

WOCAndAlles_EP82

Elaine Lou Cartas: Hey, Legacy leaders, I'm excited to have a girl dad, a husband, a podcaster, a Peloton lover, which is why I'm wearing my Peloton shirt today, even though I didn't work out, and Visa's vice president of global brand partnerships and advocacy. Matt, welcome to the podcast.

Matt Story: thank you for having me. Excited to be here.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Yeah. So we're going to get straight to it because I already bragged about you earlier in the intro of this podcast. But What is a personal brand?

Matt Story: I would say the easiest way to describe it is a personal brand is what people say about you when you're not in the room. And I think when we think about that, it makes it very clear why it's important.

Matt Story: It makes it very clear why it's, it should be consistent. And it also makes it clear why we should invest in it. Because it's something that evolves over time as we change and we evolve over time. So I really like to think about, what is that thing that someone's going to say about you after experiencing you the same way they would with a regular product or service or experience?

Elaine Lou Cartas: It's funny because I also think about dating, right? When we first meet people, like what would I want them to say about me? So what made you come to this awareness of the concept of personal brand? yeah, And knowing that, okay, what is someone going to say when I leave the room? How did you start creating that for yourself?

Elaine Lou Cartas: What made you realize you needed to do that?

Matt Story: Yeah, I, think a couple of things that come to mind. One is I'm of a generation that grew up with. Hey, you just got to work hard, put your head down, and everything will take care of itself. Success will just appear. And that actually Yes, I'm the same generation.

Matt Story: Exactly. Exactly. And that actually works to a certain degree. But I think when we get to a point where you're in rooms or you're in places or organizations where those that gave you that advice haven't been. You need a new playbook and you need a new script. And so for me, it became very apparent that in order to get that next opportunity or in order to get that next gig.

Matt Story: It's not just about hard work and it's not just about putting your head down and saying, Oh, I delivered against the thing I wanted to do. And, one of the things that someone shared with me, I wouldn't say early, but relatively early in my career is what got you here won't get you to where you want to be.

Matt Story: And I don't think that concept is taught early enough and really realizing that in order to go to that next level. You need to be prepared for that next level and it's inching into a pool. It's I'm swimming at this level, but when it goes deeper, I need to, swim a little harder.

Matt Story: I need to swim a little harder. And then, when you're in the ocean and there's waves and there's all these other things, what worked in the kiddie pool, isn't going to help you in that ocean. And For me, it was thinking about what are those tools that we can tap into. And what I found in,

through my experience and thanks to mentors, thanks to sponsors, thanks to even peers is that those that truly invested in what is it that I stand for are the ones you remember, and those are the ones that really stand out.

Matt Story: And I, also found because, marketer by trade, I was doing a lot of work around building brands for the companies I work for, the products I work on, because we want to change someone's behavior, we want to change someone's perception of what we're doing or what we're providing. And the same thing applies to people.

Matt Story: And as you think about how do I put myself in a position where somebody is going to want to employ me, someone's going to want to work with me, someone's going to want to partner with me, someone's going to ask me to lead something, I have to use that same principle of brand building, that same principle of marketing.

Matt Story: and so it was a pretty. Aha moment. Like it was like, duh, you should do that. But then over time, realizing the tools we have at our disposal that make it really easy to really invest in that and build that scale, because unfortunately I'm not able to meet everyone in the world. So then you have to think about what could I do to put a piece of me in the world where they would actually experience it, engage with it in a way that we don't have to sit down and have this conversation.

Matt Story: We're not sit down and have coffee. And I think that today's DNA is there's so many ways we can do that. That we can tap into that really help expand on it as well.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Was there an exact moment you realized it in your career? You're like, Oh, I don't just want to work hard. I'm curious if there was a moment or if there was a train of memories.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I

Matt Story: don't think there was an exact moment. It was a I would say it was a progression, but there were a couple instances where it became very apparent to me. So for one, one thing from, I've been fortunate in my journey. That I've been pulled into experiences and someone has tapped me to say, Hey, you might be interested in this opportunity, or have you heard of this opportunity?

Matt Story: And I think once that happened so many times, that's when it became apparent to me that this isn't just that I'm good. This is because people have experienced me and they have a perspective of what I can do and what I have done previously, that they're then going into rooms and talking about and saying, You should probably talk to Matt, he, would be great for this role you're hiring for this team you're building or this strategy you're trying to solve for and so I think it was more of looking back over my shoulder and seeing that consistent thread throughout everything of huh, there's something there.

Matt Story: And I wasn't. Intentional at that time. I wasn't intentionally investing in it that way. And then I also think as I started to think about, okay, I should ask people what they think about me. And what are those things? Because your perception, your reality can sometimes not be aligned.

Matt Story: And so I started asking the questions of. Hey, what would you say is the brand of Matt? Or what would you say is, why you thought of me for this, which was another kind of a build on that

wall of Oh, this, is a thing. And then I think that the last piece is more is probably once we got into COVID and, we, all had to take a step back and evaluate what was important.

Matt Story: And so for me, that's what I really tried to stop being. A work version and a home version. And I didn't realize how that was actually. It actually took a weight off of my shoulders and it actually allowed me to show up in a way that I'd never showed up before. And it was simply because. I was tired and I, just, I got to the point where it was just too much.

Matt Story: And it was like to put on that facade and to say, okay, turn it on. It's work time. And then to reconfigure that and turn it on, I'm home time. And what I found is as I was bringing more of myself into the work environment, I was actually building stronger relationships because then people felt like they knew me better.

Matt Story: And it was, it's funny. And one of, one of my reviews prior to that, someone actually described me as an enigma. And I had to look it up because I was like, what does that mean? I was like, is this

Elaine Lou Cartas: the SATs right now? Exactly.

Matt Story: I had to, look it up and what, the additional feedback I got was.

Matt Story: He's great, but I don't know him. And that to me was the aha of like really combining this personal and this professional, because yes, you can deliver great results, but you also have to let people know what you're about, what you value, because that's truly when you connect and that's when you're on a team and you want to work with someone, you want to give your best because you're side by side or you're following, or you're leading an individual that you care about.

Matt Story: And so for me, that was another moment where it was like, This brand isn't just about my work product. This brand is about who am I as a person? And that allowed me to show up more authentically as, what all the facets of me is, as you talked about, because a lot of times I think we sometimes can lean too much on the title or we lean too much on where we went to school or we lean too much on, what, companies we've worked for.

Matt Story: And what I found is more people connect to me. As you started with, because I'm a girl dad because I love Peloton more, these things that are on a sneaker head, like those are the things that people really hook onto because it gives you texture. It gives you more of a 3d versus this 2d resume version.

Matt Story: So hopefully like it wasn't one moment, but like those are multiple times where it became more apparent that this personal brand thing was not only important, but it was a differentiator.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Yeah, I'm curious I'm curious if not just in your journey, but if you notice that in terms of what's happening in the world, because of COVID, because more work is hybrid and remote, that it is important to incorporate your personal stuff in the workplace.

Matt Story: there's a couple of things happening. I would say you're right because of, the way we work is, fundamentally changing.

Elaine Lou Cartas: We don't have the water cooler talks.

Matt Story: Exactly, And, you don't have virtual coffee chats. exactly. And you have relationships with people. They like this, we've never met in person and you're able to connect with people in such a new way, which that is a positive, but it also has some limitations because to your point, we don't have the opportunity just to meet at the, the coffee machine and talk about our weekend.

Matt Story: And so we have to find other ways to do it. And so I think there's some positive negatives to the way work is changing, that's making who you are and how you stand out more important. I also think that you have, if you think about it generationally, You have a generation, let's call them Gen X that are at, their career where they're probably not looking just to retire and go to Florida and right off to sunset.

Matt Story: They're thinking about that next chapter and what does that look like? And so they're extending their life and they're almost changing their brand a little bit of what they are known for, what they're interested in. You then go back into, millennials, which are in that leader role and really trying to define like who they are, which again, it's all about branding.

Matt Story: And then you have, going into Gen Z, which they came in the door saying, this is who I am. And so I think across, you're welcome, gen Z, fyi. You're

Elaine Lou Cartas: welcome.

Matt Story: and again, and now, and I'm, and there's, and boomers and Gen Alpha, which even are playing a role in this too. and so I think that the way we work is changing, the way that individuals are experiencing work is changing because it's, literally not what it was where I work eight to five and I put it in a box and I leave it there.

Matt Story: And all of those things are making it very important for you, not only to understand who people are, but to value it because people have options. And I think before we didn't realize that there were other options of how I work, where I work, when I work, what I work on that make it very important because similar to, I'm picking a beverage to buy.

Matt Story: I just don't pick it based on the taste. I pick it based on who's behind that company, what does that company stand for, and people are choosing that in their relationships, they're choosing that in their work environment, they're choosing that in their friendships, as you said, they're choosing that in their partners they're selecting.

Matt Story: And so I think there is something that's happening in this time and space, but it's also driven by multiple factors.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I want to make sure our listeners heard the question, the powerful questions you asked is when you're talking to other people, like who is Matt? Who is Elaine? Yeah, I'm curious, when you think about me, how do you describe me to other people?

Elaine Lou Cartas: And then even getting down to asking yourself the question, who am I?

Matt Story: Yeah, and I think the other thing people have to do is, you need a North Star. And, whether you call that your mission, where you call that your purpose, I think spending time on that, and for me, that became my filter, and that became my filter of what I say yes to, and what I may have to say no to.

Matt Story: And that allows you to show up, again, in a way that somebody would consistently answer that question the same. Because I think the other thing people think about is, I may answer that question differently. One of your siblings or your coworker or a client may answer that question differently. And what happens when those things intersect, it becomes very confusing.

Matt Story: And that's why people have this difficulty with, I post this on LinkedIn, or I post this on Instagram, or I post this on Tik TOK and they're showing up in these different ways. And just from a, from the way our brains are wired, when that conflict happens of I didn't realize Elaine did that. It actually causes us to like question the relationship and to question, we knew about that person.

Matt Story: And so that's why I, again, I think it's very important that people think about how do you show up as much as your authentic self? And I always like to say. I'm saying this from a place of privilege. I have spent over 20 years working to be able to now show up as my authentic self, and I have that earned capital, both financial and social that allows me to show up as who I am.

Matt Story: And I know that's not as easy for someone starting out or someone making a change or has moved into a new phase, but as much as you can be consistent with that answers to those questions, the better it will be received. And so for me. I have a quote that's on my, literally on my desk. I look at it every day from Maya Angelou.

Matt Story: People forget what you said, they forget what you did, but they'll never forget how you made them feel. And so that becomes my filter for how I spend my time, how I engage with people, how I respond, what, is the advice I give, what are the things that I say no to, and so I, I just really encourage people to really think about.

Matt Story: Call it what you will, your purpose, your filter, your North Star, whatever you want it to be, spend time there and that will help you answer those types of questions.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Juan, thank you for taking the time to be here. So I'm glad that having this conversation is part of the North Star. And I want to go back to what you were saying of how, coming up as your authentic self.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So I'm doing this exec, executive coaching certification right now. And there is amazing people in there. Like the Marines. Former gold Goldman Sachs employees, McKinsey employees. And I kid you not, we were just having casual conversations in breakout rooms. And I'm like, yeah, I do Muay Thai, kickboxing.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I had three people add me because of that. Not because of my pedigree, the awards, how many clients I've worked with. I'm like, oh, and then I thought to myself, if, this is what people are coming to, let me update my LinkedIn headline. I edited that, and then I had more people message me about Muay Thai.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I'm like, okay, I did, I'm not doing Muay Thai because I want to talk to people. I'm doing it because I need it for my mental health. And I'm sure you get it too. Like for Peloton, Hey, who's your favorite instructor?

Matt Story: Exactly. Exactly. And the way I describe it, and I, think I did this three years ago, four years ago.

Matt Story: I changed how I introduced myself. it's, across everything I do when I speak when I meet someone the first time it's the thing I do, because what I try to do is we're all, a visual, we're all accordions and we can expand or contract based on the space. And I think we sometimes contract it to okay, I have to lead with credentials and this is again, not to generalize, but this is something I think people of color And especially women tend to face the most because they, there's this imposter syndrome kicks in this feeling of, you don't think I belong here.

Matt Story: So I need to lead with the strongest thing I have, which are my credentials I've collected, which again, I don't think there's anything wrong with that. But I feel that in order to connect with other people. It has to be related to a story. And the reason that is, is because stories activate both sides of the brain.

Matt Story: One side of the brain is the emotion it evokes. The second side is the data, the facts that are within it. And if you do that, people are more likely to remember you. And so when you're going through and you're saying, Oh, I used to work at Procter and Gamble. I went to school at Washington University that just washes over people.

Matt Story: I'm the vice president of blah, blah, blah. Those are things people have heard. When I say I'm a sneakerhead, my favorite Jordan is Air Jordan 3. I remember when I couldn't afford it as a kid, but when I became an adult, it was the first thing I bought to the point where I spent my whole first check and I couldn't actually afford food, even though I like, had made all this money.

Matt Story: And I was like my first lesson in like finance and blah, blah, blah. That's when people start to realize okay, there's a person behind this because I've expanded the accordion and I've shown you that there's other layers to me that you can hook onto. And when I do my introduction. I almost can guarantee that something in where I introduce myself, a person in that room, a person on that zoom will connect to because it's, I'm a, Midwest born mama's boy.

Matt Story: I married my entrepreneur wife and I came to California. We have two girls, I'm a podcast host. I'm a curious marketer and I could go on and on But those are hooks that people are like, Oh, tell me more about the thing that I didn't even realize about you because that's where that curiosity, everyone's curious, wants to know more about.

Matt Story: And so I encourage everyone to really think about who you are in the matter. If you're 18 or 88, you have that accordion, you have those layers to you and really thinking about how do you connect because we all have these connections that we want to make with other people. Even if it's not about us, I'm curious, like I want to know more and like, why did you choose that?

Matt Story: What did you do?

Elaine Lou Cartas: It's, interesting because I've noticed more since COVID to what we're talking about. And I get the compliment from clients or people who possibly want to work with me or collaborate with me. wow, you're really asking more about me. You didn't just go straight into the coaching.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I'm like, yeah, but I think about the relationships I had even prior to having my coaching business of you just remember things about individuals and then they come back to you. To see a human as a human, I think what unfortunately, fortunately, and unfortunately, in terms of working from home is that some We've seen meetings as it needs to be productive, right?

Elaine Lou Cartas: So we have 10 minutes. Let's just talk about what we need to do for 10 minutes. But even checking in, Hey man, like glad you're a Laker fan, not a warrior fan. Oh no, wait, are you a warrior fan? Because you're in San Francisco. Cause I see Kobe Bryant there. Are you just a Kobe Bryant fan? Yeah.

Matt Story: Yeah.

Matt Story: That's a whole chapter of my life that I have to unpack that. That's an accordion of its own.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So we don't have enough time to talk about that in this podcast, but earlier you're talking about. How you had, you've had sponsors, mentors, guides, peers. Can you first define that for our listeners and how they can start connecting with those right people?

Matt Story: Yeah. Yeah. So I, start with peers. So I, attribute a lot of my success to the peer set that I've been able to collect and have stayed with over the years. So there's a group of us that went to undergrad together. And the funny thing is we're actually not even all the same class. It actually spans.

Matt Story: About six years that we have just stayed tight since undergrad and all in different fields, all with different, live in different parts of the country. But having that, that, group of people that provide a safe space for me to go to and say, Hey, I'm really struggling with this. And again, it could be career.

Matt Story: It could be family. It could be anything. It could just be like, Hey, I just want to talk about this thing. I saw, what do you guys think? And so I think having a peer set that understands, the. Coming of age process you went through and then being able to go through life with is just invaluable.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Yeah.

Matt Story: The second group is mentors. And again, I think sometimes people think of it as I need a mentor. You need multiple mentors and you need mentors at different phases. So I encourage people to think about it. It's who is a couple of steps ahead of you and they haven't figured out everything, but they understand what you're in and what you're going through and they can give you.

Matt Story: Advice, guidance, et cetera, based on your questions. Again, mentorship should be all about you setting up the relationship to be as productive as possible. And so going to that person

saying, I'm really struggling with this, or I'm really thinking about this, or I'm deciding on this, what would you do? Then fast forward, you should go five to seven years out because that person may not be able to advise you on the here and now, because it's been a while since they were there.

Matt Story: But they can think about in chess, like the second or third step that can advise, if you take that step, think about this and it's more of a preparing you for the things to come. And then depending on your age, where you are, your journey, I would go even further out to someone. That's almost where you want to get, like at the mountaintop and think about like, how do I access them to understand their wealth of information that they could provide?

Matt Story: Because again, They may not be able to answer your specific question about what you're going through because there may be generational things. They may be like things have changed, et cetera, but they've seen enough game film that they can give you just general good guidance. And so that's mentorship.

Matt Story: Sponsorship is one that, again, most of us don't realize how important it is. And that's truly someone that's talking about you in rooms you're not in. And so sponsorship could be someone in your organization that isn't a manager, isn't a manager's manager. They're probably outside of your reporting structure, but they're able to speak your name into opportunities and they know enough about you to represent you in those rooms because what most people don't realize is those decisions on who's going to get promoted.

Matt Story: Who's going to get that new team? Who's going to take on that new thing? That's being discussed before you ever hear about it. And so you need someone that is invested in your success to be in that room, to be able to say, Hey, Elaine's not on my team, but I know what she's working on. I know what she's capable of.

Matt Story: This is directly aligned with her skillset and her capabilities. We should give her a shot at this. Because again, You want to be able to do that from not only your hierarchy of who you reported to, but someone else, because then to the personal branding thing, then it's huh, I didn't realize that she was working on that.

Matt Story: I didn't realize he was working on that, et cetera, et cetera. So having a sponsor is truly important. Also having sponsors outside of the organization, because. As you progress through your career, these jobs don't show up on LinkedIn. They don't show up on websites. They are tapping people to go into that role.

Matt Story: And so you need someone sitting in other organizations that can say, Hey, I think he would be great for this. I think she would really be a great person to consider for this. And so not just someone that you're engaging with from a mentorship, but someone's that's actually working on your behalf and from a sponsorship.

Matt Story: And then I think just having. Some form of, if you want to add in therapists, you want to add in coach and also thinking about what is the coach help you with? Because there's, career coaching. there's other types of coaching, depending on what field you're in that, I've heard of technical coaches or product coaches.

Matt Story: And so rounding out your board of directors or your Source of like guidance, inspiration with all of those individuals, depending on where you are in your phase, because again, You may be in a phase where you don't need a coach or you don't need necessarily this particular thing, but I think it's very important to have your peer set mentor sponsors throughout, because they're going to help you navigate no matter what you're going through.

Matt Story: And then you can augment with some of those other things.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Yeah. It's the relationship building. And I have some Gen Z clients. I remember one client telling me it was around the holidays. And she said, there's a holiday party. I don't understand why I have to go. And it was, it's so fascinating. I'm not.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Making fun of her, but just also acknowledge that, how they grew up, right? yeah. They grew up in front of their phones, they had the pandemic, and I was explaining to her, the importance of going to these social events, it's actually not taking away time from being productive, but you will have to work with team members cross functionally, getting to know them, it's understanding who they are.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And to even what you were saying about mentorship and sponsorship, It's important to have that too, because as you're progressing in your career and you're having those conversations with people, you could also decide if you want to be in that industry or field, because maybe you realize, I don't like their work life balance, I need to get out.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So speaking of different industries, I know prior to Visa, you were working at P& G, working on consumer goods, then you switched over to marketing agencies, and then now you're working at Visa in finances. Can you share with our listeners how maybe you're intentional about your career and I industry shift and steps to our listeners.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And I ask because we're in this kind of pivotal time where the great resignation people hate their current industry. Oh no, I don't have experience in this other industry. What do I need to do? I'd love for you to share.

Matt Story: I'll start by saying anybody who tells you they had it all figured out and they knew what they were doing is probably lying.

Matt Story: I still can't answer the question, what do I want to be when I grow up? Because there's so many things I'm interested in. There's so many things I'm curious about that I have a lot of ideas. and so I, just start there. Because I think a lot of times someone can look at a resume and be like, wow, that was so well thought out.

Matt Story: It's never that well thought out. It is all, serendipitous at times. It's all opportunities that arise that you didn't even know existed. that's just the lay of the land for, me, I think what happened is there were A couple of things that were consistent for me and a couple of things that changed.

Matt Story: So the consistent things is I've always wanted to be in organizations where I was learning from the leaders that I've always been drawn. Even if I go back to school, the best experience I had is when I was learning from someone. And anytime I felt like I wasn't learning, It was like, it didn't sit right with me.

Matt Story: And it's I, I didn't want to be in that class or I didn't want to be, studying that thing. And so that has been a consistency where I've always gone to places where I felt like I could learn something from people. And what's interesting about that is you don't realize it, but as both as a people leader, but also as a team member, you're learning and you're taking some of their special sauce and you're adding it to your, Toolkit in a way that helps you show up in that way.

Matt Story: Now you may never be as good at that thing as that person, but it being, having exposure to, it gives you a little bit of it to pull into, Hey, I'm going to remix it and do it my way. And so that's always been a consistent theme for me is, and I've worked with some of the most amazing marketing. Leaders that are out there.

Matt Story: Antonio Lucio Rashad Tabakawala Lynn Bigger, Frank Cooper, it's just like the people that are in the hall of fame, I've had the opportunity to work with, and that is just, that's been a consistent theme for me. I would say the other thing that has been consistent for me is I've always looked for, how do I stay on the cutting edge of where the industry is going, because the marketing industry is constantly changing.

Matt Story: Like literally something's going to come out new today that I'm going to have to learn about on Monday. And, it's like, how do I stay as close to the cutting edge as possible? Cause again, You'll never know everything, but I want to be in environments where I can learn and I can be exposed to what is around the corner because that's truly what's going to lead you to the future, but it's also that's where I get the most excited and I had the most passion is like, Hey, what's next?

Matt Story: What's next? And so a lot of my decisions have been driven by those two things. I'm going to be in a group where I'm learning from people that are really good or really strong in something that I just am not yet. And secondarily, am I going to be in a position to continue to be on the cutting edge?

Matt Story: And so going to the market agency side, it was all about exposing me to more industries to your point. I was in CPG and more specifically, I was in deodorants. And while it was very fundamental to setting me up to be a world class marketer, it only exposed me to a segment of industries out there. And then, so going to agency side.

Matt Story: I got to be exposed to auto. I got to be exposed to insurance QSR. And like those business models are very different. And so it opened my mind to, Oh, this client works this way. This client works this way. I need to understand how that happens. And so then going back to the client side, I wanted to go deep again because I felt like I was.

Matt Story: I had gone a mile wide, but I was like an inch deep. So then I had to go back client side to be able to go again, deep in a vertical. And I, and, my choices were where's the future of consumer behavior going. So I first left the agency world to go to Intel because I was working on a group that was doing over the internet TV, which it was before Netflix is where it is now, but Intel was trying to get into that space and I just felt That was a space that was going to boom and I wanted to be close to it. And so not only am I thinking about it from a practice standpoint of being on the cutting edge of marketing, I wanted to be on the cutting edge of consumer behavior and then obviously coming to Visa where it's like. Financial services, when I joined, it wasn't the thing that it is now and like just the way that it has evolved completely, I just felt like there was endless things I could learn about consumer behavior, where it's going.

Matt Story: And so those have been some of the things that have changed, but the consistencies have allowed me to find opportunities that align with where I want to be, but also where I think I can uniquely contribute.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Thank you so much for sharing that. I think what I'm hearing from the journey is that you're curious.

Elaine Lou Cartas: you're curious. Wait, I'm just focused on deodorant. I want to see everything. Oh, clients think differently, but I want to go deeper. Okay, so going into deeper like the visa. There's some people that are probably hesitant of okay, I'm working full time. How do I start then creating a personal brand outside of my company?

Elaine Lou Cartas: What steps are Confidence and inspiration. Can you give them?

Matt Story: Yeah. So I, would say To, to think, do I work on my personal brand or do I not? It's not really a choice because you have a personal brand. Whether you spend zero time on it or a hundred hours on it, you have one. So I encourage people to do a listening tour, like literally go to your best friends, go to your colleagues, pick people that don't know you very well and ask them, what would they say about you if you weren't in the room and then map that out and see what it see if in one, see if it's consistent, as I talked about earlier, but also see if that's what you want to be known for, because if you're not spending time on it, people are creating their own narratives.

Matt Story: Without you being able to input in them. And I personally believe I'd like to control that as much as possible. I'd like to influence it such as at least it's alive, what I think it should be. And so I think that would be the first step is recognize that you do have a personal brand, even if you don't spend time on it and to understand what it is and what's out there, and then I would also encourage people to like, this is the thing I tell everyone, write.

Matt Story: And it could be physically writing on a piece of paper. It could be typing. It could be whatever, we could do audio to text, whatever works for you from a tool standpoint. You have to write because if you don't write, you don't know what you know, you don't know what you think. And I think the biggest things that have helped me get to this point where I am of understanding what my brand is, understanding where I can expand on it.

Matt Story: Where can I extend it? Where can I scale it is I've done a lot of time just thinking and putting that out there. And then doing some hypothesis, doing some tests. I test this, I test that actually had someone come up to

Elaine Lou Cartas: me, exactly.

Matt Story: I actually, someone asked me, they're like, I noticed that on LinkedIn, you changed the format of your videos from vertical to horizontal.

Matt Story: I'm curious why you made that decision. I was like, wow, like you're really paying attention. I was like, that's one of my tests. I'm literally like thinking about Hey, I think this might work better in this environment doing this. Or I think this, and You don't know those things unless you really think about them.

Matt Story: And I found that writing things down, setting goals, tracking your progress to get them, that's the hack to getting progress towards anything, whether it's personal brand, fitness career, family, it's a solve for everything.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I think it's also like a simple manifestation tool. Like I do this and I want this.

Elaine Lou Cartas: I remember when I was working politics, I was telling people I want to get out of this industry. And as I was talking to more people, finding my mentors and sponsors then I manifested a job bringing it past UC City College. So you already gave one takeaway. Is there any other one takeaway action item or question you want to give our listeners before we go today? As I said, I'm a firm believer that your story. Not only is it important, but you don't understand the impact it can have in the world. So I just encourage everyone to spend time working on your own story and share it everywhere. Because that I did a LinkedIn post about this, but like we, we see these brands and we see companies that make a story up about the most abstract thing, like this, B2B SaaS software, is moving the needle on hand, blah, blah, blah, which I'm sure is great.

Matt Story: It is probably happening. But we don't realize that by us sharing our story, we can influence other people to know, Hey, you're good enough. You're smart enough. You're on the right path. You can pivot, you can change. But a lot of times we're like, who am I to share my story? I'm not, super celebrity.

Matt Story: I'm not super influencer. I'm not, millions of followers, but actually we need more of the people that are just in the thick of things in their journeys to share their story, to be like, huh, I don't know. I feel seen, I feel validated. I feel like I can do the thing that I've been waiting to do because I heard Elaine share her story.

Matt Story: I heard Matt share his story. I heard this other person share their story. And so I just think we, sometimes we don't place enough value on our story because self doubt, imposter syndrome, all those things kick in and I would just say, spend the time working on it and also share it as many places as possible.

Elaine Lou Cartas: So this is a great transition. If people want to learn more about your story and reach out to you, how can they find you?

Matt Story: So I would say do two things. One, go to my website, mattstory.com. That's where probably everything is from Information standpoint. And then two, I would say probably just follow me on one of the socials.

Matt Story: I'm Maddie story on every social platform. You get a different mixture of things, depending on the one, if it's LinkedIn, you're getting more words. If it's Instagram, you get more videos. But I would say just, hit me up, ask questions. I'm always happy to give my two cents or my thoughts on things.

Matt Story: If you think it's a value. So yeah, that's the two places I send people.

Elaine Lou Cartas: Oh, and can you share your incredible podcasts as well?

Matt Story: Yes. What's your story podcast. So similar to you, I got the podcast bug and, I've done, this is my fifth season, over 160 conversations with people of color leaders that are sharing their story.

Matt Story: So I truly believe that everyone's story is so important. I do a podcast on it. So yeah.

Elaine Lou Cartas: And Matt also has the benefit, that story is his last name and he didn't change his name. So he was born into this brand.

Matt Story: It was meant to be. It was meant to

Elaine Lou Cartas: be. Thank you, Matt, for your time.

Matt Story: Thank you.