

Alum Spotlight

Dr. Karen Gail Lewis gives insight into relationships with new book

Autumn Drury
STAFF WRITER

Dr. Karen Gail Lewis didn't exactly get a smooth start here at Cedar Crest. She was rejected when she originally applied back in 1962, but after some "begging," the college took a chance on her.

Lewis was considered member of the class of 196 with an English and French major. She reminisced with me over the phone, recalling how the campus used to be back then, and the activities that she used to enjoy.

However, after just two short years at Cedar Crest, Lewis knew that she needed to head north, to the "big city."

The rest as they say can be considered history, now forty-seven years since Lewis first stepped foot on Cedar Crest College. Since leaving school, she has enjoyed almost forty years as a marriage and family therapist, a public speaker and an author. She jokingly mentioned to me that she must have "seven or eight books now," but that she couldn't remember.

She told me that all of her books are "about relationships" whether single or married, and that she started to write her most recent book, "Why Don't You Understand?" A Gender Relationship Dictionary," because she began to notice that, "More than 60 percent of relationship problems and gender issues result from gender communication differences (couples not understanding each other's language)."

The research she conducts on these subjects is invaluable not only on a personal level, but a communal level as well. That was quoted from one of her websites, www.genderdictionary.com, which is devoted to her book. On this website, you can also buy this book at the "pre-publication sale price" of only ten dollars, now until Oct. 15.

A book like this is a first of its kind. Translating over seventy terms or phrases both used by men and women, it becomes a guide to understanding what your partner is really saying. As we spoke about the book, she gave us a few insights into how men and women are so different. Women want to "connect and relate" and men want to "exchange information" just as women "personalize and internalize" while men "externalize" a situation or fight. Lewis went on to say that women want to "blame themselves for everything" in their social or romantic lives, and take full responsibility for a man's "fragile ego."

Courtesy | Dr. Karen Gail Lewis

However, she went on to say that women can be completely confident and can "hold their own" in their place of work, but for some reason "their image of themselves" doesn't match up when they are involved in a relationship.

For these examples alone, there is great evidence that this is a book all women and men on campus should be interested in reading. It could help you with a current relationship, understanding how one in the past went so badly, and it can help you understand future partners. Lewis also mentioned to me that she is currently looking into the homosexual community to see if these differences exist as well.

Lewis also mentioned that she has a few other websites, one being www.DrKGL.com, which includes general information about herself, her speaking engagements, how to contact her, purchase her older books, and sign up for her newsletter.

Another link, www.uniqueretreatsforwomen.com, is also very interesting to think about. Lewis has been running these retreats for women since 1996, they last for about two days, and you are promised, "a minimum of fifteen hours of in-depth discussions, provocative exercises uniquely designed for each woman, as well as imagery, group interaction, and experiential activities." Most of these retreats are designed for women at least in their thirties, but additional information can be found on the website.

As I continued to speak with Lewis, I noticed not only how well-spoken and knowledgeable she was on these gender issues, but how thankful she was to Cedar Crest College, and how the experiences here helped her along her journey in life. She told me, "Cedar Crest started me, and it was absolutely vital to who I became."

Perhaps she didn't graduate here, or spent her entire college experience watching the seasons change on campus, but she is an "Alum" that our whole college community can be proud to call our own.

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