

Episode 105: What Actually Helps When Everything Falls Apart, with Regena Thomashauer (Mama Gena)

Mandy: Some moments don't feel like a bad day. They feel like the floor giving way. You're on your knees with no obvious next move. Here's the question that this whole episode hinges on. When you're there on your knees, what do you do? Pushing through, keeping on going, those might feel familiar and obvious, like the railing that you grip for when the floor gives away.

I get it. I've been there, and I still do that, at least some of the time. But in my own on my knees moments, I've often been in that weird dance of not wanting to get pulled into the emotional undertow, never to be seen again and also wondering, on some deeper level, if I'm suppressing and numbing out.

Should I get my feelings out? Should I be a bit more, well, messy, expressive, even unhinged? Get into my body. I don't know, do some ax throwing or scream into a pillow maybe. So there's this tension between the inner self I've just described and then the put together, keep it together outer self. Maybe you recognize that tension, too.

So there's this pattern to keep your shiz together. But I was curious what other options are available, because that's not really doing it for me these days, and maybe that resonates, too. So I couldn't think of a better person to speak to than Regena Thomas Shower, also known as Mama Gena. She's a New York Times bestselling author of *Pussy: A Reclamation*, and is the founder of the School of Womanly Arts, in which she spent over three decades teaching hundreds of thousands of women to harness the power of pleasure.

She's also just dropped a new book called *On Our Knees: Loving Your Life Even When You Hate What's Happening*. I wondered if pleasure had an unexpected part to play in our darkest moments. I also wondered if there was something to learn down there on our knees instead of trying to get back to normalcy ASAP.

And no, this is not a conversation about bubble baths and wearing lace underpants when you're down there on your knees, unless that's your jam, of course, then pl- by all means, go for it. It turns out that Mama Gina's feather boa-ed, sequiny, leopard-printed world was at a crossroads, too, where her old way of being was no longer serving her.

We get into her own on her knees moment, at the apex of her career, on the wings of a Broadway theater, as 1,000 women waited with white roses to form an altar around her, and Regena, the woman inside the costume, was just wanting it to be over, not wanting to go on stage, after 20 years of quietly drifting further from Mama Gina.

So that night is where she finally had to start closing the gap between those two parts of herself. We get right into that collapse, and she shares the surprising truth of what she found down there on her knees. I'll give you this little amuse-bouche. Pleasure wasn't what I thought it was, not entirely.

Before we dive in, welcome to *Enough*, the podcast. I'm your host, Dr. Mandy Leto. This is a show for people whose lives look shiny and successful on the outside, but inside they never feel quite good enough, no matter what they've achieved. Each episode is a real, raw, sometimes funny conversation with a high achiever who's found a more self-compassionate way of living.

These aren't tidy takeaways, by the way. They're a kind of conversation that keep working on you long after the outro music fades. So let's get into it with Regena.

So, in true sister goddess spirit, I'm gonna light a candle before we begin our

Regena: Oh my God, I can't believe we are having the sister goddess talk already. This is such a good sign. Uh, right away. I have been saving... This is my favorite Diptyque, uh, amber candle. Oh. I love this. Oh. Oh, wow. So I've been saving this just for our conversation.

Regena: Thank you so much for that.

Mandy: And I have put on my pomegranate earrings from Turkey.

Regena: Oh, my love. Oh, my love, then you will be able to extract yourself from Hades with ease and grace... as long as you don't eat the pomegranate seed, which I know is very tempting. And I, I want to say that, you know, this, this podcast, this work, this portal that you and I are opening right now, I wanna dedicate it to women of, let's say, similar ilk.

I, I feel that women today, right now, are living in, uh... They're exhausted from living in chronic vigilance, um, work pressure, achievement pressure, caregiving, aging parents, unstable finances. The world is unstable, the climate. There's so many reasons that women are destabilized, and kind of bathing ourselves in cortisol, and, uh, that has a huge consequence simply because of the chemistry inside of our body, uh, because, you know, cortisol is fight or flight.

It, it, we're in our sympathetic nervous system, which is fight or flight. We wanna shift to the parasympathetic. And there's a way, and it's not, you know, frivolous pleasure, and it's not more effort. It's a totally different pathway. And so we're gonna open that door today for any woman who's, like, a little bit lost or a lot lost or, in many cases, actually on her knees right now.

Mandy: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Regena: For the women that are on their knees. We are now, for anybody who can't see, we are... Isn't she a beauty? We are holding up, uh, Regena's brand-new book, *On Your Knees*, and she is a beauty. So I wanna start with the question that this whole conversation that I wanna create with you today lives in this question.

And before I ask you the question, I want you to create the atmo of the moment. So I want you to take us not to the story of your knees moment, not the story yet, but with your actor's brain, I want you to create the setup for it. Where are you? What's the lighting like? What are you wearing? What is happening?

So as if we were watching on camera that specific knees moment. Take us there.

Here's storyline. I had a dream to create the School of Womanly Arts. It happened when I gave birth to my daughter, Maggie, and I thought, "I need to be the change in-- that the world requires. I need to create a school where women can connect with their erotic, connect with their divinity, own their sensuality," because a woman who owns her pussy owns her life, and I knew that with every cell of my being.

And I thought, as I held my baby girl, I thought, "Let me make a world that knows how to honor and celebrate the feminine." And thus, I started the School of Womanly Arts in my living room with a handful of women when she was a baby, and my whole dream was to turn on the world of women. And so I did. Like, literally scaled it from a handful of women in my living room to thousands and thousands of women worldwide, holding, uh, live events, not in my living room anymore, but on the stage of the Javits Center or other huge venues in New York City, where literally thousands and thousands of women would come, connect to their pussies, to their power, to their present.

I was literally living the out-picturing of the dream I had of turning women on to their potential and their power, finding their voice so they could liberate not only themselves, but their families, their children, their men, et cetera, et cetera. And so I am, I'm, uh, I'm so beyond any dream come true that I could have-- I couldn't imagine.

Like, I was literally the shyest little flower, that I could barely unbud myself. And now I am standing, about to set foot on the stage of a Broadway theater, holding a thousand women, where there are women creating this huge... It, it was this altar on stage, and each woman from every year of my teaching for the past 20 was about to hand me a rose celebrating this.

And my name is on lights in a Broadway marquee. My book, Pussy Reclamation, is flashing on Broadway. Literally, I could not have dreamed this. Like, how did this happen? And I am standing in the wings, collapsed inside. I do not wanna be there. I do not wanna set foot on that stage. I cannot wait to get off that stage.

I am so broken. I am so lost. I am so outside of myself. I have a daughter in the green room who is struggling with an eating disorder. I am awash in all the wounding from my childhood that I did not manage or handle. In my efforts to change the world, I bypassed this creature, and all I could do at that moment was literally drop to my knees and weep.

Stepping forward onto the mastery stage, which was the only place in my life that I felt free because of the broken that lived inside of me. It was the only place I felt free, and yet I knew I had to stop, and yet I knew this would be my last mastery, and yet I knew I did not know how to go on. I did not know how to heal my child.

I did not know how to heal myself. I did not know how to heal my family. I did not know how to be anything other than Mama Gina, and I knew it had to end powerful.

Mandy: Thank you for sharing that. Thank you for taking us into that moment of tension because- Mm-hmm ... it sounds like, and I don't know, I don't wanna put words in your mouth, but it sounds like Regena was having a need and separating from the persona that was Mama- Yeah Gina in that moment. Yeah. That's what I'm hearing you say.

Regena: Yeah.

Mandy: And that can be very discombobulating.

Regena: It's so discombobulating because remember, like, basically how this whole trail got started was because I had abuse as a child, really from the time I was a baby. And when you have abuse from the time you're a baby, you have no fucking clue that you're actually broken.

You just think you're living in your normal family. And so I had, you know, as I grew into my 20s and, and so forth, something significant happened when I was five, which was the goddess came to me And she would sit on my bed, and I could feel this delicious presence. It was like a feeling. It wasn't like something flapping in on wings or a burning bush or Uh, it was a feeling that I feel in my body.

Almost felt like warm butterscotch pouring through me, or this feeling of aliveness that I wasn't used to feeling in my everyday scary, frightened life. And so... And I could, I could turn-- I wanted to turn my head and look and see what she looked like, but she would vaporize. And so I got the download, Goddess is a feeling.

She's a presence. She lives in the periphery. And for some wacky reason at age five, I thought, "It's my job to find her, and I, and I will, I will find her. I... She must be in churches or temples that I don't belong to," uh, 'cause it's Jewish and we didn't have goddesses. You know, we had the Abrahams and the Isaacs and the Jacobs and those people, Moseses.

And so I went to-- I had my friends bring me to their churches and different temples and Baha'i shrines, and God knows what. I looked at, for her for years and never found her, obviously. Obviously. Like, patriarchy destroyed the divine feminine about 3,000 or 4,000 years ago, which in the timeline of life is hardly nothing, because goddesses, you know, bled and destructed and delivered life and, uh, held us for, for, you know, 50,000, 75,000, 100,000 years.

The divine feminine was worshiped. There was goddess before there was God. She who bleeds but does not die and gives life embodied in the feminine got vacuumed.

Mandy: Yeah.

Regena: Uh, uh-

Mandy: Which is tricky, and, uh, it shows, it, it shows. We, because, uh, you know, we, we don't have access to that. It's- Yeah ... it's something that we seek.

And coming back to your knees moment, you're right. Every woman will have multiple versions- Yeah,

Regena: yeah ...

Mandy: of knees moments. They can, they can look all sorts of different ways. I mean, just before Christmas, my mom was dying, and I was- I'm sorry ... I was in Canada with her. Thank you. I was in hospice with her.

Regena: Mm.

Mandy: Wait for it, taking coaching calls from hospice.

Regena: Oh, my love.

Mandy: Because this is- I, I hear you ... what we do, right? Yeah. Like, w- when I genuinely believe that I was coping. Yeah. Gold stars for Mandy, because we just push through and we do the thing that we do. We reach for the familiar- Yeah ... which is pushing through.

Regena: Yeah.

Mandy: And that's really where I wanna go in this conversation- Yeah ... is these high-achieving sister goddesses are out there achieving, but the thing is I'll, we'll get into this a bit later, but in that moment, I didn't even know something else was available to me. I didn't even know in... Like, I knew this was an on the knees moment, but-

Regena: Yeah

Mandy: because she hadn't actually passed yet, it almost felt like, "Oh, I got a bit of runway where I can still- Yes ... be doing things."

Regena: Yes. Yes, yes, yes. It, it-

Mandy: And I was in this tension because- Yeah ... my desire, I went, when I sat on the airplane flying to Canada-

Regena: Mm-hmm ...

Mandy: my intention was she will not be c- cured. So-

Regena: Mm-hmm

Mandy: let me help to make her transition as exquisite. That was- Okay ... the word. As- Exquisite ... exquisite as possible. And yet when I'm in the day-to-day of it, of sitting bedside and, you know, she's not responsive anyway, so I may as well bang out a few emails. I may as well ask in the hospice room if I can take some coaching calls.

Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. So the intent is there, but it's almost like the, the playing out of the intent doesn't happen, and I think- Mm-hmm ... a lot of these things come from childhood. Yeah. I've had a lot of psychologists-

Regena: Yeah ...

Mandy: talking about the belief patterns and the ways that we show up in the world are often laid down in childhood. And often our younger selves have made a decision that this is how I must operate in life. Mm-hmm. This is how I must- Mm-hmm ... move through the world.

Regena: Mm-hmm.

Mandy: For those of us who didn't get an- Mm-hmm ... intervention from a goddess. I mean, I was chasing leprechauns at the end of rainbows at that stage. Like, I was not-
doing anything as, as profound as you, but-

Regena: Well ...

Mandy: there is this childhood belief that is often set up, and mine was I have to achieve. My father- Yeah ... was a school teacher at the school- Yeah ... that I went to. If I didn't come home with straight As, love was withdrawn.

Regena: I just have to say, I so deeply appreciate your transparency and your vulnerability.

It's so rare, it's so magnificent, and that's-- it's, I, I really believe, like, it's through our most vulnerable stories that we can open worlds for others, which I know is your intention. And I'm, I just really wanna honor you in that and celebrate that part of you. And, and I, I wanna put, like, a little more context around this little Mandy who was taught that achievement would lead her to her dreams.

Because the, there's a spiritual architecture to that, that we don't actually understand because we've grown up inside of this culture that's dominated by Abrahamic religions, which is that the experience of God is very different from the experience of Goddess. It's not comparable in any fucking way.

God is law and judgment and obedience and commandments. So we grow up in a culture that says if we achieve enough, if we're obedient enough, if we obey the law enough, that we will, I don't know what, be fulfilled. And what it does is just make us indentured to the capitalistic, colonialistic culture and to the church or synagogue or temple that we belong to.

And the Goddess is different. She's a portal. She's a seduction. She's an invitation. She's a transformational opportunity. She's the opposite of obedience. She does not hand you a syllabus for life. She throws you in the deep end of your own becoming. And in the world of the patriarchal world culture, being lost is a failure.

And in the world of the divine feminine, being lost is an initiation. It's a beginning. I didn't know when I fell to my knees in the wings of the Broadway theater That I was at the beginning of a journey that would give me the liberation in my life that I felt on stage Which is really what I wanted so much.

I just didn't know how to get there because always doing, always serving, always being the persona Mama Gena, it didn't allow the woman Regena to connect, to collect herself, to find herself, to own her own magic. I thought my only value was in creating magic for others. And so that collapse gave me back to myself.

And w- as it-- We're, we're always being dropped to our knees as women. Like, it's not one time. It's continually, it's constantly. We're always kind of on a spiral path, and the knees are the beginning of a pathway back to ourselves and a pathway back to her, to the goddess. 'Cause when you connect with that divinity, it's almost like being alive in a pouring rainstorm, and you have no umbrella.

You're just like, "Yes, this is me. This is life. This is me connected to that which is greater than me. Bring it on, bring it on, bring it on." And I want that liberation for every woman, like extrication from the patriarchy that shrinks us, and liberation into the divine feminine that expands us infinitely and ongoingly, where we are always held by life, by erotic life force.

Mandy: So I wanna know what you actually did on your knees. Because- Like- ... there's two layers here that are- Yeah ... really important. There, 'cause- Yeah ... uh, I'm asking for a friend, obviously. And, uh, there's also this thing about people who are listening, think about it, these are gonna be very corporate, high-achieving women and men- Yeah by the way. Yeah. Oh, yeah. My listenership is not all women.

Regena: Yep.

Mandy: These will be people who have pursued achievement to get, air quotes, "there"- Mm-hmm ... and have probably come to some sort of conclusion that there's no- Mm-hmm ... there there. Yeah. Which is why it feels hollow, empty, and they have a lot of nice things- Yeah and maybe status- Yeah ... but they've sort of arrived, and now in midlife it's a bit like, "Is this all there is?"

Regena: So they might be looking at you intrigued and a little bit- Mm-hmm ... afraid and a little bit mistrusting and a little bit- Yeah ... like, "Oh my God, I w-", you know, like the, the scene from Harry Met Sally, like, "I'll have what she's having- but I'm kinda scared to have that." So that's one aspect that's super interesting. Mm. I want you to bear in mind the listenership here-

Mandy: Great ... who are intrigued- Great ... and there's a deep hunger, myself included. Yeah. I've gone on this journey, but I think I've done it performatively. And-

Regena: Right ...

Mandy: more on that- Mm-hmm to come in a second. Yeah. And I think the other piece is the separation of the you from Mama Gina. From Regena, from Mama Gena. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm That is super interesting because I think that also applies to a lot of people listening because they have probably created a hologram of themselves that they send out into the world whose lives look shiny and successful on the outside, but inside they never feel good enough no matter what they achieve.

So maybe they've topically tried pleasure, and I'm putting my hand up right here to admit and confess to everyone, including you, which feels very vulnerable, that when I read your book, Pussy, I told all my friends about it. I told all my female clients about it, said, "You have to get this book." And around the world everywhere, people opened spreadsheets.

High achievers opened spreadsheets about pleasure. "Do these things-" "... like put the pink roses on your bedside table," check. Yeah. Uh, you know, all the things from the toys to the feeling yourself to the dressing. I wore silk blouses when I walked the dog and I did dishes. Like silk and dishwater, Regena? Like you can imagine- Yeah

it happening. And I did feel zhuzhed

Regena: up. You did,

Mandy: yeah. But then it faded and- Yeah, exactly ... here's the conclusion I came to.

Regena: Mm-hmm.

Mandy: It was like I wasn't doing pleasure very well.

Regena: Mm-hmm.

Mandy: And I see, I sort of go, "Oh, bless my cotton socks for saying that." I wasn't- Hear the language. I wasn't- Right ... doing pleasure very well.

Regena: Yeah.

Mandy: So pleasure didn't feel available to me.

Regena: Yeah.

Mandy: So when I have an on the knees moment, and I'm sure other listeners will have had those, pleasure would not feel like a obvious place to search whilst- Mm-hmm ... I was down there. Mm-hmm. In fact, people that are listeners here probably are, are experts at bouncing back from the knees moments.

That's what- Mm-hmm ... we do. Mm-hmm. That's why it doesn't even occur to us- Mm-hmm ... to stay down there, right? Mm-hmm. It's like we are experts. Yeah. We've got the, we've got the PhD in bounce back ability. Yeah. We are super balls. We don't stay down there. Yeah. So with that context in mind, the reason I say what did you do when you were down there because you discovered something.

You had done some, uh, uh, push back if I'm wrong on this, but some performative pleasure and realized that there was a gap growing between- Mm-hmm ... Mama Gena and you. So when you stayed down there and you didn't bounce back, please for the love of goddess, tell us what you did down there because I'm super curious.

Regena: First of all, I wanna say thank God for Mama Gena because I I'm actually a really shy, introverted person, and I knew at the beginning... Like, I, I saw the project. Uh, I, I'd had it in my body since I was a little kid. I was like, "It's my job to bring the divine feminine back. Oh, shit. I c- I'm really way too shy to do that.

Um, I'm gonna have to talk about orgasm. Ugh, I'm so shy. How am I gonna do that? And then I'm gonna have to teach women to fall in love with their pussies, 'cause the woman who owns her pussy owns her life. I am... I cannot, I cannot." I'm like, "Ugh." Like, I, I was the-

Mandy: That assignment, of all assignments you could've been given by the goddess, right?

Regena: Like, come on. Like the w- the worst. I was the kid that was so shy I couldn't even raise my hand when I had to pee in first grade to be excused to go to the bathroom. I was just like, I thought I was gonna get yelled at or hit because of my home life. So this is, that's who met the orders from the goddess.

And so I had to construct a persona, and since I just had my baby girl, I was like, "Oh, shit. I'm a mama ma-now. I'm a mama. Okay, I'll be Mama Gina. Oh, I'll make the School of Womanly Arts. Okay, that sounds fun." So it was a way for me to step into the assignment that I'd gotten from the goddess that was awesome.

What I didn't realize was that, let's say, as the work increased and the school expanded, and the level of demand That was not allowing the Regena part. You know, it's like Mama Gina had the best wardrobe, Regena had sweatpants. Like, Mama Gina went on TV and she was glamorous, and Regena just wanted to hang out under the covers and have popcorn and watch movies.

Like, it was she wasn't working. The... And so it, it almost wasn't even me. It was like the goddess was like, "Oh shit, this has got to stop. Regena is gonna be so fucked up if this continues." And so it was like the goddess pulled the plug on that whole operation. But I wanna celebrate the part of women, what we do to, let's say, serve our mission, to stand for what we love, and to give our all in the way you do, you have done, in the way I did, and to make space in that to allow it to collapse.

Because there, there... In the book, I talk about 10 different goddesses. I could have talked about 100 other ones. But goddesses have no prejudice around creation and destruction. They go hand in hand.

Mandy: A- This is super important. Yeah. 'Cause just bringing back to the, the construct that we live in where failure- Yes.

Mm-hmm ... or changing direction or pivoting can all of a sudden look like, you know, that's something to be ashamed of, something that's flopped, pancaked, something must be wrong with me. And the- Exactly ... immediate thing is, "I'm not enough. I suck."

Regena: Exactly.

Mandy: I need to be fixed." And I'm hearing the different way, because what the goddess is saying is like, we build in space to collapse and fail- Yeah and flop and be- Yeah ... a bit chaotic

Regena: We're built for this. We bleed, and then we ovulate next month, and it's the cycle of life. There's n- in the world of goddess, there's holiness in death as there is in birth. Our culture thinks birth is the way to go, and we should all live forever and have Botox and god fillers so that we at least look like we're gonna live for ev- forever.

So when this... The, the on our knees moment isn't something that can happen in your head. It literally has to happen in your body. It literally, like, the reason I chose this cover, I love the cover by the way. Quick fun story about the cover. I was working with this design team and they said, "Is there anything you definitely want or don't want?"

And I was like, "Please do not give me someone on their knees on the cover, whatever you do." And then they gave me this and I was like, "Yeah, that's the cover." But I chose it because, like, literally we... one has to drop to one's knees. Why? It gets you out of your head and places instantly in your body. Your head disconnects you from life, from truth, from your divinity, and your body is the portal of connection.

And a willingness to say, "I will, whatever the fuck it takes, find my way to find my divinity here." On my knees, not on the stage, not with a fluffy boa, not with a marquee, but meeting life here, and whatever it takes and whatever is required, I will meet life here. And allowing that grief to flow, because I had a tremendous amount of sad-

Mandy: Oh, I was hoping you were not gonna say that

Regena: oh, yeah.

Mandy: Oh. Oh.

Regena: Okay. Well- I get, I get it ... why, my beloved? Yeah. I get it. Well, see, that's an interesting thing, right? '

Mandy: Cause it's messy, and it's like- Oh, I know ... it takes you down the whole rabbit hole. And I mean- Yeah ... so I, I, I jest 'cause I knew you- I know ... were not gonna give us the sanitized 10 steps- Yeah.

It's... no ... which is why you're here, right? Yeah. But- Yeah ... so you let yourself feel the grief, and what did that look- Right ... like for you, if you're open to sharing?

Regena: I'm so open to sharing. It felt like a grief that I would never rise from. It felt like a grief where I did not know how to put one foot in front of the other.

It felt like a grief. It felt like lost, a sense of lost, that was so profound I was quite certain I would never find my way back. And I had no idea. It is that moment that you felt when you were by your mother's side as she was breathing her last breath, and it was hard to breathe with her and feel all that was there.

It's the moment when the goddess says, "Feel this. Love this."

Celebrate this. Cherish this Feel me in this. And I wanna give you an example o- of what I mean. Yeah,

Mandy: please do. I'm

Regena: gonna-

Mandy: Keep, keep us in there because I wanna- Yeah ... understand.

Regena: Okay. Uh, and- I

Mandy: wanna understand more.

Regena: Okay. Just like really clear example. About a, a decade or so before I ended mastery, I had, uh, a partnership with a lover who I thought was gonna be my for- ever after person.

Um, it was like w- it was legend- like a legendary love. I'd been friends with this man for 10 years. Once I got divorced, we began to see each other, fell in the deep end. He was... I, I respected him more than I... I mean, he was like the grandest man I ever met, and art collector, uh, went to world economic conferences and spoke, inspi- just venture capitalist, inspiring, huge man, and he saw the truth of me way before I did.

He was like, "This medicine that you have, this teaching that you have, the world requires it, and you need to expand your company. You need to step in as a leader." And I was-- At that time, it was before I had mastery, and it was before I stepped into the role of CEO and really scaled my company. It was when I was saying, "I can't.

I'm not really that great," you know? And he was like, "No." In fact, his last words to me when he passed were, "The world needs your radiance now more than ever." And so after, when he When he died He wasn't just-- it wasn't just Titus that was dying. It was my dream of my forever after. It was my experience of a man that I respected who actually believed in me, and I fell to my knees in a way that I thought, "I'll never recover from this heartbreak, and I'll never, ever be able to go on."

And so here's the practice, and one, one of the things that I have in this book are 10 initiations to get a woman from her head into her body. And so what I did was a practice called swamping, where because I was just awash in tears and completely dysfunctional, I made space for that. And so at least twice a day, I would put on a song that connected me to some facet of my heartbreak, and then I would drop to my knees, and I would literally move to the song.

First, I would just let out the raw rage of why did you take this love story away from me? Or the grief of losing this partnership, and I would just allow the raw emotions to crash. And then here's the game changer I opened my body to pour the erotic into the rage and pour the erotic into the grief. And because when you allow the body to hold both grief and erotic aliveness, both rage and erotic aliveness, when you allow erotic aliveness, which is nothing more than life force, it is what powers the wind, the sun.

It is what makes the grass grow and the trees flower. It is I want everyone to have a way of experiencing it right now. Okay?

I want you to take your hands, hold them about this far apart. Okay.

Mandy: So that would be what? Like, you'd be holding an American football in between or a- Yeah ... decent sized fish or a loaf of bread- Yeah ... or whatever?

Regena: It could be, it could be this far, could be this far. Okay. All right. Okay. Let's start here. Okay.

Mandy: Yeah.

Regena: And can you feel anything between the two hands?

Mandy: Not yet

Regena: No? Okay

Mandy: Nope

Regena: Let's get, let's get them closer and closer. Don't touch. Closer. Closer. And there's gonna be a certain point- Here.

Mandy: Ah. Here.

Regena: Okay, great. You can feel an energetic current-

Mandy: Yep ...

Regena: between your hands. Uh, what does it feel like?

Mandy: It almost feels like I wanna push on it.

It feels a little bit-

Regena: Yes ...

Mandy: foamy.

Regena: Yes. You

Mandy: know? Like a bit like a foam mattress.

Regena: Yes. Yes, yes, yes. Exactly. All right.

Mandy: Yeah. Okay.

Regena: Now let's take that. That's, that's erotic aliveness that you, each of us can create. Now, if I, uh, if I had music, I would put on like a slow, sensual song right now.

Mandy: And I'd just- Something like R&B or something, yeah, something a bit sexy.

Regena: Yeah. Okay. Yeah, exactly. Yeah. And then I would say take that erotic aliveness and just really slowly and really gently run it along your hairline

Maybe down your face

Beautiful. Keep connecting. Connect to your skin now. Yes. Run your fingers against your skin.

Mandy: Are we actually touching now?

Regena: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Mandy: Okay

Regena: And feel down your neck Okay, take a little- That

Mandy: collarbone place feels very nice

Regena: Ooh, isn't that great? Mm-hmm.

Mandy: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Regena: All right. Okay. So that is the goddess. That's the goddess. That's life force that we have inside of us

only always. And we can pour that life force wherever we wanna pour it.

Our culture that celebrates pornography exterminate pleasure from the bedroom and many other places, the churches, the synagogues, but there was a time when the erotic and the divine were one. And this is the divine feminine that runs through every woman that we can cultivate any time we want. And here's the potency of it.

In that tiny moment, that cushion that you felt- and that delicious sensation that you felt is a chemical reaction that we create, which is how we invite the divinity into our body, that's made up of oxytocin, endorphins, dopamine, and prolactin. So it's almost like every woman has a medicine chest inside of her powered by her choice to connect to her erotic aliveness.

And oxytocin is a hormone of bonding. It calms inflammation. It teaches the body to trust. It quiets the amygdala, which is the fear center. Then there's dopamine, which is the mood elevator. It's an antidepressant. It's the motivation, desire. It's the hope chemical. When you have low dopamine, it's apathy and numbness.

The endorphins are like a morphine-like substance that, that are pain relief and create a pleasurable sensation, and prolactin is deep relaxation. So we have the ability to create all of that chemistry that we-rewires the brain from fight or flight to rest and repair, and it's my opinion that women don't lack confidence.

They lack the biological state that makes confidence possible that is activatable when you connect with erotic life force or the goddess inside your own body.

Mandy: I have so many questions. I

Regena: feel-

Mandy: Oh,

Regena: let's go.

Mandy: Let's go. Um- Let's go ... how did you do this? How did you... How did y- did you... Well, first of all, I sh- I shouldn't presume, but you feel like you've reintegrated, or have you- Yeah

has, has Mama Gina, is she on mothballs? Or w- like what role does she- What role does she play in your life now? Like, what's the relationship between the two of you, and how did you get there from on the knees? I'm curious about maybe it's practices or- Yeah,

Regena: it's

Mandy: practices ... how, how you've done that integration, if that's what- It's

Regena: practices.

Yeah. It's

Mandy: pra- Is there an integration?

Regena: Yeah. Um, f- first of all, I would say that- She's there when I need her, and she's very useful- Okay ... because she's really good with a crowd.

Mandy: Yeah.

Regena: And how the practices are a practice of continually, like instead of relying on the silk blouse to create pleasure in my body, 'cause for me it was pink bows and You know, high heels- Well, for Mama

Mandy: Gena it was probably- Yeah

those things, right? Yeah. Okay. Yeah? Yeah. Okay.

Regena: Um, it, it was the practice of choosing to run this erotic life force-

Mandy: Yeah ...

Regena: through my body through practices every single day, at least once a day- Okay ... or more. And that

can happen with a self-pleasure practice, meaning, I don't like the word masturbation, but it is one, uh, it is a tool.

I, I don't like it because it implies a climactic experience that one is striving for, and in the world of the erotic or the divine, there's no striving.

Mandy: Yeah. You can- More

Regena: than

Mandy: achievement.

Regena: Yeah.

Mandy: Yeah.

Regena: You can, you can get... You can release all that beautiful chemistry stroking your own collarbone. You don't have to have an orgasm.

So it's a practice of connecting to my erotic through the emotional truth of whatever's happening. So for example, if I was, let's say during the time I was grieving the death of my partner, I would have to pour the erotic into the grief, pour the erotic into the why me through dance, through movement, and literally a three-minute song could allow me to recognize, oh, there's something in this grief that is breaking me and remaking me into the woman that I was born to become.

Because honestly, if that partner had lived, I would never have created an empire. I would never... I would've been like, "Oh, shit, why don't I just stop being Mama Gena and just follow him to those international economic conferences and those, you know, art shows and just hang out and just, like, chill and make a life for us?"

And because that future was taken from me, what happened was I stepped into my power. I stepped into my leadership. I stepped into a part of myself that would never ex- have existed were it not for his absence. And so I left my living room where I had handfuls of women and started to, uh, appear on stages with thousands and thousands of women out of necessity, out of needing to put a roof over my head, out of needing to send my daughter to private school.

Like, I became the leader that I was born to be, that without the loss of him, I never would've become. So- I found the, in that breaking, I re, was remade by the goddess into a woman that was m- it was my destiny to be this. And then further along, I found myself on my knees on the mastery stage, on the Broadway stage, at another breaking point and remaking point, and I had to once again go back to the practice.

Self-pleasure practice is something I do every day because I can connect to my truth, I can connect to my divinity, and I don't wanna have a day without that connection. I also have a dance practice where whatever mood I'm in, I connect to my, you know, whatever is that truth that running through me. Uh, whether it's, um, jealousy, rage, frustration, agony, uh, feeling lost, feeling desperate.

I'll find a song. I'll move my body. I'll connect with that erotic. When I connect with the erotic, it moves me from victim, meaning, "Why am I here? Why am I, at this stage of my life, so fucking lost?" To, "Oh I can feel a potency coming for me. I can feel a piece of my destiny unfolding. I can feel that I'm becoming more of myself through this portal.

I can feel the gratitude for life even here And once we're in that spot, the goddess takes our hand, and then the next unfolding, and the next unfolding, and it's endless when you're connected to the goddess. When you're living in the patriarchal world culture and you hit a wall or a death or the end of a passage of your life that you think you can't breathe without, you really can sometimes live that ending for the rest of your life.

"Oh, I'm, I'm a widow. I'll never marry again." Or it can be, "Th- this was a loss, and it's making me into a new iteration of myself, and I am hungry for the adventure of what's to come," is possible when you allow that erotic divine energy to pour through your body.

Mandy: I'm putting myself in the mind of somebody who this is very new to them-

Regena: Yep ...

Mandy: that are very achievement-driven, very heady- Yep. Mm-hmm ... very intelligent, very successful, maybe very corporate. Yeah.

Regena: Yeah.

Mandy: And they're a little bit fascinated and a little bit terrified, and they're like- Yeah ... "Okay, I've just found out that my partner is cheating," or, "I've just been made redundant"- Yeah

or all of those things, and she's asking me to feel my collarbone and-

Regena: Mm-hmm. ...

Mandy: put some, put some songs on and dance.

Regena: Or worse-

Mandy: But what... Or worse ... your pussy. E- that- ... that too. That too. Uh, so there's something about the gear shift between being in the head and thinking that chronic doing will help you to outrun a feeling that you don't wanna have.

There's something that you're trying not to know or something that you're trying not to feel, and if I just keep smashing my to-do list and achieving, somehow I'll stay a little bit ahead of it so I don't have to do... feel the shitty feelings, 'cause that's why I said- Yeah ... "Oh, I was hoping you were gonna ha- make us."

Yeah. There's something about you allowing yourself to be in the broken feeling of grief and- Mm-hmm ... and I'm hearing that the, the erotic life force is helping to allow that to move through. Mm-hmm.

Regena: Mm-hmm.

Mandy: Which achieving creates the illusion of that.

Regena: Mm-hmm.

Mandy: But as soon as you stop, guess what's nipping at your heels, and therefore the, the constant need to, to pursue more to outrun that.

Yeah. So I wanna end this episode. What would you say to that person who is so in their head and they're sort of, like, a little bit jaded and cynical and eye-rolly, like, "Oh my God, that... Like, this conversation, I, I'm not gonna take anything away from them"? What would you offer as an invitation to that person?

Regena: First of all, I would say that- Living in the world of "I'm fine"-

Mandy: Mm ...

Regena: is living in formaldehyde.

Mandy: Ooh! Okay. Say more. You got me.

Regena: You will never get to experience the fullness of the woman you were born to become. So just in the same way, and, and, and women were born for this, by the way. You know how, like, there's a song that reminds you of that boyfriend or that lover or that girlfriend you had, and then there's that heartbreak, and when it comes on the radio, you just think it's a sign from the great pussy in the sky-

and you're singing out loud and feeling all the feels. It's no different from that, but it's choosing to take that, that we do as women, and to allow whatever the fuck is happening to be felt. And you don't have to do it hook, line, and sinker. You can do it for one short three-minute song that speaks to your soul, and get o- out of your head, get on your knees and into your body, and simply experiment and see if that aliveness is worthy of your time.

Because we are 88 keys of the piano of emotional range, and if we only play middle C, we're not living the fullness of what it means to be a woman. So I just invite all listeners, men and women, to play with their range

and to say yes to every drop of themselves, because every drop of you is perfect, from your rage to your grief, to your heartbreak, to your shyness, to your success, to your failures, to your being lost, is all perfect and held by the goddess.

And so allowing yourself to feel that is worthy,

Mandy: even for a moment. And also understanding that you won't get sucked into the undertow. That's-

Regena: Mm-hmm ...

Mandy: it feels like it.

Regena: Yeah.

Mandy: But this whole process, the biggest shift I've had in this conversation is understanding that from a goddess lens, if I can put it that way, that these on your knees moments, it's just part of the ebb and flow of life.

Like we come- Yeah ... to expect this. That's right. It's not something to be avoided or sidestepped- Yeah ... or leapfrogged, uh, or any of those things. Yeah. It's just this is part of it, which makes perfect sense when we slow- Yeah ... down enough to think that.

Regena: Mm-hmm. Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Mandy: And to be on your knees doesn't mean you stay on your knees.

Regena: Right. And it doesn't mean you failed.

Mandy: Correct.

Regena: It means you are transforming. The floor is a door

Mandy: I can't think of a better way to end.

Regena: Okay.

Mandy: Thank you. Thank you for playing with us. This has been

Regena: delicious. It was so much fun, Mandy. Thank you.

Mandy: Remember in the intro when I said pleasure wasn't what I expected in this conversation? Not the bubble baths and the self-pleasuring, though those things can be part of it. I'm referring more to what Regena called erotic life force, the current running through a body that's actually letting itself feel things.

So the concept of life force wasn't new to me, but what never occurred to me was actually reaching for it in those on your knees moments on purpose, cultivating it daily through practices, and administering it right into the grief or whatever the thing is that you're feeling, pouring it over yourself, metaphorically or literally, like warm butterscotch.

You can actively do that. Huh. So here's another thing I'm sitting with. The part of us that achieves and tries to push through challenges by keeping the normalcy of being and the doing, that part isn't the villain of the story. That doer part is hugely useful. Think about it. Regena didn't get rid of Mama Gina either.

She's still there, useful, great with a crowd, looking fabulous in her pink boa and her fishnets. So the problem was never that she exists, nor that the achiever exists. It's what happens to the other one, the one who isn't performing for anybody, when that part never gets any airtime at all. Final thought, you don't need to believe in the goddess for any of this to land.

It's a language. It's a lens. It's an energy. My deeper invitation is to stop treating your on the knees moments as situations to escape from or to bounce back or to normalize, to get through as quickly as possible. And Regena's thoughts on this, to start treating them as what they might actually be, places with their own healing energy, their own wisdom, their own strange kind of hope, initiations, portals, if you're willing to stay down there long enough to look for it.

Reaching for erotic life force on purpose in our worst moments, and the floor can become a door. I love that phrase. Regena's new book, *On Our Knees*, is out now. And if somebody came to mind as you were listening to our conversation, thank you in advance for sharing. I'm blowing out the Diptyque candle now to bring this episode to a close.

Thanks for listening, and I'll see you next time.