



## EP281\_Karen Kranenburg

**Lisa Nichols** 00:03

Chromosomes, little strands of nucleic acids and proteins are the fundamental genetic instructions that tell us who we are at birth. Most people are born with 46 chromosomes. But each year in the United States, about 6000 people are born with an extra chromosome, making them a person with Down Syndrome. If you've ever encountered someone with Down Syndrome, you know that they are some of the kindest, most joyful people you will ever meet. They truly have something extra.

My name is Lisa Nichols and I have spent the last 24 years as both the CEO of Technology Partners and as the mother to Ally. Ally has something extra in every sense of the word. I have been blessed to be by her side as she impacts everyone she meets. Through these two important roles as CEO and mother to Ally, I have witnessed countless life lessons that have fundamentally changed the way I look at the world.

While you may not have an extra chromosome, every leader has something extra that defines who you are. Join me as I explore this something extra in leaders from all walks of life and discover how that difference in each of them has made a difference in their companies, their families, their communities, and in themselves.

If you'd like this episode today, please go to Apple Podcasts or wherever you listen and leave us a five-star rating. I'm delighted to have Karen Kranenburg. On the show today, Karen is the CEO and owner of Polo and More in the managing Director of Care Caribbean. Well, Karen, welcome to the Something Extra Podcast. I'm so delighted to have you join me today. Thank you so much for making the time.

**Karen Kranenburg** 01:57

You're welcome. And it's so lovely to be here. And thanks for having me.

**Lisa Nichols** 02:00

Yes. So, you and I were connected by our mutual dear friend Teresa Sanzottera. And so, why don't we just spend half of the podcast just talking about how wonderful she is, Karen. What do you think?

**Karen Kranenburg** 02:12

We could we absolutely could spend probably the entire podcast talking about how amazing she is. She really is a tour de force, for want of a better word. She is an incredible woman, you know. Our friendship has endured over 30, you know, 30 odd years from our college days.

**Lisa Nichols** 02:35

Isn't that beautiful? I'm so grateful for friendships like that, that have stood the test of time. I've got a few of those as well, Karen, and they're just such a blessing. But, you know, I'm gonna just kind of do a little side thing here that I just think it's so funny. She's definitely a tech leader among tech leaders. I mean, she's a CIO has been a CIO for major companies. But I also in you, and I both believe that she could equally be an amazing writer, journalist, or public relations agent for either one of them.

**Karen Kranenburg** 03:05

Absolutely. She, she could. And you know, she, Teresa is one of those people that whatever she puts her hand to, is a success, you know. She's got that great energy about her, of course, very smart, educated, you know. So, whatever it is that, you know, she's got what we would call the Midas touch. So, whatever she puts her hands on turns to gold.

**Lisa Nichols** 03:27

Turn into gold. I love that the Midas touch. Well, for our listeners, I just think this is so funny. And she kind of did the same thing about me. But when she was introducing us, I'm going to read what she wrote about you, because I do know if tech ever goes south, you know, she would definitely have a career I believe in public relations. But here's what she said "Lisa, Karen is a tour de force. I'm pretty sure you usually say that about a person's work and not the person themselves. But just wait until you connect with her. She's travelled the world - 106 countries at last count. We're

gonna talk a lot about that, Karen. She's been a philanthropist and entrepreneur and endurance athlete, and adventurer. Over the years I've seen her knocked down weather in a car accident in the Amazon falling off, off of a horse playing polo, or her most recent health challenges, but I've never want seen her not get back up. Whether sailing, polo, Ironman Everest, or the Norwegian challenge, I'm sure to be missing something. Her athleticism the spirit of adventure always amazes me. Listen to this. I've traveled the world vicariously through our whether it's running with the bulls and Pamplona, hanging out with the penguins in Antarctica, traveling the backroads of Timbuktu, riding a camel in Ethiopia, or any other amazing destination over the years. Her fashion sense is legendary, as is her eye for art." I mean, boy, we could just stop right there, couldn't we? Isn't that funny?

**Karen Kranenburg 05:03**

You know, she's done a great summation, I would say I, you know, I've done I've had. I'm one of those people that can never sit still. So, I'm constantly challenging, I'm constantly challenging myself and doing different doing different things. You know, the sporting stuff is always something that I've been, I've been interesting, I've been interested. I play polo for a long time, you know. I then, I started back, actually, back in university days, I started doing marathons when my knees started to give me problems. I said, I'm going to switch the triathlon and said, you know, shorter running distance, but you know, it's sort of combination with the cycling, and, you know, and the swimming. And, I like to challenge myself. I've got to have my brain engaged, or it doesn't work.

**Lisa Nichols 05:48**

I love it. It's there's so much to dig into here. But you know, before we dig into everything here and take me back, you know, take me back to your childhood and how you grew up. And I want to know if you had that sense of adventure even as a little girl. I mean, here's what I'm thinking. I'm thinking Dora the Explorer.

**Karen Kranenburg 06:10**

My friends call me that. Right here in Miami that call me that. And they always said, Where's Dora now?

**Lisa Nichols 06:18**

Where's Dora now? Tell me where you grew up, Karen? And was that in your DNA?

**Karen Kranenburg 06:25**

So, gosh, my DNA? Yes, definitely. From a traveler, I was an only child. I am an only child. And my parents were married for many years before I came along. I think they given up by the time they had given up, you know, the children were coming, when eventually my mother got pregnant. And so, my mother always used to say to me that your father behaved like the only man that ever had a girl child, because it was such a big deal when you finally arrived. My friends used to call me the golden child. But I have to say, for two parents that only had one child that were, you know, that they'd waited so long for, they were very easy with me in terms of, they let me, they let me explore whatever it is I wanted to do. And always supported me, and whatever it is, I was doing, you know, nothing was impossible. It didn't matter that I was a girl. You know, everything was possible. You could do you can do it, whatever it is. So, they've made me feel that I was capable of achieving anything. So, that sort of sense of doing and being sort of came from them. They were big travelers themselves. So, I kind of grew up traveling with them as a, as a child. I went away to school when I was 14, to a high school in Canada. I was born in Guyana, in South America. So, I went away to school at 13. And then I went to a Swiss boarding school after that, until 18, and then ended up living in the UK. I went to University in England. And then I did part of my masters here in St. Louis, and that's how I met Teresa.

**Lisa Nichols 08:11**

Yes. Yeah, I think you guys met at Webster. I love so much of what you just said though, Karen and just the support of your, your parents and just how to believe in yourself, right? I just that is such a huge part, I believe of our DNA if we really, I mean, I tell people all the time. My dad, I was an only child too, you know, parents. I can remember, I mean, my, I can remember people telling me that after I was born because my mom and dad, my mom, my dad was a Marine. My mom conceived when she was, I don't know, they get married when she was 17. I think she probably conceived when she was 19. But then had a little still born boy. And they waited, I mean, my mom was 31, almost 32 when I was born, you know and so kind of the same thing. They didn't know that they were even going to be able to have children. And people have told me the stories where my dad would just like, be somewhere and he just be holding me up, you know, like Simba.

**Karen Kranenburg 09:18**

You know, I felt like a kid. I followed my dad around everywhere that I could, everywhere that I could when it was possible. I went wherever he was going. My dad and I were exceedingly close. You know, my mom was a disciplinarian. So, she had to keep things in order. So, our relationship was a little bit different. But my dad was there

was never anything once you were happy, he's happy. He never said no to anything because he realized my mother was there, keeping the bus on the road in the right direction.

**Lisa Nichols 09:47**

Yeah, and we're more than I knew.

**Karen Kranenburg 09:51**

We were extremely close. And so, when he passed away a few years ago, it felt like if the world had full was out from underneath me. Because we'd always had this, you know, he was the first person I talked to in the morning, the last person I talked to at night, you know, we would talk about all sorts of things. My dad was a great reader. And, you know, he, he knew about everything, it's everything you can imagine he knew about. And he was in business. He was also in politics for, you know, a very long time. He was well respected in a very well respected in, in, in the community. And, but he was just, he was well educated. I think that was it. He was well educated. He was well read, and you could talk to him about any you could talk to him about anything. And he made the time for you, as best he could, within his crazy schedule. He always had time, you know, he always had time for you know. My mom, my mom was the same but in a different way, you know, in a different way. She was a philanthropist. So, she was involved with every charity, you could imagine that there was going, she was involved. So, I always used to make a joke with her. And I said, people must run when they see you come in, because they know you've come in to beg for something, you know. She was, she was powerful in that respect. She got things done. She got, she got people to, you know, to do things to build things to donate things she was, she was incredible. She herself was a tour de force. My mother, she was quite a unique woman. Really.

**Lisa Nichols 11:33**

Well, we're blessed women, Karen, to have that background.

**Karen Kranenburg 11:35**

I always say I won the parent lottery. Yes, absolutely. Because I had, have to say, I had the best parents of the world. I was everybody says, you know, people that have a good relationship with their parents. But they were, they were incredible parents, you know. I was lucky enough that I didn't need one for anything. So financially sound. So, you know, that was the consideration. I had a great home. I had good friends. And I was supported by my parents by whatever it was I wanted to do from you know. I spent 12, I think I've probably spent about 12 years at university from one degree to the next, and I finished them all, and my dad would keep going, okay. And, you know, supported by my parents, you know, okay, you want to keep learning? Okay, keep going, you know, sort of thing. So, they were very supportive parents, they were to me, what parents were good parents should be, you know, and you don't hear that all the time. You hear the stories around, you hear the horror stories around the time and you wonder why people have children? Because why do you have children to treat them like this? You know? So, it's in that instance, I would say, I won the parent lottery.

**Lisa Nichols 12:45**

Incredibly blessed, incredibly blessed. Well, you kind of mentioned your educational background, and you do have a very diverse background here. You got a Masters of Arts in econ and finance, you got a Bachelor of Architecture, you got Econ diploma from the London School of Economics and Political Science in a law conversion from University of Westminster, my goodness. How is this diverse background, do you believe, Karen, really influenced your professional journey?

**Karen Kranenburg 13:18**

Well, I would say, you know, the thing about it is I've got it all covered. I used to say to people, listen, I can build a house, I can deal with the financing, I can sue the builder when it all goes wrong. You know, I've got it covered. I don't need to hire anybody else. But from a perspective that, you know, in the business that I'm in now, I, you know, yes, I can, it gives me a vision, it gives me a vision, a business vision. It definitely gives me certainly my contract the contractual side of things. I'm able to deal with and look at, and I also my business actually has an artistic side to it. So, I guess the architecture sort of comes in, in that perspective, very much so because I create things for other people. So, that's very much a part of who I am. I'm a collector, I'm an art collector as well too. So, but that's something, I you know, I do on the site, I do in the site. Actually, Teresa has been coming with me the last few years to Art Basel in Miami because I go there, I go every year, even when I'm not here, I come in for it. So, Teresa's come down to meet me here for the last two years to you know, cool.

**Lisa Nichols 14:31**

Wonderful. Oh, my goodness. Well, I'm gonna have to tell her I need an invitation to that because I'm a big fan. I'm not an artist, but I love art. I love it. I really appreciate it. Well, today, Karen, you are the CEO and the owner of Polo and

More. You're the editor in chief of the magazine. You're also director of Care Caribbean or Caribbean, however you want to pronounce it. But tell me, you could you send you started playing polo in college I think, but you'll tell me a little bit about the impetus of how you got into polo. What trends are you seeing in that world right now? And, you know, how are you seeing it evolve?

**Karen Kranenburg** 15:12

Well, I started, I started playing after college, actually. I had a boyfriend, of course, and I'm living, I'm living in England at this point. I had a boyfriend that played polo. And he was the impetus to get started to play. I had, I had ridden all my life. I hadn't played polo, but I've ridden all my life. And so, when I started, when I, when I started, you know, I said, I spent a lot of time initially with him going to pull or watching his games, you know, and I was fascinated by the sport. And I said, I think I want to give this a try. And so, funnily enough, I had a girlfriend, very, very good girlfriend of mine, who, from Finland, who lived in England. And her husband, her now husband is Argentinian, and they were getting married in Argentina. So, we were going to Argentina for the wedding. And so, I connected with a polo handicap, the six-school polo player there, and I said, Listen, I'm coming to Argentina for this time, I want intensive polo lessons. So, we agreed and made our deal, he came and picked me up every day. He took me to the arena. He took me down to the polo field. I spent some time after and that was the end of the story from there. And then I subsequently got into initially, I was doing a charitable event for somebody at a club that I played at. And that was the beginning I started it. I started that way with a 40 Goal polo match in England. 40 Goal Polo is not something that happens a lot. At any given time, you know, there might be six or seven handicap, 10 handicap polo players, which is the highest handicap that you could have. So, it's the reverse swing golf. So, the highest, the higher the handicap, the better the player, the lower the handicap, the worse the player.

So, putting together 40 Goal game was quite something at that time, this is since 1999. And it started off as a one off, and it grew from there. I saw a niche in the market at the time, there wasn't a lot of sponsorship and polo back in those days. And, you know, what you could do then was quite there was professional, you know, the game was the professional game. And, but really what was a big part of what was to come was sort of this. I want to say the social aspect, the sponsor aspect of it. And that's the direction that I, that's the direction I went in. So, I started out initially, you know, working for sponsors, bringing sponsors into the game for the club that I played at, and then it spread, it kind of spread from there. And so that's one of the things that has changed a lot in the game is that there's certainly a lot more corporate sponsorship in polo, not to the same degree that there are in things like football and basketball, and you know, soccer in England. Because it's a different market. And it works differently. Professional polo comes at different levels, you've got the high goal, which in this country goes up to 26 goals. In Argentina, it goes all the way up to 40. You know, you've got the medium, you've got medium gold polo, which is sort of up to 16 goals. And then, you've got logo polo, which is anything from, you know, zero to, you know, zero to six or eight goals, you know, so there's different levels.

But one of the things that polo that standards wrote, it's very Patron focus. So, there's always somebody that there's always one person that pays the bill, or in the lower goals, you might find two patrons that play together, and they split a team, and they pay those bills together. But the professionals are paid by a Patron. So, when you get to the high goal, there's one Patron. He pays the bills, he's the man in charge, you know. So, whereas there's a certain element, they might be a certain element of sponsorship, it's also somehow tied to that Patron who that Patron is more often than not. But, there's a lot of a lot there a lot of charity events around polo there's a lot of, you know, there's a lot of corporate events that use polo as a means for entertainment as well. And so that, you know, the game has expanded in that, in that way, I'd say in the last 25 years.

**Lisa Nichols** 19:26

Okay, so Karen, now you've inspired me. We have a polo field that is literally one mile from us and we've never been. So, you know, Anheuser Busch, right? You know, Anheuser Busch.

**Karen Kranenburg** 19:41

Yes. Yes. They're big sponsors. They play the brothers play polo.

**Lisa Nichols** 19:45

Yes, I know. And so, the field the Anheuser Busch, Billy Busch has to field about, a we can hear it on his Saturday. We can hear the announcer, but we've never gone. So, now you've inspired me. Okay, so that is I'm definitely going to go to one of those. And I'm really curious now, but tell me a little bit about being the managing Director of Care Caribbean or Caribbean. Can you elaborate on the organization? Or is it that you do? What's the mission?

**Karen Kranenburg 20:16**

It's a business that I started with my cousin. And we deal with, basically medical supplies for laboratories and hospitals. And we are focused Caribbean and Latin America. So, we deal with everything that you can possibly think of from equipment, to consumables.

**Lisa Nichols 20:40**

So, and you're really offering those things and you have international clients, right?

**Karen Kranenburg 20:45**

We have international, we have international clients, a lot of our suppliers are international as well. So, our suppliers are out of Europe, out of India, of course, we have suppliers in the Asian market. So, China, Malaysia, Vietnam, a lot of our suppliers here from the US as well, too. And yeah, but our client base is mainly Caribbean and Latin America.

**Lisa Nichols 21:09**

Gotcha, okay. Well, I have one more question for you. And then we need to take a quick break. And I've got a lot more than I want to talk to you about. But that one is really, you know, I find this so fascinating that you've actually been to over 106 countries. And I think, you know, you've set up polo matches in a lot of those countries. And, you know, you've done a lot of different things around the globe, but you kind of describe, they describe me as a global nomad. Yes. And so, what I really would love to know from you, and then we'll dig into a lot more after the break, but how do you personally prepare to adapt to so many different cultures? You know, in environments, because they're all different? Are they not, Karen?

**Karen Kranenburg 21:54**

They are, they are all different. You know, I always say to people that travel is an education in itself. So, you're going there to learn from the people. To learn from learn from the culture. And that's your take, that's your take away from it all when you go there. So, there's always a fuel, there's all that always that fascination, that excitement, when you're going someplace, you're going someplace new someplace, that's different, you know. So, it's different preparing, I would say preparing for a trip, like going to Everest for going to a trip, like to Mali, which I went to Mali last year, which is very different. Mali is a country I've been wanting to go to for the last 12 years since this, since really their problems. They've had a lot of problems with rebels and stuff like that in the last 12 years, and it's not really been that safe to go. And if they haven't, they had a little bit of a quiet patch where last year and I said, I'm going to take this opportunity to go here now, you know. I packed my bags, and you know, I made a but the thing about it is I'm a planner as well, too. So, I always make sure that, you know, for example, when I went to Mali that I had, somebody had recommended a guide that they had used. She's a journalist, it's a guide that she had use. So, I made sure that, you know, I have those things all lined up before I go somewhere. I don't just show up and hope for the best, you know, moving into prayer and hope for the best. Because in some parts of the world, that's just downright dangerous. Yeah, people that do that, but not in that, don't want to I'm not, it's not smart. And I'm not one of those.

**Karen Kranenburg 23:30**

You know, so, you know, a lot of places that of course, people you know, they stay here. They are genuinely dangerous, a lot of them. A lot of it is, there's a lot of propaganda behind it as well, too. So, you kind of have to weigh the balance up of what the reality is, and what's you know, what's real and what's not, you know. And being in touch and having contacts on the ground makes a huge difference in terms of when you're planning, you know. When you're planning a trip and you're planning to go somewhere, you know, if you, you know, some you know, if you there's someplace you planning to go and you contact, you have a guide, you have a local contact and you say hey, listen to that, and they said, listen, maybe it's not such a good time to come now, you know, it's not such a good time to come. So, you don't necessarily or only a lot of people, you know. They only look at what, you know, they only see the propaganda and they only look at, you know, all the warnings that they are too don't travel here, don't go there. But sometimes the reality on the ground is very different. It's only it's the locals that give you the real reality. What's happening for you for places that are, you know, I wanna say sketchy, but you know, that have, have their problems. Yeah, I've had their problems, you know. You can't blindly go and say, you know, I'm going here with no preparation. That's no, that's not gonna work.

**Lisa Nichols 24:51**

Yes, not wise. Well, goodness gracious. There's so much goodness packed into that one. But we do need to take a quick break, and we'll be right back with Karen on the Something Extra Podcast.

**AD 25:04**

In business, the tendency is to seek out partners who are bigger, faster, stronger. When it comes to IT, you should be looking for smarter, faster, better. That's just a you'll find with the talented technologists at Technology Partners. Our



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**Lisa Nichols** 25:34

Welcome back, everyone, to the Something Extra Podcast with Karen Kranenburg. So, Karen, we've been talking about all kinds of things and on the travel. I'm gonna, I'm gonna stick with this for just a minute, but I've read several of your articles that you have written. The one about mad about Morocco, and the palace of the Sands. So, I have questions about those. You, you talk about Morocco and you says, You say Morocco should be on everyone's bucket list. So, tell me more.

**Karen Kranenburg** 26:06

Absolutely. Morocco is one of those enchanted places. It's got history. It's got color. It's and it's a safe place, you know. So, if you're looking to, you know, for example, if you've never sort of been to that part of Africa, you're looking for somewhere to go in North Africa, you say, you know, where would I like to start? It's a good start. It's a good starting point, definitely. You know, the people are genuinely very friendly, very welcoming. Tourism, of course, is a huge part of business for Morocco. So, you know, they welcome tourists, they welcome tourists. So, as I said, the culture, the history, the food. One of my favorite cities in in Morocco is Marrakesh. That the whole vibe of the Medina, it's a place that you go, you definitely need somebody to walk you through, walk with you through there, because you'll get lost otherwise. It's like a city. The Medina is like a city in itself. But the things that you see and you find and the smells and the sounds and the just absolutely incredible, really incredible. I had the pleasure actually, last year after my trip to Mali, I went to a place also Morocco called Chefchaouene. It's up in the north, it's the Blue City. It's an incredible city that the walls are, everything is blue, different, different shades of blue, and somebody had been so incredible, absolutely incredible and vibrant, you know. And somebody's been talking to me and I'm saying, you know, I've been to Morocco many times and I said, next time I go to Morocco, I've gotta go to Chefchaouene. So, I took the chance after Mali because I was going to Marrakesh. I have a friend that owns a beautiful boutique hotel called Jnane Tamsna in Marrakesh and I was going to visit. She herself is an architect, an artist, a writer, incredible lady, so I was going to visit them and I said, I'm going to take a few days and go north to Chefchaouene, come back via Tangier, which is what I did. The Blue City incredible. It's different from you know, other parts of Morocco. So, you see another side of it. And that's one of the interesting things about Morocco. It has different, you know, yes, there's Marrakesh, you can go to Tangier, you can go to Fez, you've got Chefchaouene, you know. You know, just different and it feels and each city has its own has its own vibe, so to speak.

**Lisa Nichols** 26:07

Okay, you sold me.

**Karen Kranenburg** 26:52

It is a beautiful, it's a beautiful country. One people are amazing. As I said, you know, it's definitely something that should be in everybody's bucket.

**Lisa Nichols** 28:53

Okay, I'm sold. I'm sold. Well, palace of the Sands is a story about your second trip. I believe it was to Egypt. And you really like, you before and you said you weren't really that excited about going again, but you did. And you wrote book beautifully, Karen, about the Siwa Oasis in the west corner.

**Karen Kranenburg** 29:13

In the Libyan desert, in the Libyan desert. Yeah, yeah. So, I had a, you know, Egypt is Egypt is one of those places, and I've subsequently been back to Egypt since during COVID, which was an incredible experience. Egypt, of course, tourism is a big thing for Egypt. And so, there's lots of people usually when you go, you know, crowds everywhere. So, my this, this was my second my third trip back to Egypt was this was, was this trip to Siwa. But it was completely different. It is an oasis in the in the Libyan desert. And it's incredible, it's peaceful, it's calm, you know. My friends had taken over the entire resort, so it was just a group of friends. That we were able to wander and room around, you know, kind of wander and roam around, you know. And it was, it was also a different, you know, very different sides of Egypt that we were able to see, which was fascinating. So, we went back to Egypt during COVID when people weren't really traveling. And it was amazing to go down to places like the, you know, Luxor, and Aswan and, you know, into the Valley of the Kings and places like that, when there weren't a lot of people and be able to walk around and for them to open tombs for you that they would never do, usually. And there's hardly any people around you. So, it was a completely different experience. And I'm so glad that I went back again, because I had that experience of, you know. We traveled a lot during COVID, and a lot of people say, oh, we're not going anywhere. And I said, this is a great opportunity to get out. To travel, to have freedom to have, you know, there's not a lot of crowds around you. Because

in some places that you go to their people their crowds around you, you know. We went to Mauritania, I went back to Egypt, I went back to Kenya, I went to Zanzibar during COVID. Roasted, we were going back to Tanzania, to Botswana during COVID, Seychelles, Jordan. I did a lot of traveling during COVID. And with no fare of, you know, taking, taking the necessary precautions and taking the necessary precautions, you know. But you know, you were able to travel with a certain amount of freedom and flexibility in terms of on one side, you had to do all the COVID testing and do all the paperwork and all of that for every destination that you went to in and out. But on the other hand, you also had that sort of ease because the crowds that usually meet you in most places and a lot of places not everywhere. But the crowds that you usually encounter. They didn't have because people weren't traveling, you know, and they were happy to see you that you've taken the time to come to us during this time to visit.

**Lisa Nichols** 30:33

They were grateful, sure they were so grateful to have some tourists, right?

**Karen Kranenburg** 31:28

They were grateful, they were grateful.

**Lisa Nichols** 31:30

Well, tell me, hey, Karen, tell me about the Adrère Amellal Resort. It's like one of the top three environmental hotels in the world that you stayed at. It's not me so curious that I went to TripAdvisor. And I looked up all these testimonials about this resort. And here are some of the words magnificent, rare, unique, a magical experience. The food was fantastic. You had dinner by candlelight every night. But the one that got me I was like, I'm not sure about no electricity.

**Karen Kranenburg** 32:48

The thing about it is you're in the middle of the desert. So, you're not, you know, that that's to be that's to be expected. And you, you definitely do have enough light to be able to get around. For me, one of the biggest and most amazing things about that resort. So, they've built you know, all of these huts, villas, out of, you know, eco-friendly materials, so sand mud, and they're furnished with luxury furnishings, you know, so they look beautiful inside. Of course, there's no air conditioning, so I can get a bit warm, but you can sleep outside, if you wanted to put the beds outside so you can sleep outside. I took it one step further, and they built a bed for me up on the roof of the spa. So, I went to sleep under the stars, and they and they lit it all the way for me with candles so that I could find you know, with like lanterns so that I can find my way there at night. They blew them up, and I went to sleep. And they did the same thing every night. And I would wake up to them. I would wake up in the morning, you know, I would go to sleep with the stars at night. And I would wake up in the morning with the Oasis in front of me. There's white mountain on the left and this Oasis in front of me and the sun rising up over it. It was incredible. Really incredible, yeah.

**Lisa Nichols** 34:08

The pictures, I bet you got here and we're just amazing. Amazing. I could go into a magazine, I'm sure. Well, Karen, I want to move into something a little bit different. And you know, life is not always about unicorns and rainbows. We all face challenges, and you're no different. You know, you know, Teresa describes you as a tour de force. You know, let me ask you, how do you maintain resilience? How, you know, I know you've had challenges just like all of us do. But how do you maintain a positive mindset through those challenges?

**Karen Kranenburg** 34:46

Well, you know, my dad always used to tell me, he said, my dad used to say to me, he believes in the power of positive thinking. And you know, the battles that you fight are the ones that you think you can win. And so that, that really has to be your focus. I'm going to take on, I'm going to take on the things that I think I can deal with things I can overcome. If you try to deal with everything, you can't deal with them, you can't deal with everything. It's like work. It's the same thing. It's not every you can't deal with everything yourself. You kind of have to balance it out as to what can I what I can't, what I can what I can't do, you know?

So, as you said, yes, over the years, really. Most recently, I was diagnosed with cancer in 2022, February 2022. So, we're two years in this journey now. And one of the first things I said to my doctor, I said, my story doesn't end here. So, you need to do whatever it is you need to do to get me back to where I was before, do it, you know, and then focus, focus going forward. This is, I'm coming out at the end of this. I'm going to I am coming out of the end of this, you know, and I need to try and live as normal a life as possible as I can, whilst I'm going through this, and don't give up hope. You know, hope is very important in this process, that hope and belief that I'm coming. This is, this is not the, I'm not this is not the end of my story. And I'm coming out of this at the other end.

**Lisa Nichols** 36:20

I love that. I love that. That's beautiful. Yeah. And hope is so important when you lose hope. That's when you know, you gotta hope and you gotta believe.

**Karen Kranenburg** 36:28

There's no life, there's no life. Without hope, there's no life.

**Lisa Nichols** 36:33

Yeah, Amen. I agree. Well, let me ask you this. I mean, you have, and we have, we don't have the time to get into too much of this. But I'm hoping that our listeners will hear this podcast, get to meet you and start following you. And I have a challenge for you at the end. Maybe you're working on it. But you know, you've scaled Mount Everest, you participated in all these Iron Man's and so many unique adventures? What, what lessons have you learned about yourself by doing those, Karen?

**Karen Kranenburg** 37:06

What lessons have I learned by myself? Well, first of all, I've learned that I can challenge myself. Definitely. And that's an that's an important thing, I think that all of us need to do. You need to push your boundaries, a little bit beyond what you think is possible and what you're capable of. So, the it's certainly taught me that, that I'm capable, maybe of a lot more than I think that I am, you know? So, and with the right, you know, with, of course, with certain things with the right training and support and everything you're gonna get reach where you need to.

**Lisa Nichols** 37:41

Right, yeah. Because climbing Mount Everest, I know, we all have the time to go. But you got to prepare for that you had to prepare to learn all that.

**Karen Kranenburg** 37:51

I trained for I trained for nine months for that.

**Lisa Nichols** 37:56

Wow, incredible. Well, let me ask you. You've already mentioned your dad. And I know both you and I've talked to a sidebar conversation, even about like the awesomeness of both of our parents. And we're very, very blessed about that. But you said, you know, your dad used to give you just so much advice. And my dad passed away a couple years ago too, Karen. And so, both of our dads have gone. But can you remember, you've already talked a little bit about having that positive mindset. But can you remember any other advice that your dad gave you?

**Karen Kranenburg** 38:29

Oh, my God, so many things.

**Lisa Nichols** 38:32

You need to write a book, that's what my challenge is going to be to you.

**Karen Kranenburg** 38:36

So like so many things, I keep both of them. My mother and father, both of them had a lot of sayings for different things, you know. One of the things there were two things I was remembering as I was thinking about your you know, you were asking about, you know, something extreme what good leaders should have. And there were, there were two things I was remembering as I was thinking about it. And things that my dad told me, you know, like one of them is be a good listener. You know, no one knows everything, about everything, you know. And so, you have to be opening to hearing and taking suggestions and listening to. Listening to other people hearing their ideas, filtering out what's you know, what works and what doesn't work, but you have to be willing to listen, you can't shut yourself off, you know?

**Lisa Nichols** 39:22

That's paramount. Yes.

**Karen Kranenburg** 39:24

It is. And, you know, he said he said, one of the other things he's famous for said telling me all the time, it's you know, you said, you said you have to be likable. And he said it's easier, one of his. You always used to say to me is easiest to catch flies with honey than vinegar.



**Lisa Nichols 39:41**

Yes, it's so true. Words of wisdom. I love it.

**Karen Kranenburg 39:48**

You know, so you can get so much more accomplished with that approach than you know with the honey approach than with the vinegar approach. You will go a lot further along work a lot more accomplished.

**Lisa Nichols 40:03**

So true. So true. Well, are those your something extras? When I asked you, what is it something extra that oh, my gosh, she said there are many. But you know that?

**Karen Kranenburg 40:12**

You know, the thing about thing is that I think leaders, and this covers everybody, not only, you know, leaders in business leaders in politics, leaders in religion, all of these kinds of things. There's so many things that they that what makes a good, what makes a good leader. Common Sense, number 1. I don't think there's a lot of that around these days, as somebody said to me the other day common sense is not common anymore, which is true. That's just when you listen, you know, when you listen to leaders and politicians, and you know, you listen to them, and you think, for real, did you just say that? No, you didn't. You know, so common sense is very important. Vision, you have to have, you know, you have to have vision. So, you need to have, I think, a big picture, you know, big picture game plan, if you plan it, if you're doing something if you're in business, as I said, if you're a politician, if you're a religious leader, guiding people, you need to have a plan and see, beyond, you know, what can be. You know, there's an old saying, there was a preacher, an American preacher, called Norman Peale. And he said, he was one of those people that was famous for popularizing this notion of, you know, about positive thinking. And he had a saying, that was shoot for moon, shoot for the moon. And even if you miss, you'll land among the stars.

**Lisa Nichols 40:12**

Yeah.

**Karen Kranenburg 40:45**

You know? So, you have to set yourself ambitious goals, think big, work hard and work hard to achieve them. You might not necessarily always get directly to where you want to go. But the journey is also important, it might take you some, it might take you somewhere else, but take you somewhere else, that's even more interesting, you know? So, you know, that that's important. So, vision, very important. Optimism, also, very, very important. You know, you know, people want to follow leaders that are going somewhere, you know, be you know, you've got to be going up rather than, you know, rather than down, you know, and, you know, our politicians, you know, our politicians, business executives, you know, preachers, that, you know, they're, I want to say they're in the business of selling the dream of hope. And as I just said to you just now, without hope, is there's no light, you know? So, it. So, hope is very important in the process, and, you know, hope and optimism, I think, kind of go hand in hand in it. But you kind of have to carry people along with you that with this dream, that they have to believe they have to believe as well. So, it can't be just you, you have a team around you. You have a country around you. You need to sell them on these ideas and carry them, you know, and carry them along you.

**Lisa Nichols 43:14**

When you had the vision, you had the hope, you give the people that are around you a path, right? And because, you know, they don't want to like to your point there they if you don't have hope yourself, why are they going to want to follow, you know, somewhere that the dead end, right? I mean, people Yeah, people want to win in life, you know.

**Karen Kranenburg 43:40**

People want to win is this story of the blind leading the blind, it doesn't, you know, it doesn't necessarily it doesn't necessarily work, you know. People want somebody with vision that has hope, and they want to see a better either future for themselves a better future for the country. You know, we they can achieve in business. That's what they want to see. Is that, is that positivity. It's that positivity. So, and then, of course, you you've got to surround yourself with positive people. You don't want to have people around you that are dragging you down. And also, you, you can't do everything. You know, it's impossible to be great at everything. So, you need to surround your people. You need to build a team, that everybody brings something to the table that makes that lifts you all up together as one so that you know that that's important. And of course, being a good that comes into the, the idea of being a good delegator. You have to know when to let go and who to hand this over to and who to hand that over to, you know, and together you pull it together as a team, you know?

**Lisa Nichols** 44:53

So good, Karen, I love it. I have loved this time with you. Teresa was right and I need to come to the art excursions with you guys. So, we can see one another face to face. And I can get more of Karen Kranenburg. So, thank you so much for taking the time to be on the show today. And our prayers and thoughts are with you as you are continuing this journey. And at the end of the journey, girl, you are going to your story. Like I told you before your, your story is going to be someone else's Survival Guide when you get through this.

**Karen Kranenburg** 45:29

I'm you know, I'm thrilled if I'm able to help somebody, because I know how important it was for the help I received from other people to carry me sustained me through this journey. And so, I think we you always have pay it forward, you know? So, I have to help someone else that's going through the journey and I'm, I'm more than happy to this. You know, there's no big secret in this, you know, we're, you know, we're all there's so many cancer, you know, people that have suffered from cancer, there's so many survivors out there. And if you can do something to help another person and ease the journey for them, why not.

**Lisa Nichols** 46:10

I couldn't agree more, you know? Well, thank you again, this has been such a fun this is going to be the most fun thing I do all day. Well, I don't know, I have a birthday dinner tonight with my family. You know, that's probably going to be the best thing, then being with you is going to be the second thing. So, thank you so much for making the time today, Karen.

**Karen Kranenburg** 46:30

It's my pleasure. And thank you so much for having me on. It was lovely virtually meeting you and yes, I absolutely hope to meet you face to face soon. Come to Miami to Art Basel with us.

**Announcer** 46:42

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