



Episode 189: Alisa Cohn - Growing Up

[00:00:00] **Heather Hansen:** Before we get started today, I wanted to tell you about a new offering that I have. It is a private podcast called Advocate With Elegance. It's for any of you that are interested in learning how to advocate for your boundaries, your pocketbook, your potential, and your dreams with a little bit more elegance.

The way that it works is I'm going to be sharing three queues in this private podcast, three things that have helped me and my. Learn to be better advocates. The first cue is a qualified recommendation. This is a. A podcast, a television show, maybe a piece of technology or something very cheap that I bought on Amazon that has helped me to become a better advocate.

Number two is a question. Questions are the magic wands of advocates. And I am going to share questions that have helped my clients become better advocates for themselves in their dreams. And then the third thing is going to be. Because I believe that quotes change. Your perspective and perspective is one of the tools [00:01:00] of an advocate.

This private podcast will be coming to you automatically in your podcast feed every other week, starting in October, if you sign up for the private podcast, that's it.

It's that easy. It's free. It's

for you. If you want to advocate for everything you want in your. With a little bit more elegance. The link to sign up is in the show notes.

I can't wait to hear from you there, where you're going to build a community around advocating with elegance in that podcast and in that place, in the. Back to the elegant warrior.

This is the elegant warrior podcast. It's the podcast about elegance in all of its forms. We're talking about our definitions of elegance and how we maintain it in times of. We're also talking about how we can advocate for ourselves with elegance and in a way that makes us most likely to [00:02:00] win. I'm your host, Heather Hansen, author speaker, consultant, trainer, and self-advocacy expert. Let's Talk Elegance.

Hello, my elegant warriors. This is episode number 189, Alisa Cohn and Growing Up. Ayissa Cohn is my friend. She is a phenom. She's an executive coach. She is the top startup coach in the world. She has been named the number one global guru of startups. She's also a Broadway investor and she is a rap artist, guys.

She is on here with me today because she has written a phenomenal book. It is called from "*Start-up to Grown-up-grow your leadership to grow your business*". Alisa. It is so good to see.

[00:02:49] **Alisa Cohn:** It's amazing to see you, Heather, thank you so much for having me.



[00:02:53] **Heather Hansen:** I loved this book and it really was so much more helpful to me than I [00:03:00] knew it would be before I start, 'cause I think that, and I think the listeners need to know that because you're thinking, oh, startup, I don't have a startup. Maybe this isn't an episode for you. It is absolutely the episode for you because Alisa really breaks this book into three sections. She talks about managing you, which applies to every single one of you listening. We all need to learn to manage ourselves. Then she talks about managing your team and then she talks about managing your company. But I want to take a big bird's eye view here. Alisa, why did you write this book?

[00:03:28] **Alisa Cohn:** Oh, well, first of all, thank you again, Heather, for having me, it's such a pleasure to see you and to be part of your crew, your movement here.

I wrote the book because I would constantly go into new situations and I would think, I wish I had a book to hand you to kind of say, this is kind of some of the things you need to know. So there were these questions about. The employees or the executives within the right people. And I kind of walked back and I said, well, how do we hire these people?

Do we hire these people for this situation? And they didn't and they, the founders and entrepreneurs and start people, but also the leaders in companies I would work with [00:04:00] would say, oh, I never really thought about that. Or how are you thinking about your own leadership role? And they would sort of, I've never really thought about that.

Or even where's your leadership team. I don't have a leadership team. What's a leadership team. And I just kind of realized there were the same themes coming over and over again. That I could address 'cause I've seen the movie before and I really wanted to address them. And so I was excited to write this book to have something, to teach people, the teachable things that we can, the predictable and teachable things that we can start out knowing where you're going to go wrong or no you're going to be problems for you. And then address them before they become problems.

[00:04:35] **Heather Hansen:** It really just shows your generosity. When you say that, you know, and at the end of the book, you do this phenomenal thing that not many people do and you give the reader scripts for different situations. And, you know, you just said, you want it to be able to give it to them.

This is something that for people who can't bring you in to coach them, you can leave this, give this to them or leave it behind for those people that you have coached. It's just a phenomenal resource, but let's talk with managing.

[00:05:00] Because every single listener, whether they're doing a startup, whether they're considering a startup or whether they're working with a, in a law firm.

I remember when I was a young lawyer, I felt very strongly that I was my own little company, you know, and that my name, my name is a lawyer when I went out to court and to the different committees that I serve. Was my own little company. And I think that's a lot of what you're talking about in that first section, isn't it?

[00:05:25] **Alisa Cohn:** definitely, we are all the CEO of us, right? I'm the CEO of me. You're the CEO of you and you're, you are your own startup. And not only that, but in the very first section, I say, Hey, you, the first person you lead every day is the person who wakes up in your pajamas. So no matter what we have to worry about managing ourselves, and that's a whole bunch of different dimensions because we're all, you know, in our head a lot, we all have self-doubt we all are just wondering, and second guessing, should I do this?



Should I do that? We all either make fast decisions, just slow decisions, one way or the other, getting a handle on your own psychology makes you more effective

[00:05:57] **Heather Hansen:** and better what you're going to do. That's right. And so your [00:06:00] first chapter is called startup self. And you talk a lot about self-reflection tell us about the.

[00:06:04] **Alisa Cohn:** Well self-reflection is just your ability and your willingness to take time; sketched from your calendar, where you spend time tuning into your inner voices. So what that means is journaling that might mean. Meditation. It might mean any number of practices that have to do with you really getting in touch with how you're doing, where you're coming from, maybe feeling de-motivated recognizing that you are, and then course correcting, or at least not bringing that to other people, maybe feeling motivated and you can sort of take on different kinds of things in you're excited to take on something which has been challenging for you before one way or the other to tune into where are you right now and use.

In service of whatever leadership you want to execute on that day. Yeah. And I loved

[00:06:49] **Heather Hansen:** that chapter and I kept thinking about reflection and how that leads to awareness and self-awareness is sort of an underrated, not super talked about skill and [00:07:00] talent and trait that leads to huge

[00:07:01] **Alisa Cohn:** amounts of success. Oh, absolutely.

So first of all, you need, self-awareness just to kind of figure out where are you locate yourself inside of your company, whether you're a founder or a leader inside of a company, but also without self-awareness, you're going to be susceptible to the things you're susceptible to. So for example, if you tend to be irritated with people who, for example, just making this up, who are always late.

They might be a great employee and they're always a little bit late and rather than address, Hey man, it bothers me when you're always late. You instead blow up at them or you instead get irritated with them or you might take it like they're being disrespectful to. And then you take it out on them or you treat them as if they're being disrespectful when they may not be.

And you may not even be aware of what's inside of you. That's telling you these things so that the self-awareness, we don't have the tools to rise up above what's going on inside of us and then take productive action. That's what's so important about self-aware. Yeah. And when

[00:07:56] **Heather Hansen:** you talk about self-reflection, I know Alisa, it's so clear in this [00:08:00] book that you have got the chops to back it up, that you have done this coaching.

And when you talk about journaling versus meditation, I'm a meditator. I struggle with journaling with your experience. Do you find one more that your leaders do more often than the others or one that's more helpful? I guess my question is really. Coaching on whether I should be doing more journaling.

[00:08:21] **Alisa Cohn:** Well, so first of all, go with the works were for you. So the idea is that whatever you're naturally attuned to you shouldn't have to force yourself, right? If you're the kind of person who is able to sit and sit still, that's fantastic. If you're the kind of person who likes to write things down and write things out, then you can discover that about yourself.



And then other people do really well with like running or other kinds of rhythmic fitness activities, which also helps them kind of tune into what's going on with themselves. But I would say to you, if you did want to get better at journaling, then there are good reasons to get better at. Then, what you could do is you could decide to do for five minutes, and that's a good starting point for all of us to change behavior by just saying, I'm going to do a [00:09:00] tiny bit of it and see how that feels.

If it works for me over, you know, if you're consistent with it, but also helps you build the muscle. And it's really about muscle memory for all.

[00:09:08] **Heather Hansen:** Yeah, that's a great point. That brings me right to chapter two, because one of the things I do encourage my, the people I coach to do and that I do myself is I keep an evidenced journal.

And at the end of it, I call it the evidence journal. At the end of every day, I write down evidence of my credibility, my talent, my resilience, all of the things that I might want to look back on in the future to use as evidence that I deserve, that raise that job, that client, that promotion, that, whatever that.

You talk in the second chapter about imposter syndrome. And I think that kind of journaling helps me and my clients overcome imposter syndrome. Why is imposter syndrome? Well, first of all, you coach some really high flyers and it's interesting to hear; they too experience imposter syndrome.

[00:09:48] **Alisa Cohn:** Yes. It turns out that actually a lot of high flyers, high achievers, plenty of celebrities, plenty of famous people experience imposter syndrome, imposter syndrome is simply [00:10:00] this notion of like, oh, I'm going to be found out or oh, by luck has run out.

So that's a kind of intense self doubt, which makes you just think, oh, they're going to find me out. That's what the imposter syndrome is. And it's amazing to me, actually, I spoke to a very well known investor who said the more achievement I get, the more successful I get, the more imposter syndrome I have. You think it goes away, it doesn't go away because you're pushing yourself harder.

And because in some ways you have on a higher pedestal and you have more to lose. So you have to kind of accept that imposter syndrome is a thing that you may be susceptible to. And there are strategies for you to handle it. I love your idea of evidence. I love that collecting and gathering evidence that you are competent.

You have been successful, you will continue to be successful. And that's what I call a highlight reel in the book. And the highlight reel helps remind you of your greatness and who you really are.

[00:10:52] **Heather Hansen:** It's in it's. So I think that, you know, for the listeners, it's gotta be sort of comforting to hear that everyone [00:11:00] experiences this to some extent or another, this idea that, you know, I'm not good enough and sort of, there are a lot of tips and tools that you give us in chapter two, that's going to help people to overcome imposter syndrome, but I love that you point out that it's going to be there.

You know, sometimes just knowing. Knowing that this is going to be hard, or this is going to be challenging, or this is something that's coming along for the ride. It makes it a little bit easier to not get so worked up about the fact that it's present.



[00:11:26] **Alisa Cohn:** Yes. You know, I spoke to Greg Gallan, who's the founder of muck rack on my podcast from startup to growup- the podcast.

And he said that when he was kind of on his journey of growing from founder to CEO, sort of a younger entrepreneur, he was like, she seemed and felt like he had this like, you know, secret that he couldn't tell anybody because he was having cashflow problems. He thought, oh, I'm the worst they're going to, they're going to gang.

And then he went to a CEO group, which is another way to counteract imposter syndrome and intense self doubt to share with other people. And he said, oh, then someone said, oh, you have a cashflow problem. And he was like, [00:12:00] oh, it's not this thing that only I'm struggling with. Like, it's a, it actually has a name right.

As exactly right. There's a name for this. There's a name for this. So like there's different tools that everybody can use to counteract both imposter syndrome and also intense self-doubt. But then to your point, You know, it goes along with success. You push yourself, you know, in my book, Susie, but who's the founder of Poo-Pourri and really one of the most, you know, the, one of the most successful self-made women in the United States, I know she said, I don't have imposter syndrome.

I am an imposter. I've never done this before. And I just thought that was so refreshing to sort of think of it that way. You know, in some ways, if you try something new, of course you're an imposter. If you're in the habit of continuing to try something new. You'll always feel like an impostor. And that's where, to your point about evidence in the highlight reel, having evidence of your past successes is very helpful to counteract that.

[00:12:51] **Heather Hansen:** Yeah, it's a great chapter. It's an important chapter to read. And then, then you move on to managing the team. And the first part, I want to get into this because it [00:13:00] keeps coming up. You know, how I call them God winks. Like when things keep coming up in your life and chapter three is entitled, why should they follow.

And you talk about praise and the importance of praising the people around you and for you listeners, that's your family members, that's your partners, partners at work and partners at home. It's giving that kind of praise to people, but why is praise so important in the work place?

[00:13:22] **Alisa Cohn:** Praise is so important in the workplace, because if you don't proactively praise your people, then what's going to happen is they're going to be wondering, I wonder how I'm doing. She doesn't say anything to me, so I guess I'm doing okay. In fact, I have a story in the book about one of my clients that I work with - a coach, she's a CEO, and I would talk to her exactly. And one of them kind of almost got weepy with me about like, not knowing where he stood with the CEO. And I said to him, Hey, let me stop you right there and just tell you, she thinks you're great.

She thinks you're a creative genius. And that was so comforting to him. Now, why does the coach have to say. It's [00:14:00] because people only think to come and talk to you when there's a problem, when they need something from you and they don't think to come to you to proactively praise you. Now, the problem with that is that people can kind of be wondering, they might be de-motivated, it's hard to know if their efforts matter and if they make a difference and if they're leading towards, you know, sort of.



And over time, the lack of praise, plus a normal amount of correction or criticism or feedback or whatever makes people think the weight of that is more feedback, negative feedback and criticism and less praise. So you've got to counteract that natural tendency that we all have and build people up, bulk people up with.

[00:14:38] **Heather Hansen:** Yeah, I love this. So one of the things I do in my business and I, you know, I have a handful of employees that work with me, but I just started doing this. It's the MBA inventory. What it really is, is the love languages at work. So trying to figure out how people like to be appreciated, you know, and because praise is an old way of showing appreciation, but it turns out that some people want quality time.[00:15:00]

With their team, you know, they want to sit down and have lunch with me or have a zoom call with me once a week. Some people want the words of praise, the words of affirmation. Some people- the physical touch is a little iffy at work though - they do kind of talk about some people want like a high five or a fist bump. Some people want gifts. And so, you know, I think by talking about the praise as the umbrella, we're talking about all of those things and how important it is to do it in a way that people receive it.

[00:15:27] **Alisa Cohn:** Totally. It's basically encouragement. I love your idea of the love languages. That's absolutely true. There's another tool that you could really have all your people work together and, and fill out a sort of get to know me document.

So that really show that showcases. Everybody can kind of self-select, here's how I like being appreciated. And then, you know, and then you can look at the way they like being appreciated and appreciate them in that regard. And there's no wondering and no questions. And that also cues you to proactively remember.

To acknowledge them to encourage them because ultimately praise creates the environment [00:16:00] where you can build trust. You have rapport, people know you're on their side. And then when you have to have tough conversations or give difficult feedback or give criticism, whatever it is, which you definitely will, because that's what it's like being a leader, you at least have that baseline of good feeling of rapport and them knowing that you're on their side.

And that's what you're signaling. When you give that kind of praise.

[00:16:22] **Heather Hansen:** Yeah. One of the leaders that I coach actually puts into her calendar once a month to us, she calls it an appreciation. Check-in like, who needs to be appreciated? Who has done something that I can appreciate? Because to your point, you don't put that in the calendar when someone needs to be criticized or they need some negative feedback. Those things just happen. They happen naturally. Right? And you talk in that chapter a lot about accountability and giving people guidelines as to what they're going to be accountable for. Why is accountability so important?

[00:16:51] **Alisa Cohn:** Well, accountability is important because again, assuming we have this good feeling in the, you know, good environments or it's people feel encouraged, they know what they're doing.[00:17:00]

Then of course, all pipe performers want to be able to both hit goals and also be working with other people who hit goals. So if you let things slide. The problem is that there's no longer a container, right? There's no longer a sense of actually what we, we do, what we say we will do. And people around you will notice that you're not holding that person accountable.



So accountability is important for everybody, but what does that mean by accountability? So constantly a leader will say, oh, I can't count on this person. And then when we dig into it, I asked him questions like, well, what did you guys agree to? And then it turns out there wasn't a strong discussion about what the end point looks like.

What I call what done looks like. There was not a strong discussion about when this thing was due. And then leaders will say to me, well, they should've known, well, I don't know how they would know. They wouldn't know. They can't read your mind. So making sure that you have clear expectations, again, not in a punitive way, but because everybody feels much better when they understand what is expected and who will do what by [00:18:00] when.

[00:18:00] **Heather Hansen:** Yeah. It's so important. So one of the things that I, one of the five C's of an advocate is credibility. And if someone finds their leader, credible, they believe in. It makes them a phenomenal part of the team. It makes them more likely to advocate for their leader and that credibility is built on accountability and setting expectations and meeting them.

And so those things have to be clear and you talk in the book, you give specific examples of different people, setting those types of goals, setting those types of standards and the data, the data that they need in order to support the accountability. And I think it's a really important part of the chapter.

[00:18:36] **Alisa Cohn:** Thank you. And Heather, can I say one more thing about that? Because what happens is that I'll say to any leader, like, okay, good. So how are you thinking, but holding them accountable and then they'll say back to me, well, "I'm not going to fire them because they made a mistake." Absolutely not, not necessary.

So even this notion of accountability feels to sometimes people like 'I can't punish'. I don't know how to hold them accountable without having either a punishment [00:19:00] conversation, which has never helpful, or like I'm going to fire you now conversation, which is not necessary, hardly ever necessary.

Instead it's a people want to do a good job. And when you notice them and you also are able to have just a conversation with, I expected this thing back from you on Wednesday and now it's Friday. So just walk me through what got in the way you can actually be a friend and an ally, even in that conversation because something probably got in the way.

They want to do a good job. And so when you give them context and the environment to do a good job by also holding them accountable, that makes everybody step up.

[00:19:34] **Heather Hansen:** Yeah, I think it's also important, you know, you say they want to do a good job. And there is another part of the book, I don't remember which chapter it's in Alisa, where you talk about having the will and the skill to do certain jobs.

And most people do have the will to do the job that they're doing and it's, you know, and if they don't, maybe they don't belong there, but the accountability helps them to grow the skill to actually fit that space.

[00:19:57] **Alisa Cohn:** Exactly. You got it. Yep.

[00:20:02] **Heather Hansen:** Now let's talk about cultural [00:20:00] conceptions and misconceptions. In that chapter, you talk about values.



Tell us for the listeners, you know, cause a lot of my guests have talked about setting your values, having your values. How do you work with the people you coach on figuring out what their values are and how they can guide them in the workplace.

[00:20:20] **Alisa Cohn:** Right. So there's a few ways to do that as a leader, it's really helpful for you to first understand your own value.

So there's a few assessments you can do, but also it comes down to, I often just have a list of 200 words of values and I help them choose. I ask them to list what are the most important values to you? And we can winnow them down to sort of five or six value statements and they're different for everybody.

And that is the joy of it, right? Because we're all different. We have different values. Then the question is, what does your leadership team think are the values around here? And then what do your employees think are the values around here for the personal values. Because you don't have to have the same exact block step personal values.

But what [00:21:00] you can do is you can have a culturism an amalgam, which is an amalgam of these different values. So for example, one of the CEOs I coach he's got a strong value around learning culture and excellence. That's wonderful. That's great. We want to have a lot of learning culture and excellence. One of his employees, said "I have a value around fun" and the CEO was actually taken aback like, oh, I never thought about that. That's amazing. What if we could have a culture, which is both about excellence and about learning and about fun and that's the joy of it that you can actually bring those all together. And then culture is really about values and action.

How do you give life and how do you bring those to the fore and how do you operationalize the things which are important to you that has to do with what you reward, what you talk about. How you hire people and how you make sure that they embody the values, which are important to you. I'll just give you a few more, this notion of acting as an owner.

That's a very big value in startup world. Okay, great. But what does that really mean? Well, I worked with two co-founders and what we talked about was it had to do with people who are proactive, people who will [00:22:00] put the team before themselves. So when you're hiring, you want to think about people who are proactive and ask them specific questions about when they were proactive.

And then you also want to think about people who put the team before themselves specific examples from their past about when they put the team before themselves. That's how you hire people in concert with these values. And that's how you operationalize the values.

[00:22:22] **Heather Hansen:** Yeah, I think that that's a really great description because, and I love how you said it, sort of the words you say repeatedly, the way you act repeatedly.

My values now I've recognized are my five C's and it wasn't planned that way. Right? The five C's of an advocator choice, compassion, creativity, curiosity, and credibility, and having repeated them and talked about them and shared them. I realize that those are my five values, but had someone sat me down and said, 'write down your five values.' I don't know that I could have done that. So I think you live them. And when you do what you talk about in the first chapter, that self-reflection, you sort of start to recognize what they are and then you can bring them to whoever it is you [00:23:00] lead, whether it's your family. You know, for me, it started with me, my paralegal and my secretary.



That was my little team that I led and then it grew from there. So I think the idea of being tuned in and aware of, it makes it and reflecting on them makes them come to the forefront.

[00:23:16] **Alisa Cohn:** I was just going to say, and also what you said is very powerful. You can't always sit down and say, here are my values today.

It's also like, notice what you tend to do. So actually one CEO is coaching. We talked through, you know, what is really a very, very successful CEO and a very successful business. So that, I, my question is what are we doing this for? Like, what's important to you. And what he said was. I care about the employees a lot, and I want to make sure they're in like this, you know, great environment to work in.

And I'm like, okay, great. Well, he didn't say this. I sort of said, so what's the end game. When you look back on this whole experience, what's going to be important to you. Like, is it the money? Is it the technology? Is it the products you made is just the people. Is that your legacy? [00:24:00] You said, oh, legacy. Like, it wasn't even a question for him.

It was legacy. So sometimes also just being in the presence of people who ask you these kinds of questions and also observing what are the things that light you up the most that gives you a roadmap to your value?

[00:24:16] **Heather Hansen:** Yeah, I think that's a really good point. And you've pointed that out once or twice, you know, what the imposter syndrome being surrounded by other people who are, you know, then that CEO group you mentioned, and that here getting coached, you know, however you do it, guys that people around, you can often see what you can't see and hear things in your voice that you don't hear and see things in your body language and your face that you don't see.

And so it's a really good. I can't believe how much the time is flying. I do want to talk a little bit about hiring and firing because everyone does it. Even if they don't think they do it, you know, someone listening might hire a babysitter. Somebody else might, you know, I have a wonderful dog Walker after a couple of missteps with the dog.

I also myself have been expanding my team. But one of the things that you [00:25:00] point out here, Alisa, that I think is important, as you say, identify and address issues right away. I feel like I advise mostly women, female leaders. That's something that sometimes they struggle with. Why do you think people struggle with that?

You know, identifying issues, addressing them.

[00:25:17] **Alisa Cohn:** I think very often people are, as we say, uncomfortable with conflict. And I think people put a very wide circle around what they think is conflict. And I think that's very interesting, you know, and I don't always know why that is, but I would say that people think direct conversation can sometimes be conflict.

Sometimes questioning looks like conflict. And people even use that language. Like I wasn't going to call, like for example, somebody might have shown up to the meeting and they didn't do the pre-work. And so they were a little bit disorganized in the meeting, by the way, not a federal law. You didn't break any federal laws, right?

Like not the worst thing that's ever happened in a meeting, but like, that was a moment. So you might think too, especially for a new person and you might think, [00:26:00] well, I don't want that to happen again. So I want them to



know that, like on the one hand, no, one's going to get fired over this. But on the other hand, like, I just want to make sure that you understand the expectations of how we show up and.

So I would talk with the executive about that. And she would say to me, I don't want to call him out. Well, I'm not really sure what you mean by calling him out. You know, it's public. It can just be a, Hey, let me just check in. And by the way, was the person confused? You better know that, that you're maybe sending out confusing signals or is the person busy on other things that you not aware of?

What check in on that is the person having some issues at home and you don't have to get into their personal lives, but you can express concern and compassion and empathy for what might be going on with this person. There's a lot of ways to have that conversation, but at the end of the conversation, They should be clear about your expectations for preparation, for meetings as, just as an

[00:26:52] **Heather Hansen:** example.

Yeah. And it's a, and it's a great example and you're so right about conflict, especially for women, a lot of women avoid conflict and men don't think it's in [00:27:00] it's cultural, different cultures address it different ways. So I love that idea of like, they put a wide circle around, well, that's a. And a lot of times the other person doesn't think so.

You know? And so then there's a, it's, you're

[00:27:11] **Alisa Cohn:** not on the same page. Right. But that's also why I tried to get my scripts. I tried to give these scripts to help people handle what they would consider called uncomfortable conversations, difficult conversations, delicate conversations, to be able to give people some words to you.

And then also tone really matters. You don't have to come in guns blazing. You could say things like, I just want to check in, by the way, using more words, softens, the kids would have a long windup softens. What you're about to say, especially if you do it in a nice collaborative tone.

[00:27:39] **Heather Hansen:** Oh, my gosh, I love tone. It's a great way to, I can't believe we're running out of time.

So it's a great way to sort of wrap up in the last section. I'm going to tease it. You guys, you've got to buy the book just for this RACI. Am I saying that wrong, right. RACI, just for this RACI, which is a, which is a well-known thing in leadership that I had not been familiar with it now I'm instituting in my, in my team.

So by the book. [00:28:00] But I do want to talk about with respect to tone. The last chapter of the book is your new workplace and you talk about zoom and email and remote working. And I'm a little bit obsessed with tone of voice. I know that there's a Yale study that shows that you can tell more about a person's emotion from their tone of voice than body language and facial expression combined.

What do you think about phone versus zoom in this current world of remote work?

[00:28:28] **Alisa Cohn:** Well, I think what really matters is context, right? So I just, actually, somebody just called me the other day, you know, you sent me an email, can we meet? Sure. And he sent me an invite. I didn't notice what the invite was, but at the appointed time he called me and I was like, oh, so refreshing.



I don't think it matters. I think it's good. Helpful to find your own place. I think that if you're going to have a delicate conversation, it's a little bit better to do it so you can see the other person, so you can try to read their body language. I think the issue is also [00:29:00] though using emails. Rather than any kind of voice, whether it's video or phone and the problem with email is that people don't do some of the niceties.

Again, it's a long windup. You've got to make sure that you're putting, you're checking the boxes, right. You know, saying, hello, maybe a nice greeting, hope you're having a great day, something pleasant and then giving context to what you need done. Not send me the spreadsheet, but more the report that I'm co-leading is due on Friday.

So, if you don't mind sending me the spreadsheet today or tomorrow, that'd be super helpful context, making sure that you're going through that in a comfortable way. I think that's one of the keys to emails, many keys to EMA, but that's one of the keys to email, not to keep it short. Short is good in terms of brevity of like reading the message, like here's what I want, but make sure you have the opening and closing niceties so people can read your tone.

You want to signal good intent and everything.

[00:29:54] **Heather Hansen:** Yeah. And, and the book is so great at giving. Like [00:30:00] in that email section, you lay it out. These are the things that you need to do. I can't say it enough. This book, it is, it is full. It is chock full of information. There's scripts in there. There's specifics. It is so clear that you walk the talk and that you're doing this every day.

And everyone who reads this book is going to be very lucky to have the benefit of your experience, especially if those are people who can't or aren't in a position to hire. So Alisa, it's a gift. The book that you've written as a gift before I let you go, we always wind up at the same three questions.

And the first question is about elegance. The root of that word is to choose. And so we believe you choose your elegance. What does that word mean?

[00:30:39] **Alisa Cohn:** Well, I've come to think that elegance has to do with your ability to let's say, lean into situations which make you uncomfortable. And whether you do that with a lot of grace or a lot of tears, it doesn't matter.

Elegance is your ability to wait into [00:31:00] things you might otherwise stay away from.

[00:31:02] **Heather Hansen:** I love that definition. It's different than anyone's ever given. And it talks a little bit about the conflict we were just talking about. Now books other than your own, what is a book that you would recommend to the listeners?

[00:31:12] **Alisa Cohn:** I'm going to have to recommend the long game by our mutual friend, Dorie Clark, which is also just our new book. Now it's really one of Joy's best works. And I personally have benefited from Dorie's insights and knowledge over the past few years. And so it's wonderful that she put this together into a book that will help everybody. The Long Game.

[00:31:29] **Heather Hansen:** game.

Yeah, we had Dorie, she was on episode number 181. That was just a couple of weeks ago. And when just a fabulous book, I loved it. I love. Last question is my favorite question. And it's I think going to allow us to talk about something



that we hadn't yet talked about, but what is your theme song, Alisa, when you're walking onto the stage of life, what song is playing in the background?

[00:31:48] **Alisa Cohn:** I'm going to have to say the rap music video that I myself created it's called "The work is in you", because Heather, he work is in you.

[00:31:59] **Heather Hansen:** And we will add [00:32:00] that to the Spotify playlist, for sure. We're going to have to get it off of YouTube. And we will also put a link in the show notes to the YouTube because watching you rap is just phenomenal, but very briefly tell the listeners about just a little bit about your rap experience.

[00:32:13] **Alisa Cohn:** Well, I'm going to, I will say it very briefly. It's a bit of a long story, but the brief version is this. I fell in love with Hamilton, the musical, like everybody, but why did I love it? I realized there was something inside of me that it got inspired around the creativity there. So I actually took a class on, on a freestyle hip hop rap, and I realized in doing so that I wanted more to be able to express myself in a way, which was like, get over my self-consciousness.

And take a risk and do things that I wasn't great at so that I could model the way for people. And I also realized that it opened up a whole channel of creativity inside of me and, you know, doing this, uh, this rap music little piece [00:33:00] and putting into a video was a fun, collaborative effort. I think it just made me feel, like, whimsical.

[00:33:06] **Heather Hansen:** It's so great. And just bring this back around. Dorie talks about you're rapping in her book, The Long Game. If I remember. It all comes around, guys. It all comes around, Alisa. It was so good having you on. We will put a link to, from start-up to grown-up grow your leadership, to grow your business in the show notes, phenomenal book.

I can't wait for everyone to read it.

[00:33:25] **Alisa Cohn:** Thank you so much, Heather. And thanks for having me.

[00:33:29] **Heather Hansen:** The elegant warrior podcast is brought to you by Boyles Naturals. Boyles Naturals is a woman owned mission-driven natural body in skincare products. Katie Boyle has developed soaps and oils and Pitt grit. Of course, all of these things meant to take good care of you and your body in a natural way.

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