

Head of The Table Ep 30 Anne Machesky

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Sheila Long: Hello, everybody. Welcome to the Head of the Table podcast. My name's Sheila Long, and I will be your host for today's show. Today we have our first out of state member on our show. Her name is Anne Machesky, and she's with Nwyze. And she is a MalamaDoe member, and she has a very extensive background. So I am just thrilled that we will be able to learn more about her, and you can meet her today on the show.

[0:00:56] So welcome to the show, Anne.

Anne Machesky: Hi, Sheila. Hi, everyone.

Sheila Long: So Anne, you run a very interesting business called Nwyze, right?

Anne Machesky: Yes, I do. Sheila, I'm president and CEO Nwyze. It's spelled N-W-Y-Z-E. It's a coaching company. I'm also a 30-year veteran as a financial advisor. My advisory business focuses on delivering financial advice to clients through strong understanding of investment markets and behavioral finance.

[0:01:29] And those skills have allowed me to expand my opportunities to be featured in a women's leadership book that was published in 2015. The book is called Woman at the Top, and it narrowed down from 800 women in the financial industry down to 23 that they wanted to feature. They're very successful women entrepreneurs in the financial services industry. My passion to share my unique perspective and skills through keynotes, workshops, and think tanks began about ten years ago.

[0:02:00] And so I started to build the Nwyze experience, which is about disrupting, reframing, and rebuilding how you think about your situation, your business, and who you are. I believe that thinking better achieves better outcomes. So Nwyze is a journey, and it's kind of meant to change you. How I feel about thinking is, that through the experience of expanding your eyes, opening your thinking, and changing your perspective, you'll be empowered to see that there is more to you and more for you.

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Sheila Long: That is just beautiful. What a wonderful mission that you have in this coaching business.

Anne Machesky: Thank you.

Sheila Long: Yeah, and thanks for creating it. That really helps bring the world to a really wonderful place, where we're on this wonderful journey, but we're also thinking about how to engage better.

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Anne Machesky: True.

Sheila Long: So that book that you were featured in, what a great honor.

Anne Machesky: It was. I was surprised. They started surveying 800 women in the industry. Two women wrote it, and as they surveyed questions and answers, they ended up narrowing it down to 150 women, then down to 23. There were four criteria that met those structures that featured them.

[0:03:27] It was, they were successful in the business, they were women entrepreneurs, they were top of their field. And the main thing is they all were giving back to the industry, either giving back to the industry in helping other advisors or they were actually very charitable in their communities. So I was lucky enough to be featured. It's an interesting book.

Sheila Long: Wow, great. There's just so much to talk about there. So you were a women entrepreneur in financial planning? Did you start that type of a company?

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Anne Machesky: I started that about a little over 30 years ago, and I'm still doing that as well as building Nwyze. And I've been building Nwyze for the last ten years plus I started doing that on the side, and now it's become very premiere on my focus. I'm running the two at this point.

Sheila Long: Wow, congratulations. That's really impressive.

Anne Machesky: Nwyze has allowed me to shift really into the passion that I want to help people think better and actually teach the types of perspectives and tools that I've learned over the years.

[0:04:33]

Sheila Long: Okay, great. So you're very into giving back it sounds like. How were you able to do that, and is that something that you still do with Nwyze? It sounds like it.

Anne Machesky: Yeah, giving back is going to be key with Nwyze, absolutely. And in the teaching that I've done in the industry with my colleagues mostly, the giving back gives me energy. So you find time when you do the things you love.

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Sheila Long: That's really important, just to keep your energy strong and also just to do what you love. What a great message.

Anne Machesky: Absolutely.

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Sheila Long: It must feel really wonderful being able to do that work every day. Waking up knowing that you're able to do something that means so much to you.

Anne Machesky: Absolutely. And the concentration with Nwyze is building out classes and workshops. I do corporate think tanks to help businesses that are stuck on a problem. So I work with how they shape their thinking and how they actually reframe the problem so that we bring new solutions to the position that they're in.

[0:05:36] And I enjoy bringing that kind of set of solutions. So often, I'll be brought in to help them think through it. And that also has led to keynotes and women's workshops, thinking workshops, and workshops to develop your own personal mastery.

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Sheila Long: Wow, that is really great. Sounds like you've definitely got your name out there. People are really impressed with all of the work that you've done, and that you're really able to help a lot of people.

Anne Machesky: Absolutely.

Sheila Long: So what's going on with COVID? Has your business had to adapt at all?

Anne Machesky: Absolutely.

[0:06:30] How is your adaptability going on in this industry and any business right now, with COVID? I agree with all the issues that are coming forward. We will have to reengage our creativity as well as listen to needs differently, no matter what business we're in, to help us adapt and renew. Over the years, Sheila, I've been through many challenges of disheartening uncertainty similar to what we feel today.

[0:06:58] Not related to a pandemic, but disheartening economic circumstances and market disruptions. During those challenges, I've had to adapt and get very clear on what certainty I could bring to an uncertain environment. What also helped me through those times was finding my role as a leader and the value that I really could bring to all aspects of my business and the end clients. You see, I knew what was in my heart, and I kept my faith steadfast in both my role as a leader and in the value that I could bring.

[0:07:33] And that knowledge of that role and the value was foundational for me. Both of my businesses are affected and transformed by COVID 19. What has helped me is that I know I carry aspects of three different roles within me that are foundational to both businesses. One role is leader, one role is teacher, and the third role is the poet's voice.

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- [0:07:59] And by knowing when to step into each aspect of these roles, I'm able to be highly adaptive and viable. You see, COVID kind of has forced all individuals and businesses to dramatically alter how we behave. It's asking us to rethink who we are and what we value on a much deeper level than before. So prior to COVID, I was in the mindset of building out my classes, my workshops for Nwyze, and suddenly, I'm being called to focus my attention on how can I lead in this challenging time?
- [0:08:30] COVID has crystalized my point of contact with Nwyze and with its business offerings, both in design and shape, meaning, an example of that would be, I've had to think more about digital forms of connecting rather than in person. So many businesses are doing that right now and finding unique ways to thrive. The pandemic and its fallout has forced me to ask how could I take the services, the products, the offerings to a deeper and richer level?
- [0:09:00] I moved very, very swiftly this year from building out the branding stage of my business in Nwyze to the expression of its mission and its form of delivery. I think being strategic and tactical right now is less important as a business owner. So my poetic voice was pulled to the forefront because of COVID 19, and my role and value has shaped my message. Because poets often facilitate larger language to help others see what's at the core of where we really are at, and that larger language offers a pathway forward for others.
- [0:09:36] You see, Sheila, I was sitting in my office cramped and sequestered just like everybody else, and the impact of where we are in the world hit me very, very deeply. And I ended up writing a letter to myself, to others, to the people I love, people I care about, and to the world. It kind of emerged out of this deep place of this uncertainty we were in.
- [0:09:58] And I would like to – I actually shared that as a video to 200 colleagues in the advisory business yesterday, this actual letter that I'd like to read to you today.
- Sheila Long: Yeah, that would be great. It's just wonderful how you're using your poetic voice and how you were inspired so much to be able to be able to write that and to be able to share that with the community of advisors that you've worked with and all of those people. So I'm really excited to hear it. Thanks for sharing it.
- Anne Machesky: So I'm hoping it will bring some hope. It's called Hope Reclaimed.
- [0:10:57] I wrote this letter to myself, to the people I love, to the people I care about, and to the people of the world. It's called Hope Reclaimed. We all might feel small and afraid. This earth we occupy, huge as it is, suddenly appears so small. We are huddled, cramped, and in fear of what appears to be a rampant

threat. This little molecule has stopped us in our tracks, forcing us to give up so many feelings, freedoms, and ways in which we choose to live.

[0:11:28] It seeks to find a hospitable host in which to thrive, and in doing so pulls our attention from our core beliefs, our dreams, our hopes. I ask, are we made to be undone by this vacant leader of a virus? What must we focus in and focus on to emerge from this? We must somehow free our minds from the flytrap of anxious existence. We must stop living as solo travelers, solo countries.

[0:11:58] We must ask ourselves big enough questions. What is our humanity? Do we do this alone or together? Should we push aside our core good, our core hopes, our core dreams? Are we meant to leave them behind? This is not the time to settle for lesser good, a lesser hope or lesser dreams. We are all learning that life so swiftly can be taken from us. So we must hold sacred to who we are, both individually and together.

[0:12:31] Because we are facing an enemy that asks us to choose life more strongly than ever. Someone else cannot do this for us. Our hopes and joys must emerge from within us. We must start from a much deeper place, still aware of the risks we face with this virus, knowing what it asks us to confront and yet fully find our hearts and expand them in ways of times of cramped living.

[0:13:02] We must express ourselves in a way that is uniquely our own and share it with the others that we care to serve. And when it is safe to do so, we must get back to what we do best, take our place with the confidence that the world will welcome us back. We must not destroy what has been given. We owe that to whomever we call our god, our universal presence. We must set about unifying the voice of the country.

[0:13:31] Let's not lose our souls to unkindness or to the marginalization of human goodness, nor to the almighty dollar over the almighty of each other. For if we do, that will not save us. The virus is not forever. It is a vacant leader. So we must unite around something greater than this moment. Our lives are worth more than this. I know mine is.

[0:13:59] I believe your life is too. Our unique gifts still deserve a place to survive and thrive in this world, so we must step into our higher calling, our greater good, into a greater vision, and mostly, into a greater love. Share your gifts and your ways of giving back. Share your care and your love. Let's promise to lead in the ways that we can.

[0:14:27] I know we have yet to live up to our potential. We owe it to ourselves, to each other, and to life itself. Let's embrace a calling to connect to better things, better ways of living, more aligned to a greater good, more abundant, more alive, because we know it can so swiftly be taken from us. Be strong, rise up within yourself. Together, let's embrace the opportunity of a better humanity.

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[0:15:00]

Sheila Long: That was wonderful.

Anne Machesky: Thank you. I believe that we as individuals, Sheila, will not be the same as we exit this COVID 19 tragedy. And as I see it, business owners or professionals, our skills are still within us, even when we have uncertain times. They're a constant. What we offer should just be more heartfelt and lasting.

[0:15:31]

It's just how we offer it that needs to be adapted. No matter what your product is, your role is, your service, the question that I offer forth is what is the true shape of your leadership, and how important is it that right now, you make this visible, because your business and those you serve need you. Whatever business that you're in, you carry the voice of a leader through your services, your products, and the role.

[0:16:01]

We can't control events that are surrounding us, but we can control what we give from within throughout our relationships or through our business. So how we attach to the problems that we face and how we attach to the solutions matter. I think we'll get to some form of gift out of this, but it's hard to see that at this stage. And that's what my Hope Reclaimed letter asks us.

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It says, at the end, let's rise up and be strong and together build a better humanity. It's asking us to take our place and lead from within as heartfelt, talented individuals.

Sheila Long: That is just so important, to be able to lead from within, especially during this trying time, right?

Anne Machesky: Absolutely.

Sheila Long: I just love everything in that poem.

[0:16:56]

It was just great. All about just sharing – like, you sharing and having other people just share their talents. And it's just so inspirational too. I've been trying to talk to people about that as well. Like, why did this happen to us? Because it's only been, you know, seven weeks or something since it hit us here? But everything changed, and maybe there's a greater reason. It's all just written there in that poem.

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Just really inspires us to take this as an opportunity. I love that. Like, look at your internal gifts to be able to think how you can shine during this period and then afterward.

Anne Machesky: Absolutely.

Sheila Long: We'll all be stronger.

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Anne Machesky: I think so too. I think there will be a gift. Like I said, it's hard to see it from here, but what we have is the constant of what we want to give from within. We just have to find that spark and find that light, and that's what pulls people together.

[0:17:58] That's what will heal it, I think. That's what will make the difference.

Sheila Long: Yeah, and it's so needed. You just look at, like, what were your priorities two months ago, and then you look at what your priorities are now. And some are still the same, but maybe you just have a more internal focus.

Anne Machesky: Absolutely. That's what happened. I was building out workshops and class material and getting all ready for that, and then this call to push that leadership and poetic voice just emerged, which that is part of Nwyze.

[0:18:31] But it came to the forefront. I had to speak to the environment to help people find themselves. I'm not telling them where to go or where they are. I'm just trying to pull us together as to who we are and what we can do.

Sheila Long: Yeah, it just really shows what an amazing leader you are too, just being able to really get people to channel their own internal strengths. Like what you said, who we are as individuals and who we are together.

[0:19:00] Because that's so important too. And not just now, just in general, right?

Anne Machesky: Exactly, exactly. Well said.

Sheila Long: Like in your business life and just in your state, like in politics and whatever it is that you do. Volunteer work. Just let's stop thinking of it as our mission and more as something for the collective, the social good.

Anne Machesky: Absolutely.

[0:19:27]

Sheila Long: I'm looking, I made so many notes, because it was just like one line after the next was just so great.

Anne Machesky: I think I got immediate emails from many that I knew, some that I didn't know, yesterday after the video went out. I've had requests from some of the leaders in the different organizations. They're sending that video out to their teams, because they want to inspire them, because they need some inspiration right now. They need to find whatever hope they want to have in the world.

[0:19:57] And so I'm grateful I had the opportunity to read that to you today.

Sheila Long: Yeah, thank you. So where exactly did you post the video?

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Anne Machesky: The video? We haven't posted it yet. We're going to try to get it posted. We've got LinkedIn. We're going to try to put it there. We haven't got Instagram started yet. We're close to getting that launched.

[0:20:28] We've got a landing website for Nwyze, and we're going to expand that for the fall. So this kind of came up quick, but we're going to try to put it out there.

Sheila Long: I'm in the same boat. Like, we were in the middle of our [sixth] expansion, and I had all of these things that I put off to the side. And then everything stopped. And then I was like, well, those things that I've been putting off to the side, I can finally do, I can finally roll out.

[0:21:00] And they're things that I really enjoy doing with the business. So yeah, I understand, with this social media, you're not quite there, but now you're kind of being able to focus on it.

Anne Machesky: Absolutely. I think the poetic voice will become more – it's rare to find a leader that has poetic imagination and poetic talent, and that's core to the brand. So that's front and center. That moved much more quickly front and center.

[0:21:30] And the mission. So we've kind of just interrupted just some of the buildout of the classes. But the voice of that poetic imagination and leadership moved forward. That's the gift of COVID, I guess.

Sheila Long: Yeah, it's like you had to just – there was like a reason, and it was just the time and the place that you just really had to showcase that. And maybe you would have overthought it had this not happened, but this just kind of had you bring that forward.

[0:22:00] And I loved another thing that you said in there, was like given our god, like whoever you deem him to be, that was really great, because it just really, again, brings us all together, whatever people believe.

Anne Machesky: That's right.

Sheila Long: And I just wonder who is thinking about COVID as something that came from whoever your god – that whoever you believe it to be.

[0:22:28] But, like, why did this have to happen, and why now?

Anne Machesky: Well, and I think the line that came back in one of my – one of the listeners, they loved the line that the virus is a vacant leader. It is leading us to a degree on behavior, but it's a vacant leader. It's an empty leader. It's not a real leader. What is our true leader is our hearts and our humanity, our goodness and how we are caring for each other and the service we bring to

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everyone through our talents, our products, our services, or what we do with business or life or our charitable work, whatever we choose how to express it.

[0:23:09] But it is a vacant leader, we have to emerge from within as to what's important, and our lives deserve that. And we have not lived up to our potential. Our earth, our country, our individuals. No matter what our age, there's more to us. There's more for us.

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Sheila Long: Yeah, I love that. Just living up to your potential. Like, that's just another great thing that you guys are able to do with Nwyze too. I'm so excited to just learn more about your business and just watch it fully blossom. It's going to be great to see and great to be a part of.

Anne Machesky: Well, I'm lucky to be connected with you and your firm, and I'm looking forward to expanding all of my work more in the Milwaukee area, which is home, which is where I'm from, even though I'm in Minneapolis now.

[0:24:03] I'm building in Milwaukee as well, because that's where my home is.

Sheila Long: Yeah, thanks for doing that. It's nice to be able to go back to where your roots are.

Anne Machesky: Yeah, that's right.

Sheila Long: Yeah, like I was out of the state for a while, and I came back. Like, this is my state. We really need to make it better and be able to build the community of leaders. So it's great to be able to do that.

[0:24:27] So do you have anything that you wish you would have known when you started out?

Anne Machesky: Yeah, that was a wonderful question. It made me think back. And my answer is kind of more shaped from my long history as a financial advisor, but it's carried over to the Nwyze coaching business. You see, early on in my business life as a financial advisor, I was more focused on actually envisioning what was the career definition, what did the career entail?

[0:24:57] So a good part of my early years, I was focused more, like most people, in the survival mode. I wish I would have focused more on my intention and what my intention and mission was as defined by my heart's expression. I didn't realize my heart's expression or my passion until a little bit later in my career, which was about helping people think better.

[0:25:30] So the passion developed to help people think better about their life, their business, or their roadblocks that they were facing. It wasn't just with investments and markets and financial planning. It expanded beyond that. My

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passion mission has gotten much bigger. With my coaching company, I'm able to take that passion and put it front and center.

[0:25:56] I'm much more intentional now with my skills and mission and vision, and I'm reminded — when I was reading the question, I was reminded of an early 2020 Oprah event. I don't want to pull the Oprah card, but I'm going to do it.

Sheila Long: Oh, I love Oprah!

Anne Machesky: I do too, and I went to an event in Minneapolis. I attended early on in January, which seems like a lifetime ago, and she said something that totally resonated with me at that point. She said she shifted her TV show early on in her career to make it a platform of being of service, not just a TV show.

[0:26:30] So she put her skills at the core of that service. She said making that shift of an intention of service made it successful for 25 years. My understanding was, it was how she thought about her TV show. So what I'm saying also — I'll use more poetic terms — it was how she carried the thought of her TV show inside of her.

Sheila Long: Wow, awesome.

[0:27:02]

Anne Machesky: How she carried it. That thought made the difference. And that power of intentionality and being of service made it a success. So I'm taking that same approach with Nwyze. I'm making Nwyze a platform for transformational change for individuals in business. That intentionality is core.

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Sheila Long: Yeah, that is really important. And I think that's something that happens as we get more experience too. I don't know, because you have the coaching business. But just like, at the beginning, you're just trying to figure out what the rules are in the workplace, and you may not want to talk about your passion, you know? But if you really look at it as this service, or like what you said, how you carry the thought about it, it really impacts the decisions you make on a day to day basis.

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Anne Machesky: Absolutely.

Sheila Long: Maybe it doesn't have to do with age or experience, because some people, they're very vocal about what they believe and what their standards are. So it will be fun to watch, hear all of your testimonials about your clients and how everything is evolving.

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So Mother's Day is coming up around the corner. Do you have a story to talk about your mom that can inspire others?

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Anne Machesky: I do, and it's a short one. After the Great Depression, my mother, she was about age 18, she left her West Coast family for Milwaukee. And she came back to Milwaukee to live with a distant relative and look for a job. When you think about back then, she was 18, and it was right after the Depression. Talk about a difficult time, a difficult economy. But especially for a young girl.

[0:28:58] She became actually a governess for a little boy from a wealthy family that lived right on Lake Drive, very close to where you are.

Sheila Long: Oh, okay.

Anne Machesky: And what inspired me about that story was that as a young woman, young girl, moving away, she took so many chances that really, for that time in history, were really bold and probably a little bit unsafe. She arrived in Milwaukee alone and had little foundation to kind of land on, and yet she succeeded in so many ways.

[0:29:30] So what she imaged for me, Sheila, was a streak of adventure and tenacity. Had she not taken those risks, my siblings and I wouldn't be here, and I wouldn't have learned to be adventurous as well. So when I think back on a good story about her, I admire her fortitude. And she had a hopeful outlook that must have carried her back here, even without much of a safety net beneath her.

[0:29:55] So my mom had a lot of great traits, that adventurer just being one of them. But I believe she kind of never gave herself enough credit for many of the great traits she had. My family is gifted with many of those great traits within all of us, which over the years I've become thankful for. So that tenacity and determination, it's impressive, especially for that time and place. Women just didn't do that. They didn't strike out like that and be bold.

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Sheila Long: Yeah, that's a great story. What a great role model you had growing up.

Anne Machesky: Yeah, you had to pick up on it, because she didn't boast about it. It was just part of her life's journey.

Sheila Long: Yeah, they just kind of talk about, "Oh yeah, the Great Depression hit." I'm like, that was major. You didn't have any food? And how long did it take her to get here? Maybe it was just the train.

Anne Machesky: Yeah, it was the train.

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Sheila Long: But still, you just arrive, and you don't know anybody. What was her backup plan? Then after she'd survived that, everything must have been easy.

Anne Machesky: Well, her backup plan kind of appeared. I think it was my father. So she met him, and he used to ride the cable car down Oakland Avenue. So he used to try to ride the cable car to meet her, and here we are.

Sheila Long: Okay. Oh, really? Yeah, all these years later, and you're gifted with her sense of adventure and tenacity, determination, fortitude.

[0:31:32] Well, thanks for sharing.

Anne Machesky: Absolutely.

Sheila Long: It's so wonderful to hear about people's moms, because you just get to know people so much better than just the traditional face to face. So thanks for that story.

Anne Machesky: Sure.

Sheila Long: So we went over your social media handles. Do you want to just summarize where our listeners can get in touch with you?

Anne Machesky: Sure. You can find us on the web, and you can submit your information, if you'd like more contact, through a contact page.

[0:32:02] It's nwyze.com. I'll spell it. N-W-Y-Z-E. We're launching the expanded website in the fall. You'll be able to learn a little bit more about all the keynotes, workshops, think tanks, and personal mastery classes that we're offering. You can find us on LinkedIn. Just search for Nwyze. That's N-W-Y-Z-E. If you want to reach out to me directly, you can reach me at anne – A-N-N-E – dot machesky. I'll spell it.

[0:32:31] M-A-C-H-E-S-K-Y. At outlook.com. And I'd love to hear from you.

Sheila Long: Okay. Great. Well, thank you so much for being on our show.

Anne Machesky: Sure.

Sheila Long: And really appreciate it.

Anne Machesky: It's great. Thank you.

Sheila Long: And for all of our listeners, we really hope that you're inspired by this great business that Anne is building and her big goal of inspiring us all to really take action and be in charge of our own destinies.

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[0:33:00] And please tune in for another show and look up Anne on her website and contact her. She'd love to hear from you. Thanks, everyone.

Anne Machesky: Thank you.

Sheila Long: Thanks to everybody for listening to the Head of the Table podcast. Please feel free to look for us wherever you find your podcasts. Let your friends know as well. Thanks, everyone.