

Interview with Melanie Duncan

Alicia Dunams: Hi, it's Alicia Dunams with [ALL IN: Elevating Your Leadership Game](#), and I have Melanie Duncan on the line. Hi Melanie, how are you?

Melanie Duncan: I am wonderful, very excited to be here. Thanks for having me.

A: Absolutely! Now, I have a question. Are you excited to play ALL IN?

M: Always baby, always ready to play [ALL IN!](#)

A: Okay, great! So let's get started. First of all, I want you to tell me a little bit about yourself.

M: Sure! So, I actually started my first business in college with my husband when I was about, probably 20 years old, creating custom apparel for sororities and fraternities. So for those of you in the US, you know - Greek clothing online. Basically, long story short, after a lot of ups and downs with that business, we figured out how to market successfully online, launched a lot of additional customized item businesses. And then transferred into what my passion is right now, which is coaching and teaching other entrepreneurs about how to create online success.

A: Excellent, excellent! And I definitely want you to use this podcast as a way to show how you are living ALL IN in all areas. And that's a perfect example – starting a business in college with your husband and taking it now. And you have a program called Online Edge, don't you?

M: Yes! So we run the [Online Edge Academy](#), which is a membership community for entrepreneurs who are looking for targeted training on ways to grow their businesses online.

A: Okay, excellent. So in ALL IN, I love starting with a quote on leadership to really get us positioned to talk about this subject. So what is your favorite leadership quote?

M: Well my favorite all time quote, I'll do you one better, and give you one that encompasses everything altogether, is by Christian D. Larson... "Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself." And so, I think that definitely applies to leadership and also so much more.



A: Absolutely, creating it! One of my favorite quotes is – “What you say, you create.” It’s the power of the spoken word. And so, really creating in life first begins by saying it. You’re setting your intention verbally, but then acting on it. 2:28_____ say, “You gotta pray and move your feet” which is one of my favorite quotes as well. So, excellent! And what does that quote mean to you?

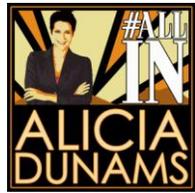
M: I think for me, you know, it gives us the empowerment that we really are in control of creating great things in our lives. And I think a lot of people sit back passively and wait for opportunities, and wait for things to kind of fall into their laps. And I’ve been blessed with a very very incredible life, and a lot of it has come from consciously shaping and creating my opportunities. And so, I think that quote really hits home.

A: Absolutely! And that’s showing up in your life, as an entrepreneur, as a wife, as a leader. And we’re gonna be delving into... specially women showing up as a leader. But I wanna ask how you, specifically, are showing up as a leader in your life and in your business.

M: That’s a really great question because I think leadership is becoming, kind of a popular trend right now; particularly in this female market, you know a lot of us wanting to contribute, wanting to give back, wanting to make a difference. But leadership comes with a lot of obligation; it does come with responsibility. And so for me, personally, when it comes to showing up as a leader, it really comes back to working towards excellence in my own life. I’m a big believer that you need to walk the walk. So in every area of my life, I’m constantly looking for ways to push my own boundaries, my own limits by stepping outside of my comfort zone, surrounding myself with people who challenge me and force me to think in their ways. I’m a really big believer in travelling, getting yourself outside of your normal areas, your normal experiences. Because I think all of that contributes back to my ability to have a good perspective and be able to really relate to a larger audience in a system.

A: Absolutely, and part of being a leader is creating other leaders. And obviously, you are doing that right now with your husband, with your Online Edge Academy. Tell us a little bit about that.

M: Yeah! I think the greatest joy I get in my life right now is empowering other people to do great things with their lives. We’ve all got, really, we really do... It sounds kind of trivial, but we all do have really amazing gifts and strengths that can complement other people’s weaknesses. So, I think in a lot of cases, originally when I started in the online space when I started coaching and teaching, I thought I’ve just got to give people that information. You know, the information



will set them free. And that is definitely part of it, and I tend to be very focused on tactics and strategies, and down in all that nitty-gritty stuff. But I think the encouragement and the consistency of having someone who believes in you, and supports you and just gives positive messages. You know, I think some of us forget having a very supportive family and relationships. But, there's a lot of people that have a lot of junk in their mind and a lot of junk in their lives, so I think giving people an opportunity to be surrounded by positivity and encouragement can really help them achieve and tap into the talents they already have.

A: Fabulous! And I love how you really spoke to that in terms of... Sometimes there's a lot of people out there being busy bees and doing a lot of things, like doing leadership for example. But, I really wanna ask about the characteristics of the type of person you need to be to be an effective leader. So it's not so much as what you are doing, starting businesses, launching products, speaking around the world... But, what type of person do you get to be? And I'm talking about, you know, passionate or confident. I wanna hear some of those adjectives from you on how you are being, and how you like stepping up as a leader. What type of person are you being?

M: Sure. And I think you've put it perfectly because when you are a leader, you do kind of put yourself out there in a big way. It's a good platform for accountability. You know, a lot of times with what I'm doing with my life, what I'm achieving, the type of person that I'm being in my relationships... I have to think about how I'm being accountable to. You know, say I've bumped into one of my members somewhere, or say I say something off hand and it gets published somewhere online. You know, you really do have to be accountable of yourself. There's that great quote about not wearing stones at glass houses or that sort of thing. You really have to be careful of the person that you're putting out there. But in terms of leadership, you know I love the topic you're talking about because it can be interpreted and taken in so many ways. Being a leader for some people does come down to compassion, or empathy. But you know, for me, I think I've really taken leadership more of a strength type of a position. Like needing to be kind of a guardian over some people, and being able to give people the empowerment, being a little bit of a butt kicker, getting people to be accountable of what they want to achieve, and giving them tough love when they need it. It think for me, it's being able to step up to that position of strength and support, not only by positivity but also by really keeping it real.

A: Absolutely! I love that, the perfect combination of masculine and feminine in leadership - keeping people accountable to being their word, to standing for something bigger than themselves, and having that empathy and compassion but also standing for strength. Joan of Arc!

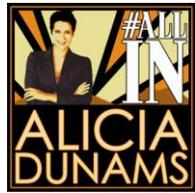


M: Absolutely!

A: I think that is so important because at the end of the day, people need that, they need that accountability to achieve things in life. And that's tough love, that's the way I coach – absolutely! I love that, and that really lends us to our next topic. And what we're gonna be talking about is... What advice do you give women in being a source of leadership in their life and in business?

M: My advice definitely applies to women, but I would say it applies to men too. I don't think there's one thing that we can tell women that doesn't apply to men. But, what I've noticed since I do work with a predominantly female type of community, is you can't be so concerned about what other people are going to think of you. It's women, you know we tend to be a little bit scared of putting ourselves out there, be a little bit fearful of being our real self or our true self. There's a trend right now in the women's market for leadership being very spiritual and be very emotional. And for me, that's not who I am. My type of teaching and the way that I deliver information and communicate is different than what the mass trend is in the market. But people are always going to like you or love you no matter what you put out there, so you've got to just stick to who you are, be true to your message, be true to the way you speak, the way you think, the way that you live your life, because what you want to be after most, is authenticity and being true to who you are. And so, whatever you put out there. I think it's important to address that some people aren't going to agree with your opinion, some people aren't going to agree with the way you live your life, you know? If you do a webinar, someone's gonna find a misspelling or a mispunctuation mark in one of your slides, and you can't let people like that hold you back from delivering whatever you can and be putting out there to really help and serve people.

A: Absolutely, I love that. I love how you talk about that being your authentic self. I know, for me personally, when people see me, I wear stilettos and I'm probably at 6'1"... I think you're tall too! And I get the words that I'm intimidating, I get intimidating a lot, and you probably get that as well. But when people meet me in person, I'm such a love bug, and so really connected with people. But when you see an online persona, if you will, sometimes it can feel intimidating, but it's not holding yourself back. My daughter is a songwriter, today is her birthday and she just turned 12 years old, and I was encouraging her to put some music on YouTube and she said, "Oh my goodness! The haters are gonna come out, they're gonna say mean things about me." And I'm like, that doesn't matter in life! Everyone's gonna... you can't control what other people say and I used Martin Luther King as an example. People did not want his message out there, he had haters all over the world, he died for his message. But the thing is, he will live on



through his legacy. I get chills. Still, his words penetrate me like nothing ever, and so he died for something. And really, that's I think a big part of being a leader, is when you stand for something, so big, it's bigger than yourself, that you're fearless.

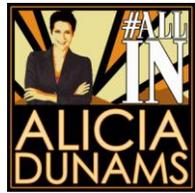
M: Right, absolutely!

A: And part of that is being open to criticism, being open to hate and just superseding it and persevering. Good stuff! Okay, so we're talking about women in leadership, and again, you were saying that advice could be for women and men – not to play small, to play big. Not to worry about what people are gonna say because there's always gonna hate when you say something. It's been told that the more you put out there, especially in an online capacity, the more people are gonna say something about you. At being a leader, you're exposing yourself to that, so it's risky. So, any other advice that you would give to women or men in terms of being a source of leadership?

M: You know, don't be afraid to fail. I think failure is something that's obviously addressed everywhere, but it's still something that holds a lot of people back. And even as a leader, you know, after you've built a certain sizable platform or a certain kind of influence, you know becoming kind of lazy or lethargic in our lives and in our businesses because we don't want to put it on the line. And since the whole topic that you're centering around here is ALL IN, I think you can't be afraid to do things that are scary or that are taking risks because as a leader, you've got to always be an example for what you're telling your audience to do.

A: Okay! So, for all the poker players out there, and know what it takes to be ALL IN. I wanna ask you Melanie Duncan, I wanna ask you... What does playing ALL IN mean to you – in your life, in your business, and in your relationships?

M: I'm a poker player myself, it shocks a lot of people, but I'm a pretty good poker player. And I think I would interpret it just as literal as you would do it in poker; it's really putting everything that you've got out there. Putting, you know, whatever you've got emotionally, mentally, your resources, just putting it all out there. When I started my first business, my husband and I were running the entire company, just the two of us. So that means we were doing customer service, we were the sales team, we were also making all of the garments by hand, working in a warehouse until 4am every day. And I think that, as entrepreneurs, a lot of the times, we don't quite put it all out there. Either because we're scared if we do and it doesn't work out, you know we won't be able to bounce back from it, or sometimes we just like to give in to excuses and we don't really put everything we've got out there, and that's one of the reasons that you



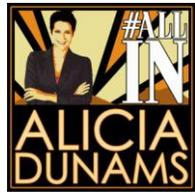
fail. You know, a lot of big risks where you're really going to reap those large rewards, it comes from using every last ounce of mental, and physical and emotional power you have, to accomplish that goal. I think it's not shying away from taking those big risks. I have a friend of mine that just purchased an entire hat making factory here in Manhattan, I live in New York City, and she really spent every last dollar she had to buy this hat factory, and she's now running it, she's reaching out to every resource she has to get this thing going; she's working on all these great collaborations. And I just looked to what she was doing and thought she's gonna be huge because she's literally putting it all out on the line and that's where you see the most incredible and inspiring stories of success.

A: That's where success lies – staring failure, staring rejection in the face. And that's where the rewards are, putting it all on the line as you just said with your friend as an example, putting it all out there. And it's obvious Melanie, you've been doing this since college, putting it all out there on the line, and you have been reaping the rewards. So, I want you to use this podcast as a platform and to put skin in the game, 'coz obviously, that's something that you're used to doing. Because becoming successful is oftentimes sharing with people what you're doing, because that share alone holds you accountable. So I'd love for you to share with the world what you are doing right now to play [ALL IN](#) in your life. What are you doing today?

M: Is the question for me or is this rhetorical?

A: The question is for you. What are you gonna do today when you get off on this podcast? Like I wanna know today, what's a day in the life of you and how are you gonna be playing ALL IN today, specifically?

M: You know, I think playing all in today and everyday comes back to knowing yourself and pacing yourself as much as I am a crazy worker, like when I get a new project, I will just hole up in my apartment for a week and just get it done and work through things. I'm a very very big action taker. But as I'm getting a little bit older, not too old, but a little bit older... I think playing all in also comes back to taking care of yourself. And when you need time off, taking time off, and when you need to recharge in different ways, letting yourself recharge. So for me, I've really had a very successful week, I've made a lot of progress on some really big projects in my business. And this Thanksgiving week, I have my family coming in, so today, I'm gonna prepare for that, I'm going to enjoy and take a few days off, a well-deserved, hard-earned break. And that's how I'm playing my ALL IN, it's not just building this incredible life and working all of these goals, but also giving myself a peace of mind along the way to enjoy the success I've created and to keep myself recharged. To take care of myself, because the only way you can



play ALL IN is to make sure you are taking care of yourself, working out, eating right, taking breaks and refueling so that you can be that leader and make the progress in your life that you're after.

A: Excellent! Sage words of advice from Melanie Duncan. Now, I would love for you to share a book that you think would be really great for our audience members. What's a book that you'd recommend?

M: Yeah, so one of my favorite books is actually called *The Rockefeller Habits*; and it's about all of the characteristics of the major tycoons and business people throughout generations. I've actually read it and listened to it as an audiobook, but it's a really interesting book to think about, to look at some of the most successful people and what they've done to achieve that success, and there's a lot of common alleys. It's by Verne Harnish, the author, it's called [Mastering the Rockefeller Habits](#).

A: Excellent, that is great! For people in our audience, they wanna learn more about you. How can they find out more about you Melanie?

M: Well, you can always go to [MelanieDuncan.com](#), that's kind of my hub where I have a bunch of free training videos; you can sign up for some of my online classes that I teach. [www.MelanieDuncan.com](#) is the best place to find me.

A: Excellent, great! So any last words of advice for those people out there who want to elevate their leadership game and play ALL IN?

M: I think you've got to find the right mentor and the right person to kind of pull you up and keep you focused and motivated. Just because someone's popular, like Oprah or Tony Robbins, that's great, but you need to find someone that resonates with you and where you want to go in your life who's achieved or is living the lifestyle or created the business that you're looking to create; that's where you'll find the most powerful connection. I think finding the right person that can really empower you, and pull you up and keep you focused and inspired, that can do great things for you personally and professionally.

A: Awesome! Thank you so much Melanie for playing [ALL IN](#) with us today.

M: Thank you for having me; it's been a lot of fun!