

I have a very bad karma with fleas



**The
Caroline
Phillips**

Interview

Leslie Kenton
HEALTH GURU

IT'S IMPORTANT to know the etiquette when you greet a baby lion in the bush. A big-boned woman gets down on all fours on the dining room floor. "You've got to put your head down," she demonstrates in a loud American voice, her long blonde hair tumbling to the floor. "Then the lion screams your hair."

The lion on the floor is Leslie Kenton, 55, New Age health and beauty guru, mother of four children by four different men, girlfriend of a man younger than two of her sons, and author of more than 30 best-sellers including *Raw Energy Recipes*.

Leslie doesn't want anything to eat or drink, not even raw vegetable juice. "You should only lunch with friends, anything else is bad for the digestion," she explains. She learned this 20 years ago from dining with the boss of a cosmetics company.

"After telling me how dynamic he was, he said, 'What do you do when you're not working?' I said I grew parsley. He went blank. I decided then that I'd never again have lunch with anyone who doesn't know why it's important to grow parsley."

Over the years Leslie has promoted everything from Mexican yams, clay therapy and vinegar baths to sleeping with an Arctic wolf and keeping magnets in the mattress, as she does in her Pembrokehome that belonged to Virginia Woolf.

Once she spent six weeks in a Himalayan monastery. "I learned that I had very bad karma with fleas," she reveals, straight-faced. "I was eaten alive." Another time, she retreated to a Buddhist monastery in Scotland and lay nude on a mountainside. "I was in despair and wanted to connect with the earth. Instead, I heard everything that had happened there over the years. I heard a man flying his kite and two women having a discussion."

Now she's running a shamanic workshop in London this weekend. The shamanic practitioner accesses the spiritual world to promote healing. "I believe people lose part of their souls. I do a lot of soul retrievals," she says. "I use a drum or rattle to connect with the spirits."

She is also promoting her latest tome, *Ten Steps To Energy*. How do you get more energy?



INSIDE KNOWLEDGE: Leslie Kenton is guided by inner voices

"The first thing you have to do is make sure that the life you're living is your own and not somebody else's. You must learn to listen to your inner voices."

Before she tuned in to her own inner voices, Leslie had a tricky time with relationships. Her first husband was Peter Dau, a neurologist and the father of her oldest son Branton, 35. "I didn't want to get married at all. But I was 17 and pregnant and my father said if I didn't marry I couldn't keep the baby."

Next she wed journalist Dan Smith, father of Jesse, 31. But while she was living with him she fell pregnant after a one-night stand with an old schoolfriend, Barry Combden, and had their daughter Susannah, now 32. Leslie divorced Dan when she was 28. Subsequently, she has had affairs with men ranging from a reformed drinker to a black power revolutionary. Recently, she started a romance with Danny Morgan.

What makes this relationship work? "I think we've been friends forever," she explains. Is sex important to her? "If I'm in love with somebody. My sexuality is an expression of the rest of me. It's a significant part of my relationship with Danny. But I've spent long periods of my life being celibate. I find it interesting."

Danny, 24, a garage owner, is 31 years her junior and 11 years younger than her oldest son. Isn't that sort of age difference a bit sick? "There's nothing odder than the fact that his mother is 15 years younger than me," she snaps intimidatingly.

We talk then about Leslie's attitude to parenthood. "I was a good mother," she asserts. Why

was? "I have only one child left — 15-year-old Aaron," she replies. But her other offspring are still her children, aren't they? "No. Not now. We're friends. I don't want to be a mother for ever."

When they were growing up, she used her progeny as guinea pigs. One week she'd get them up to jog at 5 am, the next they'd be trying to levitate. "I considered it experimental," she says. "They only rebelled when we tried a diet of nothing but brown rice and salt for a week."

AARON, the son of Paul Cox, a student, was born when Leslie was 39. He was delivered in her bedroom with Paul and her other children present. "It was a moving experience. When babies are born, there are spirits and angels in the room."

Leslie then told Paul that she didn't want Aaron, but she would look after him until he was four and a half years old. After that, she would hand him to Paul. "I don't know why," she says stropily. "My observation was that four and a half years is how long the child needs his mother."

Leslie loses her temper quickly. She's also tough, passionate, inspirational, articulate and a gritty businesswoman. "I've lacked confidence all my life," she reveals. "But I have lots of confidence in ways that are irrelevant to me. I could run a corporation like IBM with no trouble."

Suddenly she gets cross. "If you want to learn about me, Caroline, you have to listen. OK?" she snaps. "I mean *listen*, not just with your ears but with your heart." Oh dear. Is that going to be easier than greeting a baby lion in the bush?