

EP119

Elaine Lou Cartas: So I am recording this on August 12th, a few days after eight, eight for anyone that's into astrology. And I know I'm meeting my LA stereotype. Hasn't this energy been crazy? Now, if you're not into astrology, if you don't believe in it, completely understand. But I will say everyone, I've been talking to friends.

Family members, clients, myself included. Ooh, the energy is crazy. And if you don't know what has been happening recently, it was both Lionsgate and Mercury retrograde, which means we have been in a moment individually where we are fixing and upgrading things in our life. So what does that mean? Expect delays, reevaluate our big why and know that our ego's probably being clashed with being seen, heard, and acknowledged.

So what's important is to be intentional in how we are presenting ourselves. And I share all that because that's literally a text message I sent to my friend because I posted something on Instagram stories and she was like, Elaine. You just posted this to about this after therapy. I know. I feel like I'm just talking randomly.

Oh yeah. It's because I posted this quote by Adam Grant reposted it where it says, personality is how you respond on a typical day. Character is how you show up on a hard day. It's easy to demonstrate generosity, integrity, and humility when things are going well. But the question. Is whether you live by those values when the deck is stacked against you.

And I am sharing that quote. By the way, I did not plan to say any of this, even though I. Brainstormed what I was gonna say before this, because I've just been in tuned with how I'm feeling, how other people are feeling. And in this age of ai, I think it's more important to be human and to share what's been going on.

And this episode is Yes. Talking about how to lead when you are the only because it's been a conversation I've been having with a lot of leaders that I work with. As well as friends and my background, I was born the only, I was the first one born in this country. From my family who immigrated here from the Philippines, I am the only girl in my family besides my mother, but I have two brothers.

Growing up in grade school, I was often the only or few girls who played with a boys group. As a tomboy, I would rather play basketball and dodgeball wasn't a huge fan of handball. Four square, even though I would do it, and just growing up, I always felt like I thought about life and things differently. I remember being, as a teenager, even in my twenties, I would meet people older than me.

They're like, you have an old soul. Now that I'm older, no one's saying that I have an old soul because I'm old now. And when I graduated college, I left California, moved to the Midwest, working on political campaigns where I was the only woman of color, person of color, and became a director at 21 managing five men.

I was the only. I led teams and projects in my twenties and was often questioned because I was the youngest, only woman of color, only person of color. And despite all that, my friends, I was still able to raise \$11 million as a former fundraiser. And throughout my career, and I would even say, 'cause I did a lot of volunteer work for nonprofits, mentoring kids, when I was a teenager throughout my life, I always got asked for help on how to navigate being the only, so in this episode, I wanna share how to navigate being the only, Still earning respect and making an impact, because the truth is when you are the only one at the table, you are representing so many voices that aren't there yet. And I don't know about you, but I wanna be able to help open the door for them too, so I'm not the only one in the room all the time. All right, grab your coffee, tea and or Boba and let's drop the,

I've always. Had a curious mind, which unfortunately has gotten me into trouble and also makes complete sense why I'm a coach. As a coach, we always come from a place of curiosity with our clients with no judgment. Although we do tend to judge ourselves a lot, and I'm gonna be graphic a little, but even when I was a kid, I remember when I was five, I went into a grocery store and I saw a knife.

I was like, oh, how sharp is this knife? And yes, me five years old, I remember I was like, let me just graze my finger on this knife. And guess what? I got a cut and I was bleeding. That's what happened with my curiosity. And as a teenager, I would challenge my dad at the dinner table. And because I had raging teenage hormones, that meant I was yelling or slamming the doors.

Sorry, dad. I'm older now and we have a great relationship, but always questioning the why. It's always been a part of who I am, and as a Filipino first and immigrant, I've constantly navigated this tension between blending in and honoring myself. And honoring myself has often meant speaking up even when I am the only one doing it.

So in this episode, I am gonna talk about strategies and I have, I'm counting right now. Yeah. I got six strategies for you on what you could do to lead when you are the only, the first one. Prep before each meeting, remember, what's your goal? What's the goal from each person in the meeting? How does each person like being communicated to and how have I done this into play?

I recently pitched and got this contract with a company to create an online course on communication using Muay Hai Martial Arts to discuss how to deal with conflict. Because I noticed with this company, they have a lot of great content, but a lot of them are. You're sitting down talking and how I pitched it, I created a memo and talked about UGC, which is user generated content.

How that's the new thing and it's more important now where actually people, audience members are engaged 8.7 more times and it's more impactful than a talking head. Like I had a four page, four page memo, bring out stats. And sources and your girl got the contract in addition to that, another course on the way.

And then we're talking about three other courses. So before you get into a meeting, think about the value add you can provide. And honestly, it was a different way to create this course. And I knew I could have gotten a no, but it was really important for me to honor myself. I also wanna share. As a business owner, there are times I have pitched really great ideas and I've been said no to, and that's completely okay.

Not, we're not meant to work with everybody but just us. I've gotten older, I'm like, this is who I am. And as I've shared in other podcast episodes, I just don't wanna betray myself anymore. I know that's deep. Okay, a second tip. Build relationships. Constantly really excited 'cause I just got two clients who started new jobs this past month and then I just got a message earlier today with a new client who just got this new contract.

She was actually considering going to go back full time, but she's you know what, let me do contract stuff 'cause I wanna do business on the side. And before clients. Start a new job or a new contract position, actually have each of them meet with a direct supervisor, team members doing a simple walk and talk in person or virtual chats.

Getting to know people they're working with, asking them, Hey, what's their goals? How do they like receiving feedback? What's the best way to communicate? There's an established foundation with each relationship, rather than guessing it along the way. It's dating, right? oh, what kind of food do you like?

Having those conversations beforehand, and I also do this in business relationships and referrals on top of Google. SEO has been huge top revenue drivers for me. When I go to events, I observe, once again, curiosity. I know. Who has influence, not just the fancy title, but who knows people. And I like getting to know them personally, not just based off of what can they possibly do for me.

So for example, someone I met last year at a conference, I actually. Didn't even research her prior. I was just, this sounds very LA of me. I was just attracted to her energy and I connected with her. And the reason being is because in the booth there was hummingbirds and hummingbirds is actually, they're just a symbol for me and reminds me of both my grandmothers who passed away and I was like, oh, What made you decide to choose hummingbirds? And then we just got to talk and we bonded over our experiences of grief. And then she just shared with me, actually, we are looking for subject matter experts on leadership development. We connected last year. I followed up, I haven't heard back from her. And then a year later, she literally messaged me today, Hey we, are you still interested?

It's a year later and we have a call tomorrow because people don't. Just remember you for the value and the results, but also how you make them feel. It's a combination of all of it. So for you, can you take note of who's influential in your company? How can you get to know them? Can you schedule a virtual coffee chat?

Or at the next in person conference or meeting, can you go up to them and get to know them? And I know I'm saying that for full time. People who work for a company, but if you

have a business, even doing coffee chats, whether in person or virtual with other people, for example. I'm meeting with someone who I'm just excited.

I am unattached to the results of it, but I'm meeting with someone who owns a security company. She got introduced to me by a friend and I started talking about Moay hai 'cause I've been doing it for 21 years. And her husband was a former FBI agent and I just told her like, I have been trying to find someone like you and I wanna do.

I have this dream for doing self-defense workshops for women, and we have a coffee chat in a week. Just like I said, just that place of coming from curiosity to get to know someone. And in addition to building relationships, being conscious of when you're at meetings, are you backing other people up? Are you acknowledging others for work they've done?

Hey, I, you know what? I really appreciate Sharon for helping me do this project. With her help, we were actually able to identify this and save a million dollars. Or if you got a contract and someone was helping you write the RFP and you're bouncing back with it, and I actually did this with a good friend of mine, Hey, I just wanna let you know, I got the contract thanks to your advice on using these prompts on chat, GBTI was able to get it.

That actually happened. Grateful for chat, GBT, and grateful for my friend helping me with something.

I know this episode is so good, and you're like, how can I get more of this? I have a newsletter that comes out every Thursday that's free, fun and full of real talk. It's a live journal, LGA on Leadership and Life with actual scripts behind the scenes stories and lessons from mistakes I've made so you don't have to for work and life.

Just go to Elaine I. Com join. That's

aecom. Join back to the. The third tip is have a value add sheet, brag sheet. Don't forget to toot your own horn, right? if it wasn't for you, you wouldn't have been able to secure \$2 million contract. And if you have goals to move up in a company or gain more experience and visibility, start having those conversations with your direct boss.

See how you can. Create a plan with them and for you as you've continued to make wins and accomplishments, whether you work for somebody or for yourself. Make sure you update things on your LinkedIn, your resume on your website. I recently found out I passed the 20,000 client threshold and I updated both my LinkedIn and Instagram.

I also, have been working on this past summer of updating my website. I've updated pictures. You could check my website@elainei.com. Yes, I put the plugin, but this past week, my team and I have been updating videos because I realized a lot of the video clips in my website. Is from the first two years of my business, I have been in business for almost eight years, and it's an old version of myself.

I wanna show this new, not new, but this more wiser version, and. I just, I'm like, this is not who I was, and we need to update that. Also, I'll do another podcast episode on this, but want to give a teaser just with the uncertainty of the job market, whether you wanna find a new job or do your own thing as a business owner or contractor, personal branding.

Will be more important, sharing the value that you could provide to a potential employer or client. Huge. I don't chase, I get people coming to me wanting to work with me, and that's because I'm not afraid to show it with my three plus client reviews I have on my website at elaine.lew.com/testimonials and what I share on social media as well.

All right. Fourth tip, trust your intuition. I know I shared about. Preparing, understanding each person in the room, but also check in with yourself with these questions. Is this the right room and right time for me to share this idea? If it isn't, what do I still need to do? Do I need to talk to other people?

Do I have allies in this room in this project for this idea, or do I need to connect with them earlier? Can I work with this person? That's also another question, and also paying attention to nonverbal cues as well. That's important. And this is the hard part, is taking up the judgment and the assumptions of other people and coming from a place of curiosity and data.

timing is everything and. When I would provide feedback to my former boss, I knew the best timing was always first thing in the morning before the day. Got crazy. A fifth tip. I love that. This tip. I think it's the most powerful, but it's actually the power of silence. I've learned to honor being quiet.

Often when I'm at a table, I love observing, making notes of how people speak, and based on what I've observed, just make a statement punch in that value based on my observations so I could provide value, add in the meetings, and I take notes, whether in person or in Zoom call of what is happening and where I can provide value.

I remember I was at a conference a few months ago. Full of executives, I would say. I was the youngest one talking in this group of people, and they were connecting and I was listening, nodding, really engaged in terms of my non-verbal cues, just doing eye contact, nodding, and then I added some value. They were really impressed and shocked.

I smiled and they're like, oh, so what do you do? And I'm like, I'm actually gonna be speaking at the next session. oh, I need to go there. I love when people, I'll just be honest. I love when people underestimate me. oh, she knows her stuff six. this is a little different from the fourth tip, which is have a value add brag sheet, but keep track of everything.

We always take notes and have strategies on how we're gonna get clients, maintain clients, but this should also be the same with team members, people we work with. So you could prepare when you are the only track who influences decisions. Wins you've contributed and

opportunities where you could align with others' goals, like I talked about with a new friend I'm gonna meet next week where she has a security company.

And I do executive coaching, and we're talking about doing a self-defense workshop with a woman because I feel like it is so needed right now. And here's what I have learned. Being the only isn't just about carrying everything on your shoulders, it's being discerning when to speak, how to speak, and trusting when your truth should be heard.

So I'll summarize the six tips on how to lead when you're only number one. Prep for each meeting. Two. Build relationships constantly. Three, have a value add sheet, brag sheet. Fourth, trust your intuition that is good data for you, and come from a place of curiosity, not judgment to them. Fifth, use the power of silence.

It is my favorite. I've been using it more as I've gotten older. And six, keep track of everything.

Remember when you find yourself being the only one at the table, you have the power. To bring others like you at the table too. And if you enjoyed this episode, it would mean so much to me and my team. If you could just take 30 seconds to leave a five star rating and review, it would just help more incredible leaders like you to find this podcast and know they're not alone.

And if you love this specific episode on how to lead when you're the only, share this with a friend or two, send them a message on why they should listen. And if you are ready to go deeper, whether it's building executive presence and navigating high stake rooms, or creating a career or business that feels like yours, then let's talk.

You can schedule a call with me@elainelou.com slash call. That's E-L-A-I-N-E-L-O u.com/call. So until next time, take up space. Take your seat and know you're not carrying it all by yourself.