

Episode 11. Behind the Scenes with Selena Soo – Publicity, Mindset, and Building Relationships with Influencers

JACLYN: Selena, I'm so excited to have you here today!

SELENA: Yay! Thank you for having me, Jaclyn.

JACLYN: So before we get into all the good stuff, I want to know. When you were growing up or even early on in your career, what were you the Go-to Gal for?

SELENA: Sure. So I was known for being someone who was just naturally very hard working. When I was in high school, I ended up becoming a valedictorian. But it wasn't because I was the smartest person. I remember a lot of different topics like physics and math just kind of going over my head a little bit. But at the same time I was like I'm just going to figure it out. So someone who worked really hard. And I feel like that's translated to my career as an entrepreneur even because I'm someone who's naturally shy and introverted. I used to be terrified of being seen even though it was my mission to help others be seen. And yeah, I've decided – I have this vision of helping people. And so I will do things even if I am totally scared and don't know how to do it. I'll just put in the hard work and figure it out.

JACLYN: I love it. And you're resourceful with that. As soon as you're saying "Well I was valedictorian but I wasn't the smartest", I'm like what?! That is a huge accomplishment! But I think you're right when it comes to life and when it comes to business. It's not necessarily the smartest people that are the ones that are doing the best and that they're getting valedictorians. Think about it going back to high school. But with business we see this all the time. You could be the smartest person. But if you're not putting in the work; if you're not resourceful; if you're not doing these other things – that doesn't really guarantee that you'll have success.

SELENA: A hundred percent.

JACLYN: Okay. Love that. So now you're the Go-to Gal for PR and publicity. And you have this program coming up, impacting millions. I wanna hear about your journey. But why don't you just tell us a little bit more about what your business looks like now and how you're helping people.

SELENA: Sure. What my business looks like now. My passion is taking people from head and jam to household name. My people, on some level they

feel like the best kept secret ;whether they're just getting started or they already have a tribe of thousands of people but they're really looking to take it to the next level. And in many cases looking to make a global and international impact. So I help people in a variety of different ways. But to the things I'm best known for: **my Impacting Millions program, which launches one time a year. They basically help people master the publicity games so that they can get the opportunities of a lifetime that really put them in front of more people. And so it's everything, from being on podcasts like one, top websites, magazines and TV. And also learning how to be a guest expert in other people's programs, whether you're speaking to their Masterminding group or another premium group or membership site of theirs.** So it's all about helping people get more visibility. Because it's one thing for you to tell the world "I'm the best at what I do". But if someone else is saying that and there's a third party endorsement - whether that is an influential podcaster or leader in your industry or website or magazine; it obviously holds so much more weight. So it's all about building that credibility and also expanding your reach.

JACLYN: Yes. It's so important. And I feel like your people are in that place, right, but they're like oh, I want that. I hear these people on the podcast. I see them in the articles. I see them out there and doing all these things. But how do you connect those thoughts? And I love that you're able to really do that. Now with your personal brand you have your program, *Impacting Millions*, that you only do once a year. I love the major FOMO that it is coming up and it then you're out for the year. Is that you're only program? What does your business model look like? What other programs or services do you offer?

SELENA: Absolutely. I have a year-round Mastermind program, and that's also one of the favorite things I do in my business because I've been in business now for six and a half years. And I'm at multiple seven figures. But it was a lot of work to get there are. And I've just realized that when people are looking to achieve that level of financial success and impact in the world, it doesn't take just being good at one thing. There are so many things that you have to figure out from growing the revenues and keeping the expenses down. So there's actually like a profit margins to the personal branding keys and the relationships and the team and the systems and all of that.

So what I love about the year-long mastermind I have is that I'm able to work with people and such a deep and comprehensive way. And I feeling all of us need mentors. I think it's virtually impossible to get to the next level with no support. Because there's a million things to figure out in your business. So when you got a mentor and a community of

like-minded people who are showing up to help you and support you and inspire - the journey is just so much more fun and rewarding.

JACLYN:

It really is. And whenever we're having these conversations, I love that it's on two levels. It's like okay what do you do? We wanna hear about this. And I'm sure you can almost picture yourself in a program like that. But on the the other side, people are looking like okay you've built this personal brand; you have an online course that you run once a year. You have a Mastermind. How do you have this profitable personal brand? It's so interesting to see how different people are making money. And I love that you're pairing having a big signature course with a year-long Mastermind. Alright, very cool. So to get where you are now, what were some of the mindset shifts you've had to make? And you're in introvert. And I think a lot of people that think about publicity, immediately if they're an introvert they're like oh, I'm an introvert, that's not for me. Although I do think that introverts and extroverts alike struggle with the idea of putting themselves out there. But I'd love to know your journey of some of the mindset shifts that you've had to make to really set and put yourself out there?

SELENA:

Absolutely. I love to share this story about my very first media interview, and it was with one of my clients. I had just started my business and she had this platform and she was really enthusiastic about my work. And she's like I wanna tell all my clients about you. I wanna interview you. And I remember thinking omigosh, this feels scary. I'm afraid I'm going to mess. Up, you know. But then there was this wiser voice that said "Selena, you should just do it". **There should be someone on your side who wants to support you and who wants to help you get out there, what's the worst that's going to happen.**

So I said yes to the interview opportunity. It was on Skype video. And I'm so nervous leading up to the interview. And then we did it and it was uncomfortable. I wasn't used to like being on camera looking at someone. It was just unnatural. And also knowing that other people were gonna listen to it. I thought okay I don't wanna mess up. I don't wanna make any mistakes. It was scary for me. And when I listened to the interview after I watched it with my interns, I was focused on the interview and thinking like okay; because one of the things I was focused on was my public speaking. And at times I was like I hopel didn't use too many filler words. How did I do? I had all my interns count all of my filler words. Uhms, you knows, and things like that. And I think we had reached 137 filler words at one point. And I was like oh my god! And I was saying to my interns that this was such a disaster. It was just so bad. There's no way I could release the interview. And they also noticed that I had trouble maintaining eye contact And I didn't look very confident. And

it was just traumatizing. And my interns, I remember one saying to me, "Honestly, Selena, I don't think your interview was that bad. It was actually really good and I think that people would really get a lot out of it. And so you know I thought okay, I'm just going to put it out there. And so I sent it to my email list and I was nervous because I didn't think that it came across very well. Then I got responses back from people who are like oh that was really great. I really enjoyed that. I really love seeing that side of you. I really loved your perspective on x, y, z.

And so it kind of made me realized three things in that moment that have really helped me with my mindset. And so number one is that **we're always our own worst critic**. So for me, rather than being proud of myself, giving myself a little pat on the back; I had done my first interview and pushed myself out of comfort zone. Basically I was like let me watch this interview and find all the times I messed up. And let's have my interns actually count and record how bad it was. Versus paying attention to any of the good things. Just looking for the mistakes. So that's what we all do. And so usually whatever we do is not as bad as we think.

And then the second big lesson I got from that is that **it's easy to compare ourselves to people who we admire that we see speaking in big stages; who are amazing on camera and who seem so eloquent**. We have to remember that those people who are thought leaders - it took them a lot of time to get to where they are today. They've had to work for you know whether it's five years, a decade, two decades, to get to that level. They've probably also worked with coaches to refine their message. And so we are where we are. But to get to the next level, we have to go through that. Be in that uncomfortable place of not being perfect. Not being as good as we know we could be one day and just to accept that because that's the only way we're going to get better. So just honoring that process. And the third thing is that I was just so focused how do I look? How do I sound? Whereas the whole reason why I'm putting my message out there is to help people and transform their lives. And so when people wrote to me saying this was so helpful, thank you for doing this; I just realized I was focused on the wrong thing. And so even today I still get nervous and shy sometimes even about things that I really shouldn't be nervous about. And after I record the interview, teach the class; I just tell myself okay, did I show up as someone who was looking to be generate and add tremendous value? Where people helped by the information I shared? If the answer is yes, I did a great job. I don't need to spend any energy overanalyzing what went wrong; why did I appear this way or that way. So those are some mindset shifts that I've used to help me. But I can really connect with people who are afraid of really putting themselves out there. Because I connect with that very

personally on an emotional level. But I also know that **to be successful in business, there's a saying that you really need to feel and you have to do it anyway. You just start before you're 100% ready.** Because the thing is confidence is not something that you're just born with it. It's something that has to be earned. And you earn confidence by doing the uncomfortable thing and coming out on the other side and realizing that you're okay.

JACLYN:

Yes! So many great tips in there. I love hearing your story. And I can't even – as you were talking about the interns and having them count – I'm like oh dear. I've never even thought of having someone do that. I'm sure it would have been equally as horrible. But I think we hear a lot that it's okay to not be perfect. But you hit the nail on the head when you said that **it's okay to know that you're not the best version of herself yet but you know you can be.** That resonates so much because a lot of us, we see this potential first. We have big vision and then there feels like this big gap between where we are now and where we know that we're meant to be. And I think the way we close that up is just like you said, embracing that it's okay to be as good and as capable of being. But the way we get there is by showing up imperfectly and continuing to improve and not beating ourselves up about not being perfect. And all the uhms and whatnot are not getting in the way of our messages. Because **sharing is what's really gonna help people even if it's not perfect.**

So I feel like that was so inspiring. What are some steps we can take to put ourselves out there to start getting – whether it's publicity or known as an expert. What are some of the things you recommend people do.

SELENA:

Absolutely. I find that **people have trouble even answering a very basic question that we get asked almost everyday, which is *what do you do?* So sometimes our messaging isn't clear.** Or it's like I do this, I do that, and I also do this thing; but I don't want to be pigeonholed because I'm so much more than that. **But we do need to get clear on our messaging. Because if we can't convey what we do to other people, then there's no way that they can share our work with more people. Because the purpose of *Impacting Millions* is creating that ripple effect where other people are talking about you. So you do need to have a clear message.** And I think that sometimes it makes sense to whether enroll in a course to help you clarify that message or working with a copywriter. Because sometimes we're too close to it. Oh, is that just too simple? No, no, no. But that's simple and clear and people get it. So I would say that that's one of the first things, is getting on your message. **And getting really clear what you want to be known for.** What are your expert topics when it comes to the media?

So one of the things that I love talking about is the difference between niche and mainstream topics. And this is so important when you're pursuing media. So we'll use myself as an example. So one of the topics that I love to talk about clearly is publicity. And so I'll ask myself, "Is that a niche or a mainstream topic?" And so some people think it's mainstream, some say I think it's niche. I would say this is more of a niche topic, because a mainstream topic is gonna appeal to the average person. Whether it's someone working a 9 to 5 job or maybe a stay-at-home mom. And the average person in the world doesn't necessarily have to think about publicity for their brand. So this is a niche topic that would speak more to entrepreneurs. Whereas there are other topics that I talk about like networking and relationship building. Meaningful connections - that's a mainstream topic and that applies to everyone. So if I am looking to be on a website like let's say *Business Insider* or *Marie Claire*, they tend to be more mainstream than purely entrepreneur-focused like *entrepreneur.com*; my go-to topic is going to be networking because it's an easy one. And there's other go-to topics; these are my go-to topics, the ones that are very versatile and are used often like travel or sleep or success hacks or confidence or productivity. These are mainstream topics. Whereas if I or colleagues talk about survey funnels and Facebook ads and pixels and things like that. You wouldn't go to mainstream media about that. But you may go to a niche media outlet like a podcast that focuses on that. So it's really important to understand the things you want to be known for and then also the audience that your speaking to and how you can match that up.

JACLYN: Yes. That was one of the things that I had to really learn how to apply to my brand. And I'm glad you brought up confidence. That's one that I feel like in the entrepreneurial space I'll talk about mindset, better impostor syndrome. Pulling it out to more mainstream media, I do go with something like confidence or something that is a little bit more broad like that because that's what's going to resonate. Is there a one size fits all way, like this is the easiest way: get started with podcast or get started with writing or is there something that people really have to figure out what's right for them?

SELENA: Yeah. I have this framework called the *Publicity Pyramid*. It's supposed to help people systematically think about how they're gonna pursue media. So if you imagine a pyramid or triangle, there's a base at the bottom. And so the base at the bottom, that's your home base. So before you pursue media, you wanna have some kind of online presence. And for most people that's gonna be a website. It may also be a blog where you're already sharing your ideas and expressing what you wanna put out into the world. For some people, it's their Instagram account. Maybe they're a

fitness expert and they've got tons of photos there and an audience there. But you want to have some kind of online presence ideally before you reach out to the media. Because that base is really like you showing out to the world what you want to be known for. And you're starting to share your message in different ways. Whether it's through photos or through words or through audio and all of that. After that the next step is guest post. So that's level two. The reason why I think that guest posts are typically the best way for someone to get started is that it's a great way to share their ideas in depth, and to really expressing what they want to be known for. So they can talk about their philosophy. They can talk about their story. Their clients' successes. You have a lot of control over an article that you write. So that's a great place to get started and really figure out what I want to share with the world.

And then after you've read and then some guest posts... and also the other thing that I'll add is that there are a lot of great sites that are dedicated to guest posts. And they really wanna hear from you, like *Thrive Global*, *My Body Green*, *Forbes*; all these different places. There are tons of opportunities there and many of these places are household names that could also boost your brand right away and process.

The next level, level three, is podcasts and also video. So these are more niche opportunities and this is when you're going to be talking whether it's one way or it's an interview kind of back and forth. I really believe that before you do interviews it's healthy to first clarify your ideas in the form of writing, which is why I think guest posts and also even blogging on your own website or writing newsletters; establishing that home base comes first. And then the great thing about podcasts, which I love, is that you can reach really niche and specific audiences. And some of the podcasts may not be household names for the large part of the world, but to your ideal clients, they may be like oh my gosh I love this expert and this podcast. Or whatever they say, I pay attention to. So that would be the next level.

And then a level up from that would be magazines. And so we're moving more into mainstream media. And it's a huge credibility market to be in a mainstream magazine. To be like, "I was in the same issue as J Lo!" And literally millions of people end up reading magazines, bringing it to the beach with them, bringing it to bed with them, reading it at the doctor's office and all of that. I would say magazines are best if you're looking for more general visibility. Maybe you have a book coming out or a product that's at a lower price point. Because with a podcast, when someone listens to a one-hour interview or a thirty minute interview in depth, they feel like they really know you. They're part of a niche audience; they're more likely to buy. Whereas some of the more mainstream media which

is a more general audience and then also doesn't always go as in depth. That's going to be better for things when you're selling a book or an iPhone app or a \$99 product or that kinda thing. So that's magazines.

And then the level at the very top is TV. TV is something that for the most part – there are always some exceptions; I don't think people should jump to TV right away. They want to be building all these other levels before they get there. And it's very common when I meet people who want to get to media and their first thing is like “I want to be in the Today show”. Or that “If Oprah knew what I was doing, she would be all over it”. And “I want to be in Super Soul Sunday. I don't think I'm ready for that. I'm not going to pursue media right now. Imagine if Oprah's producers were to come across your name or you were recommended to them. And they do their research on you and they Google you and there is no home base, no website or social media. There are no articles or podcasts published or anything, then they're not going to see you as the expert. So they get some of those opportunities that people really want to reach the mainstream. **You actually have to go in this sequential order and kinda build your base, build your body of work so that you're ready for these opportunities.** And then everything can just synergistically work together as you get more media. Also, speaking opportunities open up. Maybe there was this guest on your podcast interview; a story that you realized is gonna be a great focus for a TED Talk. Or maybe there is something you write it about all the time, and you say you know what – this going to be the base of my book. So all these visibility pieces work together. But I think it's important not to bite off more than we can chew or get overwhelmed or frustrated. I pitched myself for this big opportunity and didn't get it. **So let's start small. Let's build that foundation, and then work our way up.**

JACLYN:

I love the visual of your pyramid here. And I think it makes perfect sense. And I think most people don't think about building things in that order. And I think having it where you're stacking these successes together and one is kind of helping you get more prepared but also better positioned to get that next opportunity. Brilliant. Oh, thank you so much for sharing all of that. I think that just brings it all together.

So here it at Go-to-Gal, we believe that relationships are really the key to success. And I love that you even talk about networking and building relationships as a big part of you and your brand. I'd love for you to share some of your personal relationships that have helped you along the way; whether you were surprised by it. Or just little opportunities that came here and there; some of that behind the scenes, I think, can be really eye-opening and inspiring to people, too, to go out and build their own relationships, right?

SELENA: Absolutely. I think relationships are so important. It means so much to have people who are on your side who believe in you. And I remember when I was in business school and I was figuring out what I wanted to do. And at the time I had been building a relationship with my favorite blogger, Ramit Sethi who has a website called *I Will Teach You to Be Rich* and also a website called *Growth Lab* right now. And I had been going to his meetups and I had been buying his courses and things like that. I became a star student. I got to know him and we lived in the same city. And I was talking to him one day. I was in business school wondering what do I do next. I didn't realize I could start business also being on a student visa. But I was wondering do I work in HR or maybe women's initiatives. I really care about empowering people or do I go back to nonprofit? Or do I do this other thing? And I remember him saying something to me about him feeling like I was thinking about things in a very narrow way. And that he really saw a lot of potential in me and really felt that I could really do anything I wanted to and that the world was my oyster. And that meant so much to me hearing that from someone that I really admired. And over time because I'm all about building relationships and adding value, I've been building relationship with Daniel LaPorte for years. And I had also gotten introduced to Marie Forleo and started being a helpful person in her world. And when I was trying to start a business, all three of these people have been super encouraging. Daniel and Marie gave me testimonials and said such nice things about me. Ramit told people about my work and I even got a guest post for him, which added over a thousand subscribers to my newsletter and has continued to add people.

JACLYN: Will you tell that story? Because I've heard you tell that story about the guest post and I loved it.

SELENA: Oh yeah, that was an interesting one. And it definitely speaks about the power of relationships. And it has been a couple months and I was working with a client whom I'm still very great that had the opportunity. But on some level she was like extremely difficult to work with. And I also, as a new business owner, didn't know how to establish boundaries in my business. And so I found myself feeling really unhappy. And also, when you work on publicity sometimes there's pressure, understandably, to get certain opportunities. I was being asked to leverage my relationships in a way that didn't feel authentic or right to me. And was just questioning myself "Do I want to do this?" And so I got together a small group friends and advisers, invite them over for pizza dinner at my place did a little focus group. Ramit was one person who was there. And I remember talking to the group that I had this vision; I was actually launching a Mastermind. I didn't know how I would do it. I

probably had a hundred and fifty people on my email list and all that. And everyone agreed that I needed to build my audience. And I realized I needed to do the thing that I was helping other people, which was to get my name out there; get publicity and build my list. And Ramit asked me, "Who do you know that could help you with list-building and who has a bigger list than you?" And it was a pretty much everyone because I was just getting started. And then they asked me "Selena, why have you never asked me if you can guest post for my website? I think your writing is really great and I think you have a lot to offer". And I remember just being so stunned because at the back of my mind I was thinking well, maybe three years from now I might be ready for that opportunity and maybe I would ask. And I remember I was just feeling so nervous and stunned, but I was like, "Ramit, can I guest post for your site?" And then he said no And I was like what?! And he said I'm not gonna do it for you because you're my friend. I'm gonna give it to you because you're adding value to my audience. So you really need to pitch me and show me what you're going to do to create that value. And I did it a couple of times and it's still kind of a mess. But he was like okay, yeah, you can email me. So I emailed him. And then his didn't team liked the idea and I kept going back to that. It took a really long time because they just have such high standards. But when the guest post had come out, it really did feel like Christmas. And his list is so big now, probably nearing a million. But at that time it was still humungous; it was like two hundred and fifteen thousand people. And there was a solo email sent about my guest post. And I think part of that was in the body and is also on his website. So it was two hundred thousand people who were like course buyers who cared about developing their businesses and brands, learning about my work for the first time. So that really grew my email list. And when I was ready to launch, of course I had people who liked to buy courses on my email list. So that was a really big thing So I guess there's a couple of life lessons I'd take away from that. So one of it is that all of us have opportunities in front of us but we just don't see them. People may say Selena, I may not be so lucky to have my influencer in my hometown and have a relationship. So that's not relatable. And that's not really the point of what I'm sharing. The bigger point is that all of us have opportunities in front of us. Whether our friend knows someone influential who we really want to connect with. Maybe we're at a conference and we see someone where there's an incredible synergy and we're afraid to go up to introduce ourselves. Or maybe there are people in our own backyard who care about us and are able to help. But we've never taken the time to just have that conversation and explore what's possible. And so while I had the friendship, I also had these visibility opportunities, but I felt like I wasn't ready and I was too afraid to ask for them. But **one tip I have in building relationships is sometimes we don't always wanna ask for big favors right away. But the key is bringing**

people to our world and asking for advice. So ask for advice, not favors.

If you let someone know and you built a relationship with them and they care about you; like this is what's going on with me; this is my big challenge; this is the big thing I'm trying to figure out. Do you have any ideas? Or these are the things I'm considering, what's your take on this? And once they get invested in the issue you're talking about, maybe they'll be like you know what, maybe I can connect you with someone. Or I have an idea of for you. Or why don't I help you with this. When you make it like a straightforward request, sometimes it can feel like a yes or no thing. **But when you ask for advice, it becomes a dialogue.** And then also sometimes the way that you think someone can help you is actually not even the best way. Maybe you're thinking you wanna get the contact, but actually what would be more valuable is having a conversation about what that story idea or pitch might look like? Or what are some specific things about that podcast or publication that you have to keep in mind. So yeah, I'm all about having conversations and letting people know what your goals are, and in that process letting them help you.

JACLYN: Totally. Oh, so many good takeaways there. Thank you for sharing that story. And thank you for breaking it down because sometimes people just hear those key things. Like oh, most of us don't have this our favorite influence in our backyard. But that doesn't mean that you can't still be building a relationships. Most of your relationships started online. Probably yours with Ramit started online. It didn't start in person.

SELENA: Following them online, newsletters. Yeah. Totally.

JACLYN: Totally. And even if you're not local, that's where I think going out of your house and going to conferences and attending events, or even when you're in cities trying to get together. You just never know.

Alright. So where can we follow you and learn more about *Impacting Millions*?

SELENA: Yeah, sure. So I have a special page for you and all of your listeners. So they can go to [impactingmillions.com/gotogal](https://www.impactingmillions.com/gotogal). And I've got a media calendar there. And I'm so excited about it. This is our 2019 publicity calendar. Because people say to me all the time okay, I've got a message; I've got a story I want to get out there. But I don't even know how to go out pitching the media and wanting more inspiration. What specific stories are they going to be interested? So this calendar is broken out month by month and it has special days. It has over 179 story ideas that are tied to different times of the year to really get your wheels turning. A lot of prompts. And so people have found that to be a tremendous resources because it's twelve months with a story idea; 179 ideas that

can get you started. So you can go to [impactingmillions.com/gotogal](https://www.impactingmillions.com/gotogal) to get 2019 media calendar.

JACLYN: I love it. Everyone seriously needs to go get that because I've never seen it broken down like that before. This is the kind of thing where it's like if you were planning on doing one, you should probably be doing some of this stuff now. But even if you're like oh, the Q2 thing – it's coming up round the corner; you need to take advantage of this. Alright, well thank you so much for sharing your insight, your stories. So many great takeaways. I really appreciate you joining us today.

SELENA: Thanks! It was a blast.