



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

**Kathy Caprino:**

Hello, Kathy here, and thank you so much for tuning in to today's episode. One quick thing I'd love to share is about my new digital training course, *The Most Powerful You*, which is the companion to my book, *The Most Powerful You: 7 Bravery-Boosting Paths to Career Bliss*.

I'm so thrilled that recently a division of the largest intergovernmental agency in the world sponsored several memberships to *The Most Powerful You* Course for members of their staff. What a powerful move that is in terms of bringing real-world effective training to both men and women to help them thrive in the workforce.

Coaching so many people as I do each year, I see that leadership and career growth training programs today are so often not effective because they simply don't go deep enough to address what really holds us back from thriving, believing in ourselves, understanding our talents and abilities, communicating effectively, asking for what we need and deserve, networking to build a great support community and making the impact we long to.

So, I'd love to make an ask of you, and that is, to briefly take a look at what I'm teaching in *The Most Powerful You* Course. You can find that at [mostpowerfuleyou.com](http://mostpowerfuleyou.com). If you feel that the content about the seven damaging power gaps and how to close those for good would be helpful for you and people at your organization, I hope you'll ask your supervisors, HR leaders, and diversity and inclusion managers to sponsor memberships of this course for you and other staff so that you can all thrive at the highest level in your roles and organizations.

Thank you so much, and here's to you becoming the most powerful you.

**Karen Catlin Initial Quote:**

When we don't take action, we become complicit, right? Complicit with the status quo. Meaning, we are okay with how things are going on, how things are unfolding here, how our culture is. We become complicit. That's why it's important to realize that we do all have a role to play, to stand up, to move from being a bystander of something to an upstander for what we believe is right.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Hello, everyone. This is Kathy Caprino, and welcome to my podcast *Finding Brave*. I've created this show for everyone who longs to create something bold and brave in their life; to rise up, speak up and stand up for who they are and to reach their highest and biggest visions.

Each week, I'll be speaking with inspiring guests from all walks of business, leadership, entertainment, the creative arts, and the entrepreneurial world. They'll be sharing their intimate stories of finding brave



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

and offer their best strategies for building your most rewarding, joyful and meaningful life, business and career.

Hello, everybody, welcome to another episode of Finding Brave. How are you? This is coming to you right after Thanksgiving, I believe. I hope, for those who celebrate it, you had a lovely holiday.

I'm so excited to have our guest today, Karen Catlin. I want to tell you, we are talking about how to be a better ally to build inclusive work cultures. We were just sharing, as we always do before we hit record, that when you're in a field a long, long time and you're interviewing other people, and you're writing books as Karen has, sometimes there's not a lot of ahas that make you go, "Oh."

But in poring over Karen's material, and we're going to talk about one particular resource that will of course link to about, how do you title it, 50 potential privileges in the workplace, that I challenge everybody to read because I think we're going to see ourselves in these areas of privilege that we just weren't aware of. And that's what privilege often is, we're not aware. So, we're going to dive in how do we be a better ally.

But let me tell you about Karen. Thank you for being here, Karen, I know you're crushingly busy. All right, after spending 25 years building software products and serving as a vice president of engineer at Adobe, Adobe wow, Karen Catlin witnessed a sharp decline in the number of women working in tech. Frustrated but galvanized, she knew it was time to switch gears.

Today, Karen is a leadership coach and highly acclaimed author and speaker on inclusive workplaces. She's the author of three books, that's impressive, including *Better Allies*, which we see right behind you, *Everyday Actions to Create Inclusive, Engaging Workplaces*, which we're going to be digging into in depth.

We just did a Forbes interview on my blog on five mistakes managers make when giving feedback. Check that out. I mean, I think you're going to have a lot of ahas like I did.

So, Karen, here we go. Can I dig in here and, since you've written three books, can you tell us what is the backstory of *Better Allies*? What prompted it?

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah, Kathy, thank you for asking and thank you for having me on your show. It is such a pleasure to be here, really.



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

**Kathy Caprino:**

Thank you.

**Karen Catlin:**

I'm looking forward to this whole conversation.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Wonderful.

**Karen Catlin:**

So, the backstory. First of all, briefly, I worked in tech. I worked in tech for 25 years. I used to write code for a living. I'm a software engineer and over time I moved into leadership roles. Most recently, I was vice president of engineering at Adobe.

Now, you've probably heard of tech. Tech is very male dominated as are other industries. And so, I was on minority working in my field. However, I'm a white woman, so what's interesting is I have a lot of privilege as a result of that, and I was an executive. I had power, respect, privilege in my workplace. I realized there was a decline happening in gender diversity, and so I wanted to do something for my industry and my company.

While I'm still working in tech, I mentored a lot of women and I started our women's employee resource group and all sorts of things. But I have to tell you, Kathy, I love doing that kind of mentoring and advocacy work for women a lot more, over time, than being a VP of engineering. So, I started my own business, going back about 10 years ago now, as a leadership coach for women who work in tech. You and I have a lot of commonality in the work we do in supporting women and caring about women's growth.

That's when I realized, "Oh, my gosh, I can coach women," and I love coaching women. I do it today still, but the real problem that they're facing isn't with their own leadership skills or lack thereof or anything, it's that they were all working in tech companies where the closer you got to the C-suite, to that CEO, the paler and paler it got.

With all due respect to your listeners who are male and/or pale, it's just that's what demographics are like. This isn't going to be about shaming and blaming anyone, but it's just that's what the demographics reveal is that these companies aren't the true meritocracies, I think, that most companies think they are.



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

You get ahead on your merit because men were getting ahead, and especially white men, at a faster pace than women.

So, that's when I decided, Kathy, I need to start looking at how to make the industry more inclusive. That led me to this whole exploration into allyship. Allyship being this every day actions people can take to sponsor, support, be more inclusive in the meetings they attend, the hallway conversations, virtual hallway conversations in this pandemic era, feedback that they're giving to employees whether they are a manager or a peer. There are so many examples of exclusionary behavior that is almost insidious, visible. I wanted to shine a light on all of that and give people ideas of things they could do to be more inclusive.

A big vision is let's make all of tech more inclusive. And it's expanded since then to more than tech and frankly beyond just gender diversity. I focus now on companies and organizations around the world, how they can be more inclusive, not just inclusive of women but based on sexual orientation or identity, abilities, ages and so forth. Race, ethnicity of course too.

So, that's the backstory of how I started working on allyship and coming to write my book. I'll stop talking there.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Oh, wow! I have a million questions, but it's such important work. Often my listeners know this, I tear up when I hear my guests speak. And then I have to, while you're talking, split my brain in half and say, "Why are you choking up?" Usually, it's because it hits a chord where I feel, look at me, getting choked up, shame or pain. Or I'm feeling the shame or pain of the individual, which is not the case. You're not feeling shame or pain. But when you're speaking, and I'm saying this to you all people because I know, if you listen to this podcast, you have heart, you have spirit. You want to do better in life as a manager.

I can and I definitely want to talk to you about how I think I needed an ally in some particular situations and I didn't have, and what would have happened had I. I would love your thoughts. But, to stop rambling, I want you all to listen carefully because it is in these everyday moments, it doesn't have to be this cataclysmic revolt. I mean, we can have that too, but it is in the everyday actions that we take and it's also in what you don't choose to stand up for.

**Karen Catlin:**

Exactly. And, Kathy, when we don't stand up for something, when we don't say something, when we hear maybe an offensive joke or slightly off-color joke, when we don't take action, we become complicit,



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

right? Complicit with the status quo. Meaning, we are okay with how things are going on, how things are unfolding here, how our culture is. We become complicit. That's why it's important to realize that we do all have a role to play, to stand up, to move from being a bystander of something to an upstander for what we believe is right.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Love it. Love it. And I know you know because we chatted about this. I want to say this and get your thoughts, there are people in our world that are supporting nondominant groups in corporate America. Women, in particular racial and other-

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah, people of color.

**Kathy Caprino:**

... and other groups. A few times people have said to me, when I write a book on, which I just did, the seven damaging power gaps that 98% of women have. Now, 90% of the men I've studied have them too, but I think that might be skewed because the men that follow me might already have a penchant for believing and understanding that their gap too, but 98% have these gaps. When you have these gaps, and number five is acquiescing instead of saying stop to mistreatment, when you have these gaps, you cannot thrive. You might be successful on the outside, but you're not successful internally.

So, I do want to ask your thoughts about this because some people occasionally have said, "I think you're blaming the victim. Meaning, you're saying that women need to change." I say this, "I am not blaming the victim, I am trying to uplift you out of victimhood."

Where I rub up against what folks say and your comment a little bit is when we do this work of becoming more powerful, there is so much within our control that we can change. Where I resist certain movements, it's not all about we have to change society. It's individuals who change society. I like to work together with ... You are working in the organizational front; I am working with the individuals. It has to happen both ways. What do you think?

**Karen Catlin:**

Okay, so some things I agree with you and some things I disagree with you. What I agree with you on is I believe that there are top down initiatives, whether that's in a society or within a company, top down initiatives to be more inclusive, to be more equitable and so forth. In addition, we need the grassroots.



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

We need the individuals to start changing behavior to create a more inclusive society or company. I think those things work in conjunction.

We're in agreement there. Although I phrased it a little bit differently, hopefully we're still in agreement. I'm thinking about what you're saying-

**Kathy Caprino:**

So, can I just understand? Where you're pushing back is when I said it's individuals who change society. You're pushing back on that, in that there can be big initiatives that the organization or societal change or law or policy can impact. But when you agree that there's an individual behind that usually, they don't pop out of nowhere.

**Karen Catlin:**

Oh, sure. So, a champion or a lobbyist, or-

**Kathy Caprino:**

Yes. Yes. Somebody said, "Damn it, this has to change."

**Karen Catlin:**

Sure. But Kathy, I want to ... I guess we're in violent agreement. Yet there are systemic things that need to be addressed in a different way than any single individual can do on their own. So, I think that ... I just want to emphasize that. It's more of an and than a but.

Yes, there's an individual at the top, maybe that policy change of an organization who can start advocating for something, but then it's how you roll that out and get that broad systemic impact you want is a whole different thing. It doesn't take one person. It takes a lot of people to get that done.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Got it.

**Karen Catlin:**

So, there are systemic things that we need to address in our society as well as in organizations.

**Kathy Caprino:**

100%.



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

**Karen Catlin:**

Yet, my focus, it's very clear, specific focus, is I'm focused on individuals working in companies. Not what they can change about themselves because they have been oppressed or harassed or excluded, I'm talking about everyone else around them who is part of the majority who can start making changes to be more inclusive.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Love it. I can be in agreement with that.

**Karen Catlin:**

Okay.

**Kathy Caprino:**

I don't think they're oppositional. I think people who are doing helping work intervene at levels that speak to them. I intervene to help mid to high level professional women take control of their lives because I was out of control. I didn't have the power. So, we all do what we passionately care about. I love it.

Okay, now let's talk about privilege. Would it be accurate to say that it's very different. When I was a therapist, what we learned is greater awareness equals greater choice. You can't really change the thing you have no awareness of. Right? So, is that one reason that you teach about privilege? So that we ... When you're in it, when you're swimming in the water, you don't see the water. You don't see that you're privileged. Can you tell us more about this?

**Karen Catlin:**

Exactly. We don't see the privilege when we just have it. It is invisible to us when we have it because we just assume everyone else is experiencing life in a similar way. Yet, when we have our privilege pointed out, we often get defensive. I think that's because we think that when someone says, "Oh, you have so much privilege" or "You're privileged," we equate that to them calling us lazy, that we've never had to work hard, everything handed to us on a silver platter.

But that's not what it's about. It's simply that it's a set of unearned benefits you have because you're part of a social group. Yeah, I'll just call it a social group, generally speaking. It's unearned benefits you have that help you navigate life in a very different way. I do think it's important for people to realize not everyone is going to experience the workplace in the same way you are because of your privilege.



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

I mean, just one example. Let's think about this pandemic lifestyle where most of us are living in right now. We have privilege if we can work from home, we have privilege if we have high speed internet, we have privilege if we have a decent quiet space in our home to be doing our work from. Not everyone has that, and it's so important. As I think back on the beginning of the pandemic, I talked to people who were living in small apartments with roommates and didn't even have a desk in their bedroom. Like, how am I going to work from home without this key part of working? So, there's a lot of privilege as we think about just even our recent work style, but of course so much more.

Now, at the very beginning, you mentioned this list of 50 ways you might have privilege in the workplace. It's from my book *Better Allies*, but it's also a free download PDF from my website. I bet you're going to link to it from the show notes.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Yeah, for sure.

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah. People can take a look at that and explore and try to understand where they fall and how much privilege they might have in the workplace and start realizing that not everyone's going to have all that privilege.

**Kathy Caprino:**

I love it. Can I dig deep on that for one second?

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah.

**Kathy Caprino:**

You are so right that ... I mean, I grew up, if someone said ... Some things came very easily to me, some didn't, of course. But if someone said, "Oh, that came easily to Kathy," I would get so defensive and I didn't even know why. But it's because I didn't want people to think I didn't deserve it and didn't earn it.

So, what I would ask people to do is definitely look at this list right away. Just look. I mean, because I'm in this field, a lot of these weren't a surprise. But 20 years ago, if I had looked at it as corporate VP, I would have, I mean, I have most of these.

And so, what I'd ask you to do, again, what I learned in therapy is you look at the content of what's going





Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

on in your life but also the process. As you're reading this, maybe highlight where you're privileged that you didn't realize it. Look at your emotions. Does it make you feel angry, defensive, justifying? Because unless you work on that awareness, those emotions, it's going to be hard for you to do this work, to be an ally. In other words, if you're resisting that, you called it unearned benefits.

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah, unearned benefit.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Unearned. That doesn't mean you're a bad person. It doesn't mean you're hurting people. It means you were born by no effort of your own into a situation. So, can I tell you the few that surprised me in here [inaudible 00:18:59]?

**Karen Catlin:**

Oh, please. Yes, yes.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Oh, before I do this, can I tell you something, Karen, and tell everybody? I hadn't experienced full on what bias against a person is until it was about 20, was it 25 years ago? A young woman was in our employ and she had grown up in a very difficult situation. She dressed differently and spoke differently. I didn't see it. Really, I didn't see what other people saw. But at one point, she called and said, "I have to tell you, I've been living in my car, and my car has been impounded." I can't even say this without crying. "I went to get it and the guy who owns the auto repair won't let me into my car, and it's everything that I have." I said, "Stay there. I'm coming down."

This is where privilege can be a benefit. I walked into the place. I could see how this shop owner looked at her and I could see how he looked at me. I don't even know how to describe it. I was not sweet. I said, "Hand the keys over. We're getting in the car." And he hand, "Yes, ma'am." I think he even said ma'am. I want to tell you, I was so shaken I even called my mother who's now 97, she was probably, what, 77, and I burst into tears because I had never seen how, through no fault of her own, how society looks at her. Ahh!

**Karen Catlin:**

Thank you for sharing that, Kathy. Thank you. I think, look at the way that bleeds in from society into the workplace. Look at that example of the privilege that you have compared to that colleague in terms of having a home to go to, to have a safe place to store your stuff, to have a dry roof over your head.



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

**Kathy Caprino:**

Ahh.

**>> Sponsorship Advertisement – BraveByDesign.com <<**

Hello! Kathy here. With the new year coming up, it's the perfect time to start taking steps towards your businesses' financial future. If you'd like to grow your business as a coach or consultant but the thought of figuring out how to do that stresses you out, I want to share something that will give you real peace of mind.

Brave by Design has created a digital calculator that shows you how you can double your revenue in 2022. I've used it myself and I love how easy it is to plan out your year and see where the money will come in. It's free and available at [bravebydesign.net/calculator](https://bravebydesign.net/calculator).

Brave by Design founder Laura Khalil has been on Finding Brave twice, most recently discussing the three key questions you need to ask yourself if you want to grow your business now. I know you'll find the revenue calculator helpful and a great complementary resource to that episode.

If you're ready to make 2022 the best year yet, grab your free download today at [bravebydesign.net/calculator](https://bravebydesign.net/calculator).

**<<Back to the show>>**

**Kathy Caprino:**

All right let me tell you the ones that surprised me. If there's anything that anyone would learn, I'd love to hear 11, you don't receive comments about your accent or the way you pronounce your words. Let me stop there. So, the people that you've worked with that have this as a challenge, what goes on for them? What do people say to them?

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah. So, first of all, they might be doing some extra heavy lifting in terms of code switching. If it is someone who is black who speaks more of an African American Vernacular English at home and with their friends and they have to code switch when they come into the office to turn that accent off, to turn that way of speaking, it's almost like a separate dialect. And they turn it off because they probably have gotten the message that they're going to be more successful if they speak without it.

**Kathy Caprino:**



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

Okay. Is it unconscious? In the people that you've worked with, do they consciously say, "I know I can't say these words."

**Karen Catlin:**

I think it becomes conscious, but perhaps for some people it's unconscious. They don't even realize they're doing it, definitely.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Which I think females have in terms of being what they think is more masculine, and I put that in quotes.

**Karen Catlin:**

Right. Right, well, look at Elizabeth Holmes, the founder of Theranos. She has trained herself to lower her voice to sound more masculine and more in charge. It's chilling to think about that. So, that's one thing that happens.

But then, also, people who aren't doing the code switching necessarily, perhaps they've come from another country, they get comments in terms of, "Well, where are you from?" "Well, I live in New York," or whatever it might be. Where you're really from? Where you're really from? Just wondering about how different they are as opposed to maybe focusing on what they're going to be doing for the business.

They might be excluded from certain meetings because I just don't think the client is going to connect with them because they have that different accent. They are potentially excluded from just going out socially and building up those relationships that we know are so important with team members. They might be excluded because they're so different from us. So, there are things that happen because of that.

**Kathy Caprino:**

I've got a question. I'm a curious person and so I often ask people, "What do you do for a living?" A lot of people hate that question because they think I'm prying for what socioeconomic class you're in or how much money, and I'm not. I'm a career coach, so I'm interested. I think people sense that I'm curious, not that I'm going to judge. But I do, often. If it's an Uber driver or a person I'm meeting in a line waiting and they're speaking to me, not a complete stranger, but I might say, "Oh, where are you from? I'm so interested."

No one ever has seemed to bristle or feel offended, and I hope it's because they sense I'm not going to



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

the judgy place and putting them in a box, "Oh, you're from the Dominican Republic. Oh." But do you think that that is a question we should be careful to ask?

**Karen Catlin:**

I do. I do. Now, there can be, maybe, a subtle difference and I'm trying to think of what that might look like in this situation. You're someone who clearly has an accent. Perhaps a driver or someone in line that you are just exchanging niceties with, how's your day going or something, asking something more about that doesn't assume that they come from another country or any kind of judgy stuff.

So, more along the lines of how long have you lived here? I'm wondering if that would be more appropriate. Or, tell me where you spent your childhood? I don't know. I'm trying to think about this, Kathy, as we're talking about it.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Yeah. And a lot of it could sound intrusive. Nobody asked ... Well actually I was going to say nobody asked me. I get that a lot, where did you grow up? Because I don't tend to have, I'm from upstate New York and there is an accent there and I somehow don't have it.

All right, it's a lot to think about. I hope people that this is food for thought for you. Let me give you one more. One more, but there were several here. Number 30, when meeting people at professional events, they assume you're attending in a professional role. My goodness. Meaning, that's the privilege, that they're not assuming you're a partner of someone.

**Karen Catlin:**

Right. Or a member of the catering staff. Now, I talked to-

**Kathy Caprino:**

Goodness.

**Karen Catlin:**

... an engineer who wears a turban for his heritage, his religious beliefs. He told me there are so many times he can point to that he has been at a reception of some sort, whether it's a wedding reception, a personal thing, or a business reception after a conference, and he said it's been more than once that people have come up to him and asked him, "Hey, the cheeseboard is running low. Can you take care of it?" That type of thing.



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

Or, I've heard from people of color, especially outside black people, shopping at Target and people come up to them, "Hey, can you tell me where I can get the paper towels?" Why do you think I work here? So, that's the bias that happens is we see someone, and we assume that they are working in the event or working the store, working at reception.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Can I tell people, you might be listening going, "So what? They got it wrong." I've been on the receiving end of this years ago. I lived in the top floor of a big music studio in Connecticut. Very big acts would come to get out of New York, bands you've all heard of. One band way top of the charts, I won't say who it is, but I lived there, and I was in the kitchen. The studio rented out the other part of the house, so the band members got up in the morning and they wanted coffee, and I'm in the kitchen. They say to me, I mean it was claim to fame, but this person said, "Could we have some coffee? Could you make some more coffee?"

I remember being offended and said, "I live here. I'll get you some help." I found someone who would ... Or, no. I forget what I said, but make it yourself is what I wanted to say. I mean, it's a coffee pot. But why it's so upsetting to you is there is an instant inference or instant assumption. She's a woman and she's standing in the kitchen, and you're assuming I work to make your coffee.

Maybe it sounds like, well, so what if they got it wrong? But when you experienced it, you feel ... What are the words? Karen, what are the words we feel?

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah, excluded. Let's imagine more of that professional setting. Really, once again, I don't look like I belong. Once again, I'm getting this message, I am different. Once again, people are making the wrong assumption about me, about my talent, about what I could bring to a conversation if it's a networking kind of situation. Once again, this is happening.

I read someone explaining this, how it builds up over time. It's like imagine riding the subway and one day someone steps on your toe. Yeah, big deal. Big deal it happened. Maybe, whatever. You can talk yourself and just explain it away like, ah, it happens. But if it happens every day, it starts to get pretty annoying.

**Kathy Caprino:**

You're going to get mad. You're going to get ... It's so unfair and it's so wrong. So helpful. So helpful.



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

I'm aware of our time. I have a million more questions, but let's go here. I want to talk about, and again in my book I talked to a former federal prosecutor, Tom Spiegel, who now supports women who've been wrongly treated at work or wrongly fired, and he gives some great advice.

**Kathy Caprino:**

I've been sexually harassed and it was pfff. There are no words when you're being treated in a way that impacts your very livelihood and there is no one you can tell because they're all, the word is cahoots that comes to mind. I know for a fact, had I gone to senior management, I would have been fired. There's just no question.

So, what I do talk about in the book is after I was laid off with 100 people, I did go to a lawyer. But interestingly, I want to say, it's not about the sexual harassment because I deleted the smoking gun. I deleted the email where he said, "We're having a party. I'd love to see you naked in the pool."

**Karen Catlin:**

I'm so sorry.

**Kathy Caprino:**

I deleted it. And I talked about why did you delete that? Which is part of the oppression, which is one I didn't want to be unfair. Unfair. And come up after him after the fact I should have spoken up. This is how I felt guilt. And number two, I wanted it behind me.

**Karen Catlin:**

You want to move on, yeah.

**Kathy Caprino:**

But I think this is ... So, I'd love your thoughts about, I think we talk a lot about what to do when you're being harassed or sexual bias, gender bias. What should the ally do? Talk to us about being the ally to that.

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah. So, let's say there was one other person, if not more, on that email that you received. Just one person. That one person should have stood up, should have stood up to the boss who said, "I want to see you naked in the pool," and said something like, "Hey, that's not cool. We don't do that here. I don't think that's funny."



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

There are so many things that someone could do. Instead of being a bystander, to be an upstander for what they believe is right. Of course, they could also report it to HR and provide that trail of evidence that this is not acceptable. So, just one person could have stood up and said something.

Same thing happens in any kind of situation where maybe there's an off-color joke that is being said. Even if someone in the circle, within hearing distance, isn't maybe going to be personally offended, still someone should stand up and just say, "Hey, I don't get the joke. Can you explain it to me?" To get someone, the person who's delivering that, message that harassment, that offensive joke, to get them to confront their biases. And when you're asked to explain a joke, it usually makes it fall flat, so it's a great way to deliver that.

Or, just say something like ouch. That one word. If you can't think of anything else, when you hear something that's biased or demeaning or offensive, harassing, saying the word ouch, maybe think of what else you want to follow that up with.

**Kathy Caprino:**

I love it. Now, I'm going to ask a confronting question because it's coming up for me. This is where you have to find brave. When you said one person should have said, "Hey, buddy, this is not right." In that work culture, Karen, no one would succeed by doing that.

So, this is The Most Powerful You concept. Sometimes, and this is privilege to even say this, but sometimes if you have to sell your soul for your job, if you have to give up who you are, you need to find another job. Now, some people can't, I get it, but a lot of us can. What I didn't do for two years even though I was offered other jobs elsewhere and it was good money, I didn't do it. So, this is the most powerful you part, only you can control. Do I want to stay at a company and make a lot of money where I'm treated like this and where it's allowed to treat people like this?

I get it, there's privilege even in that concept, that you can just get another job. I get that. But a lot of the people listening here are tolerating things that they can actually stop tolerating.

**Karen Catlin:**

Love it.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Do you agree?



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah, absolutely. If you have some privilege, explore that in terms of how easy is it going to be for me to find another job? Or, one of the privileges is you've got enough money in the bank to make sure that you could support yourself without a paycheck for a while. Maybe you have a visa or citizenship so that you can work here in the United States and you're not relying on your employer for any kind of work permit. These things are all privileges that allow you to stand up a little bit more for what you think is right, not only for yourself but for the organization. You're making a stand.

**Kathy Caprino:**

I love it. There's one other thing that I want to ask you about and then talk about something I saw on your LinkedIn profile, which I love. We were talking earlier, has there been a time where I didn't have an ally and that the sexual harassment was, but there's one thing that I struggled to even think how I could have handled look differently and I wonder what you could have recommended to me back then. It was, briefly, it was the same company that was very toxic, and it had gone through a large shareholder litigation the year before.

The president who I liked, who liked me, called me in and said, "We're aware that your boss is floundering and what I'd like you to do is basically report to me regularly. Basically, spy. I want you to tell me what he's doing, what he isn't doing." I was 41 years old or 40. I said, "I'm not doing that." He said, "What do you mean you're not doing that?" I said, "First of all, he hired me and I'm not going to be a rat. That is not what I'm doing here. Number two, it's very clear, he can't do his job. You don't need me to tell you that." I said this at age 40. I said, "Give him a project and tell him he can't use his three vice presidents, that you'd like to see him execute this without the vice presidents." He was furious, Karen. It definitely put a wedge in our relationship until he was removed.

Now, I'm talking to the president of the company. There's no ally that's higher than him. I'm guessing, allies, you want allies with power, and women tend not to do that. They isolate from influential support. Apparently, the research says women have three times as many mentors as men, but men have twice as many sponsors. Sponsors are allies with clout. But what would you do if I were your client and I said to you this is ... I want to tell you, I started to cry. Because when I'm backed in the corner, I cry, and you never want to cry at work. What would you do if I were your client coming to you? What would you tell me?

**Karen Catlin:**

What I really want to do is coach the CEO. That's what I want to do. I want to dive in and start coaching the CEO.





Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

You know, there's a whole concept called stay interviews. Stay interviews are the opposite of exit interviews. Exit interviews, I think we all know, are things that HR tends to do when someone has resigned and is on their way out the door, like tell us about your experience or a few questions they might ask. A stay interview is the opposite. A stay interview is maybe, it's like, hey, our engagement survey just revealed these things about the organization. I want to touch base with you on how you're feeling about these different dimensions and basically explore what it's going to take for you to stay somewhere.

**Kathy Caprino:**

That's so good.

**Karen Catlin:**

That's what I'd want the CEO to be having a conversation with you about. What's it going to take for you to stay here? Not spy on your boss. But give us some feedback. How are things going that you feel like you're thriving? What are some of the things that are getting in your way and how can I be a better ally for you?

**Kathy Caprino:**

I mean, there was never one conversation ever like that. I love it.

Now, let me leave you with this question. I noticed that you say, it's on LinkedIn, I think. Yeah, right there, "I won't speak on all-white panels."

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Leave us with this. Tell us what's going on with that and why. I love it.

**Karen Catlin:**

Okay, so I first started learning about something a little bit different, which is called the manel. The manel is the all-male panel, the all-male panel of experts at some professional event that are talking about the latest research or industry trends, or whatever it might be. And it doesn't just have to be a panel at a conference. It could be the speaker lineup when you are advertising that event, an all-male speaker lineup. Of course, the message that it sends is only men have the expertise-



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

**Kathy Caprino:**

Anything to say.

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah, and something to say. In the background, what's happening is the conference organizers are tapping into their network. Who has spoken in the past about this? Who do I know that I can ask and pull a favor and get them to agree to this event? It's the old boys' network at play. That's the all-male panel.

But for us white people, we have a lot of privilege because of our race. We also should be on the lookout for the all-white speaker lineup, all-white panels. And so, as a white woman, I put in my social media profiles, LinkedIn, Twitter, my website says this, "I will not speak on all-white panels." And so, when I am asked to speak at a conference, one of the first questions is what are your goals for diversifying the speaker lineup and making sure you have a nice diverse speaker lineup? Because I am not going to speak on an all-white panel or, I know it's rare for me to have to pushback on an all-women panel, but it's more an all-white panel.

So, that's why I put it right out there, to send the message not only about me that this is how I'm going to show up, but hopefully to be a small role model for other people who feel the same way and want to put it out there that they will not, as a public speaker, be part of a homogenous speaking lineup.

**Kathy Caprino:**

It's so brave. I just applaud you. What is the most stunning remark you've gotten in response to that?

**Karen Catlin:**

You know, that one, most people say, "Oh, yeah." I feel like either they are speaking very quickly on their feet or they've already thought about it. I do feel that that's been okay.

Now, what's interesting, Kathy, a corollary thing I just started doing and, I'll share with you, it's before I agreed to be on your podcast, is I now say no to podcast request unless the podcast host provides a transcript of the recording. That is because there are many people who can't basically learn from hearing. They need to either be able to read the words because they have a hearing disability or because of some audio processing disability.

I'm now, when I do get a request to be on a podcast, I ask first, do you provide transcripts? I don't know



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

if you do or not, because you and I talked about this a while ago before I started having this new policy of my own.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Yeah. You know, I will have the guest do it because it's a cost. I can send you the recording and you can create the transcript in two seconds. But I love it, I love it.

**Karen Catlin:**

But I'll tell you, one thing that happened recently is, I explained this to someone who invited me on a podcast, and they said, "No, we don't do transcripts." I said, "Oh, I'm sorry, then I am going to decline." They came back a couple weeks later and said, "We are going to make a transcript."

**Kathy Caprino:**

Love it. I used to. I came out of the gate having them, but people weren't clicking the download. They weren't going for them. But I hear you. I mean, the whole overarching theme of today is, in my opinion, there is so much that we're not aware of that gives us that benefit that you're talking about. The more we can even look at these seemingly small things, how do people learn, how do people speak.

I remember, my ex-husband now, he's a professional jazz percussionist and he had a lot of bands. Even the concept of time, be here at 9:00 for the gig, other cultures perceive time differently. I learned that in my multicultural training as a therapist. What time is; what life is; what God is, God or not. It's asking us to understand that it's an enormously diverse world and the more we can recognize and embrace that and not judge it and not push it away, the better we are. Would you say that's something?

**Karen Catlin:**

Yeah, I love the way you've just phrase that. Absolutely.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Karen, where do we learn about you? Where do we get the book? Of course, we'll link to all of it, but where do we scoop up everything you've got in this wonderful 50 ways you have privilege that you're not aware of?

**Karen Catlin:**

It's all on my website, [betterallies.com](http://betterallies.com). You can find all these resources we're talking about and purchasing links to my book as well as a free newsletter I send out every week called 5 Ally Actions. The reason I send out that newsletter, I'll just say is, this stuff is complex, and I am learning more about it



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

every week myself, and I love sharing what I've learned. So, I share what I learned in my newsletter and help other people come along with me on this journey to be a better ally.

**Kathy Caprino:**

I adore that. If you said to me I'm an expert and I know everything there is to know about this, I'd say, have you read your own book? I mean, no you don't. None of us do. It's a journey. The more diverse we become ... You know, I read a quote, I got to let you go, I know, I read a quote in a book *Journey of Souls*, which is a spiritual book, but they talked about, this individual talked about that the diversity on our planet is so difficult because our mental development has not caught up with it. We don't have the mental development because our brain is still that amygdala, fear primitive brain.

So, there we go. Lots of food for thought, people. I hope you feel this is food for thought and it inspires you to take action. That's what I love about your work. It's all well and good to say we're having diversity and equity and inclusion initiatives, but if each of us doesn't take some responsibility for that and serve as allies, we're slowing down the whole process.

So, let us know, wherever you see this. I have a feeling Karen will hop on and respond to any questions you have. There will be questions. How do I do this? Did I do something that was hurtful to someone I don't know? Please let us hear from you. We'd love to. We'd love to. Hope this is helpful. Thanks again, Karen. I hope you'll come back.

**Karen Catlin:**

Oh, Kathy, it'd be a pleasure. Thank you.

**Kathy Caprino:**

Thank you. All right, everybody have a wonderful week and we will see you next time.

**<<Final Podcast Message>>:**

Hi, Kathy here, and I wanted to just share some information about my new digital newsletter *Your Path to Career Bliss*. This monthly newsletter explores one key career leadership or personal growth topic that is essential for building a happier, more successful career or business. Every issue offers a selection of the most read articles that I've ever written along with riveting podcast interviews with some of the nation's top experts as well as career assessments, resource recommendations, a subscriber highlight section and an Ask Kathy column and more.



Transcript for Kathy Caprino's podcast *Finding Brave*  
Episode #204: How to Be a Better Ally at Work and Build an Inclusive Culture,  
with Karen Catlin

We've made it as affordable as possible with two tiers to choose from. The first month is completely free, and you can cancel at any time. I hope you'll join me in this program now. Check it out at [kathycaprino.com/newsletter](http://kathycaprino.com/newsletter) and get your free issue today. Thank you and here's to your path to career bliss.

Thanks so much for joining us today, and please don't forget to check out [findingbrave.org](http://findingbrave.org) for more programs, resources and tips. Tune in next time for your weekly dose of Finding Brave.

#End