

2: Using Historical Context to Avoid Whitewashing Your Coaching



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Hosts

Kara Loewentheil and Simone Seol

[Outside the White Box with Kara Loewentheil and Simone Seol](#)

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Welcome to Outside the White Box: Elevating the Coaching Conversation. Your podcast with two life coaches who have Ivy League educations and vaguely remember some of what they learned. This podcast is deeper than a Tumblr post, but nothing approaching a PhD dissertation.

I'm Simone Seol. I'm Kara Loewentheil and we're two life coaches who think that the life coaching industry could use a little bit of an intellectual glow-up, but we do not claim to be experts in anything other than the coaching. Don't @ us with any actual expertise. Keep your actual expertise to yourselves please. We hope you enjoy.

Kara: Important announcement for everybody listening. Simone and I have only shown up wearing the same glasses today, but not the same outfit.

Simone: Very important.

Kara: So we are differentiating as time goes on. All right, so today we're going to talk about history just in general, right? That's what we're talking about.

Simone: Yeah, history of ideas, history of social change as they pertain to coaching ideas.

Kara: Well, I think we have another episode about intellectual history. I think this is history-history we're talking about.

Simone: Really? Okay.

Kara: I don't know. Check the notes. We do this on the fly, as you guys can tell.

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Simone: They're related, but okay. Noted. History-history.

Kara: They're totally related. It's true, but when I was trying to think up what were our five different topics?

Simone: Sure.

Kara: I think there's a difference. Of course, they're related, but to me they're two strands, one of which is understanding the history of ideas is important, so that you understand that you and your teacher, whoever you are and your teacher, didn't make up all the things that you're talking about, right? Where your ideas come from, where, how our ideas are shaped, but then there's also just value to understanding actual history, right? Which is...

Simone: Yeah, let's talk about it.

Kara: Yeah, let's talk about it. I feel like Americans in particular, we're very ahistorical. We just feel like we were...

Simone: I agree.

Kara: Born from the vagina of democracy 400 years ago.

Simone: We kind of were. Yeah.

Kara: Go ahead.

Simone: Let me actually talk about that a little bit. I lived a big chunk of my life in the US, and I also lived a tiny chunk of my life in Europe and another

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chunk of my life in Korea, where I live now; and in older countries, which is every country except the US and Canada and Australia I guess, New Zealand, in countries that have actual history, there's a sense...

Kara: Rude. We're getting rude. Okay. Go ahead.

Simone: Listen...

Kara: It's fine. I'm a Jew. I feel like our history is older than everybody else, so I don't take this personal.

Simone: The thing is, if you're Jewish, there's no sense of escaping your history, because it's - here's how I think. You can't be in Europe, you can't be in Korea and be outside of history, because it's around you. Kara, I'm just guessing, but when you grew up, your family, you talk about the Holocaust, because it's your family history. You can't just be in a vacuum, right?

When I'm in Seoul, everywhere I look around I'm like oh, there's a remnant of the war. Oh, there's a remnant of colonization. There's a remnant of that massacre that happened for whatever reason, and so it's pervasive, and I felt the same way when I was living in Europe, because it's the same way.

It's just centuries and centuries of ancient history, and I think that tends to change the way, it informs the way you look at the world, and I think, when I'm in my American mode, because I'm also American, I consider myself American, I lived in America for a long time, there's more of a blank slate feeling. We're not burdened by all these stories from the past and we can create fresh. That's the American illusion. I don't know.

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Kara: Yeah. There is this, and also, we should be specific. There's obviously very different versions of the American experience, so for people who are members of Native American tribes for instance, they are probably looking around and seeing that's where my people used to be, before we were massacred and driven off the land, but the colonization of America by immigrants of other cultures does create this brand newness in the scheme of you walk around any town in England and you're like oh, there's a remnant of a Roman wall, right?

Simone: Yeah.

Kara: You just are in that history, whereas America does have this cultural ahistoricity sort of, that we - at least the dominant white framework has this ahistoricity. And then even in our own history, we're so committed to that idea that history doesn't matter that the past several hundred years we've had time to do some pretty fucked up shit.

Had time to enslave a whole group of people and have a civil war, and live through all kinds of racialized and gender-based violence, and all of that, but it's like because our whole orientation is there's no history. We're just all new. We're the brand, the new edge of everything. It's like to an American it makes sense to some people to say, well, that was 150 years ago, whereas I think in some cultures that doesn't make any sense. They're like yeah, that's yesterday. 150, right?

Simone: Right. There's a longer sense of the history...

Kara: Right.

Simone: That you're living in.

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Kara: Yeah, and even in Judaism, I think about how we count our own years, so we're not on the Christian year cycle. I would have to look up what exact, I'm not the best Jew, what year we're in, but it's 5,000 something, it's 6,000 something. It's not 2021. I'm going to look it up right now exactly, actually. What year are we in? It's 5,781.

Simone: You guys have been around a long time.

Kara: Been around a while, so 150 years, we're still having holidays, celebrating the genocides of just a few thousand years ago. They feel very recent, so I think, to bring this back to coaching, this is not just a podcast of... Well, it is a podcast of our musings on American brains, but when coaching is developed by white mainstream Americans who live in that way and have been raised in that way, with an ahistorical non context specific, non-context situated way of thinking about the world, and in this way where so many of the coaching tools feel to me like they're...

Some of them are appropriate for other cultures, which we're going to talk about later, and then some of them, it just feels like this very - I keep having this feeling of it's that white room. It's the white box. It's devoid of context. It's devoid of diversity. Just this sort of, well, it's just you communing with the spirit or whatever, as if there's nothing else. There's no history...

Simone: Your higher self.

Kara: Yeah. It's like there's no context, there's no history, there's no nothing. It's just very individualistic. We're going to talk about that later too, and so I think one of the things that we wanted to talk about was the idea that if you don't know anything about history, I think you're operating and coaching from a just less rich background than you could be, right? An understanding.

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Imagine trying to coach a Jewish person about their fears of antisemitism or genocide without knowing that the holocaust happened, or without thinking about that, or imagine trying to coach a Black person in America without being cognizant of and understanding the history of slavery and racism in this country.

Simone: It would just be very disjointed.

Kara: Right.

Simone: It's a lot of what we try to do, just because we haven't been taught how to approach coaching in a contextual way, and Kara's changing that now.

Kara: We're on that. I'm on it, but we need more of us doing it. That's why we have this podcast. And again, Simone's always much nicer than I am. I'm never meaning to say any of this is anybody's fault. I think we're just trying to make a case for, like some of us, like you grew up understanding stuff about Korean heritage and history, because that's your background.

I grew up with my background, and I think we're just trying to encourage people to explore and understand the history and backgrounds of the people that surround them, right? Especially if you know that you are someone who is part of the dominant culture, to seek that out and understand some of those things. I have a whole bunch of examples, but I'm just curious if you have...

Simone: Start us off with one of them, because I think the examples that you came up with are so fascinating to think about.

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Kara: Yeah. Well, so I think there's general - we've been talking so far about, well, here's the general reason this is important, but I see there are all these small specific things that come up all the time in my coaching like - and some of these are I admittedly was a very weird child who just read Jane Austen novels, instead of watching TV. Not totally my fault. We didn't have a TV. My father's a rare book dealer, and so I think I have more depth of this perspective than some other people.

There are so many in here, so we talked a little bit about the idea that, of course, you would have to understand the legacy of slavery and colonialism and genocide if you're trying to coach somebody basically, who isn't a straight white man. But the way this comes up in context specifically, as actually just makes you a better coach I think, is that it helps you see the ways in which peoples' assumptions about - all coaching is in some ways is just challenging peoples' assumptions about how their and why their thoughts are true, and I think that when you have a historical perspective you're able to do that more effectively.

So one kind of, this is an intense example, but I think it's really relevant, is we have this belief now, and I think body positivity is changing, but when you were growing up and I was growing up, the '80s and '90s, and even the early 2000s, there was all of this faux evolutionary biology out there, explaining why one particular body, which is basically a slim curvy body, was the attractive body. This was just an objective thing that was true. It was science. Nobody could do anything about it, and it was just biologically the case.

If you have any knowledge of history, then you know that actually beauty norms constantly change over time, and in the '20s there was the flapper silhouette, which was not curvy at all. When Ruben was painting, right?

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Where we get the term Rubenesque, it was a curvier ideal, and if you have an anthropological background, you know that it's not random. It has to do with how a society evolves.

When it's difficult to have a life of leisure and have enough food, then not having to exercise or work outside and having a larger body is a high-status symbol, and then right now we've flipped it. Now, it's very easy to be less physically active. Most of us don't, a lot of us don't do physical labor, and it's very easy to get access to food. It's easier to have a larger body than having a smaller one as a status symbol.

If you don't any of that, you're just missing so many ways to poke your client's brain to show them that their belief that they have to look a certain way to be considered attractive is just an objective truth.

Simone: Yes. I agree. I was like what can I add to that? I'm like nothing...

Kara: That was a long, little lecture.

Simone: Complete point.

Kara: Well, I'm curious to hear. I have other examples, but I'm curious to hear how you feel like this comes up in your coaching, in marketing coaching. How do you feel like this historical lens comes up?

Simone: That's a really interesting question. I don't think I've quite thought about it in these terms. I think this might not be what we're talking about, but what just comes to my mind is that I think we tend to market in the way that we have been exposed to marketing for most of our lives, and the way that most of us have been exposed to marketing all of our lives primarily is

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through television, and magazine and newspaper advertising, even though all of that is passing...

Kara: Right. In our phone, and in our eyes, and on our desks.

Simone: Yeah. Exactly, but this is a very, digital age is a recent phenomenon. We're both in our 30s, right?

Kara: I just turned 40.

Simone: Okay. Yeah, so...

Kara: I'm the elder statesman here.

Simone: All right, so '80s, '90s, it was when we think about marketing we think about television, we think about magazines, and even if you're in the digital age, what we have is in so many ways, it's a descendant, right? Of that style of marketing, and where does that style of marketing come from? It literally comes from Mad Men, right? It comes from white male executives on Madison Avenue making decisions about what America is going to wear and use, and aspire to be, right?

It's very much centered around not only the images and ideals of what they thought America should aspire to, but how they're going to experience it, right? Because marketing in so many ways, it's about storytelling and what kind of stories are you going to tell? How are you going to tell them? Using what kind of medium?

Mediums, media. And so I think a lot of ideas that you take for granted about how you have to speak in marketing, how you have to position yourself, what you have to offer as a dangling carrot to people I think

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comes from that corporate ethos that was very much intentionally defined and crafted in those Madison Avenue offices, right? This might actually not be accurate, but men having martini lunches like Don Draper. I don't know. Probably pretty accurate, right?

Kara: It sounds plausible. It sounds plausible.

Simone: Yeah, and the thing is, one other thing that I noticed from living in Korea is that wherever is the center of cultural hegemony in the world is where all the trends just radiate out, so what were Korean advertisers doing, for example? Korean advertisers doing in the '60s. They were looking to what people in Manhattan were doing, and what people in LA were doing, San Francisco and Paris, right?

I see the reverberation of the power of the ideas that happened in the hegemonic center, and you want to question where does this come from? Why was this crafted in this way? I think, maybe if I thought about it more, I'd have more examples, but I think you see a lot of that in marketing, right?

Kara: I'm just thinking of this horrifying marketing example I remember from my 20s, which is just so upsetting. It was a Dunkin' Donuts ad, some kind of coffee chain, and they were advertising a drink that was caramel colored, that involved milk, and they called it a Mulatto.

Simone: Oh, gosh.

Kara: Yeah, so if you know anything about history you would know that Mulatto was a pejorative term used to describe people of certain racial and ethnic backgrounds, and mixed heritage, in America and the American South. I'm pretty sure it's possible it's also used in other countries, but it has very intense racist overtones, and so to me that's an example.

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Yeah, you could call that being conscious of racial relations, but also just basic history. I feel like if you were exposed to, you understood anything about American history, it would set off a flag that, that was an insane name for a coffee drink.

Simone: You saying that it also - speaking of Mad Men and everything, when ad culture really blossomed, really burgeoned, was from I think the '50s on, when American consumerism really started burgeoning with the development of the American modern economy, and I think very much the way you got people to buy things that weren't essential, like this brand of detergent, this vacuum cleaner, this random orange juice the models prefer, whatever, right? Was by selling them an ideal of what their lives would be like. An ideal of who they'll become.

I'm this kind of person when I smoke this kind of cigarette, and that kind of aspirational you can become who you want to be. You can craft an idealized life, the best version of yourself and your family, through purchasing, right? And so that's what these people were selling, and so that, now that I think about it, makes a lot more sense, when you consider the history of capitalism, when you consider the history of consumerism as led by the United States in the second half of the 20th century, and if you think about it a lot, that's how a lot of coaching is sold as well, right?

You buy coaching, and then you'll attain this vision of your life, when you have six packs and whatever it is, so that's another way that historical context plays into it.

Kara: That's actually a good example, because why did we have all this additional stuff all of a sudden? Because of the ramp up in manufacturing

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during World War II, which is a historical context too. I think there are so many ways in which just understanding the - obviously, what we need to call this podcast is something about context. It's context, contextual, because...

Simone: By the way, it's episode two, Kara, and I haven't decided what this is...

Kara: What this is called. This is like having a baby you don't name for six months, which actually is what some cultures do. Yeah, but this context, this not having that context, and I think to use an intense example, but one I just think is so fascinating, because it shows us how our thoughts change over time, right? This is what I was just saying.

Some cultures actually don't name a child for a while, because infant mortality used to be so high, and so I think all the time and coaching about the idea that our culture these days, one of the things you will hear always is that a child dying before a parent is unnatural, right? That it's this terrible, unnatural thing. It's a violation of the natural order. It's something no one should ever have to experience.

I am obviously not at all doubting that it is a terrible grief to experience, but I just think it's fascinating to think about the fact that, that's a purely modern conception, until improved nutrition basically, and antibiotics. Most people who had children experienced losing one or more of their children in childhood, right? Infant mortality was extremely high.

Now, that doesn't mean it was not sad and terrible, and grief stricken for them also, but it was not considered abnormal or a strange thing to have happened. It was in fact extremely commonplace, and I think that example

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is very powerful for me, because it seems so intrinsically true to people that it is a completely unnatural tragedy that should never happen, because of a change in historical circumstance.

We now have a completely different belief about the natural life cycle and what should happen, and I always think about how in Judaism you say, traditionally you say Kaddish, which is the prayer for the dead for your parents for a year, because you only have two parents. You only do that twice, and as we established, we've been around 6,000 years. It's been a long time.

A lot of time right before, and historically you only say Kaddish for a child for 30 days, because that's how flipped that assumption was, and again, I'm not minimizing anybody's experience in losing a child, but I just think it's fascinating for us as coaches, to take what we hold to be so obvious and deeply held true, and having that historical context. It's just another way to help you wiggle your brain.

It's almost like we can do all of the logical reasoning we want, and seeing the ways the brain seems irrational to us, and all of that, but it's still our brains doing that, and so the more context we have, the more education we have, the more awareness we have of how things have been different in other times and places, the better equipped we are to challenge what seems obvious and true.

Simone: Since you spoke about children, related to that, which I know you have a lot to say about this, is this idea that we marry for love. We get into romantic partnerships for love, and this idea that our partners are supposed to make us happy, and that we're supposed to find happiness and fulfillment. Not just in our spousal relationships, but also at work as well. So

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for most of human history you did not marry to be happy. That was not a thing, and if somebody said, "My husband doesn't make me happy," in most cultures, most places would have been like...

Kara: What are you saying? That's a nonsensical statement, right.

Simone: Right, because that wasn't the point, because there was such high infant mortality, you had to get reproducing real early, right?

Kara: Right, and it was an economy. You have the household economy. It's an economic transaction.

Simone: I think a lot of Americans, you can tell me what you think about this, I think a lot of Americans look at the era before marriage was about romance and love and fulfillment, and all your dreams coming true, and all this. I think people look at that period and think pity that...

Kara: Totally.

Simone: Oh, how bleak, how unromantic and pragmatic, that you have to marry for pragmatic reasons. But actually, I joke with my husband that we had an arranged marriage, even though we totally didn't, just because my husband is my mom's best friend's son and his parents really pushed us together, and that's how we got to know each other, so we joke that we're in an arranged marriage. In my culture, in Korean culture, a lot of marriages were arranged.

That was pretty normal, up until even as recently as my parent's generation. And I know that in other cultures it's still very much the norm, and my husband and I spend a lot of time talking earnestly about the value of something like that. We married for love, but we're like you know what, I

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could really see how an arranged marriage, we could see the wisdom in that. We could see the value in that. How that could serve individual lives and the family so much better, and so we have real discussions about that, and I wonder, if Americans gave...

I'm sorry, I'm calling it Americans, but not just Americans, but everyone. All of us who are immersed in this mainstream Western modern way of thinking, to really think about what if our way, all the things that we take for granted, it's not better? There's nothing more enlightened about it necessarily. It's just different, and what would it be like when I thought about all the problems in my life, and my desires about I want to meet this kind of person, have this kind of family?

I'm not saying you have to change them to, I don't know, fit some other culture or whatever. You want what you want, but know that these aren't intrinsic to humanity. These are cultural, these are contextual, and you have a choice as to what you think things mean in your life, right?

Kara: Right, and it's historical, and we talked about this in the Advanced Certification, that the sort of development of this obsessive fixation on romantic love and marriage as being a woman's highest calling, there's been along ideology of marriage, or at least motherhood, as being a woman's highest calling.

But it's basically around the time that women began to be able to make money for themselves after the industrial revolution, and all of these people moved to big factories away from their families and were independent that we start to see the evolution of this idea that we keep the part where a woman's highest expression is to be a mother and a wife, but then we add this part, since the families are no longer just arranging this, or you're not

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just marrying whoever was in your village or whoever your parents tell you to.

Now, we add this element that it's also her highest emotional fulfillment is to be chosen by the right man for this purpose, and so this is some of the deepest work I have done on myself, and the idea that we can just say, well, no, I just want to fall in love and have kids. There's nothing culturally creative about that at all.

It's just bananas. It's just completely not true. I'm not saying anybody shouldn't. I've been in love. It's delightful. It's incredibly infatuating. You have a lot of chemicals in your brain. It's a good time, but we talk to ACFC about how romantic love used to be considered a huge social problem and danger, and people wanting to have sex with people that they had not already gotten married to was the biggest social problem that everybody had to...

Simone: Even within marriages, I think it was a little bit suspect...

Kara: Yeah, like you should be liking that so much. There's the Christian element...

Simone: Right, what is wrong with you?

Kara: Woman's fertility.

Simone: That you're feeling all these carnal desires, or...

Kara: Right. Again, yeah. Also, depending on your cultural context, but if you don't understand any of that, then when you're coaching someone and they're like, "Just everything in life is better with a partner," and you don't

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know that there's - of course, you might be able to be like yes, that's a thought, and that can be helpful, but if you can explain to your client yes, that's a thought, and here's all this historical context that shows that, that has not always been true. People didn't always believe that. Here's when people started believing that. Here's why. It had to do with the creation of advertising, and then it had to do with...

Simone: The white middle class.

Kara: Right, the white middle class, and then it had to do with the Victorian Angel of the House, and it had to do with racism, and it had to do with De Beers being like, "Fuck, we've got to sell a lot of these white stones that we have." There's a lot that goes into your experience of just being like, well, but if someone doesn't propose to me with a diamond, I will never feel complete.

Simone: Similarly, about how a lot of our clients can feel like they're less than, they've somehow failed in their lives if they're not feeling orgasmic about their work every day, right? They're supposed to be fulfilled in their work, and it should be an expression of their passion and their greatest personal whatever, right? And that is also...

First of all, for most of history, humans did not have a choice as to what their occupation was. It was just given to you, and this idea that one, you can choose, is incredibly new to the human brain, and just the economy has never been nearly as complex as it is now. I think for most of human history economies are so much simpler, which means that there is such a greater dizzying diversity of paths and options, so it's like - maybe not the best metaphor.

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Taking somebody who's been starving and had only one kind of food their entire life, and like here's a buffet of every single kind of cuisine from the entire world. Now, you have to figure out what makes you happy. It doesn't make sense.

Kara: Right, and the idea that work is an avenue for emotional fulfillment is a relatively new idea in human history.

Simone: Very new.

Kara: Right, and certainly tied to capitalism and to Americans in particular. I was thinking about this when you were talking about marriage. Yes, it's Western, but it's also American. Many countries in Europe, marriage is just not - people partner for a long time without getting married, and don't even consider getting married. The fixation of marriage in particular is partly driven by history, and then also the wedding, the economic complex. There's an entire industry devoted to this, so having some perspective, and none of this is to say that you shouldn't want to get married. If you want to have kids, if you want to have fulfilling work...

Simone: Or find fulfillment in your career, right.

Kara: Whatever. Right, but to the extent that our job as coaches is wiggle a loose tooth in the brain, until you get some traction basically. I feel like all of this, the more context you have, the more examples you can have, the more you can show your clients you don't think this, because it's true, and you don't think it by accident. Here's how you think it.

Simone: And I think it'll help people have more grace for themselves, as we figure out how to live life. I think that a big thread here is that the human brain is not used to having this many choices of partner. I just saw A

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Fiddler on the Roof at the theater. It's a musical theater production that's on my mind. It's you married whoever your father told you you were going to marry.

Kara: Yeah, or whoever you happened to have sex with and got caught with.

Simone: Exactly. Right, so the human brain is literally not used to having this much choice as to whom you meet, who you have sex with, who you partner up with, and we're not used to having this much choice as to where to live, right? And that was also not an option for most people. You just lived wherever you were born, and you were lucky if you ever made it to the next town over, right?

We are not used to having a choice of livelihood, having a choice of education, and so it's like our human brains in our age are bombarded with a million choices that we have not been evolutionarily equipped to handle, so if you feel like it's overwhelming, if you feel like there's a million, if you feel frazzled, it's not because you have the wrong thoughts. It's because of the reality, right?

You just have to, because of history, and if you have more grace for yourself, then maybe you get some freedom from the idea that there is one right way and that you're missing it somehow, and you forgive yourself when you feel like things are hard, and you have to put a lot of thought and effort and coaching into figuring out the kind of life you truly want to live. It's not as straightforward. Things are not as straightforward as they used to be.

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Kara: Yeah, and I think also just having that grace for yourself of this is why it's so hard for me to shift these thoughts. This is another thing, so I was coaching somebody the other day on, who's really beating herself up for having text message anxiety and dating, which a lot of the work that I do on that is about, it's all these different threats. It's the what are you making it mean? The fixation on having a romantic relationship and it being about your value, and then there's also the sort of...

One of the things we didn't even talk about, we could have, is that I just got asked on a podcast, "Don't you think that cellphones are ruining us forever?" And I was like, "Every time humans develop a new technology, we have a technology panic," right?

Simone: Yeah.

Kara: When people invented the telephone, everybody freaked the fuck out, because people were going to stop writing letters, and...

Simone: When people built cars.

Kara: Yeah. Everybody's going to become illiterate, right? If you can just call someone, you're not going to be writing letters, and then the whole civilization's going to collapse, and when they invented printing, it was like you could just print a bible. You're not going to have a monk write it. That's going to - seriously.

Simone: Yeah.

Kara: Right, but if you know that you can have so much more - it's like having a historical perspective. Just helps you take everything a little bit

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less seriously. That's why I feel like, a lot of Jewish humor is about that too, but it's just like, listen. We're not the first...

It's like every generation I feel like thinks they invented all their human problems. All of their - like we invented sex. We invented having sex with people you're not married to. We invented having problems. We invented whatever. It's just like, if you just look backwards, I think what's astounding is how little humans have changed.

You look at the paintings at Pompeii and you're just like, well, yeah. That's about the same sex graffiti I see in the bathroom at the student bar. This is all pretty much the same, and to me that's so comforting. I think that's the plus side of this ahistoricity is that yes, you get some of that American optimism and belief that you can change the future, and things can be different and new.

Simone: Innovation.

Kara: Yeah, but the downside is that you cut yourself off from the real peace that there is to be found I think for when you - maybe I'm just getting older, but in seeing yourself as part of a long history. There's a grounding to that. I feel like the pandemic has made me feel like oh, wow. I'm going through something that humans have gone through for thousands and thousands of years. This is such a human experience that I hadn't had before, and I was just so lucky that I got to experience it and survived it when many people didn't, so I'm not taking that lightly. It's not like yay, pandemic, now I feel closer to history, but...

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Simone: Yeah, and also I think that there is a lot of peace and comfort weirdly, in knowing that, listen, every generation of humans thought they were going to fix the world, right?

Kara: Yeah, and/or that the world was going to end, right? First, it's overpopulation. Then it's the Red Scare. Now, it's global warming. Humans are always convinced the world's going to end.

Simone: We're always convinced the world's going to end. We're always convinced the problems we have now are the biggest problems we ever had, and that we always have an idea of like - people have different ideas. This is going to be the thing that fixes history. The communist revolution of workers all over the world. We're going to achieve perfection in the world, or everybody's going to convert to Christianity, and then we're going to have peace, so every generation has an agenda, and I think it's not a bad thing.

I think it's a reaction to the inherent imperfection and pain and toil of being alive on planet Earth, but I think we have those ideas about ourselves too. If we can look at our own agendas for ourselves, how we perfect ourselves, our agendas for society, how we can perfect society, and it's not that we stopped trying to make the world better and make ourselves better, but when you can look at it like yeah, this is just also part of the human experience, to try to make things better, and also to be disappointed and fail.

Kara: Right. There's that context of, okay. This is people have been trying to solve the problem of being a human and what humans...

Simone: Forever.

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Kara: Each other forever, yeah. Maybe I don't have to solve the whole thing, so I do feel like we should be like, if you're listening to this, and you're like, "Fine, I'm sold. I never listened to history class, but maybe this stuff would be useful," I don't think - what are we saying? I don't think you need to go get a history PhD, although there are probably...

I feel like in the pandemic everything went online. There probably is some sort of History 101 at Yale class you can now take online, but I feel like I learned so much of the random history that I know, also just from reading news articles or reading a New Yorker article.

Simone: Just being curious.

Kara: Reading a book, yeah. Just be curious. There's an amazing podcast out right now about Sappho. I'm learning so much about Greek culture. Ancient Greek culture, and what it was like back when Sappho was alive, and ancient poetry. Some stuff of that is going to turn up...

Simone: Listen, Kara. Not everybody's going to relate to that. People aren't going to be like, "Let me just randomly look up a podcast about Sappho." That's very unrelatable, okay?

Kara: I just was going to say scroll through a podcast list and see if something...

Simone: Here's my advice, is to start being curious about things that are closest to you. What are you already interested in? What are you already a part of? And then start being curious about that.

Kara: Talk to your grandparents.

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Simone: Talk to your grandparents, yeah.

Kara: Ask them if they know stories from their grandparents. Now you're four generations back already.

Simone: When I first started questioning the teachings of the church as it was fed to me by church when I was little, was when I started actually learning about church history, and I was like wait a second. The bible wasn't always what it is now, wait. People just changed their minds about whatever doctrine is. Then how do I know how to trust this one? Wait, what? It got me thinking a lot more critically about it, just because, and it's something I was already into.

You're asking me to believe this for my eternal soul, and you guys change your minds about it every few centuries. What? Whenever you're curious, just look it up. What's the historical context. What happened here? And there are so many -I actually think that some podcasts and more popular resources might be more useful than...

Kara: Drunk History. Okay, that's relatable. There's a comedy show on TV where they get experts drunk, and then ask them to talk about their historical expertise.

Simone: That's really funny, yeah.

Kara: It's actually history, so watch Drunk History, but I also think part of what we're trying to do is give people permission. We all know something about something, right?

Simone: Yeah.

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Kara: Giving people permission to bring that into their coaching...

Simone: And be nerdy about it.

Kara: And be nerdy about it, and maybe your thing isn't history at all. Maybe you're really into identifying plants and you could come up with some great plant examples, but you then being like, well, these are the five questions I'm supposed to ask in my coaching. I don't want them to think I'm the weird plant lady. Bring in whatever context you have to offer. That's only going to make your work richer.

Simone: I want to say for the longest time I discounted the Korean parts of my experience, because I thought it didn't match with the version of coaching that I was taught. I didn't think about my own, the threads of my history and my heritage that are based in Confucianism and Buddhism, and our folk traditions, and it was like wait, hold on a second. Why am I discounting all of this as irrelevant, when this is a big part of a lot of human being's experience on Earth, right?

Kara: Right.

Simone: I want to encourage you to ask questions like that too. What parts of yourself, of your heritage, of your world are you compartmentalizing, because you're like, well, that doesn't belong in coaching? Well, what if you started asking questions about it?

Kara: Right. If you whitewash your coaching, then you're just making yourself amenable to coaching only people who are also whitewashing themselves basically, right?

Simone: We don't want to do that.

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Kara: Yeah, we don't want to do that. I know, and I think we're going to talk more about this in a later episode, but I had the same thing with Brooke once - Brooke Castillo, my teacher, and you also certified through her school. On her podcast, before I even worked with her, I sent in a question about, when she used to read questions on her podcast. Probably episode 10 or something. About this thing that she taught about, how things are perfect, right?

The way things have happened is perfect, which is a very Christian idea. It's very not a Jewish idea, and I struggled with that for years, before I finally was like you know what? I just don't believe this and this isn't what I'm going to teach, and that of course...

Simone: I'm allowed to not believe in what my teacher's teaching, because I'm bringing a different experience. It doesn't make her wrong. It doesn't make...

Kara: Totally, right. That resonates. Some people find so much peace in that and those people go that way, and then the people who resonate with me are the people who are like, yeah, that's some bullshit. Genocide wasn't perfect. Slavery wasn't perfect. Mass rape of women wasn't perfect. I don't believe this shit was perfect.

We could have a whole other conversation about what, that's not what anybody's who's saying things are perfect to me that suffering doesn't happen. But it's just the whole concept that's like whatever the world's like is perfection, is this very Christian concept, and it's okay to just be like...

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Simone: It gives you permission to have your own ideas, to investigate them and explore them, and I think that's what it's all about. You're a very smart person and you have your own ideas, whoever is listening.

Kara: Yes. Everybody listening, that's true. All right. That's all we've got today.

Simone: Cool. Good talk.

Kara: Hopefully we sold you on the idea of history.

Simone: Yeah. Let us know what you think.

Kara: Don't let us know. Don't leave a comment. Don't DM us.

Simone: Well, I want people to retweet us and repost.

Kara: Oh, retweet. I think we have to tweet for people to retweet us.

Simone: Oh, that's true. We don't tweet. Whatever. Re-Instagram. Whatever. I don't understand. Share us.

Kara: If you're enjoying this, we should do some basic marketing. If you're enjoying this, share it with another coach.

Simone: Leave a review.

Kara: Leave a review. We're not going to tell you how. Figure it out.

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If you've enjoyed listening to this podcast and all humor aside, you understand that in order to be the best coach you can be, you need a deeper understanding of the history, the politics, the sociology, the cultural framework, and the critical theory that has informed everything we've talked about on this podcast, then you're going to want to check out the Advanced Certification in Feminist Coaching.

This is the only certification in the coaching industry that offers the depth of social justice and critical analysis with the most transformative life coaching tools available. I always say, if you try to coach a woman without understanding this stuff, you're bringing a butter knife to a sword fight.

If you want to get on the waitlist for the Advanced Certification in Feminist Coaching, you can text your email address to +1-347-997-1784. And that's +1-347-997-1784. Just text us your email, you will get prompted for a codeword, and the codeword is just ACFC. Just those letters. All caps, all together like an acronym. ACFC.

Or you can visit unfuckyourbrain.com/acfc. Again, all one word, unfuckyourbrain.com/acfc to join the waitlist. If you are at all interested, I highly recommend doing this because last time we opened registration it sold out from the waitlist in a few days before we even emailed my whole list about it or posted about it publicly.

So there's a lot of pent-up demand building, which is amazing, and it just makes me so happy to know that so many people want to bring this feminist coaching perspective to their work. I want to make sure that if you are interested, you get on the list now, whenever you're listening to this so that you're notified for the next time we open because it does fill up really, really fast. Alright, I'll see some of you there.

[Outside the White Box with Kara Loewentheil and Simone Seol](#)

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Hey, this is Simone. If you're a life coach and you want to be as good at marketing as you are at coaching, you've got to get on my email list. I'm going to be honest, it's got a bit of a cult following and if you're into doing things your way, as opposed to following somebody else's rules, and you don't mind me cursing a little bit, you're going to love my letters to you.

Sign up now at the link in the show notes and I'll send you a list of some wacky principles I followed to make my very first \$100,000 in my coaching business with an ADHD brain. I'll see you in your inbox.