

EP129

Elaine Lou Cartas: I just had my therapy session today. I know you're like, Elaine. I clicked on this episode to listen on how to grow and scale your business. I don't wanna hear about your therapy session. Well, actually, I'm gonna tell you that the work I have done in therapy, me just being more calm and regulated so I can make decisions being that uncomfortable feeling when things come up.

Has been so helpful in scaling and growing my business where I, I've had a 215% profit margin increase. So since last year, probably since May of 2025, I stopped drinking alcohol and I feel like it's been a new evolution, a new person, and as a person, oldest daughter. Filipino immigrants first born here. It feels so nice to not be overperforming over functioning, over anxious, over doing all the most, and in fact, I think I've seen my therapist twice last year.

And once this year, and they're like, well that means your therapy's not working late. No, I have been integrating until, lemme tell you, I've been doing two decades of therapy and my therapist asked me, what are you realizing? Because here's the reality, I was like, I am feeling so good and so calm. Like I don't want this to go away.

What happens if I regress? And my therapist had asked me, what are you realizing? I told her, I can't believe it's taken me so long. To realize I can be successful in such a calm and present way. And I was crying to her. I was like, uh, excuse me. I thought I only cry when bad stuff is happening, or I'm having like huge epiphanies in a bad situation.

But no, like this was actually a good positive feel. The feels therapy session, because here's the reality, like just growing up, I always thought I had to be on the edge making decisions, doing all the things when. In reality, I can be calm. I've been so self-aware of things I've needed to work on since my early twenties.

They say your brain doesn't develop until. You're 25. I am beyond 25. Yeah. I always, well, I know people say they wanna be like Forever 21, but when I think about 21, I was so immature. So if anything, maybe like forever 31. But at then I think about when I was 31, I was still kind of immature. But anyways, what my therapist shared with me is I'm having self insight and.

I know I said it earlier, how the hell does my therapy session have to do with growing and scaling your business? Well, I just came off doing a presentation to 19 minority owned business owners and allies. All of them wanted to know the secret of how to grow and scale their business. It was with S-C-M-S-D-C, which is, you know what I'm gonna.

It's a huge acronym and I am typing Southern California Minority Supplier Development Council. I know that is a long name. Basically, it's this great organization that helps minority owned businesses. So did this workshop with them and I was transparent, like, look, I have slides ready, but I wanna be completely present, so my laptop.

Is mirrored to this TV that you're watching. So if we get to a topic, I'll just go straight into my Google Drive, share insights. Maybe you have questions about like, my best email marketing or Best LinkedIn. We'll just go there because I'm kind of upset with myself, which is why I'm recording this podcast.

I was supposed to record the presentation with my mic, hook it up to my phone, and it didn't record, which honestly, I was kind of back and forth. I thought I was gonna record it or not. And I'm glad I did it 'cause people were so candid sharing. Very vulnerable conversation, so I'm glad that we didn't record it.

But you know, I'm not gonna call you all out, but there's about 10 of you that didn't show up, but that's okay. 19 outta 29, that's about a 66% conversion. And by the way, for those of you that have never done. An event where it's free for attendees. Usually the show up rate is 20%, and when it's LA because it's driving with traffic, it is pretty low.

How the hell did my conversion rate go up? I did personalized videos using Loom, like why would you do that? I'm a former grassroots organizer. Before we had events, we would just do phone calls to confirm. Anyways, I'm already giving you a lot of great tips and then shown we need to get to the start of the presentation.

Also, if you haven't noticed, I am warning you, I will share a ton of tips, so you are gonna wanna probably type this up, take notes, or maybe you are out driving. Working out holding a baby. Then just like re-listen to this later when you can pen and paper, please be stay focused on baby driving, working out, and I'll just blab in your mouth or wait, blab in your ear, not mouth.

That does not make sense. All right, grab your coffee, tea or boba and let's drop the beat.

All right. You don't see 'em, but I have my slides up from the presentation. I am not sharing the slides with you, but I will be verbally sharing it with you because the slides are for the people that showed up. And I'm gonna award the people that showed up for themselves. So, 'cause Wicked just came out in December.

I'm recording this in February, right? So imagine there's a picture. Of our witches out here, you know, are people born great business owners or do they have it thrust upon them? And I like challenging. Business owners and leaders, when you wanna become better, it's like an athlete, a musician, a dancer. So I want you to think if back in the day, or currently maybe there's a sport, hey, maybe it's pickleball, no judgment, that is a sport, or you played an instrument.

I think it was third grade. I played the little recorder that annoyed the hell out of my parents. And then I played violin. And for those of you that don't know, I do Muay Thai, which is Thai kickboxing. I also do yoga, and something really resonated with me when, uh, this sounds so early, you're probably gonna roll your eyes.

I did a yoga session. A few weeks ago, and my yoga teacher, she, she just said, for those of you that have been practicing yoga for decades, as you continue doing it, and it's the same poses, it's actually about the small details. And the small details isn't necessarily your posture, but it could be your breath, it could be self-awareness, things that come up to you.

And I really love that. Even when I practice Muay Thai, people so often think when you're punching, it's just stretching out your arm. No, there's so much that goes into it. It's moving your big thumb. Your big toe. Thumb. Yeah, big toe. Thumb. I think that's what it's called. Moving it. Moving your hip. So there's more power that comes and lifts from the ground up into your arm, and then you pivot your shoulder and you have to bring it back.

Like I always tell when I meet newbies and I get paired up with them, I always tell them, Hey, once you punch, bring it back like it's one of those old school phones. Because if you don't bring your fist back, you'll be hit in the face when you are sparring. So being a business owner and leader is like a sport you, it's all about the details.

And I always like telling leaders and business owners be like a scientist. Be curious being an observer. I get it. We are human beings. Yes, we should be emotional. There are days when I just wanna. Throw my laptop away because it gets too technical. Thank God I have team members that help me with tech stuff 'cause I don't do it.

Or maybe there's just like a bad email or bad conversation that happened and, and whenever that happens, I've had to learn how, okay, how do I get calm? Maybe I need to walk around my neighborhood, take a few breaths. Maybe I need to go make some coffee. You want to be like a scientist, be an observer.

Because so often when we make decisions, make decisions off data, and data usually comes from numbers like our p and I report or what's converting or systems supply chains. Okay, this is how my business works. Let me try editing in so often people think of data, both supply chain systems and numbers, but what people forget about.

Data is also from people from conversations, so I'm gonna be vulnerable with you. There was. I have people fill out a form, so if you're interested in working with me, you could schedule a call with me@elainelew.com slash call. After people book the call, people have to fill out a form within 24 hours because I treat my calls basically like a coaching call.

And it's complimentary because I want to see if it's a good fit, and I wanna see if you could be able to handle my coaching and for you to see my coaching style as well. So when doing this call, you actually get three action items and when someone filled out the form last week. There was a question there that I put and I edited, by the way, of why should I choose to work with you?

Because I really care about our client's results and experiences, and the person responded. I don't like this question and I would like to cancel the call. And I was like, huh, maybe it was

too aggressive. So thank God I was having a text message with a friend. 'cause I was re, I was realizing maybe it's too aggressive and strong.

It felt off. And when I reflect back, maybe it is so just. Even though it didn't feel good to me, the sales call got canceled. To be honest, it wasn't a good fit. Anyways, when I was reading through their form, nothing bad on them, just, you know, we're human. We're not meant for everybody. So I'm like, oh, my friend suggested shout out to Andrea.

My friend suggested, why don't you edit to this question? Why do you. We would be a great fit. I take great care in selecting clients who genuinely are committed to their results. And I see your success as my success. I was like, oh my gosh, I am typing this, and now I edited the form. So if you wanna see the question or if you're interested in scheduling a call, go to elaine.lu.com for slash call.

But that question, that little edit, right? That feedback from someone who didn't end up being a client, I was like, Hmm, this feels uncomfortable. Let me sit in it. Thank you for the work I do in therapy, and I was like, maybe this is a small edit that I can do, and I think about sports. We're just gonna go back to that.

Michael Jordan, for those of you that are basketball fans, back when he started his basketball career, the dude was scrawny and he was being pushed around, so he started lifting heavy so that he wasn't pushed around. That was a small edit where, I know this is controversial, but. He did a lot of things to edit his game of basketball to become the best basketball player ever.

If you wanna fight me on it. Go ahead. Just fat me on it. But I stand my word that I think Michael Jordan's the best basketball player ever. Alright, so there's some slides right now to explaining who I am. By the way, if you're new to me, I'm a business and executive coach for women of color and allies.

I've trained and coach Fortune 500 leaders. I also am an instructional designer and have online courses with 30 plus organizations from LinkedIn Learning USC, Brown Duke, and John Hopkins. But my favorite title. Oldest daughter of a Filipino immigrant farmer. And I think I'm gonna put this picture in.

Yeah, I think I'll put this picture as my cover for this podcast. So I'm just, I told you this ain't ai. This is Elaine, IRL in real life, even though I refuse to do a video, 'cause I'm just not feeling it and doing video. So this is audio. But there's a cute picture of me, my dad, and my grandma holding grapes.

My grandma's no longer with us. Um, she is yelling at me in other ways. If you have an Asian grandma or Filipino grandma, you know what I mean by this, but I think it might be nice for you to know I. I did a survey. I always do surveys. By the way. I do a little questionnaire prior to doing a workshop because I really like customizing it.

Ugh, it so annoys me. Let me tell you, I'm kind of going off a tangent. I have also been a participant and attendee of workshops, and I hate being lectured to, so when I get asked to do. A talk, a workshop or facilitation, I let them know I am not an inspirational or motivational speaker. I am here as a coach.

I want people to be able to take away action items that feel aligned to them so they could move forward. So if you notice, even as I'm talking, I have this like presentation set up, which I know you can't see visually, but you know, I think things about, oh, this would be really helpful for this person.

I'll share it with them even though I don't have it on the slides. So. One of the questions I ask in my survey before I do a workshop is, what are your challenges right now as a leader, as a business owner? And I think it'll be helpful for you as a fellow business owner leader to hear that these are the top three challenges from this sample group of 19 people.

So the number one challenge out of the 29 people who registered only 19 people came, which is okay. You know, I'm Asian. I get really upset when it's not the perfect number, but 10 people mentioned I want new business, more sales. Number one, challenge. Number two, challenge six people mentioned, I need to just talk to the decision makers.

I need, I need contracts. And the third challenge was advertising, marketing, branding, and visibility. So those, those were the top challenges, the top goals by the end of the session, which makes sense. And this is how I market to people. Number one goal. Practical howto techniques. I am gonna share with you howto techniques.

Like I said, I am not here to be motivational, inspirational, even though I have a lot of people who tell me that. But that's because I am just real and I'm gonna tell you how to, and not just the usual, like, Hey, go be confident, networking. Yeah, but like how? Okay. Second goal by the end of the session, getting contracts and customers.

Third, goal two mentions focus, gain clarity near term priorities. All right. Getting our clients is like editing your supply chain. So just like I told you, oh, here's an edit I could do for this form and. I know that the number one challenge, top goal is to get more sales, but before you figure out how to get more sales, you need to understand how you're getting your customers.

So I have this ideal client spreadsheet. It's a great template to break down and I, I mean, I'm not gonna give it away all the goods 'cause he didn't show up to the event. That's what you get. So if you want to know when the next event is happening that I'm doing with an organization or for myself, join my newsletter@elainelu.com slash join.

That's E-L-A-I-N-E-L-L u.com/join. So. Before you wanna get more sales if you haven't yet, especially since this is the beginning of the year. I'm recording this February 2nd. Check all of your clients that you got last year, where did you get them? How long did it take to convert my B2C clients? It takes me 12 days to convert.

On average, my B2B clients, it takes me about six months to, to convert. Do you have that checked? You probably should. Last year's numbers. I had a 5000% ROI ON SEO. I also had a 500% ROI from two organizations I joined like Elaine, how'd you figure it out? You have to put time in your calendar. And this is what I was telling my therapist earlier today.

See, I'm bringing the therapy back. I was like telling my therapist I thought to make more money to be successful. I just always had to be on calls. But I realized, you know, I had a 215% profit margin increase. And what I did was I sat down, looked at my p and I, and just figured out what I need to cut out.

And if I did a day or two days off where I looked at things, sat in the uncomfortable, not that it was comfortable at all to look at my p and I report, I could figure out what's working and what's not. So I want you to take time to do it. And I would say take a whole day. I was just coaching someone else on it.

She's like, I could just make more money. Yeah, you can make more money, but what if you found more money that you could keep instead of like spending it like fire. And here's my breakdown from last year, 71%. Of my sales came from Google, SEO, 22% from referrals, 26% from renewals, and how I made sure I tracked that last year and moving forward.

I actually talked to my bookkeepers. Shout out to Evolve Finance. If you have an online coach, coaching business or online business, highly recommend Evolve Finance. I will share their your all and let them know I sent you, by the way. 'cause, uh, I'll be honest, I get like, like a referral bonus, but more importantly I just praise them.

I appreciate them, but I told them like, Hey, I need to figure out my ROI put these two organizations in there so I could figure out my ROI, because there were so many events happening in Q4, I could not. I can't go to all of them. My time is valuable. My time could be spent napping. Yeah, I said napping, resting.

'cause it's not all about doing the work. I will tell you, just yesterday as I was hanging out and playing with my nephew. Completely present. I was like, oh, I could do this little edit on my website, like when I'm at peace and calm. The ideas come and think about it for you. It's like when you take a shower, you're like, oh, this is such a great idea.

I wish I wrote this down, but I'm in the shower. It's because you're calm by the way. You could look it up like Google it or AI it. You could find like. Shower notepads. Put in your shower if your best ideas. Come out there. Look at all. See, I told you. Action items. I am giving you so many.

I know this episode is so good and you're like, how can I get more of this? Well, I have a newsletter that comes out every Thursday that's free, fun and full of real talk. It's a live journal, Zenga 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

eCom. Join back to the episode. All right, so I shared with you how to break it down. Now. Do you understand your client journey like fully from like initial conversation, initial interaction to nurturing, to converting? So for me, my top two SEO and referrals, right? How people get to know me. I'll give you a tip.

You're listening to one of them to nurture podcast. My email, if you wanna join elaine lew.com/join. And let me tell you, my email is amazing. Three years ago open rate was about 13%, and now it's around 70, 75%. A good open rate is 20%. By the way, my click rate, a good click rate's 1%. It was like 0.3% three years ago.

Now it's 10%. So join my newsletter@elainelu.com slash join. You're listening to my podcast now. And the third way I nurture people, kind of it's, I'm not dependent on it, it's more of like a. Professional diary. I use LinkedIn, so feel free to add me there. So people are learning about me through that. That's the nurture sequence.

I know how people find me through my website and referrals, and then they do a phone call with me. Sometimes it takes one or two calls. Why is it important to understand your client journey? Because it's important to understand what things to edit and looking at your stats. So when I was even looking at my podcast stats, the ones that do really well.

Are the ones where it's a replay of the presentation and I did not record my presentation, which is fine because you get a second take of my presentation now. I kind of had a practice on it, so you get to see what works for my podcast, like I shared with you, it is doing a replay of a talk for my emails.

It's a storytelling. It's not just the go do this, this, and this. It creates more human things. I mean, there is ai. Right, and we all know when it's an AI that has written, written the email, if it's just so corporate and it's not real. I got GIF in my emails. They're funny and I share, like my best performing email in 2025 was talking about my scuba diving panic attack, and.

How so for scuba diving, you, you have to learn how to breathe or else you will literally drown. By the way, I don't know how to swim, swimming and scuba diving's a little different. So what they have to teach you is you have to breathe consistently. Like you cannot stop breathing or else, uh, something bad could happen.

So when I got into the ocean, I felt my body so tense and I was like, okay, breathe, breathe, breathe. And it was so interesting. Five minutes in, like I just finally let go. I just continued breathing and I. I just realized, wow, if I could be at this calm state, how can I do this in life? But that's what I mean.

It's a storytelling. LinkedIn. I'm sharing events that I go to, realizations I've had at these events, takeaways and storytelling from client conversations, not sharing their information. I

keep it confidential, but it's broad enough. And then the phone calls, I know people would, I know people would be like, why do you give so much?

But I do treat those calls like a coaching call. I do. I give away a lot. I give you at least three action items. If you're interested in working with me, go to elainelew.com/call and you're like, but what if they decide not to work with you? I'm like, then it's not a good fit. But I also love them with a good impression to understand my coaching style.

So if maybe I'm not a good fit for them. If they could refer me to other people. Look, I believe in karma and energy and so if I gave so much to somebody, I know it comes around. Mind you, I'm discerning. That's why I have a form for people to fill out and I know people will ask me, why don't you just put the form first before people schedule a call?

I'll be honest, I wanna email addresses. I've had people follow be in my email list where they've been falling for a bit, you know? They're stalking a bit and then they realize, yeah, I wanna work with her and I get it. You have to understand, this is what gets me upset. I feel like post 2020, not just Gen Z, all generations, including me, I'm a millennial, millennials, gen Xers, boomers, it's like we all forgot how to network the it's you do not ask for marriage on the first date.

Get to know somebody. Get to know them. Build the relationship and think about what are you doing to nurture. Also make sure you have time to reflect. I remember being in school, I'd reflect, okay, what are things that happened this past week? Reflect, Hey, what are trends? What are words my clients are using or telling me?

What am I noticing? With leads. So I'll give an example. I just booked a speaking gig in March and it was with a financial institution. And I asked, what's a challenge for your attendees as prepared for this? And they said, bag lady syndrome, like what is bag lady syndrome? And by the way, I'll share more about the event when it comes out, but I cannot share that right now.

So, like I said, join my newsletter so you get updated. [Elaine lu.com](http://ElaineLu.com). For it slash join. All you gotta do is put your name and email. It doesn't cost you anything. It's like zero box three seconds of your time. So I was like, what's bag lady syndrome? And you might be curious about this because the people that are gonna be at this event are all executives that make 300 k and above bag Lady syndrome is basically when women just wanna keep all the money because they're scared that they're gonna lose it.

But know the terms. You know, I would've just called it hoarder, but why is it important for you to reflect on trends and words that your clients leads? Your audience is telling you it helps you with your marketing. All right. I said this, I did a little teaser of why do personal videos in my intro. I do personal videos because I don't know if you're familiar with the K economy, but here's reality.

We're in the K economy, so more people either wanna spend low ticket offer or really high ticket offer, and you get to choose. I just decided I don't wanna be the low ticket person 'cause I have to be performative and create all these posts on social media every day. I'd rather be like an Ivy League as well as liberal arts school where I work with a limited number of clients, but to work with me, it's gonna be high from other people.

But. You could check out my results@elainelew.com slash reviews. And there is a reason why people wanna work with me. So I do a little personal video on Loom and I told them there was 29 people registered and I asked them, how long do you think it took me to do videos for each of you? People were like, 30 minutes.

An hour. No, it took me four hours. And people were like, why did it take so long? Because I was researching every person on social media and website, and I said something personal about it. But look what happened. About 19 outta 29 people showed up and there's a couple people who didn't show up to that workshop and they scheduled sales calls with me because they were impressed by what I did even before the event.

So I acknowledge I wanna be a high touch luxury experience and service, and I don't just show that when people give me money. I show that in the beginning when people decide they want to work with me. Or just curious about wanting to work with me. So a thing I want you to brainstorm, how are you different from your competitors?

I just told you I'm high touch. I only work with a limited number of clients. 15. I also, you can't see it, but you know what? If you join my newsletter@elainelu.com slash join, reply back to the an email that you'll get. I'll just put capability statement, I'll send it to you, but I have a capability statement when I go to events, meet with procurement directors.

It's in 100. Pound card stock touch is everything else. Have a business card and I use moo cards and I use their size. I have the thick ones. Touch is everything, especially in a digital world. In my capability statement, I put logos on there. Fortune 500 leaders and executives. I've worked with the logos of online courses that I have, like LinkedIn learning, duke Brown and John Hopkins.

And behind it I have reviews. I have pictures of the people that I've worked with, logos from like Coca-Cola, so Cal Gas, Albertsons, and I have pictures of me interacting with people. Another thing on my website, if you go to elaine lew.com, I don't make my website about me. I am. Interacting with people.

You'll see people laughing, me having a conversation with a group of people. Diverse, no paid actors. By the way. They're all photos and videos of me at events where I have spoken. Now, prepping for an event. Try to get the list of people and organizations that are coming. You can even use ai. Hey, look at this list of companies.

Review their annual reports and goals and let me know if any of these companies are looking for services like mine. Then put keywords of your services and put your next codes.

Yeah, I know I said a lot, but you're gonna have to go rewind it and listen to what I said. And then actually at the event, I want you to read.

The room. I just closed a contract yesterday, or sorry, last week, and I got this pretty fancy 10 page colored paper, spiral bounded, printed, two copies, ready to present my proposal, and I kind of felt back and forth. I was like, you know what? I don't think I need to present this. I think I need to read the room.

So I sat there, met with a decision maker, and I realized, you know what? What do you need to make this decision? Will it be helpful for you? What are reflections that you have? Since our last conversation, I asked questions and I listened more, ask questions and listen more. That is what I would encourage you to do.

And then from there, I would say the last two minutes I presented, so this is how it like, looks like to work with me. Okay, great. Contact my, my assistant, and then we'll schedule our first session together. All right. During the event, and I'm blasting through it, you see someone you wanna work with, big company, research them on LinkedIn and Google.

Before you talk to them, see if there's any mutual friends, look up their annual reports, what are priorities for this year and does it have anything to do with the services you're doing? Now, and when you talk to them, connect with them, say, Hey, is there anyone I could talk to who would know about the RFP cycles for, insert your industry?

And then when do RFPs happen for this industry? And then if you get their contact information, how often should I follow up? Should be monthly or quarterly. Also a great book that I use when I network. You can look this up on Amazon. It's called One Sky Business Card Organizer. I'll put the link in the show notes, and it's this great book where you put the business cards and then you write notes.

If they're a good talk, like a way to follow up with them. It's great. Instead of it just all comes out of your purse or for all of you men, it comes out of your pockets. And then after an event or conference, prioritize who is a hot lead. And then after I would encourage, add everybody on LinkedIn. That's what I do.

And when you follow up. I always suggest the next morning after an event or conference, I block off the whole morning and ideally send emails beforehand at 9:00 AM Hey, it was great meeting you at the conference. I can't believe you both know A, B, and C. Thanks for sharing feedback, a lot of my capability statement and prayer conversation.

Can you connect me with John of hr? This is what I do and bullet point it. I've also added you on LinkedIn and then highlight the LinkedIn. I told you I was gonna give you a lot of, a lot of great feedback. You're gonna probably have to replay that. Like I said, after an event or workshop post on LinkedIn, even if you're an attendee, and lemme say, I'm just going through all the slides.

Oh, that was it. So I hope you got a lot of value from it. Wait, I'm thinking, oh no, that was it. That's all I got. I told you I didn't script it. I'm literally looking at slides, but feel free to re-listen to it. But I want you to think of actually one thing that you could start editing and doing for your business.