

# UFYB 233: Curiosity, Compassion, and Trauma Treatment: A Conversation with Gabby Bernstein



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Kara Loewentheil**

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## **UFYB 233: Curiosity, Compassion, and Trauma Treatment: A Conversation with Gabby Bernstein**

Welcome to *Unf\*ck Your Brain*, the only podcast that teaches you how to use psychology, feminism, and coaching, to rewire your brain and get what you want in life. And now here's your host, Harvard Law School grad, feminist rockstar, and master coach, Kara Loewentheil.

My chickens, I feel like 2022 has been a lot. I don't know about you, we're like halfway through April. I feel like it's already been a whole year and my brain hasn't even caught up yet with 2020 and 2021, even the end of 2019 never really got a chance to process. I know that we are all feeling a little burnt out these days. But I also know that no matter what's going on in the world, our brains are where we can make a difference in our experience of the world.

Unless you are much more powerful than me in international relations and public health, you cannot solve the pandemic or the war in Ukraine or anything else tomorrow. But you can make a difference in your thought process tomorrow and you can do something about how you feel in the world and take steps that will help you manage your mind so that you have more energy, more resilience, less overwhelm, less burnout.

And so I know that all of us are feeling this way, many of us are feeling this way, and that is why I have created a brand spanking new offer called the 2022 Burnout Breakthrough Challenge.

It is my newest, my best work on emotional resilience, on dealing with physical and emotional fatigue, on how to stave off burnout or heal it and repair it even after it's already begun. And so we are not quite ready to share all the details with you yet but we will be soon. And here's what I want you to know, you need to get on the waitlist to get all the information about it. Okay?

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So, you need to go to [unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch](https://unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch) or text your email to +1-347-997-1784 and then when you're prompted for the codeword you reply with The Clutch, two words. Or one word, either way. +1-347-997-1784, codeword is The Clutch. Or [unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch](https://unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch).

That's going to put you on the waitlist both to hear about the challenge and for The Clutch because we all know that since the main thing that helps with burnout and overwhelm is learning how to manage your mind to create more time in your week, to create more emotional energy, to reduce your anxiety, all of that we also do in The Clutch. And so we are actually going to be opening The Clutch again soon and that too, you need to be on the waitlist.

So if you have been thinking about joining The Clutch and were waiting for us to reopen, if you want to learn more about the Burnout Breakthrough Challenge or both, you need to go to [unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch](https://unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch) or text your email to +1-347-997-1784 and respond with codeword The Clutch. When you get promoted it can be one word or two words, not case sensitive, doesn't matter. Just send us The Clutch and we will make sure you are on the waitlist and that means you will have first dibs when we introduce the 2022 Burnout Breakthrough Challenge and when we open The Clutch doors again.

Okay my chickens, I almost feel like I could just be like, I'm talking to Gabby Bernstein. And then I won't have to say anything else. Because if you have been around self-development for more than 30 seconds, you have heard of her. I'm actually super excited to have her on the podcast because I would be fascinated to see if we have a lot of overlap or if we attract very different kinds of people. So, I'm really excited to have this conversation.

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So, for those of you who have been living under a rock, Gabby Bernstein is a New York Times bestselling author. She's a motivational speaker. She's a spiritual leader and podcast host. She is a New York Times bestselling author and has written nine books. I think the titles people might be most familiar with are *The Universe Has Your Back*, *Super Attractor*, *Spirit Junkie* are some of her biggest. But she has a new book out called *Happy Days* which we are going to talk all about on the show. I'm just thrilled to have you here. Is there anything else you want people to know about you?

Gabby: I am a mom to a three year old and a mom to a kitten called Jimmy Blue.

Kara: What a great name for a kitten. That's the kitten's name, not the child's name I assume.

Gabby: Child's name is Oliver.

Kara: Also, a great name.

Gabby: A good one, right, Ollie. Ollie Blue.

Kara: Kittens are really – I'm amazed you get anything else done. I think if I had a kitten I would just watch it 24/7.

Gabby: Whenever I try to meditate she just bites the shit out of my feet. I haven't had a proper meditation in weeks because this little girl just bites my hands and feet. And she wants to play. She's a [crosstalk] cat.

Kara: The universe was like, you're too good at this, let's add some – let's add a little distraction. Now try with a cat biting you. So cute. So, we are going to talk all about what you do in this book. But I wanted to start off by asking you about something that I talk a lot on the podcast and my listeners

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have heard me talk about what is trauma, what is not trauma, when it's useful to think about trauma in different ways. But I'm always interested in kind of any psychological concept that gets into the mainstream and then gets understood in a lot of different ways by different people.

And so, then people are trying to have conversations about mental health in which they are not even necessarily talking with the same definition about what the thing is that they're experiencing. And you make a distinction between trauma small t and trauma big T in this work. And I would love to hear kind of what your thoughts are on that, how you differentiate between those. And why you think it's important to have that differentiation.

Gabby: Sure, yeah. Well, a big T trauma would be the experience of maybe being abused, or having a sexual assault, or extreme neglect, or living through a catastrophic event. Whereas a small t trauma could be being bullied, which is ultimately can turn into a big T trauma. A small t trauma could be told you're not good enough, or you're not smart enough, or to experience just not feeling seen by your parents as a kid. And we all have trauma, it's just period, end of story, we've all had had trauma.

And in most of our lives I think people have never taken on that word as their own because the word comes with stigma and shame behind it. But these days all of our coping mechanisms aren't working anymore. We are pretty rocked to the core. We can find ourselves in very destructive patterns. And so, a lot of that has been the result of COVID. And then of course now being the witness of war online and being alive at this time. So, we're not immune to trauma. Living through this experience is trauma.

And then when we feel unsafe in our world it will activate all those unresolved traumas from our past, big T or small t. So, I imagine your listeners are like, yeah, my shit got kicked up in the last two years. And my

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prayer, at the beginning of the podcast you asked me, “Well, is there anything else you want to talk about other than this book?” And I said, “No, I just want to talk about the book.”

And it’s not because I’m on the book tour and it’s not because I want to sell books. And if I could, I would drop books out of an airplane and just let them land in people’s hands. Because I just want people to get to this guidance. I suffered for so many years with unresolved trauma and now I’ve come out the other side and I’ve lived to tell what that freedom and inner peace looks like. And what it means to truly live with happy days. And I just, I want it to get into the hands of as many people as possible.

Kara: Yeah. So, can you tell us a little bit about that, what led you to write this book and what that journey was like for you?

Gabby: Yeah. Well, you mentioned my other books, so I share very openly in a lot of my other books about being an addict. I was a cocaine addict. I got sober at 25. And in my sober recovery I started to get very spiritual. But I also was leaning on other addictive patterns like workaholism, and codependency, and controlling mechanisms. And eventually I was like, why am I so extreme, and scared, and anxious all the time, even amidst writing, at that point maybe half a dozen books. This was when I was 36 years old, I started to really contemplate, what the fuck is up with me?

And I began to start cracking into this very scary place. And I was having meltdown after meltdown and my mantra was, I can’t go on like this. When ultimately I had a dream and in the dream I remembered I was an adult confronting that I had been sexually abused as a child. And the dream was so real and so scary that I just was just like, no way, push that away, don’t go there.

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A few days later I was in my therapy and my therapist and I were having a conversation and the acceptance of that memory came through. And not all the pieces of the memory, not all the stories, but the acceptance. Yes, this fucking happened to me. And it explained everything, it explained why I was such an addict. It explained why I was so anxious. It explained why I was never able to be present. It explained that I was seeking so far into my spiritual practice to find safety. It just explained everything.

And that began the journey of undoing the traumas from my past so that I could be free right here right now with you in this present moment. And in 2016 I knew I wanted to write this book but there was no way I would write it until I was on the other side of it. And in 2020 I started writing it. And here we are two years later and it's out.

Kara: Wow. This is obviously a big question and I want to bookmark, I want to come back to the safety fear thing because this has come up for me recently in some of my own kind of work on trauma, and control, and safety, as you were going through it. And okay, we've got to live and experience it before can write about it and teach it. What do you think were the kind of biggest contributors to your ability to move through and process that? Was it traditional therapy? Was it some of your spiritual work? Did you find that you needed a new set of tools or were the tools you already had kind of applicable?

Gabby: No, I needed a new set of tools. The spiritual foundation that I had established was going to be the throughline throughout the entire recovery process. And really keeping me safe and guided along the way. And I believe that my spiritual practice, and my spiritual guidance, and my connection to spirit guides. And all of the truth that I know to be true for myself led me one step at a time to the right therapist, and the right practice, and the right book, and the right modality, and the right spiritual practice one step at a time. It was all guided.

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So, I know that that was all there. But the deeper healing came through therapeutic work. And that therapeutic work had already been established before I remembered in the therapy that I have had. My therapist, I joke around with her, I'm like, "Who do you think is going to play you in the movie?" Because she's such a big role in this book. And I have been guided with her through a therapy known as Internal Family Systems therapy which is otherwise known as IFS.

And IFS has been extraordinarily transformational for me, so much so that I got trained in the Level 1 training and will continue my education with IFS far, far, far beyond Level 1. And can use it now, really can use it in my practice and write about it. And that Internal Family Systems therapy is really about recognizing all the parts of ourselves. And becoming the internal leader in our system, or connecting to the internal leader in our internal system. And then I bring EMDR, which is Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing.

And EMDR is designed to relax the nervous system through bilateral brain stimulation. So, when you're practicing EMDR therapy it's a really great trauma based therapy. Where you have a buzzer in either hand or a buzzer in either ear and that bilateral brain stimulation opens up your window of tolerance to reprocess unresolved traumas in the present moment. And it's fucking awesome, it's so good. And I give EMDR practices in the book that people can start by themselves safely.

And I also mention somatic experiencing. I mentioned I have a whole chapter on somatic experiencing which is a body based trauma therapy that really helps you move the stagnant truncated energy through. And I give a lot of really powerful body based practices in that chapter to help the reader get grounded even in the moment because Peter Levine who is the founder of somatic experiencing said that trauma is the inability to be present.



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And so, when we give ourselves presence in the moment we can start to slowly touch into that trauma and then come back out and touch in. It's a very, very gentle process, can't be ripping off that band-aid too quickly.

Kara: Yeah, I think that's so important because especially I think that my listeners much like me tend to prefer to stay in the intellectual realm. And I think that's what attracts a lot of people to the kind of work I do which is very cognitive and thought based. And for sure the first few years I was doing this work I was like, "I know my tutor keeps talking about emotions in the body but I think I'll just ignore that part and just try to swap all my thoughts around."

But eventually I think you hit on things in your self-work that you cannot just do that with. You can't just change your thought. You are not going to be able to make that shift unless you're willing to be in your body for however long you're currently capable of. That window of tolerance of how long can I be with the sensation before I become kind of so activated that it's no longer helpful. And one of the things that I have found, I'm curious if you maybe would talk about it a different way but if you kind of experience this.

Is that I have been – I did a podcast maybe a month or two ago that was just called What to do When You Don't Know What the Fuck is Going on in your Brain. Because that was the experience I was having was something, I was working through something that was so murky to me for so long. I'm finally now on the other side of but one of the biggest shifts for me was that I had to even start telling myself that it was safe to briefly feel unsafe.

There's such a drive to not feel what feels unsafe or out of control that I think that was one of the things that I was so blocked on is that I kept trying to direct my work towards, okay, I just need to figure out what will make me feel safe. But that whole time I'm telling myself this feeling of being unsafe, or not having control is that's dangerous. So of course, now I'm just setting

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my brain to be terrified of that state which creates even more kind of anxiety. So, I think also for anybody who's listening and is sort of – obviously buy Gabby's book and read it.

And she gives you many practices but I think also for those of you who are like me, are very cognitively oriented. Just teaching yourself that it is paradoxically safe to feel unsafe sometimes is going to be hugely helpful because I was just constantly running away from that feeling of unsafety, whatever that means.

Gabby: We're all running, Kara, we're all running away from the feeling of unsafety. And so, I'll explain to you what you're talking about in IFS terminology and Internal Family Systems terminology. So, we all have traumatized parts of us from childhood that we've exiled, we've just shut them down. We said, lock you up, don't want to ever talk to you again, don't want to look at you. But whenever they get activated when we feel unsafe, when we feel out of control, when we feel – when we enter a sexual situation, whatever it might be, that activates those impermissible feelings.

We immediately go into a place of protection. And the ways that we protect ourselves from feeling that impermissible exiled part become multiple different parts of who we are, known as protectors. And so, in your case you actually mentioned one of your protectors which is intellectualizing, getting in the head rather than the heart or in the body. So, running from the body. So, you have the intellectualizing part, the very bright, smart, you've built up a very strong protector who can really understand things logically. And she's done a great – I don't know if it's a she so I want to give you voice to it.

Kara: Probably.

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Gabby: So, let's call her a she. And she's done a really good job keeping you safe from those deeper feelings. And so, we can thank her and have compassion towards her. But she is keeping you stuck in the patterns of needing to intellectualize rather than go deeper because it's too scary to go there. But in IFS we also all have self. And self is the adult resourced undamaged part of who we are. And self has these qualities of compassion, and courage, and creativity, and calmness, and connectedness.

And when we start to connect more closely to self we can let self soothe the protectors. For instance, maybe in the moment when you're like, I don't want to feel that. And you notice yourself going into this intellectual, get above it kind of place, you could just say to the intellectual part, literally it's a separate part of you, speak to it and say, "What do I notice about that part? Where is it in my body? What does it feel like? Is it fast? Is it slow? Does it have a color? And then what do I know about it? Is it five? Is it female? Where does it live? And then what does it need?"

And when you do those three steps of what do I notice, know and need, you can start to extend curiosity to that part. And in that extension of curiosity, you're bringing self energy to the scared protector.

Kara: Yeah. And I think for listeners who have done any kind of sort of work, whether it's therapeutic or coach, I mean some of this will sound familiar. You may have done it as inner child work, inner voice work, these things overlap in some ways, and the ways that we talk about them. But even if you're listening to this and it resonates with you to just think of – we talk a lot on the podcast about just how do you speak to yourself. How do you meet yourself with curiosity and compassion.

These are I think all different ways of talking about that process, the most important thing is not to be judgmental, shutting yourself down, trying to just

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tough it out, but rather to be able to have that conversation with yourself, whether you are working with somebody who's doing Internal Family Systems therapy. Or you are trying to do your sort of own thought work, the way I teach it. Either way what you're trying to do is on some level learn to speak to these different, whether they're parts, or levels, or thought patterns, whatever they are in a way that is more compassionate.

What are you trying to tell me? What do you want? What do you need? As opposed to I know what should be happening. I know what I should be feeling.

Gabby: Yeah, I think in spiritual conversations and in a lot of sometimes in the intellectual space it can be really easy to sort of override the voice of the protector parts because it's like I don't want to be that judgmental person. I'm going to just forgive and pray. And I've written books about this. So, there's great power in that pivot. But there's another layer that is necessary which is, why do I want to judge right now? Notice, what is it that's in my body? What is it, what do I know about that?

Yesterday I did this on myself and I had been in a setting that was very – a lot of wealth, I was around a lot of wealth. And for me that is an old active [inaudible], because I grew up in a very wealthy town but we had no money. I lived in an apartment. All my friends lived in these big houses. And it was just a lot of less than bullshit. And so, I have stuff around that but I hadn't touched into it in so long. So, I was just doing some IFS out loud to my husband who is just such a beautiful space holder for that.

And I was like, "Okay." I came home from this trip and I was like, "Why am I so hungover and activated? And kind of a little depressed and I don't know why." And so, I just started to notice where that place was in my body. And I was like, "Okay, I'm feeling a little bit depressed. I'm feeling inadequate. I feel like I want to blame them. And I feel shame. I feel some funky feelings

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here. And what do I know about that?" And I started to just get, like just talk it out.

I was like, "What do I know about you?" I was like, "Well, I know that you're young. And I know that you're in high school. And I know that you are on the bus with the rich girls who play lacrosse with you. And one of them just threw an antisemitic slur at you. And you feel like a piece of shit and you feel less than. And then they think that you are separate, and not good enough, and you don't have enough." And I was like, I'm not going to say the names out loud because like God forbid people see.

But I said the girls' name out loud. And I'm like "Oh my God that girls is there right now." And so, I noticed. And then I asked her, "What do you need?" And she's like, "I need a hug." And so not only did I hug myself, I asked my husband for a hug and I asked my son for a hug. And I was like, "Okay, I need a hug." And then really what do I need from you, Gabby? What do I need from self? And I need compassion.

And I started speaking to that part of me and I was like, "Girl, totally, get it. I can see how that would have been so hard for you to be activated in that way. And look how far you've come. And you have nothing to prove to anybody. You've done it. You're here right now. But the biggest accomplishment isn't your success, it's your inner peace, and good job." That kind of self-talk.

Kara: Yeah, totally.

Gabby: But it started with a curiosity.

Kara: It's such a beautiful way of accessing what was coming up for me then. When did this start? Or what is that memory? And meeting yourself in that way. And I think also for people who want to start practicing this, I want

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to say it's not always smooth. I did some of this with actually a coach I was working with, as I was working on this big knot I had been working on. And it was fascinating to see the first time that I did it my visualization of the part of me, the younger part of me.

The coach was like, do you want to, how do you want to interact with her, whatever it was. And I was I was literally like, "I will not hold her hand, she can sit over there." I was like, "We can be in the same room. I don't want to hold her hand." Because I had so much wrapped up around sort of fear of weakness and kind of rejection. And I did the same exercise actually with somebody else a few months later. It wasn't the same exercise but led to the same place. And I was like, "Well, I'll give her a hug."

And it was wild to me to just be like, this is so fascinating. Even though I hadn't been consciously working on that. It's one way of, I think, seeing, and especially for people who are more visual maybe or who are more [crosstalk].

Gabby: It's great for visual.

Kara: Yeah, I've very non-visual so it's even more fun for me. Sometimes I'm like, wow, there's actually, I don't have an image. But it was just this way of sort of almost – it sounds funny to say make it concrete because nothing's actually happening around you. But it's sort of concretizing your relationship to yourself. What are your thoughts about your former self? How did you speak to, probably then you were not that kind and compassionate to yourself because you hadn't learned, not you, you, just one in general.

Gabby: All of us. All of us, yeah.

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Kara: All of us, yeah, hadn't learned that or didn't know that or were just mimicking what we've been taught which for a lot of us was shove it down, don't talk about it. Just stiff upper lip, or ignore it, or whatever. And so, I think going through that I was able to say, even though it is in the past, for me what I felt was happening was I was changing my relationship with the emotions I'd had in the past kind of. I was creating more compassion for my past self, which was [crosstalk].

Gabby: We would say, IFS, sorry, I interrupted you. But in IFS we would say that you are creating a direct access from self, from compassion to the inner child. So that's a process that in the book I write about is reparenting yourself. Because the love that we did not get, the care that we did not get, the soothing that we did not get, the safety that we did not get from our parents, in whatever form that came. We can give to ourselves. We can bring little Kara and little Gabby back to safety in so many different ways all the time.

And when we create that direct access from self to the part, or to the protector, or the child part, whatever we get access to, we can let those parts know that they are safe and cared for in our Internal Family System. It has nothing to do with our family. It's our internal.

Kara: It's not to go get your parents to cooperate. It's the internal system.

Gabby: Internal Family System, yeah.

Kara: Yeah. And I think for anyone listening who – I think sometimes certain words, I think my listeners, probably some of them hear this and are like, "It sounds amazing." And some of them hear the word 'reparenting' and are like, "Oh, Jesus." But whether or not you have some reaction to some of these terms of they sound too woo for you or whatever.

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Fundamentally what we're talking about and this is why I wanted to have this conversation, there's different ways to talk about these things.

But we're fundamentally talking about something that I also teach in different words which is you now can learn how to have a different relationship with yourself. And everything you experienced is part of that person you are now. And you still have, if you had that experience on the bus that's been in the back of your mind somewhere.

Gabby: It's been there, yeah.

Kara: Yeah. You've had thoughts about it, you weren't even aware of. And this is a way you're able to address them.

Gabby: The girl on the bus would show up whenever I was around very affluent people, I was around people particularly affluent people that weren't Jewish because that was the antisemitic piece and I'm not implying that any of these people that I've been around were antisemitic.

Kara: No, no, of course.

Gabby: But there was just sort of this, maybe there was more of a related connection to the affluent Jewish person because I'd been around that in a different format. And so, whatever the storyline is for each individual as we begin to tend to those younger parts of ourselves or the protector parts of ourselves, whatever language you want to use. But as we start to give that compassion and that curiosity, and that courage, and that calmness to ourself in all these ways it's miraculous.

And just to expand upon what you're saying as it relates to the sort of woo woo lexicon and the therapeutic lexicon. In this book I think that my gift has been to be a translator and to take very lofty big metaphysical principles



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and bring them back to Earth. And in this case it's that and taking these big therapeutic principles that people may not find because the podcast were they're speaking about it in clinical terms as too heady. Or just because they didn't get the chance to have the privilege of having a therapist that does that kind of work. They may never get there.

So, in the book I really demystify these therapeutic practices that are so profoundly soothing to our nervous system, to our brain. They allow us to literally create new neural pathways and have this profound experience of neuroplasticity, of just witnessing, holy shit, I can change my brain. And how profound that is when we have the opportunity to witness and experience these practices in a terminology that's more relevant to the individual average person picking up a book that may not be super heady like you and I but wants to hear what they can do to help themselves.

Kara: Yeah. I think that thing we've been talking about that is the throughline, that is the most important thing to me is that sort of gentle curiosity. Whatever framework you're using, whatever language you're going to use, and that's what so many of us didn't get when we were suffering as children, or we had these experiences, or we were, especially if you were dealing with sort of, I think, the smaller t version of just never being encouraged to talk about how you felt, or being whatever, kind of different experiences we had growing up.

I think for so many of us one of the reasons we become someone who doesn't want to experience our emotions is that we were not met with curiosity. We were not met with kind curiosity, [crosstalk] experiences.

Gabby: We were shut down. Yes. And that actually is one of the greatest gifts of my own process. When we talk about reparenting, call it whatever you want but we didn't have the safety, we were not seen. We were not soothed. We were not safe or secure in our own unique ways because

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particularly we've had a different generation of parents that may not have been pulled aside with a stack of Dan Siegel self-help books and knew what to do.

Kara: Right. I mean everybody was doing the best they could with their resources.

Gabby: Old style, old school style of parenting was time out and shut it down, and don't go there, your big feelings don't matter. Whereas this new version of parenting that if you choose to follow it and make a commitment to yourself as a parent and your child in that way is all about the feelings and emotions. It's all about the curiosity. It's all about creating a safe environment internally.

And I spend half of my day just soothing my son, just holding him in his big beautiful feelings. And letting him express himself completely freely. And allowing him to create resilience when he doesn't get what he wants. And all these gifts that I was able to give him. And there's a whole chapter in the book where I turn them on myself.

Kara: Yes. That's what I was exactly going to say is I often find with my students. They'll be like, "Of course, if my child is having a big", I mean sometimes the way we parent is a reflection of how we shut ourselves down. But sometimes we're able to give it to our kids in the way we aren't able to give it to ourselves. And I think that is such a powerful exercise, to just be like, okay, if my three year old came to me crying with this feeling, what would I say? And then what do I say to myself when I come to myself crying with this feeling?

Gabby: That's right.

Kara: And if they're different, that's a place to bring them together.

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Gabby: I've always felt when you notice something's up, what would you say to a child? And it's never what we would say to ourselves.

Kara: A friend of mine who's a coach actually, she just started doing this thing where she put – she has a lot of negative self-talk. And she put up child photos of herself. And whenever she wants to say something mean to herself she looks at the three year old version of her.

Gabby: I love that. Beautiful.

Kara: And it's what I say to her, and I think for her that was really, she was like, "Oh, shit, a lot of the stuff I've been saying that I thought was not mean because it wasn't", I think often what I see in my students also is some people of course come in and the self-talk is so critical, it's very obvious. It's like, you're an idiot, you're stupid, why do you say that, blah, blah, blah. But then a lot of us, especially who have already done some of this work, it's like, no, I'm fine to myself, it's realistic. It's gentler mean self-talk kind of, that can easily pass when you think of yourself as an adult.

But then when you think of your three year old, you would not say that to your three year old. You wouldn't be like, "Well, I'm just being realistic, honey, you're pretty lazy." You would never say that to your three year old. But we think that because it's not you're a worthless piece of shit, it's better and we're being nice to ourselves. So, I think that imagining yourself and other people, imagining your partner as a three year old, or the person who you think is being whatever at work as a three year old.

Gabby: That's right. Seeing the loved ones in our life with that compassion and that care.

Kara: And so many people, that's where we're operating with is basically a three year old level of emotional fluency and tools.

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Gabby: 100,000%.

Kara: And probably less than a current three year old.

Gabby: I mean listen, that's why I said to you, I only want to talk about this book or these principles around the book because right here right now we are witnessing what happens when there's collective trauma that's unresolved, fucking Putin. And sorry for all my eff bombs in the show.

Kara: No, please, it's called Unf\*ck Your Brain, so this is obviously [crosstalk].

Gabby: Exactly, exactly. I do not know why I'm apologizing to you. So, looking at Donald Trump, looking at these players in the world who have just been so blown out. So, their traumas were so extreme that the protector parts that they build up have had such massive destruction, not only to them but to the world. And that's why I said we've got to get this on the individual level right here, right now begin to do the work on ourselves, begin to establish a safer sense of security within, however we get there.

There's a lot of ways to get there. I put a lot of them in the book. But to get there fast, and do the work, and make it a commitment because it is a collective energy field as well. So, let's say this in a less woo woo way. When you and I have this conversation today and you feel hopefully elevated after we've spoken. And I feel really elevated in your presence. I'm going to go and make dinner for my kid and I'm going to be in a good space with him.

And then he's going to feel really good and he's going to be really fun with his dad later. And it all has a ripple effect, particularly with our children. I mean they're just regulating all day based on our energy. And they're all about coregulating with us and we're all about – well, they're no

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coregulating, they're regulating with us and we're bonding to them. But they need us. So, it's not just the kids, it's just every human, but with energy we show up with.

Kara: Yeah. I talk on the podcast all the time about the idea that social change starts with individuals. And if we want to change the world, where is any change coming from? It's coming from a human mind. The more the idea that sort of self-work or thought work is out of touch or just for privileged people, or is just naval-gazing. It's like anything created in the world is created by a human mind. And the more that you are, as you say, able to self-regulate, understand yourself, able to have curiosity and compassion.

That's how you develop it for other people, that's how you have more mental energy. That's how you come up with better solutions. We're not coming up with – you can't solve a problem with the same set of tools and skills that you've built the problem with. You have to have a different perspective in order to come up with a different solution.

Gabby: Well said.

Kara: All of that, the microscale and the macroscale, it's not like we don't need social change. It's just who's doing the social change? Humans with brains. So, if we don't do this work.

Gabby: And we can't do that kind of work, create social change from a place of our exiled child parts. Because if we're leading from that place then a 10 year, or a five year old is leading and that really sucks.

Kara: Yeah. And that's how we get all the burnout. I mean I used to be a social justice lawyer, why is there so much burnout? Because the world is

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very challenging. And if we are not learning how to resource ourselves we're not capable of doing that big work.

Gabby: Right on, what insight you have there. Beautiful.

Kara: Anything else you want to tell people about the book, other than where they can get it? Which you should tell us but I assume it's literally any bookstore in the world?

Gabby: It's why I just love that you went from being a lawyer to go Unf\*ck Your Brain.

Kara: Yeah, I was an abortion rights lawyer and now I'm a life coach. My Jewish parents are very confused by it.

Gabby: Wow, God bless you for being an abortion rights lawyer. I have to imagine that you're still probably outraged.

Kara: It's interesting, we could have a whole other podcast. I have had to do a lot of work on yeah, I went from a very – there's wrong and right, and bad and good, and these people are terrible and we're the good ones. And to become a coach was a real mental evolution.

Gabby: I've met of lawyers that have become coaches, yeah, and particularly in that space, yeah, that's a lot of work to be even in that kind of law to be, yeah.

Kara: Yeah. Well, just build your whole career and then blow it up, do something else. I don't know what I'll do in another 10 years.

Gabby: Beautiful, it's beautiful. It's absolutely beautiful.

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Kara: So where do people find you and the book?

Gabby: Everybody can find me at [deargabby.com](http://deargabby.com). I have a podcast called Dear Gabby. The book is Happy Days: The Guided Path from Trauma to Profound Freedom and Inner Peace. And you can get it wherever you get your books. Go to your bookstore, help them out.

Kara: Go to your local bookstore, also [bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org) is one of my favorites online. It's a website that brings together indie booksellers so if you don't want to order from Amazon, you go to [bookshop.org](http://bookshop.org), works very similarly but all the money goes to indie bookstores.

Gabby: I love that, very cool.

Kara: And then go check out Gabby's social media, including her Instagram, so we'll be doing an Instagram Live the week that this podcast comes out too. So, you want a double dose, as who wouldn't, that's where you can get it.

Gabby: Fun to be with you.

Kara: Yeah, thank you for coming on.

Gabby: Thank you.

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