

EP104

Elaine Lou Cartas: Happy New Year. Can you believe it? We have a new year. I still think the 2000s were like five years ago, but it is officially 25 years ago. Now I know a lot of you are in the, okay, I need to do my goal setting for 2025. And if you are in that vibe, go check out episode 102. Didn't hit your goals this year.

Six things you can do. I know I recorded it at Q4 at the end of the year, but this episode is still relevant when it comes to goal setting and to be transparent, goal setting shouldn't just be every year. You should always check in with that. And here's why I decided to do this episode on my 2024 lessons learned and how I'm planning 2025.

I was actually reviewing my marketing stats, not just for Q4, but also for the whole year of 2024. Starting to make a game plan for 2025 because it is important to check in to see what's working, what's not working. And here's what I learned from you all. You all actually enjoy my solo episodes more and nosy and want to know all the mistakes and lessons of my life.

And you're all Basically bullies, but this also makes complete sense. Not because I think I'm this big celebrity or influencer because I'm not, and I'm not trying to be, I know who I am. I'm a human. And just like you. I don't know about you, but I'm sure you're seeing, you're just tired. I'm tired of seeing everyone's literal highlight reels in life on Instagram, TikTok, MySpace.

Does anyone use MySpace? If you don't know MySpace, I'm dating myself. And here's what I've noticed with lessons I've learned. I realize that many times when I'm insightful and learn things that really resonates with my clients because I tend to share what I've learned. And if that resonates with them, then why not share my insights and lessons to you?

And also cause you're nosy. So let's drop the beat.

Number one, be brave enough to listen to your thoughts and feelings. We live in a society where we're always seeking joy, even quick fixes, maybe a glass, a drink, even getting like a runner's high where you're running or watching Netflix and chilling. But what are you avoiding that makes you feel uncomfortable?

I loved watching inside out too earlier this year when it came out, I think came out like what, during the summer. And we see not just the shadow side, but also the light side of emotions, one of them including anxiety. We always think anxiety is negative, but it is also positive in a sense that anxiety is there to show you maybe there is something.

You want to work on or question. And for me, this past year, I'll talk about both professionally and personally, but professionally, it was even looking at my business even more. How can I simplify, how can I cut things? And the results is I improved my profitability three times this past year. I was just looking at my P and L reports with my finance team.

And personally, listening to my thoughts and feelings. I've had to learn to not be reactive, to learn to self regulate, like if I'm feeling triggered during a conversation, to take a deep breath, give myself space. And this is the hard part. Try the hardest to continue to talk in a calm voice, even if the other person we care about may have a raised tone.

Has helped me in my relationships move forward when having conversations with folks. I know that I've been in situations like, Wait, why are you angry? Why are you upset? And I realized it's something that was triggered and I've had to notice, Okay, I'm being triggered right now. It's not necessarily the individual.

They're not trying to spite me. So how can I just be calm? And just respond in a calm tone and this helped things move forward. So how I'm taking this lesson of being brave enough to listen to my own thoughts and feelings is

Being brave enough to be in the quiet that when I'm done doing a task for work or I'm not doing something, or let's say I'm even washing the dishes to not just automatically put my headphones on to listen to a song or podcast, but to be in that quiet and listen to what's coming up. and it might, and those small voices, I'm not saying it's going to change your life.

Like I need to end this friendship that could be as simple as for example, I was burnt out, like last month I'm like, ah, I need to move my body or I need to take a nap. Let's go take a nap. Or I, need to do more Muay Thai. So the reality is, that what we need to work on, it doesn't come from a loud booming voice from the sky, which we often see in the movies, but really what we need to work on, it comes in whispers and are you brave enough to listen to it?

So I will be brave enough to listen to my own thoughts and feelings so I can see what I need to work on. And if needed, get in touch. The support I need or ask for people for support. So my second lesson for 2024 is question everything. Why does it even have to be like this? I have this, okay. I'm just going to say, I.

I don't really like the quote, follow the breadcrumbs of success, because here's a problem with this quote. It's someone else's framework. Think of it at school, school, was created so, it was created from the industrial revolution. So we could be factory workers, listen to rules, listen to other people, not being willing to understand, to think outside of the box.

And we live in a Western country like America, if you're listening to this in America, where, we are bombarded with ads and social media showing that in order for you to be happy, you need to be famous. You need to have a lot of followers, you need to post a lot. And that's why I really love traveling to different countries because you get to see happiness differently.

You get to question the culture and society that you might come from. Like when I'm back in my motherland, where my parents came from, which is Philippines, there's so much poverty there and mind you, it's obviously a horrible situation, but then these kids, they are smiling and that's what I mean by just questioning everything.

So this past year I questioned my business doing things they were continuing to do, I need to even get more? I was brave enough. I remember tackling it. It was even, it's still on my website. And I'm actually thinking of reducing it where I'm like, I only work with 24 clients at one time. I only bring in two to four new clients each month, which to this current time, when I'm recording this podcast is the truth.

But even for Prepping for 2025. I'm working through my numbers with my finance team of actually, I want less. I'm gaining bigger B2B contracts, working with leaders and teams of organizations where I don't need to work with more people. And that's made me realize I want to be even more selective with my B2C.

Clients. And I feel like this year I've owned the, I'm a boutique coaching business, similar to a liberal arts school or an Ivy league where I only accept a certain number of clients. And now I even want it to be smaller. So I questioned that in my business. Do I want more? Do I have to post all the time?

No. Speaking of reviewing my marketing stats, I was looking at my marketing stats for Instagram. I get the most engagement when I post stuff doing Muay Thai than I do business. LinkedIn is a bit different. LinkedIn, I was reviewing. It was more authority, but that was just interesting. and then even recording this podcast, like I shared in the beginning of this podcast is all of you like listening to my insights, my thoughts, my lessons learned and my mistakes.

I'm like, Oh, I did not expect that. Okay. But that, like I said, I think it makes complete sense because it's a reminder that we don't have to be perfect. We don't need to have a filter on. And so I know I'm sharing, questioning everything, why I shared professionally, but even personally, I just to give background, I am the oldest daughter, also my generation.

So this past holidays, obviously we're going to see more of our loved ones and oof, I had so many people come to me and share with me what they're going through. And thank goodness I am trauma informed one, two, I've gone through my own therapy. And it's still energy to hold space and, I've learned I don't need to solve other people's problems.

And I can simply ask the question to people who come to me, how can I be there for you right now? I've been practicing that question more and more when people are opening up to me, Hey, how can I be there for you right now? And honestly, I want to say maybe like 99 percent of the time, they just needed me to listen.

Before I was like, I need to solve that problem. I need to give them advice and feedback. And here's the part, the hard part. despite even knowing okay, they have a solution that they came up with, but I may disagree. I bite my tongue and had to remind myself that it's their life, not mine. a good example is I'm such a huge proponent of therapy.

I wish everybody could do therapy, but I can never force therapy on someone. even therapists will tell you like, yeah, I think you're. You're loved one in your life, the person you

care about should go to therapy too, but they're not going to go because you tell them they need to go because they want to.

So going back to the second to lesson learned of 2024, question everything why and how I'm bringing this into 2025 is my action item this year is to do making sure I'm doing a constant check in. Hey, am I enjoying what I'm doing? does this feel like and look. I know there are things that we have to do that we don't find joyful, like as a woman I need to get a pap smear to make sure everything's okay, it ain't joyous but I know it's important, or even paying taxes every year, I know it's not joyous but if it wasn't for taxes I wouldn't have had the wonderful public school education I receive and the roads I drive on.

I'm very Californian I know by the way. So checking in with myself resonates go back going back to number one of being brave enough to listen to my thoughts and feelings like just checking in and I remember when I was in my teens where I, didn't know how to check in with myself. I always had to talk to a friend or a loved one.

What do you think of this? What should I do? And never asking myself what to do. Do I want to do third 2024 lesson learned is if you want to improve something, be consistent and come from a place of not being attached to the results. I will say being a coach for almost eight years, the clients who do really well are willing to be consistent without being attached to the results.

They are recovering perfectionists and they're not waiting for perfect. They're willing to go try and learn and see the data. So for example, this past year, I got back to Muay Thai, which is Thai kickboxing. I actually started 21 years ago. I have the basics down. Whenever I go into the gym, people always come to me and ask, how long have you been doing it?

And I say, 21 years. And I always see their eyes open. It makes sense. Your technique is so good. And I always tell them, I've been on and off, but if I was consistent, I would be better. And I see my friends who've been doing it for two years now, right? 21 versus two years, but they've been consistent and they're at the same level in terms of technique.

And if not better, I'm not saying this to make myself feel bad, but it's true. And this past year I've been consistent going about two to three times to do Muay Thai a week. And I am getting so much better. I was actually sparring. Sparring is another word, fighting like in consent. doing two minute sparring rounds with boys and I look forward to it 'cause I am getting better.

It's interesting 'cause when I spar and then I see a technique they're doing like, Hey, how did you do that? Why did you move your hands that way? I literally did this today with my coach. I was sparring him like, I noticed your hands are like this is it to keep distance so I don't hit you. what are you doing?

And then he showed me, yeah, this is what I learned. Or even when I grabbed a kick, I'm like, Hey, I'm starting to do this one, two, one, two step. What are your thoughts? it's my

consistency one, but two, I'm asking questions of the why, help me understand, or I'm noticing this and that has actually translated so well, even into my coaching, this past year, I became a professional certified coach, the International Coaching Federation.

So think of this like a CPA for accountants or getting, oh my gosh, what is it? In my, when you pass the bar to become a lawyer, it's like that it's not required for coaches, but I One of my strains is being futuristic if you take strains finders, and I just know that the coaching industry is going to change.

And more importantly, I wanted to be a better coach and doing it this past year, I have improved in my coaching where I've had mentors listened to my coaching calls with my clients. consent of feedback on how I could improve. And even when I feel stuck with a client, I will go back to even my coaches and mentors.

Hey, I noticed when I asked this question, my client felt stuck. What should I have done better? Even that I'm improving, but my action item this next year for 2025 is slowing down, seeing why something isn't working, asking the questions, Hey, what are the small tweaks I could do to be better? Whether it's Muay Thai or even my business.

Like I met with my bookkeeper and we were taught. He was just really impressed of my bookkeeper and tax accountant. He was really impressed with like you. Definitely have improved on your profitability. What did you do? I was like, I was just constantly looking at my numbers. And even then, as I'm doing my budget for 2025, I'm even seeing what things I can delete in terms of bottom line expenses.

And even going through even my own reality check, what do I need to increase in terms of pricing as well? So that's my third lesson. Want to improve on something, be consistent. And then my fourth lesson learned is I've been listening to Dr. Lori Santos, she's a Yale Cognitive Scientist and Psychologist.

And she's had a lot of research, one of them is like the Achievement Fallacy, we unfortunately have this notion of once we make x amount, once we have X amount in our bank account or have this X title, I will be happy, but it's actually not the achievement that brings joy. It's actually enjoying getting there.

And then when it comes to play, the, there's been the talk of how nowadays we have this loneliness epidemic. And there's not so much the art of just. Hanging out. I'll give an example. I've been enjoying going to weddings now that I am older, not in my twenties, but older now. And when I have friends who are getting married in their mid, late thirties, early forties, I'm enjoying their weddings more.

Why? There's no crazy agenda for two to three hours. There's no okay, there's going to be speeches from X amount of people, we're going to do an activity, people are going to dance, and I also am mindful that there are cultural traditions, depending on your culture, I

completely understand that, but the, and this is based off of my limited case study of friends or weddings that I've gone to in the past, I want to say three years.

The weddings I really enjoyed is my friends who have these weddings and they have two to three speeches Maybe like the dad's for both or best man. That's made of honor Oh, what was interesting is there's been a couple weddings where they didn't even have a bridal and groom party I was like, that is amazing.

I want to do that. One of my friends who I went up to her I was like, I loved your wedding. It was simple. It was just like two speeches They did their wedding cake cut, they didn't make a big deal for everyone to watch them. They just did it on their own. The photographer was there and their parents were there while everyone was talking because they said, Hey, our goal for this wedding day, we don't have all be together like this.

This is probably going to be the one night we just want to talk and connect. The talking and connect the unstructured play, the, Hey, let's hang out the, we don't need an agenda for everything we are doing. And I have loved going to those weddings and I share that metaphor because we don't have that as much.

And so I have been. More mindful of it. hey, let's go hang out. I want to see you and just have coffee. I think that's why honestly I've been enjoying Muay Thai too. It's like we learn things, but then we have the unstructured play of doing, sparring, and just enjoying the moment. I think we forget to play And this is just so millennial of me because I also think about back in the day when we were kids or teenagers, like we'd go hang out with our neighbors, we'd have an agenda, we had bikes, or if we wanted to just play make believe.

But don't forget, you could do unstructured play as an adult as well. So how I'm taking that to 2025 is being more intentional, I mean we are adults now, kids, even grandkids, of getting dates in the calendars with friends that I want to see. Cause it's not as easy as when we were kids or teenagers. Hey, what are you doing Saturday?

Let's hang out. we all have different roles in our lives. So even being intentional of connecting with old friends and that just reminds me of one friend I want to connect with. So I'll go through the four 2024 lessons learned. I'll just sum it up. One, be brave enough to listen to your thoughts and feelings.

And how I'm taking that for 2025 that you might want to do is not like being in the quiet, not putting my headphones on automatically or looking at my phone through scroll to question everything. Why do I really need this? Do I really need to continue doing it this way?

Want to improve something, be consistent, come from a place of being attached to the result. So for Muay Thai, for me, for example, I'm bringing it in for 2025 is, ask questions when you notice I'm sparring someone, Hey, you did this. Why did you do it that way? Even in my own business, like as I am doing some pretty big contracts, seeing being mindful of

seeing what's working, what's not working, there's even things I want to tweak in my mastermind.

For my B2C clients where I'm like, okay, I notice doing this will be better for my client's results and maybe even reducing this part of it. And that's what I should be doing. And then fourth

is having unstructured play. And for me this year it's continuing doing Muay Thai, one. And then two, seeing my friends. I know I shared my lessons learned, and I'm not saying my lessons learned are also your lessons learned, but what I would love for you to take away is giving yourself grace and space, time to think and journal.

What did you learn about yourself? And how can you integrate that into 2025 consciously, like I will say, as I'm reflecting on the things I was sharing, it's been hard is when I'm having difficult conversations because we are adults or we're humans. And reminding myself, let me respond back in a calm tone.

Cause let me tell you, 21 year old or teenage, early to mid twenties, Elaine? Oh my god, when I got into difficult conversations, I would yell, scream. I was so emotional. I just want to thank my therapist. For that help. But even now as an adult, I'm being more mindful of it. I was an adult then, but being older, fine wine, I'm being mindful of it.

And I still don't get it perfect, but being conscious of it. So I hope you enjoy this new year. I know there's all the advice popping out right now. How can you have the best year of your life, like new year, new you. And I want to remind you, you are enough.

The questions like just how can you be the best version of you and you get to define what the, what best means.

Unfortunately, we live in a world of shame when we realize, Oh, what mistakes did I learn from last year? And we try to bulldoze and keep going, not thinking about, Hey, what did we learn yet? I want to challenge you that there are beautiful blessings in disguise in those lessons. And when you give yourself time, you can grow.

For example, I'm sure you could think of those friends who are still with their partner They consistently complain about and the answer is so obvious to you break up with them or a friend who's at a toxic job and The obvious answer is to leave but with those friends Where you know the obvious answer, but they know it too, but they won't do it.

They're not allowing themselves the brave enough space to listen to what they need. And I'm not saying you're going through this situation. I'm just saying there's so many lessons we can learn if we give ourselves space and time. To reflect on it and how can we continue to create small action items for the future.

And if you enjoyed this podcast episode, here's four things you can do if you feel called to do them. One, if you could leave a five star rating and review, that would mean a lot to both me and my team, because we create this podcast for accessible education for women of color and allies. Each episode takes about four hours to create.

It takes me one hour to prep another 30 minutes, one hour to record. Then my team spends another two hours to edit and market. And number two, because we care about accessible education, share this with a friend who is probably like me before we're constantly doing, working, not giving enough space and time to reflect and think, and they continue to make the same mistakes.

And I say that from experience. Share this with them and send a personal message on why they should listen to this third Don't forget to hit that follow and subscribe button because when you do it lets the podcast platform you're listening to share this is gonna let them know. Hey, maybe you let other watercolor allies like you listen to it and fourth if you need support in your career or business Because you want to have a sustainable life You And you're interested in working with me, then schedule an introductory legacy business anchor review call with me.

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