Speaker 1: Bringing relevant and engaging insights to human resource and talent development professionals. This is Talent Champions with Diana Thomas, sponsored by FranklinCovey. Here is your host, Diana Thomas.

Diana Thomas: Welcome to another episode of Talent Champions. I'm Diana Thomas and I'm honored to serve as your host. Today we have a fabulous episode for you with our guest, Janice Ellig. Janice is the CEO of the Ellig Group, which supports executive search recruiting efforts for C-suite and board room leaders, particularly focusing in on diversity and recruiting. Businessweek calls her one of the most influential headhunters and she's the co-author of two books Driving the Career Highway and What Every Successful Woman Knows. Welcome Janice.

Janice Ellig: Thank you very much, Diana and delighted to be with you today and the Ellig Group is delighted to be featured so thank you very much.

Diana Thomas: We're excited to have you, and I have to share you had such an impact on my career and now as I coach other leaders from reading your first book, What Every Successful Woman Knows, talking about breakthrough strategies to get the power and ignite your career, especially the piece around navigating the politics, internal politics. I clearly remember reading that and thinking, I got to change the way I think about these politics and it was actually when I was helping out with a women's development group from McDonald's high potential leaders and I thought this is a much better way of describing the whole politics and what you need to do. You just had a great way and you have a great way of cribbing really practical, applicable advice. Thank you for the impact you made with me.

Janice Ellig: A pleasure. You're very important to men, women, underrepresented groups really climbing the proverbial corporate ladder because you are helping them to face what is very unexpected at times and they don't know what to look for. Coaches, executive coaches are really important to people trying to move up the corporate ladder.

Diana Thomas: Yeah. It's a wonderful opportunity to help people grow and to give back because I was very blessed to have some wonderful mentors that helped give me some practical advice and some coaching when I needed it so, but before we get into today's topic, I wanted you to share a little bit about your background and what brought you to the place you're in today.

Janice Ellig: I spent over 20 years in corporate America in the healthcare field, pharmaceuticals and then financial services and helped to take a company public, and when I was writing the book, What Every Successful Woman Knows, I saw that a number of highly talented women and underrepresented groups had less of a voice than they should have at the table and so that led me into saying after great corporate career in human resources in marketing, and you get to a point in the corporate world where you say, I've done that. Now what's my next chapter? And having written those books, I felt that my next chapter was going to be in executive search helping executives, particularly women and underrepresented groups get to those higher levels in corporate America. Because I'd interviewed them, I knew that they were there, there's a great pipeline, strong talent, but they just weren't getting that seat at the table with a voice, and so that's really what led me to executive search.

Janice Ellig: It was a natural progression from corporate into now running my own business in the executive search field.

Diana Thomas: Yeah. Maybe just tell us a little bit about your business because it's very impressive and then it's run by women and just to give our audience a little bit more texture.

Janice Ellig: Yeah, delighted. This was actually started in 1977 by Bill Gould and Millie McCoy. They'd come from two of the large just search firms at the time and it was always focused on really serving the client and not just filling a box, but understanding where the client was today and where they were going to go and I joined them in 2000. It became Gould McCoy Chadick and Ellig and then in about 2007, founding partners had retired and it became Chadick Ellig and when Susan Chadick left to primarily focus on coaching, not search I relaunched the firm under Ellig Group in 2017 and expanded the platform.

Janice Ellig: We have a legacy over 43 years now of really servicing clients. The focus that we have is really bring more women and underrepresented groups into the C-suite which is the highest level of positions and people who are under those C-suite levels and in the board room. Over 85% of our board room positions are women and underrepresented groups and then in the C-suite we are 75% plus women and underrepresented groups.

Janice Ellig: It's an unparalleled level that we aspire to because we understand that we do not have enough diverse representation in decision making at the top and it's proven that more heterogeneous groups, even if they're less skilled, make better decisions than more homogeneous groups. Professor Michael Page, University of Michigan wrote a great book the difference, and you can read this wonderful studies, that all those studies he's done, you must have diversity around the table if you want to be more innovative and really be a cutting edge company and financially as well as reputationally.

Janice Ellig: Our company has really focused on that and that's what we've been doing for many years and certainly since we relaunched in 2017.

Diana Thomas: You talked about this opportunity still to get more diverse individuals at the top of the organizations and really throughout the organizations. Could you share with our listeners where do we stand today? Because I remember, gosh, it's got to be 20 years ago when I first started to focus on top level kind of leadership roles and saw how low the percentage of women and minorities were. I was shocked but then as I look at statistics today, in a lot of cases, we haven't made that much progress. Are there any numbers that you could share with people just to give them an understanding of the landscape?

Janice Ellig: Absolutely. If you look at the S&P 500 or Fortune 500, there are 25% of the seats currently are held by women, so 75% are held by men and if you look at the women of color, it's below 5%. Representation of women, women of color, men of color I think is below 12%. It's very low and the pipeline or individuals qualified is I believe is there because over the past 20 years we've had women and underrepresented groups in the pipeline, but the focus or intentionality in saying we must look at openings and really build bench strength and then consider people for those opportunities who do not look like us, meaning Caucasian men. If you look at Catalyst, they looked at women on boards in 1995 it was 10% and now it's 25%. It's moving less than 1% a year, just a little bit over half a percent. Less than 1% a year of women on boards and that is just not acceptable.

Janice Ellig: The point is they always say, we need to have term limits. Not really. If you look at every other opening and you say filling it with a qualified man or a woman, well, every other opening then being a woman, you could get to parity by 2025 because women hold about thousand seats now a little bit over that of the 5,000 S&P 500 seats. In the next six years if you bill every other opening and there are 400 openings, should give 200 of those to qualified women. In six years, that's 1200 plus the 1000 I have. You're at about 20 to 2,400 seats of the 5,000 you're there.

Janice Ellig: It's all about looking at your openings and saying we need to build bench strength to fill this openings. Let's start today and what people say is, I don't see any qualified women. Well, if you start looking today over time in the next six years, you can fill those seats and get to parity. It really is simple math. I Marvel at how people say it can't be done. By 2025 we could be at parity and then that cascades Diana down to the C-suite in all levels below because people tend to hire in their own image. If you have enough diversity at the top, you have more women, you have more people of color, you have more international focus. They will hire and introduce the company to people like them, so then you have great diverse panels.

Janice Ellig: We work with our clients to show them that the diversity of the slates that we present to them, they have choices of outstanding candidates, women and underrepresented groups so they can get to parity and visionary companies get it, they really get it. They're moving ahead and those that are not are going to have a problem and that's one of the reasons women's forum of New York honors companies that are at 30% or more women on their boards, which we just did this in November and when I hear those CEOs speak, they say they don't understand why other companies aren't there yet. The 30% is just the starting point. It should be at 40 and 50%.

Diana Thomas: Yeah. Well, it's wonderful to hear the progress and that these successful companies are figuring it out. Thinking about your role in the executive recruiting area, how do you find the right fit? How do you develop that right slate and how do you encourage that your clients to pick those best individuals?

Janice Ellig: Well, when clients come to us, Ellig Group, they are absolutely focused on seeing a very diverse slate because they know that's what we stand for, diversity and inclusion and that we will show them highly qualified candidates to fit different roles. What we do, number one is we understand our client's needs. Not just for today, but for tomorrow. What are they looking for? Where will the company be going strategically? What are its competitive advantage? What are the threats and obstacles and opportunities that they face?

Janice Ellig: And then we really get to know them and ask them the questions so we understand what they're looking for and when they are saying they want a diverse slate, we actually go into those communities where we know that African Americans will be referred to as Hispanics, women, Asians. We go into this different pools, but you have to go into the communities where others will know others like them and they refer individuals to you who have those backgrounds and then they become part of this slate and then thirdly you have to make sure that there's going to be a cultural fit here, right? They may have the competencies and the skills, but in these different pools you have to make sure that they are going to be a good cultural fit with that organization.

Janice Ellig: This is not a science, it's an art of saying there's great talent out there. Where should we go look? Where should we target both in the corporate world, entrepreneurs internationally so many pools. It takes work. I have to tell you, sometimes it's harder because in those particular roles maybe people haven't had as many opportunities and training but for most of the roles you can find great talent of females and underrepresented groups.

Diana Thomas: Are most of those individuals, the talented individuals, are they looking for another opportunity? I mean, how do you get to the best of the best?

Janice Ellig: Our clients that we represent, we really believe in them. We're working with them, representing them. We are their ambassadors in the market. When we take on a search assignment, my team and I believe in that CEO, believe in their mission, believe in what they're doing and when I'm speaking to candidates who know us, we're not going to try and talk them into an opportunity that will be good for them. These individuals want to hear what's the compelling opportunity for them? Why might this be something that'd be really interesting for them talent-wise.

Janice Ellig: John Maxwell wrote a great book about the three things that successful people do and one is successful people have a purpose in life. We look for people and candidates where we can help fulfill their purpose, right? This opportunity maybe one where really resonates with them in terms of what they want to do next in your career and purpose driven life as you know in how you coach people, right, it's so fulfilling. Like somebody's in that role that really resonates with them, they want to do that and they just want to learn more and do better and bring others up with them, so where are we searching for that individual where we can help fulfill their purpose with an opportunity for a great client.

Diana Thomas: It sounds like you do so much homework in regards to really understanding your client, what they're looking for and that you take so much pride in making that right match, which shows up in just your impressive results. Thinking about our audience and maybe we have some people in roles and they're thinking about making a change or they're aspiring to be in that C-suite or on a board, what should they be doing now? You mentioned purpose, but are there some other tips that you could give them as far as advice, what they should be doing to continue to grow their career and be noticed?

Janice Ellig: I think honesty with oneself is really important. You have to stop, reflect in terms of what you're doing each day personally and professionally and I think oftentimes having a coach is really very helpful. I think having an advisory group that you go to, people you trust who can give you good and honest feedback and that's a very important thing in terms of when you're choosing advisors that they will give you good and honest, productive feedback. I am sure you advise people on this all the time, Diana. How many people give you good feedback on how are you doing in a role where you are and bouncing questions off of them.

Janice Ellig: Thirdly, attending different conferences. Maybe getting outside of your comfort zone a little bit that it's on the periphery of what you're doing, but not quite in your role to see whether or not you want to experiment and go further and learn something different. It's always questioning, am I fulfilling my purpose in life? Is this really driving me? Do I get up each day and I just driven to go do what I'm doing? That's very important to reflect on that periodically. I actually, getting ready for the new year. I do resolutions every year. My husband and I both do these and if you don't write them down, they don't happen.

Janice Ellig: It's important to kind of put those resolutions down on paper in terms of what you want to accomplish personally and professionally and see how you end up at the end of the year and how satisfied you are. It's about understanding and knowing yourself, getting feedback from others you trust and opening the aperture a little bit and getting out there in the world both by travel or by conferences or by meetings or by audible books, podcasts such as yours, learning what are other people doing that might be of interest to me. It has to fit with your DNA. It has to fit who you are as a person. You can't look at another individual and say, I want to have what he or she has or do what they're doing. Has to fit with what you... who you are.

Diana Thomas: That's great, great advice. It seems like things have shifted. I know in my coaching practice I start with who is the person I'm interacting with and what do they want? What is their purpose? And so many times in the past, and maybe it was focused on us as women, is you need to do these things to fit in and there's a little bit of truth still to that. You need to understand the rules a little bit so you can make the right decisions but I think the shift and focusing in on what do you want to do and what fulfills your life purpose and what gets you excited and jazzed up and play to your strengths is so critical today so the people can really show up and enjoy what they're doing and be the most productive instead of trying to fit into a mold and I love that shift and allowing people to rise to the occasion and bring their whole self in and I love the focus. I do it all the time as having goals and deciding where you want to go instead of just letting it happen.

Janice Ellig: When we start searches and then we're interviewing candidates and of course my team is with me in terms of looking in the market to [inaudible 00:18:39] research, bringing people. The first question I say is why is this position of interest to you? Why would this be your next move? Why do you want this? I want to hear what's motivating them to make this move? And we have coaches on our staff who are certified in Hogan and other tools.

Janice Ellig: We get down to final candidates. We use those tools to see like their values, what are their hot points? How do they show up each day? How does this fit with who they will be going forward? And of course we do references on them too, so we really want to know the picture of the total person and we want that total person to kind of be honest with us about... because if this is not the right opportunity, I will look at them for something else, right, and I think that they will not be happy unless they go into the right role and so that's really key and that's what we... we focus in on when we first interview candidates.

Diana Thomas: Yeah, and there does seem like there is this openness to moving a little bit more than maybe when I was first starting my career. People just stayed with companies and now people are keeping their eyes open and looking and making changes and I think that really helps companies when they go in and they've got this background and different perspectives instead of being groomed in one organization so...

Janice Ellig: Right. We are a part of an international network too. I've got partners in 35 countries and oftentimes if my clients are looking internationally, I will look to see who's overseas that I may want to move to the States or vice versa. The world is a big place and so I encourage candidates to not jump at opportunities but to evaluate opportunities as they're presented to them through a search from or somebody else's because I think they do move today more than like you said 20 years ago when you and I were aspiring up that corporate ladder, and I think you have to also make sure you're moving for the right reasons because oftentimes I'll be speaking to a candidate and they'll say, yeah, that wasn't my best move.

Janice Ellig: I didn't really evaluate the culture of that company or the person. They'll say I made a decision, let me fail fast, you move on and that's probably the best thing to do is do not stay too long, but just say that was a career mistake. Let me move on to the other one but before making a career mistake, really evaluate that opportunity. Is it right for you? Because the world's a big place, so much going on today in so many companies. There's going to be many, many changes occurring. We didn't even know what the roles are going to be in two or three or four or five years from now, right? It's just changing so fast.

Diana Thomas: Right. Yeah. Terrific advice as far as a really evaluate every opportunity and you brought up culture. We've done several episodes focused on cultural fit and making sure that you understand it. Sometimes we have people moving into cultures whether it's geographically or the culture of an organization that isn't the best fit for them and I don't know if we talked about that in the past, but I think that's a really important thing in regards to doing your homework and evaluating is looking at that cultural fit and really making sure you're going in with your eyes open and you know what you're getting and your advice is if it's not a good fit, is really decided... it is something you want to continue to do.

Janice Ellig: Exactly. How does this company operate on a daily basis? How do they communicate? It's not just the CEO but it's your boss. It's the work you're going to be doing. It's how you work with peers. You really want to look at those operational aspects of the company and not the formal organizational chart but informal organizational chart. You may all be sitting in a room and everybody's agreeing with everybody and then they leave and nobody does what they were told to do. Talk to people who have left the company and find out so what was it really like?

Diana Thomas: Yeah. I was going to ask you, what kind of things could somebody do to find out some of those more informal things or things that aren't listed on their websites. You mentioned talking to somebody that had worked there and any other suggestions?

Janice Ellig: Some of my candidates will say I have spoken to people that have worked there and that's probably not going to be the culture for me or people that are currently working there, you know, that they know who have moved from their company and they also go on glassdoor and they look at what employees currently are saying and then they'll come back to me and say, "So, I'm hearing the employees who are saying, gee, the changes that are happening now are great, but why didn't they happen before?" And the communication still from the CEO and corporate are not there. They'll want some questions answered before they go in and have further communications with that hiring manager.

Janice Ellig: Glassdoor is one of those places that people go to and of course there's a lot in the open press as well about companies.

Diana Thomas: Yup. Ask the questions and when I'm coaching people that are going in for interviews, that's one of the most important things. It's really come up with those questions to help you get the right information. Information that isn't published to make sure you're making the best decision.

Janice Ellig: If you're going in on a position and you're really interested in it and you're finding that this is a company, gee, I really want to be there, you have to do your homework on the company. I recently had a position where three candidates and one was a top one at the time and she didn't listen to the most recent earnings report. This was her a finance position, that was not a good thing. You have to do your homework. You have to listen to earnings reports, you have to understand and go in with questions but you have to be up to date with what is happening in the company.

Diana Thomas: Yeah, excellent advice. Not only for those that are going into a job, but I keep reminding my executives and aspiring executives within a company is you've got to stay on top of what's going on in your company outside of the company, in the industry if you want to be the most relevant and ensure that your company's going in the right direction. Great advice. Your last book was about helping people to identify signs of trouble in their careers. Could you share with us some of the most common signs that maybe people tend to miss or overlook?

Janice Ellig: Well, when you're in meetings you have to be participating, but sometimes when you're not being included in meetings, that's a sign. You've not been invited to the meeting and you think you should be. When you're not being asked about what you would desire to be doing next in your career. If you're not getting regular feedback from your boss and you need to ask for that. I mean, I think that communication is between you and your immediate boss are really important, but key assignments that are being awarded in a company, you want to be sure that you're in line and you're getting those. If you're not that, that's saying something and if you're not around the table where decisions are being made, you're not in on the inside track.

Janice Ellig: Of course performance reviews, bonuses, they tell a story, but I don't think people should wait till the end of the year. I think that they need to be doing this on a weekly, monthly basis. It's sort of like, how am I doing? Former mayor, Koch 00:26:38 many years ago would walk around the streets in New York City and saying, how am I doing? He wanted immediate feedback. Need to get regular feedback and know that you're in a good position. People do know when you're not on that memo or that email. Somebody else was, but you're not. Those are some signs that I think are important to be paid attention to.

Diana Thomas: Any other advice for people who maybe hit a trouble spot and how did they navigate through and continue to progress or how could they turn things around?

Janice Ellig: Well, turning things around really comes from asking other people's advice. First your boss and working with peers. People want to help people who have helped them and hopefully in one's career you've been an individual that others look to and say, real team player. When I'm doing references on candidates, when I hear it wasn't about them, it was about us or the team or not even about his or her own team, but somebody else's unit, so I not too [inaudible 00:27:52] placed to CFO and the references were like, he helped other individuals get to higher levels. He helped other leaders be better leaders.

Janice Ellig: In a very positive way people who are highly collaborative and then when you get into a bind and something happens, maybe there's been a change at the top then others will help you. You need to be building your career so that you get help when you need help. If you haven't been giving help along the way, it's going to be harder to get help from others. I encourage everybody to always help others with their objectives, their agenda, what they need to get done because there are times when everybody needs to help others and that helping hands will come if you've been somebody who's been a helping hand to others.

Janice Ellig: Lift others up and they will lift you up but if there's a time when you think, okay, this is really... we're in a bad situation, we've been acquired, we're doing a downsizing, what can I do to make sure that I'm going to be in a good position? I would reach out to those that you trust the most and you've helped the most and ask their advice for what you can do next to put yourself in the best position and then also if you have a coach asking the coach's advice. In one's career, having a high EQ and PQ, political quotient as well, being politically astute, emotionally astute, obviously there, but you have to read the tea leaves on the political arena, but not being political but being politically astute as well as having a high EQ. It's really important.

Janice Ellig: Your antenna always has to be up in a positive way and making sure that you're treating others the way you want to be treated. You have to accomplish. You have to be seen as somebody that people want on the team because you don't try to get things done, you get things done but you've helped others get them done too.

Diana Thomas: Wonderful advice, and you touched on being politically astute and I tell you one of the things that really stood out, and it was a mind shift actually. A paradigm shift for me completely when I read your book was about how you view being political and I remember being a young leader coming up in the company and not wanting to work in home office because I just felt like there was so much politicking going on and that seemed to take over instead of focusing on what our customers needed or what we needed to move the company forward and I remember reading that chapter and you kind of defined the politics of a company as the informal way that things get done and you can use that for good and understanding how it works or you can push against it and it's not going to be a win.

Diana Thomas: Maybe you could share a little bit about that because it still comes up today when I'm coaching aspiring leaders and they're like, I don't know if I'm cut out for the top leadership roles because you really have to politic a lot and I'm not like that.

Janice Ellig: Well, I think that different companies have different levels of politics going on, okay, and I'd been in the throes of those organizations. I'm like, I was at Citigroup for and I helped take the company public from Citigroup. I did not find Citigroup such a political animal. You just had to know how to navigate and understand and listen to your peers in the different groups. I remember that you did things wrong. We sort of would joke, you go into the penalty box unless you really did something terrible, you went to the penalty box, you came back out and so you succeeded. Some might say it was political, I didn't think so at all. I mean I just thought you had to understand people's egos, not let them get in the way of making decisions and working together. I think part of it is how you approach the organization and the organizational dynamics.

Janice Ellig: Now there's some that I'm sure there are highly political and maybe that's not an organization where you belong, right? You have to make that decision and say, this one is just too backbiting and if I listen, I can't really make my headway here. Maybe there's some that you really don't belong in that culture, that arena but for the most part I think organizationals are made up of a lot of people wanting to do good and if you have the right leader at the top with the right tone and you're part of that leadership and you then cascade that down through the organization and you're listening and you're being politically astute to what people are saying and then navigating that maybe sometimes with the help of the coach you'll be just fine and then there'll be others where that's really... people aren't telling you anything that you can really rely on or it will be credible and those organizations that you don't want to be in.

Janice Ellig: You have to look at the leadership at the top. What is he or she is saying and how are they operating? But I think that everybody in any organization, if it's more than two people, you have to be politically astute. If you're a company of one or two, that's fine but if it's beyond that, everybody's working an agenda, everybody's working to make themselves successful and some understanding that we all rise and fall together, the boats rise at the same time if we're all successful working together and that's that tone at the top. I think you have to read the organization again in terms of how it operates and how people that you know they are operate and whether or not that's a good cultural fit for you but I think again, everybody has to be somewhat politically astute.

Diana Thomas: Yeah, and I like what you said. It's really about building relationships and helping each other and getting the honest feedback, because I think sometimes people will label things political if they don't have all the facts and maybe there's some key competencies or some key results that might be missing and the more that you can have a culture where people are sharing and helping each other. Like you said, most companies are made up of really good people and it's just ensuring that you have the right information so that you can make the right decisions.

Janice Ellig: One of the things that I always did in corporate America was I would not write the email. I would go visit somebody and say, "We got to talk." We have to clear the air on this. You want this, I want that. How can we work this together? If you have enough trust going on, you can do that and that's what you really look to do, is to build trust with your colleagues and you pick out those into where you can build the most trust and then they have trust with other colleagues so it becomes interlocking circles, overlapping circles, and then people help each other. Again, you look at the tone of the top and what is he or she saying in their annual reports? Do people like working there? And again, not everybody is going to be suited for every organization.

Janice Ellig: Take reality checks companies by talking to people who have been there and if you're in the organization, understanding you'll have a responsibility to communicate. Nobody's a mind reader about what your needs and wants are, and walk down the hall and talk to people. If they're overseas, pick up the phone and talk to them. Nothing better than that personal touch.

Diana Thomas: Yeah, and that goes for those leaders at the top, since we both interact and coach those individuals too is understand the shadow that you're casting. Everything you say and do does send messages to other people, so be aware of that and understand and have those people that will tell you and give you that honest feedback as well.

Janice Ellig: Look, everybody has needs and wants in an organization. Everybody is going to be vying for the best assignment. You're not always going to get it but if you remain emotionally cool about it, help others if they've succeeded and you haven't in a particular role. Your time may come down the road and if it doesn't, then you move on. I mean you have to be realistic about that too.

Diana Thomas: Terrific advice and insights. Who's had the greatest impact on your professional life and why wouldn't you be where you are today without that person's influence?

Janice Ellig: Oh, I go back to my mother when I was very young, like 10 years of age and my mother's words to me then were love what you do. I was the youngest of three girls. Stay close to your sisters and be fina... Yeah stay close to... and that's why I'm so focused on women and underrepresented groups. Stay close to your sisters and be financially independent and so that was always for me that I wanted to have a career and I didn't really plan my career. I was in Medical Center and then I was at Pfizer and then I was at Citigroup and to help take the company public and then I wrote my two books and then I went into search.

Janice Ellig: It just was a sort of natural progression for me because it was about closing of deals which involved people. Making people see that they could fulfill their destiny, their desires, their purpose by putting them in the right goals. I did in the corporate world, it's about talent, valuating talent and they used to call me the closer at Ambac Financial Group, which was a spinoff from Citibank. I was really good at matching up people with the roles and then when I was finished with my two books, I decided I wanted to help individuals aspire and talk to those that are incorporation so that's when I went into executive search and it all came really from that advice of my mother and then my two sisters who also had their careers, but my mother saying love what you do, find that purpose.

Janice Ellig: She didn't say it in those words, but that was what she was telling me and then always be financially independent, which I think is very important for women to make sure that they are always involved and even if one has children, certainly taking time off for that, but being able to keep your toe in the water so that you stay relevant and involved and those children are no longer around the house. You're still part of the world. You stayed relevant and I think that that's really important for women today and I think a lot of doing that.

Diana Thomas: Yeah. Awesome advice. What final piece of advice do you have for our Talent Champions?

Janice Ellig: Well, Diana, you probably have been giving the best advice all along to many that you coach and we talked about that purpose driven. To the unknown self be true you, it sounds so cliché-ish, but I see a lot of people in roles that they're not happy in. I think reflecting on as we're going into the year 2020, it's saying look at life when you began and draw to where you are today and look at where the highs were professionally and if you do that personally as well. What are the points where you were really happy and really fulfilled and really found great purpose? You draw that line to where you are today and you spike it up and then you spike it down and you look at those years. What was that event that made you really instilled, sort of wanting to replicate more of that going forward?

Janice Ellig: It's an easy way to take a quick glimpse at your life and look at those wonderful spikes where you were really fulfilled and say, I'm going to replicate more of those or I want to change it a little bit out of my comfort zone, but to have still that great sense of fulfillment, I would encourage people to do that as we go into 2020.

Diana Thomas: That's wonderful and as you said earlier on is just taking that time to reflect where you are and where you want to go. I coach individuals, especially women. Hope isn't a very good business strategy. You can't hope that it's going to all work out or you'll get the job. I think there is this piece about really planning it out and knowing what you want so when you see it, you go after it instead of maybe going after something that isn't the best fit for you or aligns with your purpose.

Janice Ellig: Yeah, I find people get distracted and then their dream becomes obsolete or becomes forgotten or they go halfway and I think if you can see it, you can be it. It may take you longer, but if you are tenacious and that's really what you want then you stick with it. There will always be poles at your life. There'll always be people who will maybe even try and pull you down and you can't listen to that or they may be responsibilities in your life that will take you away from what you're trying to accomplish. Okay, so then you get back in the game, but stay in the game of life that you want because that's your choice and then try and minimize those distractions and you'll get there.

Diana Thomas: Wow. I'm so grateful for your time and for you sharing your expertise with our audience. How could our listeners stay in touch with you or get in touch with you and continue to learn more?

Janice Ellig: Well, I am on LinkedIn, I'm on Twitter and my website is elliggroup.com and I'm at Janice@elliggroup.com. E-L-L-I-G.com. Then I have my podcasts and you can listen to those as well on my website but Diana thank you for this opportunity and I think there's so much talent out there that companies can tap into and you're helping to make that happen so congratulations to you as well.

Diana Thomas: Thank you. It's been a pleasure.

Diana Thomas: After talking with Janice, I'm inspired to plan out my goals for this year, and I hope you are too. To recap, here are the key points I'd want you to take away from today's episode. 25% of board seats at Fortune 500 companies are currently held by women. Janice explained a reasonable plan to reach parity or a 50/50 split between men and women by 2025. It involves starting at the very top and cascading downward through the ranks into the pipeline. Leading companies have already realized that diverse leadership leads to better results. Having a coach or advisory board of people you trust to give you honest feedback is critical to longterm career success.

Diana Thomas: As objective advisors, these type of people can help you to see whether you're realizing your purpose and continuing to grow. Before making a career move, do your homework on the culture of the company. Our poor decisions are often the result of a failure to assess cultural fit before taking on a new role, and I urge you not to underestimate the importance of doing your research and understanding what you're really getting into. Invest in relationships. You will need support when you make a mistake or you get off track, and those people that you've helped in the past will be more likely to stand up for you when you need it.

Diana Thomas: Don't wait for a bad performance review. Look for the little signs that you're off track such as being excluded from key meetings. These should be triggers to turn to the people you trust and get some feedback. Politics are the informal way that things get done in companies. You can use this to your advantage if you understand the landscape or strong fit for the culture and align with the people who are credible and want to do good. In high performing organizations, we all succeed together, so look for the opportunities to help others and seek honest feedback.

Diana Thomas: Find your purpose, love what you do and make sure you stay relevant even when life demands that your career goes on the back burner or takes a little bit of a detour. It's particularly important for women that we don't opt out. Reflect on those times in your life when you felt the most happy and fulfilled and let that be your guide for where you want to go in the future. Thank you for listening. We value every single one of our listeners and we hope that you'll help us reach more Talent Champions by rating and subscribing in your podcast player.

Diana Thomas: Come back in two weeks as we delve into the topic of confidence. Where it comes from. Why it seems to be natural for some people and how to get it if it's a struggle for you. If you aren't already a subscriber, join our mailing list at talent-champions.com to be among the first to know when new episodes are released and to receive bonus content from our guests.

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