



## THE LOVE:

Over and over again here's the story I always hear from wellness practitioners about why they decided to study what it is they currently practice: One day it occurred to them that if they ever truly wanted to party with Lindsay Lohan and Paris Hilton that they would have to A. have a job that made a TON of money and B. have a job that was sexy and flashy enough that all the VIP clubs would want to take them straight to the front of the line and comp them all the overpriced champagne they could drink.

So, with that goal in mind they sat down at a desk and made a list of all the jobs that would fulfill both requirements A and B. Turns out acupuncturist, massage therapist, naturopathic doctor, yoga teacher, therapist [enter your modality here] wound up being at the top of the list, so off they went to school and upon graduation they started partying with spoiled celebrities and lived happily ever after...

Sound familiar?

No.

Exactly. When you decided to study whatever it is you practice some part of your being—your heart, your body, your gut, your mind, your spirit, or perhaps all of the above—called out to you and said, “*Yes. This.*” and you dove into it not for any promise of what life would look like after graduation, but for the *love*.

And it was easy to bask in the love while you were in school. You were surrounded by like minded people who shared your same passion and you were all diving headlong into work that was coming straight from your heart.

But I've found that after graduation things change. There's still the love, of course, but it often gets silenced by a sneaking and very unpleasant feeling that you're now in the business of convincing people to pay you. Which sucks. It's hard to love that feeling.

I think what happens is a version of “deer in headlights” syndrome. There you are, basking in the glow of a concentrated period of time spent with colleagues just gleefully geeking out on what you love about what you do, and then you come back to Earth. Where not everyone knows just how endlessly fascinating fascial anatomy, or Udayana Badhna, or the joys of using intersection needling points can be, and so you wind up feeling like an arm-twister.



What are you supposed to say to potential clients? “No really! This work can change your life! Just hand over some money and you’ll see- it’s amazing!” Depending on the tone you’ve become a used car salesman at best and a cult leader at worst. And so you retreat. You hope that your love for your work and the tremendous value it has to offer will shine through, but you’re not sure how to get the word out without feeling like a sleazoid.

### **THE PROBLEM:**

Our schools, while great at teaching us how to be highly skilled practitioners, seem to be at a loss about mentioning that we need to actually know how to get clients through the door (i.e. manage to pay our bills doing this thing we love so much and are really pretty good at.)

Don’t get me wrong, I love our schools for creating places where more and more generations of practitioners can be trained to positively impact the world. I love, love love that. I adore it. Really. However, I also wish- forgive me for my bluntness- that they would take their heads out of their collective asses and find a way to give this skill set to their students before graduation (really, honesty give them what they need, not mess around with telling people useless things like, “You should have a business card.”)

And so here’s my rant. I recently received an email from an acupuncturist where she told me about how her school constantly repeated the mantra, “In 5 years, 50% of you won’t be working as acupuncturists anymore” to the students. That is all. They never followed that sentence with one that started, “so here’s how you can avoid being a part of that 50%...” Gee thanks guys, the future’s feeling pretty bright now! Here’s my tuition check- or shall I just flush it down the toilet!? To the schools I would like to respectfully say: Don’t take our money, put us through your schools, tell us how we’ll likely fail, and then send us out into the world with no attention paid *at all* to how we might avoid becoming the aforementioned statistic.

What is wrong with this picture? Why are they such defeatists? What do they think the awful statistics are about? That people who studied acupuncture don’t actually care about acupuncture? That acupuncture doesn’t actually have much to offer people? That they tend to have lazy or flaky graduates? Or could it maybe, just possibly, be because people who love what they do and are committed to sharing it with the world enter that whole private practice thing with little to no idea of how to do that successfully? Maybe? Ya think? Ok, rant over.

### **AND SO...**

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In general I find that complaining about what other people should be doing is an ineffective strategy for creating positive change. I can't really think of many times that straight up complaining got anyone very far. Imagine if Rosa Parks only complained loudly and ceaselessly amongst her friends about how unjust sitting in the back of the bus was, without ever plopping herself in the front of that bus and thereby claiming her own power to make a change? The former strategy wasn't likely to change history. The latter? Pretty effective.

Ok, so I'm no Rosa Parks. I think that's fairly obvious. However, because of my own experience of struggling through my first three years in practice and then falling in love with practice building (no one is more surprised than me...) there does happen to be one thing I can do to make some change. I figure if I can pass on the tools and create a place for a supportive community of complementary and alternative medicine providers to gather, then maybe we've got a shot at changing the lame statistics. And if we change the lame statistics, then we'll have a lot more practitioners around and a lot more people getting the help they need.

And so I built the [Practice Abundance Course](#). It's the result of nearly ten years in practice, starting three practices from scratch, one ebook, one mega manuscript for a printed book, a year and a half blogging about practice building, and lots of conversations with practitioners who felt just as helpless and hopeless as I did when I was starting out. I designed it to be the FULL course that our schools left out, coupled with community warmth and support.

It will be open to new students from March 17th to March 20th (kicking it off between St. Patrick's Day and the first day of spring seemed fortuitous enough...) and I'll only be taking on a small number of students this first round. The soonest it would open again is this summer, so if you think this might be for you I'd [get on the list](#) to get all the delicious freebie information about it that I'll start sending out this week.

Happy practice building!