

WOC And Allies - Episode 77

Elaine Lou Cartas: Legacy leaders. I have my client and friend Luna Munoz. She's a doctor, but she did not want me to call her doctor because it was so formal and you will get to know Luna because she ain't that boring. Not saying all people that have PhDs are boring. Anyways, I'm digressing. Sorry about that. So Luna has been a professor for 15 years in the UK and she's been featured in TEDx.

Elaine Lou Cartas: It's BBC Chronicle of Higher Education. What people don't know is I also came from higher education as well. So there's a reason why both of us are no longer in it. And now what Luna does is you do career coaching and I also know you do some grant writing so you're helping people transition to more meaningful work.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Anything else you want to brag about?

Luna Muñoz: I'm also working with, I didn't think I'd ever go back to higher education in any way, but I'm also being asked to do the international women's event at one of the universities in the UK, University of Reading. So that's amazing. And yeah, I feel good about going back and then another university has asked me to help them with some coaching and I'm doing coaching for another university.

Luna Muñoz: So I'm helping people while they're in academia. To find better balance for themselves because they need to look out for themselves if they're going to stay.

Elaine Lou Cartas: what's great, what's hilarious, right? It's so often we do support people in our old industries, but it feels very nice to be not in it and helping from the outside.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So today we're talking about how to find a meaningful career. So why is teaching this really important to you, Luna, when you work with your clients? in terms of finding a meaningful prayer. And it might have a lot to do. I know it does because you're my client and friend. What did you have to undergo to teach this?

Luna Muñoz: I think part of it and your story really resonated me when I first listened to your podcast. She manifested

Elaine Lou Cartas: to be a guest here, by the way, congrats, but continue, I didn't mean to interrupt. I just want to celebrate you.

Luna Muñoz: Oh, thank you. Yeah, I, came from, my parents are from Puerto Rico and I grew up in Puerto Rico and then I moved to the U S and all through my childhood.

Luna Muñoz: I've. I think me and my family have really wanted to make a difference, in whatever way that was. My dad was not perfect. He grew up in Spanish Harlem for a lot of his childhood and, got into drugs and things like that. But while he was on drugs, a lot of times when he was off drugs, he was helping other people to not get on drugs or to kick the habit.

Luna Muñoz: He worked. He's something. Actually, I found out he went to a university to give a talk on helping drug users to kick the habit. I was like, I had no idea that he did that. And then my mom

and I both volunteered at a crisis intervention hotline as soon as I could. when I turned 18, I was doing that.

Luna Muñoz: And then I did my degree in in psychology, applied psychology, and that's what my PhD is in from University of New Orleans. And even while I was there doing my PhD, I did not get like any credit. I at all for doing this, but I hung out in family courts because the U. S. did not offer any kind of translation for the Dominican families that were going in there with their children because their children were having trouble in school and, getting in trouble with the law.

Luna Muñoz: So I just hung out in there and then just like whenever the judge was like, Luna, I need you to come in because they don't speak English because they were relying on the child to speak. Huh? between the parent and the judge is just so wrong. And so ever since, I knew that I wanted to do something meaningful but I got caught up in like the wanting to be significant and validated.

Luna Muñoz: Yeah, academia like took hold of my brain and I wanted to get a straight a and if I had a gold star, I was like, Oh my God, I'm, worthy now. Oh God. We're such

Elaine Lou Cartas: millennials. I know. I just think about it too. For me, it's I want that gold star. I want the green card. Please do not move the green card to the yellow card.

Elaine Lou Cartas: My fellow millennials know what we're talking about. I want the 100 percent where you put the two zeros and put eyeballs on it and get the smiley face. And then stickers and. I'm not blaming our parents, but obviously immigrants, they had to survive here and they didn't know what they needed to be successful for their kids.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And they just knew it's education because it was the one thing that they didn't have in the countries that they're from. And as first gen immigrants, sometimes you take it to an extreme where okay, it's education to be successful. Let me go do all the things.

Luna Muñoz: Yeah.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And. Not even ask that deeper question of what do I want?

Elaine Lou Cartas: And understanding that privilege, Of wait, I understand and I'm very lucky that our parents didn't have that privilege of choice, but now I have that privilege of choice. What do I want? And we are also thinking that survival mindset, is this resonating with you Lu? Yes. Or what's

Luna Muñoz: coming up?

Luna Muñoz: Absolutely. My mom and I both got our undergraduate bachelor's degrees within a year from each other from the same university because she was like, this is the way we're going to get out of poverty. And it's

Elaine Lou Cartas: true. And it's true. I will, I can't say that education doesn't get you out of poverty.

Elaine Lou Cartas: It does. But being too obsessed with it, it's eating a lot of chocolate or drinking a lot of wine. Like it's not good for

Luna Muñoz: you. Yeah, and I was just in it. And even, I had moved out to Los Angeles after I did my undergraduate degree in New York. And she left this

Elaine Lou Cartas: country to the UK.

Luna Muñoz: That's fine.

Luna Muñoz: Whatever. Eventually. But first I went to LA and I got a job at Warner Brother Records for a while. Oh, wow. I was a legal assistant in Warner Special Products and it was a lot of fun. I got Talk to Kip Winger, I don't know, and see like the ER cast and friends and Chandler, waved at me from across the studio.

Luna Muñoz: Rest in peace, Matthew Perry. I know. And and I kept telling people I'm only here temporarily. I'm going to give my life to academia. Like I want my job to be my life. And they just looked at me like, who is this woman?

Elaine Lou Cartas: And I think it's not that they were trying to traumatize us. I'm talking about our parents, but we just knew that in terms of we knew what the worst could be.

Elaine Lou Cartas: God, like all the passive aggressive guilt trips my dad and mom would give me, back in the Philippines, like we didn't even have food. There was a family of six, six of us, one fish and this big pile of rice and you get to have half a fish, right? It's no, I need to give my whole life to that.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I remember when I was working on a political campaign, one of my old bosses told me, Elaine, the campaign was over. We won. He was like, I want to help you. What do you want to do? What do you want to be? And I'm like, Oh shit. I don't know the answer to this. I was like, you told me what I should do. I'm like, wait, why am I asking someone what I want to do?

Elaine Lou Cartas: And I never, and that's why I went back to therapy. I'm like, what do I want?

Luna Muñoz: I would love to definitely help me a lot. Yeah.

Elaine Lou Cartas: What I mean, I've always been a huge advocate for therapy and I am saying this as a coach and I'm sure you agree with me. And if you don't, please be honest and while recording, if I had to choose between if you need support, like with a coach or therapist, I would say a therapist.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Especially if you can't answer that question, what do you want to do? And if you can't answer that, no shame or guilt. I felt that way. I'm sure you did Luna. And I have to do a lot of healing of What do I want versus, I'll make my parents proud. What does society and culture want? Anything you want to add to that, Luna?

Luna Muñoz: Yeah, that's exactly it. so I spent 20 years in academia basically, like doing my PhD and then going to Sweden where I did a postdoc and then I came to England and then, I was gonna be laid off and I was up for redundancy. And I went to a therapist because I was, my whole world was crumbling because that's all, I thought that's all I wanted to do.

Luna Muñoz: Obviously, from when I was a kid, that's not all I wanted to do, I wanted to help people. And I don't know how much I was helping people in academia anyway. So I went to a therapist when all this was happening. I was depressed. I felt, plus I was in burnout, recovering from burnout, didn't even know it.

Luna Muñoz: And I went to a therapist and she said, what do you care about? What are your priorities? What are your values? And I was, my only answer was to be a professor.

Luna Muñoz: That's all I could think to answer with. And she's there must be something more. And I had no answer. And I was I felt so ashamed because I was like, how, do I not even know what I want? I'm 40 something years old. How do I not know what I want? And yeah, working with her on what my values were.

Luna Muñoz: It was absolutely essential before I then left the university and started my own businesses because I could not have been, I was, I did hire a coach right out of leaving academia, leaving my job and every week she'd be like, so you're supposed to create a funnel. Yeah. So how'd you make on that? And I'm like, I'm still really depressed.

Luna Muñoz: Yeah. And it was just. I didn't go anywhere with that first coach that I hired because I just, every week, I just, she's what are your, brand colors?

Elaine Lou Cartas: I know. And I, say that because I have been there, right? There was this, I let go of my job, right? It was actually like a mutual ending.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And it was in higher education because I was in Trump's, I had to apply for my own job that I successfully done and I didn't get the job, which is fine because I started my own business and I was like, I knew what I needed to do to get more clients, but I also needed to lay on my floor like a starfish and just cry.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And just be depressed and sad and I needed to do that because knowing myself, I can use work as a drug to not feel my emotions and feelings to heal. It's like a breakup, like I really needed to feel that shit and know what I needed to work on. So Luna, we're in an interesting place in this world with all the wars and just the economy.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So is it even smart? Bind occur in this shitshow of an economy and when is the right

Luna Muñoz: time? Yeah. yeah, it's not a good time. It's not been a good time for a while, since 2008. That's when I was, looking God, that sounds like

Elaine Lou Cartas: last year, but it's not. That's almost. two decades ago.

Luna Muñoz: It's horrible. And it's not felt like a safe, I've not felt safe for a very long time, and especially because I still have student loan debt from the US. So I still have, a lot of payback for that American dream. And Oh, that could be a different episode. Oh, my goodness. I don't know.

Luna Muñoz: Keep going. my way of thinking about it is we need to roll with the times. I'm such, I, realize that I adapt so well to moving from Puerto Rico, speaking only Spanish, to moving to the U. S., speaking only English. Moving to Sweden, learning Swedish, moving to the UK, learning British English, and and then learning the culture of academia as well.

Luna Muñoz: And I realized I'm actually quite adaptable. Yeah. The way that I thought about going and getting a new career after leaving academia, it just didn't feel safe anymore. I didn't feel safe in any of those environments. It's still the same structures. It's still the same, colonialist, patriarchal cultures within those organizations because I applied and got director level interviews at, think tanks and.

Luna Muñoz: Foundations and, things like that. And I know you've worked in the nonprofit industry and I just saw the same thing. I don't really actually think this is different than academia. I think I'd still be the same. you can tell me what I would have experienced. No, I'm

Elaine Lou Cartas: saying I, it's not my words, but one of my former clients and colleagues, she was like the non profit sector in higher education is like sneaky capitalism, you're doing good work in the world and they use that to their advantage, like the bureaucracy of it, of that's why you should work long hours, get paid shit, Hey, can you stay longer for the kids?

Elaine Lou Cartas: Can you do it for the

Luna Muñoz: kids? Absolutely. there is like no fricking lie right there. I'm just like listening to you and going. And

Elaine Lou Cartas: that's the unfortunate thing. It's because a lot of people like us, whether first gen immigrant, or they've gone through a really tough life. It's we want to give back.

Elaine Lou Cartas: That's just our natural inclination. And yet we are. Sometimes get abused by the system. Like I remember I was at, and this is before DEI was a hot topic in 2020. So I want to say this was probably 2013 and I was at like a staff workshop and it was a DEI conference. And guess who was speaking? Two white people.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And as they were teaching how to be more like DEI values based, I was like, I could teach this. I should be paid for this, not them, it's just fascinating. Anyways, let's go back, like

Luna Muñoz: Absolutely. Oh, what you're going to say is And that's I think I think that's the important part, is that I try to help people with what can you do, not just skills wise, but that's going to make a difference.

Luna Muñoz: But that's sustainable for you, I know you use the word sustainable a lot, but there is something to that. There is something to you want to make a difference, but you need to look out for yourself. And, a lot of the skills that people have, they don't realize that their own lived experience is.

Luna Muñoz: valuable and I think that's the big revelation that I've had this year in connecting with what my father had done, cause I really saw him as a failure because he hadn't graduated high school and he never got like a career and he was a, nobody to me is what, I use air quotes, but that's what I,

I feel ashamed that I felt ashamed of him, but he, died when I was a teenager, but he, I reconnected with who was he really?

Luna Muñoz: And a big thing that I learned was that he could connect with people like you wouldn't believe. He could see people's like auras or whatever you want to talk about, but he could really see the real person. And I felt I feel like that's a strength I have, do you know what I mean? And I honor that.

Luna Muñoz: Yeah. Yeah. And I think there's more too. I can call myself like a business coach or a consultant or research, expert, but it's really about the qualities that I bring to that because it's not, you could just talk about my skills, but there's something to them. And I think that's where the real like career building in this day and age is, that's where it's at.

Luna Muñoz: Like you said, your DEI and you delivering that would come from a totally different place that people would connect. At a deeper level than somebody who is white and hasn't had any form of oppression that they've experienced. maybe if they were, grew up in like a bad neighborhood or poverty, like they could have some idea of oppression.

Luna Muñoz: But I think there is something to, we have more to give than our skills fricking resume. Do you know what I mean? There's much more to us. So I want this to be applicable to our listeners, so what

Elaine Lou Cartas: would you recommend then to our listeners as they're like, I hate my job, I hate this industry, what can they start doing then?

Elaine Lou Cartas: So I think you started talking about like writing down what they love doing, their strengths, right? Anything else you want to

Luna Muñoz: add to that? I think my big thing, I'm such a community advocate, I never do anything without having a big support network and I feel like, I was just talking to a client earlier, academia feels like you're an island.

Luna Muñoz: You never get to work with other people because you're supposed to be like a thought leader or you're supposed to be like a principal investigator or the lead author or whatever it is. It's always there must be like a person at the helm, which is, again, very patriarchal and, very colonial. And and I never liked working like that.

Luna Muñoz: And so when I left, I started to gather information about what people felt were my biggest, strengths and qualities. So not just me writing them down, but asking and crowdsourcing. Strengths from everyone and going, like, when you think of me Or when you worked with me. What were, like, The top three words that comes to mind?

Luna Muñoz: I It's amazing.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And I want to validate that because I did that. I went to people. When I knew I want transition. Hey Whether it's even having your own business or just changing careers, like I would love to ask you, what would you say my strengths are? I noticed you constantly come to me for advice.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Why do you come to me for advice about this? What specific topics and issues you talk to me about? Because it's so natural for us. Sometimes we think Oh, everybody knows how to. Make chocolate chip cookies when in reality, it's just really super easy for you. And that's why during holiday parties, people keep asking you to make chocolate chip cookies.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I know I'm talking about cookies, but like it could be a certain skill set too, right? or Elaine helped me with this presentation. Oh, maybe that's it. But I will say when I was thinking of transitioning and not even to my own business, but even for the political sector to the nonprofit sector, I was like, Hey, what are my strides?

Elaine Lou Cartas: And You listen, you're a great networker, you know how to follow up. I'm like, okay, I think I still wanted to be a fundraiser, but just definitely not in the political sector. So let's try nonprofit and higher education. And it was at the time a really good fit. And I don't have the story of I hated my job.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I haven't, I had an incredible mentor, shout out to Bobby Abram, my old boss. And she really invested in me, went to, helped me with the conferences, encouraged me to get my master's. Then again, I was realized I was people pleasing, not at her fault, but I was people pleasing and I was very bored.

Elaine Lou Cartas: It's very slow in the higher education system and I wanted to get out of it. So I heard it's putting a list, asking people, and I also want to encourage that because unfortunately, since 2020, people are like Googling online and YouTube. That's very helpful for resources, but remember we heal in community.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And for those in higher education, think of this as a qualitative study. I know I'm saying those words. You're doing a qualitative study, a focus group, asking people that you trust and love to give you feedback.

Luna Muñoz: Exactly. Yeah, I had one person actually create a survey and sent it around to all of her department.

Luna Muñoz: Yeah. Like really gathering information that you could quantify as well. A quantitative research as well. Yeah. Yeah. And I

Elaine Lou Cartas: would say, I know people say surveys. I like the qualitative, not because I'm an extrovert, but because you pick up on words people use to describe you. Yeah. And when you pick up on those words, that's where you could update your LinkedIn if you want to change careers or if you want to start your own business, then you're using those words.

Luna Muñoz: Yes. I did it because I thought I was building another career, but I ended up building my own business in the end. Like I said, because I did the interviews and I didn't feel like the nonprofit world was for me. But yeah, getting those words and also it just gives you a boost if you're feeling low one day because you've applied to however many jobs or you haven't gotten a client yet.

Luna Muñoz: You just open up that list of what people have said about you and you just have an immediate boost of I am like people do get things like positive things from being with me and here's

my proof of it and sometimes we do need that proof it's nice to have your own sense of self worth, but sometimes it is nice to have a little bit of a boost.

Luna Muñoz: there are, I hope you're

Elaine Lou Cartas: okay with me sharing this. And, but. Even as I've been working with you, not just that list, but, and not just you, but a lot of my, all of my clients, including myself, or it's like, what else, what more can I do? And it's Luna, what is working? And then Luna will look at her beautiful dashboard of leads.

Elaine Lou Cartas: It's Oh yeah, I'm not getting clients this way. I'm getting clients this way through like my referrals, going to networking. And it's yeah, the focus on what's working for you and whether it's your business or even your career, Oh, people come to me for this. Yes. Maybe I want to do

Luna Muñoz: that. And I think what's, when you were saying things that come easy to you, there's also things that come, easy to you, but drain your energy.

Luna Muñoz: And then there's things that come easy to you that give you energy. And I've been really talking to my clients about the things that, what are the things that give you energy? Things that like, so one of my clients used this, phrasing and I loved it. why do you keep not playing by the.

Luna Muñoz: playbook. Why do you keep rejecting the playbook that you know is exactly how you get ahead in your career, but you're not doing those things. It could be you're like really obstinate and I'm pathological demand avoidant in a way, but it could be those are the things that bring you energy and the playbook is telling you or the rule book is telling you to do it in a different way than what.

Luna Muñoz: You find to be fulfilling and it's going to lead to those kind of like cynicism and resentment if you're constantly being told that you're doing it wrong, but for you, it's the right way. It's so I talk about, it's about finding the right match, in terms of that meaningful career.

Luna Muñoz: It's about finding the way that you thrive. And I think when you find the thing that is easy or that gives you light and. That kind of sense of purpose and that meaning it's a complete, game changer at that point. And I think, there is a way to kind of puzzle piece things together because yeah, some people say, how can you have a meaningful career if it's not going to pay you well, but I think there's ways to puzzle piece things together where.

Luna Muñoz: you're making good money off of maybe a corporate partnership or in a good career where you don't have to spend 80 hours a week. And that gives you time to do the volunteer work that you want to do. Like I have much more time to do the girls network where I mentor young girls from, disadvantaged communities because I'm not working the 80 hours a week that I was.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I know, I remember you just, you did a post on LinkedIn a couple months ago, I think when you started working together, you had a big month and you were taking care of your sick kid and before that volunteering and you weren't working much. I think the unfortunate thing, and like I said, not blaming the generations before us is that like we were taught to work hard so that we

didn't have to feel the pain or go through poverty again when what if it's not about doing all the things?

Elaine Lou Cartas: For example, even in this new year, I've owned up, I just want to work with 24 clients at one time to ensure client results, one. And then two, in terms of my volunteering and giving back accessible education, it's this podcast, like it takes me about an hour to prep another 30 minutes to an hour to record like we're doing right now.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And then two hours for my team that I pay to edit. This is my way to give back. And that's. That's how I honor my values. So that goes to the next question. How can our listeners honor their values, get paid what they need to get paid to live the lifestyle they want? I'm not saying private jets, but even like at least a vacation once a year or being present with their kids or their aging parents.

Elaine Lou Cartas: How can listeners value themselves despite capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy that doesn't

Luna Muñoz: honor that? Yeah. The one thing that I've been struggling with a lot this year in terms of really honoring my value and what I bring is how much I thought I had to struggle, as you were saying, our families have struggled and it's all about working hard, And even you can take it as far as my mom saying we've walked a lot today. We deserve an ice cream cone, like we just deserve. Things not because it doesn't need to be tied and linked to our pain than pleasure, And I've always, and then when I get something beneficial, when I get that kind of accolade or that pleasure, whatever it is, and I haven't worked hard or I haven't struggled for it in some ways, I feel like I don't deserve it.

Luna Muñoz: I don't know if other people feel that way, but I have felt like. If I'm not struggling and fighting all the time, then I haven't really deserved what I've gotten. And I'm trying to get out of that mindset, because I know a lot of people talk about like money mindset, but I think there's something about that fighting mindset, the ease and the rest and that things can be simpler and easier and you can still deserve what you're getting, the good things that you're getting.

Luna Muñoz: And I think that's a big mindset shift that I've had in the last couple, in yeah, pretty much the last couple of years since I started my business because I was tying my worth to that pain, to that struggle. And I think it's, it's common, especially like when you come from countries where all that's, it's always been a struggle, we struggle against.

Luna Muñoz: It's hurricanes and, earthquakes in Puerto Rico. It's always a struggle to get, it's a community struggle against the elements, against, the colonialist structures that we're already in against Trump throwing fricking paper towels at people, like that sort of stuff. It's it's always been a struggle, but at the same time, when I think back to the Puerto Rican struggle, it's always been accompanied by dancing.

Luna Muñoz: there's always been salsa dancing, there's always been merengue, there's been bomba, plena, and it's always with music. Every time they go on protests, like everybody has a big band, Ricky Martin was, on, on stage and like Bad Bunny, like that kind of stuff.

Luna Muñoz: It's it's always got dance. And so I love like going, you know what, a fight is like a dance and we can, blend It's and flow between the two. And sometimes you do need to struggle, but sometimes you can just wave and, wave your body with the music and go with the flow. Oh, I

Elaine Lou Cartas: love that. And I also want to add, like, when it comes to honoring our values, despite capitalism, colonialism, patriarchy, Something that I've had to unlearn when I got into this business coaching and actually even in higher education or nonprofit, because in higher education, it's like more, more, get your masters, get your PhD.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I'm like, okay, get, all this degrees and be in debt. What the fuck? And then in business, it's do all the things, more courses, do one to one, two crew, get as many clients as possible, grow your team. And I was caught up in that. I was like, okay, let me go do all the things and then burnout happened.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And then. At the end of last year, I was just took the ownership. I'm like, you know what? I'm good. I just want to work with 24 clients at one time and to honor the quality of my coaching. Like at the minimum, have a 60 minute one to one, have my office hours twice a month, have the other coaches, have my retreat.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And I know Ivy leagues could be a problem. I've talked to you

Luna Muñoz: about this,

Elaine Lou Cartas: Luna, but I want people to know that it's competitive to work with me and my team. Like we're marketed more all the time, like buffets, I think that's an American concept, right? And even for my immigrant parents, and I have two brothers who just, that's why I ate fast, because if I didn't eat it, my brothers would steal my food.

Elaine Lou Cartas: They wouldn't even steal it. They would get it off my plate. So I saw them getting the food out, but it's we have two growing boys and also girl, let's just go to a buffet. And feed them like this concept of more and just yeah, when you get the latest iPhone or new phone, it's that wasn't a thing when we were teenagers, getting a new phone

Luna Muñoz: every year.

Luna Muñoz: So Luna, I have so many clients though, like who are getting like second PhDs, like to leave their job. And I'm like, tell me about what you do in your job and they don't need another degree or another qualification. And, but that's the way, like. education kind of works is like, Oh, you want to start out at a high level, making good money, you have to have a higher degree and those people out there making billions that don't have a degree in like business at all.

Luna Muñoz: I don't know the billionaires, but, a lot of them don't even have degrees. And not that I'm saying that like we should ignore experts and that, degrees don't mean anything, but do you really need a degree to change your job or to go into business? Do you need a business administration kind of degree to go in?

Luna Muñoz: Have your own business? Probably not, and yeah, I think it's just like honoring the skills that you've been acquiring if you've been in your job for 10, 15 years, 20 years, there's so many skills you're not even realizing because they just come so easily. And so I

Elaine Lou Cartas: had the fortunate experience working at a community college.

Elaine Lou Cartas: In California at Pasadena City College and what's great about it in comparison to the four year where I know a lot of four year institutions

Luna Muñoz: like promote Hey, get this degree, do

Elaine Lou Cartas: research get your master's and PhD. What I really appreciate about community college is okay, technical skills, like you want to do automotive.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Great. We have a program for that. You can make six figures in it. you want to be an electric technician. We have a program for that. Are you a parent that they have like dental assistant? it was like really beautiful technical jobs where it wasn't just promoting, do research, get above.

Elaine Lou Cartas: But it's if you're hands on, you want to do this, you can have a successful career doing that. And, I want to go to the next question. Like, how do, what advice do you have for

Luna Muñoz: people to start living their truth? I think bring creativity back, we did a lot of play in schools, from a very early age, we did a lot of plays.

Luna Muñoz: Curiosity, I wonder how this work then, and then we all had to sit down and be quiet and give kids like medication to get them to stay quiet. medication is, good in some instances, but I do feel like if we didn't have to, sit still and, kids don't go to school in Sweden until they're seven years old, and they're learning at home, they're playing and they're reading and, with their parents and skills, yeah.

Luna Muñoz: And social skills, and we know that like how important that is. And those are the big skills gap that a lot of industries, I've done consultancy with industries to find out what are the big skill gaps that are going to be in the pipeline in the next five years for like small and medium, enterprises.

Luna Muñoz: And the big things are leadership skills, analytical skills, like communication and being able to work on a team. Those are the big like skill gap. obviously like green skills and then, like digital skills and things like that. But, a big part of it is like leadership skills, which is soft skills.

Luna Muñoz: oh, I lost your question then. But I do think there's something about finding who you are and what you want and going back to what we were talking about in the beginning, finding a therapist. I did, I know that you are, Vulnerable and sharing your EMDR journey and that's what I had as well.

Luna Muñoz: It was such a big transformation for me and finding out how to trust myself because I think it's really hard. That was the hard part. That's exactly

Elaine Lou Cartas: what I worked on my therapy sessions, how to trust myself and what is my voice and is it my voice or is it someone else's?

Luna Muñoz: Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. One of my clients said that, she was like, but how do I know whose voices I've been listening to all this time then?

Luna Muñoz: Because all I've thought of is the next, if I'm a lecturer, then I'm a senior lecturer or assistant professor to associate professor to professor. And that's what I've thought the like ladder has to be. And instead it can be my ladder includes, playing and hula hooping and, Creating, Birimbao to play capoeira, yeah, I think it's, trust. It's belief and trust is a big element to it, especially if you're, especially if you're leaving a career and going into a new career, trusting that what feedback you're getting from your managers, your line managers, that's genuine, that they want the best for you.

Luna Muñoz: It's so hard because if you come from a toxic work environment, you then have no trust. And when you hear something positive, you're thinking, why'd they say that positive thing? It's really because they think I'm doing poorly, isn't it? like you can't even trust the positive and the praise. And the same thing when I was opening up my own business, because I didn't trust myself, I didn't trust my clients to invest with me at the level that like I felt.

Luna Muñoz: They, would get the best benefit in some ways. And when you don't have that level of trust for yourself, it's really hard for you to open up and accept feedback and to want to improve yourself because you're constantly on this defensiveness and avoiding emotions, like you said.

Luna Muñoz: That's something that I work with a lot with people. I think because of my psychology degree, even though I'm not a therapist, a lot of the work that I do with people is finding who they are, what they care about, and like finding that trust, that self trust again, and not listening to the shoulds, the oughts, the,

Elaine Lou Cartas: and, Yeah, stop shitting all over yourself,

Luna Muñoz: and. Finding your new network of like badass cheerleaders because life's too short to be with people who are going to say, Oh, but some people are going to be worried for you and fearful for you and that's totally okay. Like I don't, I definitely. Like validate people's worries, that if they're like, my mom might be like, are you sure you can make a job like this?

Luna Muñoz: Don't you have to go get a job, how are you running your own business? But I think finding what you really believe in, what you really believe in and trusting that you know the path. Even if it's not paved with like concrete, but that you know your own path and you know that as you go down that path, other things will open up, opportunities will open up, and they'll present themselves.

Luna Muñoz: I think that's a, it's a, leap of faith, Yeah. And I

Elaine Lou Cartas: think another theme here, it's you don't have to figure it on your own. I know there's so much shame, as a first gen immigrant, it's you can figure it on your own because you have all the resources that I didn't have when I was a kid.

Elaine Lou Cartas: But remember we heal in community. I like giving the comparison of remember when our kids or teenagers and those small little problems like, Oh my God, she doesn't like me, what do I do? But even talking to a friend about it was just so calming and healing. Even if you didn't need a solution, but just talking about it and I know everything's so digital and virtual, but there's also the beauty of it being easy to talk to someone and if you ever feel like I don't want to be annoying I don't be too much then that's why I actually go to therapy because I don't want to be annoying you know those like friends that complain about their partners

Luna Muñoz: again, and it's like dude go

Elaine Lou Cartas: to therapy

Luna Muñoz: Anyways, but the other thing is that you make relationships stronger and closer when you trust people and ask for help Yeah.

Luna Muñoz: Because people love, if you ask somebody for help, you are saying, I am trusting you with my big problem. Correct.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And to be a good friend, or colleague, or coach, or whatever it is, even asking when someone's going through a tough time, what do you need from me? Do you need me to hold space? Do you need feedback?

Elaine Lou Cartas: Do you need advice? And majority of the time, I even find from my own clients like you, Luna, it's I just need you to hold space. I'm like, okay, cool. I, and this unfortunate thing is that, this American Western culture that when someone's complaining, they want a solution when the reality is, they just want to vent and be human and have and hold space.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I want

Luna Muñoz: you to empathize with my thirstiness. Yeah. Was that that was from a movie, wasn't it? I don't know. She says, I'm thirsty. And he's I got you a drink of water or she was like, no, I wanted you to empathize. Oh my gosh. I think it's Pulp Fiction actually. Yes, it is.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So what is one big takeaway our listeners should take away from this episode?

Elaine Lou Cartas: One takeaway or one

Luna Muñoz: action item? A big takeaway is connecting with your values, your priorities I don't know if that's two things, but it's one thing all wrapped into one big, you and I say that every time, the connecting with who, you really, who you are and what your priorities are in terms of action points, I would go through what kind of life.

Luna Muñoz: You want to be living, because I think so many times we think about the career first or the job first and then go, how can I build a life around it? Yeah. And I think it's empowering and daring and, revolutionary and, yeah, everything that, that we shouldn't do is to build the life first and then find the career that will spill like that will fill in around that fulfilled life.

Luna Muñoz: So I think that's like number one, finding out what's going to make you happy, what's going to. Make you feel like life is worth living.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And Luna, I'm sure people have fallen in love with you. So if people want to find you, work with you, connect with you, how

Luna Muñoz: can they do that? my website is lunaleadership.

Luna Muñoz: com and I'm on LinkedIn as Luna Clara Munoz. And yeah, I'm on, I sometimes dance on Tik Tok. That's

Elaine Lou Cartas: a Puerto Rican in her, by the way. It's not because she wants a trend. Okay. It's because she's Puerto Rican.

Luna Muñoz: I just find a cool sound and sometimes I want to dance and a lot of times we get clarity through movement.

Luna Muñoz: oh my God. Yes.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I do Muay Thai and I talk to you about it, but like the biggest lesson I learned from my own Muay Thai coach this past week, it's my name is on the line and everyone's form is shit. And I don't care if you're not fighting professionally, but I have a reputation to uphold.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So I'm going to be teaching all the courses or all the classes this week and correct your form and we're going down to basics. And that was such a good lesson for me where I'm like, okay, I need to be picky with the people I work with. And there's just be, and not that I was seeking it for business advice, but there's just things you take away from dance or fighting that you can apply in your own life.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And to do a hobby and not be attached to making money out of it is very nice. Yeah, absolutely.

Luna Muñoz: Like I could not live if I didn't have these like dancing and I just started belly dancing last week and it was amazing. Gosh. Yeah. It's just,

Elaine Lou Cartas: we're doing this early, this recording, this episode early at.

Elaine Lou Cartas: ADM Pacific. I know you're in the UK. I just love the movement. But anyways, I also wanted to ask Luna if there are people that are interested working with me. And since you've worked with me, oh my God, four months now, what insight or advice would you have for folks about how it's been working with me and any results

Luna Muñoz: you want to share?

Luna Muñoz: I haven't even told you, my wins from the last couple of weeks, but it's just, I was just nominated for the Latin American awards in, the UK for best entrepreneur. And I feel like since I've

been working with you, things have been a lot easier and I felt a lot more trust within myself that I did not have before.

Luna Muñoz: Or it was very tenuous. I'd go through moments of I feel okay. And then what am I doing? I'm not doing, I'm not doing all the things. And I've had so much more consistent income since working with you, even though I've dropped things that, were bringing income, but I hated doing. And so it's just gone, gotten more clarity.

Luna Muñoz: more focus and trusting that the direction that I'm opening up towards is going to yield, sustainable income. In a way that makes me feel like I'm doing meaningful work, but that I'm not overworking myself or burning out. And I, that's the hugest impact that I can tell about a coach and it's just been so different from my other experiences in, exactly that way.

Luna Muñoz: And also you get me, do you know what I mean? You get like what, when I say something, you can understand where it's coming from. And also how it might be holding me back in some ways and how to just open up my mind to another possibility of business of doing business.

Luna Muñoz: It's been

Elaine Lou Cartas: so beautiful, like working with you and love seeing your growth. And it was funny because a lot of the work we did in the beginning, I was like, yeah, oh my God, uptight professional. You are funny. let's bring that out. And then I remember like within the first week, Elaine, oh my God, these clients are coming to me.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And then you're changing copy on your website. I was like, this does not sound like you from the person I am talking on zoom. Yeah. And it's Elaine, I ended this collaboration. I'm so scared. Oh shit! There's all these clients coming! Oh look! I got this award! And also, more importantly, being present with your kid.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Jinka

Luna Muñoz: Barrera, yeah. Ah. So if

Elaine Lou Cartas: you wanna, if you are interested in working with me, being one of the 24 people to work with me, cause that's how much I work with, and you get three action items. Doing a complimentary call, then schedule a call at elainelou.com forward slash call. And if you are in academia, you want to transition and you're feeling Luna's energy, go contact her.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Find her on LinkedIn. Luna Clara Munoz. Did I say that right? With the accent? Oh my goodness. That's amazing. I love it. the Spaniards colonized my country, Yes.

Luna Muñoz: Carthas is Mine too,

Elaine Lou Cartas: first one. Yeah, Carthas is The first one. Yeah, we were the first ones. Thanks. that's fantastically.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Luda, thank you so much

Luna Muñoz: for your time. Oh, thank you. You'll never get rid of me now.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Yeah. Yeah. I'll, give you a ring. Bye.