**Marc Mawhinney:**

Hey coaches - welcome back to another episode of Natural Born Coaches, the daily podcast for your coaching business. I'm Marc Mawhinney and we've got a real great show for you today. I'm connected to someone who I have known through social media for several years now. She is super positive, putting out good stuff and she knows a lot of the people that I've connected with for the show. She knows, I believe Bob Burg (The “Go Giver”) and other people as well. So I’m really excited to have on the show today, Karen Putz. How are you Karen?

**Karen:**

I'm doing fabulous, how are you?

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Oh I’m doing awesome, and I should let the listeners know it's an interesting interview because what people who don't know your story will find out that you’re actually deaf, and this is the first time I've interviewed a deaf guest through a translator here on the show so, this is really interesting and I want to thank you for doing this.

**Karen:**

Oh it's my pleasure

**Marc Mawhinney:**

So I'm going to give a quick bio and let the listeners know more about you Karen, and then we're going to find out what you're doing. It's going to be tough to fit everything into a thirty minute interview but I’m excited to try … so are you ready to go?

**Karen:**

I am absolutely ready!

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Karen is a mom, writer, passion coach, and barefoot water skier. She specializes in helping others unwrap their passions, after all there is no sense in playing life too small. She is a former columnist for Chicago Tribune, Triblocal and is a blogger at Growing Bolder and Ricky Martin's Piccolo Universe. I have to ask, I did a bit of research Karen … is Ricky’s site something to do with parenting?

**Karen:**

Yes it is Piccolo Universe, their parenting site.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

I'm really dating myself - but I'm used to, you know, Ricky Martin “La Vida Loca”, what was it? Late 1990's? So I wasn't too familiar with the Piccolo Universe but it sounds like you’re keeping busy.

**Karen:**

I definitely do - writing is one of my passions.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Yes, and I can tell that from social media. I have to ask because a lot of people are curious about barefoot water skiing … I mean I have pretty good idea of what it is hearing “barefoot”, but can you explain what “barefoot water skiing” is because I know you have a passion for that.

**Karen:**

(laughs) It's definitely a fun sport … not a lot of people are familiar with it. If you think about water skiing you have two skis, but with barefooting there are no skis … your feet are the skis and we move along at about 42 miles an hour on the water.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Oh yeah that’s pretty crazy, it looks like fun from what I've seen with you putting online. Now we know what it is! So Karen, can you tell me a little bit about your backstory and how you got to where you are at today?

**Karen:**

Absolutely, well my story actually goes back to when I was a teenager, I absolutely loved the sport of barefoot water skiing, that was my passion back then, and I pretty much barefooted every day that I could, and then one day I turned across the wake and when I fell, I instantly went from hard of hearing to deaf. So life basically turned on a dime at that moment and I abandoned the sport. About six years ago, I saw a “Today Show” segment featuring a 66 year old woman barefoot water skiing and all of a sudden a light bulb went on, I was like; “I'm 44 years old - this woman is 66 - surely, I can get back to my passion again” and that's basically what I did, I went down to Florida, met with the world barefoot champion, and started barefoot water skiing again. I've done a couple of competitions and tournaments and I write for Water Ski and Water Skier magazine.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

So is barefoot water skiing like riding a bike, once you know how to do it you know how to do it, or was there an adjustment getting back into it?

**Karen:**

It was quite an adjustment, the faceplants are a lot harder than when I was a teen, I’m 50 now, so it's like hitting a concrete wall some days.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

I'm 37, I like to think I’m young , but then I get out running around doing some activities like frisbee and stuff and there are certainly days I feel closer to middle age than 20. When did you start your writing: your career with the Chicago tribune, Triblocal and everything? When did you start writing?

**Karen:**

I actually started writing probably back in 2003, and the Chicago Tribune actually found me on Twitter. They liked my writing so they gave me a call and I did that for about a year and a half. In 2009 or 2010, I’m not sure of the date, but it was interesting cause they actually found me on the Web and invited me to come write for them, and the ironic thing is back in high school I had dreams of writing for the local newspaper, but I abandoned those dreams cause I was hard of hearing and I was really, really struggling to understand people to communicate. So I dropped that idea of becoming a writer back then, because it was just difficult to communicate I didn't think I could do it.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

What kind of things were you writing for that publication?

**Karen:**

At that time, local articles … I had my own column so I could pretty much write anything I wanted. I interviewed local people and did different stories, basically like a blog post.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

I have an idea what this is, but if you could explain a “passion coach”, what's a “passion coach”?

**Karen:**

One of my other favourite things to do, my background is actually in counseling, I have two degrees in counseling, but traditional counseling was just too slow for me. Passion coaching is right up my area first and foremost because I discovered my own passion six years ago, so I love helping other people unwrap their passion, no matter their age and to believe in themselves, that they can do what they really love to do at any stage and any age of their life. So when I work with people I work with them in creating a life of joy and fulfillment.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Ok, was that a difficult transition going from counseling into what you're doing with coaching?

**Karen:**

Actually is was a more natural transition for me, I'd always struggled with traditional counseling and the idea of looking into your past, and the idea of “Ok, you are what you are because of what happened in your past”. To some extent it is true, but too many of us, we get stuck with the same old rotations of the past cause we think, this is who we are and I'll never change. So with passion coaching the focus is on “What do you enjoy? What do you truly want to do in your life? And take the steps to moving in that direction. And inviting joy into your life, rather than looking into the past.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Now I have to ask, you've written for a tiny little book series which a few people may of heard of, called “Chicken Soup for the Soul” … they sold a few copies! You were featured...I believe your book was the “Find Your Happiness” edition of Chicken Soup for the Soul. How did that come about?

**Karen:**

That's an interesting story there. A couple of years ago I took Debra Poneman’s Yes to Success Workshop, and sitting on the table were the Chicken Soup for the Soul book, and we had just sat down writing 100 things in life, that we want to be, do, or have--and I had just written down “a chapter for the Chicken Soup for the Soul book.” Sure enough couple months later I sat down, went online, and basically wrote the story in an hour and submitted it, the next thing I knew I had a box of books at the door.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Oh wow… that's huge to be in the Chicken Soup of the Soul books. It must have been huge for your coaching business too?

**Karen:**

It has been, it definitely did build some credibility with people, when it's been published in the publication.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Yeah ,well if you can get Jack Canfield or Mark Victor Hansen on the show please let me know. I'll buy you dinner … no pressure! Who is your typical client that you’re working with as a coach?

**Karen:**

My typical client tends to be someone in the second half of their life journey, if you want to put if that way. I find that people often...Kids are almost grown and gone, mostly mothers they tend to lose themselves in the path of life , and people don't need them as much as they used to, and all of a sudden they're at a point where “Wow! What do I do?” . Are they going to cry and who feel they're stuck in the same old routine, and their pain level has finally reach the point where they are like “Ok I've got to do something about this. I can't stand the thought of the rest of my life being this way!”. Those are my ideal clients and ones who are really motivated to do something different, and are very aware that they want to bring joy in their life.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

It seems like a lot of people sort of give up once you hit a certain age maybe 50, 60 … you're getting close to retirement, they think “Ok this is it”. I think your story proves perfectly, not that 44 is by any means old but it shows that you don't have to be 20 to do new exciting things.

**Karen:**

Exactly. It 's funny because at the age of forty-four I thought my life was over, I let myself go … overweight, very much out of shape and I thought “Wow, I'll never be able to feel that joy again willfully”. But because I found a mentor who was older than me doing something that I thought I couldn't do, my whole paradigm of what it means to be older or growing older shifted, I can be... am excited about being 70 or 80 and doing what I love, because I hear of mentors who are 70 or 80 doing what they love.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Can you tell us more about how you found your mentor?

**Karen:**

Well, with Judy Myers I found her on her on a TV station. My husband found a link to her and she was featured on the Today Show back in 2009, and I reach out to her on Facebook and she invited me to Florida, to learn how to barefoot again … and in Florida I met with the world barefoot champion Keith St.Onge and he gave me a lesson, and the minute I put my feet on the water I felt like a kid again and I was hooked. And ever since then I've been barefooting every chance I can get. Everywhere I travel, I find barefoot water skiers in the state. And my husband has completely gotten over me getting into a boat with strange men now!

**Marc Mawhinney:**

I picture him there with a gun just watching to see, he's pretty good though now, is he?

**Karen:**

Keith St.Onge you mean?

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Your husband ….I guess not the jealous type?

**Karen:**

No, he's definitely not, because he sees me you know deep into my passion when I come home I'm in a great mood and he benefits too. So when you’re deep into your passion your whole family benefits and the people around you benefit because you give off really positive energy when you're doing something that you really love to do.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

It's contagious because you can't be married to somebody that's out doing barefoot waterskiing and all these - you know - exciting things, you know if you're married to someone that you're not going to feel like sitting on the couch eating potato chips and watching TV (laughs).... maybe sometimes. So Karen, can you tell us a little bit more about how you find your new clients?

**Karen:**

The new clients they come from all different places. I have a speaking business and often when I go to speak I will find clients, from their local networking groups has been a great source. I encourage people to look at Meetup, there are so many different meet ups out there and you can easily find clients from just networking, getting to know people, finding what are their pain points are because once you know people’s pain, what they want to change, then it's very easy to offer services of value to them.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Are you goingon a lot of podcasts like this to share your story?

**Karen:**

I do it here and there, it’s always a challenge, people are not used to the idea of deaf people actually being able to communicate on a radio show or a podcast. Obviously I have some great assistance from the sign language interpreter here.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Yes, and what's your interpreter’s name?

**Karen:**

The interpreters name is Kristen.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Kristen … ok, I just want to give us a shout out and thank her for helping to do this … we appreciate it!

**Karen:**

And I do as well.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

In terms of resources, is there an online resource that you use a lot that you find very important for your business, that could be a website or an app?

**Karen:**

Well, ironically enough for me my number one favorite is Facebook. It sounds so simplistic, but you know what? For somebody who is deaf, it's an absolutely great way to level the playing field - to converse with people all day long on Facebook, it's a great place to really network and people get to know you and they get to know whether you are authentic or not. So people naturally gravitate on Facebook, but they can see that authenticity.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Yes and I love Facebook for coaches. Are you big on Facebook groups? Are you involved in a lot of them?

**Karen:**

Yes I have several groups. That's been a great source of motivation, daily inspiration and just great networking groups.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Do you run any of the groups or are you a participant in them?

**Karen:**

I participate at this point. I do have one group for my other business.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Right, okay and how about a book that had a really big impact on you?

**Karen:**

Oh that’s a good one. I have two actually - the first one that was really life changing, it is called “Aspire” by Kevin Hall … that book was just... it came at a turning point in my life when I just getting back into my passion. And the second book is “Passion Test” by Janet Attwood. Janet and Chris Attwood … and that book led me into my coaching path. I became a passion coach facilitator after reading that book.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

I don't think either books have actually been mentioned on the show, so I'm glad that you mentioned those books. So have you written … I know at you've taken part in the Chicken Soup for the Soul and done a lot of writing, have you written a book as well?

**Karen:**

Yes, I actually have six books that I'd written and I'm looking at a seventh right now, and three more on the pipeline. Obviously I love to write.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Yeah that's some egg on my face, because with my research I read your blog posts and things, but haven't read any of your books! Tell us a little bit more about some of those books. What are they about?

**Karen:**

Sure, they are pretty specific. The one that I absolutely love is “Gliding Soles” that I wrote with Keith St.Onge, and that was actually the first book that I dove into. I didn't know what I was doing when I started writing that book, and both of us we learned together. The book has been endorsed by Dave Ramsey, Dan Miller and Tom Ziglar.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

How long did it take you to write the first book?

**Karen:**

It took me two and a half years to write that first book.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

And I'm guessing that the later ones took a lot less?

**Karen:**

It did yeah, I actually wrote one of my books in a week and the other book about 6 months, 7 days.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Oh wow, so do you have any tips for coaches who want to write a book but they are actually going through “Writer’s Block”?

**Karen:**

Oh absolutely, the first thing - just get up in the morning and just write … set a timer, or just go for a number of words and just write . The biggest thing that I find time and time again is that people get hung up in their thoughts, with their writing or they start judging themselves … “It's a piece of crap”, “It isn't good enough” … that is where the Writer's Block comes from and you just have to let it flow, let it write, because later you're going to go back and clean it up. And the other thing I highly recommend is getting a publishing coach. It's funny ....the six books … I hired my first publishing coach Patrick Snow and it’s made a world of difference just knowing that I had somebody in my corner.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Right, and do you have any tips in terms of marketing for books, for anyone who has written a book and really wants to get it out there?

**Karen:**

You know what? Give them away, I'll tell you that, for me that's been a big thing if I give somebody a book … if they are impacted by, it they will turn around and share it with other people. Don't hold your book, don't hold it back, your book is your business card to the world, give it out for free.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Great advice. If you had to give a new coach just one piece of advice , what would it be?

**Karen:**

That's a tough one, I think for me it is as always been to find mentors, find people that you can learn from. There is absolutely no need to reinvent the wheel. Starting out a business, find someone who is doing what you really want to do and connect with them, learn from them and be open. Go in with an open mind, there's a big peak, with an open mind you can really learn almost anything.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

So, I have to ask … how did you get connected with Bob Burg?

**Karen:**

I connected with Bob Burg actually through another business - through Jean Kuhn. She is an amazing coach, she gave me Bob Burg’s book “The Go-Giver” at our first meeting and it's been amazing I love that book, I love Bob too.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Well, I don't know if you know or not, but I read one of your questions to Bob when he was on the show. You had asked a question and went and put it out on social media, so Bob kind of gave a shout-out during that episode.

**Karen:**

Oh, I didn't know that, there's no caption so I wouldn't know.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Yeah, you answered a question … when I asked people on social media if they had any questions for Bob on-air, and he said “Oh, I know Karen”. If anyone wants to listen to that, that episode is #192 and it aired May 27th, 2015. So definitely check out Bob Burg's episode as well - that was a good one.

**Karen:**

Well, thank you for sharing that I had no idea.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

No problem, so what are you working on now Karen for your projects, for your coaching business, or anything else going on?

**Karen:**

I'm actually working on my next book - unwrapping your passion - and I had the pleasure of interviewing some really amazing people from all over the world who shared their passion and the process of grabbing it. I'm really excited about this next book.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Do you have any neat interesting stories, clients or people you've come across that are finding their passion?

**Karen:**

Yes, I do in fact, one of them in the group is actually a woman from Canada, 93 year old Olga and she started running when she was 72, she started competing in track and field and every year won so many medals, so many awards and I think the biggest lesson from that is that we don't have to sit down and wait for the end of our lives, we don't, we can create a new life a brand new path, a brand new journey literally at any moment of our life if we choose to. And that's what I got from her story and that was really inspirin--to think that we can get up there in years but, we don't have to really give up our lives at that point.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

That's a great example, and there are examples right across the board with people taking up painting and art when they are in their 80's and you know music, and just all these great examples, so you can go after your passion regardless of how old you are.

**Karen:**

Exactly, that's the message I want to get out to the world.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

And interviews like this will help do that , so we're going to try to get that message out to as many coaches and people as possible! So Karen, where can we find you online?

**Karen:**

You can find me [www.AgelessPassions.com](http://www.AgelessPassions.com) and of course any of the social media: Twitter, Google, Instagram, Facebook.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Definitely reach out to Karen on social media, she's very responsive … we've talked a lot on Twitter, Facebook, and all those things. Well Karen, I want to thank you for stopping by the podcast and sharing more about your incredible journey … it's certainly unique, we've had no show like this, I really appreciate you taking the time.

**Karen:**

Thank you Marc, thank you for having me.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

And I may have to start barefoot water skiing pretty soon to give it a try.

**Karen:**

Come and join me any time, there is always a spot in the boat.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

As long as there are no sharks around. I've seen “Jaws” a few times (both laughs).

**Karen:**

It's the alligators I worry about.

**Marc Mawhinney:**

Yeah, well I'm in Canada so we don't know what alligators are! So, we've had Karen Putz on the show today, go check out Karen’s stuff … just an incredible life story and she is all about going after your passion. If you're listening to this show today and you have something on your mind that you just can't let go of, you've been wanting to try - I think Karen’s story is a perfect example to not turn away from that voice, to go follow your passion regardless of how old you are, or what your situation is in life, just get out there and do it! Thanks to Karen, and thanks to all you guys for listening again, I really appreciate your support. I'll see you next time on Natural Born Coaches!