

What's Next? Podcast

Ellen Yin

[Snip-it's from Podcast] Ellen: I really only lasted about 10 months in that job because basically on day one, I really felt that it wasn't the place for me. And I, you know, when you when you're fresh out of college, people tell you all the time you need to stay in your job for at least a year or two, you know, build stability before you make a change. But I think sometimes it's also really wise to listen to your gut instincts. And I'm not saying that this is the right choice for everybody, but about 10 months.....

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

Welcome to the What's Next? podcast. Let me just start off by saying. Not everyone has the same background. There is no road-map for success. Life begins at the end of your comfort zone. Leaning into your curiosities. It does suck when you grow up. We're all still figuring out who we are. You can't just sit back and be silent. Black lives matter. It is the little stuff that makes the biggest difference. Do you have another hour?

Cody: Hello, Beaver Nation. Welcome to the What's Next? Podcast. I'm your host, Cody Stover. I am excited to be joined today by someone who is no stranger to the podcast scene. She's the host of The Cubicle to CEO podcast helping other entrepreneurs make their first ten thousand dollar month and is also the founder and CEO of her own marketing consulting agency. And of course, she's a 2016 Beaver grad with a degree in kinesiology and exercise science. Excited to welcome to the podcast today, Ellen Yin. Thanks for joining us.

Ellen: Hey, Cody. Thank you so much for having me.

Cody: Yeah. Where are you calling from in the world?

Ellen: So we are actually in our new house in Salem, Oregon. So we just moved up here from Corvallis this past week. So we're kind of surrounded by a lot of mayhem, a

lot of painting projects and boxes around us right now. So kind of a chaotic time. But I'm excited to be in a new city.

Cody: Yeah, definitely. I actually lived in Salem for a bit after school, so. Yeah. Excited to hear your experience there, too. I want to dive in to. I know there's some stuff we want to cover today. You're in the world of marketing, which I think for a lot of recent grads or students who are coming out. It's a space that offers a lot and has a lot of different avenues you can take. So I'm excited to dive into that and hear a bit of your experience there. But I wanted to start with something that most of our guests all have in common. And that's your time as a beaver. Why? Why did you choose Oregon State in the first place? And maybe where did you grow up to? What led to that decision to go to OSU?

Ellen: Absolutely, [light laugh] so this might come as kind of a shock to some people, but OSU was originally not in my game plan because I actually grew up in Corvallis. So my dad, we moved to Corvallis when I was three when he got a position on faculty at the university. And so I grew up around the campus. And I love Oregon State, obviously. But in my mind, you know, I was really thinking, I'm gonna get out of here. I'm going to experience a different city and a different campus for college. And so when I first applied for colleges as a freshman, I actually didn't even apply for OSU. And I ended up getting accepted as a spring admit at or University of Southern California down in L.A. So I went to USC my freshman year. And what I realized at the end of my freshman year was, oh, wow, I am going to end up graduating with probably close to two hundred thousand dollars in debt if I stay here. [Cody: Mhm] And so that was pretty scary. And I really didn't feel like that was going to give me the best chance postgrad that I really wanted, you know, the freedom to make those different choices and, and whatnot. So I ended up deciding kind of on a whim because I'm a bit of an impulsive person, which you'll find out, you know, as a share more of my story. But I kind of decided, you know what, I'm going to transfer back home, apply for Oregon State. And because my dad was on faculty, I also, you know, got a really awesome admissions discount. So I really couldn't, you know, find a better option financially for a college education. So that's why I ended up transferring back here. And at the time, I was actually just getting into lifting and the whole world of fitness. And I just thought, hey, like, I am really interested in learning more about this. I really didn't have any idea of if I was going to use this degree post-graduation. But I just decided, again, kind of on a

whim to switch my degree from journalism to exercise science. And that's how I ended up at OSU.

Cody: Yeah. That's interesting. And that was gonna be my next question was, was kind of how did you find that path from exercise science, like when you were when you're still at OSU you and you were heading towards graduation, were you thinking in your mind. Okay, I'm gonna find a job in that field or, or I guess what was going through your mind as you started to enter the job world for the first time?

Ellen: Totally. And this is something that confuses a lot of people when they talk to me. No one ever knows that my degrees in exercise science because my entire professional job experience has always been in marketing. But how that kind of came about is actually so junior and senior year at Oregon State, you're required to do a practicum if you are a kinesiology major. So you have to, you know, log a certain amount of hours for an internship. And what I decided is, you know, I knew I didn't really want to work in a traditional field related to exercise science. So I didn't really have a desire to be a personal trainer or a physical therapist or anything like that. So but I did have a passion for fitness as a whole. And so I ended up actually connecting with a fitness company that was based out of Colorado through Instagram. And I basically pitched myself for a marketing internship with them and said, hey, like, there are things that I see that you're doing in your marketing and your public relations that I feel like I could improve upon. So would you give me a chance to work for you for free for three months and see what improvements or changes I could make? So obviously, they didn't turn down free labor. So that's how I ended up getting that internship and that internship actually carried over from junior year to senior year of college. And by I think it was by November of my senior year, I had actually now turned the internship into a paid remote position. And then upon graduation, at the end of 2016, I was offered a full-time position working for them remotely as their public relations director. So it really kind of just parlayed into a whole career in marketing. And I think I didn't necessarily intend to go into marketing, but I did know for a fact that I wasn't going to go into like a traditional field related to exercise science.

Cody: That's great. And one thing that's really interesting there is you actually pitched them on the position, right? You weren't scanning their job page and saw a few things that they were hiring for you. You said this is what I think I can bring and then told them

that. And then they were receptive, obviously. Well, what is that like a path that you recommend people try as they're looking for a job or are trying to get that first job at a college? Is that seem like a viable route?

Ellen: Oh, one hundred percent. I would say that a majority of the good things that have happened in my life have been opportunities that I created myself, not saying like, oh, everything I do is self-made. Obviously, everything I do is impacted by, you know, the people I surround myself with being in the right place at the right time. I mean, there's so many other factors involved. But I really do believe that there are so many missed opportunities that people don't take advantage of because they think I have to wait for someone else to give me permission or to create my dream job for me. When if you see a gap in the marketplace, doesn't matter what your industry is or what your major, if you see any area where you have something to offer of value, your skill set, your experience, your connections, whatever it may be, if you're interested, there's never any harm in asking, hey, can I bring value to the table for you? Like, can I help you do what you're doing better? Because nine times out of ten, most people are going to want that, especially if you're in college and you're offering to help them for free. They really have nothing to lose.

Cody: Yeah, and I would echo, too, in my experience, when I was a college student and also just after college. Especially those were times where I felt like especially as you had your .edu email address when people receive stuff from you. A lot of times they were there willing to help or they're willing to talk to you and willing to hear what you were interested in or what you were trying to grow in. And so, yeah, I would encourage any listeners to who might be at that stage of getting towards the end of college or maybe have graduated and transitioning out, looking for the next step, dive into those things and explore them. I think most, most times people are, are happy and willing to help. And if there's something that you can do that's valuable. Like you just said, Ellen, they aren't gonna say no to free labor or to or do something that's going to help them grow.

Ellen: Exactly. You just really have to align what you have to offer with what they are trying to accomplish, right? It's always about turning the focus back on the other person and thinking to yourself what's in it for them because. Just from being on the side of the person pitching and now oftentimes being the person pitch to which is kind of an

interesting dynamic now to be on the receiving end. There's a lot of times when I get pitches from people who it's clear that they've never done any research on, you know, the work that I do or who I serve my community. And it's really clear that everything in their pitch is all about them, like, hey, can I get free information from you? Hey, can you help me with introducing me to this person? Can you. Can I pick your brain? All of these things are focused on them rather than the value that they can provide to me, which is I know it sounds kind of self-centric when, when I say it this way, but I'm trying to flip it in the sense of when you are, you know, a student or a recent graduate trying to pitch a company, a person, whoever it may be. Always be remembering that you do have value to offer. Just because you know you're new to the career field does not mean that you have no value to offer. You just have to remember that whatever it is that you are pitching them on should align with that company's mission or that person's work that they're doing so that they, they feel like it's worth their time to give you that opportunity or to take a risk on you, so to speak.

Cody: Yeah, that's a great call out. Do your research and make sure you know what what, what the value is that the company might need too. So, yeah. Appreciate you sharing that. Before we dive into what you're up to now, I know we're kind of transitioning that way, but really quick, I want to press pause and do a fun little segment we call back in my day. So this is the classic, you know, your parents or somebody older than you sits you down say, oh, you went to OSU. Oh, let me tell you back in my day. And then, you know, tells you something that was, was, was prominent in Corvallis or OSU back in their day. So the question I want to ask you is whether it was a go to study spot or a bar or a hangout in Corvallis. What was like that place for you that you always say, back in my day, you know, that was my spot or what's the biggest change that you notice when you go back to Corvallis these days?

Ellen: Such a good question. Honestly, my time on campus outside of being in classes was really spent at Dixon. [Laughing] [Cody: Uh-huh] I feel like I was always at Dixon. And so I guess that's the place I have the most fond memories of in college. I did also, unfortunately, pull many all nighters in college studying for a different, you know, whatever midterms, finals.

Cody: Were you a library person?

Ellen: I was, I was like a fifth floor library person, so. [Laughing] Yeah. I don't know. I mean, there were so many things that I love about OSU's campus. I don't know if I have like. Oh, this is my spot type of memory. But I would say the time the most time I spent was definitely at Dixon. So that place will always have, you know, a special place in my heart.

Cody: I think that's a great answer. And Dixon was something that I loved as well. And I think I took for granted because I realized like as I moved up to Portland and joined a gym up here, it was like Dixon was a really great facility and I play a lot of basketball. And so realizing that my gym has one court for, you know, the whole population of whoever goes to that gym versus Dixon, I'd like eight basketball courts and a pool. And so that was definitely something that I took for granted during my time in Corvallis.

Ellen: Oh, totally. Dixon is like insane in terms of if it were its own standalone private gym, the membership costs for a place like that would be well over a hundred dollars a month. [Cody: Oh, yeah] So I know I think we definitely took that for granted as students. And there are many times. Well, not so much now that I've moved out of Corvallis. But I know when I was in Corvallis, the other options for gyms just paled in comparison. I was always, like, so resentful [Cody: Mhm] that I had to pay, you know, these dues for a place that was literally like one 16th the size [Cody: Uh-huh] of Dixon and had, you know, not nearly enough of the same offering. So, yeah, definitely an awesome place.

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

Cody: Hey listeners Cody here, a couple awesome tips right there by Ellen on how to present yourself as valuable to companies and career opportunities that you're striving for. I just wanted to share that this podcast is brought to you by OSU next, an alumni network and partnership with the OSU Alumni Association, which is also home to alumni career services. A lot of things are digital right now, and in this digital hiring world a strong resume can make your first impression an outstanding one. I actually didn't know this the last time I was in the job hunt, and I wish I did. But all Oregon State alumni have access to free professional resume reviews. You can send in yours today and you'll have feedback within a week. Get started at osualum.com/career. Now let's hear more from Ellen.

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

Cody: Ok. So I want to jump in to what you are up to now. When did you decide that you want to go the entrepreneurship route and be your own boss and do your own thing? What kind of spurred that moment for you?

Ellen: Great question. So I am definitely someone that I mean, I would describe myself as an accidental entrepreneur. So you can probably kind of start to see like a recurring pattern here. But a lot of things that happened in my life are not things that I intentionally set out to do. But one of the things that I really believe in is leaning into your curiosities. I say this all the time on my own podcast as well. And it's this idea that, you know, you may not have all of your steps figured out from the get go, but if something interests you, don't be afraid to lean into that curiosity. Try it out. And you never know what that one little decision can lead to. You know, just it's really like the butterfly effect.

And so when, when I was in that remote position, they actually went through a companywide change. About a year into that job. And they basically laid off like all of their staff. So I ended up getting a marketing position at a local healthcare company in Corvallis. And I was in that job that was like really my first experience in what I would consider corporate America, like, you know, [Cody: Mhm] your cubicle desk and all, all of that. And I really only lasted about 10 months in that job because basically on day one, I really felt that it wasn't the place for me. And I you know, when you when you're fresh out of college, people tell you all the time you need to stay in your job for at least a year or two, you know, build stability before you make a change. But I think sometimes it's also really wise to listen to your gut instincts. And I'm not saying that this is the right choice for everybody, but about 10 months into that job, I just decided, you know this. I know for certain this is not the path for me. So why prolong the inevitable and stay longer just to have a line item on my resume? So I ended up deciding to just quit that job. And I didn't have any backup plans. So it was definitely very scary and risky.

And a lot of people told me I was making a huge mistake. But that was December 2017. And come January 2018, I was applying for jobs up in Portland and you know had gone through some interviews, hadn't really heard back from a lot of the jobs I'd applied to. And an old co-worker at that job that I had left actually reached out and said, hey, I

remember that you, you know, are pretty experienced with Instagram. And I was wondering if, you know, you can help grow our account. They owned a few local coffee shops. And so, you know, I wasn't really doing anything. So I thought, hey, sure, why not? Again, you know, leaning into that curiosity and saying, I'd love to help you. And that was a three hundred dollar project that really, you know, they became my first clients, so to speak.

And from there, I realized, hey, if I can if I can land this three hundred dollar project, I bet I could do this again. But bigger, like I could go land a 1000 dollar client or a five thousand dollar client or multiple, you know, like clients at this level. And so I just decided to start, start down that path. And within you know, within my first six months of entrepreneurship, I had made my first ten thousand dollar month. And it has just continue to grow since then in my business and that is really my passion now for helping people monetize their existing skillsets and turn that into a service to help them make their first ten thousand dollar month.

Cody: That's a really cool story. And I think for listeners out there who are in a situation where maybe you are in your first job out of college and you're learning things, but I guess Ellen a follow up question on that. When do you kind of know or, or how do you make that leap of faith? Because I'm sure that can be scary. What are the things that went through the idea of, oh, my gosh, I'm going from a stable salary to I'm diving completely into the unknown? What was that like on like, I guess the personal side or somebody who's, who's thinking about that through? What should they what should they be thinking about?

Ellen: Yeah, I think that when it comes to leaving a job, the way that I have always looked at jobs, even, you know, throughout college, like when I was waitressing at Applebee's or, you know, working at the movie theater, I always looked at every job as an opportunity to do one of two things, either expand my network by meeting new people, developing new relationships, or expanding my skillset. Really, it like either improving an existing skill or learning something new. And I think I've even from, you know, all of my minimum wage jobs, I've learned something valuable from every single one of them. Like, for example, like being a server, right. That taught me to think on my feet to be, you know, really, really reactive in situations that require quick thinking and to be comfortable having conversations with strangers.

So I think there's something that you can learn in every situation. But for me, what ultimately gave me the confidence to leave that job was realizing, one, I always like to map out worst case scenarios. And so I thought, OK, if I do not get a job for the next, let's say, three, four, five months, like, will I be OK? Will I end up homeless? And the answer was no. So I said, OK, I'm willing to take that risk. Then like I will go out and get a job at, you know, at McDonald's if I need to, to find to give myself more time to find the next opportunity. So I wasn't worried about what would happen if I couldn't make things happen exactly how I wanted right away. So I was willing to take that worst case scenario. And then the second thing was. The minute I realized that I was not growing in my job at the time was when I realized I needed to leave because I'm willing to stay at a job as long as I feel like I'm still growing as a person. But the moment I feel like I've become complacent and I am just, you know, doing the same things day in, day out, almost like a robot without really having any desire to grow or any opportunities to grow. That's what I know. OK, this is not for me. And it's worth it to leave.

Cody: Yeah. Thanks for sharing that, that's, that's valuable to hear kind of the ins and outs of what went into that decision. And like you said, the risk was worth the reward. And so interesting to see kind of like the, the way that your mind analyzed that and decided, hey, you know, what's the worst that could happen? And I'm OK with that and I'm diving in. So that's, that's really cool. Thanks for sharing.

Ellen: Yeah, of course.

Cody: So the world of marketing. There's I mean, marketing. I actually was a marketing major at Oregon State [Ellen: Oh awesome] and it's definitely like a broad major or it's a broad thing to study or abroad thing to go into because there's so many different specialties in it. What, what did you find a kind of a specialty or did you find okay, I can get good at a lot of different pieces of this marketing puzzle(?) or I guess break that down for me, how you kind of found your niche.

Ellen: Yeah, I think niching down is really powerful because if you are an expert in one thing, it's really interesting, the psychological effect effects that it has. But people start to believe you're an expert in all things, which is kind of counterintuitive to what you might think. But that's why it's so powerful to be really, really great at one thing. So when I first

started in offering marketing services, I was not very specific. I was really just trying to, you know, increase my cash flow and get more clients into the door to build my business.

And I think that is very normal for a lot of people, especially if you're in a service space business when you're first starting out. You just need money to stay afloat so that your business can continue growing. And so when I first started, you know, Instagram marketing has always been kind of my home base. And so I did get a lot of clients in that. But I did also teach myself and invest in courses and mentors and programs to learn other skill sets like Facebook ads, which was completely new to me. And then as I grew in the marketing space and worked with different clients, it really allowed me to better understand what type of people I like to work with, what types of industries, what types of products or services.

And I think that you really can't know those things until you've actually had practical experience in them. So if you are someone who is in marketing and you're unsure of how to really specialize in something, I would just say get out there and try a lot of different things that you can have a better understanding of what it is that you like to do and what it is that you don't. And once you have found something that you really enjoy doing and that you are good at, then really go all in and invest on increasing your knowledge and your expertise in that one area, because that will make you super valuable.

Cody: Yeah, thank you sharing that. Another thing I was going to ask is you've also built a personal brand through this. And if someone goes to your Instagram page at Cubicle to the CEO, they can see that you have racked up a, a decent sized following of 18, about eighteen thousand people. What goes in to building kind of a personal brand and brand following like that? And, and I guess someone else who's, who's trying to leverage a channel like Instagram. What would you say should be the emphasis placed on the number of followers versus the quality of those followers?

Ellen: I love that you ask this question. And just a quick clarification Cubicle to the CEO is an Instagram account that actually my team member, Sabrina runs. She's amazing.

Cody: Oh perfect.

Ellen: But, that one is not at eighteen thousand. The one that you're referring to is my personal Instagram, which is @missellenyin.

Cody: Yes.

Ellen: But it's you know, I love this question because, Cody, I really, really believe that followers do not matter when it comes to profitability and business. So at least if you're service base businesses, that could be different if you are, you know, an e-commerce brand where volume matters a lot. But I would say that if you're focusing on only like, you know, how many followers do I have, how many likes do I get on these posts? I think that you are focusing on the wrong things. I call those vanity metrics because, like, you know, you've probably seen that meme before. Like, you can't pay your rent with Instagram likes. Right? [Cody: Right] You can't you can't pay your bills with exposure. And so while I think that building a community is important, it's much more important, like you said, to actually connect with and get in front of the right people, the right people who can relate to your story, who have the problems that your, you know, your offer solves or that your message speaks to. I would much rather have one hundred dedicated followers that I can have real conversations with than one hundred thousand people or that have no relationship with that just give me likes on a post, because what does that really matter?

Cody: Yeah. And what does the like sense of community mean to you to aside from just the business side of this, like it is that community mean, mean something to you, too? As far as these are people that you feel of a part of, to say it frankly, is that also a piece of it too?

Ellen: Yeah, definitely I have. I mean, I've made so many amazing friendships through Instagram. It's actually, it's kind of hard because so many of my good friends live all across the country and world. And so, you know, it's fun having a global network. But it also is like, man, I wish I could, you know, just meet up with you guys for lunch or, you know, to hang out sometimes more in person. But I think relationships are everything in business. They really are. And sometimes, you know, I'm really someone who is more of a person, like I like to go deep rather than go wide. And so I really like developing deeper one on one relationships with people. But it is sometimes surreal. Like, for

example, just the other week my podcast manager and I were talking about the show. We're coming up on her one year mark for the Cubicle to the CEO podcast. [Cody: Congrats.]

Ellen: Thank you. Yeah, we're super excited. And I was looking at the stats and it was I can't remember what the exact number was, but I think it was something like people have listen to this show in 77 different countries. And I was like blown away by the fact.

Cody: That's incredible.

Ellen: Thank you. Yeah, I was just. And even just the other day, there was an 18 year old girl who messaged me on Instagram and was like, hey, I've been listening to your show every single week. I'm about to graduate high school. I you know, I live in Columbia. I want to be an entrepreneur. Like, what can I. What can I do to get started in this and that? Those moments are so just I mean, I'm so grateful for experiences like that because I'm like, wow, like something that I'm creating over here in little Corvallis, Oregon, or now I guess Salem is impacting someone, you know, hundreds and thousands of miles away that I may never meet in real life. But our stories are intertwined in this way and it's so powerful. And that's why I love platforms like podcasting and what you guys are doing here and connecting Beaver alumni, but also just the message that we all have to share with the world. I think there's so much opportunity in this information and digital age to really make an impact with, with your story and, you know, don't waste that opportunity.

Cody: Yeah, and that's an amazing story, too, because I think if you would have looked back a year prior, though, you wouldn't have seen how those dots all connect to putting you in that person in contact. But amazing when you get to the year point or you do able to look back and see exactly how those, those dots do connect. And actually, the current job that I'm in right now was I got it through networking through the OSU network. And I remember the first person who I met at a networking event who referred me to so and so and so and so and so and so down the line and eventually led to this job. I had no idea that when I met that person and shook their hand that that was gonna be, you know, the connection that that led me to this next piece in my journey. But amazing to look back and see how the dots connect.

Ellen: It is, and it's that quote from Steve Jobs. You know, it's one of my favorite quotes. "You can't connect the dots looking forward. You can only connect them looking backwards." And it's exactly what you just said where you never know what one interaction can lead to. And that's why I'm such a huge proponent of investing in two things, really, in your mind and in your network. I really believe that those two things will pay dividends for the rest of your life in ways that you can't even understand or predict, really. I mean, there's been times where I've gone to, let's say, like an in-person event hoping to, let's say, learn a certain strategy, right. Maybe I don't walk away with the information that I paid for or that I was intending to get out of that event. But I sat next to someone who I had a conversation with that introduced me to someone else, to someone else, to someone else that ended up in a huge partnership that I just never like, I never could have predicted that.

But if I wasn't in that place at that time to have that conversation, that wouldn't have happened. And so I think the best way to approach your career really is to not look at everything like, not look at everything with this bias of this is what it has to be and this is the only way. But just to be really open to the fact that maybe, you know, maybe you like if I hadn't taken that job that I hated in that cubicle right. I never would have met this coworker who actually referred me to one of my largest clients for my entire first year of business. And this is someone that I've now become. This client is someone I've become really close friends with. I've traveled all around the country with her. I'm helping her write her book. I mean, there's so many things that, like, I would have never happened if I hadn't decided to work at this job that I only stay 10 months at. But because of the relationships I developed there, it led to something that changed the trajectory of my life really.

Cody: Right. That's amazing. Another thing I was going to ask, so being your own boss and starting your own company. How do you kind of draw the line between work life and personal life? Because it seems like as an outsider looking in, it seems like it could be easy to work a little extra and take a little time out of personal life because you are in control of your own schedule and your own your own hours and how much time you're putting into it. How do you kind of balance those things?

Ellen: Yeah, this is this is like the million dollar question, right? This idea of balance. It's there's like this joke that, like, entrepreneurs are special, kind of crazy because we're

the only people that will refuse to work 40 hour weeks for someone else to work, 100 hour weeks for ourselves or something like that. [Cody: Uh-huh.] I don't remember the exact quote.

Cody: I've seen that.

Ellen: But I mean, [laughing] it's so true. And I think that you kind of have to be... In different seasons of your life I think you have to be okay with this idea that not everything is in perfect balance. Like right now this is now my third year in business. And I am pushing really hard right now for growth because I can. Because I have the flexibility and the, the home life really that allows me to do that. You know, I I'm not married right now. I don't have kids. And I just know I'm in a different season of my life that allows me to be a little bit more selfish with my time and put more time into my business. But I know that, you know, in a couple years down the road that could change. And so I think if you're always trying to chase balance, you're actually always going to find yourself not having enough of it. And so it's really more about understanding your priorities. And once you've decided what your priorities are, being okay with saying no to the things that don't honor those priorities. And that's something that I've really had to work on because I am a people pleaser at heart. And so it's very, very difficult for me sometimes to say no to things because I want to say yes to everyone. But learning how to draw those boundaries has been super helpful.

And I think that, again, with different seasons of life and business, like my first two years in business, it was mostly a solo-preneur, newer type of deal where everything in my business was run by me. And so, you know, I was making all the decisions, but I was also in the weeds doing every single task. And so my workdays were really, really long. But now, shifting into this next stage, I guess of my business as we're growing into a seven figure business. It requires a different mindset and a different leadership. And now my focus is much more placed on building my team rather than me individually as a person. And so because the work is divided differently, you know, I have now the, the freedom to, you know, like we're moving houses this week. And so I have the freedom to say, OK, you know, I'm going to take three days off and just, you know, paint. Paint at my house and have that balance right where I let myself do things in my personal life and take time off my business. But it wouldn't have been possible right away from day

one in my business. So just understanding that there are going to be different seasons of your life that allow you to do, you know, different things.

Cody: Yeah, that's a great answer. I have to say, I also saw on your Instagram today that you have a baby grand piano now. [Ellen: Yes!] Is that going to be taking some of your time?

Ellen: Yes. Oh, my gosh. I'm glad you brought that up. Yeah, I've wanted a baby grand my entire life. I actually grew up playing piano, you know, for I studied classical piano for like 13 plus years. And it's been a long time since I've had my piano. So that is, you know, definitely something that I, I equate with, like self-care and just doing something that brings you joy that has nothing to do with your business or making money or your career or whatever. So I love it because from my office I can see it outside my little office door. [Cody: Mhm, mhm.] And definitely during the day, I think when I need a mental break or just a, you know, shut, shut the screen down, it'll be a great a great distraction.

Cody: I'm actually sitting next to my desk. I don't have a baby grand, but an electric keyboard. And it's definitely I started during stressful days. I'll take a five minute pause. Go play. Come back. And it's amazing just how little tiny pieces, little breaks in your routine can really help. Just get you back on track. And kind of clear, clear the head and dive back into it.

Ellen: Yes, it's so true. And OK, first off, I love that you also play. That's really fun. And I agree. I mean, I think sometimes people think that balance means, oh, you know, I have to work a certain schedule and cut off work by, I don't know, let's say 4:00 or 5:00 p.m. every day and take the next six hours and just really be with family or, or whatever it may look like. But, you know, balance can be whatever it means to you to be able to actually, again, prioritize the things that mean the most to you. So if, you know, like if exercise is really important to you and being able to take 30 minutes in the middle of the day to go on a walk with your dog is something you want to prioritize. And you tell people, you know, don't schedule meetings during this block because it will always be the time for me to go walk my dog, then let that be your, your way of creating or, you know, instilling balance in your day. So it doesn't have to be this like, I don't know, like

world shifting way of approaching things. Sometimes it really is the little stuff that makes the biggest difference.

Cody: Yeah, that's a great call out. Ok. So we have a few more minutes here. And so I wanted to transition over to a few of our fun segments that we want to ask you a few questions to learn a little bit more about Ellen Yin.

Ellen: Awesome.

Cody: So this first one is called what's got you hooked? This is whether you're at Netflix or Hulu junkie, a podcast super fan or even if you're a voracious reader, we want to know 'what's that piece of content that you're just consuming right now?'

Ellen: Ok, first off, I'm such a binge watcher when it comes to shows and there's so many that I love. But the one I most recently binge watched is this Canadian comedy show called Schitt's Creek. [Cody: Oh, yes.] Have you heard of it? [Cody: Yes.] Oh, my gosh. [Cody: So good.] I am such a late, late discoverer of the show. I mean, it's it. It did its run of six seasons. I just now discovered it. But I watched like all six seasons, probably over the span of like three weeks. And it's so good. I mean, the writing in that show, the character development, it's insanely good. So if you're looking for something just to make you laugh. Definitely. Definitely. Give that show a try.

Cody: Yeah, I, I was late to the game as well, but I'm just glad that I found. It's so good. I'm behind. I'm only on like season two. But yes. No shame I wasn't I wasn't the hipster that found it right away. [Ellen: Laughs] But I'm so glad that I did.

Ellen: Ok, I have to know then who's your favorite character so far?

Cody: I have to say, I really like Moira.

Ellen: Her accent is so funny to me. [Laughs]

Cody: I know, it's almost like from an old timey like movie or something. She has that perfect Hollywood accent.

Ellen: It is. You know, so this is an accent that my sisters and I have obsessed over because we're always like it's not a British accent, but it's like that old Hollywood accent, like, what is that called? And my sisters actually studied film at Oregon. They just graduated this past week and they found they were like, it's called a transatlantic accent.

Cody: Yes, yes!

Ellen: That's what it is.

Cody: Yes. My partner and I had that realization the other day because we knew what we'd heard it before, but we didn't know what. And actually, we were watching a show on Netflix called The Hollywood, and they were teaching these actors and in like the 50s or who were coming over, who'd traveled across the country to L.A. and they were learning to be Hollywood actors and they wanted to be these big stars. And they were like, the first thing is you have to learn the transatlantic accent and really. Oh, yes. That's like Moira Rose on Schitt's Creek.

Ellen: Oh, my gosh. That's really good. OK, I'm gonna, I'm gonna check out that show. And your job is to finish watching Schitt's Creek.

Cody: Yes.

Ellen: So we can talk about it.

Cody: Yes. It's on my list of things to do, you think. [Ellen: Amazing] Cool. So this next one is called what are you munching on? And social distancing has us all chilling at home. A lot more right now than usual. And so we wanted to ask during this time what's kind of been your go to takeout spot or, or a coffee shop that you've been frequenting on a takeout basis. What's been that place for you?

Ellen: Oh, that's such a good question.

Ellen: Dang, this is hard because I'm such a foodie. But like, I'm literally drawing a blank right now.

Cody: Hahaha.

Ellen: I, I can't think of a food right now that's popping to mind. But I am obsessed with, with Boba bubble tea.

Cody: Oh yeah.

Ellen: And so I'm always I'm always drinking. Was drinking that. So that's what comes to mind. I probably like drinking way too much of that in the last however many months we've been in quarantine now.

Cody: Yeah. And you just moved as well too. So you have a new community of restaurants to, to find out and explore.

Ellen: Yes. I'm so excited. That's like my probably the part I'm most excited about is, you know, when you grow up in Corvallis, then you went to college in Corvallis. It's you kind of have been like every place there is to be. And so I'm really excited to be in a place where I'm like, oh, I don't like I haven't even tried like ninety-nine percent of these places. So it's really fun.

Cody: That's cool. Okay, so this last segment is called Globe or Garage. So whether you're an avid traveler or you're a proud homebody, when it's safe to travel again what is one place that is currently on your, your bucket list? Or if you're more of the homebody type, what's a project or hobby that you were planning on taking on?

Ellen: Oooh, I love these questions. I'm actually both. I am both a globetrotter and an avid homebody. Last year in 2019, I was actually I was probably on a plane at least once a month, every single month of 2019. And so this year it's been very, very strange to me to have not traveled anywhere. So I was actually supposed to go to Disneyland for my birthday last month. So that's probably like the first place I want to go. But my bucket list, man I, I really I really would love to go to like a tour of Asia, like Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Singapore, like I've just haven't explored Asia as much in recent years. And, you know, I was in Europe twice last year and that was so much fun. So I really, really like international trips.

Cody: Yeah, I would echo that too. I was thinking this might be the year that I finally do parts of Asia. I've been to Europe a couple times, a few times. But I was like, this needs to be the time that I, I head over that direction. But press pause would be more opportunities in the future.

Ellen: Yes, definitely. No, I think that travel is just one of the best ways to spend your money and time. I mean, those memories are just priceless. So I'm so, so excited when everything opens back up again. I know that people are going to be a little bit more cautious, but I'm definitely itching to travel. [Laughing]

Cody: Yes. Okay, Ellen, so we appreciate your time so much for coming on. The last thing I wanted to say was where would be if, if people wanted to follow along with your podcast or your social media channels or if somebody is looking for the services that you offer. Where should they find you, or where can they find you?

Ellen: Yeah, I'd love to connect with anyone listening, so my podcast is Cubicle the CEO. You can stream it on Apple podcast on Spotify, Google Play pretty much anywhere. You know that you would listen to a podcast. And we release new episodes every Monday and we get to interview some really cool entrepreneurs and business leaders and learn from their wisdom. So definitely tune in if you are interested in entrepreneurship. And then in terms of online, the best place to say hi is on Instagram. So my user name is at @MissEllenYin. And if you guys are someone who, you know, is starting your own business and you're looking for some help and resources in that area, just send me a D.M. on Instagram and, you know, tell me what you got going on. I'm willing to bet you there's probably at least one free resource I can send your way. So don't be afraid to just shoot me a D.M. I check mostly daily and I'm pretty good about getting back to people there.

Cody: Awesome. And we'll link some of that stuff in the show notes as well. So those of you listening can scroll down there and find some of those links. But, Ellen, thank you so much. We appreciate you for your time and for sharing your words of advice. And to all those listening who might be kind of going from college to career or maybe wanting to dive into entrepreneurship, we're really appreciative of your wisdom and telling us about your journey and the steps that you took.

Ellen: Thank you so much, Cody.

Cody: And for all our listeners out there in Beaver Nation who tuned in to listen to Ellen's What's Next story. Thanks for listening, we'll catch you next time.

[Bouncy theme music plays.]

Hey listeners our goal at OSU next and the alum association is the build community, and that includes creating connections and sharing these unique stories with the rest of Beaver Nation. If you found this episode of the What's Next? Podcast valuable, you can help us achieve this goal by writing a quick review, leaving a rating and subscribing to the show in your preferred podcast player. We're thankful for your support.