

EP121

Elaine Lou Cartas: Do you remember back in 2023 when the American Psychological Association came at us and declared middle age starts at 35? The absolute disrespect, I'm kidding. Of course. Of course. I've just learned to accept it. But here's the thing, despite that headline. I've been having some real deep conversations with clients lately that might resonate with you, and this is why I have office hours, even though yes, I do work with my clients one-on-one, meeting them twice a month, but I realize having office hours with clients just reminds 'em they're not alone, especially in this post 2020 COVID world.

Also, can we just be done with this decade? It is roaring twenties in another way. Anyways, I am digressing, but these are things that might resonate with you because I'm literally just recording this episode. 'cause I want you to know that you are not alone. I feel like I repeat myself. So here are the things I've been hearing.

One, I'm done giving my 100%, even my 20% is what most people call their 100. So why or two, I'm done betraying myself. Or three. I don't need another title bump or more responsibility. I just want to embrace enough, and it's been fascinating and honestly beautiful. To see high achieving women start thinking about their lives holistically beyond work, wanting to build deeper personal communities, whether it's with their current ones or new ones, focusing on their health.

And wanting to create more spaciousness and rest. And here's what I've also been hearing. I don't think I want C-Suite anymore or. I want more flexibility, freedom, creativity, maybe even start my own business, or this is real. I can't deal with the gaslighting in this industry anymore. Oh yes, we are gonna talk about it all in this episode.

So grab your coffee, tea, or boba or whatever beverage you need. 'cause this decade's crazy. No judgment. And let's drop the beets.

All right. Let's talk about this whole midlife crisis thing at 35. Here's the truth. When the American Psychological Association or even other people talk about middle age, I know it could mess with your brain and nervous system. I get it sometimes too, even though I'm Asian and I don't raise. But hey, there is some whites in my hair and suddenly these are questions you start asking, right?

Am I behind? Am I too late? Did I miss my chance? before we start going into some tips and coaching that I am providing you in this episode, you're welcome. Early Christmas and holiday present. I wanna share some stories too. Inspire you. Oprah had her major talk show at 32, and that was AM Chicago and the Oprah Winfrey Show started at 33.

Vera Wang created her first dress at 40. Prior to that, she was a figure skater and journalist, and Carrie Washington. She got her BA breakthrough role. On scandal at 35, and here's what I remind my clients. It's not about being air old, it's about being in a transition season, being mindful that you are in a new season where values and life and maybe people around you are shifting or added, and that's not a crisis.

It's becoming self-aware and having clarity. An exercise I do with clients is having a very real conversation with themselves on what is important right now, and here's some examples. That I wanna share with you from even my own clients that might help you know that you're not alone and oh, okay.

This is why I'm feeling this way for some of my clients. It's having a newborn or a young kid and wanting to be present with them, wanting to drop them off at school, pick them up, and having aging parents where you want to take care of them. Or maybe it's not someone else. Maybe you're just like, I'm done supporting others, I'm done working.

I wanna be selfish and that's okay. 'cause I've been there where I have felt resentful, not giving myself time and wanting to, Like maybe it's wanting to do a fun hobby, which is why I'm back doing Muay Hai. I love this martial art or reading. Got my library card. I've been using it more. Thank you.

Los Angeles Public Libraries. So it could be any of that or it might be something else for you. And in my coaching calls, like I shared, these are conversations I'm hearing and things you can start doing. So if you fall in the, I don't want the next title bump for years. That was the dream, right? But then you get there or you see it up close and realize the cost.

Maybe it's your health, your peace, your relationships, and that does not mean you're not ambitious. It just means your ambition is evolving and. You're redefining it. This actually happened to a client. They've been working with me. They thought they wanted to get to the next level. We started doing informational interviews, connecting with people in his network, and he quickly discovered a lot of their friends don't have a personal life that they, that he would want.

So they started meeting with others. Just realize, yeah, I don't want this. So the result, they've decided to shift industries and they're more happier, more balanced, more present with their loved ones. And if you want to learn more, I actually delve deeper in episode 63 on how to change career successfully.

I'll put the link of that episode in the show notes so you could click on it after this episode. Or maybe you fall in this conversation I've been having with clients. I want more flexibility and freedom or creativity. I think I wanna start my own business. I also wanna share, I'm not saying you need to leave your full-time job and start your own business.

'cause sometimes this has happened with a couple of clients where they just want their own business on the side and they want to have their full-time job. They're just realizing. I need a creative outlet to do a side thing. I'm realizing I'm giving so much here that's possible too. Honestly, this is more of a conversation of how and who do you want to give more time and energy to.

Think of it like a pie. Maybe you're having an honest conversation with yourself that 90% of your life right now of that pie goes to your job and you're just done. Or maybe you're like me and some of my clients, you've seen RFPs where consultants are getting paid thousands or even six figures, and you're like, why not me?

Why can't that money come to me instead? And. If you wanna learn how to start your business, start getting your first paying clients. I go more through this in episode 90 on how to start your business and get your first paying clients. So the links are in the show notes.

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. Join. That's

Join the episode. Maybe you're in the, unfortunately, I've been hearing this more, is I can't deal with the gaslighting in this job, in this industry anymore. This one comes up a lot. When you're in a space where your ideas are minimized or your presence is constantly questioned, then yeah, your nervous system is screaming at you.

You're probably in trauma response all the time. I have been there. It's not safe, and leaving isn't failure, it's self-protection. Now, I'm not saying you have to leave right away, but I'll give you tips on just things to think about for mentally and emotionally, and also to protect yourself legally. But I want you to consider how this is affecting you mentally and emotionally, also to your relationships with your partner.

With your kids, with your parents, for your own wellbeing, I highly recommend a therapist and to protect yourself. Keep the receipts of any conversations, emails, messages, and talk to an employment lawyer in your state. There's been unfortunately times where clients. Have had to get an employment lawyer, but it has helped them negotiate longer.

Nces. when it comes to gaslighting, you're not having psychological safety. I did a podcast episode with a former client of mine turned amazing friend Chayla Gage in episode 79. So that link is also here, the show notes. So what ties all of this together is the theme of embracing enough. Many of us have been giving a hundred percent, actually, let's be real, maybe 150% where you're working more than eight hours, and realizing that even our 20% is more than enough for the room and the old definition of success.

And I say this as a valedictorian, first gen immigrant, straight. As the old definition of success was climb, push, collect the titles, be the first one in last one out. The new definition of success, spaciousness Health. Rest deep relationships. There's a viral video right now on TikTok. Actually, it was my own coaching mentor who shared it with me on how millennials and Gen X just gives so much to their job.

It's their identity. And Gen Z's here, I'm good. what are these companies gonna do for me? I'm clocking out right at five. And I know as a millennial, there are times when we're like, I don't get them. But let's be honest, I'm sure. They're also looking at us and telling themselves, I don't want them, I don't want this stress.

And I relate it to, when I worked in political campaigns, I, when I was in my twenties and I looked at the people that were in the industry for a while, I'm like, I don't want that now. I'm not saying you try to be forever 21 like Gen Z. Also, they don't shop at Forever 21. I think they shop at TikTok shop.

I don't know, I'm aging myself, but what I want you to take away is how can you be honest with yourself at this age and stage of life of what you want? And this is where my conscious conversations framework comes in that I have trademark is one pause. Notice the moments where overachievement has turned into self betrayal.

Ask yourself, what is enough here? Second perspectives, ask whose voice are you living by? Is it your society family? Is it yours? And if it's not yours, do the hard work and take time to journal and be

brave enough to listen and ask. What do you want? I kinda think of that scene in the Notebook with Ryan Gosling talking to Rachel McAdams.

Actually, he's not talking, he's yelling. He's what do you want, Allie? That's literally what I do to my clients. What do you want? And then fortunate thing is that as a woman, we've, as women, we've been conditioned to not think about what we want, but how can we be there and support others? Oh, I'm so glad for therapy.

I've definitely worked on that. Okay. Priorities. What matters right now, this chapter of life. If it helps, here are things to consider. Maybe what matters right now. 'cause we are older. Your blood pressure, your community, your joy. So I wanna share this metaphor, that you're probably all familiar with, and that's the story of the turtle and the hare, right?

So many of us have been living like that hare in that old story, sprinting out of the gate, giving 150% running circles around everyone, but also burning out, getting distracted, and realizing. We can't sustain this pace forever. Meanwhile, that turtle steady, intentional conserving energy, and here's what's crazy in real life, these are stats.

A check, Google Chat, GBT, perplexity, whatever, AI or search you Jew. But in real life hares live maybe eight to 12 years. Turtles over 100. Now think about that. The slow pace isn't just about winning the race, it's about enjoying the whole journey, and that connects to something that just happened to me. I had brunch with my former boss, an incredible.

Ally mentor, someone who I adore, someone who I consider a close friend and we had brunch for six hours. Literally shut the place down. Just talking about life. Also, pro tip, if you haven't yet, definitely have friends and different generations, not just people older, but also younger. And she shared some powerful questions that she's been asking herself in every stage of life that I think might be helpful for you.

One, what if your ultimate goal is joy? What would change, and here's a hard one that she shared. What if it's not about mending every relationship? How would that shift your decisions? I know that's a lot. Feel free to go replay that back, but some questions to think about and to add to what she shared.

What if. Success isn't about speed. Titles endless proving. What if success is joy, spaciousness, health, relationships that matter as a reminder, you're not late, you're not behind. You're right on time, and you have agency to decide on the pace and direction of your own race. So here's my invitation. Take a breath.

Ask yourself those same questions that Mild boss did this past Sunday. And also if this episode resonated with you, hey, share it with someone who might need to hear it too. Because we all deserve to live like turtles in a community, slow, intentional, and enjoying the journey.

If this episode resonated with you, do me a favor, leave a five star rating and review. The reason being is because my team and I created this podcast as a free, accessible resource, and when you leave a five star rating and review, it lets other incredible leaders like you find it. And if you are sitting there thinking, Elaine, oh my gosh, this episode, this is exactly the kind of conversation I need to have

beyond my head with someone else so I could get action, accountability, and more important alignment.

I need to talk to you. you can talk to me schedule Call with me@elainelou.com slash call. That's ELAI. ELO u.com/call. We'll see if we're a good fit to work together. Also, no pressure, it's just gonna be real conversations coaching, and you get at least three action items towards your goals. And remember, you don't have to keep sprinting.

You can rest. Just think about the best moments in life. It's a kid's cute laughter. Seeing the sunset and its beautiful colors or just being around the people you love. 'cause you deserve to live. Laugh, love. I know you're like Elaine. That is disgusting. That's how you're ending it. I know. Sorry. Hey, see you soon.