

MONEY AND WORTH: WHAT STORIES DO YOU TELL YOURSELF ABOUT FINANCIAL SUCCESS?

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- [Robyn Scherr and Kate MacKinnon](#)

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Money is a deeply emotional subject for most of us, because it's so intimately woven in with the concept of worthiness.

It's tricky, too, because we soak up our early caregivers' opinions of and behavior around money before we even have language, and can find ourselves mirroring those opinions and behaviors — or rebelling against them — without much conscious thought. Our clients bring their own hidden money stories to their sessions, too.

In keeping with our paradigm, we aim to be aware of our own money history, and engaged with the stories we tell ourselves about money. This allows us to make [clear-headed choices](#) around money and finances. We won't be surprised by bills as they come in, and we can plan ahead for expenses.

This approach also produces an income that we can comfortably call a right livelihood. We can be at ease with the rate we charge for our services, because it matches the value of what we provide. As [educator] Suzanne Scurlock says, "Being of service and being successful are not mutually exclusive."

We don't try to make as much money as possible, and we imagine that's not the goal for many of you, either. Quite often through our years in practice, we each have turned down opportunities that would have paid us more money than we were making at the time, because those opportunities weren't in alignment with our treatment paradigm or our values. We find that we live very well on what we bring in as a fair exchange for our services.

The reality is that some professions do bring in more money than others, but what often doesn't get factored in are the expenses and time commitments for those high-earning professions. At the end of the day, those high earners often net less than we do once their expenses are factored in. We're quite mindful of the costs involved in "scaling up" a business in the hopes of bringing in more income: There's always a significant trade-off in time and money invested (up front and ongoing).

There's a financial sweet spot that's unique to you, one that will balance your money and time needs, the investments you need to put into building and maintaining your business and the income that you earn. We each find that sweet spot by being honest about money, being trustworthy with money, knowing what our needs are and claiming the true worth of our work.

Why We Charge for Our Work

We support ourselves, our families and the causes we care about with our work. Money is the chief exchange in our society; it's what we need to get the basics of life handled. We pay our bills with money, and so we charge money for the work we do. It really is that simple.

Several students came into our online class with the question: "I love my work so much, how can I charge for it?" What's often underneath this question is a set of assumptions about what being of service requires of us, and what being financially successful says about our character.

For many of us, being of service equates with being impoverished, both energetically and financially. And being financially successful means being greedy and heartless, focused only on the accumulation of wealth. Although those are common biases, they're simply not true.

There's nothing noble about not being able to pay your bills or working yourself into exhaustion. There's nothing inherently dirty about being financially successful. And it's not immoral to enjoy our work and still be well-compensated.

If you want to support yourself in other ways, and perform your therapeutic work as an offering, by all means please do so. There can be tremendous value in giving your work solely as a gift. Note that if you do make your work a gift, then you are running a charity, not a business. It's good to make the distinction, and to be transparent about your intentions, so you can clearly communicate that to your clients.

Think of any independent service provider: the person who does your taxes or gives you legal advice, the mechanic who replaces your brakes. Do you expect to receive those services for free?

Of course not. You expect to pay for those services. Likely, you respect their expertise and education, and with your payment you're expecting a certain standard of practice and level of service to come with it. We hope you feel the same way about yourself, and what you offer.

Your Financial Success Creates Opportunity for Others

You can market your business while coming from the heart. If you're honoring your gifts and standing in your truth, you'll be willing to share what you know to help people. Kate remembers hearing an interview with [Nick Ortner, the tapping expert](#). He said that if anyone who does therapeutic work gets to the success level of the average pharmaceutical executive he would cheer that person on, because it would show that we collectively had the capacity to make a really big change in the economy and health of the world.

Your business success can allow you the freedom to create a platform that educates the public about your therapeutic work. You have enough business, and charge enough for your services, that you have the time and energy to devote yourselves to furthering your field.

We now find ourselves in the fortunate position of not being able to see everyone who seeks us out for CranioSacral Therapy. This allows us to support our colleagues in building their own businesses, through our direct referrals and through the information we provide to the public. It's our hope and dream for this book, too, that our investment in writing it will help more practitioners build their businesses. Then more people will be able to receive skilled therapeutic work.

We wouldn't be able to do any of this if we didn't charge a fair rate for our work. We encourage you to take a look at your assumptions about work, money, and what it means to you to charge for your services.

A Fair Exchange

We base our rate on our financial needs and on our level of experience in our field. We've each invested significant amounts of money and time into our manual therapy education, both in classwork and in mentoring. We continue to develop our skills, and our income needs to provide for that, as well.

In deciding what to charge, we consider the investments we've made to develop our expertise. And since we work in therapeutic relationship with our clients, we ask what investment we want our clients to bring to the table.

Clients Value What They Pay For

To put it simply, if you don't have a fair exchange, people won't value what you have to offer. For some people, thinking of money as an exchange of energy takes the stigma out of charging. And certainly, therapeutic work involves an exchange of energy, and one could look at money as the tangible sign of giving and receiving that creates a balance.

[Author] Robyn had an early experience that illustrates how putting a monetary value to a service creates value for clients: "I was a medical assistant at a health clinic, and when I first arrived, everything was free for teenagers. Their visits were free, their medication was free, there was never a charge for anything. Compliance rates were really low. Our clients didn't take their medication. They didn't show up for follow-up appointments. They didn't change the behaviors that caused them to need our services.

“About a year after I started, we instituted a charge for every service that was just about equal — I’m dating myself here — to the price of a new CD. That was about \$15 at the time. Lo and behold, teens showed up for their appointments. They took their medications. They brought their partners in, and got educated. The health of the teenage population in our area really improved.

“You see, we asked something of our patients, and they stepped right up into that responsibility and took better care of themselves because they were required to invest in the process. You would think that our numbers would have gone down for patient visits once we started charging, but that wasn’t how it went. Actually, our patients started to refer their friends. They started to respect what we did a lot more.”

This demonstrates that [effective therapeutic work](#) is a partnership. In following our paradigm, we want to discourage having a “fix-it mentality.” By valuing our work enough to charge fairly for it, we prompt our clients to value it, too. We then inspire them to collaborate with us toward their own therapeutic goals. We create the opportunity for our clients to show up fully, so that they can get the most out of what we offer.

This article was excerpted by permission from the book *Elements of a Successful Therapeutic Business*, by Robyn Scherr and Kate MacKinnon.

About the Authors

[Robyn Scherr](#) is Diplomate-Certified in CranioSacral Therapy and a California certified massage therapist. Scherr promotes nonintrusive touch because it provides immediate resources to release the effects of stress, injury and trauma. She’s published several articles on skillful touch and is featured in the best-selling book *Younger*. [Kate MacKinnon](#) is Diplomate-Certified in CranioSacral Therapy and a licensed physical therapist in California and the UK. She is the author of *From My Hands and Heart: Achieving Health and Balance with CranioSacral Therapy* and developer of the Healthy Compassionate Touch curriculum. Scherr and MacKinnon founded [Touch Matters](#) to support colleagues in their bodywork practices and provide accessible resources for touch to deepen connection in communities.

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