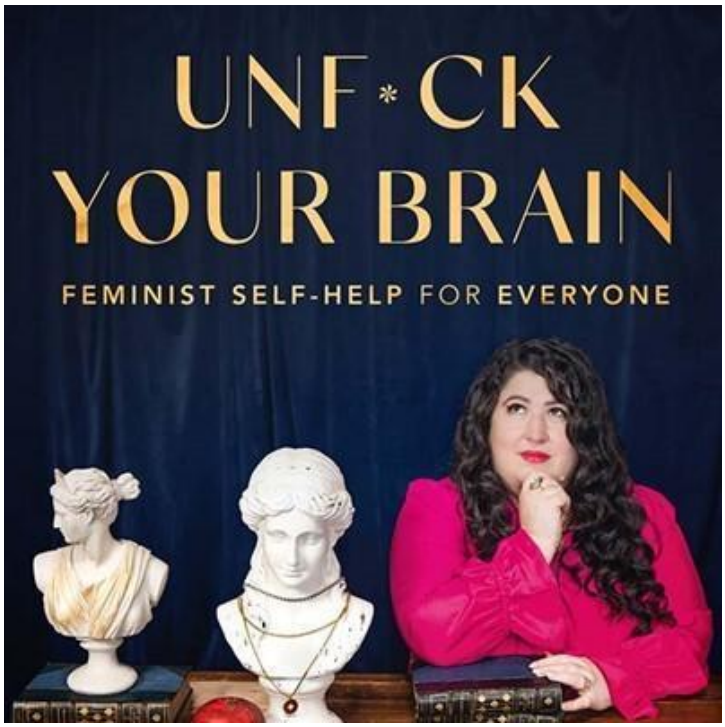
UFYB 541: Why & How to Be Extraordinary (Yes I'm Talking to You) (Classics)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

UnF*ck Your Brain with Kara Loewentheil

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Welcome back to our Greatest Hits series, where I occasionally like to reintroduce you to one of the greatest hits of the podcast. Truth is, after doing this for so many years and having hundreds and hundreds of episodes, there are a lot of great episodes that newer listeners haven't heard at all or that longtime listeners could stand to go back and revisit. Each of these podcasts are some of my favorite, most impactful, most insightful podcasts, and they are definitely ones that keep giving you new things to learn and think about the more often you listen to them.

So even if you've heard this episode before, I really encourage you to listen again. You will pick up new things. Your brain will synthesize it differently. And if you haven't heard this episode yet, then you are in for a treat.

Welcome to *UnF*ck Your Brain*. I'm your host, Kara Loewentheil, Master Certified Coach and founder of The School of New Feminist Thought. I'm here to help you turn down your anxiety, turn up your confidence, and create a life on your own terms, one that you're truly excited to live. Let's go.

All right, my friends. So we're going to start with what I've been reading lately. I just finished reading a memoir called A Well-Trained Wife that was all about the author's experience in conservative Christian culture and how she was taught to essentially dissolve her identity and become like an empty vessel for her husband and her children, and how that led her to put up with abuse and unhappiness because she was so deeply socialized to believe that speaking out or wanting more or trying to even protect herself would make her a bad wife.

And she was trained to take too much responsibility, what I would call over-responsibility, for her husband's behavior and to try to change herself in order to change him. That's what she had been taught. And it's a more extreme version of a story that I think so many women are living, trying to become the woman society tells them to be, which is impossible because that woman is supposed to be too many contradictory things at once, and

because she is also supposed to not really have any opinions of her own. So the book really reminded me of the oppressive power of these social expectations.

Of course, they are more extreme in some conservative religious contexts, but they're present with the rest of us outside of those contexts as well, and that includes me. You know, the past few weeks I have been writing and thinking and teaching you all about the concept of your future feminist self. And I've been really immersed in this concept because I've been putting the finishing touches on this all-day immersion workshop that I'm teaching about it.

And when it comes to me, I don't think anybody would describe me as a shrinking violet. Nobody would say, "That Kara, you just never really know what she thinks or who she is." In fact, one thing I hear a lot from podcast listeners who become Society members and get coached by me or meet me at person in events or people who came to my book tour launch events was, "You are exactly like the podcast in real life."

People say that to me all the time. Like, you know, "Wow, I've met so many people who aren't the way that they seem online or aren't the way they appear professionally in person, but you are just like 100% the same." And to me, that's really a testament to the authenticity and the transparency with which I show up in this particular container and relationship with all of you and really in every area of my life. And to me, that's just a way of being. It's just a way of life. I hardly even notice that I'm doing it at this point.

But I totally get why it is very striking to people who don't live that way, who live their lives hiding their light and worrying about what everyone else thinks and swallowing their true opinions and feelings and trying to perform their role to please everyone else. That's part of what is so powerful about learning how to stop taking over-responsibility for everyone and everything else and turn some of your focus back onto yourself to take more responsibility for yourself and less responsibility for everything else.

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I teach this stuff every day. I live it, and yet, socialization is still in my brain in ways that I am not yet aware of. So on the way home from upstate on a long drive earlier this week after I'd read that book, I was listening to a training I participated in with somebody who's a social media expert. I was not expecting anything mind-blowing really. I didn't sign up to have my mind blown. Like, we're bringing our social media in-house in our business, and I just wanted to get some ideas and concepts for how to approach it. I showed up for the tactics, really. But what I got was some unexpected mindset coaching.

It was two pieces coming together for me. First, she talked about the idea of communicating that you are an expert and talking about why your prospective client should hire you. That seems pretty straightforward, but when she said it, I realized that I don't talk a lot about why I am the best person to teach you how to liberate yourself. I talk a lot about my work, my ideas, my school, my team, my process, but I don't talk about myself that much in terms of why you should work with me and not somebody else.

So I was like, "Huh, that's interesting." I put a little mental pin in that. And then a little bit later, this person started talking about what has enabled her to succeed in her business and her self-concept. And she was talking about the idea that she is here for people who know they're not meant to be average, like she speaks to and wants to reach people who know they're meant to be special.

And I had this lightbulb moment where these two insights came together. I realized that I have not talked as much about myself as an example of what is possible and as someone who has created an extraordinary life and mind because of the very deep, insidious socialization that tells women, "Don't think too highly of yourself, don't stand out, don't think you're special."

And that socialization had kind of hijacked and appropriated one of my true values, which is not putting myself above anyone else in a hierarchical way. That is like a real core value of mine, not believing that I am more valuable

or better than anyone else or that anyone else is more valuable or better than me in some moral worth sense. It's like a democracy of human worth. We all have intrinsic and inherent human worth because we decide to believe that about ourselves, and some of us are not more worthy than others.

That's a true value. But I had allowed that true value to kind of be twisted to support this patriarchal socialization women get of, "Don't get too big for your britches. Don't think too well of yourself. Don't ever suggest to anyone that you think you might be special or have anything special to offer or share."

Right, women are socialized to not be arrogant, not be proud, not be self-important. And that's pretty much defined as thinking at all well of ourselves ever or acting like we might be able to offer something to anyone ever other than our just emotional labor or physical labor. And my brain had taken that socialization and used it to tell me not to ever suggest there was anything different or unusual about me because that would imply that I thought I was better than someone else or that other people couldn't do what I've done.

But here's the thing. This is what I realized. What makes me extraordinary is something other people can do. It is something any woman can do. It is something you can do because it's not my specific accomplishments. That's not what makes me extraordinary. What makes me extraordinary is that not that many women have had the opportunity to learn how to deprogram patriarchy from their brains.

Not many women have had the opportunity to learn how to truly think for themselves. Not many women have learned to stop being over-responsible for everyone else and start being responsible for their own lives. Not many women have learned to stop living 100% for everyone else and start living for themselves as well. And that's because not many women have had that opportunity, have been exposed to the work that would help them do that. That's what's extraordinary.

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It's not the details of my dream life because those are the details of my dream life. Your dream life may be extremely different. But I have shied away from talking about myself as an example of an extraordinary life because my deep subconscious socialization said, "Don't make this about you." But talking about my life is not actually for or about me. That was part of what I realized.

When I heard this social media expert talking about her extraordinary results, I didn't feel fired up about her life on her behalf. Right, I wasn't thinking about her at all. I was feeling inspired to be more bold and forward with my own life. I was fired up about me. I was not thinking about where she was going next. I was thinking about where I was going next.

And that is the moment that I realized that showing up more as an example of what a woman can have as an extraordinary life, of what an extraordinary woman can experience is not about me. It's about you because, and please forgive the Christian terminology here, it's just such a good word for this, being like a living testimony of feminist mindset work and what is possible is not actually making it about me. It's not about me. It's making it all about you.

I am proof of the power of the work, as are thousands of women who have gone through the feminist self-help society with me. And you are proof of the power of feminist mindset work for everyone around you. So taking myself out of the equation, focusing on the work, not talking about myself, about my conviction, my dedication, my effort, my returns and results and outcomes, that's a disservice.

Not just because I don't show up as the example of what is possible when I don't share that, but because I don't show up as an example of a woman who is owning the power of her unique self in the world. And that's what I'm supposedly teaching all of you to do, to be extraordinary. Because who taught us that only a few people can be extraordinary?

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We assume that the vast majority must be ordinary and only a few can be extraordinary. But what if all women did this feminist mindset work? What if all women learned to access their future feminist self? What if all women learned to become the power in the world they want to be? Maybe we would all be extraordinary.

Maybe that would become the new ordinary and we need a whole different word to describe it because everyone's extraordinary is different. Some of us want to be on the cover of magazines. Some of us want to break generational cycles of trauma and abuse in our parenting. Some of us want to raise alpacas in the mountains. Extraordinary doesn't mean a particular size or shape or type of life. It definitely does not mean a life that looks like mine.

It means going beyond what has been ordinary for women because being ordinary for women has meant having no self at all. That's the future I want to see, a future where all of us are extraordinary because historically what was ordinary was for women to sublimate themselves to everyone else around them, to become an empty vessel for society to use. And what I want to see is every woman being her own version of extraordinary.

My future feminist self is clearer than ever, and I want yours to be too. So in the next couple of episodes, I'm going to be talking more about this concept of over-responsibility and how it blocks us from creating our dream lives and being extraordinary, whatever that means to us.