



How To **Conquer the Chaos**

creating order and finding creativity
in everyday life

WWW.SABRINAGEBHARDT.COM



Conquer the Chaos

Welcome friends! I am so glad you are here. This is a topic that I am very passionate about because I have lived it. I know firsthand what a difference today's lesson can make in your life and business and I am thrilled to get to share it with you.

For starters, I need you to know that I love business. I spent years as a Buyer for a major corporation and because I love business so much I went on to get a Masters degree in Merchandising. If you don't know what that is, it is basically the business of retail organizations. I have put all my experience from my merchandising background and masters degree into building my photography business.

Today I am going to share with you two foundational principles that I think will change the way you run your business. Let's dive in!

Which one are you?

A

Planner by Nature

- Planning comes naturally
- You are generally pretty organized
- You enjoy looking ahead toward the future

B

Hates all the Planning

- Planning is a struggle
- You are disorganized and the thought of planning is overwhelming
- You prefer to take it one day at a time

By nature,

we all fall into 1 of 2 categories. We are either a planner or we hate all things planning. So, which one are you?

Here is the good news: Even if you fall into category B, this class is for you! I totally appreciate that planning isn't for everyone and can feel scary. I want to take the fear out and show you that when done right, planning is actually very freeing.

I like to say that planning is a gift you give your future self.

When we think of planning, most of us think about our planners and calendars when in reality there are a LOT of things that we should be planning in our business. We should be planning goals, social media, availability, events, newsletters, ways to serve our clients, pricing, projects and LITERALLY everything else.

Today's class is pretty short and planning is a surprisingly big topic. This lesson is a small piece of a larger module in a Mastermind that I teach other photographers. We don't have time to dive into the full module so I will focus on two key building blocks that will make a HUGE impact for you right now.

Building Block #1

A crucial mindset shift that you probably need to make.

Building Block #2

Your dream calendar and the silver bullet that you are probably missing

Both of these points require planning effort. Both of them, when done well and with intention, offer you more sanity and therefore, more creative freedom.



Building Block #1

CRUCIAL MINDSET SHIFT

YOU SHOULD BE RUNNING YOUR BUSINESS LIKE A CORPORATION.

Why is this such a huge shift for photographers? Maybe because we ARE our business. As creatives we are selling ourselves, our art and our passion. Maybe it is because we get confused and are making decisions on emotion instead of facts. Or possibly it is because we believe the lie that because we are "creatives" therefore we can't be structured and organized too.

Whatever the reason, I want you to change this frame of mind right now. I want you to realize that haphazardly running your business on the fly is causing you more stress than you think.

NOT putting planning into your business is actually creating MORE stress for you.

In order to start treating your business like a corporation there are three things that you need to do now.

1. THE STRONGER YOUR PLAN, THE STRONGER YOUR BUSINESS.

So many creatives are terrified of planning. It feels so restrictive and forced, right? Planning feels like it should be the opposite of creative freedom. But it isn't!

If you are chasing your business because there are not plans in place, you don't have the free space to think creatively. Planning well actually gives you more time and ability to create.

2. YOU ARE THE CEO, SO ACT LIKE IT.

Most business decisions should not be made with the heart. They should be made using goals and factual data. Stop waffling and take charge.



3. YOUR PRICING SHOULD BE PLANNED OUT

Here is the deal, this is not a pricing class but when I talk about thinking of yourself as a CEO, this goes hand-in-hand. All successful corporations set pricing for products and services based on formulas and numbers, not guesses.

If your current pricing is set because of what your competition is priced at, or what you "think" is a good price for your area, then you are setting yourself up for failure.

Pricing is a FORMULA. And that formula is different for everyone. If you have never spent time running your numbers, you need to do this as soon as possible.

And here is a hint, the #1 thing that most creatives forget to put into their pricing formula is their OWN PAYCHECK! Yikes!



Building Block #2

YOUR DREAM CALENDAR AND THE SILVER BULLET

YOUR CALENDAR IS VALUABLE

If you don't run it, it will run you. Read: Stress, chaos, overwhelm and burnout. If you are like many, this is how your calendar is currently functioning:

There are some general things plugged in weekly like a bible study, a girls night out or a birthday but no real structure. A client reaches out to schedule a session and you think, "I have tons of time" and you just throw them in somewhere. And then you repeat this over and over and over. Forever.

Before you know it your week is actually eating you alive. You are stressed and overbooked and not doing anything well. This is because your business and your calendar are actually in charge. They are running you!

LET'S CHANGE THAT!

But first, let me preface this. We are going to be working to create your DREAM schedule. Why do I call it that? Because life happens. It is unpredictable. Things come up. I get it. I want you to aim for your dream situation so that you have a solid foundation. This is because WHEN things fall apart, and they will from time to time, you are much better equipped to handle them!

There are 4 steps to creating your dream schedule.

1. Have to's
2. Want to's
3. Photography Needs
4. White Space

(PS: After you have read through the lesson, watch the bonus video to see me walk through this live)



Creating your Dream Schedule

START WITH A BLANK CALENDAR...

#1. Have To's

- Fill in all your "have to's" first
- These are things like doctor appointments, school pickups, extracurriculars, jury duty, etc.
- If you have a job outside of photography, those needs go here too
- Fill in the have to's for all 7 days of the week

#2. Want To's

- Next fill in your top priorities
- I recommend choosing 2-3 per week
- Want to's are things you really want to do but are not technically have to's
- These are things like the gym, bible study, volunteering, etc.
- If one of these items occurs more than once per week, it still counts as just one item. Ex: gym

#3. Photography Business Needs

- Look at what space remains and start blocking in your business needs
- The key is to make sure you are creating time for not only your sessions but all the work that goes along with them- culling, editing, emails, etc.
- Before you can plug these into your calendar you need to know how much time each item really takes. Spend some time thinking about how much editing time you need per session, how many office hours you need per week, etc.
- I recommend at least a few hours for a CEO day every week. This is when you are working IN your business, not ON your business.
- For sessions- block in days/times that you are willing to shoot each week and don't deviate from that schedule when a client calls.



#4 White Space

THIS IS YOUR MAGIC BULLET.

This may be the last step but it is the MOST important step to building your dream calendar.

WHAT IS WHITE SPACE?

This is the magical blank space on your calendar. It is literally the empty space that you can do anything with. It is NOT to be filled.

WHAT IS THE KEY TO MAKING WHITE SPACE WORK?

Many of us see white space as space to be filled. We think it should be crammed with something else to do: another session, another social commitment.

After years of struggling with being a workaholic, I have learned that it is absolutely necessary to **INTENTIONALLY** build in the white space into my calendar.

And then to **LEAVE IT WHITE.**

As tempting as it is to cram in another session or activity or CEO day or whatever, we **NEED** white space.

White space is what saves us.

White spaces gives us space for life to happen.

In the week when everything goes wrong, it gives us space to plug in reschedules, or emergency appointments. It gives us space to breathe because we have the space to make shifts without having to cram more into an already insane schedule.

White space is your safety net.

WHEN EVERYTHING GOES RIGHT.

In the weeks when everything goes right, white space serves as a space to breathe. It offers our brain time and space to be creative. It gives us a choice.

When I wake up on a Tuesday and see a two hour block of white space for the day, I can literally DO WHATEVER I WANT. Yoga? Lunch with a friend? Read a book? Personal project? Yes to any one of those things!

White space can be used for whatever you want it to BUT it needs to be at the whim of the day. Don't plan something for it. Because then it isn't "White Space" it has become another commitment.

AVOID THE TEMPTATION

Since building in white space is step 4 in this process, your calendar is probably full at this point. It is probably tempting to think that you don't have time to fit in white space.

What I want you to realize is that white space is SO important that you should take things away in order to put some into your calendar. If that means one less session per week, do it. If that means paying to outsource your editing, do it.

Adding white space is SUPPOSED to be eye opening. I want you to see just how much you are trying to cram into a week. And how impossible it is.

YOU ARE NOT A ROBOT.

You need time and space to recharge and refuel. White space is the answer. Whatever you do, I am begging you, PLEASE do not skip this step!



Wait...

HOW DOES THIS SAVE MY CREATIVITY?

You are probably thinking, all this is great but you said that planning and creating order would help me find creativity in everyday life. How does planning save my creativity?

There are 3 things that will happen when you implement today's lesson. You will get these 3 things when you start running your business like a corporation and start planning your dream schedule.

1. WHITE SPACE

This is the space that saves you from overwhelm. This is what allows you flexibility and time to live and play. This is the space that saves you from burnout.

2. CLEAR BRAIN

When we are overwhelmed, we cannot think clearly. We end up chasing our business instead of DIRECTING it where to go. A clear brain gives us the peace and freedom to ACTUALLY CREATE!

3. FREEDOM

Creativity craves freedom. You cannot tap into creativity while you are under constant pressure. Putting effort into planning sets your future self up for freedom. Do the work now so that you have time to create freely later.



How can I implement this now?

I AM ALREADY SLAMMED...

#1. Build in White Space where you can

- Look at your calendar and add some in.
- Ideally I think 2-3 "chunks" of time every week is enough to keep you afloat.
- If all you can manage right now is a 1 hour break on Monday, Wednesday and Saturday then that is better than nothing.
- Remember that once it is blocked off as white space, it needs to STAY EMPTY

#2. Get ruthless

- What can you take off? What can you get rid of?
- Where can you give yourself some breathing room?
- Take off everything that isn't a "must do". No one wants to back out of things or let people down but you are heading into busy season.
- This is a work focused season. Not every season is like this.
- You need to protect your mind and creativity in order to thrive and you need white space to do that.

#3. Plan for the future

- Look at your planner into the future weeks.
- The first week that is not booked solid, start implementing these tips for that week and beyond.
- If that means that you start implementing this plan for 8 weeks from now, at least you can see it on the horizon.
- You will be able to push through to the "finish line" and be rewarded with room to breathe when you get there



My story

In order to really understand why I am so passionate about this topic, I need to tell you my story.

The first 2 years of my business I was drowning. This is when it dawned on me that I was not acting like a CEO. I immediately changed my mindset and took charge of my business. I set goals. I put measures and plans in place. I began operating as if I was a corporation.

Believe it or not, my business exploded AND I was running things well and didn't feel like I was drowning all the time. I was happier. But I didn't realize that I was still overworking myself.

Fast forward 5 years. I am busy, happy and my business is successful. And then I faced a very trying, painful and grief stricken 6 months. Within that time, I experienced 2 huge losses, plus an unexpected emergency surgery and we moved twice. As you can imagine, within just a few months of all this, I was depressed.

My creativity was gone. I was refunding clients left and right. I was cancelling sessions during busy season. I wasn't myself so I started seeing a therapist.

Through our time together I realized that I was missing White Space. Between my 3 kids, my spouse, my business, my life stress and my grief, my nervous system was literally boiling over and I was numb. In order to climb out of the numbness and allow myself time to heal, I *had* to carve out white space.

To be honest, it was super hard at first. I am a do-er by nature and I literally had to force myself to leave chunks of blank time in my week. I even had to have one of my dear friends hold me accountable.



My story

It was really hard, but it worked. Over time, my spark came back. My creativity came back. The love for my business came back.

Since then, I have experienced a few smaller, but still challenging seasons. I have literally survived them because of the white space that I allow myself. These times could have sent me into a spiral but they didn't because I have built in white space and I hold tight to it. Because I now give myself white space, I have had time to rearrange things, reschedule clients, etc. I am able to take sick days and go out of town urgently because I don't book myself silly anymore.

I don't tell you this story to make you feel sad for me. I tell it to warn you. I tell it because it matters. Life happens.

We are in an industry where the number one reason photographers don't stay in business long is because of burnout.

*Burnout from both photography and life
is preventable.*

We have come to the end of this lesson my friends. Thank you for being here. Thank you for wanting better for yourself and your business. I really am cheering you on! Should you have questions, comments or concerns, I would love to hear from you. My email is on the next page.

Don't forget to keep scrolling for the three bonus printables at the end of this PDF. And make sure to watch the bonus video to watch me walking through setting up my dream week schedule. In that video I talk through a few things that might resonate with you.



Thank you!

I WOULD LOVE TO CONNECT WITH YOU

What was your #1 takeaway from this class? I am always creating new content so if you have a question that you would like addressed in the future, feel free to send me an email!

NEWSLETTER

I have a weekly newsletter for photographers called, "Lifestyle Lessons".

It goes out Monday mornings and includes helpful tidbits for your business. You can sign up for that [here](#).



SABRINA@SABRINAGEBHARDT.COM



@SABRINAGEBHARDTPHOTOGRAPHY

Your Life and Business

PRIORITY CHECKLIST

MONTHLY MUST DO'S

MONTHLY WANT TO'S

MONTHLY BUSINESS TO DO'S

Ideal Weekly Schedule

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY

I AM NOT A ROBOT
I NEED AND

deserve

TIME AND SPACE
TO

recharge