

SPEAKERS

Jeremy Melder, Karen Downes

Jeremy Melder 00:00

Hello, my name is Jeremy Melder, and I'm the presenter from Beaming Green. Before we start, I would like to acknowledge that this podcast is being held on the traditional lands of the bundjalung people and pay our respects to elders both past, present, and emerging. The beaming green podcast is a podcast that will help you take out some of the stress and confusion about how to live your life more sustainably. We do this by introducing you to inspiring people with first-hand experience and expertise who covered aspects of sustainability, from human interest to environmental perspectives, helping you to thrive and enhance your life, and the lives of your friends and family. Welcome to Episode 25 of beaming green. Today I'm excited to be speaking with Karen Lee Downes. Karen is the founder of the Flourish Initiative, a consulting and advisory service to business. She's also the co-founder of Femme Q, she is also a member of gender equality in Catalyst 2030 is the lead for Deep Collaboration in Bounce Beyond a commitment is to catalyse a necessary shift from the current system of domination to partnership, and to embed the feminine principle that has been missing, into all aspects of leadership to create a flourishing future for all. Over her 35-year career. Karen has built successful companies, and she will share with us some of those lessons. Throughout this interview, I have added her impressive biography for you to view in the show notes. Please join me in welcoming Karen Downes to Beaming Green. Thank you so much for joining us on Beaming Green. I really appreciate your time. I know you've got a very busy schedule.

Karen Downes 02:03

Absolutely. My pleasure, Jeremy. It's so great to be with my fellow Aussie. I'm over here in Costa Rica.

Jeremy Melder 02:12

Yeah, Lucky you ha, in Costa Rica. What I would like to ask you first, Karen, is we first heard you speak on a GEN Eco Village summit earlier this year. And I found your discussion to be for me quite inspiring. And I'm aware that you've built a successful career over 35 years. But I'm really fascinated to find out some of those steppingstones that took you down the path to where you are now. in sunny Costa Rica.

Karen Downes 02:45

Wow, gosh, let's see if I can do a short version. Exactly. Well, I work backwards. I'm here in Costa Rica, because back in March, I live in London. I've been living in London after I moved from Australia to London in 2002. And I back in March last year, I had this moment, an epiphany moment where this question came into my mind. And it wouldn't leave me alone. It bothered me for a week. And the question was, who would I be if I wasn't me?

Jeremy Melder 03:23

Right.

Karen Downes 03:24

Now, that was profound in many ways, because one it asked had me asked the question, you know, why are you bothering me? Why is this question not going away? But I really needed to examine how I'd been constructed. What put me together, how I adapted to the system, as we all have. What did I adopted that needed to be let go of? And these were big questions for me. And I think many people during the pandemic have had these very big moments defining moments where they've asked themselves, these very big existential questions, and you and I shared that earlier for you as well. So, I think we shouldn't ever ignore these big questions. And I think that's what's taken me the path that I've trodden is being pausing and listening to what either is in front of me, what's emerging, and what is the future asking of me? And if I go back a long way to when I first began when I lived in Melbourne, and I didn't finish high school, and I couldn't wait to get out into the world. But I soon discovered that I was in short supply of what I needed, and what I loved. So, I went seeking that and I created my own university, and I studied a multitude of alternative health care disciplines. I went from the physical to the spiritual and everything in between. So, I was an aerobics instructor and had my own business. So, I started being an entrepreneur at 21 and had a team of instructors. I've been taking up the study of anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner's work. And so, I was very much involved in the study, usually three or four nights a week of anthroposophy. In fact, I went to Dornoch in Germany to study the mystery plays. So, my university which was self-designed, which people are now doing, so I'm very excited that I did that back then allowed me not to have the constructs or constraints of the title and the discipline that put me into a sector. But what I did choose is the therapy that I fell in love with, which it was aroma therapy, and I created an aromatherapy company. So, I think Jeremy my steps to where I am today, that was really the starting point, because I realized that if one has a desire, and has a love and a devotion to something, anything's possible, yeah. And I didn't have a business degree. But at kitchen tabletop with my sister and my family, my children, putting labels on bottles, we built a company, which is still going all these years later, I'm proud to say, which is In Essence, aroma therapy,

Jeremy Melder 06:09

You're the starter of In Essence,

Karen Downes 06:12

I had an amazing journey, my sister and I created that business and built it into a multimillion-dollar business in and exporting training programs and products to five countries. We wrote six books, we wrote work with Deepak Chopra, we had an amazing journey. But mostly Jeremy, what that taught me is if I look back, is that what I was building was really what's called now conscious leadership was based on conscious leadership. Yeah. Because the very essence of who we were as women wanting to bring back our message was to bring the healing tools and modalities back into the hands of the healers of the home. And that was the women in the home. Yeah. And instead of handing ourselves over or our children over to allopathic medicine, how could we treat from the traditional ways. So that was a beautiful journey for 13 years. And during that time, I became a big, oh big, very strong activist for the feminine. I wouldn't have said feminist, but I would have said the feminine principle of leading and, and I was a big protector of women in developing countries, I went to India and Bangladesh and worked in with the Hunger Project for many years as an investor and an activist. And that was that's really started me on my path that I continue, now the red thread for me, really, Jeremy has been around the feminine, because I've seen always that it's so missing. It's missing in boardrooms; it's missing in

institutions. Every sector of society is being governed and decisions made by men, yes. And governed by the masculine. They're sometimes they're very heavy handed. And now, where we are, is we recognized in the sciences now putting together the violence in the raping of the planet. And the degradation of the planet is directly correlated to the degradation and violence that we've seen and do see toward women.

Jeremy Melder 08:19

Absolutely. Yeah.

Karen Downes 08:21

So that's the big journey, what and just one last piece, because I spent 13 years working very strongly and consciously with women, and empowering women and in the global south in India, and Bangladesh, as I say, but also, when I moved to England, the company was sold. And I took with me as a product range called sacred spaces that I'd created. So, the sacred and ritual had been a very much part of my life. But what was almost crazy is that I went from working with oils out of plants in aroma therapy to oils out of the ground. So, talk about a contrast and I was working in some of the most toxic and environments and the extractive industries. So, BHP Billiton, Talisman Oil and Gas, BP. All these big organizations where I'd gone into the belly of the beast, so to speak, yeah, to work in transformational programs. So, I was designing and leading programs around the world. But I quickly saw the devastation that was causing and to me, I was in I ended up in total burnout. Yeah, so I realized that what was missing is I'd forfeited my feminine.

Jeremy Melder 09:46

it's so important, isn't it too? Hang on to our masculinity, our femininity, and not to think that we feel it. You know, fair enough. If we're feminine, if we are a female that we need to be masculine to be working in a masculine environment. What are your thoughts on that? You know, that flipping that people tend to do? I've, I've observed should I say, there seems to be a feeling that, a woman feels like she's working in a boardroom, that's 95% men that she needs to work from a perspective of being masculine more than feminine. I know, you've talked about the feminine being important. How do you feel that? How can we bridge that gap? It's so apparent.

Karen Downes 10:43

Yes, it is in very much to me in in all the areas I've worked, Jeremy and I think one that one of the things as a healer and a practitioner that I go back to is I was always looking for the cause, not looking at the symptom, but the cause. And the thing that the Hunger Project taught me when I worked for them for all those years is that hunger people normally associate with a lack of food or insufficient food. But the chronic persistence of hunger doesn't have anything to do with food. It has to do with the availability of resources, agency, and sovereignty over one's own life. And what was causing the chronic persistence. One of the keys was the subjugation and marginalization of women. If the feminine and women are not included, any community suffers. Yeah, we see it most pronounced in a village, we see it most pronounced in our home. But unfortunately, we don't look at organizations and corporates through that lens, we say that the heart doesn't belong in business. I think that's changing now with the pandemic. But I think still, the bottom line is the profit and the shareholders' interests. And you know that I have a business a consulting business called the Flourish Initiative. Yes. So, I speak about

flourishing from the inside of the organization, are the people flourishing, for the business to prosper? and flourishing for me the way the reason I chose that word is it is feminine, because it's what Mother Nature does.

Jeremy Melder 12:21

Yeah. Yeah. How do you go about working through that process of getting a business to flourishing? I know, it's probably a quite a deep a long process. But you know, how do you present that? Or how does that get explored? You know, in a in a business.

Karen Downes 12:42

I think the markers for a flourishing organization for me, Jeremy would be that people have or seen to be unique contribution. They're empowered to bring that contribution. And they have the autonomy to manage their own needs. For example, people, I ran a very big program for one of the commercial airlines in the UK in 2018. 1600 leaders went through our two-day program. And one of the things that people would say is that they would find that they were burnt out by the end of the day and had nothing left for their families when they went home. And when we took them through the program, we would ask the question, does your boss instruct you or demand of you to sit at your desk and eat your lunch? And they would say, inevitably, of course not. Well, why do you do that? Because I've got a workload, and I've got to move through. So, the conditioning of the system that we live in Jeremy, even around how I would operate more of my masculine tendencies, you mentioned this earlier, many women feel that they must bring that because there's no other way to survive the system. If I go in open hearted and have my sense of humanity and care for others and bring compassion, then I'm told I'm too soft, that that vulnerability is not required in the office, for example, if I have sensitivities or compassion for others, and I tried to help them, I might be told that that's not my responsibility that we don't do that here. That's a personal issue. That I think for me, what I've seen over these decades of working in corporate is that personal is professional, there's no separation. We're just told to repress what we feel when we go inside those corridors. And repression leads to depression. And then therefore, you have lack of potential energy and creativity being expressed in the organization, because you can't shut down one system without shutting down many. So, when we shut down our heart, that pumps with rhythm gives us life gives us bonding, then we dissociate and become resources of the organization. So, this sense that we are commodity has shaped who we becoming an organization and how the organization perceives this?

Jeremy Melder 15:22

Yeah, yeah, it's kind of it, I don't know, but I'm feeling in my own body, this, this resonance of what you're talking about, because I have felt this myself in terms of going to work and feeling like I'm leaving my body in the carpark and then going up into the lift, and then being that representative of that organization, but leaving my heart and soul in the carpark so to speak. And then it's sort of almost like putting on your, you know, the cape, the Cape of protection or whatever it is, to, to go and functioning and in a world of lack of heart, as you put it, lack of feeling lack of empathy. And, and then, and then going and operating there for shareholder value when all those lovely words that we've been given lovely buzzwords, you know, we've got these values that have been made up that don't resonate with most of the employees, but that we work through that. And then we take off that cape and go back home with our families. And

Karen Downes 16:44

the here's the thing, Jeremy, just to jump in there with you. Here's the thing that when you say we take off the cape to go home to our families, it's not that easily done. So, this is some of the statistics. Now I've read, too, to be efficient at something it takes 30,000 repetitions, sorry, three 3000 repetitions, to be masterful. It's 30,000. Wow. Now, why I'm mentioning that is if you spend 8 minimum, for most hours a day at the office, with your heart in the carpark you're dissociated from how you feel you repress what you know to be true, you don't listen to your intuition, you're only using the left-hand side of your brain and not the right, which is creative and relational. When you make those divisions. When people say to me, why are you talking about the feminine? And I will say, because it's missing? Yes, because we've had to deny it, leave it in the car park. we repress all of that for at least eight hours a day. And then we go home thinking in the short span of time we have between 6pm and 10pm. When we go to bed, if we're lucky, those four hours, we're going to restore ourselves, our relationships, and a heartfelt connection with their families. How do you make mathematical sense of that?

Jeremy Melder 18:06

You don't I didn't I mean, I put that all symbolically that I was taking off and putting on my cape. But it's true, what you're saying is, I carried that. And I think the only time I really unwound, and I talked about this with my partner a lot is when I go into nature. You know, when I'm surrounded by the trees, the birds and so on, I can just really feel this serene, letting go and connecting to Earth Mother, so to speak. And, and, and I think, you know, this is so important for us to be able to feel that, but every day, not just not just on a weekend or not just for an hour, or whatever it is, we need to feel that connection, and love, have that passion in what we do so that we don't feel that work is arduous, and that we're not it's not part of who we authentically are. You know, and I guess what I'm trying to say here, what I'm asking Karen is, how do we get to this authenticity of who we are in working in, in harmony with the elements with the environment and business and connecting male and female energies together? Big Question.

Karen Downes 19:24

It is and I think it's such an important one, Jeremy, and it's wonderful that you hold these podcasts to have these conversations because there's so many different perspectives to bring. So how do we get there? I think that for me, it's the realization of how I've been shaped by the by the system. Yeah, not by choice. You know, most of us think we have a choice about how we live but we've been socialized. We've been educated, we've been parented all through the lens all through the paradigm. system of patriarchy, yet the male figure is the dominant figure. We know, profoundly women around the world are loved. But we also know the private in the privacy of their own homes they violated and that's gone up all the statistics around the world have measured that the system of the pandemic has disproportionately affected women. And now we have an even greater problem. So, I think, how do we start to change is it's the escalating self-awareness. It's understanding how we have been colonized women and men. I'm not pointing the finger at men, I'm saying, I absolutely know how I was shaped by my father, who was a very bold, aussie bloke and bless him. He gave me the hutzpah to stand up for myself. You know, I wrote in the world masters I'm, you know, amateur competitive cyclist. And I've done a lot of bold things in my life, at the cost, often, of my sensitivity and my sensibilities, and what I would say, the more vulnerable softer side of myself. And so, I think that to recognize when we're using

language that is discriminatory, and its subjugating others. And, you know, I know for myself when every time I come back to Australia, it's even more pronounced for me. It's in my system of g'day mate. And I remember being called being called to a mate in the airport one day, and I turned around when I'm not your mate. Like, if you could not see me. Yes. And I and I often felt that that I wasn't seen, I was seen as a gender and white gendered face. Yes. But I wasn't seeing for my strength, all my sweetness or my uniqueness. Yeah. So, I think the thing is to really, we must start really looking at the other with different glasses on with a different lens and a different perspective and being inquisitive. Who are you? What matters what matters? Not How are you? Who are you? Yeah. What matters to you? Why, why Karen is Femme Q feminine intelligence important to you. I rarely get asked that question. Unless I'm in an interview like this but I've set, even here in Costa Rica, where these patriarchal societies, pockets, patriarchal communities. I was in a dinner the other night, and I started talking about the event. We're running here called Femme Q. And the man that was sitting with the three of us women said, well, I'll leave you ladies to it. Like it was the ladies luncheon? Yeah. Like it was a girl's conversation. I'm thinking, no, you're the one that needs to be in the conversation with this. We need your partnership. We need to be good together in this conversation.

Jeremy Melder 23:06

Yeah. Yeah,

Karen Downes 23:07

we think we step over. Jeremy, I think we step over and ignore the marginalization, and the discrimination. And I think we must really raise the bar on recognizing where we do that. It's very

Jeremy Melder 23:24

important, isn't it? I'm happy to meet How can we do this? I just feel like you know, we have been programmed, you know, me, I've been programmed in such a way throughout my life. And it's like, unlearning some of these things so that I can become more aware of how I can be in presence of feminine, how I treat the feminine and so on. It's a reeducation process, because we have, I have been taught in a particular way, as have millions, or billions have been taught this way, right? I'm bought up and brought up and born in Sri Lanka, which, you know, has a different view on the feminine as you would in Australia. And you know, you've been to India, you see the role of feminine and masculine there, and Bangladesh and so on. So, it's like, how do we reeducate apart from going very slowly, but I also feel this urgency about how we get this moving a little bit quicker than it is, you know, we don't want to wait centuries. For this to equalize. How can we you know, I'm a bit impatient somehow, I'm going to change this.

Karen Downes 24:44

I think it's wonderful, you're impatient Jeremy, and I think the thing for me is the conversation I have is, if you think from integrity, the word integrity means wholeness. And if you think from an engineering term, without morality, Integrity means that if there's a crack in the pipeline, it's out of integrity. And their system is out of integrity. So that's why I talk about the feminine, the masculine has been dominating the system. And it's not because it should be this way. It's just that we're missing an important part of the human psyche, which is why I speak about feminine intelligence. Yeah. And that doesn't mean you lose your masculine because I've got lots of masculine and I've had to restore and reinstate and come

back to re-member, come back to my true essence of, of what I feel in my body. Now the somatic
Firstly, I would start at the physical body is this our somatic intelligence. We have sensibilities and we
have intelligence Rupert Sheldrake speak this great scientist speaks of all organs, and all parts of our
body have an intelligence, you know, the liver has an intelligence the kidneys do. And I will bring
biology which I don't normally do into this conversation, which is a woman's reproductive organs have a
certain intelligence that brings life to life. So, in the, in the biology, one of the things I now speak about
Jeremy is that it's a spectrum, you could not speak about feminine intelligence in India. That would be
crazy because we must talk about gender. And we must talk about child and bride, child marriages, we
must talk about the violence and the killing of girl children, etc. It's very much about gender. Yeah. Now,
what's interesting, one of our speakers at our conference coming up in July here is one of the Indian,
my Indian colleague Iktar has shared with me that she was going when she was married, her ex-
parents in law, were going to force her to have an abortion because they knew she was having a girl
child. That's very much about gender. Yes. So, we've got this world over in many different countries. It's
not as extreme as that. But certainly, it's still happening. And what she's speaking about at the
conference is the paradox about how Indians celebrate and revere, the goddesses in their mythology
and in their religion, but they treat the women like slaves in their home less than human. Yeah. So
that's an extraordinary paradox that in one hand, they celebrate the feminine and revere it. And then yet
when it's in front of them, they don't. So many men will say, oh, I love women, and I love their beauty
and then placed in front of that situation, they can behave very differently. And then then say, I was only
kidding. Yeah. So, we must watch our language. And we must watch. Firstly, our somatic responses.
You know, if I feel that I'm being oppressed, I need to be able to say that, and I need you to be able to
hear that. Yeah. versus being told I'm being too PC or too politically correct. I think our sensibilities we
must open our sensibilities. And I've often said, I wonder what would happen Jeremy, if every man
because mostly their men at the boardroom tables, if every man had to take his grandchild, or his child
and sit the child on his knee before we made the next decision about the future? Yeah, this is the
shareholders that are always the priority. So, I think we must build very powerful reminders, like I said,
3000 repetitions to get efficient at something, we need very powerful reminders in our day of how we
pause and reflect on our behavior, and our mindset, where we're discriminating where we're, where we
are humiliating others for positions of power. And I think it's very difficult for men now, because men I'm
speaking to, often are saying that they're feeling ashamed. And so now men are feeling shameful. And
that's not a great, great place to go to. So how do we not blame and shame? But how do we integrate?
and powerfully reflect as your saying Jeremy? How do we integrate the feminine into our
consciousness? By using right brain by pausing, mindful of rhythm and cycles that Mother Nature has
exactly what you said, going into nature? We need these practices, practice, practice to revere what are
the gifts of the feminine? And if she were missing, if she were missing is we facing now in crises around
the world with our planet? If she were missing? What would we do without the feminine? What would
we do with that that beauty and that nurturing and that care? And does it belong in the boardroom? Of
course.

Jeremy Melder 29:53

Yeah, yeah.

Karen Downes 29:55

So, I think it's practice, practice, practice.

Jeremy Melder 29:57

No, I agree with that. I've got it. Question. I don't know if this is a left field, but I'm wondering, I'll put it out here. So, the question I've got is, do you believe that you know how we've got this mentality in boardrooms or businesses about growth, return on an investment? Without having a real accountability for planetary needs. Because it's basically based on just money, not well? How are we going to take care of this planet? You know, most organizations? Is it? I'm not taking saying all organizations, but a lot of organizations are thinking about what can they get for themselves for their shareholders, all that sort of thing? Do you think that the element because the element of the feminine is missing in those decisions, that there is not enough of a thought of the generations to come? The tearing of the planet, and the needs of nature, and so on, because it's all about greed? And that's an imbalance from the masculine perspective? Do you know and understand my question?

Karen Downes 31:18

Absolutely, absolutely. I think that we, we must go back a long time to see and even if we can point to it, to see how this played out, or how this got to this whole system got developed. This notion of greed is one version, the other, as you said, was his growth, and the consumption and the hoarding and the acquisition and the competition, all these notions that you know, in a healthy system can play out, but like, any strength, because we don't want to make that wrong, like any strength that has its shadow side, or its weakness. So, if one of my qualities is honesty, we often hear the term I'll be brutally honest, well, that's true. Because usually, that notion of being honest, is just a dumping on someone, often it can be a dumping of your projection on someone your opinion about. And it is crucial, and it usually humiliates or harms Yeah. And if we don't recognize this, overplay of our strengths, which is what happened has happened. And it's now a system run amok, in inside of us and externally, and how do we restore it? I don't know, one experience I've had where, in families and communities, it is usually the mother, who was restoring harmony, asking for the children to settle down, asking, asking them to be fair, asking them bonding, you walk through nature, and if I'm in England, and I walk through the fields of sheep, and disturb the baby lambs, they always run to the mother to suckle. Yeah, so this notion of nurturing and caring and bonding comes from the feminine, and we've dissociated, we've dissociated from the profound respect and cherishing those qualities of our human psyche and of, of the role of women, in the boardroom and all over all over the world in all sectors. So, I think the thing that we're talking about is we've dissociated from our hearts and intuition and overplayed in I'm sure you know of Ian McGilchrist work "Mastering the Emissary", and he's distraught as he speaks of the distortion because of the overplay of the left brain. Yes, logic can wrestle rationale have overplayed intuition and instinct. So, I think practicing being still listening to our intuition and pausing having these moments of reflection to pause and say, What, what's true for me?

Jeremy Melder 34:06

Yeah,

Karen Downes 34:07

what is the right, what is the right thing to do? Not just for me, but what's the right thing to do for my family, the generations to come? And not just my family? Because it's too small. Now we must think bigger. Yeah.

Jeremy Melder 34:20

Yeah. And this, this also plays into the role of governments, I think, as well, in terms of that, that bridging that divide as well. And thinking, you know, I my discussion with a New Zealand Mauri was that they think seven generations ahead. And, and I'm wondering, you know, governments tend to think about the three- or four-year term, as you know, their forecast or looking forward. And I'm wondering whether there is, you know, even in government, whether we should be looking at seven generations ahead, what we're What's our vision for our countries or you know, humanity in that You know, what do you think about that? Oh, for sure, Jeremy, he reminds me, as you said, the seven generations. He reminds me when my daughter went to the Steiner school when she first began. And I don't know if you know, in the Waldorf schools, the Steiner education, they, the children had the one teacher through the first seven years. And I remember saying to the teacher, when I first went there, what happens if the child in the teacher doesn't get along? And she said, I guess we must sort it out. And I So recall that because what a responsibility because if you Mar or damage or humiliate or denigrate a child, the restoration of that trust is so hard to win back. And if you're with that child for seven years, so it's very true time is telling. Yeah, and exactly what you said, Jeremy, when you only think you've got three years in tenure, what responsibility Do you have what you leave behind? I think it's very interesting. What's happening with Biden and Trump. Yes. You know, the people were interviewed, saying they felt when Biden came in, that they could breathe again. Yes. Now, that's interesting, because he may only be there for, again, one terms. But the fact that they have reprieve, and they feel that there's heart being restored into the White House, that changes everything. So, when a leader is bringing their heart and embodying the very things that we're talking about today, Jeremy, I think that's, that's critical, because people will forget what they'll forgive you for what you said. And they'll forget what you said, but they'll never forget how you made them feel. Yeah, yeah. And that's a famous saying of Maya Angelou, that I always think about that. It's like, how do we leave someone feeling when we're in their presence? And there's think that's a very important aspect to know how we change our own internal system. How will How will you and I how do we begin job is for us to sit still sit in silence for a moment to cohere our hearts? Yeah. That's an unusual practice. I don't get to do that very often on a podcast. What's important is that it's a ritual that you do. And now even if I had a thought, it was silly. Yeah. You asked me to do that. Because it's your ritual. It's your podcast, and it's respectful. Yeah. Yeah, no, well, I appreciate you doing that. And for me, it's also just coming back to center to core that quiet time. And yeah. Now, I'd love you to promote your event coming up. Because I'm going to be putting this podcast out next week. And if we if you'd love to share it as well with your crowd. Why we can then you know, promote what's coming up and you are inviting men and women to this I am presuming. Exactly.

Karen Downes 38:08

Exactly. So, Jeremy, it's called Femme Q feminine intelligence for a regenerative future. Yeah. And the reason a week, I created a co-founded with my colleagues Femme Q back in 2016. And the first summit that we did two days summit in Berlin, it was very interesting. We hadn't thought about this until we started doing this summit. It's where the divide came down the wall and the Berlin Wall came down. And then we saw that we were trying to drop the divide between the feminine and the masculine. Yes. And we wanted to bring in re insert the feminine so the whole system was flourishing again. And we so we launched Femme Q hoping that it wasn't just about women, we wanted this to be introduced to men and women about the feminine that had been denied in them as well. Yeah. Unfortunately, out of 140

from 17 countries, I think we had about 10 men, max. So, it continues to be that way, unfortunately, with this conversation. And we've had two events in London on one in LA when I came here to Costa Rica and saw the beauty and you don't go out into nature here. Nature comes into you. And it's quite profound, you know, I'm sitting looking at the jungle, I'm usually listening to the howling monkeys or the squirrels or the scorpions, or whatever else appears on my doorstep. And it's remarkable that the phrase that Joanna Macy use, you will not protect what you don't cherish. So that's why we're doing FEMMEQ here in Costa Rica. It's a seven-day retreat in a beautiful retreat on the Pacific Ocean. And people will get to experience, and I know people can't travel from Australia, but wherever this goes out to people need to be together again, especially in these parts of the world where we've been isolated in lockdown for so long, and you can't on zoom you can't have that coffee afterwards and share about your thoughts and just, you know, chat with spontaneity allows creativity to arise. So, we wanted to do this event here in person, it's a hybrid event, and people can tune in online. So, we're going to have three, three hours online every morning, Costa Rican time, and it will be recorded. And we've got 25 speakers speaking from these very, very different perspectives on the feminine, on how to change the system, the women that are changing the system, the women and men that are in direct action every day as practitioners shifting and changing policies, structures. And we are bringing in healers and ceremony and ritual for the healing that we need for the trauma that we need to heal from our systems as well. So, it's an experiential, it's informational, but it's really a body of work that we see all these amazing practitioners are bringing in, and just hope that people will come and join us because seven days in this paradise is really something.

Jeremy Melder 41:12

So, what is what is the date? The date it starts is

Karen Downes 41:15

the 24th is the in person retreat 24th to the 31st of July? Great, yep. And online. It's the 24th to the 30th. So, we do the five days, five weekdays online, but it's seven days in person. Wonderful. And we'll be doing meditations on the elements and how do we embody Earth? How do we bring the weight, the weight, fullness of the power of water? So, we'll be doing some beautiful rituals and meditations and everyone that's online can participate in those as well.

Jeremy Melder 41:48

Wow, that sounds fantastic. So, I'll put some of those links on the show notes on this episode, so that the people that are interested but you know, as you know, Australians are allowed not allowed to go anywhere apart from in tune in online. Yeah. But you know, that would be great to share that information with listeners. Karen, I really appreciate your time. And, and sharing your story and sharing the wonderful work that you are doing. And I wish you all the best in Costa Rica. I'm jealous. One of the places that I'd love to visit and hopefully,

Karen Downes 42:34

you know, Jeremy, just one important fact about Costa Rica. It's one of the few countries in the world that doesn't have a military. (Oh, really, I didn't know) they demilitarized 40 years ago. That has very, that has a very particular energy in this country. Yeah. When you feel the vibrancy and the lightness and the phrase or mantra that uses Pura Vida?

Jeremy Melder 42:55

Well, that's quite interesting, isn't it? So, Karen.... thank you so much for being on Beaming Green are really appreciate your time. And I look forward to catching up with you hopefully soon.

Karen Downes 43:08

Thank you so much. It's been an absolute pleasure, Jeremy and all the best with your podcasts and your work.

Jeremy Melder 43:14

Thank you so much. Cheers. Thank you for listening to this episode of Beaming Green. Now, if you got something out of this episode, we'd love to hear what your biggest takeaway was. There are a number of ways you can do this; you can leave a review on Apple podcasts. Or if you have a Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn social media page, you can leave a review there that don't forget to tag us so we can thank you personally. Lastly, go to Beaming Green.com and subscribe to our newsletter and receive a free how to be green guide. That Beaming Green we are committed to providing you with a thought provoking an insightful program that inspires you to live your life in accordance with your true nature and purpose. We do this by sharing stories from people that are walking their talk and are committed to living their lives sustainably with their mind, body, and soul. So, you can share this with your friends and family and leave the planet in a better place. The music for this podcast was created by Dave Weir