

Book Journeys Author Interview - Karen Donaldson

Dr. Angela Lauria with Karen Donaldson, author of *Beat the Belly Fat Blues: Mind-Body Solutions for Permanent Weight Loss*

"I think you need someone more than just like helping you with your idea or encouraging you. I think you need a structured program that gently forces you to get it done." ~Karen Donaldson

Angela:

Well, hey everybody! We are back at Book Journeys Radio. I am excited about today's episode. We've got some good stuff for you today. Karen Donaldson is here. She is the author of *Beating the Belly Fat Blues*, uhm, which I actually said correctly without calling it the *Belly Flat Blues*. I would like to have a flat belly problem. Uhm, and so Karen is a registered dietitian, she is a certified personal trainer and Emotional Freedom Techniques practitioner. She's a certified weight loss coach and she has helped hundreds of women all over the world lose weight and keep it off as they learn to love and accept themselves and heal the hurts that cause the cravings and the emotional eating in the first place. If you are a long-time listener of this show, you know this is a topic near and dear to my heart and uhm, *Beating the Belly Fat Blues* was one of our first books and so I am super-excited to welcome Karen Donaldson to the show. Karen, thanks for being here.

Karen:

Thank you, Angela, for having me. I'm totally thrilled to be here.

Angela:

Awesome. Ah, so if you want to follow along with this conversation with Karen, you can go to excelwaitloss.com, that's E-X-C-E-L weightloss.com and learn more about her there. Uhm, but Karen, let's just start by talking about the book. Tell us what it's about and who's it for.

Karen:

Ok, thank you. Uhm, the book is really about for anybody who wants to lose weight and keep it off. Uhm, I do see male clients, the most of the people that I see are female, women, uhm, but it's open to everyone and really what happened is, through the years, I kept hearing the same question over and over again. I'm a dietitian, I'm a personal trainer, people would come to my office to lose weight and I would try to help them and I would, you know, give them the best nutrition knowledge on the planet and help them with their exercise, but over and over I kept hearing, "Okay, I know what I'm supposed to do so why can't I do it?" Like, "Thanks, Karen for that information. That was great but, you know, what the, I get home and stuff happens and then I can't ... or I have these cravings, or all these emotions come up, and it's like ughhh!" And it was frustrating, it was very frustrating for my clients but it was like frustrating for me, too, because I was, like I was doing the same thing. So I could teach people this stuff all day long and have really good meals for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and like 8:30-9:00 at night, I'd pop my butt for the TV, I'm eating popcorn, I'm having chocolate, I'm going, *Oh my God, I can't do it*

either. And so, you know, it was embarrassing but it was mostly frustrating and sad because then, most of my clients would have so much shame and guilt and frustration, and it was, you know, it was breaking my heart, their hearts were broken. And so, I really, I'm so grateful that several years ago I was introduced to uhm, emotional eating, to EFT Emotional Freedom Techniques, tapping, more mind-body solutions for helping people to like lose weight and keep the weight off. And so, what I do now is I help, I teach people how to cut their cravings and how to heal like their traumas or the events that lead to their emotional eating in the first place. Uhm, so they can lose the weight but they can keep it off as well. But then the really cool benefit is that a whole bunch of other stuff gets healed along the way and it's just this beautiful journey so I had to share this with as many people as possible and that is why I wanted to write a book about it.

Angela:

I love it. So let's give people a little bit of a sense of EFT 'cause you've talk about Emotional Freedom Techniques, uhm, and that's a big part of this book. So what is EFT and what does it have to do with weight loss?

Karen:

So EFT, as you said, stands for Emotional Freedom Techniques and I always tell people it's a little bit goofy at first but who cares, because it works and the worst thing that's gonna happen is you're gonna feel more calm after doing a little session of EFT and so, everyone's good with it. Uhm, it basically involves tapping or pressing on some different acupressure points on the body. There's some around the face and on the chest, and uhm, probably about ten points. And as it turns out, when you tap or press on these points, you are actually sending calming signals to a part of your brain called the amygdala, which is the emotion center of the brain. And so, while you're thinking about a trauma or having a craving for a food, or whatever, or maybe you're really angry about something, or frustrated, while you're having that emotion or craving going on, if you're tapping and pressing on these acupressure points, you're actually sending a calming signal to your brain basically to get out of fight or flight mode, (clears throat) excuse me, which is really important. When you're in fight or flight mode, you're making too much adrenalin, you're releasing too many blood sugars into your body from your liver, and you're making a lot of cortisol and so you end up storing a lot of that as fat right in the belly, which is typically where people store fat. So it calms down that fight or flight response but what else it does, is it helps to calm the brain in general. And I tell people that we often have what I call chaos brain. I don't know about you, Angela, where you have like all these thoughts in your head and you can't settle your brain down. Have you ever experienced that?

Angela:

Ohhh, yes! I live there. Haha!

Karen:

Hahaha! Yeah, I know, like that's my second address so...

Angela:

Yeah, exactly. Hahaha!

Karen:

Yeah. When you tap or press on this point, it actually can help to increase the level of serotonin in your brain which is that brain chemical that, aahh, makes you feel calm and settles you down. And so really what happens is that you can use this as a tool basically instead of eating too many carbohydrates because what usually happens...

Angela:

Mmm. The carbohydrates work well, too. I've tried that approach.

Karen:

Well, yes they do. Hahaha! They really do. We know this all too well, both of us. If you ah, if you eat those carbs, you're gonna raise your blood sugar levels and raise your insulin levels, which is fine, uhm, and that's supposed to happen, but you're right. So that combination of brain chemistry also raises the levels of serotonin in your brain and so it does work. Your brain is gonna feel more calm, the serotonin levels are raised, but the problem is you just consumed, you know, way too many carbohydrates--a box of cookies, a bag of chocolates, a huge bowl of popcorn, you know.

Angela:

Who knows where to stop?

Karen:

So yeah, you do feel better for a little while, but then you feel like crap again because you gained weight and you feel bad about yourself and there's shame, and *I'm a loser and I'm a failure*, and then a lot of people actually start the whole process all over again.

Angela:

Mmm, yeah. Well, so...

Karen:

So, yeah, briefly, I tell people, I'm sorry I was just gonna say, tapping is like serotonin without the carbs. That's a good way to describe it.

Angela:

Fantastic! I love that description. Hahaha!

Karen:

Yeah.

Angela:

So your, since your book has come out, what are some of the things, uhm, what are some of the things in your life that maybe wouldn't have happened if you didn't write this book and in your life or in the lives of your readers?

Karen:

Well, in the lives of my readers, it's been an extremely valuable tool because uhm, you know, we just took several minutes to explain what I do and uhm, now I have this very powerful tool. I, you know, I've got, I get to say, it's so cool. I could just say, "Why, I have this book on, you know, emotional eating and you could go to Amazon and you could order my book" and they're like, "Ah, wow, that's cool. You have a book?" And so, you know, immediately for me, it gives me credibility but it helps them feel more comfortable with what I'm doing as well, which is great. Uhm, but then they also have a resource. It's like they can download the book, read it, sit in the living room, you know, 11:00 at night and look this over and kind of get a feel for what I do, and it's a good icebreaker. So then they are much more willing to email me or schedule an appointment. Uhm, I've had many clients say, "Well, I just got online. I saw your book. I ordered your book. Uhm, I really liked what you had to say. You seem really nice so I decided to work with you."

Angela:

Yeah, so what I love about that is you mentioned that there's something a little bit goofy about EFT. If you just see a video or a diagram of where you're gonna be tapping, it's, you know, I think we're used to seeing pictures of acupuncture but acupuncture is a little goofy, like it's something that's really, uhm, I think a lot of people picture Weight Watchers and that you're gonna, you know, wave them in and give them menu choices at points and things. And so, I feel like especially with something like this that's a little bit not traditional, having the opportunity to get to know you through a book must make it feel, you know, safer or easier to take the plunge.

Karen:

Oh, by far. And so in the book, I describe the brain chemistry like I just did with you, with the serotonin levels and the fight or flight response. But then, I also have a chapter where I share some of the stories of women who, and a guy as well, who have used EFT to lose weight and keep it off, and their stories are very, very honest and real and heartbreaking and touching all at the same time. So when people read those stories, they're like, "Oh, my gosh! That is, that is me," "Well, I have that issue," or "Wow, she did it like that. I didn't know I could." I could heal the emotions and then maybe the cravings would start to go away. So, uhm, I love the venue that I have now for sharing the stories of the people who have used it successfully and uhm, just a really nice warm way to let people get to know me and what this is all about.

Angela:

Yeah. So before you wrote your book, was this what you imagined or is it different in some ways than what you imagined?

Karen:

The process of writing the book, or the book, or...? Hahaha!

Angela:

The having a book is, you know like, when you, I think when people imagine like, *I'm gonna be an author*, like they have an image of what things are gonna be like. So I'm just curious for you because you've gone through the program, what's different than what you thought it would be like?

Karen:

Ok. So well, first of all, I would have to confess that when I very first thought of writing a book, it was several years ago and uhm, it was like it would be, I was thinking it would be a hard copy and it would be a who-, really what I have was thousand of copies at my garage and how was I gonna do that and, like the whole thing, it was really, it was overwhelming so I didn't ever write it. But I knew that uhm, it would feel really good to be a published author and so I just tried to stay within like that feeling, uhm, that I would feel good about what I had written, that I would feel good about sharing the message and that of course that it would lend credibility. Uhm, of course I would want more clients to show up because of that so I really tried to stay in the energy of, I knew the energy would be good once I was published. I knew that that would be fantastic. I just didn't know how the hell it was gonna happen, it was so frustrating. And so, when it did happen, like the little details of all of that, it's like, *Oh, that's how that works out*. So but, I gotta be honest and say you, like you did all of that and so I didn't have to... Hahaha!

Angela:

Hahaha! So let's talk about that. So you had, you had an image that uhm, that publishing your book and the process of writing and publishing it was gonna be technically complicated and full of details that maybe you weren't experienced with, uhm and maybe that slowed down your process of how long it took to write your book. Are there other things...

Karen:

Oh it totally slowed it down. I never did it. I didn't do it! I tried like a whole bunch of ... I went to a work-, a weekend workshop, It was gonna happen after that. I'd sit down to write, nothing ever happened. I told my family, you know, "Could you put it out there?" And I'm like, "Yeah, whatever. We've heard this before." I'm like, *Oh my God*. You know so, haha, it's boiled down to zero.

Angela:

So why do you, so do you, in some ways like this was just another, you know, another workshop or another ... Why do you think this program was different? Why do you think you finished your book this time?

Karen:

Oh no, this was not just another workshop.

Angela:
Aaahh.

Angela:

I don't like you thinking I'm just sucking up to you either. This was... you wrote my book I don't have to suck up to you so, uhm, you published it. No, it wasn't because it was uhm, I got to talk with you and I got to work with you and we had, I could tell you knew what you were doing and there was a schedule and there was a deadline, and it was like so exciting to think, *Oh my gosh, at the end of this timeframe, I'm going have a book.* And I was like, like, almost giddy like, *I'm gonna have a book! I'm gonna have a book!* And so I could like even say, at least say to my family and my friends, "Well, yup, I'm writing a book and it's gonna be done on such and such date." And they would look at me like, *What?* Like, "How do you know?" I'm like, "Well, because I signed up for this program. I asked for help and she's gonna help me make it happen." And so I don't even know how people could write a book not doing that. I mean maybe if they could just have the luxury to sit around all day and have all the time in the world, and money and I mean I had a job and family and responsibilities and all that so uhm, I think unless you just had, I don't know how you would do it if you didn't have some guidance. I really don't.

Angela:

Hmm, yeah. So what do you wish that you knew if you could go back and talk to yourself uhm, when you were trying to write a book, what are some of the things that you wish you knew that you know now that it's done?

Karen:

I wish I knew that there were people that would help you. I mean that's the, seriously I wish I knew that you could, you could just like get a coach and they would help you write a book and know they could be done and it wouldn't have to be like that hard. Although I have to say I've heard other people working with coaches and it's not, it still doesn't always happen so I think you need someone more than just like helping you with your idea or encouraging you. I think you need a structured program that gently forces you to get it done.

Angela:

Haha! Gently forces, thanks! Haha!

Karen:

Okay, well, I wanted to say some other words, but whatever! Hahaha!

Angela:

Hahaha! Yes, but the first, uhm, the first couple of years that I started coaching people with their books, I uhm, I, none of my clients, actually I had one client who finished her book.

Karen:

Aahh.

Angela:

Uhm, but that was like for me, it was like this huge point of shame because I had all these amazing testimonials but I was always paranoid that somebody was gonna ask me for the books that we've done.

Karen:

Mmm.

Angela:

And like I barely had, I had one lonely book and my God, ... with one book. And really the impetus behind this program was like, no more learning about how, no more talking about it, like we're gonna do these books.

Karen:

Exactly.

Angela:

And I was very dedicated to that. And I don't think many book coaches are and I know why they're not 'cause I do feel like every month when we have a book launch, it's a little bit of a miracle but, haha, I just wonder how we're pulling this off still but just a lot of prayer.

Karen:

Yes.

Angela:

Yeah. So for you, did writer's block come up or were there times in the process where you were stuck in any way and how did you deal with that?

Karen:

Uhm, yes, writer's block did come up and I think that's again where uhm, where your help was valuable because we, I think you've changed a few things since I've published my book and you have some different formats uh, you know, timeframes and so forth. But the program that I went through, uhm, we were committing to writing a chapter every week and submitting it to you and, and then you would review it, and then, like we were done. And I'm like, "Okay, what do you mean we're done? Okay, but I can't rewrite it like fifty times?"

Angela:

Yeah! Ah, yes!

Karen:

You said, uhm, "No!" And I'm like, "What the hell? No? Why not?" You're like, "Wait a second." So you ha-, you helped us trust that the way that we wrote it was, was good, was like good enough. Not just good enough in the sense of *oh well, it's good enough*, like "No, this is good. This is good enough. This is, you're done." Uhm, and so if you, the pressure, I'll be honest, the

pressure, it's like, "Okay, it's Wednesday. I told Angela I would have this to her by Friday. I have to have it to you by Friday. I'm gonna stay up tonight and I'm gonna get it done and I'm not gonna do something else this weekend." And so, I'll be honest, there were some painful times, but it was worth the uhm, the finished product. Because the painful times were like sh-, were like short and was painful for some weeks, for a few weeks, but then you had a book.

Angela:
Yeah.

Karen:
So, so it was worth it. You could be having pain and put it off and procrastinating for like ten years, but that's painful, too. So, you know, get it, just get it done!

Angela:
Yeah! Okay so let's talk about uhm, for you, with uhm, when you were in those stuck points, one of the things you talked about that helped you, and people who are listening can do this whether you're working with me or not, uhm is that you were on a deadline. So if people were to set up a deadline and make themselves accountable to that deadline, I always have a technique I suggest to people which is, pick an uncomfortable amount of money and make a friend hold it for you. So it could be a hundred dollars or a thousand dollars, whatever seems scary to you to lose and give yourself a chapter and a deadline and say, "If I don't give you my chapter by this date, please mail this check to a political organization or a charity." But that money will be gone and out of your pocket. So let's say somebody is doing that, like you they're on a deadline. Uhm, for you, what percentage of your time were you writing from a place of like, forced and *I'm on a deadline and I just gotta get this done*, and how much of the time were you flowing and you felt like your message was just coming out of you? And how did that balance out?

Karen:
Ooh, that's interesting. I would say more at first I was feeling the deadline like, *Aargh! This is uncomfortable*. But then once you, once I got past that then everything started to flow and it's like, *Oh geez, I should go to bed. Oh well, never mind. I'm gonna keep on writing*. Uhm, so I don't know if I can give a percentage of time.

Angela:
Yeah. No, but I think that the way you explained that was great uhm, because when you just make that decision, *I'm gonna keep writing anyway*, sometimes you just move and like we've all had this happen with, you know, book reports for school or whatever, where it's like, you're struggling at first but when you stay committed to it, uhm, then all of a sudden it's like flowing out of you because you didn't leave that discomfort, which frankly, is another thing that EFT is great for is, when you're in that place of discomfort and you just say, I would rather not be in this place of writer's block or feeling pressure about my deadlines. But if you have tools that you can use to keep yourself calm and committed to what you said you're gonna do, that entrusting that that flow state will come, I think that's exactly what happens a lot of times.

Karen:

It's so funny you said that because I actually did use my tapping, my EFT to like calm myself down to stay, you know, *You can do this, just tap for a moment. Breathe. Calm down your brain.* Because when you're in chaos, friend, you don't have a lot of creativity either. Uhm, and so I didn't want to have any more blocks that way so I would like tap myself into calmness. But what was really funny is I, haha, would, I found myself thinking, *Oh, I wonder. Should I go make myself some popcorn? I wonder if we have any chocolate?* I'm like, *Are you kidding me? You're gonna gain weight writing a book on weight loss. No, no, no you are not!* Hahaha, so, so I...

Angela:

It's so interesting how our brain gives us that information, like right now a chocolate would be ideal.

Karen:

Yes, or Facebook or any other thousand distractions so...

Angela:

Right.

Karen:

I, honestly, I would set a timer on my phone. I wasn't allowed to pick up my phone. I would do hour intervals. I would set a timer. I would put the phone down and away, can't touch it till the timer goes off and do some tapping. And then, once I got into it, like half the time the alarm would go off on my phone and it would start, I'm like, *Oh my gosh, I've been writing for an hour. Oh cool, let's do that again.*

Angela:

Right. I absolutely love that. So any other advice that you would give to somebody who, you know, like you, maybe for them it's been ten years and they've spent hours writing and they've gone to workshops and they don't have a book. Is there anything else that you would want to tell them or share with them as advice to be able to actually get it done?

Karen:

Uhm, I think you gotta get a coach. Obviously, I would say to hire you and work with you because I don't, if it's been that long it's probably not gonna happen. Uhm, so it's time to try something different. I mean kind of like with weight loss, people have tried diets and diets and diets and that's not working, then there really is time to let that go and try some other method. Uhm, I think, you know, you being a coach for helping people write books is what you are like on the earth to do. Maybe in a coach for weight loss, that's what I'm supposed to do so get the help of an expert and you know, it's that old cliché, "Just do it." I mean, just jump in. You, I mean you know, actually I had a family member pass away during that time and I, there were lots, there's always stuff that can come up, uhm and so you want to, there isn't ever a perfect time. So like, jump in, sign up to do it, and commit to it. Uhm, do something different, get a coach, call you,

get the deadline. Go through the, trust the process, uhm and I can't even tell you how good it feels to have it be done. It's like, I'm done, I'm done.

Angela:

Aahh.

Karen:

Yeah, it's so good. I love having a book!

Angela:

So one of the, one of the types of books that we focused on is like your book, we call it a client conversion book. So this is a book that people read, they get to know you better, and then if you have related programs and products, they can buy them from you. So I know for you, one of the things that you offer is a boot camp, the Naturally Thin You Boot Camp which kind of dovetails, if people like your book, that boot camp is a great next step for them, and I think you have one coming up. Do you wanna talk a little bit about that and who it might be for?

Karen:

Sure, that would be great. Yeah, I actually teach, uhm, a Naturally Thin You Boot Camp through EFT Universe and so uhm, it's great to have even more credibility with such an international organization, and I am the weight loss coach for them, and we have a class. There's an informational call about it on Thursday, September 10th and you can get information about it by going to EFT and then number 4, numeral 4, weightloss.com. You can listen into that call for free and find out some more information about that. It's using EFT for cravings and emotional eating, self-sabotage, body image. Uhm, there are six live classes and I am the instructor for each of those live classes and there are numerous audios and videos and materials to follow along with so it's a fabulous program. It's good for experienced tappers but if you're new, it's a great way to introduce yourself to emotional eating. So, or have it...

Angela:

So do you think people, would people need to, do they need to read your book to do this class? Is that required?

Karen:

It's not required. Uhm, it's definitely an adjunct and if they are confused or maybe ... it would give them a lot more information about how emotional eating, really the psychology of food and what happens to all of that. So uhm, they could read the book. Of course I would love it if they did, but if they didn't want to, they could still take the course.

Angela:

Love it.

Karen:

But you also mentioned, too, like for other clients, and uhm, so I have that course that I work with people one on one and generally what happens, if people are wondering how this book would help them like with their business, I think it would help, you know, tremendously. Uhm, so it gives me a lot of credibility. We use part of my book in the boot camp course itself, which is very nice. Uhm, (clears throat) excuse me, but what else will happen is that it's part of a 10-session weight loss package that I offer and so people, uhm, it's just another wonderful tool that you can offer people and use for products that you might already have or something that you wanna develop. It's fabulous.

Angela:

I love it. If you wanna see how Karen Donaldson uses her book in her business, go to excelweightloss.com, it's E-X-C-E-L weightloss.com. You'll see that boot camp, that Naturally Thin You Boot Camp right at the top of the page and if you scroll down on the right, you'll see a copy of her book, *Beat the Belly Fat Blues*. And if you click on that book, uhm, you, it will take you to Amazon. You can purchase it. Uhm, you can also just go to Amazon and search for *Beat the Belly Fat Blues* by Karen Donaldson. Please get her book and also check out how she has incorporated that book into ah, into the business. And of course, uhm, if you find yourself enjoying carbs as much as Karen and I do, reach out to her to find out about that boot camp or other ways she might be able to help you. Karen, thank you so much for being our guest today. This was so fun. It went so fast though. I feel like I could talk to you for another half an hour.

Karen:

I know, me too. And I hope that the message gets out. Uhm, I can't stress enough, people should just call you and work with you. I, you know, like just ... Nike thing, just do it. Just, just call. Only if you want your book done. Now if you don't really care if you get your book done, then don't call Angela, but like, if you do wanna get it done, then you should call her! Haha, so it's pretty cool.

Angela:

... That's totally awesome. Well, I really appreciate that. I love working with you. I'm sure there's another book brewing in there so I know we will talk more soon.

Karen:

Hahahaha!

Angela:

And uhm, and I will encourage people again, pick up a copy of Karen Donaldson's *Beat the Belly Fat Blues*. Uhm, ... next week on Book Journeys Radio, we are on a hiatus. We have finished Season 1 of ^PageUp^ podcast. So if you have not listened to all 17 of our episodes from the first season, go to ^PageUp^ podcast and do a little binge because that will teach you many of the techniques that we use with our authors at the Difference Press. Ah, I think you will enjoy the show and we'll meet you back here for our Book Journeys next week. Thanks everyone!