

Color Your Dreams - Episode 63

Elaine Lou Cartas: Hey, Legacy leaders! I'm excited to have one of my clients, Ava! All the way from the East Coast. Welcome, Ava! Hi! And Ava and I finally met each other, what? Oh my gosh, last month for the retreat? In person last month, yeah. Yeah, we've been working together for almost five months now. And within, I think, the first two months, Was able to able find a new career, new job at the Department of Justice and living at this amazing place in the East coast.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Congrats, Ava.

Ava: Thanks so much, Elaine. I've been a fan of the podcast for a really long time, and , I was a fan since we started working together, so it's super surreal to hear

Elaine Lou Cartas: today. Yeah. And your dreams are coming true because you said you've always wanted to be in a podcast, right?

Ava: Yeah, I've always wanted to get into it.

Ava: Me and my sister love. Podcast, we always talk about it. We're always like, what are podcasts to me? So it's fun to be here to get to turnage.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And maybe the next time we have a conversation, you're going to end up having a podcast with your

Ava: sister. Stay tuned listeners. Stay tuned.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So Ava, I would love. To hear your thoughts, like, where were you at in life that made you... before we begin there, I just want to let our listeners know, Ava's gonna share, her own experience in terms of how she was able to successfully change careers. Cause you are professionally playing the cello.

Elaine Lou Cartas: to go from playing the cello to even now... Working at the Department of Justice, having your dream job, living in a dream city even though I think Ellie is the best, but whatever. We're not going to have that type of fight here, and I don't want to push an agenda that makes you feel uncomfortable of how Ellie is better, Anyways, let's keep ourselves in track. Ava's going to be sharing her experience, but where were you at that made you decide, I need to look for a career coach? And what made you decide to do

Ava: that process? Yeah, that's such a great question. question. After college, I took an internship at the legislature in my home state in Utah.

Ava: And, I studied music in addition to public policy. So that's always been part of my life. And after that internship ended, I knew I wanted to apply to a full time position. And so amidst, working and gigging full time, I Really, knew that now was the decision time, and, I'd

been in school for the past 16 years, and I thought, okay, now there's not a curriculum, and there's not a professor, now it's about me, and about what I want, and, there was a million different directions I saw myself going.

Ava: And this was something that we talked about in our complication of like law, finance, music. I was interested in coding. I was interested in government. I was interested in art. There was all these things that I had always considered like in the back of my mind, but had always told myself, Oh no, like that's not on the radar.

Ava: And I was overwhelmed by those feelings and those options. And I'd been in a number of different positions. And I just came to a point where I said, okay, I want to make this choice based on what I want and not on what anyone else wants or expects from me. And I was so skeptical about making the investment because it is an investment and a consideration for yourself.

Ava: And I was putting in so much work at the time to save money, but I looked around, looked in the mirror and I thought, okay, this is worth it. But it's an investment in myself. And so I knew I wanted to hire a coach. Yeah. And

Elaine Lou Cartas: I know you're like everywhere, right? You were like, I'm interested in possibly coding.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I want to do business consulting. I think I want to go back to government. And what's interesting to validate for our listeners here, there's a lot of people that feel that way, especially since 2020 when things shook up. It's still shaking up, unfortunately, of what is life? What do I want in my life?

Elaine Lou Cartas: And I was sharing you the process of informational interviews, how you could start. Talking to people. So I would love for you to share that process of what I taught you when, as I've been working with you, you're still a client of doing informational interviews and that how that helped you figure it out, but can you share with listeners that

Ava: process?

Ava: Yeah. the framework that you give your clients, I thought it was invaluable. It was one of my favorite parts about. The experience early on It, essentially, it just allowed me to approach the job search Instead of this, huge stressful thing that I was, like, thinking of it as. Because it's overwhelming and all consuming.

Ava: I, instead, thought of it as an opportunity to explore what I was passionate about. Like I took all the boundaries off of my exploration and what I wanted and just it's that kind of childish play and curiosity. And that's what information interviews really was about for me, because it was like, okay, I took this coding class.

Ava: I loved that. Let's talk to the professor, let's talk to a UX designer. It's okay, I'm interested in law, let's talk to lawyers. And I saw jobs not as like titles that I had to have to make a salary, but as lifestyles that you live based on what you value and where you want to make a difference. And it wasn't just shallow about making connections, about, The idea of networking, it was about like following what was a good fit for me, and I loved how you would always check in and say, how did that make you feel?

Ava: What did you feel was a good fit? And based on those conversations, you can find out more about the things that were a good fit. And that, helped me not just recognize the possibility, but to behave like I knew that there was possibility, if that makes sense. Yeah. And I was so surprised. Oh, sorry.

Ava: Go.

Elaine Lou Cartas: No, I wonder, just in case people don't know what informational interviews are a way to basically put a list of people, um, and connect with them about specific, within specific industries and jobs that you might be interested in and ask them. Because what I hear so often from people that are interested in working with me, like I want to do A, I want to do B, I want to do C, but I don't know which one.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I don't want to waste time. I'm already in my X age. I'm already doing this. I've invested so much time in my career. If I do something else and I realize I don't want it anymore, I'm gonna waste time. So to save time is doing informational interviews and to do informational interviews is start putting a list together.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And so that's what we did. I remember like putting a list of three or five coders that you probably knew. Business consulting was another thing. Also, you're considering like working in the government and what's important is not just doing it, but asking the right questions. do you have work life balance?

Elaine Lou Cartas: Are, is there able to be growth? what is the salary range? Can you share your background of, those conversations for you, what you learned from it, and why they were valuable versus Googling it?

Ava: Yeah, that's a really great question. When you talk to someone in an informational interview, you have the opportunity to get personalized feedback.

Ava: And to say, oh, I'm really interested in, this specific thing. What do you think about that? Was this a good fit for you? What does it actually look like in the industry as a person who's living in it? And, sorry, somebody just knocked me.

Elaine Lou Cartas: We'll edit that out. Go ahead.

Okay.

Ava: Thanks, editors. Okay.

Ava: Let's see. where am I? Where was I?

Elaine Lou Cartas: We were talking about how you were understanding informational interviews, what people were saying in their lived experiences that you can't get off Google. Go

Ava: ahead. I guess it was like... It's very different to say, here's my background, what do you as a person in the industry think than to just Google, what is it like?

Ava: And I think, doing research is a great supplement in informational interviews, but actually talking to people and forming those connections really lets you incorporate everything you learn into your applications in a way that's so specific, especially if you're targeting specific companies. So I found that really helpful, like it helped me really triangulate the application process and, along the way, you understand the kind of people who go into each of these disciplines.

Ava: for coding I just noticed everyone was really introverted and there was not a lot of, working as a team in a lot of the companies that I was most interested in, so I was like, okay, it's easy to rule that out because that's not the work environment I'm most passionate about. So there was lots of elements of understanding what kind of people and environment is a good shape for me.

Ava: And as far as specifying on like salary and lifestyle and work life balance, everyone kind of had a different answer. And I thought that was really cool because it taught you how these industries value those things in a way that's more in depth than when you just look it up. because you understand it from the inside instead of just from the surface level.

Ava: it's hard to, it's hard to say because there are so many of them, but I feel like the learning that I experienced was something that I can have for a really long time and it was more profound than I thought it would be.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And what Ava was even sharing, it wasn't just the questions, it wasn't just even choosing the people, but even doing that reflection, like you were talking about earlier in this episode of, huh, did I like what they said or they didn't like it?

Elaine Lou Cartas: Like you're using your internal GPS. So what made you decide from, you shared it, I know with coding, you notice introverts aren't as much collaboration, but how did you make the decision like, okay, I want to do government as you're doing all these informational interviews?

Ava: Another book you recommended to me was What Color is Your Parachute?

Ava: And I did that and I really loved it because it breaks down like the job search process into the things you care about the most. And it really helps you to get your priorities straight and informational interviews forces you to do that because you're trying to pare down your options. So you say, okay, I have all these options.

Ava: I know that I have to make a trade off somewhere. What do I value most? And the reflecting really helped a lot to say, okay, this has a lot of things I'm interested in, but it doesn't have the things that are most important to me. And that's how I know to leave it out. And I loved it because when you really consider what's the most essential to you and what you want in your life, it's much more transformative than if you take in any opportunity that comes your way.

Ava: Because you start tailoring your experiences to your needs and it's really fulfilling in like a very foundational way. Yeah.

Elaine Lou Cartas: and to be tra to let listeners know, I remember Ava was like not sure if she wanted to work with me. She's I don't know, Elaine. And then you just trusted the process and did it.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And then what, within two months? Like you just found your job. Like it was just insane how fast your results were, but you trusted the process and you were having conversations with people. I know the next process we did was updating like your resume and updating your LinkedIn and for a tip for people listening, when you've already figured out what industry that you have, what you want to do is research.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Okay. Let me look at other job descriptions. Let me print it out. Let me submit our common words, themes, and experiences I noticed. And then you start tailoring. Your LinkedIn and your resume to that so that you could find the right person or find the right industry and then find the right job for you.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Can you share your experience with that?

Ava: Yeah, so can I ask a clarifying question of Yeah, of course. What exactly, what do you mean exactly?

Elaine Lou Cartas: How was the process of doing, of restructuring your resume and your LinkedIn to tailor towards the job you wanted?

Ava: Okay, got you. Yeah, that was also one of my favorite parts. It was really, it, nice, you made the process easy.

Ava: I think, and honestly, I will say, it sounds so glamorous when you say it like that, okay, within two months, but when you're in it, it feels just absolutely endless and it's a complete torment and it's full of misery. And you're like, this is never gonna end. I will say that it's so easy to like, say, okay, I have these results.

Ava: But that's not a result of like it's a complete struggle to get there. I want to acknowledge for everyone on the job search, like, it's so valid to just not be having a good time. Cause it sounds amazing to be like, oh my gosh, you're doing your dream thing. But it's There was like so many days that I was like, this is really hard.

Elaine Lou Cartas: let's go there then. what made you still keep going knowing that it was so

Ava: hard?

Ava: everybody has their own motivation. For me, I'm really passionate about making people's lives better. And I wanted to figure out how to do that in a way that made me happy. And that's like why I was in coaching. I had this year off after college and I was like, let's, I felt really fortunate.

Ava: Let's ask myself, I have this time, what do I want? And I knew that it was gonna suck and it'd be hard, but I think sometimes when you struggle the most, you learn the most. So what kept me going was the curiosity, the people I met, my family, my support system, and knowing that Even though I didn't really think that it would end eventually.

Ava: there's a light somewhere at the end of the tunnel, even though in my heart I was like, is there a light at the end of the tunnel? There is. There is one. It's so easy to be like, blinded by that terror. It's oh my gosh, I'm never gonna find a job. But I think throughout the process, and especially like, when I got towards the end of the application processes, I started to see my value in the workplace and see why I was a desirable candidate and be able to articulate that really clearly and be able to, to your point, tailor it really directly to the job description in a way that was just super objective and super clear so the hiring manager can easily see, okay, this is why you're an excellent fit to the position.

Ava: So yeah, I can answer the, other question too, if you.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Yeah, go ahead. we're there anyways, but how were you able to tailor it? describe that process for you and how even informational interviews helped you too as you were looking at other resumes and job

Ava: descriptions. Yeah, I think in informational interviews, when I talked to someone who was really passionate about their work, it made me really look at that organization and say, okay, like they have an amazing work life balance, they really love and are interested in what they're doing.

Ava: Let's check out this position, it's just a good fit for me. And then once I really got more into looking for applications then you get better at, a first glance saying is this something I want? Is this something I don't want? And it makes it much easier to say, okay, this is something I do want.

Ava: My biggest thing was, that helped too was getting really specific about the kinds of jobs I was looking for and the kinds of organizations I wanted to work for and the exact locations I was interested in. And, the work environment and the values of the organization. So when you have all of the really specific criteria, then it makes the process a lot easier because instead of considering everything on the globe, because I was geographically flexible, I was like, okay, actually, here's the places I'm really interested in living.

Ava: And here's the industries I'm really interested in getting involved in. And then it becomes a much shorter list. And then when you tailor it, because you know exactly why you're interested in the position, it's so much easier to say, here's why I'm a great fit, and here's why this would be a great fit for me, why I'm, why I would travel here, why I would live here.

Ava: And you made the process really seamless too, to break it down and to pull the job description into a Word doc, and then under each bullet point, articulate, okay, here's one bullet point from the job description, Here's one bullet point for my resume that fits that. And that was so helpful.

Ava: And then re aggregating that into your resume, that was okay. It made it so much less confusing to say, insert keywords

Elaine Lou Cartas: throughout your resume. I hope everyone is taking notes with what Ava just said, with getting the job description, looking at each thing and putting examples of what you've done in the past.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So it's just easier.

Ava: No, that was insanely helpful because then you know that. The hiring manager can see really clearly why your resume is a great fit. It's not even a concern. They're so easy to be like, Okay, I just want to paste in keywords. It's okay. What if you actually tailor your bullet points to the position?

Elaine Lou Cartas: I know, I don't mean to bring the anxiety back up, but it's like facts in terms of when you wanna, when you're looking for a job, how anxious it gets. And we unfortunately live in this Amazon Prime world where we think about how things are gonna come to us within one or two days, right? We want to know what the end result is.

Elaine Lou Cartas: What I was coaching you through and through a lot of my clients is being unattached to what that end result is. And trust the process and the journey of receiving more clarification while at the same time making sure you are listening to your gut and intuition. And that's what I find so hard for people when they're wanting to switch careers looking for a job.

Elaine Lou Cartas: It's oh, I need this deadline, right? I need to make it by X amount. And the reason why I got into career coaching is because I've gone through the journey where I'll be

honest, I was like fired or I lost a job. I'm like, Oh shit, I need to find a job right away. But I was never intentional about my, job search.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And then I hired my own career coach when I was in my early 20s. And I went through this process of, okay, let me have conversations. Let me be intentional. And being intentional made me feel aligned where I ended up with my dream job prior to having my business at Pasadena City College. And I'm so glad I took that time, even though.

Elaine Lou Cartas: It did take me, I want to say, four months to find, a new job. But, to your point, I just so much anxiety. And also, I had to also, I don't know if you had to do it, but, I don't want to talk to a lot of people about it. Just the people that I felt safest with. Because I also didn't want to be annoyed about it.

Elaine Lou Cartas: hey, how's your job search? Oh, it's okay. You got this, or they expect like an emotional rant. so how did you protect yourself emotionally and mentally? Cause it's a very, soft patch in your life,

Ava: It's so vulnerable and uncomfortable. That's such a good question. Especially, I was living at home.

Ava: my parents were always there. Being like, what are you up to? What are you doing? And I made the decision early on because I love my parents to absolute death, but to your point, it's really hard throughout the process to continue to check in, especially if it's like you feel horrible or, having a bad day.

Ava: It's hard to be like, you know what, it's going horrible. And then people internalize that about you and behave to you as if it's going horribly if that makes sense. I don't know, what I really appreciated was just being really objective when I checked in with my family or close friends about it, and just saying, I'm considering these things, and then just keeping it general at that, and letting the exploration process be up to me.

Ava: He's just protecting my peace.

Ava: I don't know if that's your That

Elaine Lou Cartas: was No! I was sighing because that was just beautifully stated and said that you're protecting your peace, saying things objectively, so that you get to be able to validate your emotions and co regulate yourself as opposed to having to respond to someone else's emotions and what might be triggering for them as they know you're going through this process.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And it was really great because I never had to coach you through that. You had just really wonderful and strong boundaries, even if it probably didn't feel that way. But I'm just throwing confetti to you just to know that you were amazing through that process.

Ava: Thanks, Alayne. Shout out to my therapist.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Also, I've given this tip to all my clients. You even heard it from me during the retrieve, but seriously, when you are changing careers, I'm sorry, I'm just gonna warn you, having a coach and a therapist, like, that is a type of bull you want on your team.

Ava: A coward combo. Unstoppable combo.

Elaine Lou Cartas: what tips do you have for people who are in that unwavering, I just hate my job.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I hate my industry. I can't, do this anymore. I need something to change, but I don't want to rush into it. What tips or advice would you have? I want you to think about that moment for yourself.

Ava: I think number one is be kind to yourselves. I know everyone's Oh, okay. Sounds woo y. No, seriously.

Ava: do things for yourselves that you couldn't usually do when, if you're unemployed, when you have a job, or if you're employed in a job that you dislike, then take a little bit of leeway, Maybe take an extra 15 minutes. in the morning to go on a walk, something like that. And if you can, spend a lot of time outside, take good care of your body, spend time with friends, find that nourishing and abundant energy in your life, and know that this is only temporary.

Ava: For me it felt so permanent to be in the job search, but I think that strength, enabled me to feel really powerful. Entering my position, because I know that I can always advocate for myself, and that's my advice, is that you can always advocate for yourself, for your needs and your wants, and if you don't see it where you are, you can find it somewhere else.

Ava: And, okay, my second tip is get specific. I already talked about it, but that was the biggest thing I realized throughout this process. get specific on what you really want, what skills you love most, how that fits with you personally, what you're passionate about, what your mission is, your philosophy on life.

Ava: What I love about your coaching is it's about legacy and about what you want to leave for those that come after you and really asking yourself those questions when you're trying to pivot to a new career. or get a job after the layoff and not having a job, it helps you to act in alignment with your values and with yourself and your heart and there's nothing more freeing when you're in that place.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And I know you gave some tips, so would you say that's like the one takeaway that you would want our listeners to get from being specific by brain dumping and brainstorming? Anything else you want to add to that? Like any last reflective question or tip

Ava: for folks? I guess as you gain a greater and greater understanding of what it is you're looking for in a position, it becomes easier and easier to apply, and to fit the requirements of the jobs you're looking for.

Ava: And, so when I applied, it was because I had talked to people who'd worked at the company and the agency already. And I knew based on my research and those conversations that the position would be a good fit. And if you know that it's a good fit, it's much easier for the hiring team to see that because Your application doesn't just say, give me a job.

Ava: I'm the best, it says, no, I'm the best possible hire for this position because A, B, and C are my differentiator. And so that, that's my advice is to give yourself leeway to go as far deep as you want to. And to really get curious about what your life looks like in the most ideal version of your heart and your soul.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I don't know, everyone that's listening, doesn't Ava deserve to have a podcast? Just so insightful.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Maybe it should be called Ava Awareness. Anyways, we'll table the brainstorming another time.

Ava: I just want to request this so we were just going to tell jokes.

Ava: But that sounds cute.

Elaine Lou Cartas: for those that might be interested in wanting to work with me, can you share your experience working with me and why you decided to hire me?

Ava: Yeah, I saw on the Color Your Dreams podcast through Mac Fritchard's Find Your Dream Job podcast. And I started listening to all the episodes as in New York City earlier last, earlier this year actually.

Ava: And, I was struck by the ability of Elaine's clients to make these seemingly impossible transitions from completely unrelated industries And I was like, that's fake news. And then I kept listening. I was like, okay, it's not. So I just took a consultation call and I, at the time I had done a lot of work, she had a job search, but I was feeling still so ah, and Elaine basically took everything I had done, the work and thought and gave me a big picture of feedback and was like, Hey, what's the direction you want to go?

Ava: And then once you had the big picture, she gave me like her entire framework in that consultation call, I was floored. You were like, bam, here's what it looks like. Here's my whole framework. And I was surprised at the amount of value you were willing to provide on the initial call. I had talked to some other coaches and they're like very, cagey, very here's a sample of what we're doing.

Ava: You were like, no, here's everything. This is what we do. This is what I'm about. Here's my values. And I was just floored. And. That's how I wanted to approach my life. I want but it took me a while to be like, Okay, is this, can I actually do this? After her deliberation and thought and ignoring what some advice and taking other advice.

Ava: Here I am.

Elaine Lou Cartas: it's what it is like trending TikToks or whatever, Can I do it? Can I do it? I did it. I did it. Yeah, right?

Ava: Yeah. No, and I told you this already, but I, now it feels like such a dream to be here. Not visiting, but living here and talking on the podcast that I was listening to.

Ava: It's safe, Full circle! Full circle.

Elaine Lou Cartas: A full circle moment of you, binge listening. it was really cute when we got on the calls, I am a fan. You literally said that. I'm a fan of the podcast. I'm like, that's great. But I'm here to serve you. So what do you need support

Ava: in? I

Elaine Lou Cartas: gave you the whole meal of what you can do and look at you.

Elaine Lou Cartas: we, right before we hit record, we just talked about how Ava found her dream apartment, by her new job.

Ava: Congrats. Crazy story.

Elaine Lou Cartas: if you're interested in working with me, feel free to schedule a complimentary call. You can go to elainelou.com forward slash call. And just like Ava says, I like, really. Take the curtain off and just show you everything that's possible for you. And you're like, why do you share everything if it's not paid?

Elaine Lou Cartas: I'm like, because to be honest, I'll just be fully transparent on this episode. I show everything and all my steps, but the reality is, like people need to be, need support and accountability. And that's what I provided my coaching. It's not just the strategy, but also the support and accountability and being able to hold space when you feel like you're having a shit day.

Ava: And also, Elaine will push you. She will

Elaine Lou Cartas: push you to do something Not aggressively! Not aggressively! Not

Ava: aggressively! No, in the way that you need to be. Like, my it was really funny. My therapist was like, you need to be doing this instead. And then I was like, I don't know. And then I came to career coaching and you were like You need to be doing this.

Ava: And I was like, okay. So like, Elaine, she'll hold you accountable in a way that I think is really unique because it's about alignment is what you want. And it's about the kind of gross that makes you uncomfortable, but that needs to happen. And that's something that you can't get, from a strategy.

Ava: It's something that comes with, being a client. Thanks,

Elaine Lou Cartas: Ava. we have to end our episode just because Ava and I have a coaching session right after this and we're not going to hit record for that for all of you, okay? That is only for our ears, but! If you want to be on the other seat, feel free to schedule a call with me at elaineloot.

Elaine Lou Cartas: com forward slash call. Ava, thank you so much. Congrats on having this full circle moment on being in the podcast.

Ava: Thank you so much, Elaine. I am so grateful for you. Yeah,

Elaine Lou Cartas: and then when you have your podcast out, let me know so I can promote it, yeah? Like your own podcast, not this episode, but your own, Okay. That was aggressive. That was a, that was aggressive pushing. Apparently. I'm kidding. All right. Bye legacy leaders.