

Ep #522: Take Back Your Brain with Kara Loewentheil



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Brooke Castillo

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You are listening to *The Life Coach School Podcast* with Brooke Castillo episode number 522.

Welcome to *The Life Coach School Podcast*, where it's all about real clients, real problems and real coaching. And now your host, Master Coach instructor, Brooke Castillo.

Oh my goodness. It's a big day today. I have one of my bestie besties on the podcast today. And you know she's my favorite cause she's so funny, but she has written a book that is so damn good. And that's what we're talking about today.

Please welcome Kara Loewentheil to the podcast. This is like your third time on.

Kara: There should be an applause track.

Brooke: I think it's like a record. You're like the most times on.

Kara: I've been on the most, you think?

Brooke: I hope so because you're amazing. I love having you on. It's like, I was seriously so excited to talk to you today. I was giddy.

So today we're talking about Kara's book, *Take Back Your Brain*. First of all, this book is out now. Go get it. It's amazing. Like seriously, amazing. I rarely say a book is amazing. That's probably a lie. There's a lot of amazing books, this is one of them.

Kara: And she read my book.

Kara: But this book really is amazing. It's so awesome. And we're going to talk about money during this podcast because it's actually, this is a little side note, it's kind of funny. I get feedback a lot from my team where they're like, we do talk about money a lot. Maybe we should not talk about money so much. Brooke, you're always talking about money and how much

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money you want to make and all this stuff. Maybe we should not talk so much about money.

And so I decided to do a special topic class inside of Scholars and I let them pick what the topic was. Money.

Kara: Was it money?

Brooke: It was like 90% of everyone on the call wanted to talk about money. So when we were talking about your book, which talks about a lot of amazing things, money was the topic that I loved your take on. I love how you talk about it in this book. I think everyone needs to read the way you talk about it, especially if you're a woman. So that's what we're going to talk about today.

But first will you just introduce yourself? If it's someone's first time listening to the podcast, tell us a little bit about you and tell us a little bit about your book process.

Kara: In addition to being one of Brooke's besties, which is really, you know, what other identity do I need?

Brooke: Right? Bestie besties.

Kara: My name is Kara Loewentheil. I am a former women's rights litigator and academic who became a life coach. I like to call it the Ivy league to life coach pipeline. And now I teach women how to identify the way that society has taught them to think about themselves and how to reprogram, rewire their brains to kind of get the patriarchy out of their brains.

Is that what you asked me, who am I? What do I do?

Brooke: Yeah, I think that's a perfect introduction. And then why did you write the book?

Kara: Oh, why did I write the book? That was a good question. Well, first of all, if you have Jewish parents, then you have to write a book at some

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point, especially if you're going to be a life coach. Like you could at least get a New York Times bestseller to make them all feel better about it.

Brooke: Right, at least be legit.

Kara: At least be an author also. No, I wrote the book because when I came to coaching, I obviously, this is how I met you. I was trained by you. I went through your School. And you know, when you start coaching, you're basically just reiterating what you were taught. You're just kind of like a little, you know, ChatGPT, you're just spitting it back out.

And then over the years my work has really kind of evolved and grown. And I had developed this whole theory about how society impacts women's brains and gathered a lot of evidence through coaching on it. And I have a podcast called *Unf*ck Your Brain*, but a podcast, as you know from yours, it's sort of like layers of sediment that build up over time, right?

Brooke: Yeah.

Kara: It's just like whatever, wherever your teaching or thinking is at a given moment is what's immortalized in the podcast. And it's not, you know, it's not the most organized and concise way of learning something because it's sort of over time.

So I really wanted to write a book for a couple of reasons. One to sort of put everything in one place in the perfect order with everything that I had created.

Brooke: So good.

Kara: So there's like this one stop shop for here's the whole theory front to back. Here's all the areas and how it impacts your life. Here's all the exercises you need to do. Like everything's all in one place.

And because, shockingly, there are some people who don't listen to podcasts apparently.

Brooke: So rude.

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Kara: Which I think is very strange, but they do exist I've heard. And so I wanted to reach people who are not in the podcast world, who aren't in the life coaching world and sort of spread the word. I'm very mission driven. So for me this is like I'll be done when every woman on earth has heard this information or I'm dead, whichever one comes first.

Brooke: And that's such a great way of describing it because like, what episode are you on in your podcast? Do you know?

Kara: I'm like in the 330s I think.

Brooke: Yeah, so it's like instead of having to listen to 330 podcast episodes, I can read a book and it's going to be so much more concise. That's really what a gift. I love it. I love this book so much. I think I agree with you that every person needs to read it. Not just every woman, every person needs to read it.

Kara: That's true. So we were just talking about how my partner, who is a straight white dude from Minnesota, like as he was reading the book and he's like, this sounds a lot like me. I really identify with a lot of what's in here.

Brooke: Right, brains. Okay, so one of the things that I love about your work, first of all, I love that you've taken some foundational truths that you've learned through all of your individual studies with your teachers and then created your own body of work. That's just such a beautiful thing.

And one of the things that you talk a lot about is how we are socialized to think certain things. And I would love for you to just unpack that a little bit. Like what does that mean? Socialized, what does that word mean?

Kara: Yeah, so if you think about when you're born, you don't know very much. You have some instinctive drives like babies know to try to nurse instinctively.

Brooke: Yeah.

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Kara: As you grow up, you learn from your parents, from cartoons, from the books your daycare person reads you, from interactions with other people. Then you go to school, you start consuming media. Maybe you read books.

So you're learning constantly what it means to live in our society. And that means it's everything from like, you're supposed to wear clothes when you leave the house. Like that's socialization. You've learned from society that you can be naked inside by yourself, but you're supposed to put on clothes when you go outside.

Brooke: Right.

Kara: Unless you're a nudist or something, right? You learn what foods your culture eats. You learn kind of what the different social and cultural roles are. Like who's a teacher, who's a father, who's a mother, who's a postman. It's like that Richard Scarry book that we used to read when I was growing up, which was like the people with all the jobs.

So you're constantly learning from society and a lot of the stuff you learn is really helpful. Like toilet training is socialization, that's helpful.

Brooke: Yeah. I mean, so you're learning what normal is.

Kara: Yeah, just like how the world works.

Brooke: Yeah.

Kara: How the world works, what you're supposed to think. Like we are pro ice cream and anti-murder, like that's socialization, right? Like what's good or bad. But we're also learning, what are you supposed to be like, right?

And that starts to break down along we get different messages based on different identities. So we learn that men and women are different, and this is what men are like and this is what women are like, right? Or we learn, you know, people of color are like this and white people are like this.

So we have all of these sort of biased belief systems that are built into our society and we absorb those. And I think sometimes it's almost harder to

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recognize now because a lot more of it is sort of implicit or subtle. Like it used to be, you'd be born and if you were a woman, people would be like, okay, so you're not going to need to know how to read and you can't vote and you need to get married and your husband will be in charge of you. And it's like, all right, that's pretty straightforward.

But now we have legal, social, political rights. And so we're not taught that directly. We're not literally told, hey, because you're a woman, you're also feeble-minded and need a man to be in charge of you, which is what you used to just literally be told. So there was no mystery about it.

Brooke: Yeah, go find a man. Hurry up. Yeah.

Kara: Right. Like, you know, your father is going to be in charge of you until you get married because you can't make your own decisions. That was just a very clear thing a person would say out loud to you.

Brooke: Right. Not that long ago, by the way.

Kara: Not that long ago. Now most of us are not hearing that explicitly. Like they're not teaching that in school, but in our society, I think turning society is like turning a tanker ship. It doesn't turn immediately. So like, yes, we're no longer mostly saying that out loud, except for like some terrible parts of Twitter or whatever Twitter is now.

Brooke: Right. Right.

Kara: Most people are not saying that out loud. But it's still, some of these beliefs are still reflected when you look around society and you just look at like, how many women are CEOs? How many people of color are in the government? Who tends to be in charge of the money in your household? Whose job is more respected? Like what genders and what races and ethnicities are more doctors or more nurses?

Like you just absorb still that there's this bias in society and you get certain messages about who you kind of are allowed to be or should be based on who you are.

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Brooke: Yeah.

Kara: And all that shit gets into your brain. So that's socialization.

Brooke: Right. And I think it's like, I teach a lot on possibility and like how we come up with ideas about what's possible for us, right? And I use the example where I say like, I think most of us are picking out of a box of crayons with six different colors when really there's, you know, badrillions of colors in the world to choose from, right? It's like a decillion is actually the proper term of how many colors there are. It's ridiculous.

Kara: Wow, interesting.

Brooke: But where do we get the six colors from? Like how do we know, like if you're a woman especially like how do you know like what are my options? What's possible for me? What should I look out to maybe be doing with my life in the world?

And until I started really studying my own biases, like I didn't actually understand how much just movies and TV shows that aren't, you know, like you said, they're not saying now girls, notice you're not the one going to work here. You're the one at home, right? It's like, but that's what we're seeing constantly, right?

And when it comes to money, I am fascinated by not being able to really name in a movie or TV show, like very few women who are successful and wealthy and decent human beings.

Kara: Right, what we learn is like the 101 Dalmatians. It's like Cruella de Vil.

Brooke: Evil. And that's not just for women, that's for men too. There's very few examples of kind hearted, wonderful, uber wealthy people on TV shows. Most of the rich people we see on TV shows even now are train wrecks.

Kara: But at least some of them can be superheroes, right? Like Batman was like –

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Brooke: Right, right. Well, we got one.

Kara: Cruella De Vil is like, well, who knows? She probably murdered her husband. She's a widow and she just breeds dogs and wants to skin them. That's what a rich woman looks like.

Brooke: Right. Right. And so even though nobody's ever sat down and taught us that, that's going into our brain. And it's also just not presenting us with the opportunities that I think are so available to us now. So when I think about money, I think about that a lot.

And I try to be someone that talks about money in a different way. And I know you do too. And I remember Amy Porterfield is a great example. She talked about making a million dollars in a year and I almost lost my mind because Amy Porterfield is a good human. She's a good person and she's nice. And she makes a million dollars a year.

It was like a crazy thing went off of my brain. And so it made me really realize this socialization impact. And so when you say, in the title of your book you say Take Back Your Brain, who are we taking it back from?

Kara: Yeah. I mean, I think that what's so sneaky is that I always say like, if the thoughts that you learned from society came out in your head in like a male announcer voice, then you would kind of recognize that they weren't yours, right? Like if you were walking through your day and your brain was like, well, women don't know how to make financial decisions. Then you would know it wasn't you.

But that's not what happens because it all gets absorbed and it comes out in your own voice in your head. So what you hear is, I don't know, I don't really understand the stock market. It seems really complicated. I better like hire some 23-year-old named Chad who probably knows nothing to tell me what to do because men are responsible and they understand money, right?

Brooke: And they're good at math.

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Kara: Yeah. Math, right. Money is math and they're good at math. Although any woman you meet who lived through the nineties can do the calorie count of an entire meal in her head and then divide it by the portion serving size. So we can also do math.

Brooke: Amen. Amen.

Kara: But in the book I talk about three money lies that women are taught. And the first one is that money is for men. That men are the ones who understand money. That men are the ones who make money. That money is something that men give to women, you know, reward them for good behavior or for being attractive or whatever it is.

And I mean, the studies show that actually women make better investment decisions because they are more careful and analyze risk better. And they're not so convinced of their own genius all the time. But nevertheless, women believe and women are taught to believe this.

And there's, I mean, horrifying/amazing studies of like media aimed around finances. And the financial media that's aimed at men is about building wealth and investing and taking risks. It's like teaching them how to generate money. And the media that's aimed at women is all about budgeting. It's how to be thrifty. It's how to save money. And it's all coming from like, this is how socialization still shows up.

So it used to be that legally women, especially married women, couldn't make their own money. Any money they made belonged to their husbands. And most women were not, at least, you know, this obviously depends on place, it depends on your demographic group, a lot of different things.

But overall, especially in the sort of like white middle to upper class women who tend to be like, tend to dominate the social norms or conversation, a housewife got, her husband made the money. You got a certain amount. And you being good with money meant you're good at managing the budget of the money someone else gives you. And that's still what shows up.

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Obviously women of color have always had to work outside the home, poor women, women in other marginalized communities. But that's kind of the ethos of still the way we talk about money is like, and it's also, I mean, to me, it totally reeks of diet culture also. It's like women are always being encouraged to restrict and be small and be careful and don't do anything pleasurable and don't do anything fun. And don't be excessive.

Nobody's saying to men like, do you really need that new golf club? I mean, maybe you should just give up a golf club a week and then you can become a house owner or whatever.

Brooke: Maybe you should just practice more.

Kara: Right, maybe you don't need that expensive. Why are you driving that car? Is it because you don't feel good about yourself? Like nobody's saying any of that to men.

Brooke: Right. Oh, that's so interesting. And as you were talking I was thinking about this. It's like all of this is happening in the media. And I'm imagining that there's even women that are recreating this nonsense without even realizing it, right?

Kara: Totally.

Brooke: We're all like part of this. And we're learning from our mothers who learned from their mothers who have been exposed to all of this. So it's like, how do we get that, hello, did you notice? Like, maybe that's not true. And this is what people say to me all the time because when I talk about money I say it in purposefully jarring ways. Like I say, I love money. I want to be rich. And people like lose their minds because it's so unique for some.

Kara: I think that's also gendered, right? Because there's like this overlap of what we're taught is virtuous, right? It's like money is not virtuous and wanting money makes you a bad person, et cetera. But that really gets enforced on women more than on men, right?

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Most men out there who want to make a lot of money, I don't feel like they have a lot of people in their comments.

Brooke: They're just providing for their families.

Kara: They're just innovators. They're successful. They're business people.

Brooke: Right, they're just innovators. Yeah.

Kara: I lost my mind, I was trying to get my Google knowledge panel updated. And, you know, Gary Vee has American Businessman, Tony Robbins has like life coach. Like, okay, I'm not quite as well known as those people, but I'm not chopped liver, as we would say, either. Like I run a multi-million dollar business, I have a podcast with 50 million downloads.

So I submitted, first it just said I was a lawyer and I was like, that's out of date. So I submitted like, here's my link to my book contract with, not contract. Here's my link to my book with Penguin Random House. Here's my link to my top ranked podcast, blah, blah, blah. And you know what Google spat back in my lifestyle panel?

Brooke: Oh no, I'm afraid.

Kara: Lifestyle guru.

Brooke: Wow.

Kara: I was like, come the fuck on.

Brooke: You're like, oh, look to society to see who you are.

Kara: Like that is so diminishing.

Brooke: I'm surprised it didn't just say influencer.

Kara: Right, or just housewife. But that was so classic. I was like, really?

Brooke: Wow.

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Kara: Published author, podcaster, business owner, entrepreneur. I'm a lifestyle guru? And you know what? That shit's done by an algorithm because I looked into it. And so it's like our biases infiltrate the algorithm also. But this is a perfect example, if a man runs a multi-million dollar business and has a top podcast and a book deal, I don't think that his Google panel says lifestyle guru.

Brooke: You know what's so interesting? Now I'm going to have to go to ChatGPT and ask to talk about money as if it were a man and talk about money as if it were a woman.

Kara: Yes.

Brooke: That, I bet, would be so fascinating.

Kara: Oh my God, it's going to be horrifying.

Brooke: That's so interesting, because people will say it's just not polite to talk, for women, it's not polite to talk about it.

Kara: Right, who says that to men? Whoever says anything to men about being polite?

Brooke: Can you imagine?

Kara: Can you not make sexist jokes? We're just asking could you not make sexist jokes? That's just what we're just asking. Could you not, right? And this is also historical context, like women were supposed to be virtuous. Women were supposed to be like good ones. So what I always say is like, look at who benefits from the story, right?

Are all those men in power who are telling you not to care too much about money, are they giving away all their money and power and becoming monks? Not usually. So who is benefiting and who is not when you're told to sort of self-enforce and self-impose restrictions and being small, and not caring about these worldly things while they run away with the money and the power and keep running the world.

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Brooke: Well, I think one of the things that – Like I have two boys that I try to explain to them because it's lost on them sometimes that, you know, when we're taking back our brain, like in my mind it doesn't feel like there's a bunch of just white dudes out there that are consciously thinking this through. And like, how do we keep the women down?

I think even with them, with women and men, it's just such, it's like an infiltration.

Kara: Right, it's not like the protocols of the elders of Zion. It's not like a meeting. They're not at a meeting deciding these things.

Brooke: Right.

Kara: That's why we call it structural, because we've all learned to think this way. So, I mean, of course, you can have a straight white man who absolutely thinks of himself as a feminist.

Brooke: Yes, and doesn't even realize it. Yeah.

Kara: But he's still thinking in ways he doesn't realize a little bit differently about his employees and like the maternity and the paternity leave policies. And like, what do the women in his company need to be able to be successful? And who does he assume is going to take the coffee order? And like, what is, you know, all of these? And like, does he give as much credence to when a woman is speaking passionately, does he a little bit just assume she's being kind of shrill or hysterical?

It's like all of these little, little things. And so, I mean, in the book, I really go through specifics. I'm very big, as you know, on like here's how we're going to concretely change your thinking.

Brooke: Yeah.

Kara: There's plenty of feminist theory out there, like nothing I'm saying on the theory level in this book in the non-brain area, like in the feminist theory area is necessarily even new. It's feminist theory and philosophy. But how do we actually change our brains?

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And I think that what I have found is when you marry the cognitive change tools that you teach and I teach and coaches teach, with this context it's so much more powerful because it addresses the actual root of the problem, right? Because a lot of women don't even know that this is why their brain works this way.

Like I was just teaching a training today on people pleasing and we were talking about how people pleasing for a lot of women literally feels like they're going to die. It feels like life and death.

Brooke: It does.

Kara: And if you don't understand the social history of the fact that for thousands of years it was literally true that you might die.

Brooke: You mean not people pleasing makes you feel like you're going to die.

Kara: Right, yes.

Brooke: People pleasing feels like breathing.

Kara: It feels safe, right. Not people pleasing, like trying to stop, right, that fear.

Brooke: Saying no, yeah.

Kara: Yeah, without the social context it's hard to understand. With the social context you can understand that literally for thousands of years, it was physically dangerous to be a woman who displeased people, especially men, especially authority figures.

I always like to show when I'm doing trainings, this picture of what was called a scold's bridle. It was like a muzzle that you would put on a woman's face who was like a nag and she would have to wear it around town. So that's not that long ago. It's a few hundred years ago.

Brooke: Right.

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Kara: So of course it feels like you're going to die when you try to stand up for yourself.

Brooke: Oh my gosh, so many times just saying no made me think I was going to die. But I really think it's important to explicitly say about this work that so much of it isn't conscious.

Kara: Yes, it's unconscious.

Brooke: Like so much of what is going on in our own brains, we will be surprised. Like you were saying, like if there was an announcer doing it, you'd be surprised to find out. And so not only do you need to know how to change it if you want, but you need to know that it's there. And I think in so many of us, that's the hardest part.

Kara: Yeah. That's why the first exercise of the book is an exercise that walks you through figuring out what are the different kinds of identities that you hold, and then what did you learn about those people? And like that alone blows people's minds, right?

Especially when I then make them make a list of what are your beliefs about yourself? Do you see any, is there any correlation here in what you believe about yourself and like what you were taught, right? And as you're kind of in the book, the first half of the book is sort of how your brain works, how socialization impacts your brain, how to understand the thoughts and feelings and actions through this lens.

And then the second half of the book are chapters on the major kinds of areas of women's lives. And I go into each chapter, like these are the common thought patterns I see that are created by socialization.

Brooke: Yes.

Kara: Because yeah, people don't even realize that they're doing them or they don't realize where they came from. Or like so many women I've had come to me exactly what you're talking about, be like I didn't have an

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abusive parent and my childhood was fine. And I still feel like I'm going to die if I try to say no to a second date, like what the fuck is wrong with me?

Brooke: Yes.

Kara: So I would be like nothing's wrong with you, there's thousands of years of socialization impacting your brain. And okay, now here's how we're going to change it. But I totally agree with you, most people have no idea how much of what they consider to be their individual failings or flaws or like thought patterns.

Brooke: Yes.

Kara: Actually it makes complete sense when you look at the history of what we've learned about women.

Brooke: And it's so, I don't know, confirming for me.

Kara: Yeah, validating. Yeah.

Brooke: Yeah, validating. Yeah, that's the word I need. So I'll give you an example. So there's like, there's first, you don't even know the thoughts are there. You just think this is how the world is. And then you realize, wait, those are all just thoughts that are programmed into my brain.

And then you realize that it's just a thought. And then you still are like, wait, okay, wait, what? So I have a perfect example between the two of us that we talk about a lot. And I think many people struggle with this, right?

And it's, for me, dating and relationships and marriage, all the things, all the constructs that we've been taught are normal and what we should do and what is right and what is good, right? With no question, we've just believed these things. And so many conversations I've had with you, you're just like, yeah, well, I just don't believe that. I just don't do that. I just don't think that. I'm like, what? Like we're allowed to do this this way?

And one of the things, and this applies to money, is being a woman who makes a lot more money than your partner or your husband or the person

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that you're married to, right? And how I can't shake that me making more money than my partner could be considered normal.

Kara: Yeah, I remember texting you about this.

Brooke: Right.

Kara: And you being like, but what about this? And I was like, it's fine. And you were like, what?

Brooke: What do you mean it's fine? And you said, because I asked, I'm like so doesn't it create any kind of weird dynamic? And you're just like, that doesn't bother me at all. Like, it doesn't even, like I don't even think about it. And I was like, wow. Because society, I feel like it's just everybody believes, like we all agree that men should make more than women.

Kara: And we assume that they are. Like every female entrepreneur I know has the experience of going to a hotel or restaurant or store with her husband or partner who she's usually retired and supports.

Brooke: Right.

Kara: And then the people at the restaurant or the hotel or the store or the bank are talking to him.

Brooke: Right.

Kara: Like my partner, he just points to me and goes, listen, she's the bank. I don't know why you're talking to me.

Brooke: Oh, I love it. I love it.

Kara: But like they've all had that experience. Every multi-million dollar business owner I know who's a woman has had that experience.

Brooke: That's actually interesting because I wonder if most men would say that, "Oh, she's the bank."

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Kara: Yeah, I think just the ones who happen to be married to the women I know, because obviously, I mean, dealing with us you're going to have to be that kind of man.

Brooke: But I'm just like, I think we like to perpetuate that idea. I find myself doing it.

Kara: Right, because men are socialized this way, right? Men are socialized to believe that they need to make money to be, like that masculinity requires making money, being the provider, making more money than your partner.

I mean, in the book I talk about some of the research on what happens in marriages and household labor and time, depending on who's the breadwinner. And essentially, if the man makes more than the – In a heterosexual married couple, I would say. If the woman makes less than the man, she does more housework and child care. If the man and the woman make the same amount of money, she does more housework and child care.

Brooke: Wow.

Kara: If the woman makes more money, but the man still works, she does more housework and child care. The man, on average, does not do more housework and child care unless he literally does not work and is a stay at home parent.

Brooke: But the point is, I want everyone to hear this. The point is, it's not because the dude is lazy. It's because we've been socialized to believe that that's what's normal.

Kara: This is how we've been socialized. Right, and the man has been socialized to have a certain expectation of entitlement to rest and leisure.

Brooke: Yes.

Kara: And the woman has been socialized to think that she's only allowed to rest if literally everyone she knows has had something done for them,

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and probably the pets also. Like the difficulty, because women are socialized to believe that. And again, this is like, this is the history. Women were essentially just trapped domestic servants, right?

Brooke: Yeah.

Kara: You know, marriages were arranged. Money was exchanged, like in a lot of cultures. So women are socialized to believe that that's where their value and worth is, is doing things for other people and being in service. And you and I are in service of big goals. There's nothing wrong with being in service, but we want it to feel –

Like I was just teaching about this today. And, of course, anytime I try to teach a woman that it's okay to care at all what they think about something or what they want, they're immediately like, then I will become a destructive sociopath and a narcissist and be selfish, right? And I'm always like, we're just trying to rebalance the scale a little bit. We're not saying that everybody should be a sociopath who doesn't care about anyone else.

Brooke: Right. Yeah, and I think that this trying to go against these norms and make, for me, it's like I want to make a contribution to that effort, right? To make it change. So like when someone's talking to my boyfriend and he's telling them about me, well, she's beautiful. This is what he's saying, right? She's beautiful and she owns this really successful business. And she's got all these clients, whatever. And they're like, oh, so why is she dating you?

Like literally said that to him. Like the only reason that I would date a man is because he was providing for me. And this woman, to her defense, is just kind of like she's thinking in terms of, well, these are the reasons that you date someone, because they're attractive. Especially a woman, right? She has to be pretty. I mean, it's obvious why you're dating her. Why would she date you? Because you don't have as much money as her, why would she date you?

Kara: Right, because that's what women treasure.

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Brooke: Yeah, it's so crazy. But one of the sections of your book that I just thought was amazing and I'd love for you to speak about it on the podcast is know what happens if you don't create wealth.

A lot of people come to me and they're like, well, why do you think making or creating wealth is important? And I said, well, it's important to me and I can describe why it's important to me. And I want to give as many women permission to consider it as a possibility.

Because that's what had happened to me with Amy Porterfield. I hadn't even considered it as a possibility that I could make a million dollars in a year. So I want to give that as like, huh, is that something we're all allowed to do? Is that something we should consider doing?

But the way you present it is, okay, you may not want to consider doing it, but just know that there is an effect if you don't consider it too, and your thoughts on that.

Kara: Yeah, I mean, I totally agree. I don't think everybody needs to be a business owner or be trying to build wealth if they don't want to.

Brooke: Right, of course.

Kara: I think what you're saying, number one, is really important, which is we want it to be an honest choice, right?

Brooke: Yes, conscious.

Kara: It's the same as saying like – Yeah, conscious and honest choice where you've told yourself the truth about the options and you have done the work to not be acting out of just your default socialization, what you were taught, what your parents taught you, what you heard in the media, whatever, right?

The same way that I would say like when I teach about people pleasing, I'm not saying like, so you should never, ever go to a family reunion.

Brooke: You should never please anyone ever.

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Kara: Never. Never do anything. If it seems like your mom might like something, don't do it.

Brooke: Right.

Kara: No, right? We want to do it from a sense of generosity, not obligation. So when it comes to money and wealth, I think the big lie that we're taught is that you can sort of opt out of those things and then you are pure and good.

Brooke: And good, yeah.

Kara: And you're sort of, and everything else is sort of just neutral. It's like you can just remove yourself without impacting the whole system. But when you opt out, and for me it's not even just about money, it's about speaking up in a meeting or going for the job or whatever.

Brooke: Yes.

Kara: If you opt out because you're uncomfortable or you have biases or whatever else and you haven't done the work to at least honestly make a choice, you're confirming and validating the status quo, right?

So like I get this all the time in terms of like, well, if you want to support women, but you're also making money in a business, you're also running a business, right? I'm like, yes, I would much rather – And this is no, I always feel like I have to say like this is not a dig on anything that anybody chooses to do with their own whatever; body, time, money.

But personally, yes, I would much rather that somebody comes and pays me to learn how to love themselves, than goes and gets like another cosmetic procedure that's not going to make them feel good about themselves, that goes and spends their money on the 14th red lipstick that is not going to change your life compared to the other 13 and that is ruining the environment.

It's like, if I don't do what I do, then the status quo just stays the same. So it's like, I think you have to think about it.

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Brooke: I mean, what is the argument people are making there? That you shouldn't make money helping women?

Kara: Yeah, probably. I mean, some version of, you know, because women are socialized to believe that women especially are supposed to help and not want to make money or that help and money are like somehow in conflict with each other.

Brooke: Yes, interesting.

Kara: Even though nobody ever says, like, well, you shouldn't pay for a house because living in a house is helpful. So no one can charge money for their house.

Brooke: But that's all that bias, right?

Kara: Yes, that's all that socialization.

Brooke: Like how could you make money helping women that need help?

Kara: Right. But if you are a woman who's like, I'm uncomfortable negotiating, I don't want to seem greedy, I don't think I should care about money so I'm not going to try to negotiate my salary. Or I'm not going to ask for more. Or I'm not going to try to blow my mind by seeing if I can create this amount in my business.

Brooke: Yeah.

Kara: It's sort of like if you opt out, the money you would have made doesn't just sit in a pile somewhere and nobody touches it. It goes to all the people who are already running the show. So if I don't stand up and talk and yes, like charge money for coaching services –

Brooke: And create an option.

Kara: And create, right.

Brooke: An alternative, yeah.

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Kara: So women can really learn to love themselves, then the money they would have spent with me is going to all these things that don't actually offer true empowerment or confidence.

Brooke: Yes. Oh, that is so good. That is so good. And I think too, I remember having many conversations with, you know, like our mastermind group when I was first wanting to help a group of women make a million dollars as life coaches. Because I was getting so much feedback, well, you can do it because you're so charismatic. And you can do it because of your childhood. And you can do it because of all the reading you've done.

And I'm like, I just really believed that lots of people could do it. And I wanted to help prove that in some ways. But I think a lot of times it's like we have to negotiate between our desires. Like some of our desires are, oh, I would like to do that, and is it okay?

Kara: Yeah.

Brooke: Right? Are people going to hate me? Am I going to get in trouble? Like I can't even tell you how many times I felt like I was going to get in trouble for making so much money.

Kara: Yeah.

Brooke: Like it's crazy. And I think that is a shared feeling. I think people look at women, men too, making money and think they must be doing something wrong.

Kara: Yeah. And we're afraid to step out of line or do anything beyond the norm, right?

Brooke: Yes. Stand out, yeah.

Kara: And that's all humans. A lot of humans have that to some extent. And I think women have that more because women are punished more by society for doing that.

Brooke: Yes.

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Kara: I mean, just look at the treatment of male and female, even celebrities. Like I'm not crying any tears for Taylor Swift, she has a pretty good life. But if you look at like she has so much money and power and there's still so much sexist nonsense about her, right?

Brooke: So much, yeah.

Kara: Compared to how a male celebrity is covered. Again, like she's not – The treatment of Taylor Swift in the media is not the biggest problem in the world.

Brooke: Right, of course.

Kara: But the point is that at any stage there is that sexist socialization. And so of course women are afraid to step out of line or try to be bigger than the people around them think they should be or than they were told that women could be. Because there is –

I mean, one of the things I work on a lot in my coaching is like it's like women come to me and they're like, I want to believe that if I do what I want and I stop people pleasing and I blah, blah, blah, whatever, publish my novel, make a million dollars, whatever, nobody's going to be upset. And I'm like, that's not, no.

Brooke: That's not going to happen.

Kara: Right. We need to get okay with some people being upset.

Brooke: Yes, some people will be upset.

Kara: We do a lot of like maybe this and this. Like even if... I can be a good person, even if a few people disagree or think I shouldn't try to make money or I can, you know, I was just coaching one of my students about making art that her family doesn't like. It's like I can be a good daughter and love my mom and have a good relationship with her, even if she doesn't like the art that I made.

Brooke: Yeah.

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Kara: Even if she disapproves, like learning to tolerate that is crucial to freedom.

Brooke: It's so good. And I do think in order to change the socialization that the people who come after us, the girls that come after us will receive, we have the opportunity, I should say, to do that with our own lives.

Kara: We have to. I mean, this is why I get so mad at the social – When I say mad at the social justice crowd, I am a social justice crowd. I'm talking about myself.

Brooke: You get mad at yourself.

Kara: Yeah, myself. I come from that world. I was a reproductive rights litigator. I still consider myself somebody focused on social justice. But there's like a strain of that criticism, mostly of women, that is like, you know, sort of it's like navel gazing and privilege to care about your own thoughts and feelings and like nobody should be bothering with that. I am just like, where do you think social change comes from?

Brooke: Right.

Kara: Like, does it get airdropped from the aliens? Like what? It comes from people's brains. It comes from the people currently alive now. And like, do they have good ideas? Do they feel willing to take risks? Are they able to speak up? Like any revolutionary hero you have, the thing that made them a revolutionary hero is that they thought differently than the norm.

Brooke: Yes.

Kara: And they didn't accept what society had told them and who society told them they had to be. So they're completely the same thing.

Brooke: Well, yeah. And being that, right? So let's use you as an example. If someone's not considering their choices of what they could do for their own life and their own agency as a woman, and they see someone like you

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who has this ridiculously amazing education and is an attorney and living this one life and then just decides one day to become a life coach.

Like the audacity of a single woman to make a choice about her life that doesn't make any sense to anyone else is so inspiring to so many other women. And then to go and make more money than you would have made as an attorney, like what is happening? And then to have that inspiration, like the more of us that are making our own decisions and questioning our thoughts and doing what we want, whether it's making lots of money or not, together that's what changes the world, period.

Kara: Yeah.

Brooke: And so it's going to be uncomfortable.

Kara: Yeah. Right, somebody's mind has to change and then they can change the world. So I always think of it like, maybe you want to change your life. Do you want to be president of the PTA or do you want to be the president of the United States? I don't care either way.

Brooke: I actually do care. And I would like you to be president of the United States.

Kara: Well, I'm definitely not going to be president of the PTA. So I guess that's the other option.

Brooke: That's the only option.

Kara: You have to talk to a lot of strangers to be president, and that's not really my vibe.

Brooke: Right. Right, but I do think like, know what happens if you don't create wealth. I think this point is just like it's not that there is no consequence. It's not that there is no effect if you make that choice. It's not like, well, I'm just choosing not to make that choice. You are making that choice in that moment. And just make sure, and this is all we're saying, that you've made it honestly and consciously. You've evaluated your thoughts –

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Kara: I think even putting that energy towards something.

Brooke: Yes.

Kara: I don't think everybody needs to go make money. If you were like, what I really want to do is work with indigenous forest preservation, and that is not a thing that creates a lot of wealth, like God bless, please.

Brooke: Yeah, if that's genuine and true for you.

Kara: Right. If you've chosen that, then that's just very different than what I just want to get. Like, it's all a tradeoff. It's like I'm going to do this instead of this. This is how I want to contribute to the world. This might be the cost. It's anything that is a conscious choice where you have really unpacked your own programming and decided on purpose for yourself.

I mean this is, on a fundamental level I think this is the thing that so many women struggle with is because we are socialized to constantly be trying to live up to impossible standards and expectations from society, we don't even know what our own standards or expectations or criteria or values for things are.

I teach a lot inside the Feminist Self-Help Society, which is my coaching program about making decisions based on your values and even knowing what those values are. So many women are like, I don't even know what I want. I don't even know who I am. I don't actually know what I think because they've been taught their whole lives to just constantly be trying to – It's like a compass spinning around and around based on whoever's closest or has the loudest opinion.

Brooke: Yes. And I just know that I'm supposed to be pretty. I'm supposed to be thin. And I'm supposed to be polite and feminine.

Kara: Right. And nice.

Brooke: And nice, yeah.

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Kara: And just wait to keep your head down, wait till somebody rewards you.

Brooke: Yeah. And I can be successful, that's nice. But don't be too successful, and please stop talking about it.

Kara: No, make sure you still need a man. Yeah. Well, and be independent, but also don't make a man feel emasculated. I mean, you also have to also be fragile and needy. I mean, it's just so much. And, obviously, I have mostly people socialized as women who listen to my podcast. I think you have a more mixed audience. But this is not good for men either.

Brooke: No.

Kara: My partner is very happy as a stay at home. I mean, he does some legal work still, but like he also is like a very nurturing, loving person who likes to caretake, which I don't want to do. And that's socialization, too, he had to overcome of like what is a man supposed to do?

Brooke: Yeah, of course. Yeah. And there's just, I mean, there's so much freedom in that. And I think that's one of the things I would hope that, first of all, I hope that you go buy the book. If you're listening I hope you go buy it. And I hope that one of the things that you take from it is just that you actually are more free than you think. I really do think that's true.

There actually are more options and more choices. And even though we have been socialized this way, we do have the opportunity to undo so much of that in the brain. We can't change the world right now this second and make it all different, but we can change how we think about it. And that, to me, is freedom.

What is your wish for people who read the book?

Kara: That's a good question. The dedication of the book says this book is dedicated to every woman who has ever dared to live life on her own terms and is written for every woman who wants to do the same.

Brooke: Yes.

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Kara: So like that's it to me, it's like living life, knowing what your own terms even are, just like we've been talking about, Like even figuring that out;. And living life based on those terms, which means lives are going to look really different. This is not like everybody should be a girl boss, nor is it everybody should be a stay at home dairy farmer's wife. Whatever your version of it is, I want you to –

Like you said, you have so much more power than you realize to change the way that you think. And just because you've been thinking one way for so long, I mean, the miracle of thought is that it won't take just as long to reprogram it the other way.

Brooke: Right, right.

Kara: It's much faster to change it when you're doing it intentionally. I just think one of the things that's different about me than a lot of women is not genetic or inherent, it's from doing this work, it's not like I don't have moments of self-doubt, but in general, I believe that I'm in charge of my own life and I'm going to make it happen the way that I want it to.

I'm going to, you know, thought work is also about dealing with when you can't control things. But I just remember before, I just feel like I woke up every day like, oh God, who knows what kind of feelings and thoughts are going to happen to me today? And I didn't feel like I had any control over what my life was going to become. I was like, I just hope I meet a partner. I just hope I have a good career. I just hope.

It's like women are just taught to be so disempowered. And my wish for people who read this book is that they start to grab the steering wheel and really feel like they can drive to whatever destination they want.

Brooke: Yes, I love that. And I think that you're such an example of that. I watch you live your life and you just make decisions that are so, I don't know, contrarian. Like to just decide one day that you're just not going to try to lose weight ever again. Like it's such a profound like, what?

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And you're going to decide to change your career and do exactly what you want to do, even though the sunk cost is ridiculous. Of everything that you've done, you're just going to do that. And the reason being because I want to. That's what I want to do with my life and I can. And I do feel like we have more freedom than we think. And this book really shows us that we do.

And so everyone right now, don't wait. What are you waiting for? First of all, you have to go to this website to see the picture of Kara because it is the best picture. We're not going to tell you what she's doing, but she's doing something amazing. And it's takebackyourbrainbook.com. The book's available everywhere. You can buy it on Amazon right this second. But if you go to this website to buy it, you will get some special cool bonuses.

Kara: Yes, if you buy it the first week. So this is coming out, it's May 23rd as we are releasing.

Brooke: If you buy it this week, yeah.

Kara: If you buy it this week you will get some cool bonuses. So hurry up, that's a good reason to get moving.

Brooke: Hurry up.

Kara: After that you can buy it wherever you find books.

Brooke: Wherever books are sold.

Kara: Wherever books are sold.

Brooke: That's amazing. Congratulations on writing such an amazing book. I know it's going to change the world. Really, our contributions that we make in our own life do change the world. We don't maybe say it that way, but I want to say that to you because I think this book is going to change so many people's lives.

Anything else you want the people to know before we say goodbye?

Kara: Thank you. No, I got nothing else.

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Brooke: Thank you. Thank you, everyone. Thank you for listening. Go to the site, takebackyourbrainbook.com. I love you, thank you.

Kara: I love you too.

Brooke: Talk to you later.

Hey, if you've ever wanted to work with me as your coach, now is the time to do it. You can join me in Get Coached in Scholars by going to thelifecoachschool.com/join. This is going to be the best year ever. It's your turn to change your life. Let's go.