

Kara Cenar
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Lorin: I'm speaking with Kara Cenar of Bryan Cave, LLP, in Chicago. So Kara, tell us your story. What are some of the highlights that have brought you to where you are today?

Kara: I think my story starts with education, which opened doors and opportunities for me that I didn't believe were possible. I call them perceived barriers. I did not grow up in a family of professionals and when I went off to college, the thought of becoming a lawyer was just not on my horizon. Lawyers came from rich families and they were super, super smart people and I didn't think that I fell in either category, so it didn't even dawn on me to pursue that as a career path.

Lorin: And, not even something that you probably were exposed to enough to know that you even would want to.

Kara: Right. Both of my parents were college grads and put a huge value on college education. My dad was an engineer and had his own construction business and my mom was a schoolteacher who was required to stop teaching when she got pregnant.

Lorin: Who said that she couldn't?

Kara: That was just the way it was back then.

Lorin: Wow!!

Kara: So, I have that background of parents that put education at the forefront of everything, but not really having a background to draw on for the professional

services, if you will. So, they were very encouraging about my getting an education. When I was in junior high school, my father told me that I had to learn how to type, so that I could always be assured of getting a job.

Lorin: That's amazing.

Kara: And, I guess, in hindsight, I have to thank him for that, because I used that skill as a secretary to put myself through college and law school. So he was right! It was an insurance policy to get a job. It just wasn't a job typing! It was a means to an end.

Lorin: What a great story! So many people can relate to it!

Kara: I wandered out to Chicago from Massachusetts for college. I went to business school because my father said that I should get a practical education, so I went and every course that I took was very practical so that I could graduate quickly. But my freshman year roommate first semester was a premed student and second semester was a prelaw student.

Lorin: Interesting.

Kara: And I thought, "Well, they are not any smarter than I am!" But if you had asked me then whether I would be a lawyer, I would have laughed. So, I took a job at Loyola Law School in the admissions office as a secretary/clerk. I helped the admissions director review applications for sufficiency completeness and toured young law school applicants through the school and talked to them about why they wanted to go to law school. After every tour interview I would say to myself, "Well, he or she is not any smarter than I am. Eventually, I got over the perceived barrier that super, super smart people became lawyers. I came to a realization that if that was true, maybe I fell in that category. I don't know, but I decided to apply

to law school. I didn't have the money to take the prep course for the LSAT, so I sat in the library with a book that I bought on how to take the LSAT and took it, applied to law schools, got admitted, and lo and behold....

Lorin: You were as smart as them!

Kara: Well...I could be part of them. I told my parents that I was going to apply to law school and they were encouraging, but in a hesitant way. They said, "Well, if you really think that's what you want to do." I think they were afraid of failure for me. So, it wasn't like, "We're behind you one hundred and ten percent!" It was like, "Are you sure?" And, of course, that meant more years of school, and I would have to try to finance that, et cetera.

Lorin: Yeah, and they knew that! They knew that you were financing it yourself and didn't expect them to.

Kara: Right. So, I had to tell them that this is what I am going to try to do, and I had 110% backing by them as far as support and encouragement, but I think that they, too, had this perceived barrier, that these were professions that were just difficult to get into. So, I applied, and because I had worked at Loyola, I had to go through a special admissions review process. I had deans from other departments that had to review my application. But they admitted me and I got a half tuition scholarship, which was a huge help.

Lorin: Sweet!

Kara: So, I started law school. Now, I never really intended to practice law. I always wanted to own my own business and thought that having the legal background would be helpful, and when I started, I did the appellate add class and the trial class and fell in love with litigation! Hey, I was good at this! If you had asked me

at the beginning of law school whether I would be a trial lawyer, I would have laughed at you. Again, another perceived barrier for me.

Lorin: It is interesting – your perceived barriers. My sense is that there was a limited vision for yourself and even your family had a limited vision for you. Then, when you met other people like your roommates, they had a different kind of a vision for themselves, and it totally opened up what’s possible for you. So, your vision for yourself changed, true?

Kara: I think that’s very true! And I also think that the fact that I tried things out opened up my own visions for myself. Now, I mentor a lot of young students and young lawyers and I always encourage law students to try to explore different areas of law and different practices while they are still in law school for that very reason. I think you put yourself in situations where you’ll find resources within yourself you didn’t even know you had.

Lorin: And that changes your vision!

Kara: Yep!

Lorin: I think a vision is such an important piece of our success. Whatever our vision is for ourselves, it is *our own* vision and, as you say, it’s either a limiting vision or it could be bigger than us. Does that make sense?

Kara: Yes, but it’s a vision that can change if you allow yourself the opportunity to maybe get uncomfortable a little bit.

Lorin: I totally agree with that. I think that there is only one kind of vision, and that is one that changes. It’s like you are totally attached to it and it only gets bigger; it almost never gets smaller.

Kara: That's true. So, the other interesting thing was that poverty was a great driver for me. I needed a job to pay for tuition and I was trying to find a clerking job my second year of law school with a law firm. I found one that did intellectual property law and they wanted somebody with a technical engineering or a scientific background, which I didn't have. They wanted somebody that wrote for law review, which I didn't do. They wanted someone in the top ten percent of the class. I think I was in the top fifteen percent, so I didn't meet any of their requirements.

Lorin: (Chuckling)

Kara: But they paid their law clerks really well and you could work as many hours as you wanted to work. So, I thought, "What the heck, I'll try!" And, lo and behold, they hired me! Again, I think it was the right place at the right time. The managing partner of that firm at the time was starting a business model of pairing pure litigators who did not have a technical background with patent lawyers that did, to try intellectual property cases. So, I got hired as a clerk and I fell in love with an area of law that if I had listened to the requirements to practice in that area or in the barriers to entry in that area, I'd never be doing what I am doing today.

Lorin: Such a great story! Like a perfect accident!

Kara: Yep! Yeah.

Lorin: And, when I met you, it was very clear to me that you really stand firmly in your success; you own it one hundred percent. You can see that when you walk in a room. You have taken that leap from getting exposed to a type of legal practice

you didn't think you were qualified for, to falling in love with it, and actually making yourself very well known within that type of legal practice.

Kara: Right.

Lorin: Is that a vision that you had then or not?

Kara: Well, no. When I graduated law school, I was hired by this firm as an associate. It was a 13-attorney firm at the time and I think I was one of the first people they ever hired out of law school. I set a goal for myself when I chose to take a job there, as opposed to a larger firm, because it was a very family-oriented firm and I wanted to have kids. That was very important to me. I wanted to have my kids when I was young, and I wanted to make partner early. So, I happened to get married literally three days after my last law school final.

Lorin: Wow!

Kara: The goal I set for myself is I wanted to have all of my children by the time I was thirty and become partner by the time I was thirty. I guess I was a little driven, an overachiever.

Lorin: Well, it sounds like that evolved over time. That driven overachiever sort of showed up when you started to meet goals that you didn't realize that you could meet. All of a sudden you realized you could set bigger and more ambitious goals.

Kara: I kind of call it the confidence curve. I am a very goal oriented person and every time I reach a particular goal, I'm thinking I must not have set it high enough or hard enough, because I made it! I am my biggest critic and my hardest driver. I always underplayed it whenever I reached a goal and just said, "Well, let's set it higher and higher." What was really happening to me was I was developing more

self-confidence! It was an interesting internal dynamic for me, because as my confidence curve went up, I looked at bigger and better opportunities, harder challenges if you will, and pursued them. The perceived barrier piece was gone. I was looking at ways to get around barriers or over them or under them or whatever I had to do, but they weren't barriers anymore.

Lorin: Yeah. Nobody can give us confidence and nobody can take confidence away from us. I believe we actually develop that ourselves by setting and achieving goals. So, as you set a goal and meet it, you gain your self-confidence.

Kara: Or, you put yourself in a situation that is out of your comfort zone – you put yourself in some sort of stressful situation – and then you find out that you'll do whatever it takes not to fail or drop the ball. You find out that, internally, you have resources to achieve things that you never even thought of before, and that fuels your confidence level to maybe try things out-of-the-box. So, confidence gets fed that way, too.

Lorin: I am very curious about times that you failed or have not met goals. How have they helped or hindered you, and what did you learn from those times?

Kara: My husband always teases me. I'm my harshest critic. So, early on in my career, I would handle a temporary restraining order, a plumber injunction hearing, for example, and I may have won it, but I didn't feel like my cross examination was good enough or I had fumbled or whatever and then I would sign up for a trial refresher class. He used to laugh at me and say, "But you won!" For me, winning was important, getting the right results for the client was important, but it was also my skill that meant a lot to me. So, I was always trying to keep my product, which was *me*, sharp and relevant, and if I didn't think it was there, I would make myself fix it, improve it!

Lorin: Yeah, raise your bar.

Kara: Yep!

Lorin: What would you say was the turning point in the career or in your success?

Kara: I don't know that I could say one thing was a turning point. I think it was a building process for me. I was taking my first deposition the day after I got sworn into the bar. I think I had my first witness on the stand three months later. So, I was thrown into true trial work very, very early in my career and that was a turning point, because I had two great trial mentors. Both were former assistant U.S. attorneys that took a vested interest in teaching me trial skills and gave me opportunities early on in my career that made me more self-sufficient. So that was a turning point.

Lorin: Well, I have to say, Kara, it sounds like you've been self-sufficient from day one! There's a lot about self-sufficiency here, like you paid for your own college.

Kara: Yeah, I've kind of been running my own life for a very, very long time at a very young age when I really didn't know what I was doing or where I was going or why. And again, I was very fortunate to meet good people, work with good people who, I think, saw more in me than I saw in myself at the time. I think that has been a continuous thing with me. I have a partner who says, "Kara, you just don't realize what you bring to the table!" Because for me, those are just elements of who I am and what I am. I don't think that they are anything significant.

Lorin: I want to switch gears on you slightly, and talk about your children. You have three, right? You talked about the fact that you wanted to have your children before you were thirty. Did you reach that goal?

Kara: Yes, I have three. Because I miscarried two in between my second and third child, I think I was thirty-two by the time I was done having them all. And now I have a nineteen-year-old, a seventeen-year-old, and a thirteen-year-old.

Lorin: Wow!

Kara: And, I made partner at thirty-one! So, I was close.

Lorin: You were really close! So, how do you do that? How do you balance? Obviously, you don't get to be partner by doing a shabby job. I don't believe there are any secrets in this whole work-life balance. What are your words of wisdom around the whole work-life balance and taking care of yourself?

Kara: My first rule is to embrace imbalance, because just when you think you have everything all in order and everything under control, somebody comes down with chicken pox!

Lorin: (Laughing)

Kara: (Laughing) You know, there's this stuff that happens that you can't control! And then you've got to figure out how to deal with it.

Lorin: That's actually a great visual, because if you really try to balance, if you think about balancing on one foot, for example, the way to be balanced is to be really limber and relax a bit. And the more that you get off balance, the easier it is to get back on balance.

Kara: Right. I kind of look at work-life balance as a balloon.

Lorin: As a balloon?

Kara: Yes, a balloon filled with air, and there are going to be periods of time where it's just nice and and fully round and even, and it can float around. Then there will be other times where somebody's gripping one side of it and all the air pressure goes over to the other side of your life and there are other times where that lightens up and it eases back to the middle. Maybe somebody grabs the balloon from the middle, and then there's pressure on two other ends, but it doesn't burst!

Lorin: I like that!

Kara: So, you're always going to have something that occurs in your life. I have had extreme examples that have gone on in my life that I look back and I chuckle about how we ever got through it.

Lorin: But, you did.

Kara: But I did! I had a situation where I was going to try my very first jury trial and I was so excited. It was a big deal and I was second chair on this case. I had two little kids and I was pregnant with the third one. We were about to buy a home and buying my own house was a huge deal for me, something that I had wanted since I was thirteen.

Lorin: Thirteen!

Kara: Since I was thirteen I wanted my own little plot of America. It didn't have to be big, it didn't have to be extravagant, but it had to be mine! But, as we approached the trial date, I miscarried very late.

Lorin: Oh, my God.

Kara: I think I was twenty plus weeks along. I was emotionally and physically kind of drained from that. Then my middle son, who I think was under two, was misdiagnosed with leukemia. And, I was closing on a home and starting a jury trial! So I had chaos!! I had to stand in front of a federal judge and ask for permission to miss the first day of jury selection because I was awaiting the blood test result for my son to confirm whether we had to do some pretty intense stuff. I remember the judge saying to me, “What if the news isn’t good?” and I kept standing in front of this judge trying to fight back tears, saying, “It’s going to be good, Judge. It’s going to be good.” And, as it turned out, the blood test results *were* good. It was a false alarm with his cell tissues, there was some kind of infection. So, they gave him massive doses of antibiotics and he was fine. We closed on our house, which was a huge, important thing in my life, but in the perspective of the time that it landed, it meant nothing.

Lorin: Exactly.

Kara: My husband and I drove by the house as he was driving me back to the office, because I had to prepare for my trial. The day the moving truck showed up, my Mom came to help us pack. I took the train into work and took a different train home that night to my new house. It was very funny.

Lorin: Oh, my goodness!

Kara: So, when you talk about work-life balance and focus and being able to compartmentalize... I had physical issues going on with the physical drain of being on trial, but also having just miscarried. There is an adrenalin rush of trying a jury trial, and by the way, we got a \$9.9 million jury verdict.

Lorin: Wow! Your first one?

Kara: My very first jury trial! Yeah, so, it was a great ending to all of it. I moved into the house that we still live in.

Lorin: You live in it now?

Kara: Yep!

Lorin: Oh, I love that story! It's interesting that, as a thirteen-year-old, you had a goal for that and interesting that the timing of actually having it made it be nothing.

Kara: Right!

Lorin: So amazing! It takes me to my next question that I have around money and abundance. How high do you hold those things? Is money a part of your goals or do you find that money tends not to be part of the goals?

Kara: Money's not my driver. I expect to be compensated at a level that I have achieved, but money is not my biggest driver. I love the environment that I work in, the opportunity to try great cases, but also that I am able to do the things I like to do in the community. Family is still very important to me, also, so...I am paid very, very well.

Lorin: Yeah, of course!

Kara: I can say that now, but there have been times in other places I have worked where I have had to say, "Hey, look...you are parading me around as a first chair female IP litigator, because that's a value and the clients want it and other people are looking at that as a credential, but if you look at how you are paying other people that are at that level, I am being paid substantially less and that's not fair, that's

not right,” and I have said that! I wasn’t being underpaid, if you will, but I stood on that.

Lorin: You knew there was value in what you were bringing to the table.

Kara: Yeah!

Lorin: It sounds like you are pretty aware, like you really pay attention to your life and the twists and turns and the opportunities to learn as they have come in and out of your life. I am curious what role spirituality plays in your life.

Kara: You know, it’s an interesting question. I have always felt like I have had a one-on-one relationship with God. My Mother, when I was a little child, used to say to me, “You won’t be around me all of the time, but know that God is always there to protect you, so you always have somebody to lean on and you are never alone.” So, in some of my hardest times where I did feel very alone or kind of in the abyss of chaos going on, I got comfort in that. And, I get strength from it and I am not an over the top extraordinarily religious individual, but I do have some very strong beliefs and I do rely on it quite a bit.

Lorin: When you were in that place that you called the abyss...you knew, not just that you weren’t alone, but that you could handle it – somehow, someway. Looking back, what would you say your biggest struggle has been along this journey so far?

Kara: I think my biggest struggle is being too critical of myself and being too hard on myself. I think that I don’t cut myself enough of a break. I always want to fix it. But some things, like a child’s illness, you can’t fix; you have to manage.

Lorin: Yeah. So, if you were to replace that struggle or that being hard on yourself with something else, what's the new way you would be if you could go back? At this point going forward, what would you consciously replace it with?

Kara: I don't know, because I look at it as both a blessing and a curse!

Lorin: Yep! I totally get that. A strength and a weakness comes together. It's like the two sides of a coin.

Kara: Because I think that eventually I come around to telling myself, "Oh, cut yourself a break!"

Lorin: Yes, but it served you!

Kara: But it served me to sit back, take a look, and think, "Where are you? What are you doing? Why are you doing this?" So, I don't know that I would want to change that. I just wish somebody would have told me it was okay to be that way! There weren't a lot of mentors that I found early in my career – women going through the same thing that I am doing. I actually turned to the women business owner community, that's how I got into NAWBO (National Association of Women Business Owners).

Lorin: Interesting.

Kara: Because they just weren't around, and they certainly weren't in intellectual property law.

Lorin: Exactly! That's why I think your story is so important, because you are in a very male dominated industry.

Kara: But it's male dominated because women weren't going into engineering and sciences back in those days. So they didn't proceed to have the technical background to go into intellectual property law, and that was the perceived barrier, that you had to have that credential to go into it, and that's just not true! I am living, breathing proof. But now I am a misfit because of that. That, too, has been a blessing, because I can take some really complex technology, and I may have to struggle with it for a bit to understand it, but once I do, I can explain it to the judge and the jury in terms that I understand.

Lorin: And through all of that you are keeping it simple, right?

Kara: Right.

Lorin: There's something that you keep doing that I am not sure that you are aware of. I just want to underscore it, because I think it is important. You are always seeing things with the glass half full. There are no complaints, no challenges, no struggles. The glass is half full and not half empty in everything that you've ever been through!

Kara: Part of it, I think, is my driven personality. It's not like everything has come so easily for me, but I am not afraid. I have a very good work ethic and I am not afraid of trying something totally different. I'll give you an example. You know how kids do a class project where they make mommy and daddy a little book or whatever? They had a picture of my husband playing basketball and they had a picture of me with a briefcase. (Laughing) And, I thought, I don't want my kids to think that all mommy does is work! I had other aspects of me, but there was the living evidence that that was how my children were perceiving me, so I decided that I was going to do triathlons.

Lorin: That's how you got so fit!!!

Kara: (Laughing)

Lorin: Now I get it!

Kara: I had never really raced before. I ran, but never raced. I rode bikes with the kids, but I never raced bikes and I knew enough about swimming not to drown, but I had never swam any distance. I was taking on something totally, totally new! Now, part of this was again a confidence thing for me. Endurance training is actually a great analogy to building confidence and seeing the glass half full. When I started, I had an opposing lawyer who was a big triathlete and he gave me a training schedule and I followed it kind of to a "T." There was a checklist for each week. I had to run twice, swim twice, bike three times, or whatever it was. It didn't matter when I fit it in during the week as long as I got it in each week and for a certain amount of time. And every time, as every week progressed, I was a little faster or a little stronger, I was less tired after I finished and my confidence kept going up. So, I did my first triathlon. It was great. I wasn't the fastest on the block but I wasn't the slowest on the block. I was above average for my age group. My daughter came with me the night before and walked the course with me, stayed in the hotel with me, and was there for the start, early in the morning. My husband came out with the boys later on and they were at the finish line. I remember crossing the finish line and my little one was peering over this barrier watching his Mom cross it!

Lorin: Great story!

Kara: But, you know, from there I got sports greedy. I did more triathlons. I ran a half marathon and then I said, "Well, if I can do all that, then I can run the marathon." I signed up for it and paid my fee and it happened to fall in a year that I had a big

patent infringement trial and my daughter got sick, so I never really trained for it, but, of course, I was stubborn enough to still run it.

Lorin: You did it anyway. And, how'd you do?

Kara: I finished!

Lorin: Yea!! That is such a story! There's something about your personality that whatever you do, you do to the utmost that's possible for you.

Kara: Sometimes you have to put yourself in stressful situations, whether it's your work, your sport, or your relationship, and you will do whatever it takes to make it happen. And, for me, that means you'll find resources you never knew you had, so that you won't fail! I learned from competing in these triathlons that, not only was I able to finish the sport, the event, or whatever, and accomplish that piece, but I was actually able to fit in another whole realm of activity in an already overscheduled life! I also realized that I was all work and Mom at that point and there wasn't really enough time for myself! I was always at the bottom of the list and I learned, "Hey! You actually can carve out a piece for yourself and nobody else suffers!"

Lorin: That's exactly right. That's such a life lesson. It's that "nobody suffers when you carve out time for yourself," and the book that your kids will write next time will definitely not be you with just a briefcase.

Kara: Right! But isn't it funny how something as innocent as the kindergarten book that came home could impact you in that way?

Lorin: That changed your world, because you got to see who they see you as through their eyes.

Kara: My other funny story is about my youngest son. In a class he was taking, they were talking about what a big deal it was for women to get educated in whatever period of time it was or country they were studying. And, I said, “Well, why do you find that so strange? He goes, “Well, look at you!” He just had no concept of any world where a woman wasn’t in control of her life and her destiny. I like that he feels that way about women being business owners, being strong, and being successful. He Googles me, and he sees stuff.

Lorin: (Laughing)

Kara: He’s like, “Oh, Mom, you’re really....”

Lorin: You’re out there, Mom!

Kara: But, it’s funny! I think when he gets married, his wife will have more leeway.

Lorin: He’ll have a whole different perspective on what her role is in the world.

Kara: And, when he goes out into the working world, it’s not going to be difficult for him to have a female boss.

Lorin: One chapter in the book is called, “What do men have to do with it?” And, quite frankly, the answer is, “Everything!” I think as women’s roles are changing, men’s roles are changing. There’s a huge shift going on in my opinion. I am curious what you see in that regard? What does your partner, your spouse, or even your kids that are boys, what’s their role in your success?

Kara: Well, I think everybody contributes to the success of other family members, because everybody is impacted by what each of us is doing. Everybody supports

you or complains about it. So, they all have an impact on it and a say in it. For me, my husband grew up with a working mother, so I think he is more tolerant of my work schedule. When we were engaged, we were trying to set a wedding date. I said, "I'd like to get married a year after I am out of law school, because I want you to see how I am working full time." And he laughed at me and he said, "You are working full time now and going to school full time; it can't be worse than that!"

Lorin: That's true!

Kara: So, we got married right out of, literally, right out of law school! During the early phases, when our children were very young, my husband was also a lawyer in the state's attorney office. He was in a very busy courtroom and in a busy phase of his career where he wasn't contributing a lot at home. He was trying cases and out all of the time and I had more flexibility with my schedule. Now, the tables have turned in our careers and so I kind of supported him when he was going through his phase (chuckling) and he's supporting me when I am going through my phase.

Lorin: So, it's been supportive along the way, based on who needs the support.

Kara: Right, and I can't say that there have always been great, happy moments, because there are times where the balloon gets squeezed.

Lorin: Yeah!

Kara: His trials, they last a day, a couple of days, maybe a week. My trials last six to eight weeks. Mom could be gone for a month and a half.

Lorin: Wow!

Kara: And, leading up to the trial, I am working long hours. There's a big difference with the types of cases that I try and the amount of absence that can occur, so there has to be a lot of great understanding on that.

Lorin: Is it consciously talked about, or does it naturally just happen based on what's happening in each of your lives? Do you say, "I am going to need you to be more present at home?" or does it just naturally happen because you are talking about your life and it just gets covered?

Kara: For big things like a trial, where we are going to have long absences or I am going to be on the road for depositions, I really try to give as much advance notice as I can, because there is a lot that has to be covered. You've got to find resources to kind of keep the household running. I have built a pretty good network of friends in the neighborhood who helps out when I go out of town, and my mother-in-law is also very involved.

Lorin: That's great. I am finding that among most of the women I've interviewed that they literally have created a village to raise their families, because they couldn't do it by themselves.

Kara: Yep!

Lorin: Are there any words of wisdom you've gained along the way that you'd like to share before we wrap up the interview?

Kara: Well, I always joke around that I am an ordinary, extraordinary person and I think that there are thousands of women like me out there. I think that the best message that I can leave with everyone is, "It's all possible, because if I could do it, and I'm a pretty ordinary person, then you can, too."

Lorin: Yeah. You are the girl next door. I always describe myself as the girl next door. “I am like the girl next door. There is nothing different about me than you!”

Kara: Right! My husband would laugh at that, because he keeps telling me, “They don’t *make* women like you.” But, I disagree, because I look at single moms out there that are doing everything that I am doing without a spouse.

Lorin: Exactly.

Kara: Thank God the grocery stores are open all night now, so you can get the gallon of milk in the middle of the night.

Lorin: That’s true! (Chuckling)

Kara: But, there are women that may not have the same job that I have, or are not at that phase of their life yet, but they are doing the equivalent in their space and they are doing it balancing kids, and elderly and ailing parents, or sick parents out of town, and it’s not always just kids. There are a lot of things that are being juggled. So, I think if anyone wants to look at my life and say, “Wow!” the biggest message I could send to them is, “You can have this same life, too, because I didn’t come from any means, any connection. I kind of made it all myself. I fell into it.”

Lorin: You fell into it by setting goals. Like at thirteen, your goal was to have a house, and later you watched other people apply to law school and realized they were just like you.

Kara: Right.

Lorin: I mean, you fell into it, but you made really conscious choices. Even when the kindergarten book came home, you made a conscious choice to say, “I don’t want

my life to be like that, or for my kids to see me just like that. I need to expand my world!” So, you were really conscious along the entire path, and at a really young age! You truly are, as you said earlier, an “ordinary extraordinary woman.” And everybody can be that way! The goal of the book is to help more ordinary people become extraordinary, because every single person can!

Kara: The way I see it, every ordinary person *is* extraordinary if they would let themselves be.