

EP108

Elaine Lou Cartas: Hey, legacy leaders. So I'm in my childhood bedroom. Yep. I'm at my parents home and my childhood bedroom consists of storage. If you are a child of immigrants, you would understand, like there's just piles of things. Mind you, I have old stuff here. I need to go through like old high school clothes from forever 21.

Books. I have my old Muay Thai gear, which is gross because I haven't cleaned that and that probably needs to be thrown out. I hope you are not judging. But I am actually here at my parents home because it's the last week before my dad goes back to work and he failed in his intention of a career move, which you know, we're talking about uncertainty and career moves and what I mean by that is my dad took it's almost a year, I don't know exactly how many months, where he actually had two knee surgeries.

And he had an intention to retire because of his knee surgeries. Thankfully his recovery has been great, but he decided, Nope, not retiring. I am going back to work. And thankfully he has a great boss and. He's not going full time. He's going part time. He just misses his friends. He is tired and true boomer.

And what I mean by that, he has been in the same company for 34 years here. He is now a manager for the recycling center that he works at, managing a team of five. Such a boomer to be in the same company for so long. But he misses socializing and Despite his intention of retiring and then now wanting to go back, you know, that's the pivot that he decided to go through and I'm leading with that because I just want to let you know where I'm at looking in my old And here to talk about the uncertainty, career moves, should you stay, go, or pivot?

It's been a conversation I've been having, not just with my own clients, but even friends, family members, even with myself. And outside of our control outside of our own individualized personal lives. What a year, right? Like fires in Pacific Palisades in Pasadena and the fire in Pasadena hit really close to me, like emotionally, because I've shared this in another podcast.

I lived in Pasadena for six years. My old home was one block away from the fires and I had really good friends who lost their homes. Altadena Country Club, where I used to host my retreats is burned to the ashes. Then, there is the federal freezes that has affected my friends who work in government, those who are deciding to leave, and I used to work in political campaigns.

There's layoffs happening in big tech and finance companies, DEI being attacked, and unfortunately, I have both friends and clients who's been let go. And just the attacks on marginalized communities, it's been a year and with all of that going on, no wonder we have a huge trust issue as both humans and consumers, as an employee, as a business owner, as a consumer.

And I've noticed this in my own business, and I know it's not just unique to my business where it is taking longer for leads to decide to work with me or not. And that's okay, I understand that. I've also seen more of a decrease of B2C clients as opposed to B2B clients where I actually have more of an increase.

It, it's just interesting seeing trends, seeing changes, acknowledging it, seeing how I can readjust in my own business and even having conversation with my clients within their own careers. So my intention in this episode is to help you. Make empowered and strategic reflections during uncertain times like this.

Now, I'm not going to say you're going to have a clear choice of what to do, what you shouldn't do, but my intention is for you to start thinking about it in a way that feels aligned to you. Now, let's. Drop the beat. Hey, I'm Elaine TTAs. I'm a business and career coach for women of color and allies. Elaine Weekly awarded me the number one thought leader and Apple Muse named me one of the top five business coaches done doing the most as a woman of color or ally.

And you want to create your own definition of success and happiness? Well, grab your coffee, tea, or boba, and let's do some business and career real talk. Now, first things first, let's, let's understand your current career position. Looking at Your job security, whether you have a current job, you're looking for one, you're a job seeker, or you have your own business.

Is it stable right now? Or is it at risk? Like I shared earlier in the tech and finance industry, it's being hit hardest in layoffs. And by acknowledging that, having that self awareness. Then my suggestion to you is to start updating your LinkedIn, start reaching out to colleagues, just having conversations, seeing how the market is going.

And if you need help finding a job, you could refer to episode 45. That's four or five. I'll put it, I'll put all the episodes I refer in the show notes on how you can find a filling job in life. with Matt Pritchard. So I share more about that. Second, in terms of understanding your current position and assessing your stability finances, I'll be honest.

I wish I had more of a buffer when I started my business. So do you have savings or financial buffers? Whether you are starting a business or you want to transition to new career, you want to leave your job because it's toxic. Before I started my business, I had about I was calculating this like four months savings, yet I didn't plan on leaving.

I got let go. It was actually a good fit in terms of ending that, and it was my dream job. Loved doing what I was doing as a fundraiser. But I already just started my business five months in while I was balancing working full time. Looking back, I wish I did have more of a savings. I'll just be transparent.

And I have also been fired and let go where I didn't have it. I was also younger then, so I didn't have as much responsibilities, having to pay for certain bills. And That's where I was at. So I want you to think of where you're at in life. What's important for you when it comes to savings and financial buffers.

I want to give you other examples. Like I have another client who found a big anchor client, giving them the lifestyle to pay for their bills, to travel and save and be able to do other fun things in their business. So that's what worked for them. Rather than focusing on like, I know you hear it a lot, there's just different formulas to do it.

Right. And we're like, focus on the one thing. What are you going to sell? But for them, it's like, you know what, I just want this big contract. And then I want to provide service to. The thing I actually want to start doing. And then I have another client who realized, you know what, I've been having this business for a bit and I just, I can't sustain it from a job.

Having a business on the side, I need the creativity. And that is okay too. It, it doesn't have to be black or white. It's just more of what you need. And I know money is more of a sensitive topic than talking about sex. So if you need more support in that, check out episode 66, four steps to reduce financial anxiety with Claudia Rucker.

Okay. Another thing when understanding your current career position is also looking at your growth potential. So I have a client who is working at a big fortune 500 company with a fancy title, but the reality is, is to get to the next step. They were not going to be able to move up unless their boss was either going to retire or leave, which was most likely not going to happen anytime soon.

So. They decided to leave and worked for a smaller company, but more responsibility, more growth, more experience and future opportunities. That was a decision that they made. Or maybe if you have a business, something to think about, are you able to grow your business and. Growth. I want to just also challenge what growth potential might be in your business.

Growth doesn't necessarily mean more revenue. I had a wonderful last call with a client today and they had, we were going over their goals for 2025, the work that they've done hitting their revenue goals. But what was interesting was them realizing, you know what my goal is not necessarily to make. The most revenue.

My, my goal is yes, to grow my team to make more income. But more importantly, I want to grow my family. I want to be able to take trips like I'm taking right now because she was on a trip and then she was at a coffee shop talking to me to her growth in her business was having more time for herself. So I want to challenge you what growth might be.

If you have your own businesses, growth. Maybe looking at how you can have more time for me last year. Ooh, what a challenge I was cutting out so much expenses in my business. I was figuring out even how to simplify it. Even this year I had an intention as I have shared, I have receipts from past podcast episodes, most recently in December where I was sharing, you know, my intention is I want to work with more business organizations and it's happening.

I made 77 percent of my income as of today, when I'm recording, February 17th. is coming from organizations. Now, I know that may fluctuate, but it flipped completely. So, what is the growth you are looking for? And the last thing to check in, in terms of understanding your current career position is emotionally checking in.

Do you feel safe and valued? What does safe even mean for you? Or are you considering leaving or ending this current chapter in your life out of fear? Or is this an opportunity for a strategic move. I'm working with a client right now who got let go from their job and at first, it's like, Oh, I should have broken up with them first.

But then they came to the realization of, you know what? I'm glad because I'm able to get unemployment. And rather than rushing and finding the next thing, it's given them an opportunity to reflect on what they really wanted. And something that my clients had clarity in is a major career change. Actually going from working in finances to, you know what, I want to work in the medical field.

Completely different. This means they have to go back to school, but they're learning to appreciate the pause. And a lot of, you know, it's interesting, the emotional check in, it's a lot of the hard work is, oh my god, what about other people's judgments and opinions? Hey, guess what? People are going to judge, have opinions, but at the same time, they ain't thinking about you all the time.

Well, the person's a squirt. thinking about you the most of the time is yourself. And the question you should ask yourself deeply is, am I honoring what is true to me? It's so, I do myself too, where we have this timeline of, Oh gosh, this person's done this at this age. I need to do it. Why am I not here? And rather the better question is what am I doing to honor myself?

All right. Then the second part of this episode is, should you stay? And to consider if you should stay in your current position, job, business, reflect on what stage are you in life? Are you really in the throes of being a parent with the young kids? Are you actually in that sandwich pressure of not just your kids, but also taking care of your parents in addition to taking care of your kids?

Do you, are you looking for financial security? Whatever that may mean to you. And then asking yourself, what is important to you in your career job? Maybe you do want the stability because you have kids going to college. I was talking to a friend about this. They have a kid going to college tomorrow on the way in the next couple of years and they've made the decision.

You know what? I'm, I'm gonna do my full time job, have a business on the side, but ideally I want to have a business full time later, but this is the reality I'm in. And I'm okay with that. So, actions to take. When considering if he should stay where you're at, what is your personal life goals? Just start there, you know, what are my life goals?

And if you have a partner or whoever is important in your life, talking to them about it, coming with an open mind, those are people so often forget, Hey, ask for feedback from friends who have gone through what you are going through or in similar situations. And I actually would encourage older friends.

I've shared this before, but I appreciate friends. I'm a millennial who are older than me and wiser. And I don't mean wiser, like, Oh my gosh, they have like the best degree and title, but life, like they're seasoned in life. Like the reason why I have. A boomer therapist is because I wanted a therapist who went through life already, where I could be like, you know what, I'm at this age, I am thinking about this and all these pressures.

And they could be like, yep, know exactly what you're going through. Like, that's what I looked for in a therapist. But also when going through life decisions, I like talking to people who are older than me and season and experience in life where I could ask them for feedback on stuff because. Life ain't always bright, you know, but at the same time, going through those moments of testing yourself allows you to better understand what is important to you at this moment, because I will say it changes, right?

Like, It's so funny. I'm looking to the left of my computer as I'm recording, and I have this, this vision board that I created when I was in my mid twenties. And there's this picture of like, this floor to ceiling window apartment that I wish I had in downtown LA. I didn't end up living in downtown LA. I actually lived in Noho Arts District.

But I look at it, and my Vision, and I'm like, oh wow, that was very, I don't know, really cared about what other people think. Anyways, I'm, I got distracted because I looked at my vision board from my mid 20s, so let me go back to this. So should you stay? I can't answer that for you, but you could ask yourself your personal life goals and ask for feedback from people you feel safe with, who are seasoned in life.

All right, should you go? Should you leave? Here are signs to consider if you should go. Maybe you're feeling burnt out. You're in a toxic work environment, or there is a lack of growth. Or maybe you've been thinking about leaving for a while, and you finally have. A backup plan. So here are some steps to take if you're considering leaving, you know, if it is looking for a job, update your LinkedIn, reach out to recruiters, reach out to your network.

I mean, at the beginning of this year, the medical general surgeon talked about how. Not beginning of this year, sorry, last year that we have a loneliness epidemic. The best way to get out of loneliness is to connect with people being vulnerable. And I know it's so hard to do because unfortunately social media apps have taught us to be addicted to looking at our phone.

I've shared Dr. Laurie Santos's research before. She is a Yale cognitive psychologist who has the number one course in Yale on happiness. And she talks about how going on social media is, it's like a example of eating junk food. Tastes so good, but it's not really good for you, right? Like looking at reels, viral content, looking at faces.

We think we're connecting with people, but we're not. It's not the real thing. And we heal when we actually connect. We learn and grow when we really connect. And if it's not face to face, it's live on the phone or Zoom, but I'm just, you know, using phone, old school. So I said steps to take if you are looking for a job.

When it comes to maybe you have a business, maybe it's time to test a new service. Look, I tested this actually and at first I was so against it. But as I shared earlier, there's such like a trust issue that people have, including myself as a consumer, of I don't know if I trust them. Look, I have been I've been a coach for seven years going on eight, and I have invested in things that didn't necessarily give me the return that I wanted.

I don't necessarily mean financially, but seeing things under the hood. And it's interesting. I've had clients hire me the past year who have worked with big names that I'm not going to share their names and they have shared. I thought I was going to get a lot from it, but I didn't. Didn't, and I got more from you and you're not so much a bigger name.

And I hated to break it to them, but I was just like, yeah, because it's, they know how to market really well. They know they could have affiliates and be associated with certain names. They have big followings, their social media content looks great. And you think you could trust them, but the reality is then you realize, like, they're just really great marketers and they consistently show the same people in client testimonials.

I've talked to other colleagues like this, and it's just unfortunate, and I really worked intentionally to get away from that, where, okay, how can I be different from what people see? I actually had a client last year who is a VP at a financial institution who decided to work with me and I asked her as I do, whenever I start working with a new client, what made you want to work with me?

And she said, you don't have a big following. And you don't post all the time, like, Oh, wow, that's interesting. Okay. Why is that? Like, well, that means you're busy with other clients. You have a life. You don't have to try to prove anything. I was like, that was just so interesting. Right? Like I'm so much into my niche or being a coach and seeing people post all the time.

Like you think, okay, I have to do that too in order for people to trust me, like, wait, what if I could do this differently? Legacy leader. I know what you're thinking. Elaine, you have such good stuff here. I want more. So if you want more tips and advice for your business career in life, sign up for my gifts and gifts newsletter at elainelou.

com forward slash. Join. That's j o i n. And here's three things you'll get when you join because I'm like Santa Claus, I love giving. Number one, funny gifts because who doesn't love memes and pop culture references? This newsletter is so fetch. Number two, receive actionable gifts. That's business, career, and life tips that you can start doing today.

Third, the gift of me not only to get my wins, but also my failures, my reflections, my gifts and gifts. A newsletter is like an up to date diary. Think Zenga or Life Journal for my fellow millennials, where I share vulnerable stories. relatable mistakes and important life tips like what to watch on Netflix, like when's the next Bridgerton season.

So if you're ready for those fun gifts and actionable gifts to create a more sustainable life, then join my newsletter at elaineloo. com forward slash join. That's J O I N. All right, let's get back to the episode.

So with a trust issue, what I tested twice at the end of last year was, let me do a one month trial. It was interesting. People are like, I can't commit the six months cause that's what I have. I have a six month commitment. I'm like, you know what? Let's do a one month trial. I get it. And I tested it. And it worked well, but I also give them an intention.

Hey, it's one month and then if it's a good fit for both of us, we could continue doing six months. Now, mind you, it is one month where they do pay and it's a little higher than with someone to pay for six months, but I realized, okay, this is a new service. That I could try out with my clients or people that are possibly interested in working with me that might have been burned from other coaches or completely new to investing in coaches.

It's so fascinating because I have dropped thousands of dollars. I need to add up the number of how much I'm pretty sure probably 6 figures. I add up how much money I have invested in into my own coaches. And people like, Oh, people won't invest in it, but it's about educating them about why it's not necessarily just a luxury.

And I'm not saying even for a coach, but whatever kind of business you have explaining, okay, this is why it's important. This is what you will get out of it. And what I've made sure to stand out from other coaches, Hey, I only work with a limited number of clients, 15 at a time and you get direct access to me.

I'm not going to delegate you to another coach. I do have a team of coaches who specialize in different things. So I'll. I'm happy to connect you, but you have direct access to me and I have 314 client like client reviews that you could check out at elaineliu.com forward slash testimonials. And so that's what I've made sure to do to make myself unique in the coaching industry.

And this is what I want to test as a new service. So if you want to try the one month trial, you could schedule a complimentary call. See if it's a good fit first at ElaineLiu.com forward slash call. All right, another step when it comes to should you go is financial preparation. Uh, just learn from my mistakes.

Don't make the same mistakes I've done before making a leap. I would suggest six to 12 months of. An emergency fund, honestly, 12 months, the more the better, but just creating that financial preparation. All right, next question, should you pivot exploring alternative options? So maybe as a business owner, maybe you're like, Oh gosh, my B2Cs are.

My revenue has gone down. Is there an opportunity of other ways to make money? for example, actually in my own business because of unfortunately, what's happened with The federal funding like in the nonprofit sector where I used to work and it was my first business a lot of nonprofits who? receive federal Grants are worried and realize, Oh, no, we have to diversify our funding.

And I was at a meeting, met a couple of nonprofit leaders because we had to do one minute, like, Hey, what should we do? And I came from a place. This is an opportunity for every nonprofit to do strategic planning, to meet with board members, all stakeholders, not just the donors, but also the program leaders, the constituents that nonprofits serve.

And create a strategic plan on, okay, what are initiatives that are important and how can we diversify funds and getting funding from individuals, companies, and organizations. And because I said that, I had three people come up to me who want to talk to me about doing contract work. And that was my first business where I was able to raise 12, did I say 12 million?

Yeah, 12 million. Sorry, I get confused with my, yeah, it's either 11 or 12 million within seven years. Wild and I just had a conversation about that. I was testing. I'm like, okay, so This is possibly another service that I could offer. All right another alternative option Transitioning into a new industry.

Maybe you're like, ah, you know what? I've tried this industry for X years Different, you know similar job, but I just I just don't like it You know, I had a client who worked in chemistry and was able to transition into doing sales. How did they do that? They start having conversations with people in their network.

And what was interesting is a company that he worked with as a chemist was looking for a sales rep. And it just made sense for them to go into sales because they knew the product so well and the science perspective. And another Alternative, when it comes to pivoting, maybe you want to do both. You don't have to choose one or the other.

Maybe you have a job, and you have a business as well, and that's okay. But as you pivot, or as you go, or if you should stay, considering all that. Even having that mindset of viewing pivots as opportunities rather than setbacks. That you pivoting allows you to honor yourself. And if you want an inspiration of pivoting, it's a girl me.

I have consistently pivoted throughout my career. You could say I have commitment problems, but you know what? I am committed to myself and my happiness. I transitioned working in political campaigns as a grassroots organizer to becoming a fundraiser in political campaigns, to leading political campaigns, working in the nonprofit sector in fundraising, and then getting my master's in leadership and management because I had intention to be an executive director for a nonprofit.

The day I graduated, I'm like, Oh, I've been listening to what everyone else wants and not what I want. To starting my own coaching business. Within my first. Year of career coaching. I made six figures in the first nine months. People are like, how the hell did you do it so quickly? And people just started asking, can you coach me in my business?

I'm like, Oh, I guess I'm a business coach too. So did both business and career coaching now. And. And my seventh year, I realized, you know what, I want to improve my skill sets, my toolbox of being a coach. So I finally got professionally certified through the International Coaching Federation. The reason why I did this, I've shared this in other podcast episodes, the reality is is, as I said, there is a trust issue.

The coaching industry is a low barrier of entry. Anyone can call themselves a coach. Unfortunately, there's not as much like regulation. People could lie about how much money they've made or to the people and the most recognized certification for fortune, not just fortune 500, but fortune 100 companies is being certified at the International Coaching Federation.

And that's why I intentionally became certified. And also getting an executive coaching certification, and I did this because I just saw it. I, you call me a psychic, but I just saw people having a lack of trust. And I wanted to be more intentional, have more B2B contracts over B2Cs, which, as I've shared earlier, has increased.

And I still love working with my executive career coaching and small business coaching clients because, honestly, it, I love it because it keeps me grounded when, and too, I get so much joy out of it. And also, I know I shared a successful pivot, but I also want to share a failure of a bad pivot, but I'm putting air quotes with my fingers.

My dad, he wanted to retire. He was like, okay, I can get these knee surgeries. I'm going to retire as he's healed. And I'm here. It's just happened so perfectly. The last week before he goes back to work and my partner, he is at a work trip. So it just worked out perfectly. He doesn't want to retire. He wants to go back to work.

He negotiated. Well, he didn't necessarily negotiate. His boss like begged him, please come back. We miss you. That's okay. My dad's like, okay, I'm, I'm going to go back, but just part time. And also my dad just cannot stand just being alone. And he's an introvert by the way. He loves gardening. He loves organizing.

He's done all that, but he misses socializing. So he's going back part time. So that's a failure of a bad pivot, but you know what? I know I've shared the example of me as a air quotes successful pivot and putting air quotes, because that's. My, by my definition of successful pivot, I'm giving the example of a bad pivot with my dad.

But here's what I want to share with both pivots. Both myself and my dad have learned to honor what, what we need. I will also share a bad pivot that did happen where I got let go of a job and I quickly was looking for another job because I just couldn't take it that I was unemployed. And guess what happened when I found a job like really quickly.

I got let go again. I was two times in a row. And from that situation I learned, I need to slow down and ask myself what's really important to me. And that was when I was working political campaigns. Political campaigns, they're very short term anyways, because political campaigns end on election day. If I took the time, if I didn't rush into looking for a new job, I would have realized earlier, I should have left that industry earlier, that my ego got back to me.

And I'm sharing this with you, whether you're in a job, you're in a business, I should have taken more time to really ask myself what is important to me. I'm like, yeah, that I didn't want to be in that industry anymore. And that was so hard for me. To accept, and to move on, but my happiness was more important.

So here is my call to action to you. What I want, want to remind you is that life is a constant change. Things move and change. We don't have control over everything. Like, okay, I'm gonna get TMI, so my bad. But I wish I could still eat spicy food. And I legit, two years ago, went to my OBGYN. I, like, got x rays and just to make sure everything was okay.

And then my OB GYN, who is a woman of color, told me, Hey, for women, our hormones change. That means we can't eat the same food. So unfortunately, you can't eat spicy food like you used to. I'm like, okay, I've learned to accept it. Then you know what? Constant change. My body changes. Your body changes. We age.

We change in different life situations. All right, TMI, I'm sorry, I know. And second, you only know what is right for you. Yes, I know I shared here it's important to connect with others that you feel safe with, to ask for feedback, to ask for advice from those who are seasoned in life. But it's important to reflect on your situation, make sure it aligns with your current stage in life, your goals, and not have it be reactive.

And, if you need further support, schedule a complimentary call with me to see if it's a good fit to work together. And I do have that one month trial so you don't have to commit so long like six months so you could schedule that at elainelou.com forward slash call. And if you just need someone to talk to you like you're feeling so uncertain right now, DM me on Instagram or LinkedIn.

I'll put the links on my show notes and let me know what's happening and I'm happy to point you to the right direction. I might just point you to like podcast episodes to listen to. So I'm sending you so much love and just know. You'll know. You'll know what you need to do.