Introduction to Plant Medicine and Sita Ramayya

You may have heard me talk about in previous episodes my experience with plant medicine. Extremely profound, life-changing experiences. Ones that helped make my relationships with my wife, with kids better.

But since then I've been really wanting to sit down and just kind of dig a little deeper into what plant medicines is to maybe support you all and better understanding it and maybe even finding curiosity to explore it yourself.

That's why I'm so excited. Our next guest is a deeply rooted guide in the world of integrative ancestral healing. Sita Ramayya is trauma-informed spiritual practitioner weaving together decades of work in somatic healing, plant medicine, and ancestral wisdom.

You know, honestly, some of this work is probably the most ancestral medicinal work you can find. It's rooted in nature. Welcome back to Everyday Ancestral.

I'm your host, James Berry. Please enjoy my next guest, Sita Ramayya. Let us know what you think. Talk about kind of the law of attraction, because when we first met, the catalyst for our conversation was that I had read that book that you probably know, but I am skipping on the full name, it has to do with the serpent and the DNA.

That's exactly. But Jeremy Narby, I was skipping the name too, that really talked about his experience in the jungle with the Ashaninka. Yes. Yeah, and that was my first exposure to plant medicine.

And what's so fascinating, so I had that ceremony that I did with you. That experience was profound. I was not able to do the two days. It was only able do one, but absolutely profound, then I haven't touched this stuff.

and recently got in with a functional doctor here who's been really doing deep dives into plant medicine for the last few years. And he has brought me into some of his ceremonies and have had newer depths, newer profound experiences.

That's why I reached out to you, because I was like, I really want to better understand This is such ancestral practice. It's such an ancestral medicine.

And I would love to hear from your perspective as someone who's been working with it for so many years. Oh, what? 30 years? How long have you been? Working with.

98. Yeah. So that's almost 30. I mean, you're, that. Let's start with the history of plant medicine, can you share a bit about How it has how it's shown up historically and and just in general how its it was it used to be used the versus we will get to how to use nowadays but how used.

So. I am not an authority. Let me just say this. I only know what I know. And there are so many multiple lineages of plant medicine practices that let's just save for the purposes of this conversation that span the Amazon in South America and so, many different tribes and within those tribes, families and practices.

What I think everybody can agree on is that Ayahuasca, the vine, has been used even before the chakruna, came online and they were put together. I, you know, this, the use that I am familiar with and the stories and transmissions that have received are based on my frame of reference having studied with the Shipibo people, which are an indigenous group of the Peruvian Amazon.

So I just want to clarify that. You know it's not the Iwanawa, or the Huni Kun in Brazil. What I find fascinating is that

all of these different groups are using, working with, communing with in dialogue with learning from ayahuasca, whether they call it Yahé or any other name.

So that to me speaks to the sentience or the presence of ayahuasca in a specific bioregion on the planet.

Ayahuasca Lineages and Traditional Healing

What I know is that in many of the Shipibo lineages, while people in the communities drank ayahusca, the primary purpose was for the Onaya, which, you know, is like you would think of as a shaman, but the shamen is a bit of a colonialist imposition of naming the onaya who is, like, the doctor, or the steward of the medicine and the realms of medicine.

So to drink this medicine, the uni, ayahuasca, to have the vision to be able to help the patient to see, what has to happen here, and to work with the various energies, spiritual, that manifest as an illness or an imbalance.

And the starting point always is in the non-physical, in unseen to the eye in day-to-day, let's say, waking light. Then there is a prescription, if you will, for a bath or a vapor or adepta or lifestyle change, we would say now, for that person to feel better in whatever way that they are needing to.

Feel better. And that transmission comes from the plant or Well, it's a combination of the practitioner. I'm going to use the word practitioner because it just, you know, less specific but applies to people who practice with this plant medicine in this specific lineage in my knowledge base.

So the practitioners drinks the medicine, however, What comes through in terms of the capacity is not just based on, you know, drinking the medicine in that moment, but the years of study and learning and working with a multitude of other plants that when We die at them, we receive the medicine of those plants, which then come through in the capacity to host that energy during the experience, if that makes sense.

So the Onaya drinks the Medicine, looks, and it's in real time. Having the visionary experience that also the helpers of all the plants and access points that are in their Let's say medicine chest based on their experience with them From your kind of knowledge and deep dive into ayahuasca, would you say that it's probably one of the oldest forms of kind health care or medicine?

You know, we'd have to define old, and because in this sense we're talking about the Amazon, there's like very few archaeological remnants or records.

And the Shipibo-Kenebo language and the Pinoan languages across the amazon basin were not written languages. These were oral histories. So the Archaeological record if we're looking for like verification.

is not there. However, if we talk to the elders and the teachers, it's always been part, for example, of the Shipibo culture, like ayahuasca isn't separate from the culture.

It's infused. And in fact, It is said and has been said that if you want to learn about ayahusca, the shipibo are the ones to go to, they are like the masters of this in that region.

So just to say, like, you know, it's really sexy to see, oh, one of the oldest medicines ever. And maybe that's true and maybe it isn't. Certainly there are various other archaeological records having to do with other plant medicine practices and other places in the world across the Himalayan regions and Persia and Greece and so forth that have better archaeological records because, you know, they, we're writing and they were buildings that were preserved.

You know, I don't know. I suspect, and based on my sense, it is, but ayahuasca isn't a stand-alone. Ayahuaska is really profound, that we can't separate ayhuaska from all of the other master plants, because ayuaska provides access to the plants that, you know are part of this rich pharmacopoeia, Amazon and so these other plants are teachers that plant teachers the master plants that you don't get very refined in their service to us humans who go

astray.

I want to definitely explore some of what the other master plants are. But, you know, I, it, i realized that a lot of people like this, the term plant medicine is getting thrown around a LOT these days is plant.

Medicine to you is. Is ayahuasca the culmination of what you would say is plant medicine when we talk about it? Or how would you refer to psilocybin and all these other things that people are now saying are also plant medicines?

What's your definition of plant? My definition is medicine from plants that provide healing and remedy. So it's not limited to fungi that have healing properties, you know, which are not throughout plants anyway.

Right. You know these plants that are behind me, are they plant medicine? Well, in a way, like, I don't know. It's medicine because they're providing oxygen for the air that I breathe, expansive view of what plant medicine is.

I was at the Dubai airport. a couple of years ago, and they have these atriums with like all these amazing plants inside. And I sat and I'm like, wow, you know, like this feels really good.

You know I mean this long transit across the world. I felt like there's healing in this calm, just from the richness of this incredible atrium of plants in the middle of an airport.

So that's plant medicine. In the common parlance of social media and all of this. And I think plant medicine is being used to refer to entheogens like things that you know are a way to know ourselves or that are expansive or transformative or That alter consciousness and my Definition is not limited to that and primarily because I have had communications and experiences with plants that people would not call entheogenic and they don't have the requisite alkaloids.

However, when we come together with the plants and we do our work of being open to this non-linguistic interspecies communication, there's so much medicine that is beyond sort of just this gross effect of drinking ayahuasca, or ingesting psilocybin, and the 5-MeO, even that, right?

That is referring to a synthetic compound. I feel like everything, if it's a product of our intelligence, it is not natural. But we would not necessarily classify that as a plant medicine.

things like MDMA or 5-MeO or ketamine, it doesn't diminish their potential for healing given that, you know, they are taken or administered in right relationship and right circumstances in a safe setting, but they would not necessarily be plant medicines.

Yeah. But yet I think a lot of people are clumping it all together, at least to your point, how they talk about it on social media. And it makes me wonder, because I had experienced in college a couple of mind-altering things like acid and psilocybin, but that experience was very different than what I experienced with ayahuasca, and it was also very from what i've experienced recently with this functional doctor.

And that makes Is it just the vehicle, meaning what you're taking? Or is it more so the environment you are taking under? Is there a ritual to it? Are there people guiding you?

Do you think it's just a mixture of the two? Well, I think, it is all of that. As far as plant medicine, Jack and Jill are the same person. You know, so like Ayahuasca is ayahuaska and ayahuska presents itself in many different ways.

You there's the Yaha tradition out of Columbia. And then there, you know our traditions in various tribal settings. Then there are emergent traditions where people are working with it in let's say more contemporary ways that are less traditional.

So, um, I think that the set, you know, our emotional set point or physical set-point or psychological setpoint, or spiritual set points, the setting in which the experience happens and the amount we take are all components.

And there is an aspect to ceremonial work and ritual work that is a container set in a specific way specifically for healing. And so, you know, that plays into it too.

What, what got you on this path? Cause I know it was reading that book that introduced me to it, but what brought you down this. So I had a yoga teacher.

Um, in early to mid 90s. And I was sober from drugs and alcohol for like 11 years.

What Counts as Plant Medicine

They mentioned ayahuasca to me and I was shocked. I'm like, oh, that's just an excuse to use drugs. And, and then when I contemplated and observed the yoga teacher's way of being in the world and what they did for their students and working in hospice and Working with AIDS patients and this amazing work.

Like, I don't know, but they don t seem like they're using drugs like the way that I did anyway. And so I sat with it. for about a year. And then I said, I actually am interested in this.

Then it was another year before an opportunity presented itself and I was on a yoga retreat on Maui and there was an opportunities. It wasn't connected with the retreat, but one thing led to another.

I had my first experience and really believe that In that moment, I even knew it in that. Moment. There was like my life before I had Waska and then my.

Life after it was. I've heard that I'd heard. That from many people. It really was, and I felt very strongly called and very. Strongly drawn. And then, um, two years later I traveled to the Brazilian Amazon, which started my journey and.

Had read the cosmic serpent, but it. Was there. a year after that, that I met Jeremy Narvey and we became friends and then he was actually the conduit for my journeying then into Peru, into some of the far reaches of The Jungle.

First staying with that he that that was part of the group in that book at the cosmic serpent and so that Was a couple of years before I then Met and started studying and learning from the sheep people It's fascinating because more and more you're hearing about ayahuasca being a resource for addiction and And yet it's interesting, because I think what you're speaking to is that here I had been an addict, I was sober, and I, was afraid to do something that was kind of like perceived as maybe being mind-altering or drug-like.

So it was almost like we build these labels and then there's lots of, while they're keeping us sort of safe, there is also a lot of fear around them, right?

Was it just sitting with it that kind of made you feel safe to delve into it? But like, or, in general, when you're working with people that are dealing with addiction to, let's just say alcohol or these modern addictions, alcohol, I don't know, cocaine or anything like that.

What are you finding is helping people to take the leap and to see this is not the same as the thing that they feel like they're addicted to. Well, I'll speak for myself to answer the first part of your question.

And that was, it was such, just the whole evolution like was you know, I felt like in a way we would say like as a, you in Buddhism, like it is my karma to meet this person and for these auspicious circumstances to present themselves.

Because during that year, what I realized was the question was not, oh, that's just an excuse to use drugs. Would it be an Excuse to Use drugs for me?

And it wasn't until I because there was no like internet and Google or any of these things, even when I went to the Amazon, like there is no Google, there's no anything.

And this was okay, here I go. Um, and so in answering that question, um, in the beginning, it was like, like, no, because I don't want to use I Don't wanna drink and but I do want To improve the quality of my life and I Do know that while I might be sober there are things that Have not yet healed and there things That I have not Yet released and i knew that and yoga was certainly helping and some of My other practices or spiritual practices were helping.

And I I felt more and more called and drawn. And it also, I'm like, wow, OK. I let them know. And then it was a year. So it helped me to cultivate patience and not perseverate on the thing.

OK, now this thing's going to fix me. Like I am available if and when. It was the beginning of a long journey, a practice of cultivating patience, which was not in my wheelhouse prior to that.

And then now I think that we're so blessed because there's so many communities of psychedelics in recovery. And there are meetings where people who are either exploring entheogenic substances or taking them, but they're also in a recovery and are breaking free from more regimented or restricted 12 step programs that say, Oh, you know, anything that's mind altering is not being sober.

And then there are pharmaceuticals that are okay, but entheogens aren't. So I think that when somebody feels called or drawn or hears about it, at that point, I hope for them that they find their way to somebody who is going to talk to them and thoroughly do an intake or an assessment to make sure because I have found that there are people Who open the door to psychedelics and then they're consistently chasing like the big event the high dose and doing 20 grams of mushrooms and.

You know, not a problem, but you know what it can do. It can also feed patterns where people who, like people are addicted to the cortisol or the adrenaline and also perhaps a little less self-aware of their own desire to have a certain status or achieving.

You know, this is there's not a one size fits all.

Set, Setting, and the Role of Ceremony

And while I believe psychedelics, which promote neuroplasticity, and specifically ayahuasca does a really good job at that, it promotes neuro plasticity and helps to get us out of the default mode network and gets all the regions of our brain working at the same time, much like meditation can, that it's not for everybody.

It's Not the answer for Everybody. And many people, let's just say who, you know, have been addicted, or alcoholic may have physical Considerations on board as a result of the abuse of their body.

So I think that As I said at my hope is that they find their way to somebody if they're drawn who can guide them in a way that is helpful and reasonable and you know can assist them and providing information so that They can make informed choice about whether or not to proceed with consciousness altering experiences.

Yeah, I think that's well said that there's still, despite the popularity and the trendiness of some of these things right now, that they're still no magic bullet or magic pill.

Yeah. That's going to work for everyone, everybody. It is fascinating though, because when I had my experience with you, The first time I really got got it.

I was like, oh, this is plant medicine. Like this. And it was so clearly not a drug, at least the way that I had grown up, you know, understanding what drugs were.

Keep in mind that, we grew up with we're of the age where, Nancy Reagan was saying, just say no. So drugs, were very like. the idea of what a drug is and what is labeled as it kind of permeated our childhood, you know of us of anyone that's a certain age and and so I Went in kind thinking well plant, okay You can call it vegan or plant-based is still you're not eating animal You know, I mean like I kind went in going sure it's plant medicine Yeah, just like you but when I experienced that was like, oh, no, this is medicine.

It was such a distinct Difference and so I would love to kind of help people understand What is ayahuasca because you're talking about let's go back to that idea that there's?

These these other plants that you mix with it when you are creating ceremony. Can you kind have explore what? If someone said well, what is it? Yes, and what does it what embodies it yeah, so we don't mix other plans with ayahosca but I What happens is we diet with other plants outside the ceremonial space for extended periods of time, a month, three months, six months a year to come to understand the medicine of those plants.

And when we do, we receive the songs and the connection. Then in ceremony, the practitioner opens themselves to receive whatever needs to come through to assist them to be of service to the person that they're singing to.

So if they have dieted tutuwasi or ohe or some of these other plants, those plants might come through while the practitioner is in the experience of ayahuasca to be of service because let's just say that person is healing from drug addiction or alcoholism and ohey is like this really powerful deep cleanser of any residual, any remnants of, you know, alcoholism, whether it's physically, spiritually, emotionally, energetically, or drugs and parasitic energies and parasites.

So, so that comes through in the in in the realm of of the medicine ayahuasca is just two plants the ayawaska vine and chakruna now at some people in some regions where chacriona is not native it would be chalipanga which is a different admixture plant but those two Ayahuasca.

And it's really fascinating because ayahuaska contains harmin, harmaline, and tetrahydroharmin which are beta-carboline alkaloids that act as a temporary and reversible inhibitor of monoamine oxidase A activity and is a natural antidepressant.

Pharmacologically, mono-amine-oxidase inhibitors were the first antidespressants, pharmaceutical But if we were to prepare a tea with chakruna, with the psychoteroviridis, and drink it and it's rich with an alkaloid of NN dimethyltryptamine or DMT, the person would not feel an effect because our bodies are so brilliant.

The monoamine oxidase activity would neutralize it or metabolize. It's saying, whoa, wait, this is foreign. But because that activity is temporarily suspended, The DMT crosses the blurred brain barrier and produces what in allopathic medicine is referred to as a psychotropic or a psychoactive effect.

And in the shamanic spiritual practices, it's much more than that because now we're open to the teaching of this plant.

Personal Path Into Ayahuasca

is primed to help us expand and have potentially a visionary experience, which may include visuals, or it may be an experience like you had, James, of I just knew.

And if that's an insight, then that is a vision. And because there are a lot of, you know, physiological pharmacological things going on, which intuitively indigenous people without that language knew they just knew.

And so. You know, it's nice that we have science and we had assessments and starting in the late 80s, you know these studies started happening. So it is great to know that, but there is something that can't be qualified or quantified through science, which is like, how is it that, for example, myself growing up on the streets of Philadelphia, you know, in the inner city, like makes her way to the jungle?

Like, How does that happen? So there's something that is, ancestral in that You know, it could be through many lifetimes or many manifestations of this interdependent nature of our existence.

And then there is our capacity to surrender to having an interspecies communication, if you will. like receiving messages or maybe even expanding enough to have an experience of recognizing the plants as having sentience and being helpers and teachers and healers themselves and wanting to help us.

We need a lot of help. Human beings need help and so it's really quite profound. I think I may have gotten off track to your question, so remind me if I did.

Well, no, we're just talking about what is ayahuasca, but what's fascinating to me Well, let me first walk through and you can of course support it. But from my understanding and from what I've experienced is typically.

You're told to fast from animal based products prior to ceremony to not eat too much, to keep it pretty light. Then the ceremony that I did with you, it was in the evening.

And then we sat, and I don't even remember how many people, but it's not a huge group. It's intimate. And, then a lot of people purge, not everyone, But a lotta people then purged.

I'm curious to hear your thoughts on what that purging represents. But then also, you then do the ceremony and it is however long. Then afterwards, your still kinda told to, You know not immediately go into eating too much food and I think we had oatmeal for example, we kept it very light and We did it so long ago.

This was an issue But I know nowadays it's also like that you're warned to kind of like not get too heavy into electronics like Not to not to to kinda give some space between what you experience and modern life.

Yeah, so Thank you. So the diet in preparation for drinking ayahuasca in the lineage in which I've learned is no salt, sugar, spices, dairy, oil, caffeine, red meat, poor recreational substances, marijuana, alcohol, pornography, sex, and masturbation.

So it's not complete abstinence from animal products. So you could conceivably eat chicken, or you can eat a light white fish, which unfortunately is not really available in North America that hasn't been farmed.

But just as a counter to this, deep in the jungle over the course of retreat, It might be like plantains and Boki Chito, which is like this little tiny fish with a million bones.

And in order to eat it, it's very meditative. Like, It's not like, ah, don't be accurate. It'd take an hour to get a fish this big. So- It forces you to go slow and be mindful.

Yes, exactly. There is another component to the diet because there are other plants that are incredible plant medicines. But they're not a fit with ayahuasca, so like it's not like a hard and fast thing.

So, you know, that that interfere, not just physiologically, but potentially physiologically, by energetically. And they are just not. A good fit. It's like if you were to put on an outfit and you're like, wow, That just doesn't go right.

Uh, So that's. Not my color. Yeah. So the idea is that we're preparing from my perspective. There the the Dieta is not an add on like, oh, I have to do this because I'm going to go drink ayahuasca.

The Diet is an opportunity to connect with my intentions. So like why am I going? To the ceremony. Oh, because. I want to. work some more on my patience, I want to cultivate patience or I'm going to release my attachments.

So maybe I otherwise drink coffee and then I'll be like, oh, but I am not having coffee. I not have coffee because I wanna cultivate patients. Not because I'm kind of forced.

It forces you to face whatever it is you're trying to. Well, I mean, it doesn't force you because some people could just like white knuckle it and not have coffee and.

Have sugar and I'd have the things, but as an offering, as a spiritual practice, Oh, no, not. I am abstaining from this because. To this practice of releasing my attachments of cultivating patients of, you know, letting go of jealousy or letting of.

You know the things that keep me from really being of you know highest service to myself and others. And so the

dieta is a time of contemplation.

Plant Medicine, Addiction, and Recovery

And certainly, if there are things that interfere with that, like electronics and too much engagement with the world, then it's a nice time to just like, you know, let me hang back.

The other thing is afterwards, after drinking ayahuasca, it's really nice not to dive too quickly back into our normal eating habits because the heaviness can like cut the experience and we might really like have this like ongoing profound experience for a few days or longer afterwards and most people will notice the minute they start eating the spice or they stop and have the hamburger that it can create a heavness and then it brings us down which We have to come back down, right?

We're living in the world. We want our feet on the ground. That to create a container for everything that potentially could emerge that's positive to have a contain and a space in which to emerge.

And because not everything happens in this ceremony. Not everything it happens the morning after. They're like, wow, we start to contemplate. Now I remember that what what is the message there for me what does the insight let me contemplate on that the minute we're back to doing all the things.

We're very forgetful and then we forget. And why do you think the plant induces or the purging? Cause I, I know it's not for everyone, but it definitely happens more often than not.

So, um, so the prerogative effect is primarily due to the vine, which is a really powerful antioxidant. Um, it can have, you know, You know up to hundreds or even a thousand times the antioxidants and say green tea.

And it is a really powerful detoxifier. So that detoxification of the vine. And even when people purge physiologically, whether it's through vomiting or through profuse bowel movements or shaking or sweating, many people experience the purged as a release of that which no longer serves them or habituated thought patterns or Ways of viewing their themselves or their relationships or there by graphical information and so many people.

You know purge they feel really great afterwards like wow you know like that that i heard this so that really needed to come out. And so, yeah, and this idea of cleaning and clearing is really big in the Shipibo lineage.

And in fact, in Icaros and in The Songs, there's so many variations on cleaning, cleaning cleaning. Cleaning, washing, And in in the songs because so many of us and have so Many things that we're carrying and things That we don't realize are Obscuring our true nature which is like the light the Light that's in us it gets covered over and so you know we want to clean that and and we also want To clean our organs and our blood and nervous system and Our bones and all these things, too So this is what I've been thinking a lot about lately and I feel like we've talking about that book, The Cosmic Serpent, that this, this book really highlighted because if I remember correctly, he was going to the rainforest to do one thing.

but then through his conversations with the shamans and the different tribes, they had an understanding of medicine and science, the DNA, They had all this understanding.

They just had different names for it, but they have a deeper understanding, of these concepts than even non-tribal people did. And their explanation for was, well, The plants told us, it's in the plant.

That has really kind of like made me wonder, Cause I'm always, uh, in, my exploration of ancestral living and, and how we merge it, you know, how do we get back in touch with all this innate knowledge we do have is if the plants have all that knowledge, don't we as well, like, isn't it all stored in our cells?

Isn't that part of, of when we breathe the air, is in a part. The, the kind of um, ancestral knowledge that continues to get passed down cellularly, biologically.

And so if, like, so, if the plant has that knowledge, then so do we technically. So in your experience, Is that true? And then how do we get more? How do We get closer to our own and mate knowledge of, for example, what we need to eat, how we Need to be, How Do We Need To Coexist in this life so that we're not just full of anxieties and like depression and all these things that are really overtaking our lives these days.

Well, first up, you know, just to clarify, in the Cosmic Serpent, Jeremy was with the Ashaninka, like not different tribal people, but with Asaninka specifically.

And I say that because I don't want to us, as folks from the global north, clump all Indigenous people together because, even within, you know, Anoshinaka community, there are individual people there, like having individual experiences and their own individual and collective heritage.

And I believe that, yes, If the plants have this knowledge that has been passed on from what we know on this planet in this iteration from like that first single self organism till now, the same is true for us.

And I agree.

What Ayahuasca Is and How It Works

that if we are able to get out of the thinking mind and we're able could get it out this linear based approach to our inclination on in a body, then that's a first step.

So it's kind of like it could be something as simple as you look at something or you smell something and you're like, Oh, right. You know, it's a no. How do you know it?

No, there's something in you telling you that it to know. So there are various practices and I work with people individually and in groups in many different ways, helping us to learn the language of our body, which is the carrier of our consciousness and therefore the carrier of the wisdom of everything that we have been and our ancestors have and are to be.

So there are things that were already doing that don't realize, you know, like had a gut feeling about it. Like there's some, there is real wisdom in that.

Or I just, you know, it was just a no. And then we find ourselves going back. So I think that it's important to be reminded that the the foundational tools are already on board, but we forget it or we recognize it and we do it anyway, because our mind comes in and says, no, You should because then you're going to look weird if you don't and blah, blah blah.

And so quieting the mind and being open and willing to do something out of the ordinary, that's out the order nary for ourselves is the first step. And My hope is that we can inspire people to do something out of the ordinary for themselves, whatever it might be, to be able to reconnect with who they truly are and tap into this lineage of their own ancestral knowledge and of our collective ancestral, knowledge, and also to not feel separated, because when we're separated from the trees and the plants and soil and sun and stars and wind and rain, Then, you know, when we perceive ourselves as separated, we are not.

But then we have this perception that we're trying to live in isolation when. We are designed to. Live, and we. Are living interdependently, but then.

Stop paying attention to this inter-dependence. And we think I'm a solo warrior trying. To get through my life and. You know from my view. Like one of the reasons why we're here in our incarnated is to recognize that we are not separate.

Do you think ayahuasca is a tool towards supporting that? Cause that that's, that has been my experience as of late is, is really seeing how connected we through my experiences.

I, I do. And I. Um, because, um, historically, traditionally, in the people who our companions to stewards of work with ayahuasca, it's done in community.

It is not done an isolation. I mean, granted if you're in a study or you are in the or in jungle for an extended period of time, maybe you drink on your own as part of the learning process, but it is a communal event.

And I think there's a reason for that, because the idea is that like, like we can't be healed unless we start with ourselves. But that is the pathway for our collective healing and our Collective emergence and awareness of our interdependence.

And, you know, in this, common era, You know, in the last couple hundred years, we've just become more and more isolated. And we co-created that, too.

So we're in a time of isolation and we don't know how long that's going to last. But like any other epoch or era, there are those who say, wait a minute, like this might be what's but I'm aware, I am aware.

And once we're aware we can do what we do and then we hold an intention to help others, to not force anybody to do anything. But it shows up, how do I speak with my neighbor?

How do interact with someone who's providing me a service? how I interact my client or my customer? How am I in my family with my children? with my parents and with extended relatives, like that's where it happens.

And how do I do my best to, you know, live in a way that recognizes the interdependence of the natural world and the waterways and mountains and plants, all of plants not just the ayahuasca plants but all them and birds and fishes and animals and insects and all the elements of this Gaian ecosphere that that we're living on right now.

It's fascinating to me in terms of that connecting point. One of the things that I believe is a sign of like the interconnectedness of ayahuasca and the experience that people have with ayahua ska is something that i experienced through the ceremony i did with you which is I saw these very specific kind of matrix-y, very clear images that were geometric.

And then after the experience, I'm walking through the building that we were near and I see all these pictures on the wall that I did not see before I went in.

And I was like, wait a second. I saw that. Yeah, yeah, exactly. And so what? Yeah. So where were those? Yes. These lines and shapes and configurations are called Kuna.

They're the visual representations of energy and of history and stories. It is a way of communicating non-linguistically when we look at the artistic representations of the visionary experience.

And one of articles I wrote like touches on this and I think it's You can look me up and find it, but it's really a fascinating phenomena like people like they can't put words to their experience, But then they look at and they're like wait.

That was it. So to me that's evidence of this unique cosmology of ayahuasca because now it's like wait a minute we have a shared vision what is that and that is um a testament to our interconnectedness and our interconnectiveness beyond what we can see but our inner connectedness in the unseen yeah yeah i i have to imagine that yeah I wonder how you'll answer this.

I had some, I've had a multitude of experiences where when I'm doing them, and this even happened when, when did ceremony with you is something is talking to me and it's not me, but it threw me.

Diet, Purging, and Preparation

And, in more recently, it feels like source. How would you like, if, If I were coming to you and we were having a one-

on-one conversation and I was sharing, Hey, this is what I'm experiencing.

How Would you, how would You respond to me with that? Would You, Would, You say, Oh yeah, you're definitely talking with source or how Would how, How, would, interpret that connection?

Or is it more just, well, however I see it is What it Is. Well, whoever you see, it, is, what it. Is, but however you See, It is. What has meaning for you.

And. like we are nothing but source. And in the Buddhist tradition, we would say Rigta, the original nature that is unconditioned. It's kind of like a a pointer or a guide like leading us to what might allow us, to recognize the truth of who we really are and what we are.

And for now, what I'll say is, whatever way that voice or that information has meaning to you is what's most important. And also to the extent that you feel like you are tapping into information that is going to improve the quality of your life and the lives of others.

Like that's the barometer. not like voice that says, sell everything and go, you know, build a tower someplace, like to not get ahead of ourselves and, and you to still maintain discernment because, it can be very enchanting.

We see all of the things. And then we think ayahuasca told me X, Y, Z. So to also make sure to check in with whatever the voice is or whatever, you know, we perceive it is telling us and verify it.

Do an investigation rather than just take things that face value because it feels very, um, You know magical and, uh, mystical that to act. Yeah, that invest.

That's definitely investigated. This is what the Buddha said. Don't believe me, do your own investigation. I like that. As we come to an end, you mentioned that you see your life as before ayahuasca and after.

So in the last 20 odd years since you've been doing this, and technically even in last 12 or so years that I've seen you, who, what, how have you changed?

And even more recently, like is through your work with it, How is it developing? Do you just keep going deeper? The layers just keeps getting revealed or where does the journey that you've been on, where has it taken you?

I think it is taking me closer to the awareness of how little I know, number one. from a day-to-day, in the last three years, I believe that it played a big role in coming to another medicine practice, which is that of the Medicine Buddha and Sourikta in traditional Tibetan medicine, Which I've been studying in Vajrayana Tibetan Buddhist practices in Uttak Nintig, which is amazing to me because here's this other traditional medicine practice from the Himalayas on the other side of the world.

And so it just keeps unfolding and keeps inspiring me. I would say for me that I can't say you'd have to ask the people that know me, but I feel better.

And I fell like I'm a better person and I am more committed to my own self-care. As a result of that, being able to be of service to others. The mask drops down in the plane and they say, oh, put your mask on first before helping anyone else.

So I felt like maybe the first 12 years were putting my mask And then, you know, the next we're like, Oh, okay, I have, yeah, think I've been a Fox agent to help that person for two minutes.

Ancestral Knowledge and Interconnectedness

And so I think it's leading me to continue to expand and not get boxed in because, It's easy to get boxed into like this is the only way and so I am so grateful to the plants and to The Medicine for helping me so much to open my mind and open heart and heal my body and help to amplify my innate intelligence and connection to myself and to

teachers and the journey continues and yeah like there's not an end point there not in endpoint it's like yeah just like this continuing evolution and if I am paying attention and I'm diligent and I put forth good effort and am disciplined, then like not in the like regimented kind of way, but like in a way that I want to be and maintain good practices, than the benefits are beyond anything I could say with this voice in this time.

Like it's not something that really is easily translatable into language. So for me, I guess I could say there were hints of it, but like the preciousness of this human life and this experience is astounding.

It's so profound. And I feel like, you know, to get the external circumstances of, where I live or what I do and all of those things, I I feel better and I'm doing a better job at being human.

Wow, that's lovely. I want to thank you for talking about this. It's, it's a hard profit because a lot of, you know, there are some taboo things with it.

There's some legalities, I think we're finally at a place where we can actually more openly talk about plant medicine. But I know. You know back in the day when we've earthed menomia was not talked about.

And then, and then if there was any kind of ceremonies, that was all hush-hush. you know, don't reveal anything and all that. And I know that to a level that still exists, but it seems a little bit more mainstream in terms of that, hey, at least we can have the discussion.

At least, we could talk about this is not just lumped in as a drug or anything similar to what people growing up in the 80s were programmed around. but that this is a modality and when you're called to it, it's a potential place of awakening and healing in a different way than we typically experience with modern day tools.

Yeah, and, just, you know, side note, I grew up in the 70s. I'm a little bit older than you might imagine. And I grow up when we could still walk around, smoking joints in a park and it was just like the tail end of the hippie era.

Then came the war on drugs and this is your brain on the drugs with the egg and the frying pan and all of that. I would say there still is good reason to be discreet and some things That even I might not be ready or able to hear in a way that is say respectful or Honoring of information or the practice.

So you use this word mainstream and I mentioned earlier like not everything is for everybody and i do think that there is a good reason you know to be well prepared for whatever it is that we're receiving and not to dilute it and to turn it not to commodify things.

At the same time, the information and the teachings that we receive should be shared, whether people drink ayahuasca or not. And like how that shared is maybe not necessarily even saying, you know, ayahuasca taught me this or the plants told me that.

But as I said, in how we show up, that's way more important than. You know. Promoting the plans, let's say, because I think they know what they're doing.

They're done a good job promoting themselves and and showing us. Yeah, it's interesting thought, like almost almost in a sense, do your work, show up in your best self or show, you know, or whatever that means.

Cause I don't mean higher in like judgment. I mean more just, do the best you can. But that the, That we don't have to like that the experience or the the out the ayahuasca plant or whatever it is that it's not necessarily about that.

It's about who we are. either from the experience or just in the world with it, in conjunction with, it doesn't even have to mean that you've done it.

It just means who are we within this current state of affairs and how do we mix with like, I love how you started this, which is, well, the plants behind me, how, do I interact with those?

Those are medicine too.

Source, Discernment, and Closing Reflections

And I think, I really what we're talking about is that there is, this is maybe a possibility for certain people, but it's more important about what, what kind of, um, mindfulness do we have in our day to day?

Yeah. With everything. How are we living our life? That's it. Like every day, like, are, we, Are we kind and, and to ourselves and others. Yeah. Well, thank you so much for taking the time to have this discussion.

I really, I value your knowledge and your experience on this. And you really are a linchpin for me on. This journey as from our conversation that first time in Malibu at the, at that party to then my experience with you to, then just, just knowing you're all, you know, Just kind of being aware that you were there.

Should I ever need you? And so I just really appreciate you. Well, thank you for saying that. And I appreciate you doing this podcast and broadcasting to those who are ready and able to hear what is important to you in your quest to connect with and rekindle this ancestral wisdom that you astutely mentioned is available to all of us.

And now if people want to find you just to learn more about your writings, about you experiences, how can they do that? And the website is like literally ready to be launched after all these years I'm like finally getting with the modern era.

And then there's a way to contact me on the web site but I think it's going to go live like in a few days. I have an old website that's up. It's just like a landing page.

And, you know, while we've been talking about ayahuasca, there's so many things that I do in terms of, like, I'm an SC practitioner, somatic experiencing, and so rigged a counselor and a Nizhang yoga teacher and like all of these things, vietas and tuzanguera.

So, yeah. And the thing is, just like when you looked at that painting, Ah, like there was something for you. So all the things I just mentioned, maybe you go to the website and there's just one thing that speaks to you like, yeah.

You know, so I hope to be able to provide things for people to contemplate and to think about and read. And you can also just Google Sita Ramayya Sitta and writing and articles and different things come up on the Internet as a result of a search lookup.

Well, thank you and I'm excited for what's coming for you in terms of this new work that you're doing and look forward to reading more. Okay. Thank you so much, James and thank what you are doing as well.

Thank you and thank you all for watching or listening. It's such a joy to have these conversations with people like Sita and to know that maybe it's gonna affect one or many of you.

And maybe this is the time you needed to hear it. Cause the goal is to support your health and help bring these beautiful ancestral, important ancestral practices into our modern life.

So thank again and stay curious. Thank You. Thank you so much for joining me on Everyday Ancestral. If you enjoyed this episode, hit subscribe so you don't miss the next one.

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Stay curious, live well, and keep it ancestral.