

## WOCAndAllies\_EP84

**Matt Story:** My guest on the pod this week is a trauma informed career and leadership coach that supports BIPOC women in moving from the supporting role to the leading role in their lives. She's been recognized by Apple News, LA Weekly, and LinkedIn as a top voice and thought leader. I'm really looking forward to hearing more about her story.

**Matt Story:** So please welcome Delaine Lou Cartas to the show.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Thank you, Matt, for having me.

**Matt Story:** Before we get into learning more about your journey, I'd love it if you could just share a story about your background and maybe take us back and give us a glimpse into what little Elaine was like.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I love when I hear these questions in your interviews.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** So for me, I'm a first gen immigrant, Filipino American. My parents and my grandparents immigrated from the Philippines to central California to work in the farm to be grapevine workers. And I was the first child. like first person in this generation to be born in America. And I was born into both my grandparents, my mom and dad and my mom, my aunt and uncle.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** So six adults, I was the first child. And since I was born, I felt that pressure of fulfilling the American dream. Also feeling the pressure of six adults of we get to start all over and we don't have to live in this world where we are in a country where it was so poor and we didn't have that much opportunity.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** So feeling that pressure, and don't worry, I went into a lot of therapy for that, thank goodness, is surviving and thriving. There's this wonderful quote, I forgot who quoted this, but our grandparents survived so our parents could provide. Our parents provided so we can thrive. And I felt like I was my parents and my grandparents dreams to thrive.

**Matt Story:** Yeah, that's beautiful. And I, I think the idea of that pressure and it's twofold because it is a source of motivation, but it is, it can also be a source of. I'll say baggage that we carry. That, that those to the left and right may not, may not also carry. And so I'm, I'm curious for, for you, even, you know, at those, at those early ages, did you have an idea of like, in order to thrive, I want to be this, or in order to make them proud, I want to be, you know, this type of, Career or following this path.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, I, I had a lot of those questions and I mean, you've shared this. We get to redefine our own version of success and more importantly, understand what our version of success is in different stages of our life. I wasn't really aware of it. I just knew I couldn't live what my parents went through because it was so hard for them at the dinner table because I was a teenage girl, right?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I'm like, I didn't finish all my rice. And my dad's like, why don't you finish rice? And I, at the time, like, I need to be skinny like all the other girls at school. Right. And I was just thinking, okay, what would make that make me successful? Make them happy. It's like, straight A's, valedictorian, let me go play the violin, do all these things for me to look good when I apply for college, and then do the checklist of what looked good for college.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And then I graduated around the recession, realized, wait, hold on. I did the checklist of what people wanted for my success. And I didn't ask the most important question. What is my Definition of success. What do I want? And throughout my life, there is so many different stages where people would ask me, What do you want?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I'm like, I realized, Oh, no, I've been listening to what everyone else wants. And I've been people pleasing. And it just helps doing all that reflection and therapy to ask, what do I really want? Am I doing this because my parents told me to do it? Because my boss told me to do it? Because this looks good on social media?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Or is it because I really want to do it?

**Matt Story:** Yeah, it's like, there's almost like you, you're given a script that you follow from your parents up until the point you get a job. Yeah. And then the script is kind of done, but there's more seasons and there's more chapters to be written that it may become, it becomes a challenge.

**Matt Story:** And so I'm curious, once you made your way into the work world, like what was that experience like when kind of the, the, the, the script from your parents probably, it didn't go beyond that because in their eyes, you had been successful, you're a valedictorian, you got the,

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** you know, the

**Matt Story:** degrees and you got the job and like, Job done, but for you, you had to still go forward.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I realized the privilege I had that my parents, maybe my grandparents didn't have is choice. Mm-Hmm. Like I have choice to choose. what career I'm going to have, how I'm going to make money. My parents, not so much. They're like, we need money. We need to pay for bills. We have this daughter. Now we have two sons.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** We have a mortgage. I mean, I know we have all those pressures, but they didn't have that, that buffet of choices. And I realized I had that choice being in this country. So I know the privilege I have. So, When I got into the workforce, I, I worked in, I used to do political campaigns. So that's why I lived in Indiana.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I lived in Iowa. I, I did the different storyline that you had from going to the Midwest to living in the West coast. I went from the West coast, moving to the Midwest and working on different campaigns. And there was a congressional campaign that we won. And my former boss asked me, Elaine, so what do you want to do?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I want to help you get whatever job you want. And I was like, Oh, no, I was like, I don't know, you don't know. And that hit me where I realized, oh my gosh, I've been listening to what other people are doing. Now, mind you, I am not blaming other people for my choices. I was just people pleasing. And I realized I do not want to work in politics anymore.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And I got into the nonprofit sector, working at fundraising. I worked at passing city college foundation, and I, How I got that job is I was working with a coach and I learned to do informational interviews, networking with people. I'm happy to delve deeper on how I did that. And. I got my first six figure job again, passing city college foundation, and it was my dream job.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I had the most incredible boss and ally. Her name is Bobby Abram. I just had dinner with my ex boss. It's weird when people hear that you had dinner with your ex boss, you have your own business. I was like, she taught me leadership. She taught me. She was one of those people when you were at a board meeting and she had a different view or perspective.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** To everyone else, she got out of that meeting with respect, the way she just communicated, but she was mentoring me to be like her, to be an executive director for a nonprofit in the future, to where I

got my master's in leadership and management, because in the government sector, when you get a graduate degree, you get paid more.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** So I'm like, okay, I'll go get it. I paid that out of pocket myself. And then it happened again. The, the day I graduated from my master's. I wasn't hungry. I wasn't happy. And I had a, oh, no moment. I. Don't really want this. I did this to please my boss and I'm not blaming Bobby. That was on me. And then I finally really deep down asked the question, what do I want?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I want to start my own coaching business. And the reason why I wanted to start my own coaching business was because I wanted to work specifically with women of color. And allies, because at the time when I hired my own coach, I didn't, she was amazing, but she wasn't a woman of color that understood those lived experiences.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I was like, what if I just do that? And it was also hard to break out of the mold as a first gen immigrant. You shouldn't hire someone to help you. You should figure it out yourself, right? You live in this country. There's a buffet of. Opportunity, you should figure it out yourself. Well, there's also too much.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I don't know where to go.

**Matt Story:** Yeah. Yeah. So there's a couple things in there I want to, I would do want to dig into. And so the, the first piece around this idea of getting help, and I, and I think it is something. I can only speak from my own personal experience of, there's this idea that like, if I work hard, opportunities will present themselves.

**Matt Story:** Even though many of us are in rooms that our previous generations have never entered. Correct. So we can't just rely on hard work. Yeah. And so I do want to hear about how you overcame. This idea of getting help and particularly getting a coach, because I, I think if you were in, and we'll talk a little bit about your, your kickboxing, but like, if you were in sport, it's, it's a no brainer that you get a coach and it's like, you need someone to guide you, you need a trainer, you need someone to drop the plays and like, that's kind of just expected, but in the work world, it's almost like, well, that's saying something is wrong with me.

**Matt Story:** And so I'd love it. I'd love it. If you could go into that.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. So I was working on a campaign. And I was a fundraiser in this campaign and we, I was, I was hitting my numbers like over the top, doubling the fundraising goals. And I knew not just intuitively, but also looking at the spreadsheet and data, like I need a raise.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And so who do we go to as not just kids, but even young adults for advice? We go to our parents, right? And I asked my immigrant parents, Hey, how do I ask for a raise? and their immigrant response is work hard, they're going to give it to you. I'm like, that's not how it works in this country. And I, and I'm not blaming them.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I also understand that they were taught that from their own parents, my grandparents. So when I was like, okay, there has to be a different way. And, Filipinos are very emotional and reactive. So when they want something, they'll like, I want a raise. I want chocolate ice cream. Like we yell and we're very expressive.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And I knew that that is not how you communicate and ask for a raise. So I'm like, Hmm, I've heard of. Actually, I brought this up in therapy session and I asked my therapist, how do I do this? Have you heard of what a coach is? And it was actually my therapist who googled and found a coach to talk to. See, I was even using my resources of what I was spending money on talking to my therapist.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And I really appreciated that my therapist was honest, that she couldn't. Do that for me. I mean, therapies, for those of you that don't know the difference between therapy and coaching therapy helps, any blocks that might be affecting you at present moment to hit your future goals and coaches. help you with getting your future goals.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** But if you're mindful that there's some blocks, then work with a therapist. Highly recommend both. If I had to choose one over the other, work with a therapist, because if you don't heal your stuff, it shows up in your daily life. So I interviewed this coach and I told them what I wanted. I wanted to ask for a raise.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I hired her. I was scared. It was a lot of money. Mind you. Sorry. Anything is a lot of money in perspective, but as a woman of color, as a first gen immigrant, as a person of color, we're not taught that it is okay to hire a coach. So that's not a norm for us. So I hired my coach the first session, she taught me how to ask for a raise and how I asked for the raise.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Cause I know your listeners love steps is we did something called a brag sheet, a brag sheet. Think of it like a memo where you're bullet pointing everything that you've accomplished since you started your job. So print out your job description. And then make a memo of everything you've accomplished and exceeded and done beyond that.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Also do research on what other competitors are charging. So I also did research. I printed out what competitors were charging. And then I asked for a raise that was 10,000 more than I was making. I was like, Hey, I like, thank you so much for this opportunity for the past year. While at the same time, I've been able to exceed goals doing A, B, and C.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And then I even showed I deserve a 10,000 raise. And then I got it. I'm like, Oh no, this works asking for help getting the tools. I would not have ever been able to figure it out, but it was fascinating during that story of me getting the raise I wanted and getting the money I wanted. That's when I realized I don't like the industry I'm in.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I don't care how much money they're giving me. And that's when I realized I need to change industries. And I started putting a list of other fundraisers in different sectors, doing informational interviews of like, Hey, I want to know more of what you do. And then I realized I needed to get out of politics.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And then learned more about the nonprofit sector. And then through one of my political contacts, they connected me with the executive director for Pasadena City College Foundation. I interviewed her. I was just asking questions as if podcast interview, tell me how you got into fundraising. What do you love about it?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And then. I had no intention to apply for a job, but she said, I actually have an opening. Do you want to come in and have a formal meeting? I'm like, yes, please get me out of this industry that I do not love. But what I want your listeners to hear is I was brave enough to ask those questions. And be unattached to the result of it.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I was unattached to, I'm going to get this raise. I was unattached to, I need to get a job.

**Matt Story:** And it

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** just came. And in this world of, I'm very grateful that you and I were around the same age, that we lived in a world before social media, that, A lot of powerful things happen when we're in relationship and we're connecting and talking to people and just asking questions and letting the answers unfold.

**Matt Story:** Yeah. Well, the interesting thing about what you're, you're saying is, well, one, and you said this a couple of times, like, It isn't the person who told you to work hard or isn't the person that, you know, said, go get the master's that, that there's fault in that you're actually collecting feedback and you're getting data about the thing you were doing.

**Matt Story:** And eventually you got enough data to say, this isn't for me at this stage. It may have been for me when I started. It may be for me in the future, but right now it isn't for me. And looking at things as data or feedback versus it being, I've made a mistake. Because I think we can sometimes look at our career and expect it to be up and to the right.

**Matt Story:** And no careers like that, and you're going to get to the point where you get enough feedback to say, I need to, to your point about choices, I need to make a different choice. And I think being okay with that and to your point, separating yourself from that to be able to know like, okay, I can make a different choice because I now have this data as opposed to we can sometimes associate with our identity and say that I've made a mistake or I'm at fault here.

**Matt Story:** And so I think that's powerful, but I'm, I'm curious how you were able to really be comfortable Thank you. Um, and I think that's the other piece of it's sometimes challenging to tell someone what we want or to tell someone what we're interested in because we're afraid That they may, you know, judge us, or they may say, well, you can't do that.

**Matt Story:** Or we, we, they may, they may not accept it in a way that we, you know, ultimately want to get to that point. And so sometimes we'll keep our ideas or our interest or our passions to ourself, and we don't share it with enough people and of course, Most people you talk to, they want to help. And they, especially those that have been where you want to go, they want to say, Hey, because you actually, selfishly, you get something out of helping someone.

**Matt Story:** It feels good. And you feel like you've done something. And if we don't tell people those aspirations, they can't help us. And so how did you. overcome that, like, you know, again, it was probably initially awkward to ask for, Hey, I'm interested in this sector. Can you tell me more about this? Cause you didn't go in asking for a job.

**Matt Story:** You just wanted to understand. And as, as that person got to know you, then in their mind that click, well, I actually have a position. So how, how did you jump over that hurdle, so to speak?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, I was just over it in my head. I'm like, I can't, I, I don't like anxiety. I don't know about you, Matt, but I don't think anyone here likes anxiety.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I was just over trying to figure this out, the anxiety that was happening. I'm like, what if I just ask and just being in my career and seeing the people that were at the top, what made them successful, they asked questions. When I was at those powerful meetings, they didn't know the answer. They asked questions.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** So if they were asking questions, I figured why not ask questions? Mind you, there is also the, like, the therapeutic stuff of like shame, judgment, how are other people going to feel? I mean, I had to do a lot of that because I shared my story. I felt that pressure of doing the American dream. And then I also want to share this is Yes, we have choice, that beautiful privilege, and we, as you were saying, collecting data.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I was collecting a lot of data. What I sometimes forgot to do when I was younger that I wish someone reminded me is as you're collecting data from people asking those questions of what you think you want to do, take the time to pause and reflect with yourself and ask yourself, is this what I want to do?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Cause so often we collect data from all these big names. Like, okay, if they're successful, I need to be exactly like them. And there's nothing wrong with someone else's path, but check in with yourself intuitively of, wait, do I, do you, do I think I'm going to enjoy that? Well, what Matt's doing is really cool.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I'm so happy for him, but I don't think I would like doing the same thing, but what did I get from Matt's interview? Oh, I got that. I'm really good at this, this, and this. So maybe I explore it this way. So don't just collect the data, but reflect and then make that choice.

**Matt Story:** Yeah, I love that. It's, we always, you know, relate the professional world to the personal world, because I think that they aren't separate.

**Matt Story:** I think they actually are integrated, but in the business world, you do quarterly business reviews. And you sit down with leaders, you review progress, you look ahead. And I am a firm believer similar to what you just said of like, we need to do that individually. And whether it's quarterly, it's monthly, whatever the time duration is, but making that committed time to look at where you've been, what is the, what is the data you collected?

**Matt Story:** And like, are you still on track? And is that even the journey you want to be on? Because I think we don't necessarily realize like you can change course, you can change that path once you have more information. So, so I. You've worked with a number of people, over 600 clients, 23 different countries. I'm curious with that diversity of people and that number of people, what has been the most surprising thing to you in those engagements?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** My most surprising. So I'm Filipino American, Asian American, right? But like I said earlier, I work with women of color, so from different backgrounds and the most surprising, but also. Encouraging and makes me feel good and gives me butterflies is when I'm on that zoom call, or I meet a client in person, they say this, it's so nice to see someone who looks like me.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Because I get it. That's actually why I started my coaching business is because I didn't see someone who looked like me, who had lived experiences and knowing. You know, I, we didn't even have to go throughout the whole session, but even the first two seconds, when you turn on the zoom, it just gave that individual hope that, Hey, if this person was able to carve out and create their own path, I can do it too.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** That's been the most surprising and the best compliment I get when I coach clients. I mean, sure. They've made all these money, like all this money, accolades have an incredible marriage, but. That's my favorite part of coaching.

**Matt Story:** All right. So. We talked a little bit about this before we started recording, but I do want to go back to it and, you know, you really focus on not just.

**Matt Story:** Capturing accolades, but creating legacy. And I'm curious for you, how do you think reframing success can actually change people or even more importantly, change their behaviors?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. I mean, we were talking about the chasing accolades, right? I said, I had straight A's earlier, valedictorian. If you look at my LinkedIn, you'll see all these media features like Forbes and Business Insider.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** But at the same time, even as I was getting all that stuff throughout my life, I had, I had to ground myself and check in, like. What is my definition of success at this present moment? So for your listeners, even asking, what do you want right now? Right. So. In about a month, for example, my dad's going to have knee replacement surgery.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And so what a privilege it is for me to be able to be there for the first 10 days of his surgery. And I know that sounds weird, but that's what success looks like for me right now. Being able to be there for my dad. That would be so different in my life when I graduated high school where I was valedictorian where I was just studying my butt off and not making life in my social life.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Also in college, I actually stayed a fifth year in college because I realized on my fourth year or actually third to fourth year I was studying way too much and it was all about academics and I wasn't enjoying and having fun. And so what does success and joy look like for you at this present moment?

**Matt Story:** I also think there's a shift from external validation to internal validation because the accolades are typically for others.

**Matt Story:** It's typically to credential us in someone else's mind. Whereas the idea of being able to say I'm successful if I can be there for my parent That's an internal validation that you can achieve and you can use it as your North Star to say am I doing the right things because that's important and that's where I want to be.

**Matt Story:** And so I think it's also a shift from where are you getting that validation? Is it external or is it internal? Because I, I think we both probably can attest chasing external validation, you'll always be chasing that.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yes. I mean, there was even a point in my own business where I was realizing, oh my gosh, once again, it's not the straight A's in valedictorian business.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I was chasing like the likes and the comments. I met up with one of my old team members. She was my former virtual assistant and she's in my team again. And I was asked, I love, I just always ask for feedback. So whether you're a business owner or career leader, I would just say, even asking your colleagues, Hey, what have you noticed that has changed?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** What can I do more of? What can I do less of? And a beautiful compliment she gave to me was. It doesn't seem like you have to prove yourself anymore. I'm like, that's so nice. I'm because I was, I was absolutely doing that in the beginning of my career and beginning of my business. I felt like I had to constantly try to prove myself, especially as a person of color.

**Matt Story:** So you also have a podcast and anytime someone else has a podcast, I'm always curious, just like, why did you start a podcast and what have you learned from it?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I mean, I don't have your last name, but I love the storytelling. So I just, I love meeting people. I love the storytelling and. I feel like we could really understand one another.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I mean, I'm a millennial, right? So Zynga, LiveJournal, back in the day, getting to know those stories, as opposed to like a restricted characters on social media or 30 second reel or TikTok. You get to really know and understand people and that's what I feel like with With podcasts. And also I'm overlooking like doom scrolling through my screen.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** So it's really nice to just listen and pop in your headphones while I'm doing laundry, washing the dishes, cleaning.

**Matt Story:** Yeah. It's funny. I always tell people that having a podcast is like an invitation to be with anyone. Because normally if you were to just randomly email someone and say, Hey, can we meet up?

**Matt Story:** I don't know who you are, but if you're like, I have a podcast, would you like to jump on the podcast that tends to lower the barrier and they're like, Oh yeah, I'd love to do that. And so it literally is a cheat code to, as you say, making those connections and then sharing it with the world, which is, you know, obviously the gift that we get to give to others.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I don't know if you feel the same way too, but people that have podcasts. I mean, I feel like all of us have a similar, like, I, I want to be like, Oprah, I want to interview people like, Oh my gosh, what a privilege to. I mean, do we have the big billion trillion dollar production that, that Oprah has no, but yeah, exactly.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Not yet, but how great it is for us to do it with the tools we have right now. I might as well do it.

**Matt Story:** Yeah. So you left that dream job to pursue your dream passion of coaching. And since then you, you know, you've done other things. And so what I really have seen is there's this shift and you're one of these people that have a portfolio career.

**Matt Story:** You're not just one thing and you're able to tap into, you know, what, what and how your passions are. And I think more people over time are going to move into this phase. And so. I'm curious, how have you been successful in adding products, services, offerings to what you do from a business perspective? And what have been the lessons you've picked up along the way?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, well, I want to kind of talk about this portfolio career, just to validate people who might be listening. Who's like, I hate my industry or I want to shift. This is my third time shifting, but. We are different from the baby boomer generation and shout out to Gen Z even like teaching us a lot to us millennials, but there's data that shows that we shift and change careers.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Five to seven times in our lifetime. So just to validate those that need the data and when I reflect back in my career, I was working, working in politics as a field organizer, and then I was a fundraiser to coaching. All those experiences helped build me up for the next thing. So I know so often we think about the career ladder, but all those experiences and skill sets help.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** When. I got into my business, I think I've changed my title probably four times. And for those that may have a business where like, what if I shift or change again? I just want to let you know, nobody cares. And I don't mean that your job or your business doesn't matter. It's just, no one's really thinking about that for you.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I mean, I think, I think about like In N Out for example, In N Out is known for burgers. There's number one, two, and three, and then there's this special ingredients. And for me, I've had to understand what I want to do and what also my audience has wanted. So when I first started, it was actually first generation millennial women I wanted to work with.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And then as it's expanded, I was like, wait, I'm realizing working with more women of color. And then I've had some allies messaged me like, Elaine, I know you work with a woman of color, but do you know any white women I could work with? And I was just like, actually, because you're asking that question, you can work with me.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** It's more so values align. So even listening to what people need and in my services. I did the mistake where I did so much and a lot. I started my business when I was 28 that in this past year, I've simplified it where I only work with my clients, either one to one or through my mastermind where there's monthly one to ones.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And when the pandemic and COVID happened, I used to have like two hour office hours. People would show up for the whole two hours Zoom. I noticed in the past two years, we're recording this in 2024. So 2022 to 2024, my clients didn't want to show up for the full two hours. And even asking for feedback, Hey, what's going on?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Am I not serving? And everyone just said they had Zoom fatigue.

**Matt Story:** So.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I noticed because no one was willing to stay for the full two hours, I shifted and said, okay, I have a 90 minute office hour. Come and go when you want to. And I had to take ego out, but even asking for feedback from my clients of what do you need?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I'm noticing this is not happening. If you don't make it mandatory and we just show up when we can, that would be great. I'm like, okay, so it's like college. So listening to feedback and I used to have programs, which is business coaching and career coaching. And then I tested it for about six months and combined both my business and career leaders together.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And it was beautiful because the common challenges they have, it actually helped in coming from different experiences where as my clients came together individually, they're like, Oh, I'm not the only one going through my problem. So it felt very therapeutic for my clients too. But what I want people to hear is noticing when things change and shift.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And then asking for feedback and not assuming that. What you're doing is right all the time.

**Matt Story:** Yeah. Oh, no, I love it. And in showing the adaptability that you've had across it all, where it's like you expanded, you contracted, you've morphed, you've listened, you've, you've, you've, but you, in all of that, you're providing value and no matter how your customer needs change, you're providing value so that, that, that's the consistency.

**Matt Story:** So on that, I want to switch into your personal brand a little bit and ask you, what would you say is your superpower?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Empathy. I know you hear this from a lot of your guests too, but being able to listen, to feel a room, to feel what someone needs. And sometimes when I'm like sitting down with a client and they might be ranting about something, I'll ask, what do you need right now?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Do you need me to be nurturing? Do you need me to give you feedback? What is it that you need instead of making assumptions that someone needs a solution?

**Matt Story:** Yeah. Yeah. Where do you think that superpower came from?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Like I said, I grew up in a, I was the first one that was born in this household of six adults.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** So I felt the emotions of all those adults. And then I am the oldest of two brothers and then the oldest in terms of all my cousins. So I had to, I worked on therapy on this and even told my dad, but my dad used to call me the HR of the family. I'm like, dad, I am not the HR of the family. I am the daughter.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I am a sister. I'm a cousin, but. So often family members would come to me like, how do I talk to my mom or my dad about this? Or I want this, how do I communicate? Or my parents were like, why

don't your brothers do this? So often I was just navigating how to communicate different things. So people would understand.

**Matt Story:** It's fascinating because you, you were in essence, a coach, you're a coach for the adults because you probably understood. America more easily, because you were younger than they did. So you were helping them adjust, but then because you were the oldest, you were helping the next generation coming up because you had gone through what they were about to go through.

**Matt Story:** And so it's like, they actually put you in that, the, the, the job that you ended up getting from

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** my clients instead of my family. You know, but,

**Matt Story:** but

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** that I would not want to get paid by my family to coach them. They, they need to do their own help. but Yeah. It's hilarious because my mom tells me like, cause even when I was younger, back when we didn't have cell phones, I was always, even on the phone getting the, the cordless phones.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And then when the battery would run out, I'd get the other phone talking to friends and she's like, you're getting paid to talk. I'm not surprised.

**Matt Story:** Yeah. I've seen that there are certain things that are consistent throughout people's journey. The destination has changed, but there's are, there are certain consistencies that can, they carry through.

**Matt Story:** So have you had a mama, we made it moment?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. I, I was waiting for you to ask this question because, you know, we're recording this after the Superbowl where Usher, you know, in his performance was like, mama, we made it. My mama, we made it was when I presented for the universal music group. So that was my first big presentation.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** I want to say that was within my first year in business.

**Matt Story:** Hmm. Nice. Nice. We're going to close out and have a little bit of fun. We'll When they turn your life story into a movie, who would you want to play you on the big screen?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yes. I was thinking about this. So I'm going to say when I'm younger, Michelle Xu from everything, everywhere, all at once.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And then the older version, Michelle Yeoh. So just that, that whole cast there.

**Matt Story:** Okay. Okay. I always like when people think about it as the full journey and like having different segments and chapters with different actors to play the roles.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. What

**Matt Story:** song would play in your trailer?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** So the 1994 song by Desiree, You Gotta Be, right?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** You gotta be bad. You gotta be bold. You gotta be wiser.

**Matt Story:** Yeah.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** That's my soundtrack.

**Matt Story:** Nice. Nice. So I'm a huge fan of stories. As, as you mentioned, the last name doesn't, doesn't hurt, but I think there's so much we can learn from hearing someone's unique experience and, and apply in our own lives. But for you, if you could sit with three people, they could be with us, they could have passed on and hear their story firsthand, who would be your three?

**Matt Story:** Yeah. Absolutely. Absolutely.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** So I'm really grateful to have two matriarchs in my life. Both of them recently passed and I wish I could have asked more questions. There was also language barriers, but it would be both my grandmothers on both sides. And the third one's a unique answer, just because I selfishly would want it, but I would want my future self.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** And the reason being is that we all know this as humans, we go through some stuff in life. And I kind of want like my older version to be like, Hey, Elaine, you know, that time when you were like 43 and you were crying on your floor, actually, that was a good thing because this, this, and this happened, like, like, I want that validation of, of the bad.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Well, I don't want to say bad. There's a negative connotation with that, but in the hard times in life.

**Matt Story:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. You, you want the wisdom. To give you the ability to get through, through those tough moments. Yeah, that makes sense. So is there anything I didn't ask that you want to share or anything you want to ask me?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. So you have the beautiful last name story. So what is your intention for this next chapter or current chapter of your life?

**Matt Story:** Yeah. So it's funny because it goes back to what I think is important to what you do in your day in and day out work around legacy. And I want to plant as many seeds as possible.

**Matt Story:** And I think that I'm in a phase and, and, you know, it takes different times for all of us to get there, but I'm in a phase where I've moved away from thinking about things in terms of what do I get out of it? And like, you know, what is the, the monet, you said, you said about like the matter with that job page, it wasn't enough.

**Matt Story:** I've moved away from that like monetary reward into the, my reward is an impact. And how do I. Increase my impact that helps others with their story. And so really just trying to think about where and how can I be strategic. in planting those seeds because there's so many places that I, as, as we talked before we got on, that I think stories help us and I just think it's a solution that is standing right in front of us.

**Matt Story:** And it's like, it's not, it's not something because of technology. It's not something because of where we are in the world today. If you even go back many, many years ago, which I like to do. I think about like how stories have made a difference. Think about the civil rights movement. And how stories actually moved the overall sentiment towards civil rights in this country.

**Matt Story:** I think they have songs about it. Exactly. Exactly. And so I, I just think it's something that's literally within everyone's reach, but we don't go to it because we tend to think about, I need to solve it with data or I need to solve it with, you know, technology and like, again, those are enablers, those are tools, but I think stories is one that is a solution.

**Matt Story:** So I'm just trying to figure out how do I, how do I make that, you know, More prevalent in our world and where are the, where are the places I can do that can have the biggest impact, but thank you for, thank you for asking that.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. Well, thanks for doing that already with this podcast.

**Matt Story:** Yes, indeed. So another two questions, who is someone that I should have on the podcast, but with my caveat, you have to help me get them on.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah, I'm actually thinking about one of my former clients and friends Chela Gage. She just became the Starbucks VP of Global Inclusion and Diversity, just got the job. Nice. Happy to introduce you to her, unless you know her.

**Matt Story:** I don't, I don't, but I just read a headline that they're opening accessibility cafes.

**Matt Story:** So, which, which is fascinating me for a number of reasons, but yeah, would, would love that connection. This is, this is a new question I'm adding. I, I stole it, I stole it from the up and smoke podcast that Matt Barnes and Steven Jackson do. So I unapologetically I'm stealing, you know, another good idea. You know

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** what, there are clues from other people and I don't think it's about stealing.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** It's about helping each other grow. And if people have a problem with that. Then they're not your people.

**Matt Story:** Exactly. Exactly. I just want to give them the credit. I, I always want to make sure any ideas that I, you know, borrow from, I want to give credit, but before I let you go, if people want to follow your story, they want to follow your podcast, they want to follow what you do with the business, where should I send them?

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yes. So if I have my own podcast, just like Matt shared, so feel free to check it out in any streaming platform. It's called WOC and allies. Business and career real talk. And if you're interested in my story, if you are having challenges in your own career and you would love support, feel free to schedule a call with me at elainelou.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** com forward slash call. That's E L A I N E L O U forward slash call.

**Matt Story:** Awesome. Well, I thank you for coming on and sharing your story transparently and authentically. It really means a lot. I appreciate you.

**Elaine Lou Cartas:** Yeah. Thank you, Matt.