

# The Face of God

Karen Drucker

Beloved Musical Face of the Divine

Kent Rautenstrauss



“I have this sandbox. I want everyone to play in it.” This imaginary visual scene sums up the reason why inspirational singer/songwriter/speaker/author Dr. Karen Drucker is one of the most impactful and beloved musicians in New Thought.

A red-haired, twinkle-eyed, warm-smiling, kazoo-playing face of God, Karen Drucker authentically embraces a connection with her audience, and because of this, total strangers feel that she is a part of them and they are a part of her. Drucker’s husband John Hoy, who engineers and plays bass guitar on all of Karen’s recordings, says, “Her private persona is as beautiful as her public one. She

speaks to you like a good friend who knows how hard it can be. She has been there. She is a true love being love.”

In being love, Karen Drucker has reached the hearts of others deeply, as her musical colleagues testify with admiration. A prolific New Thought artist with thirteen musical CDs to her credit (and more on the way), Drucker travels to churches, spiritual communities, and conferences throughout the United States and around the world each year, impacting thousands of people with her heart-centered compositions and singing. She also co-presents healing and transformative subject material at workshops with authors, including Dr. Joan Borysenko and Alan Cohen. She has racked up numerous honors along the way, including an honorary Doctorate of Music from United Centers for Spiritual Living and a “Grace Note” award for her work with the Unity Movement.

In her “off-time,” she donates countless hours to working with cancer and AIDS patients and has been known to show up at a hospital to softly sing one of her healing chants to a patient. This has earned her the Marin County, California, “Volunteer of the Year” award for twenty-two years of service to Bread and Roses, an organization that offers free live entertainment to hospitals and institutions. Everywhere she goes, Drucker tries to make a difference.

“Karen Drucker has a very special ability to put the principles and teachings we love to music,” says United Centers’ Community Spiritual Leader Dr. Kathy Hearn. “Her chants and songs support spiritual awakening and realization in thoroughly uplifting, powerful, and enjoyable ways. She helps us sing ourselves into enlightenment and spiritual living.”

Drucker says it in a more understated way, “I want to help people and make a difference with my music. If I am making a difference in some small way, then I am happy.”

Making a difference for Karen now includes authoring a new autobiographical book, *Let Go of the Shore: Stories and Songs that Set the Spirit Free*, published by DeVorss Publications. This very readable book, with clever cartoon illustrations of Karen by Brian Narelle, shares the inspiration behind many of her most popular songs and chants, and key “aha” moments and insights while being on the spiritual path. Throughout her book, Karen’s great humanity and humor shine brightly. She shares many funny stories about her Hollywood, Cal-

ifornia, upbringing, including her first job as a pony pooper scooper at Beverly Hills Ponyland where The Supremes' Diana Ross brought her kids for miniature pony rides. There are other wildly entertaining and compelling real-life stories that give insight into who she is and where she came from. One minute the reader will laugh; another, he or she will tear up. All of her life experiences have most assuredly impacted her music.

### **Dippity Do and Tarzan Calling**

A competitive swimmer as a youth, Karen also dreamed of singing and being on stage, but she admits she was “a total geek.” In sixth grade, she had acne and braces, stood five-feet-seven, was fully-developed, and had a mop of red hair that refused to stay flat on her head despite using “globs” of the Dippity Do gel. She desperately wanted to fit in and discovered that her sense of humor opened many doors. “I started to be accepted into the ‘in’ crowd simply because I was funny.”

Every Friday during this time, Karen took the bus after school to CBS Television Studios to watch comedienne Carol Burnett tape her hilarious comedy show. One day, as she did to open every show, the famous comic actress

asked if anyone in the audience had any questions or comments. “As if possessed by some demon, I witnessed my right hand shoot up,” Karen recalled. “Um,” she said in a timid voice to Burnett, “I would like to challenge you to a Tarzan Calling Contest.” The “Tarzan call” was one of Carol Burnett’s most-famous comedy antics. Karen had practiced it so many times in the privacy of her home that her impersonation was spot-on.

Suddenly, Karen found herself on the same stage with her childhood idol. She took a deep breath, and let out her best Carol Burnett Tarzan call. The crowd went wild, as did Carol Burnett. Karen was hooked on stage performing, and also realized something equally profound. For the first time, she had made the choice to go for it, to risk, to grow, to step out of my comfort zone. Years later she wrote a song about the moment:

*I can do it. I can do anything.  
I release. Let go. Go with the flow.  
This is where I'm supposed to be.*  
Lyrics from “I Can Do It”

### **Hollywood Connections and Unusual Music Jobs**

Even as a self-conscious teen, Karen stepped out as an extraordinary individual. She organized a fund-raising bike ride to raise money to fix the famous but in-great-

need-of-repair, “Hollywood” sign, located in the Hollywood Hills. About a hundred kids with pledges and bikes showed up, along with the media, and through the riders' collective efforts, \$700 was raised along with corporate sponsors who also came forward to save the iconic sign from demolition. “What a gift the whole experience was to me,” Karen recalled, adding, “I try to do what I can to be the change I want to see in the world.”

A side business as a babysitter in Laurel Canyon brought Karen literally to the door of singer/songwriter Carole King, who had moved in on her street, and soon Karen began caring for Carole’s children. In the process, Karen grew very close to the songwriter, who gave her clothes and even loaned Karen her upright piano where Karen wrote some of her very first songs. Karen babysat for Carole King on the night in 1972 when she won four Grammy Awards for her album *Tapestry*. “I truly think I wouldn’t be doing what I am doing now had it not been for her coming into my life at such a critical time. I believe in divine timing, and my relationship with Carole was the manifestation of it.”

*I've got the power to make all my dreams come true.*

*I've got the power, there's nothing I can't do.*

*I've got the power to be anything I want.*

*I've got the power inside of me.*

Lyrics from “I’ve Got The Power”

In her twenties, Karen found herself working as a “professional singer.” Her musical career was far from glamorous by industry standards, but was also far from average. She was a tap-dancing “singing casket” for the California Funeral Directors and a singing mermaid at the Monterey Bay Aquarium, to list just two of the zany “gigs” that she hilariously recounts in her book. Another crazy music job occurred at Christmastime when she was hired to wear a green elf outfit and sing to the shoppers at Macy’s. She recalls hearing one teen girl say in her best Valley Girl voice, “Look at her, she is soooooo stupid.”

Other work ensued. Karen organized people’s “stuff” in their homes and garages, a task which was near and dear to her heart, as she loves organization. She also consoled nervous mothers-of-the-bride as the consummate wedding singer/band leader. In this job, she learned volumes about family dynamics and diplomacy. Singing “Misty” in smoky lounges far too many times, she longed to escape to Hawaii, her dream destination. She began



practicing the idea of “act as if,” and a short while later, through a serendipitous connection, she found herself singing onboard American Hawaii Cruises, which sailed throughout the Hawaiian Islands. Many other singing opportunities followed over the next several years, including high-society musical engagements in the San Francisco Bay area, where she now lives.

Every time Karen made a change in her career, she heard an inner call to something more and she let go of the shore. “I have finally realized,” she says in hindsight, “how important it is to get quiet enough to hear that call, and then to trust enough to take that leap in faith.”

*I feel the call of something more.*

*I feel the call of something that I've never felt before.*

*I feel the call of something more.*

*I feel the call, asking, what am I here for?*

*What am I here for? What am I here for?*

Lyrics from “The Call of Something More”

### **Squeaks on a Sunday Morning**

One of her musical colleagues sensed that Karen had something deeper musically than pop music to share—possibly something spiritual or inspirational—which brought

Karen to a new shore: singing in a New Thought church. “What did I know of singing in church? I wasn’t religious, and certainly had no idea what New Thought philosophy was all about.” Despite this, Karen showed up to sing at a Napa, California, Religious Science church one Sunday morning, and heard the sound of high-pitched squeaks all around the room. “The problem was that these were not fireflies,” she said, but “the sound of the elderly congregation turning off their hearing aides as I got up to sing.”

Despite the symphony of squeaks that morning, Karen was intrigued, and continued singing in New Thought spiritual communities. “I began resonating with the messages I would hear every week,” adding, “This teaching changed my life. It gave me my daily bread. I was longing for this.”

A particularly fruitful artistic collaboration that spanned many years involved Rev. Karyl Huntley, minister at the Golden Gate Center for Spiritual Living, where Karen eventually became the Music Director. Every week, Rev. Karyl would shoot Karen some lyric ideas for Karen to write a new chant, but not before her talk was completely written, which often was toward the end of the week. One of Karen’s most

poignant chants was birthed from such an eleventh-hour deadline.

It was 2:00 a.m. on a Sunday morning when an exhausted Karen arrived back to her home having fronted a long and raucous wedding reception for a Hell’s Angels party. The message machine light on her telephone flashed. It was Rev. Karyl cheerfully sharing lyric ideas about seeing the face of God in everyone you meet, which would correspond with her talk the next morning.

“I swore; I screamed. I couldn’t deal with it,” Karen recounted later. She went to bed still cursing, but got up five hours later, and in just ten minutes, divine inspiration poured out through Karen with a simple, but deeply profound spiritual message:

*You are the face of God.*

*I hold you in my heart.*

*You are a part of me.*

*You are the face of God.*

“The Face of God,” lyrics by Karen Drucker and Rev. Karyl Huntley

Years later, Karen still hears about the impact this chant makes throughout the world. There’s the story of the grandkids who sang “You are the face of God” to their grandfather as he made his transition; or the family who sang this simple chant to their dog,

who was also making his transition. There are stories of men’s groups who weep openly as they sing the words to each other, accompanied by sign gestures, or total strangers gathered at a conference, whose lives are touched and transformed by the spiritual essence of the lyrics.

### **The Secret of Expansive Appeal**

Karen has come a long way from her Tarzan-calling/singing-casket days. What is the secret of her immense popularity and universal impact in spiritual communities? A clue is learning that as a championship swimmer who swam the English Channel, Karen was always more comfortable seeing her teammates take home the first-place blue ribbons. “Karen loves to see others shine,” reports Rev. Karyl Huntley. Author Alan Cohen says, “Karen Drucker is one of the most talented, dedicated, heart-centered, and service-minded musicians and teachers of spiritual wisdom and joy that I have ever met.” Husband John Hoy adds, “When she sings, I hear truth, compassion, heart, soul, and true love. That is who she is.” Perhaps her good friend and author Joan Borysenko, who also wrote the foreword to Karen’s book, sums it up best: “Karen is a truly good human being, a

model for us all.”

If you ask Karen for her recipe of success, she says quietly, “I’m really about ‘connection,’” underscoring that this is one of her favorite words. She insists on creating community wherever she goes, and her easy-to-sing chants facilitate her intention. “People thank me for allowing them to sing along by making the chants easy. They say, ‘We can keep up with you!’”

Despite this widespread artistic validation, Karen’s inner critic, “Zelda,” rears her head from time to time, especially when she’s in the recording studio; but Karen tames Zelda by printing e-mails and taping them all over her music stand, testifying to the impact of her music. “Dancer Martha Graham said, ‘It’s not your business to determine how good it is; nor how valuable it is; nor how it compares with other expressions,’ but to keep the channel open. My purpose is to put it out there. Period.”

*I’m taming my inner critic.*

*You’re not welcome here any more.*

*I’m taming my inner critic.*

*Allow me to kick you out the door.*

Lyrics from “Taming My Inner Critic”

### New Shorelines

As a lifelong swimmer and student of life’s learning, Karen is always searching for new shorelines. “Right now, I particular-

ly enjoy the newness of speaking engagements and leading my own retreats. The book was also a huge stretch for me.” Karen is also beginning spiritual coaching as her schedule allows. “I love brainstorming with people.” Regarding the infinite possibilities of Spirit, Karen says, “I keep releasing and asking, ‘Is there a higher plan?’”

Karen knows that her music will always be in the center of all that she does and all that she is. One thing else is for certain: Karen knows that Spirit expresses joyfully full-out as herself, just as she knows that Spirit expresses joyfully full-out as each of us.

The face of God is you, and me, and Karen Drucker. And for that knowing, we all have a higher plan.

*You are the heart. You are the hands.*

*You are the voice of Spirit on earth*

*And who you are, and all you do*

*Is a blessing to the world.*

“Blessing to the World,” lyrics by Rev. David Bruner and Karen Drucker ■

For more from Karen Drucker, visit [karendrucker.com](http://karendrucker.com).

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