

Podcast Episode #021

How to Unlock Your Inner Radiance with special guest Karen Drucker

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Pamela: Welcome to the LiftOff Project. I'm Pamela Mitchell, your host and your coach, and this is the podcast devoted to helping you meld your professional self and your personal self into an enhanced version of your best self. My goal is to help you take control of your work and your life, feel more relaxed and confident, and experience the satisfaction and fulfillment of a sustainable, successful life.

Today's topic is How to Unlock Your Inner Radiance. To help me to talk about this, I spoke with Karen Drucker. Karen is a singer-songwriter who has recorded 19, yes, count them, 19 CDs of her original inspirational music. She's the author of an inspirational book as well, called "Let Go of the Shore: Stories and Songs That Set the Spirit Free."

Among Karen's many accomplishments, she has been a professional comedian, she's led her own band for corporate events, and she has been the music director of New Thought Churches, as well as the music director and music weaver for many spiritual conferences and retreats. In following her passion, Karen sings, speaks, and leads workshops and women's retreats, mind, body, and health conferences at various churches around the country.

Karen has been called a master of communicating presence and spirituality through music. We had a really fun conversation, and be forewarned, there will be singing. So let's dive in and get this show started.

Hi, Karen. Welcome today. I'm so thrilled to have you!

Karen: I'm thrilled to be here! Thanks for having me!

Pamela: I have been a big fan of your music for a number of years.

Karen: Well, that's great to hear. Thank you!



Pamela: I know. I was so thrilled, because actually, my mom attended a workshop at a conference, and I didn't even know you gave workshops. I was so excited, so why don't you tell us, me and the listeners, a little bit about that, because I thought of you mostly as a musician. What else are you doing?

Karen: Well, this is what I love, and this is why with the work you're doing and what I'm doing, it's perfect that we meet. I really believe that our spirit or our soul calls us out to whatever it is that we're supposed to be doing next. Reading through some of the stuff that I read about you, it's like the idea that you were frustrated with what you were doing, it's like the spirit is calling you to do something bigger. For years, I was making my living as a wedding singer. I was in New York, New York and Evergreen every weekend.

Pamela: Which is like the eighth circle of hell, right?

Karen: Oh, yes, but I made my living doing it. I was very comfortable. I was singing in Bar Mitzvahs and you name it, I was there singing. It really wasn't until I found more of a spiritual path that I started singing in New Thought churches and started to write my own songs with a more positive message. It's really like building blocks. It's like each phase that I went through was really a reinvention. It really is. It was like, "All right, this worked for me at one point. Why am I getting knots in my stomach now? Why am I miserable? Why am I having no energy?" Each time I would get to that place, it's like, "Well, okay. What's next?" I had no idea, but each thing slowly presented itself to me. The fact that I'm facilitating women's retreats and doing key-note talks and everything, that was so not even on my radar.

Pamela: Oh my god!

Karen: It just wasn't. Here I'm just this singer, and then I started to sing in these spiritual places and these churches and mind body health conferences, and again, I'm just a singer. If anything, I am doing music behind famous authors. That's their role. They're out in front, and I'm just the little musician that's behind them singing a few songs.

One of my favorite stories to tell is that I was doing some really big conference, and I was supposed to wait onstage while the author did their thing. They said they were going to use me for a meditation, so why don't you stay on stage, but they somehow, in the middle of their talk, just forgot that I was there. I'm sitting there waiting and waiting and waiting for my queue to go on, and I realized that the frustration I was feeling of like, "Well, am I supposed to sit here and just keep waiting for them to give me my queue? I'm up in front of 2,000 people sitting on this awful piano bench," and finally, I realized I was getting more and more hot. I could feel my skin getting hot, and I realized that's when I could finally hear this voice saying, "You're getting frustrated because you're really supposed to be out in front. You're supposed to be the one doing the talk. You're supposed to be expressing more of who you are."

From that place, that's when I started to reinvent my life and developing my talks based on my songs. In all of my talks, we start off with a song and end with a song, and from that place, I also



started to develop these retreats because people wanted to talk more about the subject, and that's what I'm doing today.

Pamela: Tell us how you come up, because so much of your music, all of your music really, is very much positive, it's very much about the affirmations. Each one has a message that I can personally attest to. They just hit right to my heart, and also, they draw on a bunch of different musical traditions. Talk about marrying these positive philosophies with the different musical traditions and how that gets inside of us and opens us up.

Karen: Well, it's a few things. First of all, I always say whenever I do a concert, you get to see what all my issues are because that's what I write about. People come up to me and go, "Oh, you seem like you really have this down," and it's like, "No!" I'm writing songs as affirmations to me because I'm working on my prosperity, I'm working on learning how to say no to things. What I learned years ago was when I just used little yellow stickies and stuck them all over the mirror and in my car saying, "You have thin thighs," and, "Money is coming to you," and, "You're a foxy babe," it didn't really do anything until I started singing those. I started to notice that when I would sing them, they would go into my being.

I started to really look at, "Well, if this is helping me, how can I look at it on a bigger scale?" I really started to talk to different people about, "Well, what are some of the issues that you're working on?" They were always the same things that I was working on, and I just noticed that if I made a song out of it, especially if it was just some catchy, fun, up-tempo thing, it would hopefully become what is called an "ear worm," where you get this song in your head and you can't get it out of your head. I've had more people come up to me, usually men will come up and go, "Look, Karen. My wife really loves you. I think you're great, but you're driving me crazy, because I can't listen to your songs all the time. I can't get these songs out of my head. It's making me nuts."

I just feel especially if it's a musical style that is fun and it's the blues or it's jazz or it's country or whatever, somehow I'm going to get in there and if you're going through a bad time and you're beating yourself up, hopefully you're going to hear my little voice saying, "I will be gentle with myself. I will be gentle with myself, and I will hold myself like a newborn baby child," and I'll have these phrases that I'm hoping will come up when people go to something. That's really the intention.

Pamela: I can attest that that is the case, because the music, the songs that you sing and that I listen to, they click right back into my brain. The one, "My money is like a bunny. It goes forth and multiplies."

Karen: My money, is like a bunny, it goes forth and multiplies. That gets stuck in your head, so I just really find that when you have songs that are catchy like that and fun, people are going to remember them and they're going to sing them, and hopefully they're going to change their life by changing their thinking.



Even more specifically, the way I really got into learning the power of what we're talking about, is really doing more healing music. My mother had cancer. Unfortunately, she passed away, but when she was diagnosed with cancer for the second time, unfortunately, towards the end of her life, she had a mantra that she said. She had an affirmation, and it's just, "I am healed, whole, and healthy," and she would just say that every day. I said, "Well, Mom, I've got to make that a song for you."

I wrote this very simple chant, "I am healed, whole, and healthy. I relax and visualize, I am healed, whole, and healthy. I am well," and I made this little song for her so that when she was going in and doing chemo, especially for me because she was back east and I'm on the west coast, I wanted to be with her every time she did this. I would be with her a lot of the times, but I wasn't living back in Wisconsin at the time. She would just play this little chant over and over and over as she was getting infused with her chemo. I just really felt like this was a mission for me, the idea that having songs that women, anyone, men or women, but specifically women, thinking about some of my friends that were going through cancer, that they could be having these infusions of hopefully something that's going to help them, but then also having an infusion of positive messages and music that's going to relax them and keep their mind in that positive state. The healing music has really been a big part of what I'm all about.

Pamela: Yes, because all of that really does change us biochemically, like what's going on inside us.

Karen: Yes. It does. It releases this oxytocin and it just allows you to relax, and then when you think about if you're going through something painful, whether it's mental or physical, if you're going through something that's painful, the more relaxed you can be around it, the more you can move through it.

Pamela: Right! So talk to us about that, because that's really a calling. In all of the story, and as I'm listening to you talk about your pathway to this, it's really about staying in tune with your calling. What in your life made you decide, or what was your turning point that helped you say, "You know what? I'm going to tune in, and this is what I'm going to do, and I'm going to follow it."

Karen: Well, I think that we actually have a lot of tuning in points. I think sometimes that when people are going through a hard time, they think that they're supposed to have some moment that the skies open up and thunder crashes and angels start singing, and then they go, "Oh, I'm supposed to make a change in my life." Sometimes it can happen like that, but I look at them more like spirit nudges.

I was talking about the concept before, and I'm sure a lot of your listeners have heard a lot about the idea of spiritual two by fours, that you just get really whacked when you're supposed to look at something, but I think sometimes it's more like these internal little nudges from the spirit of just being so tuned in that you can go, "That doesn't feel good anymore," or you get that little knot in your stomach. In my case, I think I was just starting to notice that with jobs



that I was doing, certain things that I was doing, they were fine six months earlier. Fine. I had no problems, and then all of a sudden, I'm noticing my energy is getting really low or I'm getting those little knots in my stomach or I've got a back ache or I'm getting headaches or something is happening that when you can be quiet enough to tune in, you just say, "What's happening in my body that my mind hasn't caught up with yet, or my heart hasn't acknowledged yet? Something's trying to get my attention." I think in my case; I was a blues singer at one point. In San Francisco, I was singing in all these blues bars, and I'm signing these songs that are all about "my life is in the toilet."

Pamela: Right, because that is the blues, literally, right?

Karen: That's the blues, baby, and I could sing it really good. I could whine all night long. I'm singing these songs every night, and it's like, "No wonder that my life is kind of in the toilet during the day." I'm just kind of going, "Why isn't my life working? Why am I so unhappy?"

It was really funny. It wasn't really until I just got a job completely out of the blue singing at one of these New Thought churches. A friend of mine just said, "Well, what else are you going to do on a Sunday morning? Just come and sing for me, because I have to go and do a job someplace else. Just sub for me on this day," and that's when my life turned around, because all of a sudden I started subbing for her at this church. I didn't do church. I wasn't into that kind of stuff, but the minister's up there saying, "Change your thinking, change your life, watch what the words are that are coming from your mouth. What are you saying? Because whatever you're saying is what your reality is going to be. You're planting those seeds of manifestation every day with every word, every phrase that comes out of your mouth."

I started to really look at my life and go, "All I'm doing is singing about how awful my life is. I don't want that anymore." I started to write these positive message songs, and lo and behold ...

Pamela: Things turn around. You have a song that says ... I can't remember. It's something about, "I don't have the right to sing the blues anymore."

Karen: Yes. I lost the right to sing the blues.

Pamela: I love that song. I used to blast that song. I was like, "That's right! I lost the right to sing the blues."

Karen: Yes. It's one of my favorite songs to sing. That's probably my real turnaround song, because it's a comedy song, but it's basically just saying, "When life gets this darn good, you lost the right to sing the blues," because I'm talking about how my house is Feng shui and my bills are paid and everything's looking good. I can't whine anymore.

Woke up this morning, something wasn't right.

My poor head was throbbing because I tossed and turned all night.



This unfamiliar feeling that shook me up inside,
The truth, it was revealing that a part of me had died,
So I called my higher self. She gave me the bad news.

She said, "Your life is just too good, you lost the right to sing the blues."

What I have done with all my songs is really look at whatever issues that are going on for me. One of my favorite songs to sing is, "I Don't Have to Be Perfect." It goes, "I don't have to be perfect. I'm doing the best I can. I give myself permission to be just who I am." Just that little song can completely help me when I'm getting stressed out over a talk I'm going to do or a concert or whatever, it's like, "Wait a minute. I'm doing the best I can. Lighten up here, girl." Just have fun. That's what life wants. That's what the spirit wants. That's what God wants. Just share your gift, be who you are, stop thinking everyone's judging you. Just go out there and have a good time. That's when it works.

Pamela: That is truly the power of it. One of the talks that you gave, I see, is, "Let My Big, Brilliant Beam of Radiant Light Shine."

Karen: Well, that was based on my song "Shine." It goes, "I let my big, bright, brilliant beam of radiant light shine."

Pamela: I love that song. What's the real message behind that? If we wanted to unlock our inner radiance using your music, what will we do?

Karen: That's a great question. It's interesting, because some of the lines in that song really talk about just surrendering and lightening up. I think that's a lot of what it is. I have another song called "Lighten Up." "Don't take it so seriously. Lighten up. Just trust the mystery." I think that when we take ourselves so seriously and make everything be so important, then it's like there's this garden hose and it has all your life force in it, and your creativity, and your love, and your gifts to the world, and when we get so constricted with worrying about what other people are going to think and letting our inner critic run the show and just not surrendering to the miracle of life, it's like we step on that hose and we just cut the circulation off.

That's why a lot of my songs really use the word surrender. I mean, "I relax, let go, release, and surrender." I have so many songs that use that word, because I think a lot of it is letting go. It's letting go of thinking you have to be perfect, giving yourself permission to just do things at the level that feel good to you, and you're being gentle with yourself, you're not beating yourself up for what it's supposed to look like. You're just sharing your gift and lightening up. I think that's really it.

Pamela: That's really it. We could talk forever, we really could.



Karen: Yes. I get that!

Pamela: Exactly. Let me wrap up by asking you what kind of advice you would have for our listeners who literally could go through your music and put together a playlist of the ways that they want to change their lives and do that. What kind of advice would you have to help our listeners with that?

Karen: I could answer that question a bunch of different ways. I actually thought for a minute of specific songs. If someone's going through a real change in their life, I wrote a song called "The Call," which is off of an album called The Call, and one of the lines in that song says, "Pain pushes till the vision pulls." It's really like that. Sometimes you have to allow the pain to be there in order to get clear on the vision. The chorus says, "I feel the call is something more. I feel the call to be someone I've never been before. I feel the call is something more, and it's asking me what am I here for?" That's a song that I've had a lot of people going through transitions say that they listen to a lot.

I also have a song called "This Too Shall Pass." If you're in pain, it's just talking about that expression that we all know, "This too shall pass." I wrote a song with Jack Fowler basically saying, "Hang in there, because tomorrow's going to be different. It is going to pass."

I think "I Don't Have to Be Perfect" is a song that tells us to do the best we can, and then I have another song called "I Am a Gift." That's also on The Call. That song is saying, "I'm a gift, no matter what age, no matter how I look. There's beauty in each stage. I am a gift, and I promise every day that when I look in the mirror, I'm going to look at myself and say that I am a gift." That's what it really comes down to. It's allowing ourselves, I think, to give ourselves credit, be gentle with ourselves. That's another song, "I Will Be Gentle with Myself." We need to give ourselves credit for what we're doing and the road that we're on and trust that when you really can take the time to be still enough to listen to your heart, the spirit will just start to lead you down that road in whatever way you're supposed to be led, and you'll meet certain people along the way that will guide you, and that's when life becomes really magical, I think. It's synchronicities and meeting people and all of a sudden a book falls off a shelf that you're supposed to be reading and all that kind of stuff.

Pamela: Right, and then staying tuned in to all of that.

Karen: Yes.

Pamela: Yes. All right, I'm going to hit a little bit of a side segue here because you have an album around prosperity.

Karen: Yes, I do. What I did was I had so many people, when I did a concert or talk, they'd come to my table and say, "Okay, here's my issue. What do you have for this?" What I did was I put together a little four compilation CD pack, one that has all the songs that I've written. I have 19



CDs at this point, so I can borrow from all different CDs. One CD is just called "Prosperity." It's every song or chant that I wrote that has the message of prosperity. I also have another album called "Love and Acceptance", and I have one that's called "Stillness", because people would always say, "What do you have that's just mellow the whole time that I could use to just get really centered and grounded or use it for meditation or in a yoga class?" So I did "Stillness." The last one of that series was "Power Up", so for people who were working out or they're going to go in for a big business meeting, it's all my most, "Rah rah, you can do it," kind of songs.

Pamela: Perfect! We've got a soundtrack for whatever we want to create in our lives.

Karen: Yes, pretty much. If you don't have it, I'll write it for you.

Pamela: Awesome! Thank you, Karen, for taking the time today. I so appreciate you joining us.

Karen: Well, it was my pleasure. Thank you so much for having me and for all the good work that you're doing in the world. I just love it that we're both doing this kind of work that's about saying yes to life, and it's great. Thank you for having me!

Pamela: Thank you!

Song Lyrics: Gonna be the first on the dance floor, the first to raise my hand,

The first to state my opinion, the first to take a stand.

I won't play it safe and wait for a sign.

I'm going to throw myself out there and let my light shine.

Let it shine, let it shine.

I let my big, bright, brilliant beam of radiant light shine.

Pamela: I am not as good as Karen, but wasn't that amazing? If you want to learn more about Karen's work, she's doing lots of women's retreats, and I believe she has a soul tribe gathering. Sounds very cool. You can check her out at KarenDrucker.com. That's KarenDrucker.com, so go on over there. Visit and see what she's up to.

That's it for this segment of the LiftOff Project. Be sure to visit our web site, TheLiftOffProject.com/podcast, where you can download a transcript of today's episode. If you have a question for an upcoming segment of "Ask Coach Pamela", go to TheLiftOffProject.com/question and leave me a voicemail. If I answer your question in a future episode, I'll send you a free deck of reinvention cards as a gift, so go on over there and leave me a question. You can also connect with me on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram



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Today's LiftOff inspiration comes from Donald Hicks who says, "Always let your inner light shine. By doing so, you not only light a path for yourself, but also light a way for others." Let that light shine. Thank you for listening today, and remember, why settle for good when great is waiting? Take one small step this week to lift your life. Bye for now.

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