Christ
In Private Practice

PODCAST TRANSCRIPT
CPP Ep. 30 Faith-Based Fee Setting: Ditch the Guilt & Build with Wisdom

Camille McDaniel (00:12.396)
Welcome back for everyone who has been following along the journey and for anyone who is new it is wonderful to have you along this journey. Today is going to be as promised a continuation of the podcast episode that we had last week when we talked about building a sustainable private practice.

And this week we are going to be talking a little bit more of one of the topics that was mentioned last week. And that has to do with money. And specifically, we're going to be talking about fee setting and really addressing some of the guilt and talking about building with wisdom. And I know that money brings up a lot of emotions in our field and in a lot of fields, honestly.

I've seen a lot of conversations about money amongst colleagues and some I knew and some I didn't even know who they were. And there was a lot of emotion involved when it talked about the setting of fees and how much people charge and all of that. And so we're going to address that. And even more specifically, we're going to get into how do you set your fees and then what about no shows?

the dreaded no-shows, right? And how do we deal with those money mindsets that might be holding us back? And then how do we create give back areas? In a way, all of this in a way that's wise in our stewardship, that's ethical, and that honors God. So we're going to address the first thing that I mentioned. And we're gonna start with...

Setting fees and setting those fees with wisdom not emotion Let me tell you a saying that again, I've heard quite a bit I'm sure everybody has a different way that they choose to To use this phrase. I just never did like this phrase and that is the phrase of charge what you're worth

Camille McDaniel (02:30.57)
Let me, let me kind of go into why I just didn't particularly care for the phrase. I just didn't think that it was a helpful standard to have. Don't come for me. but here's the thing. You are invaluable. Your worth was determined by Christ. So how could I ever charge what I was worth and possibly get even close to what I'm really worth?

And even if people are talking about, well, charge what you're worth as far as your career, as far as the service you provide, not as far as the worth of who you are as an individual. Although I will tell you, usually when I hear that phrase, it seems as though people are making it very personal and using a lot of emotion because they are thinking about the amount that they charge being associated with their value. But even if we weren't talking about that,

How do you put a price on preventing somebody from parking their car on the side of the highway, getting out of their car, and walking into oncoming highway traffic? What price do you put on that? What price do you put on being able to help a marriage that is almost on the brink of divorce?

Never to see each other again to move on in opposite directions when that was never the initial intent when they said their I do's What price do you put on? Helping them to bridge together to heal the hurts and the pains to maybe even heal a household and Generations to come or generations that are already there. How do you put a price on that?

How do you actually put a value on things that are priceless? The next thing that kind of bothers me about that is that, know, large successful corporations don't use that alone to determine how they are going to price their products or their services. They don't. They actually use a few additional factors when they are coming up with prices.

Camille McDaniel (04:51.404)
for whatever products or services that they're offering. And I think that it would be very wise for us to take a look at some longstanding corporations that use this model and we can apply it to our own practices. So let's totally remove the emotion from our pricing and let's focus on what

our services are worth in a more local or maybe even regional context. I say local in case you happen to be offering services in your specific town, your specific state. I'll say regional for those individuals whose services go from state to state. And we can just say countrywide or, you know, universally, depending on how far of a reach that

person's services go. And that will also make a big difference in what they can charge for the services that they offer. But let's say for right now, it's a local context. So if you happen to be licensed in a particular state, even if you're licensed in more than one state, you're going to look at the geographic location. What's the cost of living in that area?

What do other licensed therapists charge in that area? Are you in a metro area or are you in a rural community? Because your rates are going to reflect a lot of those realities. And then in addition to that, if you happen to be a person with a specialization, then you'll also consider your specialization and you'll look at

what maybe that specialization can can bring in what added value and that is also going to be tacked on to the charge that you present the fee that you present and Always always Please write this down Make a note put it wherever you are going to remember to go back and look at it again

Camille McDaniel (07:08.982)
that the first thing that you want to remember when you are counting the costs and when you are figuring out these fees, your fees must account for your business expenses. All of those expenses, whether you have rent, whether you have mortgage, utilities, anything related to insurances, all of that good stuff, taxes, if you happen to be getting clinical supervision, if you...

put money aside for consultation, for training, keeping up with those CEs that we have to get. Do you want a retirement fund? Would you like to get paid? Would you like to have some money set aside in case you happen to get sick? Maybe you want to take a vacation. These are all the things that you want to be able to make sure that you write down on this list because all of your numbers are going to take into account every single thing that I just said.

right now. Okay, so that's as it relates to not just setting a fee based on our emotion, but we're going to set fees with counting up the cost. Okay, and that's biblical, because it says which of you will build a building without first counting up the cost. All right, so after we count up the cost, and we take a look at all of the numbers that are going to be required to just keep our doors open, then you're going to start adding on what I talked about with location and specialties. Take a look at the fees that are going on around in the area. For those individuals who have additional services that might require them to travel to different locations, they're gonna also take a look at, you know, what are those travel fees that need to be added in? Because there's gonna be like a cost for maybe gas or maybe a flight.

or maybe, you know, staying somewhere. And so obviously that's going to also significantly impact just depending on what service you're providing. Let's go into the next one that I had mentioned, then that is the the wonderful, wonderful no show fee. And I know some of you do not want to think about it, don't want to have to deal with it. It is uncomfortable to say the least.

Camille McDaniel (09:32.012)
and it causes you to have to hold clients accountable in a way that may not feel therapeutic. It might feel just more like it is going to agitate the therapist-client relationship. I fully understand that because I did not always have an admin in private practice. And so there was a time in my private practice where I was the one, and there was quite a bit of time in private practice where I was the one

who had to have money conversations with clients.

It sometimes can be very uncomfortable. I know, I know it's uncomfortable. Okay. But listen to me here. I encourage you to just hear me out. You have to protect your time and other clients need for help. Now, maybe this has not happened in your practice, but I can tell you in my practice,

I cannot even count, I don't have enough fingers to count the number of times over all the years that I have been in practice where somebody thankfully canceled within the 24 hour period that we asked for and somebody else was like, I need a session. Do you happen to have anything available? And I was able to offer it to them because somebody else gave 24 hours notice.

So this is about protecting your time. This is about encouraging clients to protect themselves and their own time and take this process seriously. And this is about being able to maybe even show up for other clients that might have unexpected events happen in their life and they're seeking support last minute. It is really important to hold that boundary.

Camille McDaniel (11:34.39)
Now here's the thing. You want to create a policy that is going to feel appropriate. It's going to be feeling like something that you can apply fairly and equitably across the board. Do not come up with policies that you cannot stand behind because you're going to have to put them in place. Okay. And so I'll give another example. just using, using myself as examples today, but

Here's another thing that we do in the practice. I need grace and mercy. I have received grace and mercy. I have received grace and mercy from other healthcare providers when I was running a little bit late. I remember one time especially that my son had an appointment with his doctor. I had my other child with me.

We're running behind. I missed a turn on the exit. I call the practice to tell them, I'm so sorry. I missed the turn. It's causing me to be a little bit late. Will you all still see me? Because I know that sometimes doctor's offices have a cutoff point, at which point in time, they won't see you after that period of time. I was like the last appointment of the day. So I know the doctor wanted to go home. I get there late because they were like, that's fine. Just come on.

and I get there late and it was almost like my kids just knew, they just knew that I was feeling like, my gosh, a little frazzled, if you will, because when the nurse came out to take everybody back, the kids were like running toward the nurse saying hello. They were like the welcoming committee, no joke. They were so friendly. They were so happy and upbeat. The nurse couldn't help but like laugh and smile.

And I thought, my goodness, thank you so much. And when I finally had my son get to the doctor and the doctor comes in the room, I said, you know, I am so sorry for running late. I missed the exit. I'm sorry. kind of were, I was a little discombobulated. We were a little bit behind. And this doctor really do enjoy when we do have to see this doctor. But the doctor turned and said,

Camille McDaniel (13:51.288)
We all need a little grace sometimes, don't we? And that really like, I could feel that in my heart. I was just like, man, thank you. And I said, yeah, yeah, we do. So for me, in my practice, with that in mind, we do give a Life Happens freebie every six months.

So that means that you can no show, you can late call, whatever the case may be, you won't be charged. And if it happens again though, within that six month period, you will be charged. And we can say, and again, back when I was the one who had to deal with the clients directly about that, I felt really good to be able to say,

Well, it looks like on this date, you didn't have a 24 hour cancellation, or it looks like on this date you had a no show, no call, and we didn't charge you. That's a, know, life happens freebie that we give. But on this day, you no showed or you didn't cancel within 24 hours again.

So unfortunately we don't have any more Life Happen freebies that we give out. We only give out one every six months. So we will have to charge you for that one. And I will tell you that right there has gone over so smooth for like 99.9 % of the clients, really and truly. And...

Sometimes what has happened also is that sometimes people have like kind of used their life happens. And then like for something that maybe wasn't that important. And then when something really did happen that was important. It was like, I really needed to use it. But unfortunately they had already used their freebie. So when it comes to no charge or excuse me, no show charges.

Camille McDaniel (16:03.206)
I encourage you, I mean, it's the ethical thing to do. It is the godly thing to do to be fair in your dealings with your clients. Have a policy. Please don't go about conducting business based on whose events or whatever they have shared with you happened, who sounds more genuine and who seems to be more invested and who really probably took this seriously and

who really didn't and therefore I'm just gonna go ahead and waive the fee for this person. But it doesn't seem like that person took it seriously. It doesn't seem like that person's invested because again, we don't know their heart. We really don't, right? It says that God knows the heart, but man looks at the outward appearance. So there might be some people where we're getting it a little wrong. Maybe they are actually taking it very seriously and this means a lot to them.

but the way that they present outwardly in their behavior gives a different impression. And maybe there are individuals who give the impression that they are taking this very seriously outwardly, but inwardly, it's something totally different. We won't know we are not human lie detectors. We do not have crystal balls. It is important to have good sound policy in place that again, you feel you can stand firm on.

so that you can apply it fairly and equitably across the board. Okay? It is important to have that boundary. It is healthy to have a boundary. Like I said before, healthy for you, healthy for your client, and healthy for anybody else who might randomly need last minute support. Okay? So if you're not already on top of it with

a policy for no shows, I would encourage you to start drafting that immediately. Get it into your paperwork. Make sure that you share it with your clients and move forward knowing that you don't have to guess. It's already written in the policy. You just have to implement it. All right. As we're talking about

Camille McDaniel (18:22.95)
Looking at things putting things in place. Let's go ahead and take a look at the money mindset that is Holding a lot of Christian counselors back. Okay, Mindset Many of us carry some guilt some discomfort around money We just talked about that with regards to the no show fee, right? And now here's the thing money mindsets come up from a lot of different places

Maybe it's from what we grew up with within our own home and some of the messages that we received within our own home about money or about wealth or about wealthy people. know, sometimes there is an image that's portrayed of individuals who have wealth or, you know, rich individuals, if you would say, and the association is not positive. And so therefore we don't want to be seen that way. So we shy away from

accumulation of money, right? Maybe we grew up in a church that that had ways of thinking that said that it is it is not good for somebody to be too rich or too wealthy or Something around that a matter of fact. I actually just heard a couple of days ago I was listening to the radio and I was listening to somebody who gives like financial advice and there was a

person who called in and said that they were wanting to be like good stewards of their finances and they were just kind of concerned because there were a lot of people that they knew who was saying, know, quoting the scripture that talked about, well, you know, the Bible says that it's going to be easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than it will be for a rich man to get into heaven. And they were like, so, you know, maybe it's not that good. And

you know, as they were talking it all through, it was really taken out of context because it had to deal with, I think, the young rich man who had said, you know, Jesus, you know, what do I need to do to follow you? And Jesus instructed him and just said, you know, well, go ahead and sell all your wealth, give it to the poor and then come follow me. And the young rich man went away with kind of, you know, feeling down.

Camille McDaniel (20:43.832)
kind of, you know, disappointed, if you will, because he didn't want to give up all his wealth. And he wanted to follow Christ, but he didn't want to let go of his wealth. And that's then when, you Jesus turned to the disciples and said, you know, it will be easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into heaven. And it is because not of the wealth.

but because you might find that you cling to your possessions and don't want to give them up to follow Christ, or you don't want to have to make such a sacrifice that it costs you your worldly possessions. So it's just about balance. It's not that the money or the growth in your finances is a negative. It's not that it's you being selfish.

But it's clear, like I said in the last podcast episode, that the Bible doesn't say anything about money being evil. It says that the love of money is the root of all evil. Because again, you are instructed, we are instructed as believers in Christ to also take care of those who are less fortunate and

whether you are talking about building schools, whether you're talking about purchasing back to school items, helping people to become rehoused. And for some people who are rehoused, whether it's an apartment, a townhouse or a home and can't purchase furniture, know, what gets people furniture? What gets people shoes and school supplies? Money. So whether you are donating, you know, food or whether you're donating

supplies or furniture or even helping build a home. You're going to need some money along the way in order to execute your plan to help others who are really in need. So we want to take a look at what are the mindsets that you have around money and money of a certain amount.

Camille McDaniel (23:05.174)
What amount gets uncomfortable for you? Why? So even if in your local area and based on your specialty and based on what other people are charging, do you find yourself charging less? Why? Is it because you really want to help people? Okay. And so to help people and charge less may not necessarily help your business flourish.

So let's talk about the next thing that I had mentioned, because maybe if we can bring a little balance and you find a way to charge appropriately after you have dealt with your money mindset, and if you get your mindset around money in a healthier place, then you can go ahead and charge individuals who can pay your fee what you're supposed to be paid so that you can actually afford to take a sick day.

And you can afford retirement, right? But you also then can help those who may not be able to afford your services, but they really need the care and the support that you offer. So that's where the next subject or the next bullet that I have kind of goes along with that. And that's creating give back areas in your practice. And it's very possible. Here's the thing.

This is where the balance comes in. So let's talk about serving those who can't afford your full fee. You can intentionally build into your practice, give back areas. It might look like a sliding scale. It might look like certain pro bono. It might look like partnering with churches to sponsor a certain number of counseling sessions.

Or it could be offering like a quarterly community care day that includes like workshops and donations from other individuals, business owners in the area. There are a lot of the ways that you can give back. So one of the things that we do is we do accept sliding scale and at least two of us have like a pro bono individual that's on our client caseload.

Camille McDaniel (25:31.692)
Well, we take a certain percentage of the clients that we actually see on average. So it's been determined like how many people each of us usually sees on average. And a percentage of that is dedicated to either pro bono or sliding scale. That's as much as we can take before it would then negatively impact our ability to meet our business needs.

including the needs of those who are working in the business. And that's how we give back. And if you continue to grow your wealth, you can continue to give back even more. So this is not about us like downsizing our figure so that we can give back. No, allow your practice to be great. Allow your gifts and talents to shine.

charge what you need to charge based on everything that I talked about in this episode and build in ways to give back so that you can also be honoring your faith and taking care of those who are less fortunate as the good Lord has asked us to. So here's the bottom line in all of it. Money and our gifts and talents given by Christ are not enemies.

Or another way to think about it is like money and ministry are not enemies. Okay. So when you charge appropriately, when you create healthy boundaries and you honor God with your business, you are free to build something that is sustainable for years and years to come. So as you think about your fees and your mindset and your give back, remember you're a steward.

God called you to this work and he equips you to walk it out in wisdom. All right. And if you're thinking, okay, Camille, this all sounds great, but I really have no idea where to start. Then I'd love to help you. And you know, all you have to do is go to www.ChristinPrivatePractice and click on

Camille McDaniel (27:54.146)
business consultation. It's right on the homepage. Schedule a session with me. We can talk about building a practice that serves others and sustains you. And don't forget to hop on over and join the Facebook group, Christ in Private Practice. We're having discussions. I throw out questions to the group and, you know, ask people how they're doing, ask them what they think about certain things and certain topics.

Have people have opportunities to share about themselves, share about their businesses and, you know, just trying to continue to create community that supports one another. So I hope to see you over there. I hope you've gotten value out of this podcast episode. And until next time, take care of yourself and God bless.