

If you've ever considered having a membership for your photography business, you're gonna wanna listen to today's episode with Annemie Tonken from This Can't Be This Hard. We are going to be talking all about memberships for photography businesses. Now, if you're like me, many of you are like, wait, how, what a membership for a photography business. Well, I think it is 100% pure genius,

and we talk about some interesting ways that we can make this work for pet photography as well. But really it will work for pretty much any type of photography out there except maybe wedding photography, although we did mention that, and it probably even could for wedding photographers that wanna include an anniversary session or an engagement session. But we're gonna talk all about it.

You are gonna get all sorts of great ideas. So stay tuned and enjoy. Welcome to The Hair of the Dog podcast. If you are a pet photographer, ready to make more money and start living a life by your design, you've come to the right place. And now your host pet photographer, travel addict, chocolate martini connoisseur, Nicole Begley. Hey everybody.

Welcome back to The Hair of the Dog podcast. I'm your host, Nicole Begley, and I am very excited for today's guest. She is my kind of neighbor, quasi neighbor, state neighbor, up in Raleigh, North Carolina. I'm down here in Charlotte on a Well, can I, like I get in my head, I get in my, I know everybody does.

It's okay. Ee tonkin Ee Tonkin. Yep. All right. From this. Can't be that hard. An incredible photography educator. And we like really love numbers together and are excited to geek out about memberships with you guys. Get ready. Put your, put your excitement pants on because Oh my excitement pants are on. This is so exciting. So Annemie,

welcome so much to the podcast. Before we get into it, can you tell us a little bit about your journey to, you know, becoming a photographer and how long you've been a photographer, what you specialize in, and Sure. Just, you know, your story. Yeah, absolutely. Yep. So, as you said, my name's Ami Tonkin.

I'm based in, I'm actually based in Chapel Hill, which is like right down the street from Raleigh Triangle. We're in that triangle. Exactly. If you know, you know, and I have been a family photographer since 2010. I got into photography with a background in nursing. You know, we all kind of come from different places and come at it in different direction from different directions.

But when I got into photography, I knew Zippity Doda about running a business. I had the good fortune of having a mentor right at the beginning of my career who told me, if you're serious about making this a career switch, like if you want to actually make this your, your living, you need to take the business part of running a business as seriously as you do your photography.

'cause of course, at the time I was consuming absolutely everything I could in terms of how I could make my photos better. And I really took that message to heart because I knew that I didn't know anything. And so I started to just kind of consume that as much as anything else. And I, I honestly, I mean, I believe very

much in my photography,

I think my photos are great. I think my clients think my photos are great. So that's really what's important. But at the end of the day, in such a competitive field, I fully credit that effort that I, you know, put in from the beginning in setting up not only profitability, but also systems that made things sustainable. And kind of paying attention to how the business ran with the,

the fact that I've been able to survive low these 13 plus years at this point. So, so yeah. And seven years ago, six years ago, I co-founded a conference with some other family photographers because we felt like there was not a lot of good business education that was specifically focused for family photographers. So we created a conference called The Family Narrative,

which is still around. And the, that sort of foray into the education space really lit a new fire in me because I realized that my passion for business and entrepreneurship that had grown over the seven or eight years prior was not shared by a lot of other photographers. It's like they needed it, but they didn't know where to get it and they didn't have a lot of internal motivation to find it.

Exactly. So yeah. So then I, I got into doing more education on my own. I started the, this can't be That Hard podcast back in 2020 and, and I teach some online courses and here we are. So I love It. We started our podcast about the same time. Yeah, Yeah, yeah. I know you and I have these nice little parallel journeys from across the state.

It's really, yeah, it's really crazy. Yeah. Yeah. I am a big believer that anyone that is serious about actually making this a profitable business needs to take that business education just as seriously, if not more so than the art. And you know, while we always wanna strive to be better artists, there's like a, a technical proficiency that once you're there,

like you can make this a profitable business. Yeah, yeah. Of course. You wanna keep on growing and as you develop that art even more into something that's like really, truly uniquely yours and there's even more demand, you can raise your prices and all that. But yeah, that, that business education is such an important piece of this. Yeah.

And I mean, I am sure that you can relate to this. I have seen so many people out there who I would say are just as good if not better than I am from a, like an artistic perspective who can't, who were not ultimately able to make their business survive. You know, they went back to a day job or whatever. Not that there's anything wrong with that,

but I'm talking about people who did that kind of against their will and it's like, okay, clearly this is the difference. And so even if it feels like, you know, eating your veg veggies, the nice thing I have found is that if you embrace business and you think about it as a creative pursuit, you will start to find that there's,

because we're typically the owner of the business, right? We get to make the decisions and call the shots that you can. You can be creative, you can use your business as its own creative outlet. So I always like to encourage people who are reluctant on that end to think about it that way. But then again, the people who are listening to your podcast are probably not too averse to business anyway.

That's a good point. Absolutely. Oh my goodness. So yeah. So today we're gonna talk a little bit about, I mean, something that I love, but I have never ever thought about putting it towards my photography business until one of my students mentioned how much she was loving this from something that she learned from you. And that is membership. So everyone knows we have Hair of the Dog Academy membership to learn all about business and craft of pet photography.

But never in a million did I think you could take a membership for a photography business and talk about taking that creativity toward your business. I love this. So yeah, how did you even start to come up with this idea? Like, tell us how this happened. Yeah, so, you know, it's one of those necessities, the mother of invention situations.

So I was recently divorced. My ankle had been giving me trouble. I had a high school ankle injury that had been, you know, in my late thirties catching up with me. And I was just having more and more kind of chronic joint pain in my right ankle. And I went to see a specialist about it and he was like, oh yeah,

we, they did an M R I and looked at it and said, you've got some pretty bad cartilage damage, but we can clean that up for you. No problem. The downtime for the surgery is like two weeks. So I scheduled the surgery for December 7th, 29, no 2018. And I, and you know, that was gonna be fine for me.

I was gonna finish up my busy fall season. Yep. Get everything delivered. And then basically take the month of December to rest and recover before the next year started. And so scheduled the surgery. My dad came down from Virginia to go with me for the surgery and I woke up in the recovery room, my dad is standing there talking to the doctor and they were like,

so we have good news and bad news. The good news is your surgery was a big success. The bad news is when we got in there, it was not just cartilage damage, you had like essentially no ligament. And so halfway through what was supposed to be like a really quick surgery, apparently the doctor had come out and talked to my dad.

Here I am in my late thirties and my dad's like, yep, this is what's happening. So he came out and talked to my dad and he was like, either she can have a second surgery or we can fix this now, what do you think? And my dad was like, I'm sure she's not gonna wanna have to go through this a second time,

which is was the correct answer. Yeah. Right. But the, the sad part was that that meant that I was gonna be on crutches, non-weightbearing for three to four months and Oh wow. For a family photographer where, you know, obviously I'm doing a lot of work with like two and three year olds who don't sit still in case you haven't worked with two and three year olds.

I, that meant that I couldn't work. And fortunately the first quarter of the year is typically my slow season. So I wasn't, it wasn't as though this was like a full disaster October, but it was a Yeah. But it was a major wake up call for me. 'cause even the process when I got divorced, like having to kind of really do some deep soul work and money work and everything else on how am I gonna make this business able to,

you know, fully provide for me and my kids, right? Then it was like, oh, okay. And I need to figure out how, if I have to take a couple of months off of work in the future, you know, how's that gonna work? How can I bombproof my business? And, you know, this was not an idea that that I was,

it. I, I think that when we open up our minds to like, I'm looking for a solution to a problem, you can put that on the back burner and as long as you give it some time, I find you normally end up kind of coming to it. And it happened for me when I, the doorbell rang one day and my three dogs went bananas.

And I went and it was the, like u p s guy had delivered my quarterly drop off of HVAC filters that I have on a subscription. Right. Like, who remembers to go to Home Depot? Yeah, right. And buy HVAC filters, but you need them. And when I opened that, it was like this light bulb kind of went off and I was like,

oh, here's the thing that I am always like, yep, I need to do this, but I don't, you know, life gets busy and I forget. So I signed up for this subscription, which is a little bit, you know, it's just makes it more convenient. Yep. Makes it so I don't forget. And that sort of crisscrossed for me with my clients who would frequently,

and at that point I had been in business for 10 ish years and, and I, you know, I had all these clients who would come back to me every other year or every third year and every time they would call and say, oh my gosh, I meant to call you last year. Little Susie, you know, lost her teeth and then I totally forgot whatever.

But now I'm sad 'cause we missed that and, and it occurred to me that like maybe I can, maybe there's some an idea here. So for about six months I spent time thinking about how can I position an offer because I did. I was like, why don't these exist everywhere? Once I came up with the idea then my major doubt was if I'm not seeing it,

it's because it's because there's a fatal flaw baked into this idea. But I really, I did a bunch of research, I couldn't find any other photographers who were doing it. But I also spent a lot of time kind of thinking it through, talked to my lawyer who's written up my contracts for me. I was like, what am I missing here?

And she's like, no, I think it's a great idea. Talked to some friends, talked to some clients and ultimately launched a membership to my existing clients that August, my busy season is the fall. And so I was strategic about when I launched it because I wanted to make it so that anyone who was coming in was sort of getting the benefit of being first on my calendar for the busy season.

But really what I was looking for was a way to stabilize my income and somewhat stabilize my desire for, or not desire for, but like my need to constantly be hustling and marketing my business. Long story short, that first year I invited I think about 50 to 60 clients. Again, I had been in business for a long time, so I had a lot of people to,

to offer that to. And I brought in 35 members that first year, which at over a hundred dollars a month each, you know, that more than covered my mortgage, my expenses for the business. And so all of a sudden I had this just baseline income that was coming in month after month. And on top of that, what I would do is I would have my members book they for that,

they got a session each year. And so I would have them book during two kind of open calendar times during the year, once in August and once in January. So if they wanted a fall or a winter session, they would book right after they signed up. If they wanted to wait for spring or summer, they would book in the winter. And by doing that in August,

I was able to look ahead all the way to the end of January and say, okay, I am two thirds full now when I get an inquiry, I'm going to give them the options. But I am no longer in any way in that state of like desperation. Right. Panic. Right, exactly. It was, it didn't feel feast or famine.

It was like, nope, I know I've got income, I know I have clients booked so I'm only going to put people in spots that really make sense for me and my family. And it was that winter or that fall I had the calmest busy season I've ever had. It was perfectly, I made all the money I needed to make and then some,

but it was, it was very, I was, it was, that was a brand new thing for me in 10 years of business. I had never had a busy season that didn't like nearly kill me by the end of it. Right. So that was amazing. And then 2020 rolls around and like the years off to a perfectly fine start. And we're reading about that like 10 week or 10 day hospital build in Wuhan and yeah,

here come the breaks and then here come the breaks. Except that that didn't happen in my business. I had a whole bunch of clients who had scheduled for March and Beyond who then needed to be shuffled around, but they were already, you know, two thirds of the way through paying for that year. So they weren't like, I want my money back.

Right. They were just like, okay, well we'll postpone. And we did and we did most of their sessions that summer and we did them outside and I often shoot inside, but that's, you know, for a while we were outside. Yep. And, and it was incredible. And I felt incredibly, it was one of those almost survivor's guilt situations where all of my photographer friends were just like done.

Like they had no income and it was this huge shock to the system, but kind of because I had had a trial run of that with my ankle, I, I wasn't in that position, I was just, I had income coming in every month. And then it was like, well I wonder

what's gonna happen in August when re-enrollment time comes around.

Is this gonna scare my clients off? And what I found was that as we rounded the corner, actually it was like a little bit after like in April and May, I started to get a bunch of emails from my member clients who were like, this is, you know, I just have been thinking about you and your business and I'm so glad that you came up with this idea.

You know, these were people who I had been working with obviously. And so we had something of a personal relationship as well. But it really was like this perfect scenario in a very imperfect, bigger scenario. But it really woke me up to the fact that this was something that was, that could be a stabilizer for a lot of photographers. So since then I have,

I have helped other photographers set up memberships in their business and it's amazing to see I of course set mine up for family clients and it was to me kind of a no-brainer. People wanna photograph their kids as they get bigger and all that sort of thing. But as other photographers have come to me, you know, I have photographers who do brand work where their clients need updated photos on,

you know, sometimes as frequently as monthly who are making big bucks doing monthly subscription type of services. I have certainly a fair number of pet photographers at this point who are using subscription models or membership models. And I know that your student, Monica is, is a shared student of ours, which is fun. Yes. And, and yeah, so boudoir photography,

tons of family and children photographers, some people have switched to a membership model so that their baby plan that, you know, a lot of photographers will do that first year. The membership model is a really great way to transition that into not just the first year but beyond. And so yeah, it's fun to see it kind of spreading all over the place.

I love it. Pretty much everything except maybe weddings. Yeah. Yeah. You definitely don't wanna do weddings. Oh man. Buy one, get one free. Yeah. Although I do have some a a few and I think that it is, it is certainly not unusual for somebody who does both weddings and families to transition. Right. Yeah. I've had a couple of wedding photographers who have pitched this as like an anniversary session.

Oh, That's really great. Or including the engagement session as well. Yeah. Yeah. Just kind of depends on your clientele. I love it. I love it. So can you give us maybe just a couple ideas of how this could set up? 'cause I'm thinking the biggest objection as a pet photographer is to think about is like, well yeah that works great for families 'cause you wanna get photos every year.

But a lot of times our pet clients, you know, there's those special unicorns that do do a couple sessions with us or maybe it's a puppy, which, oh my gosh, this would work amazingly well for your puppy session or puppy years. But generally as an adult dog, people don't get a lot of a lot of sessions with their dog because they look the same for a lot of their life.

So kind of what have you found is some different things that people can include to encourage people to want to do this year after year. Yeah. I think that the key, and this kind of comes back to the whole thing that we were talking about at the beginning, where you have to get creative about your business. I never know. And there,

you know, I have my family clients, there are plenty of people who call themselves family photographers whose whole offer looks totally different from mine because their clients want something different from mine. So my first thing would be, you know, your business and your clients better than anyone else. Think about what it is that they want. Why do they hire you in the first place?

What is it about their relationship with their pet, our relationships? And that's, I always think of myself, I don't necessarily talk about this, but like as a relationship photographer, right? Like it's not, I usually am not doing just individual portraits. It's usually some sort of, you know, if it's a newborn, sure I have that photo of a newborn like laying in their crib or whatever.

But that's mostly like a parent holding them and nuzzling them and that sort of thing. The same thing is true with, you know, someone and their dog. It is a little bit trickier in a straight portrait, like if you're just doing studio portraits. But one of the things that I offer my family clients is that if they join at one of my higher tiers,

they get a studio portrait in addition to their family session of their kids each year. So it's kind of like a, an a like a school portrait. So, you know, there is I think merit to all different kinds of structures there. It just kind of depends on your clients. It's also not required that it be an annual thing. You can spread it out to be wider.

So it could be, you know, you're paying monthly and you're getting a session every other year. It could be narrower. So you know, if, if you're going through a season of change like a puppy in that first year, you know, maybe somebody wants two or three or four sessions. So you wanna really think through what the ideal offer is for your clients that could be put on a repeat kind of a basis and then build the membership around that.

That's awesome. I'm sure you could also think of some fun, two things, different types of sessions. I'm thinking as like an outdoor photographer, like oh, maybe we go to the lake and then this is like the city with the city in the background and then this one's a natural. So you have these different options. Yeah. So that it's almost becomes like a collect them all kind of thing.

Right. Which then you could even have you, after a couple years in your membership, you get an album with all of the images from all of your things. Oh my gosh, mine's going. But it can also be probably things that aren't even photography related. You know? 'cause one of the main tenets of a membership is building community. So if your target client is a similar target client,

which generally is like maybe your target client's outdoorsy and you guys have like

a dog hiking meetup Yeah. Kind of thing. Or different, different ways to just encourage people to, to connect. I love that. I have really fun different, or I have a handful of family photographers who are running memberships who have Facebook groups with these parents and you know,

especially people who are parents with young kids, newborns and very young kids, they are looking actively looking for community. Oh yeah. And so if you can sort of facilitate that, you know, not only is that a gift to them, but it breeds extreme loyalty to you if you are kind of the hub in that wheel. So, so I love that.

I also love your idea of like, it's almost like a bingo card, like over the course of five years of your membership or you know, more we're going to do a snow session and a, you know, water session, whatever. And they can sort of, I love that. Like collect them all when it comes to, in particular pet photography so that it's not just kind of the same thing year after year.

Yeah. Oh my gosh. That's really, really fun. I love it. So in your experience, people are paying monthly and then they're having their session whenever they schedule it for the year, are they usually then adding on? So does that just cover like a, a portion of their session or like, could be all inclusive but they end up,

you know, upgrading and buying more things? Yeah, so, and I mean this is a, it's a big like there, this is why it took me six plus months to figure out all the different details. 'cause it is a little complicated to figure out like, how am I gonna set this up so that I'm covering my costs and making sure that this is worthwhile for me,

but also such that it's still an enticing offer that brings somebody, that makes them overcome the barrier. Which is like, well, am I gonna commit to one more thing? Right? And so you do that by really starting with the basic ideal thing that your clients want to walk away from. So I, when I teach this, I go into a lot of depth about really thinking about what that main offer is.

That is sort of your signature thing, that when people think of you and think of hiring you, this is what they want. And you wanna figure out a way to kind of bake the, the meat of that into the membership so that that's included in what they're paying for. But you definitely wanna give yourself always, always definitely wanna give yourself room to grow,

right? Like I teach it so that you create three tiers, so that's your base tier. And then tier two will include another thing plus the plus tier one. And then tier three includes everything in tiers one and two plus, you know, plus plus. So there's that stretch, but then there's also the ability to add on over the course of the year.

So once you get someone, one of the things that I really love about the membership is that my clients, so my average sale with a, with a standard client who comes in off the street is \$1,800. And I like, which is my sweet spot and I love that. Yep. I used to be higher end back when I was doing in-person sales.

I, you know, that was my target was sort of between more like two and \$3,000. And because it took a lot more time than the way that I run my business now. But I realized that those clients that I was getting at that price point were either stretching really hard or they weren't really my ideal clients. It was like there was sort of a,

and well, you know this 'cause you live in North Carolina. I am not someone who lines kids up in matching seersucker with like monogrammed stuff. And there are a lot of those clients out there who want that. And typically they tend to be people who spend a lot of money on things like children's clothes. So I was in this weird spot. So I ended up like changing my model so that I was working with people who I just sort of Yeah.

Enjoyed the process more with, and, and at \$1,800, even though they can afford that, it's still a big-ish check to write where they're having to have that conversation with their partner and whatever. What I love about the membership is that at somewhere between one and \$200 a month, if you scan down your credit card statement or if those people are scanning down their credit card statement,

that doesn't stand out. It's like, yeah, target Harris Teeter on me, whatever. Like they don't even see it. And so that makes it so much more available to them to add something on. So I have some things that are available to my members that are not available to anybody else, including, and I'll just sort of drop, my favorite one in here is a mini session,

a one-off mini session that my members can call me for at any time. And I have some parameters around it. It's not, you know, I won't do them on weekends. Yeah. I'm not gonna come over during golden hour or whatever. Right. But let's say that it's your kid's birthday and the grandparents are in town and you just want like that Captured.

Yeah. Right. Great. Tuesday afternoon I'm gonna come over, we're gonna do an hour, you're gonna buy a cake. We're, you know, it's gonna be a fun little like mini session type thing with grandparents. You can have the digital files from that, you know, there's whatever 20 no fuss, no muss, and it's a \$450 add-on.

And so I would never do that as a one-off with a Right. With a new client because it's not worth my time. Yep. But because that person has already paid me, they're already like clearly marked as they're committed as a, they're a committed client that's just gravy kind of on top and it adds value to them. So those are the kinds of things that I like to pamper my,

my members with that that make them, you know, not only enjoy the process but also not wanna give up their spot when renewal time comes around. I love it. There's so much to unpack here. One of the things I wanna talk about though is this move from the, the higher boutique thing down to this 1800 because I am a huge believer that,

oh my God, just about any model of photography business can work if you know your numbers, you know who you wanna serve and you know how much time you have invested in it. So you can do it in a way that makes sense for you and is actually, and you

know, still profitable. Yep. So I love that you were able to look at that and be like,

oh wait, look at this client that tends to come here, this client that tends to come here, I wanna be with this client. How could I make this work? What could this look like? And adjusting your, your business a little bit to do that I think is fantastic. And there's, gosh, there's just so many different ways from,

you know, a high volume, low cost to that like high, high end piece I've, I've been getting on my pricing, which we're gonna do actually when we do that. I'm putting you on the spot here in public. We're gonna record that and we'll have to release that to both of our podcast people. Oh yeah. This is gonna be a really good pricing conversation that we're gonna do after the new year.

I love it. That's, oh my gosh, we're it's, it's gonna be a long one guys. It's just Yeah, I was gonna say it's gonna be a double header is what it sounds like. It's shaping up to me. Oh. But anyway, I love the fact that you're able to discern that and you didn't get pulled into the like starry bigger sale.

Bigger sale, bigger sale just because you felt like, well I'm supposed to get the bigger sale. Bigger sale, bigger sale. Yeah. Well And when you and I got into photography, it was like there was some sort of like no one was saying that anything other than in-person sales, high ticket boutique, it was like that's that way or The highway.

That's it. Or out. Yeah. Yeah. Or you are destroying the industry. Totally. And I, I mean honestly that is one of my, it's like one of the pedestals that I will die on in terms of I, you know, I have done a ton, as I said in the beginning, I have educated myself to death on,

on business, different business truisms. And the fact is that out there in the world, when you look at businesses in a bigger, you know, in a bigger context, not just photography businesses, but all businesses oftentimes those higher volume, lower ticket businesses make a lot more money. I actually just gave a talk the other day and I opened it with a series of images from pulled from the internet of glamor shots like 1990s.

Oh Yeah. Yeah. Amazing big hair glamor shots. And I was doing some research on glamor shots because I think we can all kind of agree that those were really like really cheesy, often pretty bad like filmy lens kind of photos. And I found these old ads that they were running where it was like, come in for an \$8 session and you're getting your hair and makeup done and all these photos.

But their average mall sale right. Was like four to \$500. Wow. And their, for a couple years at the height of the glamor shots craze, that company was pulling in a hundred million dollars a year. And I defy you to come up with almost any other photography business out there in the history of photography businesses that has made that much money.

And so yeah. Don't knock the, the variety of business models that are out there.

I'm not, I wouldn't wanna run glamor shots Yep. Or put my name on it. Exactly. Well, but there is more than one way to be profitable in this industry and, and I think that the judgment needs to get dialed down a little bit. Oh my gosh,

I agree a hundred percent. I just cannot even put into words how much I agree that how important it is that any business model really can be successful. And but the key, and I think the trap that a lot of people fall into is they're like, okay, I have the permission to do this little lower cost thing or I don't have to be going after this 10 k sale,

but they neglect to figure out how much time they're spending per client and taking that, that sale taking out their cost of goods sold. So taking them that profit, dividing it by the number of hours that they're working to make sure they really are being as profitable as they want. Yeah. And they wouldn't make just as much money working at Target. So,

you know, you need to know your numbers. All of you guys please, we implore you to figure out your numbers because that is the key for doing that. And same thing with glamor shots. You know, they made all that money, it was amazing. Like, okay, what was their, what was their payroll? You know, 'cause obviously it wasn't one person running all of this of course.

But you know, I doubt their payroll is a hundred million dollars or whatever that amount was. So they were still likely very profitable. But you know, they knew their numbers. So. Yeah. Well in big business, you know that when you start a business where, I mean even if it's just one store at the mall, retail space at the mall is extremely expensive.

So I have no doubt, maybe less Now that the malls are all dying. Yeah. Nineties but then you have no, no foot traffic. The nineties Know Yeah. Was like the hotspot For sure. Yeah. And so, you know, in order to start that business, the, the startup costs were probably huge. And of course this was also,

I think, yeah that was even before digital photography. So they were, you know, doing film. And actually fun side note that I learned as I was studying glamor shots is that they were, their whole kind of ticket to fame or claim to fame was the fact that they were doing in-person sales on the spot, which was new because of course prior to that they weren't able,

so they were taking video while they were taking pictures and then they would show people the still of the video. No. So it was like A pre-digital way to do onsite in-person sales like at that time. So talk about like the impact and all of that. I know, you know, this conversation has gone off the rails. That's Okay. This,

this happens on the hair of the dog podcast on the regular. Yeah. But it, anyway, all that to say it is a matter of knowing your numbers and knowing your audience to bring it back to that like these, this glamor shots model was predicated on like, we're gonna bring somebody in, they're gonna think like, oh it's just gonna be kind of a fun experience and it's gonna be a small investment.

And then they would kind of nickel and dime them up to, you know, whatever high package they could. Again, it's not the business that I wanna run, right. But it is, it is a business model that in that particular case and for some period of time was, was working. And so when you know, when people are setting themselves up in business and looking around,

the number one thing is don't compare your business on one axis to any other business out there. You know, that person's price point and your price point could be wildly different and mm could mean totally different things. I mean maybe you're charging less and making less, or excuse me, charging less and making more and they're charging more and making less because their expenses and their,

you know, numbers are off. Yeah, Yeah. Oh a hundred percent. Same thing with like what should I charge? Let's see what the other photographers around me are charging. You have no idea how they came to those numbers. They might have just picked the numbers from outta thin air. Yeah. And so figuring out what your goal is, like what's your revenue goal?

What's it cost to make your business or to run your business, how much time do you wanna devote to this? How many clients can you serve in that time? So what price point do you need with those clients? And then getting really creative for how do I wanna meet that? Right. Do you wanna do something with this membership model? Do you wanna do like the more one-off sales?

Like what does this look like? It can be so many different things and I am so excited to dig more into this membership model strategy because you have agreed to be one of our incredible speakers at the hair of the dog summit coming up in the end of September, September 26th and 27th. And it's going to be all about this membership model. Love it.

Yeah, I know because there are many things to consider and it is, you know, of the utmost importance. If you are going to set up a membership, it's one thing to undercharge a client or 10 clients in a And learn your lessons in A six months, they'd be like, you're gonna be like, well that was a rough, you know,

patch that I just went through. When you create a membership, there is some built-in con continuity there. And it's not to say that you can't raise your prices over the course of a membership, but you want to ideally go into a membership with a kind of longer term plan in place. So it's, you know, measure measured twice, cut once and set up a membership that will serve you for years and years.

I am now four years in most of my clients from that first year are still in there. I have added several more and it is, I love it. It's, it is has been great. It is like the the biggest automation in my business history. That's fantastic. What percentage of your like yearly clients are membership clients versus Regular Now it's up to about 65%.

That's fantastic. Yeah. I mean how, like you said, that busy season with more ease to be able to just know like, oh I've got basically my main bread and butter salary like taken care of and then these extra people that come in are gonna be bonus.

It's gonna be gravy icing on the cake. And then here's the other piece too.

Once you have that taken care of, because we talk a lot about mindset here. You're no longer approaching marketing from that desperate place of like, I have to fill this whole calendar, or I'm gonna have to give up this business, or I'm gonna have to get another job. Or how am I gonna feed my kids? Like you know that you have this reoccurring revenue that you feel safe and secure and you know what's coming.

So that way you can focus on marketing in a fun unattached way that is going to attract more people and therefore make your business so much more successful just because of the attitude that you are approaching that other marketing with. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I Love it. Oh my gosh, I love it. All right, so before we wrap up, let everybody know where they can find you online and connect with you on social.

Lovely. Yes. So my business and my podcast are both called this Can't Be That hard. So it's this can't be that hard.com and at this can't be that hard on Instagram. And if you are dying to dive into more membership information and can't wait for the summit, you can go to this can't be that hard.com/revenue. I teach a course called Revenue on Repeat and that's where the information about it That is Awesome.

I love it. So yeah, so come join us in the summit guys pet photography summit.com. AMI is going to be one of our incredible 10 potentially plus speakers 'cause there's a couple more I wanted to slide in. I'm trying to figure out if we're gonna have room. So it's gonna be amazing. I can't wait for it. Annemie, thanks so much for taking the time to be on the podcast today and also for being part of the summit.

This has been great and I'm sure you guys will be seeing a lot more of her in the future because we could talk about business stuff all day every day. Love it. Count me in. Awesome. Bye everybody. See you next week. Bye. Thanks. Thanks for listening to The Hair of the Dog podcast. This was episode number 209. If you wanna check out the show notes for access to any of the resources that we mentioned,

simply go to www.hairofthedogacademy.com/ 2 0 9. Thanks for listening to this episode of Hair of the Dog Podcast. If you enjoyed this show, please take a minute to leave a review and while you're there, don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss our upcoming episodes. One last thing, if you are ready to dive into more resources, head over to our website at www.ofthethanks.com/ for being a part of this community.