

Clara Cohen: Would you give an entire one-hour free consultation in your clinic in order for that patient to be committed for long term to come to see you? Three months, four months, six months? Or would you think I'm not giving one-hour free consultation?

No way. My time is worth everything, right? So today my guest is Joanna Sapir. She came in with a bold, bold idea. She teaches practitioners and I have to say it was such a great conversation. So, if you want to hear about this, you are in the right place today. cause we had a lot of fun. How to communicate with patients, what to do to qualify the right patient to work with you so we can make more impact in our practice.

And this is what we're here for, right? Let's go.

Welcome to AcuPro, a show dedicated to making Chinese medicine and acupuncture. Easy to grasp and fun to learn. Hi, I am your host, Clara Cohen. I support practitioners and students and like you in changing the world one patient at a time. My goal is to share my passion for TCM and empower you to achieve superior patient care.

I love to showcase the amazing benefits of acupuncture because after all, acupuncture rocks.

Welcome Joanne Sapir to the AcuPro Show. Thank you so much for coming in today. We are in for a treat because I know you truly help practitioners all over the world on how to combine their love for their craft with how to make a profit and actually make an impact. Because the part that we have a hard time with is the business aspect of our practice. So, thank you for being here. I really appreciate. Now I know you were in, San Francisco area before, now you in Mexico. I love it. So, this is why when I saw you today, I was like, oh my God, you look like you're all dressed for warm weather and I'm freezing in here.

So welcome Joanna.

Joanna Sapir: I am so excited to be here. I've been really looking forward to this conversation because you have good conversations on your podcast, and acupuncturists are amongst my favorite people, so totally happy to be here.

Clara Cohen: Awesome. So glad you agreed to come on the show. So, one of the things that I think practitioners struggle with is, and I know you know this in Chinese Medicine School, mine anyway. Had zero business class, like zero. We got excited about going to Chinese medicine school to learn Chinese medicine

in acupuncture, and we were like, oh, we're going to treat the world and we're going to help everybody and it's going to be fantastic.

And when I finished my five-year program and got my license, I was like, yes, let's start. I opened October 1st. And that was in 2003. So, a long time ago, and the first week I had zero patients. The second week I had zero patients. The third week I had zero patients. And because, you know, all I did was put a sandwich board outside and that was it.

I mean, this was a long time ago before social media and the whole internet thing. And then waited for people to come to me because they should know about me. week I had three patients and they were all friends of my husband and myself because they felt so bad for me.

So, they made appointment and two of them came from far away just because they wanted me to practice. Right? Then I started panicking and I went to the Chamber of Commerce in my area and said, okay, what can I learn here? Because this is freaking me out.

Right? And so, my first question, and I know some TCM schools have a bit of business, but it's very limited and most of them have. Nothing. So, we come out wanting to change the world impact patients, support people's health, and nobody comes through the door. So, I would love for you to start at the beginning of why do we need to know about business?

Joanna Sapir: Well, my story's not that different from yours, Clara, except for, it wasn't acupuncture. But I don't think anybody in wellness practice gets business education. We all spend all this time learning the science and how to apply that and how to help people. But most schools do not have a business education side of things, so.

I started a little bit after you started. 2008. I started a specialized strength and conditioning gym, and I had absolutely no experience in business whatsoever. I had been a high school history teacher for a decade but just knew I had this passion for providing this. Basically, strength training had changed my life completely and actually helped me really heal in some important ways.

And I was like; I want to bring this to my community. And I took all these, certifications and classes to learn all the formalities of how to help people get stronger. And I ended up starting this business with just zero experience, and in my case, a little bit different from yours. I mean, I wouldn't say that I was flooded to begin with, but people started showing up, right?

And so, what I found was several months into my business that I was starting to burn out fast because it was just me and I wasn't even necessarily like rolling in money, like it was covering the bills. I didn't know what I was doing with money. I wish I could tell you how much I was making or if it was profitable, but I had no idea what I was doing.

Right. I just knew that I had to show up at these times that people were coming for classes and sessions and I was a single mom of two little kids. And because of the way I had set up the business, I had these classes and sessions offered in the early morning and in the evenings before work and after work for people, which as a single mom was insane.

cause then I was paying people to watch my kids during that time. I actually did burn out really fast, as in I got so sick one day. That I decided to go to the emergency room. I'm not like a go to the doctor, Western medicine kind of person.

So, it felt serious enough that I was like what's going on? And they couldn't find anything wrong with me and I figured out two hours in the hospital. I was like, oh my goodness, this is just stress manifesting as these weird symptoms that they can't figure out what, what this is.

And that was when I realized, oh, I need to learn how to do business. And I did, which is awesome, right? I totally took it on myself and I mentioned that I used to be a history teacher. I really like patterns and systems and information, and I got really into it. I was like, this is amazing. And I realized.

I can make my business be whatever I want it to be. There are ways to do this. There are ways to set up systems and structures. There are people who have successful businesses that are not burnt out. I was like, I know this is possible. So, I figured that out and you know, over time, like built a team to support the business and my big climax, I would say was that I got to take my sons, who had grown up a little bit at that point. We went away on a trip to Europe for a month and I never checked in with the business at all. And I came back and it had, not just continued running without me. It had grown without me.

Everything was in place for it to run sustainably and profitably without me having to do everything. And so, I decided to sell that business because I wanted to go full-time into what I do now. I had been doing it already on the side.

I was the client of so many wonderful practitioners, myself. Right. And I'd go to their offices and they were so good. They were so good as practitioners and their businesses were flailing. Either they were totally overworked and burnt out, or they were just on the roller coaster, right?

Of sometimes there's clients, sometimes there's not patients, clients, whatever. Just the up and downness and the unpredictability of it. They came to me first, I was like, okay, I'm going to make this into something.

So, I sold my gym and started this business and it's just a hundred percent what I'm here to do. There are so many amazing practitioners, and acupuncture itself is such an amazing modality that can help so many people. But the thing is, is no matter how good of an acupuncturist you are, that actually doesn't determine the success of your practice.

And that's a sad fact, but it's true. You have to have the business pieces in place for it to be sustainable for you and profitable, right? Sustaining the business and making you the income you want. And that's got to be done in a way that that doesn't burn you out, right? Where you can continue to give fully to your clients and community.

Clara Cohen: That's a great start. Thank you for sharing that story. And what's funny about it is before I went into TCMI. Was managing two fitness clubs, so I was in the same industry you were at. I did personal training for many years and taught aerobics and all that stuff. I taught hip hop.

So, I did this for a long time and I really enjoyed it until I wanted something more, because I felt like you had the passion of wanting to help people in a different way instead of the health, you went above that to people that were helping people of their health and then you were helping them.

So, it's like the ripple effect is much

Joanna Sapir: Yes,

Clara Cohen: for me.

Joanna Sapir: yes.

Clara Cohen: It was more like people would come in and say, oh, I can't work out today. I have my period and I'm in so much pain, or I haven't slept in two

weeks. I have no energy. I didn't know what to do, I didn't know what to help them or if I could help them with nutrition, but that's about it, right?

I don't know why you're not sleeping. I don't know what's happening in your life. Maybe it's anxiety, maybe all those things. So, I felt like I needed more because I couldn't help them when they came with health issues that were not related to working out. Right. So that's why I went back to school. So, I totally understand where you came from.

And I love teaching as well, so I get the history teacher wanting to teach cause you're continuing to teach. You're just teaching

Joanna Sapir: Yes,

Clara Cohen: modality, right? So, you're

Joanna Sapir: yes, yes.

Clara Cohen: adults versus high school students. So, I love that. I know you are passionate about how to communicate with patients the way that if you communicate the right way, then they are going to trust your ability to help them and they're going to refer you to their whole family and their friends and et cetera, et cetera.

So, one of the things. nobody Teaches us is how to go about communicating to patients. So, one of the things that we were saying in school is like, oh, this person has liver cheese stagnation. Well, you can't say to a patient you have liver cheese stagnation. cause they don't know what that means.

They didn't go to TCM school, so nobody taught us. it's the fact that

how do you explain to patients, how do you communicate to patients? How do you flow about so. Patients can really, really connect with you because like you said, they can see many amazing practitioners, but it starts with a good communication.

Right? So, I would love for you to share what you teach or what you can coach people about that.

Joanna Sapir: Well, I think there's two sides to this. One is the marketing side, which I've heard you talk about. I'm going to focus on the, the client side, but I'll just echo what you say, which is, you know, your marketing should be about

them. You are talking to them about them and about their pains and problems and about their goals and desires.

And you know, it sounds obvious. I'm saying this and all of you listening are like, yes, yes, I know that Clara's told me that already. Like I know that. And yet, when you go to write that social post or that blurb on your website or whatever it is. we all seem to revert into this thing about like, oh, what's my elevator pitch?

I hear that all the time. Like, what do I say at the networking meeting or whatever. And people always revert to wanting to talk about themselves. I'm passionate about acupuncture and I have this training and I do that and this and this, and just don't make it about you. So, on the marketing side of things.

It's not about you. Talk to who your people are. Show them that you see them, show that you understand what they're going through and offer them help and hope and solutions, right? So that's the marketing side, but really at the heart of what I do. is teach practitioners how to create systems in their business to call in the right people.

That's the marketing side, but once they are invited in to invite them into a consultation that enrolls the prospective client into a full program with you. And this, I think this is what you're asking me about, and I'd love to, to share about that. So, my, my process, I, I call this the predictable sales system.

And the sales system involves that's what the call to action is for a practitioner, for an acupuncturist, it's not booked a session, it's scheduled a free consultation. You can name your consultation. It can be called all different things, but I'm just going to use consultation.

And that consultation is a true assessment process. It starts with an actual assessment designed by the practitioner, so I guide people to create their own assessments. Some practitioners I work with are just, for example, a mental health kind of person, a therapist of some sort, and then some do physical work, like body workers, acupuncturists, et cetera.

So, your assessment portion is whatever you need to do in order to actually get a picture of what's going on with this person and what do I think their treatment plan would be,

Clara Cohen: So, when you say invite them to a free consultation and do a full assessment, do you to spending like an hour on a Zoom call with them?

Joanna Sapir: So, if we're going to get granular, yes, it's an hour, but let me back up. So, acupuncturists serve people hands on, in person. All of my acupuncturist clients do anyway. So that one-hour assessment is in person in your office, but to get there, they actually go through a filter first because you do not want to be spending an hour in a full consultation with somebody who's.

Not a fit for you has problems you can't solve. Definitely who can't afford your services, who can't commit to the time, et cetera. So, we have a filter in place and that one we call the 15-minute phone consultation. That's why the our in-person consultation is called something else. Again, I'm just making placeholder names.

Clara Cohen: and I, you know, to recap it if I'm hearing you well, is we. Get that 15 minutes free time to assess that, okay, this is the right fit, this is going to work well with us, we're going to work well together. Then we book an appointment and that is a full paid consultation with treatment or whatever the practitioner has set up.

Is that what I'm hearing you say?

Joanna Sapir: My system is particular, but it's a little bit different. The 15-minute phone call is really clearly scripted. It's something you take everyone through the same process, it is not a sales point, so know you're not selling the in-person consultation.

The in-person consultation is still free, and I'm hesitant to share that on the podcast, but I will because so many people before they do it, balk at it. And in fact, I have this wonderful acupuncturist in my program who just got over the hump of resisting that she was resisting that part, and then she finally did it and she's just like, I mean, it's just flowing.

She's like, now I get it. Why it works this way. Let me explain some of the energetics here, because the energetics matter. The 15-minute phone consult, again, it's not a sale. It's just a, does this person fit through my filters? It's not, do they want to work with me? It's are they in alignment with the way I have decided to work?

And so, I'm sort of putting the cart before the horse here in that we haven't talked about things like understanding who your ideal client is, what exact pains and problems you particularly solve. You know, especially if a lot of you listening are just in school. That's another thing that schools do is they teach us to work with.

Everyone and anyone, they're not teaching us what is needed in business, which is to get specific on who are my ideal clients. And so, the way I work with practitioners that's a core piece of it, is understanding who's your ideal client. Clara this is more than niche.

Your ideal client can involve your niche for sure. You can have a niche of women's hormonal problems. That's a niche, but understanding who, what I call it your bullseye client. So, everybody's got a target market. So, your target market is. Find women's hormonal health, but your bullseye client is a very particular woman or very particular women who have specific pains and problems and goals and desires.

Clara Cohen: So, first of all, one, I love that you went there because a lot of new practitioners are scared to focus on one area or niche like you call it which is a French word. Ha ha ha. I love when people use French word, so.

They're really worried because they're like, oh my God, I have nobody already. So, I want to be able to treat everybody because then I'm so worried or fearful that if I, you know, put myself into this hole or this corner, then I'm not going to be busy, which I think is a disservice. And I agree with you, absolutely.

Be more focused on who you want to help Second, helping women with women, let's say health hormone, reproductive hormone. Great. That's a small focus, but I agree that's not a very ideal avatar. Your customer avatar could be in that big part of women's hormone, but it has to be more defined. Let's say a woman trying to conceive with fertility and has been not able to do for the last two years and is getting really to a point where she's thinking, I'm never going to get pregnant.

Joanna Sapir: And she's tried this and she's tried this and she's tried this and this is how she feels about this process. She's got all this shame and judgment of herself, right? And like, you know, all her friends are getting pregnant and now she's getting older. Right? There are all the details in there.

Clara Cohen: That's exactly that. Really over the years, I've had a lot of patients in that bucket where it's exactly it. The shame, the I'm never going to get pregnant. What's wrong with me? Like everyone around me is. You describe that so well, and that's exactly. Why I wanted to ask you.

You need to understand what she's struggling with, not just with the issue like fertility, but mentally and socially and spiritually and everything around her.

Clara Cohen: Do you feel like your TCM College prepared you to grow a thriving busy practice? I know mine did not. It saddens me and sometimes even angers me to see so many acupuncturists giving up their practice because their TCM College did not teach them business skills. This is the root cause why so many practitioners struggle to make an impact change lives using the knowledge they acquired in TCM School.

You have the TCM knowledge, but you are missing a crucial piece, how to market your services because if nobody comes through your doors, you cannot make an impact with anybody. I've built a successful, busy, thriving practice. Now I want to make sure that you do too, because the more of us are successful out there, the more patients will be impacted.

I will be teaching two master classes on how. You can grow a successful practice and crush it on social media without feeling overwhelmed because I know this is scary and I want to make it easy for you to apply and take action so you can have your best year ever. I will teach you how even as an introvert, you can market your services without feeling ay and gross.

If you're truly ready to elevate your practice, this is your chance. Don't miss out on those two masterclasses. Click the link below, and learn to implement these strategies effectively without feeling overwhelmed.

Joanna Sapir: That's the marketing side of things. cause you want to be able to talk to that person in your marketing. But I want to back up a bit and say for people just coming out of school who are scared of, of getting this specific, I personally actually think that. You can't get that specific when you haven't worked with enough people.

You don't know who your ideal client is. So, I do think picking an area of focus, like that niche part is great and important. You do need to do that. I just had a consultation with a woman who, was like, I'm a health coach and I just want to help people be healthier and happier and live their optimal lives.

And I'm like, good luck with that. cause that's not going to get you anything. There's no pain problem. What exactly are we talking about here? You do need to have some kind of focus there. I want to work with these kinds of people, but

when it comes to like really, really honing in, I do think you need a lot of experience.

You need to know, for example, who have you not been successful with? You do need to know what are the problems that I've tried to treat and haven't been successful with, because in, in my opinion. You should be. This is that filtering process that I was talking about. You should be kindly and graciously referring those people to a, to a colleague who, you know, can help them.

Right. And yet you're going to have trouble with some situations and others, you're going to find is your thing. My thing is wellness practitioners. It's just like, these are my people. This is who I not only feel passionate about helping, but I successfully help over and over and over.

The truth is I'm teaching basic business stuff that I could be teaching to plumbers, but plumbers are not my people. Do you know what I mean?

Clara Cohen: So, get it. Because when I first started, I really was passionate about women's health and mental health just because I've seen in school a lot of patients in my teachers, making a difference in those two aspects. And then I also thought that they were very crossing because a lot of women's health actually stem from mental health and trauma, et cetera. So, I really liked that and I wanted to really have those kinds of patients. But what I did, and I think what you are absolutely right when you first start, you don't have enough experience. So, what I did is not only have patients that came in with a lot of, women's health and mental health, et cetera, but I took all my continuing education and read all the books in those areas, and then you start getting better and then you can narrow it down. So, I

Joanna Sapir: Yes.

Clara Cohen: Sharing that. You start with a little niche and then you can narrow focus when you feel passionate, when you feel like you have more knowledge. So that's a really good point. Thank you for bringing that up.

Joanna Sapir: Yeah. So, for the new folks, yes. Start somewhere. And then for people who are more established and more experienced, start to look at who are the people in my past that I have loved working with and that have seen the best results from my services? And you look at who those people have been, and there's going to be patterns there.

You might have people like my three best clients ever and they may have had different health problems. And so, then you're not necessarily in one specific health niche, but you still understand who your best people are and there's going to be something in common between them.

Right if, even if it's not their particular health problem. I was talking about how the filter, the initial filter, which is the 15-minute phone call, which we script. So that's what people on your website or they end up, finding you on Google or whatever.

That's what they know. Instead of calling the office or booking a session online. It's right away the call to action everywhere is book your free 15-minute phone consultation and that might be available in two hours. Like you have set hours that you're available to do those a few a day and they're 15 minutes.

So you can have four per day, you know what I mean? If you get that many leads, that 15 minute phone consultation, that's the filter is just to determine whether this person is on target. And then to qualify them on the major qualifiers that have shown up for you. Price would definitely be one.

So you qualify them on price, but for example, if in your past you found that people really had trouble making it to your office or committing to come in once a week. You look at the past and you go, that's something I need to qualify them on. You know, this is where my office is located.

If you were to work with me, I'm getting ahead of myself here because I teach people how to enroll their clients in in whole treatment plans. But let's just say your treatment plan is three months and it's weekly sessions. Then a qualifier might be, do you know where my office is located and would you be able to come here every week if we were to work together?

All of it is a conditional, it's not making a sale. It's all conditional. If we to work together, here's how it would look. Does that sound like something that's right for you or that you would be interested if we were to work together at do, do, do. And importantly, right at the beginning of the call, you're asking them some basic questions about them to determine is this somebody who, yes, they fit my target, or no, I'm gonna kindly refer them elsewhere.

Clara Cohen: Yeah, and that's a

Joanna Sapir: Right?

Clara Cohen: point because for example, I feel very weak when it comes to dermatology. I have said it for years. Skin issue is not my thing. I didn't do a lot of schooling on it. We did maybe a few hours, and it's not my thing. I have a colleague in my area that is passionate about dermatology and he's amazing when it comes to skin, and he gets such great effective results.

So. understand that if you're doing a pre-qualifying 15 minutes free, and this person goes, I'm coming to see you because I've had 20 years of rosacea. I'm like, oh

Joanna Sapir: Yes.

Clara Cohen: do this. So then we're wasting each other's time by you coming for a consultation, and then you sit down and it's like, oh, I can't help you.

I have to refer you to my colleague. So then you could do this in advance. And I feel like when you refer that person to, let's say your colleague, that's passionate about skin, that person's gonna feel so grateful that they will continue to refer you out because they feel like you had the best interest at heart, which is the truth.

The best interest is to support patients, to help patients, and if I can't help them, then there's no point for me to give it a try. Right.

Joanna Sapir: Exactly right. I have multiple times myself gotten referrals from people who I referred out, right? Who I said, my program's not the right fit for you. Here's somebody I recommend for you. There's such integrity in that, so that's really true, and you learn that right away.

And then also it just. Turns out that the technical systems we have, because they're scheduling that call through an automated scheduler, they're very likely to be opting in onto your list. And so they're actually gonna end up on your list anyway, and I call that a lead. If somebody's on your list and you're able to market to them, there's still a lead for other services later.

So we take care of that. So just to be clear, so they are being invited after you've determined Yes. Looks like this person's on my target. Yes, they're qualified. Then you invite them in for the in-person consultation. And this all goes back to the question you asked me, Clara, about how to communicate, like how do you communicate what they need and that they need something more than a session to just fix their problem.

Now here's the thing. If truly somebody has something going on where it's just gonna take a session, then that's a different issue. But nobody that ever comes to work with me in their practices, ever. Gives me examples of something that is a one session fit. The biggest complaints I hear from practitioners before they work with me is that clients drop off, that they're always trying to get them to rebook and that they drop off and when they drop off, they don't get the results they were after.

And then the practitioner feels pretty frustrated by that, right? Like you don't feel like you're kind of living your purpose, like your whole purpose is to help people experience these transformations and when they're not doing their side of things, it doesn't happen and it kind of, really mess with our heads and make us feel like we are not great practitioners when that's not actually the case.

Clara Cohen: You're absolutely right. Specifically because not patient's gonna go and say, oh, acupuncture didn't work for me.

Joanna Sapir: Exactly.

Clara Cohen: And so that reflects on the whole profession because they went once or twice, they didn't know they needed to be consistent. They weren't told what to do, what to expect.

Their expectation were not met because their expectation were not taught or shared with. So

Joanna Sapir: Exactly,

Clara Cohen: that.

Joanna Sapir: So let me get into that. If I can just kind of go deeper a little bit on here. So the kind of heart of the work that I do with practitioners is teach them how to build programs and treatment plans for their clients and patients. And so that's what we're talking about here. And so that's why you have to know who your ideal clients are and what are their pains and problems and goals and desires because you are building the treatment plan or program.

That is actually going to get them the results and that's what you're enrolling them in. So starting with that, that's important. I think, a lot of times due to both insecurity and what we think is supposed to happen here. A lot of times people hear this and they try to make up something in their head that's what they think someone would buy, or is what they have heard of other people doing.

So it's sort of like made up. It's like, oh, okay, a six week program, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And I just wanna discourage that and say, this is not about what you think people will buy. This is about, what do those bullseye clients of yours actually need to solve their pain and problem and achieve their goals and desires?

What do they actually need? What is the service that you would love to deliver if selling and marketing it were no issue. Because you can learn how to market and sell this. After You don't create it based on what you think people will buy, you create it based on what they actually need.

You just said that thing about when somebody comes in for a few sessions and it hasn't, , quote unquote fix them and then they go, acupuncture didn't work. My big harsh lesson was when I owned the gym and I was selling personal training. It was the way everybody was selling personal training, which was a pack of 10 sessions, right?

And so just to be clear, that's not what I'm talking about when I talk about a treatment plan or a program. It's not a pack of sessions. So I sold packs of 10 sessions and what happens, guy comes in, he's got these goals, and I'm like, cool, I sell you a 10 session pack. And then he uses it sporadically, doesn't come in regularly.

And his goals are I wanna be stronger, I wanna look better, I wanna be attractive to women or whatever it was. He came in three times in the first week and then skipped the next two weeks.

Right. And meanwhile I wasn't giving him what he needed in terms of consistency and regularity. I wasn't requiring that 'cause it was just a pack of sessions. But also he needed nutrition guidance to be keeping track of his sleep and his stress. There were all these ways that I could have helped him get to his goals that I wasn't delivering because I was just like, oh, pack of 10 sessions.

That's how this goes. That's the what not to do. And so we're talking about do your people need? And in my case, let's say with this guy, it would've been all of that. There would've been nutrition guidance and monitoring. There would've been sleep and stress education, and again, kind of tracking and checking in.

And it would've been a really consistent requirement of how often he came in for the sessions. You know, two to three sessions a week consistently for more than a few weeks if 10 session pack. If three times a week, that's three weeks,

right? That's not enough. That's barely enough to start seeing barely something different.

And so it should have been more like three months, six months, 12 months whatever it was based on his goals. One of the reasons why I love acupuncturists is because, in my experience, they are very excited by this idea 'cause they know how powerful acupuncture will be when people are committed to a whole process with it.

It also allows you, as an acupuncturist to bring in all these other pieces of traditional Chinese medicine that you may wanna be bringing to people, including education. So for example, when somebody is enrolling in a program, you don't have to be using all the session time to be talking to them. You can incorporate that in other ways, right?

In a variety of ways. There could be videos, there could be audio, that could be things for them to read, et cetera. But it's part of the program. So how do you communicate all this?

Ad Break: Before we continue with today's episode, I wanna share something that honestly feels like a big moment for me if you've been following me for a while. You know, I've always said no to all sponsorships. I've been approached many times, but I turn them all down because if I don't genuinely use a product or love it, I will never recommend it to you.

But today is different. I am super excited to introduce my very first sponsor. Drum roll please. Jane app. I'm also a Jane Ambassador, so this is a company I actually use and love. I am saying yes because I've used Jane for years in my own multidisciplinary clinic. Truly, it's the best practice management software and electronic medical record.

I've ever worked with before, Jane, we were using a clunky system that made everything harder than it needed to be. When we switched the entire clinic, felt the difference immediately. Jane is built by people who actually understand what it's like to be a practitioner. Running a busy practice. One of my favorite features is online booking.

There is nothing better than waking up and seeing patients booking their own appointment. Well, I was asleep. Your patients can book when it works for them and the wait list feature. Fills last minute cancellations automatically. I love that. I used to spend so much time calling eight to 10 people just to fill up one spot.

Jane also automates the things we never enjoy doing, like intake forms, reminders, confirmation. It honestly feels like having an extra assistant handling all the moving parts. You can focus on what really matters, which is supporting your patients and being the TCM rockstar practitioner. You truly are.

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The link and the code are also in the show notes below for you. Now let's get back to today's episode.

Clara Cohen: Before you go into communicate, I know you mentioned this, but I think that is going to be including with me a big friction. Yes. Hurdle. Friction for most of my practitioner audience, including myself, is great with the 15 minutes free consultation to make sure that we are in the same mindset and they are qualifying as a patient that I can try to support and help. But that first free consultation for an entire hour of my time makes it very difficult for me to wrap my head around

Joanna Sapir: Yes.

Clara Cohen: something that I have never done and I just can't even imagine.

Joanna Sapir: Let's talk about it. Let's talk about it. So I'm gonna use, because she's currently working with me and just got through that whole hump. I can't use her name, but she's an acupuncturist, wonderful acupuncturist and she's busy. She came to me to , streamline and basically make more money with less hours. That's the promise of my program.

So let me just note first thing, just the numbers. When you qualify people with the free 15 minute phone consultation. For an in-person practice, I'll say her numbers, she's converting a hundred percent of the people in those in-person consultations the hour long one into a program, so a hundred percent conversion.

For my in-person practitioners, we're aiming for 80%, so 80% being the baseline. This is different. I don't think many people listening to this are gonna

be online practitioners, but I do work with online practitioners. It's a lower conversion rate online,

Clara Cohen: sense.

Joanna Sapir: In person like this, it's a lot higher.

So just imagine minimum four out of five people minimum, but likely five out of five people that come in for those consultations you're converting and what are you converting them to? You're converting them to a 3, 4, 5, 6 month. Treatment plan with you, that costs something like 3, 4, 5, \$6,000. So you're spending one hour to make, let's just say a \$4,000 sale, and you're booking that person out for four months in that hour. That's the part that, I can say it and maybe it doesn't land, but I just wanna say it really, really works for the business. So you're not giving away your time. You're using that time to connect meaningfully with somebody and get their full a hundred percent buy-in and commitment and understanding of what this program or treatment plan.

Is for them and. The energetic side of it is something that, unfortunately, I can't describe how powerful it is, but it is a completely different energy to work with somebody to start working with somebody who you two have just committed to each other for something like four months or five months or whatever it is.

You have just gone in depth on what's going on with them. They have shared so much more. I do wanna talk about this consultation process 'cause it's so much deeper than most practitioners do do usually. I mean, there's a real difference. So this is going deep. You're really understanding this person.

They feel heard and understood. You are only offering them your program if you know that you can help them. And you have just committed to this process together. Like it's a difference between a relationship where there's somebody you're just kind of casually seeing and like you don't really know where it's going and what's going on, and you could drop off at any point.

And having had that conversation, like, yeah, we're gonna be in a monogamous, committed relationship to each other. Like that's a huge difference. Right? In energy. And that's what this is like.

Clara Cohen: I hear you then I'm thinking that free consultation is a foundation for

Joanna Sapir: yes.

Clara Cohen: of the relationship with you and this patient.

Joanna Sapir: That's exactly right. What I say is even if your mother or sister or cousin wants to work with you, they go through the same sales process because it's so foundational. They get qualified in the same way. They go through this consultation in the same way, this one hour assessment and consultation, because it is totally foundational.

Its purpose is not about, quote unquote making the sale. Its purpose is not to quote unquote convince them. It is a really, really authentic coming together point that's a great way you put it, that it's the foundation for the whole relationship. .

Clara Cohen: So I could see it. My practice is full, but at the beginning when I first started and I wasn't busy. I would have no issue if I understand really the purpose of it, to spend that time, because I had the time, right? I had those hours that I could. Now, if someone is, let's say, they're not super busy, but they're doing quite well and so they would need to adjust their schedule because, let's say you have five patients a day. Now you add up maybe one or two free sessions, so now you're working more, but you have to think you're working more just right now for the long run in having a full practice that is full of patients you are actually really, really wanting to work with.

Is that what I'm hearing you say?

Joanna Sapir: The promise of my program is to make this is US dollars 10 to 30 K US dollars per month in fewer hours. And so we're actually working fewer hours. So let me just note, the majority of practitioners that come to me are established already, and they are wanting to make this change because of a couple reasons.

One, they're too busy. They find themselves never wanting to turn away people because they wanna make the money. And part of the reason that they wanna make the money and don't wanna turn people away is because there's always cancellations and no-shows that happen. So there's this unpredictability to it.

And again, that kind of goes to you might have a good month, you might have a bad month. You don't know until it happens. There's no predictability. If you catch some of what I've been teaching so far, you can see that it's actually makes your income completely predictable. So you are enrolling somebody for, I keep saying four months.

I'm just gonna pretend that that's what it is. You're making four months of predictable income. That's how it is. I should also note that people are not paying, when they come to a session, they're paying for the four months.

No matter what. We have a monthly charge or you pay in full. So that's happening no matter what. So the way we get to our pricing for that is by looking at what is your ideal schedule. And I'm sure that you'll relate to this and understand this. What happens when people start their businesses is they go, how much should I charge?

And they go, okay, well this guy down the street is charging this. My teacher charges this and I'm not as good as my teacher and I'm brand new, so I'm gonna charge less than this. And it's totally fricking made up. It's this totally made up price that is based on what they think they're good enough for which means your head is getting in there, which is not how money should work.

And so what happens when it's made up? Let's just say you end up with a hundred dollars per session. I'm making that up because it's an easy number to work with. Then you go, well, I wanna make \$10,000 a month. And so you go, how many sessions do I need to have to make \$10,000 a month?

This is the wrong direction. That's backwards to me. I should also note that people say they wanna make \$10,000 per month, and they're thinking, I wanna take home \$10,000 per month. They're forgetting there's a whole business to support, right? Like your salary is just one of the business expenses.

What I believe you should do is you start with what does it cost to run the business? What is the salary I want and need to take home every month? That's the bare minimum the business has to bring in. Then you look at what is my ideal schedule? How much do I want to work? Not how much do I have to work, it's how much do I want to work?

And the thing is, nobody says they don't wanna work because we're all totally here to help people. We have these businesses because we wanna help people. Usually people end up in the 20 to 25 hours per week range.

Really depends on stage of life and where they are and so on. Here's where I'm gonna get a little detailed and tricky. What most practitioners are used to doing is trying to book out their whole schedule. And part of what I'm teaching people to do is how to run a sustainable and profitable business, which means you actually are the leader of your business.

You are the CEO of your business, and you are not just the practitioner. And so I say that if you are ace. Solo practitioner, you're the only one in your business. There's nobody else, no admin, no nothing. If you're a solo practitioner, then maximum 50% of your business hours should be client facing. That's a hard pill for many people to swallow who are used to just trying to book as many hours as they can.

This is really important I think for anybody in here to hear, is you need to be reserving 50% of your work hours to lead your business. And what does that mean? Lead your business. I talk about five departments.

Marketing is one department. Sales is a different department, which is what we've been talking about as a sales process. Fulfillment is the word for the actual client services, like what you're delivering to clients operations and administration, and then financial management, five departments.

If you're a solo practitioner, you are the lead. You're the department head of five different departments. And if you think your whole business is just seeing clients, that's one department. It just means you've made a job for yourself, right? But nobody's actually running the business.

There's four other departments to run and that's what happens in the rest of those hours. So back to your question on now, I feel like I'm working more somebody like you, which again is the majority of people who come to me are established and, and wanna make this switch because they want consistency and they actually wanna be making more in less hours.

We start by going, what's your ideal schedule? Identifying how many client facing hours is that? And then pricing their programs and treatment plans based on that. So how can I make the money I want and need in those hours that I have for the client facing hours? So you are not working more. That's part of this whole system, right?

And so also note that I said 50% of your hours are for the other departments, and one of those departments is sales. So the free consultations fit in sales. So that is you being the head of your sales department, and that is you. The sales is like how the business makes money. It is like one of the most important departments there are.

Sales is this meaningful connection point that creates this foundation for really helping somebody achieve transformation.

It is something you can fall in love with and it's such a win-win 'cause it's wonderful for your client. They're all the way in, they're committed, which means you know you're gonna be able to help them when they're committed in that way. It's a win for your business because you're fueling your business.

It's like one of the most important parts of your business, right? And then it's a win. And then it's a win for you just in every way in terms of the, the what you get from your business, both financially and energetically.

Clara Cohen: I get what you're saying about, trying to not overdo it because I think people forget that yes, there is something outside of just treating patients.

There's a whole aspect of owning a business and even though you may not be a solo practitioner, you may work with other people in a multidisciplinary clinic, for example, there are still things you need to do that involve the business. Obviously you can't rely on everything else, so that's really a really good point. When I first started my practice, I took patients any day, every day, any hour, because you're desperate, right? You're like, I wanna help people and I'm not making money, and I'm paying rent, and you worry about finance. Once I got established, I went down to four days a week. three days a week because I also taught in colleges.

I chose the days and the hours that I like to work and then I would never go outside of that. So I totally understand. The only time that I would say I would go outside of that is if a patient needed IVF support a certain day, a certain time.

'cause you can't pick those. And those are people that you see for. Six months, for a long time. So when it comes to crunch time, then obviously I'm gonna be there and I'm gonna show up. But in general, I really defined what my hours would be. And I did own a multidisciplinary wellness center. And like you talk about your burnout, I did burnout because there was 15 practitioners in the clinic, including my full practice, including staff, and eventually I burn out because the business part of it took so many hours, so much time that I just felt like all I did was work all the time. So I get the burnout as well.

So there's two aspects. There's the new practitioner that is trying to figure it all out, and then there's the practitioner, like you said, that you coach a lot, which is to help people that. they are busy, they may not quite be busy the way they want it to be or the hours they want to be, and they also may burn out.

So the prevention of burnout, which is the whole point of Chinese medicine, is to have a balance between life and work is so important. So when we first

started this, you talk about implementing systems and I think that's what we need a lot. A lot of people don't have enough systems because

Joanna Sapir: Yes.

Clara Cohen: ask me all the time, oh my God, you're online, you're everywhere.

How do you do it all and stuff. There is systems and time management where everything is in a certain way. If you look at all my social media, it's all scheduled. It's one platform. You put your post and it schedules it for all the platform. It's not like I go to each platform and then no, no, no, no.

I need systems. So I wanted to wrap this up because you shared so many really good points and I really appreciate you being here and sharing. I would love to finish off with why systems are important when it comes to practitioners.

Joanna Sapir: I mean, I think you just said it and nailed it, let's just talk about the sales process. So. That's what I call a predictable sales system, is this clear flow that I said even your mother would go through even if she wanted to be patient. It's step-by-step processes. So this is me defining systems because a lot of times people hear systems and they think. Automations and sure we want our systems to automate whatever can be automated, but it doesn't mean there's not in-person pieces of it. When I say system, I mean a step-by-step process for everything that happens in your business, right?

And so the sales system, this is how everybody becomes a client. Everybody goes through this step by step by step, and for example, the 15 minute phone call that we talked about, that's scripted and the in-person consultation. Has a very specific step-by-step process that you're taking people through. And payment plans have a very specific way they're done, right?

All of it. And then even your programs have a clear framework to them. So we didn't talk about that, but that's what you want for every piece of your business so that you can just keep optimizing and optimizing and optimizing. You know, told the story at the beginning of this program. I went away from my business for a month and it runs without me.

And even grows without me. And that's because there's step-by-step systems in place. Some of those systems you simply hire other people to do. Some of them are automated, right? Like you're making it all so easy for yourself so that you

don't spend so much time sort of putting out fires and responding to this and that.

It's the magic. It is, it is the answer truly is the answer. And actually, I have this free gift for your people. That is basically these recipes of three systems to have in their businesses.

Clara Cohen: I know you graceful enough to offer my audience a free gift, so I really appreciate it. We'll have the link to it in the show notes below for people to get it, so I really appreciate you doing that. I absolutely think it's fantastic because it'll. Kind of show them the possibilities that they might not think about again, because we were not taught this in school.

So I really appreciate you being here, Joanna. Any parting words for my audience before we go?

Joanna Sapir: I think my parting words would be you can build the practice of your dreams. You really are the leader of your business and when you step into leadership, you can make it be exactly what you want it to be, including things like the income you want have and the hours you wanna work, but.

Perhaps most importantly, the impact you want to have, the really life-changing stuff that you wanna have, and changing people's lives does depend on things like systems. The more you develop your business, the better your services and work in your community will be.

Clara Cohen: And it will be a better flow. So that, that was perfectly said. Thank you so, so much. I really appreciate you coming in today and you do have a podcast as well, so we'll put the link in the show notes below so people can listen and learn more from you. Thank you, Joanna.

Joanna Sapir: Thank you for having me.

Speaker 2: Thank you so much for spending your time with me today. I truly hope you benefited from this episode, and I would love for you to share it with a friend that may benefit from it as well. Follow the show, live a review, and if you want more, go to my website, acupro academy.com. I have tons of resources there with treatment protocols, case studies, free courses, and so much more.

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