

WOCAndAllies_EP92

Elaine Lou Cartas: 777. I know I'm so clever. Seven years, seven figures and seven lessons in business. And I love an angel number. I'm from LA. So before I share with you the seven lessons learned in business in the past seven years, making seven figures, I just got to tell you The angel number reading I read, which meant I just Googled it before I hit record.

So the angel number 777 is linked to self discovery and personal growth, which is basically what this podcast episode is going to be. So you are probably. You know what? I was going to say you're probably going to want to take notes, but this is actually a good podcast episode to listen to if you're doing chores or walking or going around nature.

So let me just dive right in on my seven lessons in business after seven years and seven figures. So number one. Celebrate your wins along the way. Majority of people that listen to this podcast are ladies. So ladies, we don't do this enough. We don't celebrate our wins because society taught us to be humble and quiet, but we see men sharing their wins all the time and.

proclaiming what they want. So celebrate and share your wins. Even for my career coaching clients, I tell them to create a brag sheet of all the wins and accomplishments they've done for the year and to constantly update that probably once a month or once a quarter so that when the annual review comes up, they can ask for a raise and provide evidence on why they deserve the raise and or promotion.

So how does celebrating your wins relate in business? I remember. a couple of years, even now to this day, where sometimes it gets so bogged down with Oh my gosh, I have to do this. I have to do that. And not feeling like traction was happening because so often we focus on the end result, right?

The big ending, the big finish, but even daily, but instead of just doing a to do list, putting a to win list, for example, sending that pitch, getting that sales call, creating that email and sending it like I'm. for example, thinking of small wins today, one was actually, I just got off a one hour call with my baby brother.

He's not a baby. He is. Oh my gosh. He's in his thirties. I don't know exactly what age, but he's in his early thirties. And so I got to catch up with him and I don't normally talk to him a lot because for those of you that have brothers and you're a big sister, boys don't talk much. So I got to talk to him, that was a win.

And I say that's a win because before, when I started my business, I didn't make time for personal time. A second win was I got to sleep in, and when sleep in, 745, which younger self would be like, that's too early. But 745 is a win. sleeping in. Got to do that. Third was talking to a possible prospect who seemed like a really good, fit and also being unattached if this person is going to convert.

And then right before this, getting a sales call scheduled. So these are small wins. That could lead to big things. And if you notice, I started my small wins with talking to my baby brother. By the way, I have a podcast episode with my brother where we talk about how he changed careers and how I helped him.

He basically paid me through food. Actually, he never paid me. gave me food back. So I think I'm just saying this in this podcast episode so that I could remind him to pay me back their food or just giving me time because I love bonding with my brother. But anyways. I am digressing a bit. So celebrating your wins.

And I'm looking for that podcast episode. It's episode 27 with my brother. If you want to check that out, we cry a bit. We talk about our challenges being a first gen immigrant. So going back to wins, celebrate your wins. So I spot, I talked about the dailies, how those daily to win lists, not just the to do lists and even big ones.

I'm at seven years in business. I was just updating my business plan today. Met with one of my coaches, reviewing it, looking at my cash flow, making sure I'm focused on the huge pillars and even sharing with her wins. Like I'm grateful for creating a seven figure business that was slow and steady. I didn't have the, I made all this money overnight or within a year.

I'm glad I did it slow and steady like a turtle and not burning me out. Yeah. I did get burned out a bit, but not burning me completely out. I'm grateful that I've served 4, 000 clients from 48 different countries, or 38 different countries, having two courses with LinkedIn, having courses with 20 universities, including Brown University, Penn State, and USC, And even though I don't have this yet, but finishing my hours to, I just finished my hours to be a professional certified coach through the International Coaching Federation.

I'm doing this through a school called Center for Executive Coaching. And this is a highly regarded certification for 400, 500, Fortune 500 companies. And I'm already working with these type of companies, but this allows me to be a better coach, which I'm excited about. Another one is reducing my business expenses by 50 percent this past year compared to the year before and comparing it to two years ago like I reduced my expenses by 75%.

I'm in closing where B2B business, which is business to business and organizational clients and owning that I don't need to do the most that I only want to work with 24 B2C business to clients because my client results and client experience is what I want to be known for, which shows like you can go to my website, elainelou.

com forward slash testimonials, go on YouTube, go on Yelp, Google business page, my Instagram, I have two IG results highlight reels on LinkedIn. I have. 43, recommendations. I have hundreds of five star ratings and reviews. I pride myself in that and I am really grateful for my team and I for providing that type of service to our clients.

So what's my number one? Lesson for you, celebrate your wins along the way, including the lessons that has happened. When there's a challenge or there's a problem that happens,

what I always tell my clients too, it's okay, what can you learn from it? And how can you create a system with it? So in the beginning, when I started, unfortunately, it happens when you start, but I attracted clients that were not aligned and they wanted refunds or they want their contract and I didn't know what to do.

So then now I have an email template. I see say my lawyer, I have a lawyer. So now I have a process when that happens. Thankfully that no longer happens because I also put a system and process in place where the people that have calls with me are my most ideal prospects. And if they fill out the form on scheduling a call, if you go to ElaineLiu.

com forward slash con schedule a call, I also have a process vetting people out. So if it's not a good fit, I did this last week where I canceled a sales call because I was not going to be a good fit to support this individual. So I let them know to honor both your time and mine. We just decided to cancel our call, but here's another person or a resource that could help you.

And so even having high quality service for people who are not. my most ideal clients but giving them another resource. I just want to remind you people, remember how you made them feel. And there are times when I have done sales calls with people and they've decided to go with another coach. And before I used to be like, Oh, if you change your mind, it's not a good fit.

Please contact me instead. I celebrate them. I'm I tell them, Hey, congratulations. I'm so glad you made an aligned choice. You found the right coach. I wish you all the best and I'm sending you good vibes and energy for you to hit your goals with this coach. That's it. I don't need to be like the latter before where I was like, if you, if it's not a good fit, contact me.

Gross. That's like just desperate. Okay. Second tip or lesson is going to therapy. I don't know if you've heard this quote, every new level, there's a new devil. So as you are growing, and I'm not saying growing in terms of revenue, but just growing, you will get pushed sometimes. It's going to trigger you and make you realize things you need to work on.

And this happened to me. I was realizing in my coaching business a couple years ago that I was getting caught up in the popularity contest, also having to be performative on social media, where I was doing lives every day, posting every day, even posting my personal life, like what food I'm eating every single day and not being present with my loved ones from my family to my boyfriend.

And I had to ask myself, is this how I want to operate in my business or even my life? Am I just doing this just because everyone else is doing it, but how can I do this in a way that honors my own voice? And then I realized that's not what I needed to go back to therapy for. How do I honor my own voice?

And I'm so grateful for therapy, specifically EMDR therapy. That has changed my life. I have talked about EMDR therapy in different podcast episodes. And let me share with you my

experience with therapy. I started when I was 18 because it was free in college. technically not free because it was part of my tuition, but I was just like, Hey, why not?

I also got, my major was in cognitive sciences, psychology. So it's you know what, let me just experience it. And so I did talk therapy for about eight years, but I was just tired of, okay, I'm self aware. I know what's wrong with me. How come nothing's changing? And my therapist at the time, I've gone through different therapists, was like, I think you're ready for EMDR therapy.

EMDR therapy helps rewire your brain from past trauma so that presently when you're triggered, it could rewire and you don't be triggered anymore. See, when it comes to trauma, for example, let's say this actually happened to me, but not to this extent, where I was five and then I got burned by hot water and I got third degree burns.

And This didn't happen to me, but let's just say it did, where anytime I see hot water it would be triggered and I would be sweating and it would trigger me. I knew that I was triggered by the hot water. I kept sweating and I kept being traumatized by looking at hot water. So when that happens at five, like a traumatic experience, it gets stored in your brain that your body is going to react that way.

So to rewire it, it's doing EMDR. Going back to that core memory back when you're young and then neutralizing that feeling in your brain and then rewiring your brain by using bilateral stimulation, which is doing like eye movement or doing bilateral pats on your shoulder or your leg, depending on, and you're doing it to yourself, not the therapist.

And it just rewires your brain. It was life changing. I also don't recommend it to people right away. If you haven't done talk therapy helps ease it into. And I have a blog about it that I could put in the show notes, but if you want to read about it, go to elainelou.com forward slash EMDR.

And I hear so often people telling me, Elaine, I tried therapy, it just didn't work. I want to challenge you that it's probably because you did not find the right fit for yourself. So I encourage you to go to psychologytoday.com, exactly how it sounds, psychologytoday.com and filter out. Maybe you're looking for someone specific to help you with who you are as an individual.

For example, I wanted an older Asian woman therapist who understood my cultural upbringing and I wanted someone older experience life situations. That's what I needed because I was going through this pressure of being a woman in your thirties and you may hit these milestones. I needed someone older, In their 60s, which I found that was a great fit for me. And maybe for you, you want someone that's specific to a gender or gender identity, ethnic or religious background, or a therapist who understands neurodivergencies like ADHD or bipolar. Or someone who specializes in a specific type of trauma. You could go filter that at psychologytoday.com.

com and interview several, five. I did this in one day. I just had enough of my bullshit and I needed to heal. And so I had five back to back interviews. It did take a whole day. And then I knew who the one was because they cracked me and made me cry. And that's how I found my therapist. And I probably haven't seen my therapist maybe in eight months.

But. It's like a car. I know I'll probably need a tune up because you can't control what happens in life. Like the last time I saw her was because my gram, both my grandmas passed away, so I needed to talk to her about things and grief. And that's when I started, obviously, I can't control when loved ones pass away.

So highly encouraged going to therapy. It's When you are running a business, it is going to trigger you in things that you need to work on. And I find when I do both therapy and coaching, it helps. I also find bigger leaps and bounds with my clients who are also seeing a therapist or have seen a therapist.

So I share that. I have also ended contracts with my coaching clients because I realized despite trying to guide them. To create an aligned life, there was blocks that they needed to heal from their past. I'm like, hey, I want the best for you. I don't think coaching or even my coaching is going to be helpful for you because of that.

I want to, it has nothing to do with your performance or results. It's just, I'm my intentions to think of what's best for you and I believe we need to enter a contract and you should consider looking for an online therapist. I have done that a couple of times and I'm so glad I did because I don't want my clients to waste their time and money and I want the best for them even if that means it is not me.

Or a coach. Also, I've said this time and time again, but if I had to choose between therapist and coach, I would say therapy because the difference between therapy and coaching, therapy heals the past and blocks. Coaching helps you with future goals, but you can't hit future goals if you're not healing the past.

Just saying. Okay. Third lesson. Ah, this is a good one. You need to define your own. version of success, happiness, and being enough. And what's your definition of enough? Here's the reality. We live in a capitalistic society. where we are socialized to want more and the newest. Do you remember life pre smartphones?

We didn't have to get a new updated phone every year because there was a camera. We'd probably got a new phone every couple of years. Yet, that has changed, where people who are deemed quote unquote rich will get the new latest phone every year. And even when we were kids, feeling shameful when we didn't get the newest kicks.

If there's anyone younger than millennials listening to it, kicks are shoes, just FYI, are the newest clothes. And this translates into our adulthood, where it's we want more. of this and that. Would I suggest, side note, because it just came out, watch Inside Out 2. What a movie.

I, wish this movie and its predecessor, Inside Out, existed when I was a kid or teenager, but you know what?

I'm just gonna be grateful for what it is now. So watch Inside Out 2 because it talks about emotions and your definition of enough and your sense of self. But what is that for you? And what's shaped that for me was I was a former fundraiser, as I shared with you before, my first business with being a fundraising consultant.

And I was a fundraiser for two different industries. One was political campaigns. One was fundraising in the nonprofit sector. And I remember when I was working with a couple of candidates based in LA and their donors were of new money, which meant Lots of flashy named cars and fashion and comparison to a non profit I work with based in Pasadena.

Pasadena was the gold rush city in California. So wealthy families back then in the early 1900s from the Midwest and East Coast moved to Pasadena. So it's a lot of old money, generational money. And I got to see how old money and new money is different. Because people with old money, they dressed so humbly, driving Priuses, sure they had a statement ring, but they knew what was important for them.

Pasadena is known for having a lot of non profits, so a lot of these rich families have their own foundations, giving back and spending. And it was so lovely to see. I will say, I used to be that person that would count how much money they were wearing, I'm wearing 1, 000, I'm wearing 2k. Ugh, thank god I am not that anymore.

But what is Enough. And from my experience. Of success and happiness, even in coaching, it has evolved. I thought I needed to be like Tony Robbins or the other big names having the most clients making impacts to like billions. And I just realized, you know what, I'm okay being like an Ivy league where I accept a few clients, 24 clients to work with, except two to four new ones.

each month for Macs because I care about my client results and client experience. And for more accessibility, I have my two courses on LinkedIn. I want to create more licensing and courses for business and organizations. Like I already have courses, Penn State, Brown University and USC and 20 other universities.

And for free resources, I have this podcast that I could give back where I have two podcast episodes I do per month. And I know I've been talking about success, happiness, and what's enough in business, but also personal. I have a privilege and I choose to take my parents to their doctor appointments, to their physicals, to get blood work.

I choose to do that. Yes, they are. They live far away from me. They're about, they could range from an hour and 15 to two hours to commute to because that is LA for you. It depends on traffic. And I'm so glad to have that privilege and choice. And then wanting to start a family too. Those, that is my success, happiness, and what is enough.

And even right now, no shame to people that say this, but I know other people say, okay, hire someone to do your launching. I have laundry running in the background as I'm talking to you. When I was talking to my baby brother who's in their 30s prior to hitting record here, I was talking to him while I was hanging my clothes because I'm old school Asian and I like air drying my clothes as opposed to putting it in the dryer because I believe that if you put your clothes in the dryer, it's not going to last long and you air dry It's longevity And yes I'm giving you a tip in terms of laundry and clothes for your clothes to last longer and this has nothing to do with seven lessons in business, but you're welcome.

I just Threw you an extra present on why you should air dry your clothes, but I digress. So let's go stay focused yes Please, take some time to find your own version and definition of what success, happiness, and enough looks like. And also know, this will change and evolve as you get older and you go through different life situations.

Sometimes there are situations where you need to focus more on one thing, like my dad's getting ready for his second knee surgery, so more energy, time, and resources spent with my dad and my family. Also good news, I, my godson was just born a couple weeks ago, so I'm gonna see my godson who's also my nephew and my brother, who's a dad, next Tuesday and I get to see him after I take my dad to a doctor's appointment.

But what a blessing. I'm so grateful. Number four. I gotta warn you, I wish someone told me this, but And it's ugh, I already know I need to work on it. I don't really want to work on it. But it's something I had to work on. Improve your relationship with money, numbers, and data. Okay, look, I used to joke around.

I'm a broken Asian. I'm not good with numbers. Watch your words. They're spells. That's why it's called spelling. And I had to watch my words and re change that. And I realized I needed to change my relationship with money. See, I'm pretty intuitive and spiritual. What a lot of people don't know is I'm Reiki certified.

And I thought starting my business, I'm going to be doing good work in the world. Money's just going to come to me. I'm like, if I throw this and do this, it's all going to come. And I remember not looking at my numbers, how I got clients. And it's always been heavily referral based, but I just got tired of the way I was doing business in the beginning where I spent 30,000 on Facebook ads and a Facebook ads consultant and I got 30K in debt.

And thankfully I have an amazing boyfriend who's an accountant who put this beautiful budget and cashflow sheet that I even now share with my clients. And I realized, wait. In order for me to improve this, I actually need to look at it and ask myself, do I really need to spend money on this? Is this really working for my business?

So I shared this earlier as a win, but I just reduced my business expenses by 50 percent compared from last year to this year. And from about three years ago, I reduced my expenses by 75%. Which is huge. I had to make lots of cuts, lots of difficult conversations, ending contracts with contractors because I realized my business didn't need it and my client results didn't need it.

And being honest with my profit margins, I also, I know this sounds crazy, but I want to say in the past year I have looked at my numbers at least five times. out of the week. I try to do it every day, weekends happen. And I'm not saying just look at numbers in terms of my bank account, but my cash flow, my marketing.

For example, what has shifted and changed this past year is 38 percent of my revenue comes from businesses and organizations. So that's a high compared to previous years. And so now I'm more on that so that I can limit myself to the number of B2C clients, which is 24 clients at one time that I work with.

Also in terms of my B2C, my business, my clients that I work with, my business career coaching clients, about 38 percent of my clients are career coaching clients and 62 percent are business coaching clients. I'm sharing that because I've seen a shift where there's been, I used to have like about an 80 20.

more business coaching clients, and now I have more career coaching leaders like VPs of Fortune 500 companies that I'm working with. And so knowing that, and what's the common thread between these clients? they're leaders, they're women of color, and they're allies, and they're going through challenges of having a safe space to express what they need support in, whether it's team dynamics, communication, getting to that next level, or changing industries or careers.

Or even if they're a business owner, how are they going to communicate to their team, leadership challenges, and managing that. And also when it comes to numbers and data, don't just focus on the vanity metrics. Like I was focused on, I'm going to do an IG live every single day. I'm going to have this many likes.

It's just exhausting. Then you just become a puppet to constantly perform, which I also am very mindful I need to work on. Because. I was a straight A student, valedictorian. I performed, all throughout grade school and then I realized I was doing that in my own business, even though I thought I healed that from therapy.

But what is actually moving the needle? What are your KPIs, your data that you're going to look at? So when I was updating my business plan, I was putting KPIs, okay, I want to continue having a 50 percent email open rate, having a minimum of one new sales call scheduled per month, which I've been on track with having a 1.

5 percent 12 percent email open rate. So I know the numbers. that I need to hit my revenue, like all the data points. And so even asking yourself, what is the data point you need to look at? Or even knowing, like I shared earlier, that 38 percent of my revenue comes from organizations. And I know that my income stream comes from three things, referrals, renewals, and Google SEO.

Going back to the vanity metrics, one of the things I also focus on is I know people talk about increasing your email list and increasing subscribers, but I care about the quality of the

people on the email list. So I used to have an email list of 1500. Now I have I think 882 subscribers. I scrub my list once a quarter.

I delete people who do not open my emails. I need to do that again, speaking at which, because I'm recording this in a new quarter, so I'll tell my assistant to do that. If you want to hear more on support when it comes to improving a relationship with money, numbers, and data, check out episode 66 with my client Claudia.

She shares four steps to reduce financial anxiety, and she has been the behind the scenes scaling businesses to seven figures. All right, fifth lesson focusing on client service, and you will see sales increase. I have to admit, a mistake I did before and I'm glad it happened because it helps me change my client's service.

But I remember working with a client a few years ago and I have a great high touch method and process when I receive a lead and how they convert to a client. And she called me out and she said, Hey, It's different, like how you treated me before I became a client is completely different to how I was a client.

I feel like you don't listen to me. You don't read the notes that I send you. And I lost her as a client. I was like, you're right. So we ended the contract. And I had to be honest with myself, what's going on? I don't have that type of client service when they do convert to a client. So I changed my process to ensure I now have a high caliber client service process, not just when they are leads, but also when they are clients.

And despite that being a painful experience and receiving that feedback, it has created such a higher renewal and referral rate. I have hundreds of five star ratings and reviews that you can check on my website, LinkedIn, Instagram, Yelp, YouTube. And I'm just really grateful for that. So what I do once a quarter is I connect with one or two clients that have been with me for a while and ask for feedback on things that I want to shift and change.

For example, even combining with the fourth tip of looking at dated numbers, I was looking at my profit margins and I realized events are a lot. And so I'm reducing my Two retreats I do a year to one because it was between choosing the retreat versus choosing like the coaches that support my clients and I chose Getting rid of the retreat and making sure I have the coaches that have been consistent to work with my clients Cuz yes My clients to get one to one time with me at least monthly one to one and there's office hours with me twice a month My clients also enjoy the office hours with Monica for marketing with I read for intuitive guidance and Gabby for assistance and project management.

My clients get a huge ROI and results from it. And to be honest, it's like an aunt or an uncle. Sure, I'm going to give feedback, guidance, and advice for my clients. They're always going to hear the cool aunt who's going to say the same exact thing. And then my clients are like, Oh my God, it resonated when Monica said this, and then they're going to do it.

But it goes back to what's moving the needle for my client results. But I will say. In person events has been huge. That's why I used to do it monthly, but now it's once a year, and I'm just going to make sure it's an amazing experience when it happens that once a year. So the next one is going to be in April.

And if you want more details about that, go to elaineloo.com forward slash retreat. another thing with focusing on a client's service is see if you need further training or a certification. For example, I am focused on being a professional certified coach through the International Coaching Federation.

That means I have to do 125 hours of training and have a minimum of 500 hours coaching clients have way over that. But it's given me a framework. And this program has absolutely improved my coaching where clients have worked with me for years, have even noticed the difference of how I'm listening more and giving the framework and guidance for them to move them along in their own individualized goals.

Like I have noticed the difference even with myself. I'm so grateful that I'm doing this and that I'm going to get the certification. Highly recommend if you're looking for an ICF school. I did the program through, why is it, why am I not thinking of it at the top of my mind? Certified. You could probably hear me typing, but I did the

Center for Executive Coaching.

And then I'm also working towards being a certified minority business enterprise and a certified women's business enterprise. And I just realized the importance of constantly updating my skills and my tool kits. even two years ago, I became a trauma informed certified and just adding more things.

And it's not because I'm just addicted to it. I love learning and growing, but seeing how I could be more. effective and support my clients. So for example, I'll be honest. I remember when there'd be times in the beginning of my business where clients need support with their mindset, and I just didn't know how to help them with their mindset.

But now going through the certification, I can be, I have more experience and tools to help people when they're going through a challenge or need a reframe because of what I have learned. So check it out. Episode 23, get clients with ease through referrals and renewals. My sixth tip, creating and owning your own intellectual property.

Like I said earlier, I used to be active on social media all the time, but who owns my content that I put on social media platforms? This is why I have my own podcast that you're listening to right now. And if you haven't yet, be sure to follow and I have my own email newsletter. And if you have enjoyed my email newsletter, go to lanelew.com

com forward slash join. I own this content on my podcast. I also owned the content in my emails. Also own content that I do with organizations. I just was tired of being this

performative hamster wheel and I wanted to be less spending on social media. So even though yes, you don't get a return fast, Oh, the ROI long term is amazing.

Like I said earlier today, I was on a sales call. I just got a sales call scheduled before. I don't think I posted today. The people that I am attracting are such ideal clients. And also here's the difference with the people that I am attracting versus what I used to when I was posting on social media.

It's just a higher caliber. of clientele. They know what they want, they were searching, they were researching it, they were intentional of how they want to spend their money, who they're looking for. It's just a different game with these types of clients. Like I am so grateful that I create and own my own intellectual property.

And I'm not dependent on social media. And if you want to check out more resources, check out episode 38 on how I became less dependent on social media. And it's with my marketing strategist, Monica. Okay, seventh lesson. You always have choice and agency to change things. I get it if life changes. I get it if how you used to create your business now, you no longer love.

Like how I used to do monthly in person events, used to daily lives on Instagram and Facebook. It worked. It got me clients. I loved it, but it burned me out and I needed to change it. So how did I change it? Asking my audience and more importantly asking myself how I wanted to create my business. So that's when I implemented new strategies like podcasting, email newsletter, and Google SEO.

And it's created such a sustainable business where I don't have to perform. Even in this podcast, I have the camera off because I just was not feeling it in terms of recording. I haven't washed my hair in two days. It's oily. It's in a bun. And I do not have makeup on. I'm recording this in my pj's and so I want to do it and that's how I changed my business or even a simple choice of I had this opportunity to be in this big podcast network.

I just had to hit download numbers in order for that to happen. I needed to record at least weekly podcast episodes, which each episode, it does take about four hours to create. So even though this is less than an hour episode, it does take four hours in terms of my team, not me, but my team to create. So it takes time, energy, and money, and it just no longer sustainable in terms of other things my team and I are focused on.

And even though I had the intention this year to do weekly podcast episodes, about two months ago, I'm like, you know what? Two podcast episodes a month. I'm good with it. And what I want to remind you is that you can always change your business, whether it's a small decision from going from four podcast episodes to two like me, big choices of, I don't like the way I'm getting clients.

It's not sustainable. Let me do it a different way. You have choice and agency. So here's what I would love for you to take away from this episode is

ask yourself what you want. the life you want to create. And the hard question is, your business supporting that? And if not, what needs to change? And if you don't know what needs to change, journal about it, go walk. And then you're gonna have to do the hard part where you go through your budget sheet and go through each line and be like, do I really need this or not?

And see what happens. You have choice and agency.