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## CTRL+CLICK CAST #124

### Thriving at Work with Gina DeLapa

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**Preview:** Self-care is not selfish. Self-care, as I talked about in the book, really comes at the service of your other commitment, not at the expense, and it doesn't mean we don't have to disappoint people sometimes, we do, but there's a difference between hurt and harm. We're not harming anyone, but I think the other piece of it is when you really get down to it, self-care is hard. Self-care isn't just blowing yourself a kiss in the mirror or getting a massage, although there's obviously a place for that, but it's making hard judgment calls. It's getting really clear about what are my needs, what are my limitations, what am I willing to put up and not willing to put up with. So there's a lot to it. I mean, I think it can be, in some ways, almost a spiritual battle to speak up for yourself and get your needs met.

[Music]

**Lea Alcantara:** From [Bright Umbrella](#), this is CTRL+CLICK CAST! We inspect the web for you! Today, professional counselor and author, Gina DeLapa joins the show to discuss self-care and her book, *Thriving at Work*. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my fab co-host:

**Emily Lewis:** Emily Lewis!



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[Music stops]

**Emily Lewis:** Before we get to today's episode, some exciting news for our listeners and for us really. We are launching a Patreon at the end of this month! We're hoping this will help us better connect with our listeners and help us grow this podcast. We'll be offering awards like early access to new episodes, exclusive content, even live chats to talk about recent episodes. We're sharing details on [Twitter](https://twitter.com), so make sure you are following us there.

Now, without further ado, our episode today kicks off our October schedule, which like last year is focused on self-care, well-being and mental health, in honor of World Mental Health Day and Mental Illness Awareness Week. We're joined by Gina DeLapa who is a licensed professional counselor and the author of *Thriving at Work: Make Your Mark, Lead With Confidence, Stomp Out Drama, Get Home By 6:00*. Her motto is self-care is oxygen, and she's also one of our long-term clients.

I'm so excited to have you on the show, Gina, welcome!



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**Gina DeLapa:** Hey, good morning. It's great to be here.

**Lea Alcantara:** Thank you. Can you tell our listeners a bit more about yourself?

**Gina DeLapa:** Ah, sure, what can I tell you? I have lived at San Diego for about ten years now. I came out here from grad school. I recently rejoined the faculty as an adjunct. I'm teaching a career development class at USD (University of San Diego) in the graduate program that I finished in, and wow, I haven't taught for four years, but it is really energizing.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** And my biggest job is keeping up with those students, but they are sharp and upbeat and I'm loving it, just absolutely loving it.

**Emily Lewis:** How did you even get started with professional counseling in the first place, helping people with their careers?

**Gina DeLapa:** Well, I realized I was really good at listening, and I got so good at it, I realized I need a new skill, setting boundaries. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** Seriously, because every strength overused is a weakness.

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**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And it was driving me crazy, and I thought, “All right, I’m good at listening. I might as well get paid for it.” Right?

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah. [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** And I’ve just written a book called *401K Success Stories*. I’m sure you’ve heard of it. Ha-ha-ha.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** It sold a whole lot of copies, but I was proud of the book. I wrote through my former employer, which is another store. So I finished this lifelong dream of writing a book and I felt empty, you know?

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** It turns out I wasn’t put on Earth to write about 401K plans. Go figure.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** So it was kind of a bit of semi-milestone birthday and I looked at a lot of different options and USD popped onto the radar and six months later, I was kissing my father goodbye at the airport with a one-way ticket and off I went. I have a brother and sister-in-law who live here in San Diego, and that really make all the difference.

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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** But the counseling program at USD with a career specialization was tailor made for me, and even on the worst day ever in grad school, I never once regretted my decision. I never once second guessed it. It was just that powerful and that life altering.

**Emily Lewis:** I love that story. Before we get into our questions for you, as I noted at the start of the show, this is an episode to kick off our focus on mental health this month, I just want to remind our listeners that we are not mental health experts, we're just sharing advice, personal experiences and strategies that work for us, and if you're struggling with your own mental well-being, please reach out to professionals. We're going to include some links in the show notes to reputable organizations with resources. So I just wanted to makes sure we state that out at the outset. Gina, you talked about going to USD, going through that program, then how did that lead you to writing your ultimate reminders advice books going from professional career counseling to writing these, and I think the best way to describe them to our listeners, these are like tidbit books, like the most common sense things that we always seem to forget, but they contribute to sort of a wonderful quality of life.

**Gina DeLapa:** Well, briefly, when I graduated from USD, I took a career counseling position at a university and I got to a point where I realized, "Okay, we're doing a very good job of helping students find employment. We're not doing so much to help them be successful on the job once they get there."

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Like, "Kids, don't do wheelbarrow races in the hall and pull up your pants and don't wear white socks." I mean, just things that they did not learn on a college campus. So I started a



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company called Real World Etiquette and I got hired on Wall Street, which was very fun, and some other placed and I would give workplace etiquette seminars at various points all around the country. At some point, I missed the writing and I had a nephew who is my friend Gail's son, Adam, who was starting high school. Gail is a lifelong friend and her son was starting high school at the high school that she and I attended, and it started out as just some words of encouragement for him.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And anyone listening can do this. If you've got a young person in your life or maybe you'd just do it for yourself, grab a journal, grab an empty spiral notebook and start writing down what life is teaching you and what life has taught you.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Anyway, that red journal turned into a manuscript and it became a book and a book series and now it's core part of my brand. So I could not have planned it if I tried.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs] And where did *Thriving at Work* come from? Because it's your latest book, you have stuff you already know and stuff you already know for college students.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** *Thriving at Work* is your latest? What inspired that?



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**Gina DeLapa:** Well, let me just quickly say, the *Stuff You Already Know* book got rebranded into ultimate reminders because I got really tired of answering the question, “Well, if it’s stuff I already know, why should I buy the book?” And like, “Well, the...”

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** But the thing of it is I want it to be a gift book that you could be comfortable giving and receiving, and of course, I was writing for my teenage nephew so, of course, teenagers know everything. So the full title of the first book was *Stuff You Already Know and Everybody Should*, meaning like, “Elbow, elbow, you know this, but we know that everyone else does.” It was comfortable to give and receive. .

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Those got rebranded into ultimate reminders, but *Thriving at Work*, yes, it’s my latest and greatest. I wrote that because I really saw a need and a need that I felt called to fill. I was going into companies and nonprofits and giving them my best stuff and they were nodding and taking notes, and I didn’t really have anything to leave behind that specifically addressed the workplace. Ultimate reminders for everyday life came close, but it was more general and it was meant to be more general. *Thriving at Work* really drills down into those four areas you mentioned; the make your mark, lead with confidence, stamp out drama, get home by 6:00, and those really speak to the four elements of self-care that I really want to get across; the physical, the mental, emotional and spiritual.

**Lea Alcantara:** So speaking about that, Emily and I both read your book and self-care is a major thread that ran through it.



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**Gina DeLapa:** Yes, absolutely.

**Lea Alcantara:** So I feel like that is almost a loaded term. [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** Okay.

**Lea Alcantara:** What is self-care?

**Gina DeLapa:** Self-care is, at the core of it, I think it's getting your needs met and not making that someone else's job, but getting you physical needs, your mental, emotional and spiritual needs met. I had a professor at USD who taught an ethics class and he would always tell us nobody can protect you like you could protect yourself.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

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**Gina DeLapa:** And I think that's true in the self-care realm. I can't get enough sleep for somebody else. They have to do that on their own. I can't speak up for someone else. I mean, there are times I like to advocate for somebody who doesn't have a voice, but again, no one can advocate for us like we can for ourselves.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** So it's just getting your needs met.

**Emily Lewis:** And I feel like Lea sort of suggested it being like a loaded term, some people seem resistant to this idea of self-care. Why do you think that is?

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**Gina DeLapa:** Well, I can answer it because I've been one of those resistant people before.  
[Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** Huh, really?

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah, I mean, let's face it, self-care is often seen as selfish.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** It's seen as threatening and if you try setting boundaries with somebody who has horrible boundaries, their first response is not going to be, "Thank you for doing that. I really need to be put in my place."

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** No, they're going to fight you.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Gina DeLapa:** And the world doesn't often reward self-care, at least not initially, but I want our audience to realize, self-care is not selfish. Self-care, as I talked about in the book, really comes at the service of your other commitment, not at the expense.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And it doesn't mean we don't have to disappoint people sometimes, we do, but there's a difference between hurt and harm. We're not harming anyone.



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**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** But I think the other piece of it is when you really get down to it, self-care is hard. Self-care isn't just blowing yourself a kiss in the mirror or getting a massage.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Although there's obviously a place for that, but it's making hard judgment calls. It's getting really clear about what are my needs, what are my limitations, what am I willing to put up and not willing to put up with.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** So there's a lot to it. I mean, I think it can be, in some ways, almost a spiritual battle to speak up for yourself and get your needs met.

**Emily Lewis:** Lea and I talked about this recently. One of the things Lea and I have done in our partnership is to try to assess where our strengths are so that we can work most efficiently together, but also that means identifying weaknesses,

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** And one of the things that I continually struggle with, and it feels like a battle, I'm kind of glad you chose that word because that's what it feels like, but self-care is a big challenge for me. It's hugely a challenge. I can give the business as much care as I can possibly give, but I'm at the bottom of the list.

**Gina DeLapa:** Oh.



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**Emily Lewis:** When I finish the list and I see myself at the bottom, I'm like, "Eh, eh," I still don't do it. [Laughs] So it really is something and it's incredibly challenging. Even I would consider myself a very productive kind of successful individual, but I feel like that's one area of my life where I don't have a lot of success.

**Gina DeLapa:** Well, yeah, in many ways, I'm right there with you, in many ways I'm right there with you, and I think one thing that helps me kind of have a reality check is, "Okay, is what I'm about to do going to give me a sense of relief or is it going to give me a little bit of resentment?"

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And the older I get, the less comfortable I get with living with resentment.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** But there are times when, unfortunately, all of us can get almost acclimated to that feeling and resigned to it.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And I think we really have to fight that tendency, and it comes through in everything to how we speak up with a client or a vendor or a neighbor, whatever it is, but there's like from Nathaniel Branden I love that may fit in here. He said, "Relationships that are right for us will grow stronger if we own our power, and relationships that are toxic are better ended sooner than later."

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

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**Gina DeLapa:** And I think it helps to keep that in mind. Yeah, I mean, something as basic as sleep.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** If I get enough sleep, that's going to serve my business and me. If I don't, we're both going to be diminished.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** I wonder how much denial is a huge aspect to the resistance.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Because as Emily was sharing in her part when we were exchanging ways on how to better a partnership and working together, it made me realize how I've always considered myself as someone who's taking care of herself a lot.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** But then, have I? Because when you pause to self-reflect sometimes over why you behaved a certain way or reacted a certain way and then you realized, "No, I haven't been sleeping the amount I need to sleep. I haven't been exercising." I haven't been doing all these things that you just put off don't think about, but then for whatever reason, because maybe I was conflating self-esteem with self-care, like I don't put myself down.

**Gina DeLapa:** Right.



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**Lea Alcantara:** So I'm like, "Okay, therefore, I'm taking care of myself." But it could be like a "death of a thousand paper cuts" kind of situation.

**Gina DeLapa:** Well, something that I've recently started doing really kind of out of necessity because I mentioned I'm teaching and that's a very time-consuming activity if you want to do it well.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And I've got these weekly pep talks and monthly TV segments, and et cetera, I started just blocking out one day a week, Monday through Friday, pick a day that works with my schedule, and that is my time to catch up and tie loose ends.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And I try to schedule minimally on that day, and I find then it's built in just for me and that gives me a chance to catch my breath and assess, "Okay, am I doing what most needs to be done? Am I taking care of me so that I can take care of my business and other things?"

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** That's just the real practical way. So far it seems to be helping.

**Emily Lewis:** I feel like self-care, I feel like there are some fundamentals that are pretty much human, you know, sleep, eating well, activity or exercise.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yes.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.



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**Emily Lewis:** But then I think it crosses over into areas that are very unique to the individual, you know?

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** For example, you talked a lot about self-care. You even mentioned it already today. As you know, setting boundary is also a way of expressing self-care.

**Gina DeLapa:** It's huge. It's huge, huge.

**Emily Lewis:** Could you talk about that a little bit more because I feel like almost how you suggested it earlier that it's taken negatively as someone being selfish or guilty or unwilling to collaborate or whatever. Like what is setting healthy boundaries actually look like, especially in the workplace?

**Gina DeLapa:** Okay. Well, first of all, I think it helps to remember we set boundaries for ourselves not for the other person.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** So it's not about saying, "You will only see me after 2 p.m. today." It's saying, "I need the first part of the day to get my work set up or to concentrate on projects or whatever." So it's defining your needs, kind of your property lines.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** I think that's a Henry Cloud term.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

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**Gina DeLapa:** It isn't slamming the door in someone's face. It might be saying, "Yes, I'm happy to collaborate. I need to get this in place first and then I'll be happy to sit down with you."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** So it isn't about necessarily your needs get met and mine don't or vice versa, but it's like, "I'm going to include myself in the equation here."

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** Well, it occurs to me, this is a part of where it becomes it's custom. It's custom to what you need.

**Gina DeLapa:** Right.

**Emily Lewis:** And what makes me think of it is what Lea was just describing. It was upon reflection, she then asked herself like, "Am I? Am I actually taking care of myself?" So I feel like that it requires almost this reflective aspect, whether that's a daily thing or weekly thing, but to kind of assess like, "How did things go today or this week? Was there something I could have done differently?"

**Gina DeLapa:** Yes.

**Emily Lewis:** Like I feel like that's where I'm finding opportunity to create my boundaries or my guidelines for what a healthy life looks like and it requires me to think back because if I took care of the food and I took care of activity and I took care of the sleep, what's the custom thing that to me that isn't just something prescriptive?



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**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah. Well, yeah, and that brings up a good point. I think you can take a few minutes at the end of the day or end of the work day and say, “All right, what gave me energy today? What drained my energy?”

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** If you do that even just for a few times, you will see patterns and you’ll see that maybe it’s that one person that walks into your office and interrupts or that person who no amount of help is ever going to be enough and so you say, “Okay, I’m going to stop beating my head against that wall.” Do you know what I’m saying? That I’m going to somehow politely extricate. I mean, we’ve all have that coworker, say, in past lives who calls and has 45 minutes to tell you how busy he is.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** And you just don’t have time for that, and sometimes setting a boundary comes down to, “Okay, I’m not going to reward that behavior.” Because the truth is if I don’t answer that call or I don’t let that person yap for 45 minutes, he’ll find someone else, it doesn’t have to be me.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** So yeah. My mother had a saying when I was growing, “I’ll clean it up for this perp.”  
[Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

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**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** Because basically, if one of has to be ticked off, it may as be you. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** You're not going to see that embroidered on a pillow, but there's some truth to it.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** So this idea of self-care and setting boundaries, I've talked on the show before. I'm in therapy. I've been seeing a therapist for a decade plus.

**Gina DeLapa:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** And it's been instrumental in my life, but it's been one of those things that I have friends and family and colleagues who it's a foreign idea of kind of...

**Gina DeLapa:** Sure.

**Emily Lewis:** And it feels a little – I don't know. To borrow an old term, New Age-y or something, not...

**Gina DeLapa:** Oh, booga booga.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah, exactly, but I do feel like one of the things that's powerful about your book is that all of these things apply at work, and so I feel like addressing it with this job performance angle, it



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almost gives permission for people to talk about this because it's not, "Oh, I'm taking care of myself," but it's. "Oh, I'm taking care of my job by taking care of myself."

**Gina DeLapa:** Oh, right, it kind of legitimizes it maybe or it takes away that stigma.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Yes, speaking of that, try telling your entrepreneurial family from the Midwest that you're moving to Southern California to go to grad school, kind of whatever that is, to study counseling. It's like, "Oh, horrors!" And I would always say like, "What is career counseling?" And like that helped tame it a little bit.

**Timestamp:** 00:20:09

**Emily Lewis:** Legitimize it. [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** Legitimize it or not make me seem like such a freak, I guess.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** But I'm now looking out my window at palm trees and like, yeah, crying all the way to the ocean.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** So call me what you want, I'm going to sleep very well. [Laughs] Anyway, where were we about? Oh, the workplace angle is kind of giving it a little more credence, perhaps.



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**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah, because, let's face it, in the workplace, if you're not performing well, there are repercussions.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** You don't advance. You have a negative performance review. You miss out on opportunities. Everybody wants to feel good at what they do.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** It's one of our basic needs, to feel competent. I love the Billy Joel line, "I've reached the age where competence is a turn on."

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** I reached that point years ago, but yes, we all need to perform well at work. We all want to, and so self-care becomes a vehicle toward that end, and if your work is going well, your personal life is going to go well. And if work is going lousy, it's going to spill over, and we all know this. We've all had that bad job that kept us awake at night and we bored our friends rather on the weekend with what a miserable existence we had.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

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**Gina DeLapa:** So if you get work going well, everything else in your life is going to well.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Speaking of, what does thriving at work look like?

**Gina DeLapa:** You know, every time I think about that, the first thing that pops into my mind, I'm not sure why, cheerful sense of urgency.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And I'll say more about that, and I think that characterizes often how the three of us work together, that we know what the goal is, we're all contributing toward that goal. I think we all know what our part in the goal is, and things are upbeat and they're moving along.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** And there's a sense of compulsion to get this done because we're both motivated to see a positive outcome.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** I think in a traditional workplace, what thriving at work looks like is I have the tools and the support I need to do my best work. I'm getting some level of respect and appreciation for doing a good job. Respect and appreciation in ways that matter to me, not just here's a Snickers bar. Do you know what I'm saying? [Laughs]

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**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right, right, right. [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** It's got to be a meaningful reward, and we all have a different love language and all of that.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Emily, I want to say just one thing about it. You mentioned therapy, and I think you've mentioned wisely at the beginning of the podcast about having some resources. I just wanted to let people know, in case they're not aware, it's pretty well known in counseling circles that it take an average about four therapists before you find the right one.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah, I've talked about that on the show before.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Oh, good. I'm so glad because if you don't know that and you strike out twice, you might think, "Maybe it's just me or maybe this therapy thing isn't for me," when you're in very good company so keep trying. Don't give up on therapy, but maybe give up on that therapist until you find the right one.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And yes, when you do, they can shave years and decades off your learning curve.

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**Emily Lewis:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** So I absolutely advocate for that.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah. You mentioned love languages, and I know we're talking about work stuff, but I think that it's a relevant thing because that sense of feeling, appreciated or respected, it really does manifest differently for every kind of person.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yes.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** So I have found personally that there's like a little quiz you can figure out what your love language is, and I'm the kind of person I really respond when someone does tasks. When Jason does chores, I'm thrilled.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs] Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** If he buys me something, I'm kind of like, "Oh, thank you," but it doesn't hit my love language, right?

**Gina DeLapa:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** And it's the same way working with Lea. One of the things that makes me feel like our partnership is like humming along is when we're both like cranking and working through stuff together, but Lea is different.

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**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** And so we both have to learn how to give each other the things we need when the things we need show up differently for ourselves, if that makes sense.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah, and I think part of self-care is being able to clarify those needs for yourself and ask for them in an appropriate way.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Lea, I'm curious, what's your love language, so to speak? What do you respond to?

**Lea Alcantara:** I definitely like direct praise.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** Like it's one of those things where it feels awkward to state, maybe even selfish, but even like a small like, "That was great or that's a good job," like really puts me in a great mood.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah.



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**Lea Alcantara:** So like I very much respond to verbalizations of stuff, and that's the way like my sisters and I grew up, like we always told each other we love each other like all the time, even through insults like verbally, you know? [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laugh]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** But it was always like verbal, like it was one of those things that we tell them they're beautiful or if we're trying to be insulting, it's really the opposite of what we're trying to say, that kind of stuff, but yeah, I'm verbal. I like verbal acknowledgment.

**Emily Lewis:** Words of affirmation.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yes.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yes.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yes, yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** And I think Emily used the word "advice" which is fine earlier to describe my books. I tried to think of it. There probably is a huge element of advice in there, but I'm not tied to whether someone follows the advice or not. It's more about encouragement and affirming people.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]





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**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** And I know the word “empower” gets overused, but sometimes people just need that little psychological permission to say, “No, this is not acceptable. I do need to set this boundary.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And again, I’ll clean this up for our purposes, but I tell the story in the book about when my 5-year-old nephew got picked last for night games and he stormed off the fields and said, “I don’t have to take this stuff.” And he didn’t say stuff...

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** But he said it as little 5-year-old boys, which is, “I don’t have to take this.” But that’s kind of become almost a family motto like this is one of those places where I don’t have to take this, and I won’t.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah. But that’s a good realization.

**Emily Lewis:** So I’ll put a link to the love languages in our show notes. It’s a really interesting exercise just to understand what connects with you. It makes all types of relationships improve.



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**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** Gina, I wanted to get into some specific examples about thriving at work. First, I've been here before, it's what prompted me to strike out on my own, but people find themselves stuck at work or stuck in their career.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yes.

**Emily Lewis:** How does self-care and some of the reminders in *Thriving at Work* kind of can help people get unstuck?

**Gina DeLapa:** Okay, that's a great question. Well, I think there are different levels of getting stuck. There is getting stuck in your company. Maybe the company is going to be bought or sold or whatever, and you're at an impasse that way. Maybe you've got a new boss and that's not what you signed up for, and you've heard the expression, "People don't leave companies, they leave bosses."

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** So maybe it's a boss issue, and maybe it's just a personal level of "I have nowhere to grow, or my needs and priorities have shifted, this no longer fits for me."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** So one of the ways you can address all of that, and this is a tool that talk about in the book, you might remember, it was what a massage therapist said to me right in the middle of a



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massage, “What does Gina need?” And it was kind of rub it off at that time, it sounded just so Mr. Rogers like, “I’m right here, you don’t have to use the third person.”

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** It was just odd, but clear.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** Later, she got the last laugh because I stubbed my toe memorably hard and my whole life basically flashed before me, and later that night, I thought, “Yeah, what does Gina need?”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** But that’s a way that you can obviously insert your own name. Anyone listening can do this, “What does Emily need? What does Lea need?” And it’s a real kind of right brain way to break through the clutter and say, “I need a new challenge.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** Or I need a new peer group. Or I need to go have a conversation with my boss,” but it becomes quite what you need to do, and then it’s just a matter of gathering the courage to do it, but

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sometimes, many times, when you're feeling stuck, I wouldn't do this kneejerk, but many times in your heart of hearts, you know you've got to make a move and take a risk, and I think, Emily, you alluded to that when you struck out on your own.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah, and I'd also add that I feel like, upon reflection, striking out on my own probably would have gone a lot smoother had I've been more focused on my self-care.

**Gina DeLapa:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** Because I feel like if you are actually, especially that fundamental stuff, the sleep, the activity, the connection with other humans, all of those things kind of provide a foundation that when you're ready to make that move, you feel a little safer.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** Because I feel like I unstuck myself and then put myself in a situation where I was like, "Oh, my gosh, what am I doing?" [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** Well, yeah, but there's a saying. Harvey Mackay said you're a lot better off being scared than bored or stuck.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh, good point.



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**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** But yeah, that's a great point. When your self-care needs are met, even if you do still need to move on, you can move on with some warmth and grace rather than just taking your ball and going home.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Gina DeLapa:** I'm telling you we all get tempted to do this sometimes, but when I left the university where I worked full time, I reached a point where I was able to sit down and just warmly explain that it was time to move.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And I can be very cooperative in that process. It doesn't mean it didn't have to happen, but self-care really, yes, when that's the foundation, everything else goes better.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Well, everything still seems very tidy the way we've been explaining all of this, but...

**Gina DeLapa:** Okay. It's not. I can assure you.

**Lea Alcantara:** It isn't. Exactly.

**Gina DeLapa:** No.

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**Lea Alcantara:** Specifically, workplace drama seems to be an inevitability sometimes.

**Gina DeLapa:** [Agrees]

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**Lea Alcantara:** But is it? Like what examples are there of that and how can we avoid it or work through it?

**Gina DeLapa:** Okay. Well, yes, I mean, we're all human beings and I think it's good to be low maintenance, but if you're in a no maintenance relationship, for example, you're probably not in a relationship at all, you know?

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** If one of you is in a coma or something.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** So I think it's fair that, yeah, there are always going to be little misunderstandings or somebody doesn't feel treated right. It's what we do with that. But I'll give you an example that came up in a workplace where I was. Our office had just put on a major career fair and so we were meeting as a staff the next day, and one person in the room, it wasn't me, clearly had done the lion's share of the work. I mean, that was part of her job. She had gone above and beyond. Well, the boss gave this blanket praise, "Thank you, everyone, so much for helping us pull off the career fair."



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Well, one person felt really, really slighted because she had done 90% of the work and so it didn't go over well, whereas if he had just said, "Well done on the career fair. Join in thanking so and so for really pulling all the stops to make it happen. Everybody applaud." Everyone is included. Of course, it didn't happen that way, but I think it's how do I speak up when I am the one who's slighted.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And there's nothing wrong, you know. If you bring up something uncomfortable in a relationship, that's not a sign that things are bad. It's just, "Okay, we've got to do a little course correct here." But I can do that without chopping somebody's head off or hopefully without tears. I can go and say, "You know, this happened and I think what would have been more meaningful is if we had done it this way." I mean, it always has to be solution oriented.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And I think it has to assume the best about other people, not the worst. Does that make sense?

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** I mean, yes, but to your point, self-care is messy, relationships can be messy, but embrace the mess, and another principle I try to live by is don't talk more about me than you do to me.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

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**Gina DeLapa:** And I think that's a way to cut down on drama. If you've got a problem with someone in the workplace, just go to them. Go to them privately and bring it up in a high level way, and again, don't dwell on the problem. Let's focus on and let's get this on the right track as quickly as possible.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** I think a lot of that, Lea, if it reminds you of our conversation with Amélie Lamont on fearless feedback.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** Oh, feedback is tricky. Yeah, that can be a tricky one.

**Emily Lewis:** It is. In fact, it leads really well to our next question that we had lined up for you.  
[Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** How do you give constructive feedback? What is constructive feedback?

**Gina DeLapa:** Oh, constructive feedback, first of all, it has to be your feedback to give.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** There are certain things that I'm not going to be the one to bring up because it's not...

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

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**Gina DeLapa:** I'm not close enough to that person. I don't have enough bandwidth with that person to tell them their breath stinks or whatever. I'm making that up, but I think constructive feedback really has to be given with the other person's best interest in mind.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And I think it was to be given with a little bit of humility, a little bit of grace.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** You have to let the other person save face. I mean, we're all doing the best we can, and it doesn't mean we don't need feedback. I have a friend who was my former roommate from college, Jenna, who her theory is you can say anything to anyone if you just preface it with "dude."

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Dude. [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Nice.

**Gina DeLapa:** And it lines up. It's like, "Dude, we got to talk about that project."

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]



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**Gina DeLapa:** Or like, “Dude, I need that report today.” But it softens it. It kind of kicks the person in the butt without tearing them down, which I realize is a total mix metaphor.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** But yeah, it’s letting the other person preserve their dignity, and I’ll give you an example. I had an assistant once at a previous job who had some body odor.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And it wasn’t a one-time thing. It was ongoing, and it was very awkward. You’re sitting alone in a small room and it’s more apparent, and I didn’t tell her how to solve the problem, but I’m trying to think of how I’d phrase it. It was kind of like, “Well, before we get to X, Y, and Z,” like I had my next move kind of in place, so we had somewhere else to go quickly. I just said, “You know, I’ve noticed this issue come up and I just wanted to make you aware of it so that you could take care of it, and then move on,” and that was it.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** It never had to be brought up again. But sometimes you have to bring up feedback to people that they don’t want to hear.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And sometimes they respond with a meltdown or insult.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And you know what, you've got to just let them own that. That's theirs. You don't apologize. You don't undo what you just said. It's okay that you feel that way.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** I think what resonated with me as you're sharing these stories is that you approach constructive feedback by allowing the person to have dignity.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** Like understanding you're not there to tear anyone down, and I think this is the issue with, say, like unsolicited advice perhaps is that it's just you feel entitled to your opinion.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** But that doesn't necessarily mean that's constructive, and if you'd kind of lead with, "Does this enhancer dignify this person? Will this improve a situation?" I think that's a good perspective to have.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah. I also think you have to ask yourself who owns the problem, and maybe you own the problem and maybe you are feeling called to say something about it. Maybe somebody keeps repeating the same underhanded insult or something that's like not just sitting well. You own

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the problem, but that does help frame how you approach. It might just be, okay, this person maybe has a laugh that's annoying or something that rubs me the wrong way.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** And it happens, but you realize, "Okay, well, that's really my thing to deal with. I can't tell that person how to live."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Do you know what I am saying? You figure out, "Okay, is this a hill I need to die on?"

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Sometimes it is, but probably 80% of the time or more, it is not so you just let it go.

**Emily Lewis:** So I think that's useful when you're considering to give feedback that is going to possibly be perceived negatively, but how about when you're the recipient? You've done something and someone has come to you with some negative feedback. I felt like in your book, this was something where the sort of boundaries came into play in the sense of if you have your boundaries and you know who you are and what you can own, that can help you receive negative feedback in a more non-personal way or it's not challenging your worth. You can separate it from your sense of self.

**Gina DeLapa:** Right. So how to receive feedback...



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** I think there are two aspects of it. There's the content and then there's the delivery.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And sometimes the content might be spot on, but the delivery leaves tire tracks in your back so you have to kind of separate, you know. Bernie Siegel says, "Are you polishing my mirror or scratching it?"

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** But let's assume that there is some value to the content. I think you have to embrace it and you thank the person who gave it to you because if they have a shred of decency and social skills, it was probably very hard for them to say, and so you say, "Thank you. I'm sure I needed to hear that and I will take it to heart." But it depends on the severity of the issue. If it's really serious, then you say, "I didn't realize how it's affecting you and here's how it's going to be different."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** I don't think everything. I mean, it might just be like, "Dude, clean up the lunch room refrigerator."

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

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**Gina DeLapa:** And then you don't need to offer something very formal, but it's pretty hard to argue with somebody who comes back with strength and humility.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** So I mean, it's pretty disarming. If someone gives you negative feedback and you'd take it like a champ and say, "That is so good to know. Thank you." Hey, you've just defused a whole lot of argument.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** And then I think that's a way to make the workplace safer and a safer place to speak up and then conflicts still come up, but they get resolved much more quickly and you could go on stronger than before.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah. I think too the early part of my career when I was working for other people, like in my late 20s, and getting negative feedback and taking it so personally and getting defensive, even raising my voice to my boss. I'm so amazed I didn't get fired that day. I actually had the perspective of, "How dare you give me negative feedback. I'm amazing."

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** It's my 26-year-old ego, you know?



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**Gina DeLapa:** We are all in our 20s, yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** And it escalated the situation, and frankly, that relationship with that boss, like we continued to work together for many years, but it never really recovered from that. Now, that I look back on it, I can really sense that I took it so personally as like an attack on me as opposed to constructive feedback to help me be better at my job from my boss who is supposed to be doing that, you know?

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Emily Lewis:** So now that I'm older, I feel like I'm a bit better with negative feedback.

**Gina DeLapa:** Sure.

**Emily Lewis:** And it's one of those things that, like you said, it defuses the situation. It gives everyone the opportunity to feel heard and hopefully resolve the problem that brought it up in the first place versus what I did in my 20s, which is basically kind of damaged the relationship forever.

**Lea Alcantara:** Well, the one thing I do want to point out as a person of color sometimes though is that bringing up issues and being brought issues can be heavier than other situations.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Sure.

**Lea Alcantara:** And so how would you deal or how would you get someone to deal with someone, let's say, disparaging your work unnecessarily or like dismissing the scale or scope of your input to a project per se?



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** And I think like for a lot of people of color, their reaction is actually not cause drama.

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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Sure, like can be the model minority kind of, yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** Exactly, but that doesn't help.

**Gina DeLapa:** No, no, that just keeps the oppression in place.

**Lea Alcantara:** Exactly. So how would someone in that kind of situation deal with that kind of drama and leave with a certain sense of dignity as well as like moving something, you know, their career and their work relationships forward?

**Gina DeLapa:** That's a big question, an important question, so somebody is dismissive of your work or your contribution.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** I think you can go to them privately and sometimes you can just say more about that and get them to talk and hopefully recognize the error of their ways, so to speak, or just let them kind of exhaust themselves and say, "You know, well, here's how I see it." Or engage them in conversation, but say, "I need to point out that I think my contributions are strong and I think you'll





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agree, I've done this, this and this. It's not helpful to me when you blah, blah, blah." But warmly, quietly you advocate for yourself.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** I have a refrigerator magnet that says, "Stand your ground, it's sacred."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And you don't back down. Yeah, you stand up for yourself and hopefully move that person a little further along, but meanwhile, you make your voice heard.

**Emily Lewis:** I feel like to be in a position to do that, for me, this just keeps looping back to that understanding what you need and knowing what boundaries you are not willing to let someone else cross so that you can advocate for yourself from a position of strength.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yes.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** And then you even support it further by making sure you're getting enough sleep, making sure you're active, making sure you're connecting with people, you know, all those fundamentals.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah, surrounding yourself with healthy people I think is a huge one.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yes.



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**Gina DeLapa:** The same friend who had the “dude’ theory has another statement that always stuck with me. She said, “I have my own valid way of looking at things.”

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And you don’t always have to say that out loud, but if you start with internal boundaries, the external boundaries flow out of that pretty easily.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And you don’t let, you know, like, “I will not let myself be talked to like a certain way.” You know?

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** “If you have a problem, here’s how I’d like you to handle it.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** Lea, I don’t want to put you on the spot, but I’m going to. [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]



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**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** So you brought it up.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** Do you have anything to add to Gina's advice about advocating for yourself in those situations where you feel like you're not being supported or you're being marginalized in your contributions?

**Lea Alcantara:** Ah, it's such a difficult question to answer because I'm definitely "burn it all down" kind of situation. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Like my personality is definitely the type of person who's like "I have a problem, here's the problem" kind of situation.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** And I also understand that I'm in a position of privilege to be able to even do that, and I mean that financially.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Lea Alcantara:** So I think if there's really only one advice I can give, it's get your finances in order regardless of where you are in your career. In your college, like save up as much money, get your savings in order, because when you are in a position where you're not worrying about your basic needs and you are confident about who you are or what you contributed, so this is just putting yourself in a position where you know that you are being incorrectly maligned, for example, and then you've put yourself in a position where you defend yourself. It's going to be harsh to say, but if you've got the money to fall back on, it doesn't matter what that means, and I mean this like even back when I was making not that much money straight out of college, but I always had like an "f\*\* off" fund.  
[Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** And that's what I call that.

**Gina DeLapa:** That's a Hallmark term, yes.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** And that gave me the confidence where I remember, even when I was in my early 20s and this was when I kind of similar to Emily's where I think I was tired of my job and I decided to strike on my own. I did that very strategically where I knew I had X amount of money in my savings account, and then also I had contingency where if this doesn't work out, I will get a job at X making X.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** So everything was always like for me the more financially secure I was, the more confident I was sticking up for myself, and I think this is true if you're a woman, man, black, white, whatever you are, I think, gosh, so much I think is fundamentally tied to financial security in order for you to advocate for yourself.

**Emily Lewis:** It's like on of those fundamental needs.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Well, and it's also, let's say, when you're in a frustrating work situation, if you know you're setting aside whatever it is, 5 or 10% of your income, toward that...

**Lea Alcantara:** Fund... [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** On that upward fund or whatever you want to call it.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** You know that, "Okay, my days of putting up with this are limited because in the background I am creating pathways for myself. I'm creating options."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

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**Gina DeLapa:** And then there comes that point where you get that toxic feedback one time too many and you just pause and you say thank you because you know what your next move is going to be.

**Emily Lewis:** It's a very empowering place to be, I think.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yes.

**Emily Lewis:** I think self-care is like the beginning of really feeling strong in your life.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** All right, we're getting near the end of our time. I want to get into some resources. We've mentioned your ultimate reminders books. We'll link to those in the show notes and Lea and I both can recommend them, especially I have my copy of *Thriving at Work* right next to me and it's got tons of highlighted lines and little sticky notes and everything.

**Gina DeLapa:** Oh, good. [Laughs] I'm so glad.

**Emily Lewis:** But other than your books, Gina, what other resources could you recommend to help professionals with their self-care?

**Gina DeLapa:** Okay. Well, a couple of them. First of all, if anyone is interested in signing up for my free Monday morning pep talk, just text the word PEPTALK, all one word, to 66866 and you'll be added to the list. So that's a way to get kind of a weekly dose of self-care and encouragement.

**Emily Lewis:** Positivity.



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**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah, exactly. And we were talking earlier about therapy, I mean, that's easier than ever to get that and get that on your phone now.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** If you Google the term "online therapy," you will see a lot of links come up, including one from the APA, American Psychological Association, what to look for in that, but therapy is just talking to people, talking to someone, and making sense of your life.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** There's an app I use, a company called HeartMath, again, all one word. It's basically a biofeedback device.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** And I'm just dipping my toes into those waters, but it helps you to develop what they call heart coherence. I don't know if I could describe it, but it's a way to lower your physiological and emotional stress.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

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**Gina DeLapa:** So that's kind of again a big picture way. There's an app called AutoSleep that I use, and I wear with my Apple Watch at night in it, but it monitors my sleep and that thing knows if you had dessert last night because it's going to show up in your sleep.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** I mean, it really knows if you went to bed mad. I mean, it just knows, but it's a way to keep yourself encouraged and motivated. So those are the couple that I can strongly recommend that I think will make a big impact.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** So Gina, what's your final advice for someone struggling to make self-care a priority?

**Gina DeLapa:** I would say start small and start with something that you can do even every day, and I want to go on a limb. We mentioned how booga booga therapy can be. Here's another one, affirmations.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** They're so Stuart Smalley, I know that. They're so corny.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs] Stuart Smalley.





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**Gina DeLapa:** But I'm telling you, they make a difference. And as best I can, every morning, I write a page or two of affirmations, just whatever flows out. It's a way to get you to listen to yourself, "I am setting myself up for success." That's one that I often repeat.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** "I solve problems brilliantly." Whatever you want to strengthen or improve, but start small and keep track of how you feel afterward, after you speak up for yourself or after you clarify a need or a boundary, and I think when you start to see those early returns, it will inspire you to keep going.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Or you get a great night's rest. Man, you'd feel like you could do anything and then there's your motivation to continue that. As a last thing I would say on that, everyone listening should understand you're going to fall off the wagon a lot.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Everybody does.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** It's part of being human. Just get back on track as many times as it takes and don't ever give up. Just use that as rocket fuel to say, "Okay, that drained my energy, I'm going to do it differently next time and just keep learning."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

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**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** And yeah, I find keeping track of what life teaches keeps me as much as possible from repeating bad lessons or bad mistakes and that's again another source of empowerment and self-encouragement.

**Emily Lewis:** Wonderful.

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh, thank you, Gina.

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** So we'll make sure to list all of those resources that Gina mentioned in our show notes, and I also wanted to just mention a couple other resources for anyone who may be struggling right now, and we'll also link to those in the show notes. There's the [National Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#), the [Veterans Crisis Line](#), the [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) has a lot of good resources, and then there's a resource from the [Behavioral Health Treatment Services](#). It's a locator to help you find treatment opportunities in your area, and like I said, we'll list all of those in the show notes.

**Lea Alcantara:** Perfect. So that's all the time we have for today, but before we finish up, we've got our rapid fire ten questions so our listeners can get to know you a bit better. Are you ready, Gina?

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs] I'm as ready as I'll ever be. Go for it.

**Timestamp:** 00:49:59

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]



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**Lea Alcantara:** Okay, first question.

**Gina DeLapa:** I have my protein shake this morning, so yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Nice. What's your go-to karaoke song?

**Gina DeLapa:** It's Carly Simon, *You're So Vain*.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** What advice would you give your younger self?

**Gina DeLapa:** Trust yourself.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** What's your favorite PG-rated curse word?

**Gina DeLapa:** "Damn it" is always cathartic.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

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**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** What's the other one? Vista. I guess Vista is a good curse word.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Microsoft Vista, are you familiar with that?

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah. [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** It's a terrible operating system.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** But it's a pretty good expletive.

**Lea Alcantara:** That is hilarious.

**Gina DeLapa:** Vista, it's just, you know.

**Lea Alcantara:** Excellent.

**Gina DeLapa:** I grew with a lot of curse words.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]



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**Gina DeLapa:** So I have a wide palette to choose from. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** All right, who's your favorite superhero?

**Gina DeLapa:** Gee, my superhero. Carol Burnett was my hero growing up.

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh, I love it.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** I know. I know, and I'm resigned to the fact that I'm never going to do a project with her, but yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** What is your favorite time of the year?

**Gina DeLapa:** Probably summer. It doesn't get much better than summer.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** I'm warming up to fall as I get older, but summer, yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** If you could change one thing about the web, what would it be?

**Gina DeLapa:** I think there would be more consistency.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** Yeah. Easier, like I want us all to log out the same way on every site.

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**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** A good consistent user experience.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Gina DeLapa:** Is that too much to ask?

**Emily Lewis:** It shouldn't be. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** What are three words that describe you?

**Gina DeLapa:** Loyal, intense, motivated.

**Emily Lewis:** How about three words that describe your work?

**Gina DeLapa:** Empowering, encouraging, inspiring.

**Lea Alcantara:** What's your favorite meal of the day?

**Gina DeLapa:** Breakfast.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Gina DeLapa:** It's your reward for getting up.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** All right, Gina, last question, coffee or tea?

**Gina DeLapa:** Coffee. It's a question that answers itself. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs] Nice.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** So that's all the time we have. Thanks for joining the show, Gina.

**Gina DeLapa:** Oh, thank you for having me on. It was a delight and I hope some of this was helpful to our audience.

**Emily Lewis:** In case any of our listeners wanted to follow up with you, where can they find you online?

**Gina DeLapa:** I am on Twitter pretty actively. So [@GinaDeLapa](#) is my handle. You can go to [ultimatereminders.com](http://ultimatereminders.com). Those are probably the best places. The PEPTALK is a great way to stay in touch.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Gina DeLapa:** That's how I stay in touch with most of my readers and followers, so you could sign up on my website or again, text PEPTALK to 66866, and that will give us a way to connect on a weekly basis.

[Music starts]

**Emily Lewis:** Wonderful. Thanks again, Gina. Lea and I both love your book and we're so glad we were able to share your reminders with our listeners today.

**Gina DeLapa:** Oh, thanks. I'm honored.

**Lea Alcantara:** CTRL+CLICK is produced by [Bright Umbrella](#), a web services agency invested in education and social good. Today's podcast would not be possible without the support of this episode's sponsors! Many thanks to [Foster Made](#) and [Tower](#)!

**Emily Lewis:** We'd also like to thank our hosting partner: [Arcustech](#).

**Lea Alcantara:** And thanks to our listeners for tuning in! If you want to know more about CTRL+CLICK, make sure you follow us on Twitter [@ctrlclickcast](#) or visit our website [ctrlclickcast.com](#).

**Emily Lewis:** And if you liked this episode and want to support our show, check [our Twitter feed](#) for details about Patreon launching later this month. Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when we're going to talk with Francis Rowland about designing for people struggling with mental health. Be sure to check out [ctrlclickcast.com/schedule](#) for more upcoming topics.





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**Lea Alcantara:** This is Lea Alcantara ...

**Emily Lewis:** And Emily Lewis ...

**Lea Alcantara:** Signing off for CTRL+CLICK CAST. See you next time!

**Emily Lewis:** Cheers!

[Music stops]

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