

484: The Rise of Feminism in the LDS Church Part 2: Guest Expert Kara Loewentheil



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Jody Moore

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Welcome back to the podcast my friends. Boy, do I have a treat for you today. If you are not familiar with Kara, I cannot wait to introduce you to her. Not only is she brilliant and kind and a Master Coach, but she also has the best wit and humor. Every time I talk to Kara, I leave with my stomach hurting from laughing so hard. And this conversation was no different.

So when I decided to do a series on the rise of feminism in the LDS Church, I knew I needed to bring in some experts, some people who know more and have been working in this space longer than me. And the first person who came to my mind is my dear friend, Kara Loewentheil.

So Kara and I first met when we were both studying and working as coaches through the Life Coach School. We have a long history together, and we couldn't be more different in many other ways, though. Kara and I come from different religious backgrounds, different socioeconomic situations, different education levels, let's just say, with Kara being far above mine, and she is one of my most favorite people to learn from, and she really always challenges and expands my thinking. So I am so excited for you to learn from her and experience her personality as well. This is *The Rise of Feminism, Part Two* with Guest Expert, Kara Loewentheil.

Welcome to *Better Than Happy*, the podcast where we transform our lives by transforming ourselves. My name is Jody Moore. In the decade-plus I've been working with clients as a Master Certified Coach, I've helped tens of thousands of people to become empowered. And from empowered, the things that seemed hard become trivial, and the things that seemed impossible become available, and suddenly, a whole new world of desire and possibility open up to you. And what do you do with that?

Well, that's the question... what will you do? Let's find out.

Sometimes, listening to a podcast is enough. But sometimes, you'll feel inspired to go deeper. If you hear things that speak to you in today's episode, consider it your invitation to a complimentary coaching workshop.

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On this live, interactive Zoom call with me, you'll get a taste of the power of this work when applied in real life. You can participate, or be a silent observer. But you have to take a step if you want to truly see change in your life... two steps, actually. Head to jodymoore.com/freecoaching and register. Then you just have to show up. Your best life is waiting for you. Will you show up for it? Jodymoore.com/freecoaching. I'll see you there.

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Jody Moore: Hello, Kara Loewentheil.

Kara Loewentheil: Hello, Jody.

Jody: We're acting official now, like we haven't been just been chatting for 10 minutes.

Kara: We've already had like three laughing attacks and now we're like, welcome to this podcast of professional women.

Jody: Very serious around here. Thank you for coming on the show again. I always love talking to you and I used to get to talk to you more and just due to life changes. I haven't talked to you in a while and I wanted to just, I don't even think I told you this part, but I secretly wanted to just get on a call and pick your brain about some things because you and I come from different enough backgrounds and have different enough viewpoints that talking to you is so helpful. It always just helps me formulate my own opinion because I know I need to talk to people that don't just see the world the same way I do. Right.

Kara: Like I just said, it shows you that like your thoughts are thoughts. It's like a very underappreciated reason for talking to people who don't share your point of view is that it can be so helpful because your own brain is like, well, the way I think about this is obviously true, so what else am I supposed to think about this, right? And then someone else who really disagrees with you has a totally different thought in your brain, and if you

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can approach that with curiosity, it's like, oh, whoa, there's like a range of thoughts I could have about this.

Jody: Yeah, and there's some people who disagree with me who I have a hard time hearing it from, but you are so just, well, obviously you're a brilliant coach, so you know how to hold space for any belief system, but also even just as a person, I think that you're just articulate and educated about your opinions. I just don't ever feel like threatened or I don't go on the defense when I talk to you about it. I'm like, oh, that is so fascinating. I never thought about that before. So anyway, I just appreciate, and I thought, wait, instead of me just having this private conversation with Kara, let's get her on the podcast and let everybody benefit from it. So if you would do just a brief introduction for people that don't know you.

Kara: Yeah, and I love that you, I mean, I appreciate that you said that, and I will say it's due to coaching, because in my former life, I was much more, like, it was important to me that people agreed with what I was saying, and that they had the same thoughts I did, and that we were all on the political same page, blah, blah, blah. And in order to become a coach, I really had to let go of that. I did a lot of self-coaching around really what I call radical subjectivity, that there's no way for me to prove truly that my thoughts are more true than anybody else's. And so I feel like I am much more able to just be like, here's how I see things. I'm like, take it or leave it.

That's so peaceful for you too, right?

Kara: It's better. People in my family say to me snarkily, well, I guess we can't all be enlightened. And I'm like, well, I'm not enlightened...

Jody: I guess not.

Kara: Life is still 50-50. I should just start saying that. I guess not. Bummer for you, man. Sucks to be you. Yeah, it sucks. Sucks for you. Should try thought work. So my name is Kara Loewentheil, obviously. I am the founder

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of the School of New Feminist Thought and the host of the Un-F Your Brain podcast. I have learned not to curse on this podcast. And I'm the author of a book. The New York Times bestseller came out in May called Take Back Your Brain: How Sexist Society Gets in Your Head and How to Get It Out.

Jody: It's so good, by the way. We'll talk about the book, too.

Kara: Yes. And prior to all of this, before I became a coach eight years ago, I was an academic and a lawyer, and I worked on women's rights and reproductive rights. And let me just say up front, since I know this podcast has a varied listenership and some of whom have very certain ideas about some of the terms I just said. When I talk about being feminist, and especially in my coaching practice, it is never about we have to have all the same opinions and you have to pass the orthodoxy, and like, instead of a coaching session, we're actually making posters for a march.

I personally am also politically feminist, but that's not actually what the coaching is about, and that's not what this theoretical lens is about. As an intellectual project, what I do is bring an awareness to one of the impacts on how we think that I believe was sort of under-appreciated in the coaching world before I came to it, which is that in coaching, we spend a lot of time talking about evolution, evolutionary psychology and biology. And then in your coaching, you may spend a lot of time talking about your relationship with God and your faith as an impact and your culture.

And so we talk about our religious culture, we talk about our family origins, but we really were not talking about, well, when you grow up in a society, you learn certain things about what are people supposed to be like? What are men supposed to be like? What are women supposed to be like? What are the characteristics that matter in them? What makes them valuable or not? We get these different messages. And I think it would be silly to think that those, I just said I wasn't being judgmental, but it's hard for me to imagine that those don't impact how we think about ourselves, right? What standards we hold ourselves to and how we evaluate ourselves.

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So when I talk about feminist mindset or feminist coaching, I'm using this word, which I know can be kind of a trigger for people. It is not about we have to all have the same political opinions. It's about looking at gender, even if you decide you like every belief you got about your gender and you want to keep them all. You just want to be aware that you got certain messages from society and look at how they might be showing up in your brain and are they serving you?

Jody: I love that. I do think that word feminism has been used in all kinds of ways and it's a word that requires maybe a bit of like, what do we even mean by that? So thank you for explaining that. There is this movement and it's not brand new, but it's gained a lot of momentum for whatever reason, even just in the last year within the LDS community of women.

First of all, more women than ever leaving the Church, and I don't know, like, I have my reasons why I believe that's true, and I think some people would say, how do we know that's really true? So I'll just own that that's my thought about it, but it seems to be a lot of people's experience, and a lot of just kind of enough is enough from women both within the church and women leaving the church around this topic and around the unequal representation and authority given to women versus men.

I don't know that the LDS Church, if we're unique in that way, or if this is happening in general with traditional religion or Christian religions, I don't know that. But there is some doctrine around certain, we call them priesthood keys, priesthood authority that goes to men and not women. But for the most part, that's not even what women are upset about. Most women are not trying to challenge that.

It's all the other things that happen that don't disrupt the doctrine at all, if we were to change them, that seem, I don't know, the more I notice it and the more it's pointed out to me, the more ridiculous it even seems that we've lived this way for so long. And so I thought it would be cool to have a discussion with you and get your insight about some of these topics. I

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wanted to start with this idea of a feminist awakening because I'm curious to hear your thoughts on that. Is it real? Do you find for your clients that that's a problematic way to think about it or is it useful? Let's just talk about kind of that term in general, first of all.

Kara: Yeah, I think it's absolutely a real thing that happens to people and probably it moves through the culture in different waves. And so maybe it moved through secular, non-religious culture, you know, the 60s and 70s for the first round, and maybe it's now moving into more conservative religions.

It's actually a fascinating question. I don't know if – I'm Jewish, for instance, are Orthodox Jews seeing a similar rise? I don't know. I would love to go on a podcast and find out. But I think, yes. So I think that when we, what is a feminist awakening? I think that that sounds very, I don't know, grand or complicated, but that for many women what that means is just putting a name or language to things that they had always like subconsciously or half-consciously been aware of, but maybe had told themselves, well, that's just the way things are, or like, that shouldn't bother me, or, you know, that you kind of overlook when you're 18, but then when you're 38, now it's been 20 years of this, right?

And so I find like, for sure, some women who come to me find me because they're like, searching for feminist coaching and they're already a feminist. And for them, the feminist awakening is really one of being like, oh, I didn't realize how much I'd internalized some of these thoughts. I thought of myself as somebody who understood this stuff and was very politically aware and I wouldn't have sexist thinking in my brain. And then realizing like, oh, all the ways I talk to myself that don't seem political at all are actually part of this and are influenced by society.

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And then some women come to me and no, I mean, I get messages from – I got a message once from one on Instagram who was like, I'm 18, I live in Nebraska in like a really conservative place. I had always thought feminists were like man-hating feminazis. And it wasn't until you listened to your podcast that I was like, oh, this is actually about the fact that like why does the boys' football team at my school get so much funding and like the girls' soccer team gets nothing? Or like why is there a dress code for girls but not boys? Or like why are there more boys in the honor classes even though more girls are going to college?

It just gives voice to these sort of things we just noticed growing up, like who's in the kitchen cleaning up and who gets to watch football after dinner? And who decides how the family's gonna vote? Is that an equal conversation or does the father decide and then his wife has to go along with it? Who's allowed to drive? All of those things. So I think it is a useful term, but if it's a scary term to you, you don't have to call it that. You can just call it starting to notice more things about what's happening around me.

Jody: And I think what concerns me a little bit is that I see, like for me it's more, oh, I didn't even realize, and I'll mention a couple things within the LDS culture, just because it might be helpful for us to have examples to play with. But for example, it used to always be like, we don't have like a preacher or anyone that speaks every week, it's just members of the congregation get asked to each take turns like giving a talk. And so there's usually like two or three people giving a talk each Sunday. And the last speaker for years was always a man. And at one point, it was explained to me that, well, if there are women speaking, then this sounds so funny now when I say it out loud, but it just seemed so normal to me growing up...

Kara: That everyone will leave?

Jody: Well, no, that if the woman accidentally speaks too long, the man can modify his talk and go shorter. Or if she doesn't speak long enough, he can

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compensate for that and speak longer. And so it was seen as like this kind of chivalrous thing. Like, go ahead, woman.

Kara: That's such a hilarious explanation though, because why can't a woman adjust her speaking also?

Jody: Okay, so it wasn't until someone explained it to me that way that I was like, no, they're just being polite. Like, go ahead, you go first, and then I'll just do whatever's necessary based on what time is left over. It's like polite and courteous, right? But then, you know, it assumes, just like you said, it has this underlying message that a woman's not capable, a man's a more capable speaker or more capable of adjusting himself and then a woman probably will either go too long or too short.

Kara: Right, once a woman starts talking, who knows what she's going to do, but she certainly can't control it.

Jody: I mean, if it were me, I would for sure go long and I have.

Kara: Oh, me too. I'd be like, it's okay, Bob, sit down. We're not going to need to hear from you, I got this.

Jody: Exactly. But anyway, when I realized like, oh yeah, there are these underlying premises, and that's just one tiny example, right? And that, by the way, is no longer the policy, women could speak whenever now. Like, we have made some progress. But there are many, many little things like that, that until someone points out to you, like, no, look at the premise of this is the sexist part that you realize, look at the premise of this is the sexist part that you realize, I never labeled it a feminist awakening by any means, but it is kind of.

It's like, oh, yeah, I didn't realize until I stop and think about it that actually any decision a woman makes within our church, like there are leadership roles that women have, Relief Society President, Young Women's President, things like this, but ultimately, anything they do has to go through

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the approval of the bishopric or the stake presidency, which is always men. And so, ultimately, what you can do is subject to who is the man in charge and what does he feel comfortable with. And there are handbooks and policies that are supposed to follow, but, you know, in the end...

Kara: I don't know that much about the church, but often, in a kind of system like that, it's also interesting to look at, like, what areas are women allowed to be in charge of, right? So it's like, women can be in charge of young women, but, like, women are never in charge of young men, but men can be in charge of everybody, right?

Jody: Right, that's right.

Kara: Women can be in charge of women, men can be in charge of everybody, or women are in charge of like the charity work, but not like the money part, right? Or so sort of even within an institution, like, well, what are we communicating about what women are good at, what their skillset is, what their sort of natural, quote unquote, natural and appropriate like sphere of influence is.

Jody: Right, that's right. And that is still very much the case. There's a lot of that happening. And I love my church and we're not here to bash it. I just think that the awareness of it all, right, it makes you, first of all, I am appreciative of it, and it's a different experience for everybody, and I would imagine you see this. For some people, it really is like an angry breakdown of I can't believe we've been living this way, and for me, I never felt that way about it. It's more like, oh, that's interesting. Okay, yeah, I guess I'm gonna have to raise my hand and speak up about this.

Kara: Right, or how does that show up in your life, right? So you might decide, yeah, I'm gonna stay in this religion, and I'm gonna live with this, then if you notice that you don't think you're good with money and you think your husband should make the financial decisions and you don't trust yourself around money, it's useful to look at it and see like, oh, well, maybe

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this is part of why I think this way and I need to decide for myself how I think about myself. So I think having this awareness doesn't mean, yeah, you have to take a specific action or something like you or I don't have an opinion about what religion somebody else should be.

But I think it's just the reason this stuff is so important to me is, sure, a lot of my students are more maybe active or political, and a lot of them are not. But it's just understanding that the way you think about it. The big message I think that a lot of my work is the way you think about yourself is not an accident, and it's not actually really about you. It's not personal to you. These women just grow up, and they don't know that that's what they're observing, that their father handles the financial decisions. Their mother can keep the checkbook or has the household budget, but their father makes the big financial decisions or he's the one who earns the money and she stays home or whatever. And they don't connect that to the fact that they just have what seems like an organic true thought about themselves that's like, I'm just not really good with money, or I don't really get it, or I don't really understand. Investing is too complicated, I just leave that to my husband. It's just seeing those connections that you can change your thought about you, even if you're not gonna change any of your thoughts about the church.

Jody: Yeah, that's so good. So I wanted to get your thoughts on this because I really want to contribute in a positive way to, in this case, it's the community of my church, but any community I'm in, right? Because I really do think that in most cases, it's not a bunch of angry men trying to keep us down. They're not even aware in most cases of how just entrenched it is. And like you Like you said, it's how they view women and how they view themselves.

Kara: It's totally unconscious. There are studies showing that if women speak 40% of the time, men will estimate that they spoke 60 to 70% of the time. I don't think that those men are going to that room thinking women

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shouldn't talk. It's just so embedded. I'm married to a man. I love men. I have a father. I have brothers. It's exactly as you say, but it's so important. awareness doesn't mean like all men are evil and terrible and consciously trying to keep you down. It's that it's so embedded into our culture, right? Like the belief that women talk too much. That's so embedded into our culture that even a man who is very nice to his wives and his sisters and his colleagues and supports women and thinks they're great, you know, will still have a skewed perception of what's happening because those biases are so ingrained.

Jody: So how do we contribute to the evolution, if you will, of a community in this regard. Is it just pointing things out? Helping bring awareness to things?

Jody: I think that really depends on your kind of personality. You know, it's like some people just have like different roles in a community. So for some, I don't think it's one size fits all, like some people are suited to and want to be the firebrand who's gonna raise their hand in the meeting or is gonna show up and picket the whatever, they want to, I mean, those are two different levels of escalation, but there's both, right?

So some people want to be out front and it is a political issue and they want to work on systemic reform of the church and they're gonna be doing on-the-ground organizing and doing political action and whatever. And then some people want to, they don't wanna do that, but they are willing to speak up in the meeting in a smaller setting, or they're gonna advocate with their local bishop or whoever that they want to take on this traditionally role that usually goes to a man. And they're willing to, they don't wanna do something big in public, but they're willing to argue in private about like, but why does it have to go to a man? So they're willing to engage that way. Some people are probably gonna be theologians and they wanna look at the theology and have those debates like every religion has. And then

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some people, I think it's just, how do you show up in your family, in your community.

When you listen to a friend of yours saying things to herself and to you about herself that you can see are so influenced by society, do you share that with her? Do you say, like, hey, I hear that you're really beating yourself up because your body hasn't bounced back after your fourth kid, and that's an unrealistic ideal that society teaches us, and there's nothing wrong with your body. There's so many different points of intervention and ways to impact a community. And I don't, obviously I don't think everybody needs to like become a coach and start a podcast like us. Like if that's what you want to do, then you should, but that's not what everybody has to do. So it's just like how you want to show up.

Jody: I like that. I like that. Like find what feels like the way that you want to contribute. And it might be in a more public way. It might be in more subtle ways.

Kara: And how are you parenting? You know, I just had a fascinating interview on my podcast with this woman, Joanne Finkelstein, who just wrote a book that came out in September. It's about raising feminist girls basically, but she was talking about like, this is the thing about all this bias. It's like so subtle, like that, you know, parents interrupt girls more, like without meaning to or thinking about it, right? They tend to interrupt girls more. They tend to give less credence to their concerns because we have such a stereotype of like women are complaining and they're sensitive and they're right, like they're kind of fragile. And so we like intervene differently.

I had another psychologist in my podcast, Amy Morin, who talked about studies showing that parents use the word perfect more often with little girls and little boys when they're praising them. And they're more likely to praise girls for being kind, being nice, being obedient. And they're more likely to praise boys for doing something new or interesting or taking a risk. They're

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more likely to sweep in and rescue little girls if they're about to make a mistake or fall. And boys are allowed to kind of do that.

So just start so young. None of these parents are thinking, they're probably not thinking like a girl can't scratch her knee, but the stuff builds on it and itself. And then what do you end up with? You end up with a lot of adult women who are very perfectionist, who think that what they need to do in life is be perfect, to be approved of and accepted and loved. And so, how are you parenting? How do you show up in your conversations with your kids? Your kid gets a crush and what do you tell her to look for?

Do you tell her, you know, I mean, a classic example is like telling girls that, oh, is a boy being mean to you? It's because he likes you. Like, is that the message we want to be giving girls that like men who like you are mean to you? Like, that's not right. Like, right. It's funny when they're six. It's not funny if they're 26. Like, that's not what we want them growing up with. So it's just like even just being more aware in your own interactions of like, how are these cliches playing out?

Jody: That's so fascinating. What do you think about, like, if you have a client come to you who's trying to decide whether or not to participate in a community like a religion or any other community, what are the things people should consider? Because I'm personally, you know, both of us, the kind of coaching we do is not to sway anybody one way or another, but to help them make the best decision for them. What are the things, because you can look at, especially religion, and we're behind the times, let's be honest, when it comes to this topic. Is it worth sticking around and what should people consider?

Kara: So it's funny because I had a coaching call in my coaching community earlier today and I coached two different women about getting divorced and I actually think it's like a very similar conversation. Yeah, it is. Because you're in a relationship with the religion, with the church and the way you're thinking about that relationship determines your choices. And

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most of the time when we're unable to make a decision, it's because we are asking ourselves the wrong question about the decision, right? We're framing the decision the wrong way. And usually what we're trying to do is figure out how to make the right decision. You know this as a coach, right? And like when we're trying to make the quote-unquote right decision, we're usually, if you ask someone how will you know if you made the right decision, what they say is, oh, I'll feel X, Y, and Z, right? So it's like, oh, my unmanaged mind in the future will produce this feeling and that will tell me I made the right decision.

Jody: And they think they're going to feel good when you say that.

Kara: So it's like, if I made the right one, I'm gonna feel whatever it is. One person might say peaceful, one person might say like happy, one person might say like empowered. Yeah, whatever it is. But it's like, if I feel bad, that'll mean I made the wrong decision. If I feel good, that'll mean I made the right decision. So like, of course, the first thing is you're gonna feel bad and good no matter what you decide. So that's not how we make the decision.

Jody: Welcome to being a human.

Kara: Welcome to being a human. Welcome to having a human brain. And your brain can manufacture. I mean, one of the things I pointed out to someone today like you could get married or get divorced and your brain would say the exact same things which is like you made the wrong decision, you're such an idiot, you shouldn't have blah, blah, blah, right? So I'm belaboring this because like it's so deep that we're trying to make the right decision or like the rational decision. That's what the other woman on the call said to me and I was like that's not any more real than the right decision. So instead what I think you have to look at is what are my values and what do I want out of this relationship, right? So like in a relationship with a person. It's like, okay, well, what are my values for a romantic relationship or a familial partnership? What are the values that I need this

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institution or structure to reflect? What are my values? How do they line up? How do I want to be treated?

Not because it causes my feelings, but because if one of my values is communication and collaboration, then if my partner insults me and doesn't ask me before he sells our car, then it's not reflecting my values. I'm still in charge of how I feel, but that treatment, that interaction doesn't reflect the value I have that I want exhibited in my romantic relationships.

And I think that you can do that with a religion, like what are your values? I mean, I'm not an expert in religious decisions, so this is just what I use for everything. But like, what are your values? What is the role of that religion in your life? What do you want from a religion? Like most, you know, women aren't socialized – you touched on this in the very beginning, you talked about authority. And this is a thing I coach on so much. And it was a client of mine who is still a member of the Church of Latter-day Saints. She's less involved in some ways. She's less faithful to all the obligations in some ways, but is still part of the church in her mind at least. Didn't have a definitive, I'm leaving.

And working with her, we did so much work on the socialization around the idea that just women aren't authorities. And what does it mean to be your own authority? And most women have never stopped and asked themselves that because nobody's asked them that. Nobody said to them like, well, not just what do you owe to your religion, what do you owe to your community, but what do you want from your religion? What do you want from your community? Not in a like, I want all the money, or it's not material. It's like, this is a two-way relationship. What role is it supposed to fill in your life? So I think just asking yourself those questions, most people have not stopped to do that.

Jody: I like that reminder. It's a two-way relationship. Like, and I think, and of course everybody's different. That's what's hard. We're trying to coach people that everybody has their own stuff going on, but like there's on the

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one hand, some people need to stop and ask themselves, wait a second, what am I getting from this community? Am I getting what I need or want from it? And then the second thing is what do I want to contribute? And I like asking myself that way. What do I want to contribute? Because there's like what I think I'm supposed to contribute, what I think they're asking me to contribute, and none of that actually feels great to me, even though when I let myself ask what do I want to contribute, it ends up being like 90% of it is what they are asking of me, but I still have to back up from it and make it my own choice.

And then there is also like a 10% that maybe isn't being asked, not that it's not welcomed, but it's me raising my hand. I'm not the person out there doing the research on theology or any of that, but I do, in just my own little church community, raise my hand every time I feel like, okay, I get where this comment's coming from, but it's jumped the track and it's off, and I'm just gonna gently add my two cents worth, and that's where I feel like I can make a contribution. And so, yeah, it is. They're just valid questions to ask yourself. And I love your reminder, there's not a right answer. It's not going to be easy either way.

Kara: Yeah. And does your religion want what you have to communicate? So if you are somebody who's like, what I have to communicate is innovative new ideas, and your religion is like, we're not actually that interested in those, then maybe that's a mismatch, right?

Jody: It's a good one. We have the Moana song. Have you seen Moana?

Kara: No.

Jody: They're like, who needs a new song? This old one's all we need. They don't want any new ideas.

Kara: And that's fine though, and part of why people get so hung up on this, right, is that they feel like, but then in order to leave, I have to like demonize

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something, right? It would have to be like, it would have to be either it's bad or I'm bad or, but no, our religion, a community, just like a person can just be like, maybe it's not the right match for you or not in the current form. I mean, right, your relationship with God also is like not the same as your relationship with your religion.

And I'm often surprised by how many religious people are in my coaching community, but I coach on it all the time, right? Even though we don't necessarily have the same beliefs and like those things get muddled up too. Like you're really, you know, no matter, I mean, my belief is like it's humans on Earth interpreting whatever that text or that scripture is.

Right, and like unless you believe in it, unless you believe that you have a literally in front of you physically immortal infallible person, what we're dealing with is mortal, fallible people who are humans who are shaped by their society and their time and their own upbringing and all these other things. So it's also like separating those things out. Like, okay, well, what's my relationship with God? What's my religion big picture? What is it like being in this specific religious community with this specific person at the head of this specific area? It's like we get it anytime we're at the all-or-nothing black or white, it becomes impossible to make a decision.

Jody: Yeah, that's right. And I will selfishly just say, though, that I hope – like, there's lots of women who think like I do in the church, but they're all secretly going, no one thinks like I do. I'm like, no, yeah, there's lots of us. In fact, please don't leave. Stay with me. I like being around people who think like me in this community.

But anyway, I want to ask you this, too, because this was really fascinating. And as soon as it happened, I was like, I wonder what Kara would say about this. So just a couple women that I know personally who have like leadership roles in the church but are frustrated with the limitations of that or what have you and are very much aware of, let's just say, how the patriarchy has influenced the way we run things.

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And I do think that our church is trying to make some changes here. They're aware of it. They're trying to become aware. They're trying to make some changes. And so one change, for example, was we have these men in leadership positions that will go speak at different congregations. And they were like, wait a second, why don't we have the women also go speak to these different congregations, right?

Kara: Women can travel now.

Jody: Brilliant idea. Brilliant idea. Okay. So, and anyway, then some of these very same women who I've seen be very vocal and even emotional about this topic are suddenly were like, yeah, we would like you to go speak. And they're like, oh, well, not me. No, no, no, I don't want to be the one. And I'm seeing that more commonly than I even expected, where it's like, yes, we want you to take the lead here. And they're like, oh, no, no, not me. I'm just saying there should be women. And I'm like, well, who's going to do it?

Kara: But that's the authority thing, right? Women are not socialized to see themselves as authority figures and as leaders. The really simplified version of patriarchy is like, men lead, women follow, right? Men protect women and children. Women and children are dependents who need guidance and who need to be told what to do. And it's not that long ago that that was the legal regime.

I mean, part of what I'm always trying to bring into the conversation is you have to look back more than 15 years. You have to look at what is the case historically and think about how hard it is to change a culture. It wasn't until 1974 in the United States that in every state a woman could get a credit card without having a man have to co-sign with her. And it wasn't until 1986, 83 or 86, but 1980 something, that a woman could get a business loan without a male co-signer in every state.

Jody: Wow.

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Kara: Right? So it's like just imagine me, I own a seven-figure business, I support my husband and my step kids, that I would have to take him down to the bank, my retired house husband who like worked for the government before me, to sign to be like, I'll make sure this little lady pays her credit card bill, right? Like, that's not that long ago, so.

Jody: It's even in, we have made some progress at least, like even my husband and I were watching the original Karate Kid, the Ralph Macchio, right? And there's this scene, he gets his car from Mr. Miyagi and he throws the keys to his girlfriend. He's like, she's like, you want me to drive? And he's like, why not? It's the 80s. So my husband and I joke to this day, like women can drive now. It's the 80s. The 80s Wasn't that long ago.

Kara: But my grandmother never drove. Oh my gosh. Only my grandfather drove. I actually, the funny thing, I drove everywhere by myself because I didn't get married until a little later in life. And now that I'm married, I'm like a passenger princess because my husband likes to drive. But I actually sometimes drive just because my step kid's mom doesn't drive at all. She grew up in a city and didn't need to. And so I'm like, I can't have these children thinking that women can't drive, so I have to like it. And the first time I did, my stepson was like, you can drive? And I was like, oh God, I gotta do this more often.

Jody: They let women drive now.

Kara: Right, but I think it is that same, it is really deep, powerful work to become...

Jody: Like you said, it's so subtle.

Kara: Yeah, your own authority, like believing that you are a woman. have something worth saying, believing that you can trust yourself to say something that you can. I think one of the things that came up with the client that I was talking about who was a member of the church and was

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really struggling with authority was she didn't want to take on authority both because she'd been socialized to think that it was for men, but also because she had seen some of the damage that authority figures can do, right? And especially in a patriarchy. And so she didn't want, it was like I don't want to be part of that, I don't want to do any harm, I don't want any power, you know?

And I think these things go hand in hand that women are socialized to believe that being good is the most important thing, being kind, never hurting anyone, because that lines up really nicely with having no power, right? Because you and I both know that if you're going to have influence in the world and you're going to do good, it's like you're going to break some, right? You can't make an omelet without breaking eggs. Obviously, you want to be careful, but in order to have a big impact in the world, in order to change things, you have to take on the possibility that you might also do harm.

Jody: You have to rock the boat a little.

Kara: Yeah. You have to rock the boat. You might hurt someone. You have to take on the possibility that you might also do harm. This is something I coach really deeply on with people who are active feminists and not at all who want to be coaches or want to be thought leaders or want to have a big impact on the world, the way women are socialized. It's like, but I got to do that without ever doing it wrong or ever upsetting anyone, or ever hurting anyone or ever getting it wrong with a client or like I have to be perfect because we've seen through centuries like what happens to women who fail in the public eye like that's been a cautionary tale.

So I think part of taking on our own authority is I have not said it this way before so I'm kind of thinking as I talk but now I'm going to do a podcast on it. It's like moving away from goodness and like non-harm like niceness kind of as being your only metric for like if you're doing what you're supposed to be doing. Because if it is, you'll never be able to take on

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authority, right? What if you get up and give that speech and like someone's upset? What if you hurt someone's feelings? What if someone's offended? What if, what if, what if, right?

So I'm not surprised you're seeing that. And I really think it comes back to that like there's also so much socialization for women to like not think too highly of yourself. Like as I was giving my little like who I am spiel. I was like, I forgot to say that I do it this way on purpose. There's probably people listening being like, all right, you didn't have to tell us you had a bestseller or anything. When women come on my podcast, I make them talk about their own accomplishments instead of me talking about them while they sit there demurely. Because you know men going on podcasts are like, I'm the author of the my self-published bestseller in my neighborhood, right? Right, right. We're talking about that more than women who are New York Times bestsellers.

Jody: Yeah, yeah. So is it safe to say then that like, cause it's easy to be like, yeah, this needs to change and that needs to change and point to all the things outside of us and those things do need to change, but also we have to be doing the internal work.

Kara: Yes, yes. I get this criticism from the other side, which is like people on the left or in the social justice world being like, you know, we have these big structural problems, like don't make it individual people's responsibility. It's not, you know, a woman can't change the pay gap with her thinking. And I'm like, okay, it's actually both, we need both. Like, yes, we do need structural change. Like, it should not be legal to pay people a different amount for the same job based on their genitalia. And...

Jody: And.

Kara: And we do need the mindset piece because, exactly to your point, whoever changes the world, any hero you have, anybody who made a big spiritual revolution and reformation, anybody who made a political

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revolution or reformation, what happened was they looked at society And society was like, the way things are is great. This is how it should be. This is correct. We've got it right. And they were like, no, I don't think so. This isn't right. This isn't fair. This isn't just, this isn't correct. This is, whether it's not what God wants or not what humans deserve or like whatever, right? It came from society telling someone that this inequality or this whatever is okay. And that person being like, no, I don't believe that. So I don't know how people think you're getting social change without changing your thinking. Somebody has to change their thinking, right?

Jody: Right, right, and see the vision of it. And I think the only, I guess for most people, I think what comes to mind too is like, then you have to get really angry, like you said, and villainize. And that's not what you're saying either. Like, again, people that make significant impact don't usually approach it that way.

Kara: I think this is always an important thing to talk about because on the one hand, no, you don't have to be angry. On the other hand, why is it so uncomfortable for women to be angry? Because we're socialized that women shouldn't be angry, right? When men get angry, if a man, like, someone looks at his wife and he gets so mad, he punches a wall, that's like, he's a strong, you know, he's a hero, like, jealousy is love, he's possessive, he's strong, right? Like, so anger is sort of, and this is a great example of why we talk about feminism and patriarchy, like, it's not good for men. either. You're raising little boys, it's not good for men to be told that anger is the only emotion they're allowed to feel and that's manly and everything else is weak, right?

And it's not good for girls to be told that they can never have anger because that's unladylike and that's, you know, so it's somewhere in the middle. I also don't believe, you know, there's some feminists would say that sort of like, it's like women's anger is sacred. And I'm like, well, it's your amygdala. And like, sometimes it's wrong. So from a coaching perspective,

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I don't think that like all anger is sacred. But I also think that when our first response is like, oh, I don't want to acknowledge some of what's happening because I don't want to be angry. It's like, why is that? It's just an emotion. It'll come and go like any other emotion, right? And so I don't want to sort of only be saying, no, you don't have to get angry because I don't want to be reinforcing this idea that like, well, women definitely shouldn't be getting angry.

Jody: Just- Yeah, I agree.

Kara: I know you didn't mean that. I just want to call it out because it's such a common thing. Like.

Jody: Yeah, I do think in, in my family, I'll just say that I tend to have a lot of like, kind of masculine attributes in terms of like my confidence level and things like that. And, and so do some of my girls and my husband is very sensitive and emotional. And so are my boys. And so the patriarchy, like, like when we say patriarchy, it's what we're talking about is like gender roles, predefined roles and all this. And it has hurt my boys as much as my girls.

Kara: Because you want all your kids to be able to go to school and like whatever emotion they're having is fine. And no one's saying to them, like, be a man, don't cry.

Jody: And even within my own marriage in the beginning, I had a hard time. I remember at one time, even saying to a therapist, like, No, if my husband was mad, I feel like I could handle him being mad easier than him crying. And she was like...

Kara: Yeah, that is like socialization...

Jody: Because in my mind, like a man isn't supposed to cry, that's not attractive or masculine or whatever.

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Kara: Attractive when a man has uncontrollable rage, that's attractive.

Jody: Or I was just like, that would be better, at least right. And then then I, the therapist, luckily did say to me, like, well, it's just seems like you're more comfortable with the emotion of anger in a man than whatever the crying is representing, but actually it's healthier for him to stay in a primary emotion than escalate into anger. And she basically said that's on you. I was like, wait, what?

Kara: Yes, totally. And this is like such a thing, right? People want, I mean, that's why when I talk about this, it's not like, okay, we are, you know, feminists are enlightened and everybody else is still sexist. It's like all, like I'm coaching, you know, successful, ambitious women being like, I can't be attracted to a man unless he's also ambitious. And I'm like, why not? Who's gonna stay home? Who's gonna let in the gardener if you're always jetting off to the summit? I'm not saying you can't both be ambitious if you really want that, but that's patriarchy too. Why does your husband have to be six feet tall? Why does he have to make a certain amount of money? You make a lot of money. What do you need him to make the money for?

For me, we almost are coming around to what is the definition of feminism at the end, but it's people being able to be who they are and have equal rights and opportunities regardless of their gender. There should be no differences or everybody should be like this. Yeah, it's fine if you are in a heterosexual marriage and he's gonna make money and you wanna stay home and blah, blah, blah. And then it's also equally fine when it's swapped and one of those shouldn't be the default or expected or raise eyebrows if it's the other way.

Jody: Yeah, I love it. So good. And turns out our theology supports all of this in the end. So maybe I'll do another podcast on that another time.

Kara: But that's such a good example, right? It's like the people who wrote the radical theology in the beginning usually were kind of radical. And then

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it gets like, you know, institutions kind of like solidify and things get less and less radical as the religion, you know, continues.

Jody: Yeah. Kara, thank you for coming on today. You guys have to check out Kara's book. She has the most brilliant mind. Take back your brain. Get it anywhere you get books. Yeah. What else do you want to? Tell people about? Your podcast is great too.

Kara: The audio book that I narrated.

Jody: Audio book, which is the only way, I can't read books anymore, they have to be read to me.

Kara: Yes. I read the book to Jody and I'll read it to all of you. Thank you. And we can tell everybody what, remember, so when Jody and I were both teaching Life Coach Certification, I had a class that was like 12...

Jody: All the Mormon women.

Kara: 12 Mormon women, one Planned Parenthood employee, and like one ex-Mormon. It was a great group. And the more, some of the girls went to Jody and they were like, Chakara seems smart, but she curses a lot. And Jody was like, it's okay. She's good people. So I'll just say that about the book. I do curse in the book. I'm sorry.

Jody: Not that much.

Kara: Not that much. That's true.

Jody: I feel like it was mild for you.

Kara: You have Jody's word that I am still good people.

Jody: Oh, you know what, we decided, I decided that it is no longer appropriate for any of us to say, they're not a member of our Church, but they're still a good person. Like that could just be a given that you don't

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have to be a member of our church to be good. Yeah, there is a little language in there. So if that bothers you, just be forewarned. Such a good book. Yeah. Before you go, have you been watching The Secret Lives of Mormon Wives?

Kara: I want to hear like all of your thoughts about this. I watched like one episode. And I don't know, I think I thought it was gonna be a really fun documentary. And then it was a reality show. And I'm always like, about reality shows. But I am kind of fascinated. I mean, I think, like, yeah, I'm curious, like, what are your well.

Jody: I didn't know what it was gonna be either. Exactly. But a friend of mine was like, no, it's actually really entertaining. You have to watch it. And so I gave it two episodes. And then I just couldn't take it. Like what kept coming to my mind was Abraham Hicks talking about you raising your vibration. I was like, this show is lowering my vibration.

Kara: I was like, this show is making me dumber.

Jody: Not even like I was offended or anything. I just was like, I can't do it. I'm sorry. I feel dumber after watching this. But yeah, what I will say I appreciated about it is the title sort of implies, like you said, that it's gonna be like a documentary about Mormon women. But the show I didn't feel, and again, I only watched two episodes, but I didn't feel like they were claiming to say, this is how LDS women live their lives. It was just more like, this is a story about some women who some of them claim to be somewhat loosely members of the church. And I think they have probably a really fascinating story to tell. So whatever. I will say this. I'm always open to anything that gives me an opportunity to talk about my faith with people. And it sort of has done that. It's made people somewhat curious. So there's good and bad in anything, you know.

Kara: Yeah, I was sort of thinking like, this is such a fascinating thing be like the breakout LDS show is to be like these women and like what is

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happening here. And just all of those like I mean I always love from the feminist perspective when there's like a – when somebody is talking about a gender dynamic where the woman is like supposed to be more submissive but then like they're out there making a national career like I think about this with Phyllis Schlafly all the time. Phyllis Schlafly was this was a politician and she campaigned against the Equal Rights Amendment very heavily. But like, she had a, her whole life was getting paid to give speeches while her husband stayed home, where she talked about how women should stay home. Right? And you're just like, okay, what's happening here? Like you do realize that you are out having a career while your husband stays home with the kids, but your career is telling other women they shouldn't do that. Like what?

Jody: Yes. Oh my gosh, you're right. That's fascinating. What are you going to do? What are you going to do? We should make our own show, like the secret lives of life coaches. I feel like there.

Kara: Could be some kind of mind coach. It would be like they go to bed at 9 p.m. and do a lot of thought work. I got into, I talked to a producer for a TV show and she kept asking me these questions. And at the end, I got off and I told my PR person, I was like, I think I was too reasonable. And she was like, absolutely, that's probably what happened.

Jody: I talked to someone too a long time ago about a TV show and he was like, well, it needs to be sensational. It needs to be really fascinating. And I was like, I'm not going to like fake it for TV. You're not going to have a TV show.

Kara: What about coaches doing things therapists should do? Like I was supposed to say something like, you know, and of course, I'm like, Ms. Zachary, I'm like, well, you know, coaching and therapy are just different. They're different words. And then there's a spectrum and like some blah, blah, blah, you know, it was like, she's like, snooze alert. I'm not into this.

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Jody: She wanted you to say therapists are terrible. I can do anything they can do.

Kara: No one needs a therapist. Everyone should have a coach.

Jody: You want a prescription? All right, you won right now.

Kara: I have some Ritalin in my purse. Do you want it?

Jody: Dang it. I guess we're not going to have a TV show.

Kara: Anytime soon. Oh, wow.

Jody: All right. I love you, Kara. Thanks for coming on.

Kara: Thanks for having me.

--

Oh wow, look at that. You made it to the end. Your time and attention is valuable, and I don't take it lightly that you made it this far. In fact, it tells me you might be like me; insatiably curious about people and life and potential and connection. Maybe you have big dreams but a small budget and no time. You're tired, but bored. You're content, but dissatisfied. Sound familiar? Come to a free coaching call and see for yourself what's possible: jodymoore.com/freecoaching to register. That's jodymoore.com/freecoaching.