



**Episode 100**  
**Up Close and Personal**



**Jason (00:00)**

Hello, and welcome to Designer Discussions with Jason, Mirjam, and Maria. Today, we have a special guest for our 100th episode. Charmaine Wynter, one of our good friends, is actually taking over the hosting duties and interviewing us. So here we go!

**Charmaine (00:16)**

Hey, everybody. The Designer Discussion Gang had no idea what they were letting themselves in for when they asked me to interview them. I'm going to do it Charmaine style. I'm going to ask questions that I've been dying to know the answer to. I hope some of you have also wondered these same things.

**Mirjam (00:39)**

Welcome to the Designer Discussions Podcast with-

**Jason (00:43)**

Jason.

**Maria (00:44)**

Maria.

**Mirjam (00:45)**

And Mirjam. Tune in each week where we talk about marketing, PR, and business advice for design professionals.

**Maria (00:54)**

Are you an interior designer facing the challenges of marketing your business? Are you struggling to find the time and looking for effective solutions?

**Jason (01:02)**

You're not alone. Many interior designers and remodelers share these same things, but there is a solution.

**Mirjam (01:08)**

Welcome to the Designer Discussions Academy where we understand your challenges and are here to help.

**Jason (01:14)**

Our Academy offers a monthly focus on marketing, PR, and business development tailored for interior designers and remodeling.

**Maria (01:21)**

Learn the most important marketing tactics from SEO to get press, social media, and even harnessing the power of AI.

**Mirjam (01:28)**

Join us at the Design and Discussions Academy and take the first step towards transforming your interior design business.

**Charmaine (01:43)**

So, I'm going to get started. I wanted to ask this to each of you. I would like for you to have your own individual answer and just so that your viewers can get to know you so much better. Where would you never visit even if you were paid a million dollars? I'm throwing that out to Jason first because I know he's an avid traveler.

**Jason (02:02)**

Okay, where would I never visit? I would say right now where wars are happening. I would say those are places you couldn't pay me because I see a lot of what's happening, and just one where Russia is attacking that whole area. I've seen a lot of that on TV and what's happening. I saw on 60 Minutes, I think it was two weeks ago where the President was actually explaining what was happening. I was like, You couldn't pay me to be there. I know journalists and reporters are required to be there. You couldn't pay me to be there. That would be my choice.

**Charmaine (02:39)**

All right. So Jason you would toss up the opportunity for a million dollars to stay away from war-torn destinations.

**Jason (02:48)**

I wouldn't be able to spend it if I'm dead.

**Charmaine (02:51)**

Good point. All right, Mirjam, I know you just recently returned from a trip to Europe, so where would you never visit, even if I paid you a million dollars?

**Mirjam (03:05)**

Well, my first inclination was well, nowhere. I'm like, I'd go. But then I'm like, let me rethink this. Wars are, I'm much more of a pacifist. I'm a little bit with Jason on that. But for me, it would more maybe be countries where women's rights are not respected and upheld, like Saudi Arabia. If you go somewhere and you can't move around freely, and maybe you get jailed if you don't wear the right thing or say the wrong thing and that could totally happen to me. So I'd probably stay away from places like that.

**Charmaine (03:52)**

Very good point. Okay, Maria, last batter up.

**Maria (03:58)**

Okay, so I'm going to say Maui just because everything that happened there and how they are requesting the colonizers to stay out of the area, I'm really big on karma. I don't want to look back at doing something that's disrespectful to a whole entire community when the whole point of traveling there is to embrace their culture. And so right now, I wouldn't touch it with a 10-foot pole, even if it was for a million dollars just because there's human rights there that I don't think people are respectful of.

**Charmaine (04:34)**

Really really valid points. I got to share with you guys, my late husband, he was in the travel industry. Well, anyway, he worked for the Airlines, and that was exactly when he would book us some of our best destinations is when there was some civil unrest, when there was war because his viewpoint was, "Hey, no one's going. This is going to be the best deals ever." We did do a lot of traveling in the aftermath of an event happening. I got to say, I think I'd have to agree with you all, it's probably not the best timing. What would you say was one of the biggest challenges you had as podcast creators? How did you overcome it and what did you find most beneficial? We'll start with you, Mirjam.



### **Mirjam (05:32)**

Well, I'd say the biggest challenge is to get started at all and to stay consistent. If it wasn't for my partners, if I had done this by myself, I would have fizzled out a long time ago. But it's really great to be working as a team where if somebody is going through a tough time or somebody is getting low in motivation, it's like you have the other two to pull you out of it. I think that that's really the beauty of this and what makes it enjoyable. It's not easy. We're getting to 100 episodes. I think when we started, we never thought, no, I shouldn't say that. I think Jason always knew this was going to happen. Maria and I, we were more, I don't know, we're just going with the flow. So it's been great, but yeah, it's just the consistency and getting it done on a consistent basis.

### **Charmaine (06:44)**

I think I'm hearing you advise don't do it alone, right?

### **Mirjam (06:49)**

I think there are people who can do it alone, but it's tough. Even if you do it alone, you want to surround yourself with the right people. Maybe they're not on microphone with you, but they're there supporting you. I just think doing it as a team is always better than doing it alone.

### **Charmaine (07:11)**

Got it. Maria?

### **Maria (07:14)**

It was being willing to take on a time commitment that was no pay. You look back at it and you're like, this is my charitable activity in some capacity, it's my way to give back to a community of people that I truly believe in and I know work way harder and are compensated probably lower than the majority of other industries. Right now, if I wanted to call someone and ask them to review branding, if I wanted to call someone and ask a business consultant about something, if I wanted to call an attorney and ask them one question, it would cost me \$500. And interior designers are still going out on appointments and meeting with people for free thinking that's their marketing. And... I mean, people don't even get up and get in their car for less than that. And so I do feel like this has got some impact. Do we have a measurable number right now? No, not so much. But honestly, it's enjoyable as solo people. We all work independently, and this is our one thing we all do together, and it's much more fun this way.

**Charmaine (08:28)**

So again, I'm hearing you talk about one of the benefits is the fact that this is communal, right? You have an opportunity to do this as a team. Jason, biggest challenge for you as a podcast creator, how did you overcome it? What's one of the benefits?

**Jason (08:51)**

I would say what Mirjam said and what Maria said is time. About two years ago, when I was contemplating doing this on my own, I was looking at the time. I actually talked to Pat Flynn. He's one of the mentors I've looked at throughout all of this and with other podcasters and seeing how much time they take to actually produce an episode, edit the episode, promote the episode, get the guests on, get the topics and just all of that. I'm like, wow. So I kinda bamboozled Mirjam and Maria into a little of this.

**Mirjam (09:27)**

He did. He totally did.

**Jason (09:29)**

Because I knew it was going to be a lot more time than I originally said, and I said we could split it up. It's been a little more time than they thought. But I believe on the other side, they've seen a lot of benefits as well. I would say the time commitment was the biggest thing that I saw. How did I overcome it is with the help of Mirjam and Maria. Anyone that's doing it alone, I would just say make sure that you understand it. It's more time than you think. The best thing that you will be able to do is bank episodes. That's something we used to do a lot of in the past. We don't do as much now. But if you can bank a lot of episodes for the times when you're not feeling like-because there are going to be times when you do not want to do this, just to be honest. You're not going to want to do this. But if you have banked episodes that you've already done weeks in advance, when that time comes, you could just put that episode on and say, "Well, I don't have to worry about it for a month" and then hopefully you can get that energy back up to do it again.

**Charmaine (10:37)**

Great tips. I love it. I love it. What superpower do you wish you had? I'm going to start with you, Maria.

**Maria (10:46)**

If I could predict the future, I think I would feel so much better on the regular, honestly. I think there's so many things that we jump into and do, and it takes an enormous amount of patience to feel like you're going to get to the end of the road. And if I just had a little bit of perspective that things were going to work out, I think that that would be amazing.

**Charmaine (11:08)**

Okay. Jason?

**Jason (11:10)**

I would say anyone that knows me knows my favorite superhero of all time is Superman. And I would honestly love to have all of his power, but if I only have to pick one of them, I would say flying because I love to travel. So I'll be able to get wherever I want to be in less than a second. And so that would be my superpower is to fly at his speed, at the flash speed of light.

**Charmaine (11:35)**

Okay. Mirjam?

**Mirjam (11:37)**

I was thinking more like Mr. Spock, you know like, "Beam me, Scottie, beam me," somewhere, you know?

**Charmaine (11:43)**

Right!

**Mirjam (11:43)**

That would be amazing. But since Jason already took that, I'd love it if I could heal people with my hands.



**Charmaine (11:54)**

So you're altruistic, okay.

**Mirjam (11:57)**

You've got to have diverse interests right?

**Charmaine (11:59)**

Do you think one of the things you would heal them from is maybe stupidity? Would that be one?

**Charmaine (11:59)**

Do you think one of the things you would heal them from is maybe stupidity? Would that be one?

**Mirjam (12:07)**

That would be a lot of work.

**Charmaine (12:11)**

I'm just saying. I think on many people's minds-

**Mirjam (12:21)**

That'd be a lot of work.

**Charmaine (12:22)**

-suffer from that ailment right there. So that would be one I'd love to cure.

**Mirjam (12:23)**

I agree I agree. Yes.

**Charmaine (12:24)**

Yeah. Okay. So I think I'm hearing a theme here pretty much. It's the biggest superpower that you as podcast creators would like is ways to save time, gain back that time. Yeah, that makes sense. Absolutely. So in the last five years, what new beliefs or behavior or habit has most improved your life? I'm throwing this out to you, Jason.





**Jason (12:51)**

Wow, that's a good question.

**Charmaine (12:54)**

I try.

**Jason (12:55)**

Good question. I have to ponder that. I would say go with somebody else first. I'm going to have to ponder that one for a little while.

**Charmaine (13:02)**

All right, I'll give you a moment. Mirjam?

**Mirjam (13:05)**

I would say, and it's a work in progress, but I would say trying to cure perfectionism.

**Charmaine (13:16)**

Oh.

**Mirjam (13:18)**

Both of my podcasts, they can attest to this. I have a little issue with this, but that's what comes out of 20 years plus years in corporate. So it's a real struggle. And they've actually, particularly Maria, she's helped me a lot. She's always just like, Mirjam, it's good enough. It's good enough.

**Maria (13:41)**

I tell Mirjam we're not getting a report card, so B work is plenty good these days. It's just getting it done is the A at this point.

**Mirjam (13:49)**

Gives me anxiety, though.

**Charmaine (13:50)**

Done is better than perfect, right?

**Mirjam (13:53)**

Yes. I know this in my head, but truly embracing it is difficult for me.

**Charmaine (14:01)**

Okay, so but I'm-

**Mirjam (14:03)**

But I've made progress.

**Charmaine (14:04)**

But what has most improved your life.

**Mirjam (14:07)**

I have because otherwise we would have probably never put out a podcast. There's a lot of things I would have never done if I hadn't launched my membership. It's like just putting things out there that they're never going to be perfect. But I did it, and most people didn't notice it wasn't as perfect as I thought it should be, so it's all good.

**Maria (14:30)**

And I operate from, if there's not a typo in my social media post, you know I didn't do it.

**Charmaine (14:37)**

I blame that on spell check. I spell correct all the time. That's my go-to right there. I'm like, Darnet, I need how to spell your name that's spelled correct. So, Maria, in the last five years, what new belief? What behavior? What habit has most improved your life?

**Maria (15:02)**

So one of my big things is that I don't do what clients ask me to do. I do what I know I should be doing. I've been a people pleaser for a really long time. And I look back on my whole entire 20s and I think about how I was like a glorified assistant to wealthy people and not necessarily respected as a professional like I wish I would have and stood up for myself back then. And then when it comes to just stopping working with clients just because I need the work, I would say now that I'm working at home and doing stuff that I don't have to feel fulfilled in everything that I do, but I do have to be distracted and enjoying something. And sometimes it's just integrating audiobooks and podcasts and listening to music while I work and not thinking I have to exist like I did in college. You can get stuff done and still have those things around you to make it more enjoyable.

**Charmaine (16:15)**

I love that. I love hearing that. All right, Jason, have you had an opportunity to think about what has improved your life?

**Jason (16:22)**

I have. I was going to say perfectionism like Mirjam, but she took that. So I'm going to pick something else, and it's me understanding that I cannot do everything alone and relying on my team. This has been a tough year for that. Mirjam knows because one of my team members had us lose a client because she dropped the ball and I had to let her go and I had to find someone else to replace her. That aspect of relying on somebody else because I can't do everything. There's not enough time in the day and I have to rely on the team. Mirjam and Maria has helped me with that. Mirjam has really helped me with that when I was heading through all that with the client and with the internal person. But being able to understand that I have to rely on my team to grow because I cannot do everything by myself.

**Charmaine (17:21)**

Yeah, I think it gets real. For folks who may have a type A personality, which sounds like you all do, and I'm throwing the mirror right back at myself, it can be challenging to rely on others because you always know the perfect way to do it. Right, Mirjam?

**Mirjam (17:45)**

Often.

**Charmaine (17:49)**

Often. What idea do you think the majority of people get wrong about... I'm going to go to you individually. Well, actually, I'm going to throw this one out as a group one. What idea do you think the majority of people get wrong about Designer Discussion podcast? Let's throw that out. Let's talk about that one first.

**Mirjam (18:10)**

We're thinking.

**Jason (18:11)**

You're asking some good questions. We didn't ask to see just so our listeners know we didn't ask to see any of these questions ahead of time.

**Charmaine (18:19)**

And listeners, if you're fans of mine, you know I wouldn't have provided them anyway.

**Jason (18:27)**

That's why we're being stuffed here. But what I would say on my side, what I believe a lot of people get wrong is that we're here to just market you to sell you stuff because it's a marketing podcast and we're talking about marketing PR, business development, is that what I've heard, too, and what I've heard from a listener about two months ago, actually, and I didn't even tell Mirjam and Maria this, is that when they listen to us, they were surprised at how much information they got from the podcast because they thought we were going to sell them stuff and it's going to be to promote our widgets and not really educate. They were surprised at that particular episode. It was an episode where Maria talked about AI. Then they started to listen to other podcasts and they were like, Actually, you have me as a listener that there's a lot of educational, good information here that I didn't think I would learn. I would say that the marketing aspect, that happens with me in general. Anytime I talk to anyone and they hear I'm a marketer they're like "Oh, here we go." Then they talk to me like "Oh, you're not too bad!"

**Charmaine (19:42)**

Jason, you've anticipated because I was going to delve into you individually afterwards and ask you, what idea do you think the majority of people get wrong about, for you, marketing? Did you want to expand on that?

**Jason (19:55)**

I'll be happy to. Over the last two years, I've done a lot of presentations either to the AIA, ASID or NKBA in those audiences. Usually after a presentation, I'll usually hear "This was a very informative presentation" and I usually hear, "I appreciate how you present because you present to teach, you don't present to sell." They like that because they say most of the presentations they've heard from marketers are to give them a little bit, but then to sell their widget at the end where I'm gonna give you everything, but then if you want help, I'm here to help you out. That's what I would say a lot of people get wrong about me specifically as when I'm helping, I'm helping from the heart to really help. Yes, I would love to take money by all means, but I'm here to help first, and I've always believed if you put enough out there, you will get it back in droves.

**Charmaine (20:52)**

I love that. Mirjam, what idea do you think the majority of people get wrong about Designer Discussions?

**Mirjam (20:59)**

I would say that a lot of people may think that they listen to the podcast and they learn, and that's going to help their business. And where they go wrong is that if they just listen and learn but don't do, it's actually not going to help. And I think this is the reoccurring theme that I've seen throughout the years that I have been working with people in the design industry, small businesses, solopreneurs. You can know everything. It's like this in my industry too. You can know everything. But if you don't do it, nothing's going to change. So my suggestion would be maybe listen less, but execute more, you know? Pick one or two things and start executing, and then you'll see a difference and that will motivate you. When we do our podcasts, we always say it's like bite-size, it's hands-on, it's like stuff that you can... And you know this from experience, right? Because you followed so much of Maria's advice. It's like it's hands-on stuff that anybody can do if they just try. So that would be my challenge to the listeners.

**Charmaine (22:20)**

100% to your point. I love that you guys presented in bite-size ways that I can implement them. They don't take too much time. And so what do you think the majority of people get wrong about public relations, PR? What did they get wrong?

**Mirjam (22:37)**

So many things. I think that-

**Charmaine (22:39)**

You need to write a book. "This is for you, stupid".

**Mirjam (22:44)**

Oh no, I'm the only one who hasn't written a book of the three of us. I feel like such a slacker. Maybe one day. No, I think that people put PR in a pedestal, and it's like this thing that's inaccessible, but it's really not that. And you know, that's what I've been teaching all along. It's like you simplify, you only do what actually works for you and what gets you the results you're looking for. You don't have to know everything. Do you need help or not? I'm like, for some people, if your business is big enough and you can hire somebody, it's always good because it's one less thing for you to do if you can delegate because it's hard to do everything. But if that's not your path or where you're at in your business, there are simple ways that you can do it for yourself. I think that's definitely one of the biggest misconceptions. And it's not a misconception that everybody in this industry, people need to get press to get recognized and build up their reputation and their brand and get the clients they want. I think that's the truth that most designers inherently understand, but then the struggle comes with how to get there.

**Charmaine (24:18)**

I love that. You're saying, okay, implement what you learn here.

**Mirjam (24:25)**

You actually have to do a little work, sorry!

**Charmaine (24:29)**

Implement in both aspects, though, too, right? Because even with PR, it's not on this pedestal. They can actually do some of it themselves. That is a great takeaway. Maria, okay, what idea do you think the majority of people get wrong about Designer Discussions? What don't they know? And following up, what do they get wrong about... I'm going to go with I think what is your most groundbreaking, and that is AI. We'll delve into both of those.

**Mirjam (25:04)**

I would say the one thing I think people believe about us that is wrong is that we always feel comfortable doing this. We feel comfortable talking to each other, and that's what we feel comfortable doing. We feel comfortable talking c\*\*\* to each other and doing all sorts of stuff. Jason is going to bleep out that cuss word because he wants to keep us rated G. But we are not the type of people to reach out and join other people's podcast. Because if we don't feel comfortable, we're not willing to branch out and do those things as well. Because we're just like everybody else. If we don't know you, if you aren't part of our circle, we don't actually feel comfortable putting ourselves out there within an environment we don't feel safe in. I mean, just like we brought on Charmaine to interview us because we knew she was going to heckle us and not make us feel bad. I mean, that was the whole point. We were like immediately, Jason was like, We need someone to interview us for 100th episode. We're like, Charmaine. I mean, it was like we all were like obviously-

**Jason (26:06)**

I agree. And I want to attest to that as soon as I said that your name came out immediately.

**Charmaine (26:12)**

I'm probably the only one you guys know.



### **Maria (26:15)**

Well, no, it's the whole idea that we're like, if you're not going to make it feel comfortable and fun, we aren't going to sign up for it. We're scared too. We're scared as well. And we do evaluate our podcast just based on having a conversation with each other and inspiring and motivating each other. And then we don't really get a lot of feedback now that we're on a platform that we used to get when we were in smaller groups on Clubhouse. And so we actually do feel like we're more removed and probably not getting into the weeds as much as we would like to be, if I was completely honest. And then technology-

### **Charmaine (26:55)**

Hold on one second if I could respond to that because I want to make sure that I'm going to break it down for those who may not be able to follow as quickly. I'm going to say it another way. That is I like the fact that you talk about how you guys continually put yourself out there. It's not because you're coming from a position of being comfortable. You're doing this afraid, you're doing this scared. I like the transparency in that as well because I think a lot of times, let me rephrase that, I think what makes your podcast Designer Discussions unique and so successful is because you guys present from a position of authenticity. And that resonates. It comes forth. Even with the interviews and so when I'm listening, I'm thinking, and yeah, pardon Maria's cuss words, I'm thinking that, okay, I can try this because she's made it very easable. Mirjam giving advice and saying, "Hey, you can do this." This is not something that is exclusive to the industry. Just take these steps. Jason, when you talk about marketing and making me understand that, all right, this is medicine, I got to take it just like everybody else, just pull my big girl panties up and move forward. Thank you. I'm giving you all feedback that you missed from Clubhouse days. I want to let you know that's what I'm thinking, I'm one of your fans, and so I can imagine that other fans are thinking the same thing. I'm wondering, maybe even though you're on the podcast platform, maybe they can send you all some comments of how they felt with that podcast. I'm saying that for all of them, for the Designer Discussion crew here, would you guys take the time to just jot them a comment so that they know how you're receiving what they're sharing? All right, I'm Charmaine, I'm complete. Go ahead. For those of you who don't know, that's a Clubhouse reference. Go ahead. Maria, I wanted to ask you, what do you think majority of people get wrong about AI?





### **Maria (29:13)**

So technology is scary. We're super late to adopt. We're into dinosaur technology. Honestly, you got to embrace it, and it's probably not going to impact you as much as you think. Most of this stuff is geared towards the do-it-yourselfer the person who's wanting to shop online anyway. So if your clientele base you're targeting is lower end, yes, you're going to see a shift. But do you really want those people as clients and the answer's meh. So it's not scary. It's not bad. It's actually kind of fun. And I think there's a lot of ways that designers can elevate their brand through it. And if someone's out there yelling and screaming, "It's scary and bad" from a leadership position. They're just doing that for the next six weeks until they learn how to do it and tell you how to do it yourself. So stop listening to everybody who says "Run, it's scary, I'm going to point my finger at you and shame you for using it," because I will never say that that is an appropriate way to handle new things.

### **Charmaine (30:24)**

Maria, I also think that the underlying message with AI is it's a time-saver. That's what I get out of how you present it. And you all have talked about that being something that's important, and I think it's important to every person in North America. We're all looking for ways to save time. I appreciate you being what I call in the trenches and bringing it to my attention. I don't have to go figure this out. She's right, I'm a dinosaur. I don't want to learn something new. I hate when they change the iPhone, okay? Bringing that bite-size clips, as you do, to social, to your podcast, encourages me to go and try something else that will save me some time. Just want to give you that feedback as well. What's one of the best or most worthwhile investments you've ever made? I'm going to go... Jason, you haven't gone first yet, but we're going to go-

### **Jason (31:32)**

Yeah I would say-

### **Charmaine (31:33)**

Go ahead.

**Jason (31:34)**

Okay. Now, I would say that tied into one of the other questions you asked about what's one of the things that I've had to learn and that's trusting in others. So my best investment has actually been people. There have been some people like the one that I had talked about earlier that was not a good investment, but on the other end, I have people, and I'm going to name one of them that most of the people here know is Rumsha. She's saved me a lot of time and a lot of headache. Then there are others I'm not going to get into naming because I'm gonna forget somebody. I just named Rumsha because everybody on here knows her.

**Charmaine (32:13)**

Jason, for those who don't know Rumsha, what is her role in your life? What does she do?

**Jason (32:19)**

So Rumsha came on board about, it was about three years ago when she was my Executive Assistant at the time. She's now moved into now she's the Director of Digital Marketing. So she's moved up over time. But she's still, even though I have another assistant, she's still there. She's that sounding board that I could talk to and reach out to. She helps out Designer Discussions a lot in terms of posting. We had joked about this at the start. Most of the social media comes from her, not from me. So if you see posting on social media, nine times out of ten it's from her but she's just one and I'm going to stop on her because I'm not naming other people.

**Charmaine (33:02)**

Maria, what would you say has been the best, the most worthwhile investment you've ever made?

**Maria (33:08)**

Okay, so this is going to sound crazy, but houses. Whenever I have a client who comes to me and they have a really good marketable product that I can tell is really going to be well received by the market, I try to get in on it early on in the game, try to be one of the initial investors. And every time we've been able to execute on that, it's been financially beneficial. So it's almost like investing in myself as well and also taking advantage of the opportunities that come across the table because of the industry that I'm in.

**Charmaine (33:48)**

I love the fact that you're such a strategic thinker. It's evident in the fact that you like to do all the research that you do on tech and the goals you set and the fact that you've devised a way to strategize to also help it to add to your financials. I'm all about profitability. I love it. Mirjam, what is the best or most worthwhile investment you've ever made?

**Mirjam (34:17)**

I'm going to say personal and professional development of myself. It's ongoing. I 100% believe in having a growth mindset. It's good to know what you don't know, and you don't have to try to know everything. But it's really important to get to know yourself, especially if you're in an industry, like if you're an entrepreneur, whatever, it's like you run your own business. You have to understand your own strengths and weaknesses and potential that you need to develop. To me, personal and professional development is almost synonymous because you are one person and you want to bring your whole self to work, whether or not you work for yourself or for a company. So I would say that I have a lot of books, a lot of books. Unfortunately, I need more time to read them. And before I embarked on launching my membership, it's like I took a lot of courses about launching and building courses. I don't know. I love to learn things, and it's like I speak a few different languages, but I love grammar. My children think I'm completely insane, but I don't think you can learn something without having the structural foundational knowledge to the subject. So that's my favorite investment.

**Maria (36:00)**

My typos are her arch nemesis.

**Charmaine (36:08)**

What do you all think about what each of you have said?

**Mirjam (36:14)**

Oh, there are no surprises. I think at this point we know one another pretty well. I think each of us could have said something else, too. We're all multi-layered people, but yeah.

**Charmaine (36:28)**

Okay. Anything from the two of you, Maria? Jason?

**Jason (36:31)**

Like Mirjam said, I'm not surprised by any of the answers. It was interesting that for almost every question there was a different answer. That was a good one. Our listeners are able to learn a little more about who we are as opposed to just talking about marketing, PR, business development, which I really appreciate having you on today, Charmaine, is that you're able to have our listeners learn who we are and not just what we know.

**Charmaine (36:57)**

That was my aim. I have two more questions for you. I'd love to get on here. I think we can slide them in. One, what's your proudest accomplishment? Who's going first? Maria.

**Maria (37:09)**

Well, I do have a 15-year-old son, so I would safely say somewhere around 13, I was still really proud of myself, but it's been going down since then.

**Charmaine (37:24)**

Yeah. And Mirjam and Jason, I know you too, both of you have children as well, as do I. And so Mirjam, your kids are a little bit more advanced. So what's your proudest accomplishment? One. And what advice do you have for Maria?

**Maria (37:45)**

Well, so my oldest just went off to college, right? So it's not like it's done, but at least I feel like I did a reasonably good job. I did the best job I could with what I had to get him to where he needed to go. But I do have two 15-year-olds, almost 16-year-olds that I'm still working on. Honestly, you do the best that you can. I'm with Maria. Anything career-wise is easy compared to raising three boys.

**Charmaine (38:21)**

I'm an empty nester. Thank God. I can tell you all with honesty, you begin to live a different life once they are on their own. Now, they're never not your kids, sad to say. But man, it's great when they're out and on their own. I know for me, when my kids hit around 26, then we developed a new relationship. And so hang on till 26. 26 seems to be the magic number. It was for me.

**Maria (39:08)**

So, Charmaine, before you leave, I want to ask you to give the same advice to our listeners that you gave me.

**Charmaine (39:16)**

So I just mentioned that when I'm not in the zone to be Charmon, to be Charmaine, to be on, I have an avatar. I have an alternative ego, okay? Alter ego, pardon me. That is a me, a personality, if you would. Because let's face it, we don't always all feel like being on. And people often comment to me, "Oh, I love your energy. You're so positive." I don't always feel positive. I don't always feel energetic, but my personality does, my alter ego. I call her Charmon. Charmon is always ready. And so sometimes it's not me being fake. Charmon espouses many of the same things I do, but she has more guts than I do, too. And so she'll just go for it.

**Maria (40:18)**

And I love that because sometimes you just need to give yourself the permission to be afraid to do something, but to put yourself out there and be okay with it. And I replay that advice in my head all the time and it really makes a big difference.

**Charmaine (40:33)**

Thank you for letting me know that. I'm glad to hear that. I use it still to this day. When I get up to do a speaking engagement or something, it's not Charmaine out there speaking. It's Charmon. Charmon has abilities that Charmaine may not want to present.

**Maria (40:55)**

It's that introverted extrovert.

**Charmaine (40:57)**

Yeah. I heard that that Beyonce has an alternative ego. She's Sasha Fierce, I think, is her alternative ego. Alter ego. She uses Sasha Fierce, and that brought to mind... one client had said to me eons ago that when I become famous that I needed to change my name and go by one name because all famous people only use one name. And that stuck in my mind. And so that's where that comes from. So what can listeners expect from you all next on Designer Discussions? What's new for you?

**Maria (41:53)**

I would say, as Mirjam said earlier, we want people to be able to implement some of the things that we've been talking about. We are opening a monthly subscription where you can meet with us directly. Let's be real. You can't hire a PR person on retainer for less than probably about \$5,000 a month. Just having Mirjam around and being able to resource from her and ask her questions directly has significantly changed my abilities to do basic PR stuff for my business. And then having access to Jason answer all the questions that you get these incoming phone calls. "You're not listed on Google. Your SEO is terrible. I'll charge you three grand to review your SEO and you won't get any results." Right? And sometimes you just want to have the friend that you ask those questions to. And so we're really opening up this support system where we're going to go 12 months of supporting and teaching each one of the things a little bit more thoroughly and watching people implement it and graduate them out. I don't want to see you back in here because we want to be able to keep people successful and keep them moving along and have access to us directly because like we said earlier, we don't know exactly what you need. We don't know what that little bit of feedback is. And we used to do the Clubhouse room once a month, and we would get to talk with people directly. And we did see results directly out of those rooms, and it was great. It was amazing. Just as much as doing the monthly meetings on the Clubhouse helped us to propel us forward to create the podcast, we're wanting to do this monthly thing not just to help you out as designers, change your business and really just create like a business educational system for you to go through. We're doing it because we really value the change when we see it, and we really want people to actually participate and have the structure that they need to actually implement and see the success that comes from it. And so we just want to offer that to people. And so that is our biggest change that we're doing moving forward because we see that there's a place for this. We see everybody out there who is selling marketing, it's like done for you. I get it. But if you don't understand your branding, if you don't understand your messaging, if you don't understand your voice, if you don't understand your client, it doesn't matter who you have do it for you. It's not going to be successful because you're not going to have understanding of accountability and to be able to push someone to do it for you. So that is what we're doing moving forward.

**Charmaine (44:52)**

I love that. I want to actually weigh in because I feel really passionate about this point. With all those done for you marketing that is out there, I find it ironic because the overall message is that you've got to market your uniqueness and then you pay for template advice that then, in essence, turns you into a cookie cutter because anyone who has the dollars and goes to that same marketing firm will also have that same offering. If you do learn how to do implement some marketing for your own business and you understand some basics, that is one way that you can maintain the individuality and the creativity being unique. Throwing that out there. What can listeners expect from you guys next? In your words, Jason?

**Jason (45:55)**

More of the same. What we're going to hear from the Academy and from others is that will be our way also to hear what's happening on the ground. Then we'll be able to incorporate a lot of that into new episodes because we always have our ideas of what we believe will help. But by having the people in the Academy and hearing what's happening in the real world, hearing what their issues are, not only will they get direct help from us there, but they're going to help us to create better content for all of our listeners as well.

**Charmaine (46:32)**

Yes. Mirjam, what can listeners expect from you all next?

**Mirjam (46:37)**

I think my two partners summarized it really well, but the one thing we neglected to say is that within the podcast and within our new offering, which is called the Designer Discussions Academy, you get Jason and me, but you also get Maria, who brings in the business savvy and the client communications. She's a super early adopter. When she started talking about AI, I'm like, "What?" Now I'm a complete believer, and I actually use it for my own business. But she was on this like a year, I don't even know like, so long ago, it's ridiculous. So she's invaluable. I think it just we complement each other really well, and we each have our specialties. I know that we'll have a lot more good stuff to share with our audience, so we're excited about that.

**Charmaine (47:39)**

Well, I love what you all had to say. I'm going to sum it up in one word. What can listeners expect from the Designer Discussion crew? Excellence. That's why you got to listen in. Thank you so much, Jason, Maria, Mirjam. Thank you all for allowing me to take over your 100th episode of Designer Discussion and interview you. Thank you for being such good sports. I've had a good time.

**Mirjam (48:12)**

It was fun. Thank you, Charmaine.

**Maria (48:15)**

Hey, Charmaine, can you tell everybody how to find you and about your Instagram lives?

**Charmaine (48:20)**

For sure. I'm on Instagram. That's probably the best way to find me. It's Charmaine, C-H-A-R-M-as in, just like the state, so M-A-I-N-E, so charmaine\_wynter, W-Y-N-T-E-R. From Instagram, you can find me any other way. Just Google Charmaine Wynter. Once you spell it right, you'll find me as well. I'm on pretty much every platform, and I have a pretty good marketing efforts out there. I try to make it very easy to people to find me on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM Eastern, you can find me live with my Chatting With Charmaine, live podcast, I guess.

**Jason (49:09)**

Awesome. Well, we appreciate you taking over the podcast. Like I said, this is one of the things like being the type A personality and not knowing what the questions are was a little nerve-wracking like what is she going to ask? Because I've known Charmaine for a little while. She put me on the spot a couple of times in her Clubhouse room.

**Charmaine (49:28)**

There's private rooms. I'm always about positivity when it's going broader.



**Jason (49:37)**

Well we appreciate you, Charmaine, and all of our listeners, make sure to listen to her live, because I've been on one, and I've listened to a lot of them, and they are amazing. It's the New Age talk show that you need to tune into. We appreciate you, Charmaine, and we look forward to hearing everybody here in two weeks on Designer Discussions.

**Charmaine (49:58)**

Bye.

**Maria (49:59)**

Are you an interior designer facing the challenges of marketing your business? Are you struggling to find the time and looking for effective solutions?

**Jason (50:07)**

You're not alone. Many interior designers and remodelers share these same things, but there is a solution.

**Mirjam (50:13)**

Welcome to the Designer Discussions Academy, where we understand your challenges and are here to help.

**Jason (50:19)**

Our Academy offers a monthly focus on marketing, PR, and business development, tailored for interior designers and remodels.

**Maria (50:26)**

Learn the most important marketing tactics from SEO to get press, social media and even harnessing the power of AI.

**Mirjam (50:33)**

Join us at the Designer Discussions Academy and take the first step towards transforming your interior design business.



### **Maria (50:40)**

We hope you've enjoyed this episode of Designer Discussions and all of the helpful information. Subscribe to our podcast, leave us a review and share it with your friends. We look forward to having you back next week. For more information on the podcast and the Marketing Studio, visit [designerdiscussions.com](http://designerdiscussions.com) and follow us on social media.



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