

## MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh

Tina Shrader, January 2026

How to Cancel a Karen: What to Say How to Stay Regulated When a Client Is Upset



**Tina Shrader** is a licensed marriage and family therapist, communication strategist, and founder of Tina Power™, a brand dedicated to building emotionally sustainable people, workplaces, and service careers. She is known for her signature frameworks that help people understand not just what they said, but what the other person heard, felt, and made it mean. Interviewed by **Winn Claybaugh**, Tina believes communication is the real differentiator in relationships and careers. This interview delivers a beautiful feeling of hope for those who feel tired, burnt out, or emotionally drained.

**Winn:** Hey everybody, Winn Claybaugh here and welcome to this issue of MASTERS by Winn Claybaugh. I am sitting here—and boy, these topics, I could do every single issue on this topic of mental health and wellness and self-regulation and how all of that translates into running a successful career, a business, especially in the world of hospitality. But any business that revolves around relationships, which, I guess is everybody. But this also translates into our personal lives as well and I'm so grateful to Tina Shrader. Tina, thank you so much for being a part of this. And then I'll jump in and share with everybody who you are and what you bring to the table. But Tina, thank you so much.

**Tina:** Thanks, Winn. I've been looking forward to this. I'm so excited to talk with you today.

**Winn:** Well, I'm just—straight out thank you to Jim and Tina because they told me about you and said that you came into their salon. So here you are, a licensed marriage and family therapist, and they were telling me, “Winn, we're bringing her into the salon.” I'm like, “Well, that's very interesting. Tell me how it goes.” And of course, when you were done they were just, “Winn, you've got to have this woman on your podcast. She's incredible!” So, let me share with everybody who you are. You're a licensed marriage and family therapist, communication strategist, and founder of Empower Family Therapy and Tina Power, a brand dedicated to building emotionally sustainable people, workplaces, and service careers. That's a tall order. In 2019, Tina had one part-time therapist in a dream of building the go-to practice for couples and families, but then COVID hit. Of course, the demand surged and the practice grew from two to a team of 16 therapists and three administrative staff across Illinois and Florida guided by the mission “family time shouldn't suck.” I love that. Family time shouldn't suck. So, Tina's message today is simple. Make

- communication skills accessible, make mental health tools normal, and make emotionally sustainable work the new standard. So, Tina, once again, thank you and my gosh, you've accomplished all of that. You look like you're, I don't know, a fraction of my age and yet you're already this smart, so whatever you're doing, keep doing it.
- Tina: Thank you.
- Winn: You know, obviously COVID hit all of us in very, very different ways, but somebody who was already in the mental health, mental wellness capacity, my gosh, what happened?
- Tina: Yeah.
- Winn: What happened to you and to your family and to your company, to your organization?
- Tina: Yeah, well, right in March 2020, I was about to start telling my clients in my private practice that I was pregnant and going to be going on leave. And it was a bit of an unexpected situation that we were all kind of going on leave. So, we all just kind of hunkered down at home. I think, you know, my family, we were making fried chicken every night. Like, we were just eating like this was going to be a week. And then we were like, "We've got to stop. This is going to be for a long time. We've got to rein it in." But for my business, I was really grateful for my career roots in hospitality because you learn a certain way of speaking to people when you're in hospitality that other people don't get training in. And it really helped when I was talking to clients and my staff about what does this look like, what does this mean? None of us really knew how to do virtual therapy and we all were adjusting quite quickly. And it took a lot of, you know, that customer service smile to work through a lot of those conversations during those early days of COVID.
- Winn: I'm not aware of what your background is in hospitality. So, before you became a family therapist, you worked in what?
- Tina: I came up in restaurants. So, I was front of house: serving, cocktailing, waitressing, you know, from high school through grad school. And that's where I met my husband. So, some of our closest friends are still deep roots in the restaurant and hospitality world. And similar to the hair salon world, it's just like the caliber of people that you don't feel like you meet in the real world, right? They're just like really good, great friends. You always have the best time with them. So, there is that piece that's hard to get out of: even if you're no longer working in the restaurant, those people stick so closely with you.
- Winn: I think everybody listening to this will relate, even though the majority of my listeners are obviously from the professional beauty industry but I have a ton—because I took a shift, I took a turn many years ago, to start inviting a whole bunch of people not from the professional beauty industry to be my guests on this podcast. And so, we've attracted those audiences as well. But I don't think that there's anybody listening to this who wouldn't relate to what

does it mean to all day, every day be face to face with the customer in hospitality. So, your background and your experience is just going to be incredible. But before building a practice or a team, you were a 20-something crisis worker in Chicago carrying a pager. I'm not sure that everybody knows what a pager is nowadays, but you were on call overnight, driving across the city. Obviously families in crises and their hardest moments. And there you are, showing up. Can you just take us back to those beginning experiences of your career and what you learned and gained from all of that?

Tina: Yeah, early stages of my career in mental health, the field hadn't moved so much toward private practice. We all had to cut our teeth in community mental health, which was very much just ground-level, grassroots, community-based work. And so, I was fortunate enough, after a year of job hunting out of grad school, to get a job as a crisis counselor. And so really we're assessing for risk and safety. So suicidal, homicidal, abuse: that's really what we did day in and day out. And met on site, whether the young person was at school in their home. We would go into their home, into an ER, or somewhere in the community that this crisis had been flagged. We would assess them and determine whether they needed a higher level of care. So, inpatient. Or if they could be discharged with therapy services and then we'd follow up with them for 90 days for counseling and stabilization. It was just one of those jobs that you could—the experience that I gained is priceless and the friendships that I gained from that were priceless as well.

Winn: You know, I think nowadays, you know, we're so easily triggered and I get it. You know, somebody comes at us with their bad day or their bad attitude or their bad whatever and it just triggers something in us and we just want to respond in the same vein, in the same negative energy. And I mean, what did you learn from all of that? Like, how do you stay grounded when somebody is coming from a place of chaos, they're dysregulated and now somehow you have to be the calm in all of that?

Tina: Yes, I think that's really it, is finding that inner calm and learning how to maintain it because you need it at a moment's notice. The pager goes off at two o'clock in the morning. It's winter, it's 20 degrees outside, you gotta get up, you gotta get in the car and get to that emergency room, and you're on the clock. You're timed, right? So, you don't have time to put yourself together and get in a good mood. You need to be not only emotionally regulated and be able to be with someone and hold space for them in their toughest moment but think logically, make really important decisions that impact people's lives going forward. So, it's not only that self-regulation, but it's having to regulate to be able to have access to that logic part of your brain. A lot of people don't know about brain science because you have to go to higher levels of education to learn about it. But what happens is when we are dysregulated, we actually lose access to the part of our brain that holds our logic and our reasoning. And so, when we are in that emotionally flooded—or even when you start to feel that, you know, in your throat when your feelings are coming up, you can imagine, like, you're losing access to some of that

logic and reasoning brain power. You're really in your feelings, that part of your brain. So, holding that regulation, maintaining that, really allows you to maintain access to that logic part of your brain, which you need in those crisis moments.

Winn: So, obviously you gained something from that experience where you're dealing with extreme cases where somebody is in a major, major crisis, as you just shared with us. Again, you get this page, you're driving across town, you're going to somebody's home, and there is chaos there. There came a time in your career where you realized, *What I'm learning right now, this could absolutely help people in hospitality, people who are in the service industry, meeting with customers every single day.*

Tina: Yes, there were a few moments where, you know when things just kind of present themselves to you and you're like, "Oh, this is the moment." So, I had a few clients who I'd been working with as a couple. So, we were learning a lot of communication skills, which is primarily what I work on in those first couple sessions, is really learning the basics of communication. And they had shared that those tools, once they got in the habit of using them with their partner, they started using them in other relationships in their lives. They started using them with their friends, with their kids, with people at work. And they saw the transformative power of learning these powerful communication skills and what it unlocked in their relationships. And so it was a very clear moment where I was like, "Oh, these skills aren't just for couples who are struggling to communicate, they're for everyone who's struggling to communicate." And reality check: we're all struggling to communicate because none of us know how to do it. None of us are taught that class in school. So, I became quickly inspired to share these skills outside of the therapy room and just demystify and stop the gatekeeping of communication skills. Those are things that everyone should have access to, not just people who have access to mental health.

Winn: And I want everybody to know that Tina and I have prepared for this. And so, she's going to give us some very how-to. She's not just going to speak in theory, but she's going to say, *Do this, don't do that, here's step one, here's step two*, and we're gonna break that down. I was telling Tina before we started recording that, after reading through her material for the last week, I realized that this podcast could be at least eight hours long, and so there was so much, so much that I had to edit to really, really get to the heart of. I want you all to see what it is that we're seeing, the value that Tina brings, and so thank you for that. One thing that you said, and I mean it was in your bio, so I'm going to say it, where you said the line, "family time shouldn't suck." And I love that. Tell us about that. Family time shouldn't suck.

Tina: When I was starting my practice, I had a very clear vision of wanting it to be the space where parents, it's usually moms, who are searching the Internet late at night. They just got everyone in their house to sleep. And they had that moment where they're like, *This is not what I want it to be. This sucks. I hate this. My family is not cohesive. We're disconnected. Do we even like each*

*other? You know, that idea of wanting—you know, it's the holidays—wanting to go out and do the family things and just saying like, This sucks. Why do we do this? Why do we even try? Let's just stay home and turn on all the TVs and be in separate rooms. So, I really wanted to have that moment of connection with her and tell her like, Family time doesn't have to suck. There's supports for your family and we're the place for that. So really wanting that to be our tagline. It's on the front of our website. It's the first thing you see when you get there and really hoping that you're just like, Oh, okay, they get it. This is the place where I need to be.*

Winn: So, what is that first step, that first advice? Again, you mentioned there's a mom late at night, everybody's in bed, and she's just frustrated. *Why does this suck?* And they contact you. What is the first step that obviously gives them hope to hook them in? And I don't mean that in a bad way, I mean that in a very positive way. But to hook them in to like, okay, we can get you on a better path.

Tina: I mean, the first step is acknowledging how they're feeling and just being honest with themselves. And I think we all have a lot of high expectations of how things should be. And so, recognizing like, *This isn't what I want it to be and I want to do something about it. And I want to seek help.* And not only like acknowledge that in myself, but say that to someone else and maybe even say that to other people in your family and be like, *I think we need some help. I don't think this is how I want to feel. I don't think this is how you want to feel.* So, I think acknowledging is really the first step of anything. And then asking for help and finding a good fit. In this case for our practice, it's therapists that could help with family therapy, couples therapy, therapy for the whole family system.

Winn: I've heard you say that you want to “lower the veil of the therapy room, giving people real communication tools.” What do mean by that?

Tina: So, I believe there's a veil in what happens in the therapy room, especially with couples therapy. People have a lot of curiosity and misconceptions about what happens in couples therapy. One of the ones that I'm still most surprised that people believe and I hear this all the time is, you know, people go into couples therapy expecting that this is like the make-it-or-break-it. That the couple therapists, they expect me to tell them if they should get divorced or not. And I'm like, “That's not my decision. That's up to you all,” right? So many couples come in with that and obviously it comes in with fear, apprehension, and they're not wanting to open up and be vulnerable. They're afraid. So, I think just lowering the veil, being really clear about what mental health is. There's still so much stigma around mental health and couples therapy. So, lowering that and giving the access. These are tools that people can have access to. You don't need to be in therapy or hypnotized for these, like, skills to work. They're accessible to anyone to implement in their everyday life.

Winn: Because you brought that up, you know, that stigma. What are the worst parts of that belief system, that stigma surrounding mental health, that you just

wake up, like, and cringe, like, *Gosh, we need to—I wish I could take that away. I wish I could fix that.* What would that be?

Tina: The biggest cringe moment of stigma, I think, across the board, is when you get into that place of being in a difficult place in your mental health, it goes hand in hand with feeling alone in it. And there's something about when you're feeling a certain way, but then you also—there's that voice that's telling you, *You're alone. You can't tell anyone. No one will understand. No one else has felt this way. No one will help you.* That's where things get really dark and really difficult for people. I think if you're able to access the recognition of *I'm in a tough place. I need help* without having that *I'm alone. No one will understand*, that's a really good spot to ask for help. The stigma comes from the feeling of being alone or being the only person who's ever felt like that.

Winn: That right there is super powerful. That stigma alone.

Tina: Yes.

Winn: Because, how many of us have felt that? *I'm the only one who's ever gone through this. Nobody's going to understand. If I speak this truth, people are going to run away. People are going to think I'm a horrible person.*

Tina: Absolutely.

Winn: Wow.

Tina: Yeah. We're seeing this a lot, especially in men's mental health, which is a coming conversation in the mental health field. Men who have, you know, culturally held a lot of pride in their stoicism and having it all together. It's difficult for them to reckon with mental health because there is a vulnerability. It does kind of contradict that facade of having it all together. And we're seeing a lot more conversation about men's mental health needing to be more of an open dialogue of not having it all together. It's okay to not be okay. And so those are conversations that I feel like are really important to continue to have in our field.

Winn: Again, because you brought that up, you know, what's some of the hope that you have seen when it comes to men and mental health? Cause I remember, my God, here, I'm like—and anybody who knows me is going to laugh that Winn's even attempting to talk about a sports team. *[Laughs]*

Tina: *[Laughs]* I got you. I'll help you.

Winn: Well, no, there was a woman, cuz I met her and her family owned this incredible team and they have this whole campaign on men in mental health. And here are these, what people would put on that pedestal of super jocks, know, superheroes in the sports world. So of course, you know, they have million-dollar endorsement deals and contracts and so they don't suffer. And yet the campaign, the message they were sending out, was about men's mental health. Is this ringing a bell at all?

Tina: It's not, but I love it. I love it so much because it's true. It's really like what we talked about: dropping that facade intentionally of saying, “You may have an

expectation of who I am based on what you see when I'm at work," right? When these men are performing—and they're doing their work when we watch them play their sport—there's a whole other life. Imagine if you just saw someone doing their work. That doesn't dictate their entire life and what's going on in their inner world. But I think the thing that I've felt most encouraged by, when it relates to men's mental health, is in my community there's a lot of men looking for friend groups actively. And I think that the other piece of men's mental health that is not talked about is boys and men grow up having a lot of community with other boys and men. Sports teams, clubs, friend groups. And it's really important for them socially. And then when they grow up, it seems like men tend to lose a lot of that support system and they get in with, you know, their partner and their kids and with work. And having that support system around men is incredibly impactful for their mental health. That's something we're seeing a lot in our couple sessions. I'm prescribing a lot of men to go find friends, to go join a community club, go play pickleball, go to a Star Trek, whatever they do. Like finding that community to really get that checked.

Winn: You talk about the masks that people wear at work.

Tina: Yeah.

Winn: And at home. Can you expand on that?

Tina: Yes. So, the mask that we wear in any situation is what I refer to as the way that we're kind of pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps when it comes to regulation. And we're masking how we're internally feeling. So, this goes back to the conversation about regulation and how we're regulating our nervous system and how that presents outwardly to others. Specifically, people who work in the hospitality industry or what I like to refer to just as like people work, right? So many people just spend a day on the computer. Even though they're typing to people, it's not face-to-face people work like the hospitality industry does. And having that—what we could refer to as like that customer service smile, which feels like that fake thing you put on when you go into work. It's more so how you're able to do that day in and day out. It requires a different level of regulation. But there is a part where you're kind of having to stuff down what's going on for you, right? If you go into work, you have to be on and you can't always present as, "I just got in a fight with my partner" or "My mom is sick" or those kinds of things can't be present if you're working in customer service.

Winn: Well, you actually say that self-regulation and burnout prevention is a superpower, a career superpower. Talk about that.

Tina: It really is. Like, I wish this was like the truth that everyone could know is that self-regulation is the key. It is the superpower to everything you want to achieve in your relationships, in your life, you personally, and how you feel just going through day to day. Because once we are able to stay regulated, we're able to be present and experience those moments. Have you had that moment, Winn, where you're like driving or you're doing something and you're

like, “Wait, did I do that?” Like, “Where am I? What am I doing? Did I pour that in? Did I mix that color? How many ounces?” And like, “Hold on, I got to start over.” And it’s because we are constantly in this place of dysregulation when we like black out in those moments. And in those moments, you’re not able to fully experience life. So, when we’re able to regulate and understand the key principles of brain science and nervous system regulation, it allows us to be more plugged in to living our life, enjoying those moments, enjoying our relationships.

Winn: Well, I think people are drawn to hospitality. So, they’re drawn to being a hairdresser, in the hotel business, in restaurant business; there’s a certain caliber of individual that loves people. You know, we love people. But whether or not they can self-regulate and learn the tools that you’re sharing with us right now will determine how long they can actually stay in that career.

Tina: Yes.

Winn: You know, we want people to love this career. There was a reason why you chose it. You fell in love. You know, I heard it said that hairdressers go to work every single day with the intention of having fun, right? So, that’s from the industry that I’m in. But when it stops becoming fun, you know? *I love this career, I love this industry, but I’m just burned out.* We don’t want that to happen. Do you have some specific stories of, because I’m sure you’ve heard this a million times, of helping somebody overcome that so they can stay in the career that they originally loved?

Tina: Yeah. One of the things that I think is most important for the hospitality industry to recognize is that that high-pace energy, that is the calling that people fall in love with: it’s a good fit for people who often are neurodivergent or who enjoy that kind of like higher-endorphin hit of energy. Right? And so when I have done my Hairapist workshop, when I go into salons and talk to hairstylists and owners about their work and how to be present with people and how to stay regulated so that they can continue the longevity of their career that they’ve invested so much in, I hear from them time and time again about, *Okay, so how many of you feel like you might have like ADHD or how many of you feel like you might be autistic or have trauma in your life?* And those are people that are often drawn to that higher-pace energy. And those are also people that may not have those self-regulation skills. And so, they’re naturally tending to burn out more because they don’t have the skills to regulate that more.

Winn: You know, that’s interesting that you brought that up and you’re asking people, “How many of you feel like maybe you relate to being somebody diagnosed with ADHD or somebody who is autistic?” Can you expand on that more? I mean, is that common? I mean—and I’ve learned this from a friend of mine. I don’t know that I’ve ever been, you know, diagnosed with ADHD, but if I were to self-diagnose, especially comparing myself to people who are on that same level with me and have that diagnosis and then call it their superpower. You know, “This is my superpower.” And I’m like, “You know

what? I relate to that, too.” My whole life—it’s so funny. I was on a plane. Now I’m a grown-ass man, you know? I’m 66 years old. A couple of months ago, I’m on a plane, I’m in first class. You know, I’m a man; I can afford to fly first class. The woman next to me told me to sit still.

Tina: Uh-huh.

Winn: And I just started laughing. Eventually she started laughing as well but my gosh, I’m thinking, *My gosh, since I was three years old people are still telling me to sit still.*

Tina: Yeah. And you’re like, “Is this me forever?” And of course if you haven’t done the work to recognize why you can’t sit still and understand that about yourself, yeah, you’re gonna interpret that as like, you know, a slap on the hand.

Winn: Like it’s a bad thing rather than this is my superpower.

Tina: Yeah.

Winn: Well, okay. Well then—

Tina: This is my superpower.

Winn: —give us some hope here for those of us, again, who are attracted to service industries. Give us some hope.

Tina: So, I want to tell a story. I do want to give hope but I want to—I know you asked for a story. So when I was going in to do one of my Hairapist workshops I was meeting with one of the stylists on the team and she was talking about how it’s been difficult for her to continue her career because she feels so much more burnt out in the recent years. And we were talking about why that is, what drew her to the industry. She was open in sharing with me, which I was grateful for, and to the other stylists in the group: her coworkers, her colleagues. She was open to sharing about her history with trauma and how she, during therapy, had started to realize that the way she grew up with what others might consider like a tumultuous day-to-day life, that impacted her nervous system in those formative years. And so, she had these experiences on a day-to-day of being, you know, dysregulated emotionally. And that led her to a career where she was looking for kind of that high-paced, energetic, we don’t know what’s going to happen today, every day is exciting. And the service industry was a perfect fit for her because she could go in, she could be on, it was exciting. And it really was a match, a career match for her nervous system. And then, as she was starting to work through some of this trauma in therapy, she was starting to calm her nervous system and learn how to use these self-regulation tools. And she then found that this career was starting to burn her out because she no longer needed that higher-energy workplace. And so, we talked through about how, as she’s starting to get better, things were getting harder for her. And we were able to give her some tools, which I’m happy to share now as well, on how to stay regulated at work as she’s working through— in her own therapy, you know, working through her trauma.

Winn: Well, let's, let's jump into that because—

Tina: Okay.

Winn: I mean, I am in awe of people in hospitality. Again, I see it on a regular basis in the professional beauty industry. You know, you see 10, 15, 20 customers in a day, which means it's 10, 20 customers sharing their energy, good or not so good; sharing their stories, good or not so good. You know, as they say, sometimes people will share more with their hairdresser than they share with their own therapist or their own spouse, their own partner. And so, my gosh, that's a lot, that's a lot to take on. So, give us the tools.

Tina: Yes, it's a lot of weight that I feel hairstylists specifically carry in the hospitality world. And one of the things that I am passionate about making sure every hairstylist learns and knows is that regulating yourself is your ability to maintain this career and to hold space for your clients. I think a lot of hairstylists, you know, when I was starting this workshop, the Hairapist workshop, they wanted to know, "What do I say to people when they tell me their boyfriend's hitting them or he doesn't give them access to their money or, you know, doesn't let them see their friends. What do I say?" And I'm like, "No, that's not your job. You don't need to tell them—like have all of the mental health. You're not a therapist. What you need to do, what they really want you to do, which is harder, is just holding that space for them and accessing that emotion of saying, 'It's really hard for me to hear you say this. It's really hard for me to hold space for you, but I love you and I'm here for you.'" Holding that space is Therapy 101, but it is the hardest thing to hold space for people. And in that moment, hold your own emotions and regulate yourself and not say something because you're scared, right? You can say, "I'm feeling scared," but you don't want to say like, "Oh, I got to run over here and do this" to end the conversation, right? Holding that space and giving them the space to share how they're feeling.

Winn: Okay. Keep going. So, no more—holding the space. And also, what I hear you saying, maybe you did say it, is it's not our job to fix it.

Tina: Yes.

Winn: We're just holding space. We're just listening.

Tina: We are listening. We are holding that space for them. And then acknowledging. You know, acknowledging what they're saying. One of the key communication skills that I teach couples that seems like obvious but people don't do, they just step right over it, is validation. The acknowledgement and the validation punctuation of communication is critical for the person who needs to feel heard. So, statements like, "I hear that you're feeling really" XYZ, fill in the blank. "You're feeling scared." Simple statements like that. Those that feel a little bit robotic, those validation statements are hugely meaningful to the person that's sharing. And that's one of the big steps in canceling a Karen, as well, is stating back to a person what you hear them saying. It is the magic sauce to defuse people who are escalating or feeling

defensive. Once someone feels heard, Winn, and validated and you get that moment where they're like, "Yeah, that is what I'm saying." Whew. You can feel the energy like pull out of the room. And what they're doing is they're accessing that logic brain. And then, once they're acknowledged, then we can move toward limiting the loop, which is the next step of the CALM framework.

Winn: By the way, I'm taking notes.

Tina: Okay.

Winn: So, number one is holding space. You're not there to fix it. You're there just to listen. Number two is acknowledgement what they are saying. And you emphasized validation.

Tina: Yes. And then there's actually like centering. So, the CALM framework is centering yourself and making sure that you're regulated to center yourself so you can hold space. Those kind of go together. And then acknowledging.

Winn: Okay.

Tina: Acknowledging what they're hearing, acknowledging how you're feeling in that moment, right? Because that's very important in staying regulated.

Winn: And that validation, you're actually scripting us, which is fine. You're scripting us.

Tina: Yeah.

Winn: You know, when somebody says something, "I hear that you are feeling scared."

Tina: Yeah.

Winn: Yeah.

Tina: So yeah, there is that script and it feels so robotic saying, "You're feeling sad, you're feeling scared." And so, people usually just skip over that step but it is crucial for the person who's speaking to get that validation. And we see that a lot in couples communication where one person's like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, I've heard this before." And the person who's like trying—they don't hear validation from that. They hear like, "Just brushing me off." Once that person stops and says, "You're upset I didn't unload the dishwasher." "Yes, that's what I'm saying." That yes is like the most powerful moment in communication.

Winn: Wow. Okay.

Tina: And we call that limiting the loop because the person is like looking for validation. So that really limits the loop. That's L in the CALM.

Winn: Oh, wait, wait, We're going. *[Laughs]*

Tina: *[Laughs]* We're going.

Winn: Now you see how my brain works. We're going through—so the acronym CALM, C-A-L-M.

Tina: Yes.

Winn: Wait, what was the C?

Tina: Centering yourself.

Winn: Centering. I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry.

Tina: Oh, you're good.

Winn: The listeners right now, they're like, "Oh my god, here he goes again." Okay, CALM. So we're an acronym of CALM. C-A-L-M. Got it.

Tina: Yeah. The acronym of CALM is the way that you're able to self-regulate in a hospitality or any moment to what you can use to cancel a Karen, which is defuse a high-tension communication interaction, whether that Karen is your spouse, your neighbor, a road rage incident, whatever it might be, a customer. So, you want to CALM. We talked about holding space, but that is part of the centering yourself.

Winn: Got it.

Tina: Okay. You ready for M?

Winn: I am. I'm ready for M.

Tina: Okay. M is moving to solutions. Once that person gets that validation, you're able to limit the loop because they're no longer looking for that validation. What happens when someone's like sending a message is, "Hey, Winn, I'm upset about the dishwasher. I'm upset about the dishwasher." If I don't get that you hear me, I'm going to keep sending it until you hear me. So, the minute that you're like, "Tina, I hear you," then I can be heard, validated, and limit that loop of sending that message again and again.

Winn: Got it.

Tina: And then I'm able to move to solutions.

Winn: Okay.

Tina: What do we want to do about the dishwasher? What do you want to do about your hair not turning out the way that you want? Or not being able to get this appointment or reservation that you were looking for.

Winn: Okay.

Tina: Once they're able to calm that emotion, they're able to access that logic part of their brain.

Winn: Okay. Give us—because this one's an important one. Again, we're, lot of us, we want to fix things. We want to fix people. We want to fix problems. We want to fix situations. But that's not the advice that you're giving to us necessarily.

Tina: There is a place and a time to fix, but if you skip over the validation, you're not going to be able to access the fix.

Winn: Okay.

Tina: So, you have to validate, you have to connect with that person. You have to make it very clear to them that they are heard by you, that you fully understand their problem and what they're trying to say. Once they feel like, "Yes, you get me," their brain is literally able then to access that logic and move toward solution finding. A lot of the times what happens is people are just like, "Okay, I hear you. Let's move to the logic." And they may not be ready because they haven't gotten that validation.

Winn: So, give us—because I have a feeling that you would script us here as well, or at least provide us for the solutions. So, in the M, moving to solutions, tell us exactly what's our role here. Do we have a carpetbag full of, you know, here's a therapist, here's a crisis center, here's a phone number? I mean, give us, because we have to be prepared, whatever it is.

Tina: Yes, so definitely I think every hairstylist should have a list and I think every salon owner, they owe it to their team—and I mean their liability to have printed somewhere very clearly these crisis resources available for their team to offer staff. Or even like cards that they can give people to take home with them. Additionally, the script for moving toward solutions, the easiest, most powerful, most you-can-use-it-with-anyone is, "How can we make this right? What can we do to make this right? Let's move toward getting to where we wanna be, which is a solution." It's collaborative. It's not saying, "What can I do to make you happy?" It's not saying that. It's, "How can we make this right?"

Winn: Well, again, the script, the words that you're sharing with us are so important. So, I'm imagining a team training, a team huddle, whatever the business it is that you're in, that you're bringing your team together and say, "Hey, because we are face to face with human beings on a daily basis, let's walk through the step, the process of CALM, C-A-L-M." And it's a skill set. Nobody should feel that they automatically should know this stuff. Just like you automatically didn't know how to cut hair or properly service a hotel guest or whatever it is. Those were skill sets that we had to learn. This, what you're sharing with us, it's a skill set that we have to practice, practice, practice.

Tina: Absolutely. And some people grew up in families where this was common and it was modeled for them and most people didn't. And it's okay to learn those skills as we grow up and as we develop relationships. And any day that you learn this skill is the day that your relationships, all of them, will start to get better. It's the day that you will start to interact with people differently, deepen your relationships with people, and just find a deeper piece of regulation within yourself.

Winn: I believe that you have a resource on your website about how to—what's the word you use, how to defuse a Karen, how to handle a Karen, whatever?

Tina: So, I have two, and it's a similar framework but it talks about it differently. So one is for hospitality, how to cancel a Karen, and it walks them through these

steps. But it really walks them through maintaining that level of self-regulation and what that looks like. And for hospitality managers, how to help their team incorporate self-regulation in their team culture. A lot of the times what we see in hospitality is only certain people hold these defusing skills or these customer service skills. And the frontline workers—I'm talking like the servers, the cocktail waitresses, the bartenders don't have them. So, they have to call a manager, right? And when they call the manager, that person then has to hold all of those skills and responsibility. And the transformative power of a hospitality team that is able to provide their entire team with these skills not only is a healthier team, but it's definitely a different customer experience of being able to get that affirmation from every level of the staff.

Winn: Oh my gosh, what you're sharing right now is so important. Because, you know, as a customer, when somebody says—when they can't handle it, like when they're not empowered or trained or given the tools to handle my complaint, my frustration as a customer: “Sorry, I need to call my manager.” Now I'm even more angry.

Tina: Right, because now you have to wait.

Winn: You have to wait.

Tina: You have to tell it to this person again. You know this person is just appeasing you, right? They're not really listening. And you don't really get that resolution with, we'll say your server, right? So, then your server comes back and they're like, do you want to do dessert? Or worse, they just take that server off and give you a different one. And this happened to me when I was working in restaurants is, there was a situation, you know, when I was cocktailing at night and this group of men had come into the bar and one of them was starting to get, you know, a little handsy, inappropriate. And the manager came over and—well, I said something to the manager and they were just like, “Okay, we'll take you off the table.” And I'm like, “Is that really the way that we're going to address this,” right? Just appeasing the customer, putting a different young female waitress on the table. It didn't give me any empowerment as the employee. It redirected the difficult situation to someone else on my team and there was no follow-up or closure for me as an employee.

Winn: Wow, see this is such good information because, again, I think you said it, too. Usually there are team members who are trained with the stuff that you're sharing with us right now but of course that's upper management so it's the managers who are receiving this training. But oftentimes the managers are not front and center with the customer. They're not the front lines. And so, the people that we need to utilize this information and to train and to script and rehearse and practice, it's those frontline people. I think maybe I've shared this before. I interviewed in my podcast series, the president of Outback Steakhouse. You know, 650 locations and he said, “Guess what, Winn? Never once have we received a letter from a happy customer saying, ‘I just love Outback Steakhouse because of the president.’”

Tina: [Laughs]

Winn: He said, "We've never received that letter."

Tina: Exactly.

Winn: It's the frontline people. It's the ones who are face to face. They are the most important individuals in the organization. The managers—sorry, managers, you're not the most important person because you're not face to face every single day. The most important people that we need to put on that pedestal and provide for them this information and training are those frontline people.

Tina: Winn, it's crucial. And I think that the higher ups—the presidents, the boss's bosses—the thing that they're seeing is the turnover numbers.

Winn: Right.

Tina: The cost of turnover, especially in the hospitality industry, is staggering.

Winn: Oh gosh. Yeah, yeah. Because they don't have this training.

Tina: They don't have the training and people are burning out.

Winn: They're getting beat up all day. Yeah.

Tina: Yes, they're burning out and it's crucial to give these people these skills. It's crucial to their bottom line.

Winn: Okay, well, huge, big shoutout then to those of you who are in power: you're an entrepreneur, you're a manager, and you're thinking, *My management needs this team*. Okay, yeah, they probably do, but please, please start with your frontline people. Because they're the ones who are taking the punches, so to speak. They're the ones who are getting burned out and that's not the team that you want to have burned out. Because the cost for replacement and turnover and training and HR and everything is just so, so great. It's just so much easier to properly train them so that people want to stick around.

Tina: Exactly.

Winn: I want to shift gears here a little bit because you speak on women in leadership a lot. And again, I don't want to always make this about the professional beauty industry, but you know, I come from an industry that's prominently women. And you talk about first-generation female business owners. You talk about female breadwinners.

Tina: Yes.

Winn: So just give us your magical input on that.

Tina: Yes. I just get so excited talking about this because I see myself so much in these women that I work with and it's just such a powerful group, right? The amount of power in the rooms when you're talking to female breadwinners, CEOs who are also moms, it's this wonderful mix of powerful in the workplace and also this soft, vulnerable mom who's constantly doing this juggle every day of, "Which hat am I wearing?" And like the deep desire to have it all integrated so it doesn't feel like I'm putting on this hat and then I'm taking it off

and putting it on this hat. And so for these women in business in like the C-suite, when they learn the skills of self-regulation, it is transformative for them because they're able to finally get that integration of the power of work and the softness and the vulnerability of being a mom, both of which they are obsessed with. And It's less of this code switching and they're able to get that integration and they're able to experience and be feeling whole throughout their day. It's the best time that I have.

Winn: Well, give us some insight.

Tina: I love it.

Winn: Maybe people aren't aware of that because you're saying, okay, women in business are forced to take off one hat and put on another one in order to thrive or be successful or to advance in their careers. Explain that more: what I mean "take off one hat." The only thing—not the only thing but one of the things that comes to mind for me is, and I can't remember who the mentor was that taught me this years ago, and as a business owner I'm thinking, *Well, it has to be fair and fair means equal, right?* Okay, well, it's not fair when you expect the single mom who has to leave at three o'clock to go pick up her kids from school, you're trying to make it equal: well, everybody has to stay till five. But the expectation is there's that single guy who doesn't go have to pick up kids, right? How is that fair to the single mom who does need to leave at three o'clock? And I don't know if I explained that well, but that's the one example that came to mind for me.

Tina: No, it's a great example. And I think it rings true, this idea that women are still integrating into the traditional work world. And specifically for women who are in higher C-suite positions are often surrounded by men or have come up surrounded by men, they've learned how to be successful in that space. And it is tapping more into—now I'm going to get a little woo-woo, Winn—into that masculine energy. And being in that masculine energy has allowed them to be successful. But then, when they go home, they want to be soft with their kids. They want to be enriching. They want to do those things and be more in that feminine energy. And finding that blend can be very difficult a lot of the time because we have no models. This working woman in the C-suite who's also a mom, we're just starting to figure out what that looks like. We don't usually have a lot of models of what that looks like in previous generations. We're doing a new thing and doing it with self-regulation and what that looks like. So, I really love working with these women because they're on the cutting edge of a generation of working women who can be the boss and be like soft mom at home and finding the regulation of both of those. That's what I mean by like switching those hats. They can wear all the hats at one time and not have to take one off and put one on. So, if they're in the conference room and their school calls, it's not like, "I need to step out. I need to change my mask. It can be a more easy switch because I can feel integrated."

Winn: Yeah, that's one I try to stay so present with, you know, because like I'll have an important event and somebody's canceling at the last minute because of

a—it's their kid's soccer game or it's prom or the kid's sick or whatever. And I just like stop myself: *Winn, tell them, tell them that nothing, nothing is more important than your kid right now.* You know, because the old me probably would have said, “Well, okay, but you know, everybody else is going to be here and you're really going to miss out and gosh, it cost me a lot of money to put this event together, this training together, and you're going to miss it. Okay.” You know, so was allowing them but with a ton of guilt and I'm like, gosh. And it was, again, good mentors: “Winn, let them know straight up, this is far more important than anything that you have going on.”

Tina: And, Winn, that's so powerful to hear because, you know, speaking for myself, that's a voice that I hear but I discredit because I'm like, “But I have to be with the big dogs, right? The big dogs aren't staying home. And so if I want to be up there, I got to do that.” And then we get women who have missed out on their childhood and they're resentful of their career because of it. And it's so powerful that you were able to kind of turn that corner and see it from that perspective.

Winn: Well, I've got a long way to go but thanks to people like you. Slap me around a little bit. So, what expectations do female leaders and female bosses face that perhaps male leaders often do not have to face?

Tina: Well, I'll just give you some of my own personal experiences. I'll just talk about myself. I have a husband, a male partner. He has never felt the need to figure out the kids' extracurriculars. Right? I have like the book of like, okay, the park district, these are all the things the kids need to sign up for to be enriched in their little lives. I have a five- and a two-year-old. So, women hold a lot of that emotional labor. And additionally, like making sure the kids have, you know, the next size of clothes. This is emotional labor that women often hold. And yes, we can delegate that to our partners, but it is often those kinds of things are held on our plate. And delegation is a skill in itself. And so, I think teaching female leaders that skill of delegation: how to ask for help nicely and not feel weak in doing that. Those are really important keys to self-regulation. For myself especially, learning that rest is important to my career. That second part is critical for me because you could say, “Oh, yeah, rest is important, okay.” But it's important to my career. It rejuvenates and thrives my creativity, my energy, my empathy. Those things, if I'm burning myself out and not resting and opening my computer at 10 o'clock at night once everyone goes to bed, that rolls over into how I'm able to show up—not only to my kids and my family but at work the next day.

Winn: Wow. So, I think I just want to stay on this topic a little bit. So, what pressures or expectations come with those roles that people don't talk about for that female owner, that female breadwinner?

Tina: The pressure of the female breadwinner—I often speak to women who are also moms, and so that's kind of like the natural place that I'll go—is to have it all together. If things aren't good at home, you should probably step away from your job and make sure things are good at home. I don't feel that men

often have that same pressure and so we do. Female leaders often have that pressure of holding things at home and at work. Additionally, being a female leader at work and being a mom or being of like a certain age, it often gives the impression that you're the work mom. And so, I think battling that expectation with your team that, you know, especially as a therapist who's a feelings person, I employ a lot of feelings people. It's a fine line of, like, I'm often reflecting, "Would my employee ask me this or come at me in this way or expect this of me if I was a man? Or is it because that I'm a female, I'm a mom, that they think that they have access to that part of me as well? And how do I, as a female leader, hold that boundary with my team, regardless of my gender, but hold a leadership expectation while being a woman?"

Winn: I'm smiling because, you know, I made a very good decision at the very beginning of starting my company 40 years ago. Literally within a couple of years, I recruited my mother. She had a full-time job as a circulation manager at the local newspaper and I recruited her. I got her to quit that job and come to work with me. Mainly because I loved being around my mom, but I had no idea what she was going to bring to the culture. To have that female energy, that female presence. It was nurturing. It was nurturing. And my gosh, every business just needs nurture.

Tina: Yes, and it allows you to have that balance, right? It allows you to have that other side, that yin-yang dynamics so that you can really sit in the powerful leader seat and trust that someone's holding that vulnerable culture piece as well.

Winn: I love this message that you're bringing to us, enlightening us on the pressures that moms deal with that maybe dads don't necessarily have to deal with. And I also learned that lesson because I was a room parent for my daughter's—well, I started pre-K, so at four years old, I was the volunteer room parent in her classroom. I was the volunteer room parent in kindergarten, first grade, second, third, like every single year. And usually, I was the only dad. And I remember, maybe it was when my daughter was in second grade that, you know, we send out the SignUpGenius. You know, there's a field trip, there's a party, there's something going on. And we send out the SignUpGenius: hey, okay, who wants to bring cupcakes? Who can, you know, be the chaperone on the bus? Who can, you know, whatever, right? You send out that SignUpGenius and of course within 30 minutes all the slots are filled by whom? Moms.

Tina: Yes.

Winn: And that teacher said to me, "You know, Winn, the favorite day of the kids in my classroom is when a dad shows up." I'm like, "What?"

Tina: Yes.

Winn: Their favorite day is when a dad finally volunteers and signs up. And so, she and I made this plan that we were—I can't remember what it was, a party or a field trip or an art project or whatever, you know, we need 20 people to sign

up to make this happen and we said dads only. Only dads can sign. Oh, and it didn't fill up in 30 minutes; it took, you know, several weeks. I mean please, please, begging, come on. "You know, well, I'm busy." Well, did you see my signature on my email? I'm running a company, too. We're all busy.

Tina: Yup.

Winn: You know, can you just please put this time aside? And you know what? She was right. Kids went crazy when a dad showed up.

Tina: Yes. So, Winn, I'll give you some hope because I went on my kid's field trip, he's in kindergarten, and there were an equal number of dads and moms on this first field trip. So at least in my community, we're making progress.

Winn: That's great.

Tina; But I think that's a perfect example because the working mom holds both of those heavy responsibilities.

Winn: Right, right.

Tina: The SignUpGenius comes out and she grew up in those classrooms. She knows it's moms. She holds the expectation of, *I want to run this business and be able to be there for my kids*. So, she's going to sign up but she is also running the business. Her email signature has C at the beginning of her title.

Winn: Exactly, exactly.

Tina: And we're seeing a lot more stay-at-home dads but these partnerships don't always have the models for what these gender roles look like or dynamics, whether it's not gender related. That's kind of like a stereotypical phrase, but you know, digging into that is really powerful work that I love doing.

Winn: Wow. I can't believe that I actually have to start to wrap this up because I'm not exaggerating. Well, I told you this and I tell people all the time, I over-, over-prepare because I just like being super, super prepared and I dove into your material and your information. And when I tell people I have 10 pages of notes, I'm not exaggerating and I barely have—

Tina: Well, I've given you a lot, too.

Winn: No, I know you did, which is how I love it. And if I tell people that I maybe have touched on two or three pages of notes, that would be accurate. But you know, if you could leave listeners with one mindset shift that would change how they communicate tomorrow, what would it be?

Tina: My one mindset shift that will change how you communicate today and tomorrow is *the way that you communicate to yourself is the way you communicate to others*. And so, the first step of self-regulation journey, because it is a journey, is really tuning in to how you're speaking to yourself. Because that is a really important piece of what we call your internal narrative. And that's how you speak to yourself. That's how you think about others. And so that's really a powerful place to start.

Winn: Okay, give us some of that very specific self-talk.

Tina: Yes. So, one of the best ways that you can start tuning into how you're speaking to yourself is—a lot of us have this internal narrative, right? I was doing it this morning when I was making breakfast and making my coffee and we're not often alone, at least I'm not often alone. And so we have that narrative in our head. So, what we can start to do to, what we call in therapy world, externalize that narrative is start talking out loud a little bit to yourself. When we hear ourselves speak to ourselves, that is also very powerful and words have power. If it's all in our head, sometimes we don't register it in the same way and it's harder to catch it. So, if you start talking out loud to yourself a little bit, you will start to hear yourself say, *Oh, Tina, you're so stupid. Why did you do that?* And then you can shift it a little bit. *That wasn't stupid. You're just thinking about something else. You're excited about this podcast you're getting ready for,* you know, and shifting. Some people like to shift their voices. This might sound a little crazy but it is helpful to kind of get in that zone, to kind of have a nicer voice that you use to talk to yourself. And you can pick someone that loves you so much, whether it's your mom or your best friend or, you know, your grandma when you were growing up or your godmother or whoever, your child. Like how would they redirect you in that moment? You can think of yourself as like a little puppy who's learning how to walk on a leash. You want to gently redirect yourself. *We're all learning. You're new to this.* Redirecting yourself toward saying it in a nicer way to yourself. That is hugely powerful. It might be silly. It might feel like you're cray cray, talking to yourself, but it's powerful.

Winn: Okay. Again, I'm 66 years old. I've been through many, many years of therapy, even ongoing, read all kinds of books. That's the first time that somebody gave me that information.

Tina: Really?

Winn: Yeah, to take the self-talk that's just in my head, it's thoughts only, and to speak it out loud.

Tina: Yeah.

Winn: To speak it out loud so I can hear myself say it. And then, that next part of adding the voice of somebody else, adding the voice of my mom. How would my mom coach me in this self-talk, in this conversation that I'm having with myself? That's powerful. Thank you.

Tina: Yeah. I think a lot of people go towards the journaling, which is another option. But I don't think a lot of people have time for that. Right? To sit down and journal. That's a heavy lift. Instead, you can do like a little video journal. If that feels easier for some people, they can start to video journal themselves and keep it in like a separate folder so that they can talk about their day. Talk about, you know, have record of how you're speaking to yourself privately in a voice note, a voice memo app that's on your iPhone, or just a video through your camera.

Winn: Wow. So much incredible information here and I have a feeling that you're just getting started. You're probably gonna, when we end this you're gonna think, *Wait a minute, I just I have so much more I want to share*, and so we're gonna have to do a follow-up to this. Well, I just want to share what I got the most out of this. That the secret sauce to all of this is self-regulation. That's the secret sauce. It wasn't how to beat up that Karen. It wasn't, you know, how to go in and tell your boss that—it wasn't that stuff. It was self-regulation. Am I accurate?

Tina: You got it, a hundred percent, Winn. And I was, you know, I'm a slow reader but I was looking through your book and the whole time I was like, self-regulation is the root of being able to be nice and to be kind. Because being nice and being kind for most people is a vulnerability that they don't often feel safe accessing because it is seen as weak or it's seen as too vulnerable: that people are going to interpret them in the wrong way. And being able to harness that self-regulation is a way to access and unlock the vulnerability to be nice.

Winn: Wow. So, we're going to put this in your information, in your bio and everything, but just if people would like more tools to handle intense moments, clients, we already mentioned that there's a free download called "How to Cancel a Karen" that walks you through what you say and how to stay regulated when a client is upset. They can find all of that at [TinaPower.com](http://TinaPower.com).

Tina: Yes.

Winn: Okay. And if someone connects deeply with your message, what's the next best step for them to take to work with you and to learn more?

Tina: They can email me and get a hold of me directly at [Hello@TinaPower.com](mailto>Hello@TinaPower.com) and I love to talk about this stuff and so I would be so excited to see any email come through from a listener of the podcast. Just anything that resonated or anything they want to chat more about, I'm really excited to have these conversations.

Winn: Good. And my challenge would be to, especially for those business leaders, managers, owners, entrepreneurs, you have a team of people working with you, whether that's a team of one or a team of hundreds, but that you think, *Okay, in the next staff, you know, team training, in the next team huddle, this is going to be the conversation. You know, hey everybody, you're here the front lines. I can't imagine what's on your plate. You're dealing with customers every single day. I don't deal with those customers every single day the way that you do. We're going to start this training. We're going to start this conversation. Here are some basic, basic tools.* That would be the challenge that I would give to those listeners who have that power, who have that opportunity. Would you agree with that one?

Tina: I love that challenge. I think you said it perfectly exactly how I would say it. I think those who are higher up, maybe seeing things in like a numbers, you

know, one of those lagging indicators of like how it's showing up numbers wise. And I think knowing that the leading indicator is that company culture, it is the mental health of your team. And so, we support both the leaders and the frontline workers, depending on where the corporation's at. So, we're happy to help wherever you're feeling the need for support.

Winn: That is great. Cause you know, I mean, part of the conversation and questions that I had for you, which we're not going to get to is just, you know, post COVID, how did things change? You know, post COVID, what was the shift in the workforce needs and why communication is the most underdeveloped and yet the most critical career skill. And, and so there's so much more that we can address and so many. Oh, I'm looking at amazing, amazing opportunities for our listeners and Tina, you're wonderful. You're so easy to chat with.

Tina: Thanks! This was so fun!

Winn: Thank you so much.

Tina: I could talk to you all day.

Winn: Well, please let's do version two of this, okay?

Tina: I would love it. Yes.

Winn: Tina, thank you so much. Again, you're—and everybody needs to know: when I reached out to Tina after I heard from my good friends, Jim and Tina, salon owners, “Winn, you’ve got to connect with this woman,” of course, I reached out to Tina and immediately you just said yes. Probably didn't even know who I was or what the ask was or what the responsibility was going to look like. You just immediately said yes. And I just, I love people who just say yes. So, thank you.

Tina: Yeah, thank you.

Winn: Enjoy, everybody. Thank you so much.