



HELLO EVERYONE! THANKS FOR JOINING ME!

This is Part 1 of my 3 part ***'How to get the prices you deserve'*** Webinar!

For those of you who don't know me, My name is Melanie Stimmell Van Latum and I've been a professional artist for 25 years.

I'm a Fine Artist, Creative Director of my own Creative Agency, We Talk Chalk, Inc, and I'm also an illustrator and surface designer represented by CruiseCreatives. The success I've had has been a combination of a lot of things, including a lot of hard work, and a lot of hard decisions... which leads me to what this webinar is all about.

SO, WE'RE GOING TO GET STARTED WITH A REALLY IMPORTANT QUESTION...

"How confident are you in asking for the price you want??"

Actually, I'm going to rephrase that...

"How confident are you in asking for the price you deserve?"

I think pricing our work is one of the most difficult things for artists to do. As I've said, I've been a freelance artist for just over 25 years and there are still times I freak out over a quote we're going to present to a client... And when that happens, I remind myself that I'm worth every penny of it. Or sometimes my husband (and business partner) has to remind me :).

But the truth is, I've seen artists continually undercharge for their work and or their services, and worse, I've seen them do it for free. But I've also seen the flip side, where artists are asking for an amount that is way about their experience and skill level. So how do we figure out the prices that are going to work for

us? I'm going to get to this, but I really quickly want to talk about what happens when an artist agrees to work for free. . .

When an artist does something for free - without any sort of compensation - it has a domino effect. . . And believe me when I say, I've seen this A LOT. I've seen it quite a bit here in Las Vegas and Los Angeles. . . artists creating murals for free, sketches for free, ideation. All of which they should have been paid for. As soon as your pen or your paintbrush hits the page, you should start getting paid.

When I first started creating for larger clients, they would often ask to see sketches first. And, being young and naive, eager!, I took the time to come up with a concept, create 2-3 sketches - usually in full color, and present them with a wonderful story about how and why this is a perfect fit.

Do you know how many projects I booked with that method?

The percentage was low.

Often times I never heard from that client again, only to find out they did the same to 3 or 4 other artists. Why? Because if the sketch didn't hit the nail on the head for them, instead of asking for a revision, or working with the artist, they just moved right on to the next artist who would again sketch for free. And because they didn't have to invest anything, they were happy moving from artist to artist collecting amazing concepts and sketches. For them it was a win win. But. . . let's get to my point.

The Ripple Effect of working for FREE...

1. The client will expect it for free again and again.
2. The artist has completely devalued their talent, experience, and their time. You've basically said, without saying anything at all, that you don't need to be paid. I've given them permission to step all over me.
3. The artist has lowered the grade point average of the entire class. . . What I mean by that is. . . Doing that one project for free has lowered the overall value put on artists within the community. "Why pay Joe, when Jesse will paint for free??" But you have the same effect when artists undercharge for their work. It sets a standard.

I actually have a really wonderful client that we've been working with for about 7 or 8 years now. Our 1st big project with him was something like 15 poster sized paintings for his studio space. The original price we quoted him seemed perfect at the time and maybe a little low because we were doing so many and we really wanted to project. But once we got into the project we realized we should have charged at least 50% more. But at that point, it was too late. We ended up doing several more of those posters over the next 5 years and were able to raise the price slightly each year, but it had to make sense, right. We couldn't all of a sudden double what we were charging. That wouldn't be fair to a loyal client, and it's just bad practice. Luckily, those posters were always an addition to a much larger project so we end up making a profit regardless.

But it's a lesson learned.

"Don't let the fear of loosing a project dictate my worth."

So... You don't want fear of loosing the project to be a part of the equation when figuring out what you should charge. I know it's hard to ask for a price, especially when it's on the higher end, but if you really feel it is warranted, then you should present it with confidence. If the client isn't prepared to pay with the project is worth, they are probably not your 'ideal client'. And that's ok. Move on. Because as soon as you resolve yourself to accepting lower prices, you've set your worth in that industry. It's really difficult to move your prices up to what they should be in the future.

Your ideal client will know your time and talents are worthy and will be more than happy to pay. They will understand what it takes and they respect your talent and skill.

A few rules... Now these have become my rules over the last 20 years, there are exceptions of course, but I try to stick with these as much as possible.

1. Never ask a client what they want to pay. (It may seem silly but I've seen and heard happen right before my eyes.)

***Instead ask what their budget is.**

2. Never quote a price on the spot or during an initial meeting. (You don't want to be pressured into a price. It will likely always be too low. Take the time to think it over.)

***Instead let them know you'll send over a proposal later that day, or within 24 hours.**

3. Never discuss pricing of current project with a potential new client. (I've had this happen a lot where you're working on a public project and someone will come over and ask what you're being paid.)

***Instead let them know you'd be happy to email them your pricing sheet.**

Again, these are pretty straightforward but you'd be surprised how much they help in getting the price you want, instead of one that you are pressured into. And if anyone has a problem waiting a few hours for a quote, I usually back kindly back away from that project.

So, this is a great place to pause because in the next video we're going to figure out how to price our work and actually get paid what we deserve. But before you go, please leave me a comment or question below on what we just talked about. I'll be answering them in the next video as well.

And I'll leave you with this quote...

"If you want to improve your worth, stop giving other people the calculator" - Tim Fargo