Opening on Anxiety and the Human-Animal Bond

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And then it's kind of like an unspoken knowledge among the people in the veterinary field that if the dog was anxious, more than likely the people were also anxious.

Even if they weren't externally showing it, they're like, oh, like more than likely it's actually coming from the people. Like the people were influencing the dog's anxiety.

Welcome to the To Curious MD podcast. I'm Dr. Ali Ahmed. And I'm Dr. Surya Rapan. With the wisdom from holistic, alternative, and these conventional medicines, we are here to challenge the status quo.

We're curious about the connectivity and complexity between diverse fields of knowledge as it relates to consciousness, chronic illness, mental health, resilience, and beyond.

learning more about the art and science of healing, or listening to stories of extraordinary healing. You're in the right place. Let's dive in. Welcome to the Two Curious MDs podcast.

I'm Saraya Raman, your host for today's exploration. of the human-animal bond, or are you making your pet sick without knowing it? Today we have with us Nadine Encarnacion, a licensed veterinarian, intuitive strategist, and certified judo coach with a sixth sense for spotting patterns, whether it's in a patient's blood work or someone's shady energy.

A judo coach with over 25 years on the mat, she has also spent the last decade in veterinary medicine. Completing a rotating internship and now practicing as a fully licensed doctor of veterinary medicine.

She's here to educate, not intimidate. She's here to guide pet parents through complex diagnoses while teaching humans how to listen deeper, defend smarter, and avoid conflict before it even starts.

Her version of self-defense, trusting your body, reading a room, and only flipping someone when absolutely necessary. I love that. All heart.

Introducing Nadine Encarnacion

With a heart for healing and a mind wired for precision, she blends medical insight with movement, intuition, with instinct and turns every episode into a masterclass in empowerment, whether you're caring for a pet, a patient, or yourself.

If you're ready for embodied leadership, smarter pet care, and someone who teaches both healing and handling, welcome home. It is just an honor to have you on the podcast, Nadine, today.

Thank you so, so much. I'm excited because from the first moment I kind of spotted you at this integrative medicine conference, you were standing there in front of the mic asking one of the kind of giants of integrative mental health, you know, Gabor Mate.

This question that kind of shook him and made him stop. And you said, You know, we were talking about trauma and you asked, so has anybody looked at the relationship of the animal-human bond when it comes to trauma healing?

And what do you know about it or something like that? And his immediate response was, yes, of course. It was just like, why wouldn't you even think about it?

And I remember talking to you and the confirmation of that also first from somebody who's worked in trauma healing with humans for so long. You know, it was great.

However, also, I'm just, you know, in our further conversation, we dug in more and I was like, oh no, you are the specialist here in this human animal bond.

And I'm like, Gabor, thank you. but you don't know enough about this. And I'm pretty excited because I can't tell you, I've actually met therapists who work in this way of healing the bond between the human and their animal and how that benefits both.

And I've never had a chance to kind of dig down deep into it with somebody coming in from the medicine side of it, the vet medicine side of it. So yeah, I'm just excited and I think our audience is going to love this.

And so I just want to ask, you know, you're combining this intuitive sense, this knowledge base of working with animals, and then you're like, wait a second, there's an emotion here.

There's an embodied something here. There's a third thing, right? What led you to discovering that? How did you find your way to that place? Well, it first really started with, you know, my own childhood dog, as to me, I overhear is clamoring for attention, of course.

But when, as I was in the field and I worked more first as an assistant, like I literally started from the bottom and then went up to the top as a kennel attendant first, then an assistant, then a senior assistant, even leading like team up in the ER.

and then eventually becoming a doctor. Like, there's some things you just start noticing, especially once I became a doctor and started talking to my clients and patients.

Like, as a doctor, you become very good at pattern recognition or even just As someone with a history of trauma, for example, it's something that you can become very, really good at because it's, you know, like kind of a self-defense mechanism, if you will.

So that combined as with my doctor in clinical senses, it kind of like… made me more aware of what was happening with my clients and my patients and I was noticing a pattern.

How She Noticed Shared Patterns in Pets and People

And so that's why it led me to ask Gabor Maté and it was so funny because like, I would bring this up, but then it seemed like the people I was around with wasn't noticing it.

So I was like, am I crazy? Like, is it just me? And then before I even like really fully asked him the question, he was the one that was like, oh yeah, like it's funny that you see that you're bad.

You know, he said the stressors of the people or the family are usually the stresses of the animal. And I'm like, it's funny that you say that. That's literally leading to my next question.

And I just, it was just very validating for someone else. So obviously, like you had said that someone of his expertise who had, you know, had the research background and everything to be saying that to and And I know that's how we met and I just became like, I love the integrative conference and I'm just still learning so much about veterinary med and human animal bond and all of that too.

So that's where I'm at with that. Absolutely. What patterns were you noticing? What were these patterns? And you know, if you ask the people who are recruited, they'll be like, oh, it's just me coincidental, but it just happens so

often.

It didn't happen all the time, of course, but it happened so much so that I was starting to notice it that, let's say for example, an animal comes in and it's through the ER and you know, I have to do my physical exam.

I worked them up. I did the diagnostics and I'm like, I'm sorry, unfortunately, your dog has this type of cancer, let's say lymphoma, and they're like, oh, that's funny.

I had that cancer. And I'm like, huh? So you, first I'm like, of course I don't make that face, but then I'm like, oh, so you understand of what it entails, like the chemotherapy, you know, survival, all of that.

A little bit different that I have to explain for animals, but still, you know, that sense, or for example, I've had many cases in which I would, you know, say to the parents, you know, your dog comes in for a limb pain and I've worked them up, physical exam, diagnostics, and they end up, I'm like, oh, your dog has a torn CCL, so cranial cruciate ligament, which is equivalent to an ACL in humans.

And then I would describe that to them and tell them, they're like, oh, that's really funny because I tore my ACL. And I'm like, so you kind of have an idea and you'll understand.

But like that was happening so much so that I was starting to notice that a lot of times what the family had experienced was the animal will suddenly also experience.

And it wasn't just limited to cancer. It was like, or ligaments. I would see like asthma. I would see like diabetes. Like it was really interesting. And I've never looked officially written in down.

So I don't have numbers, but it was enough for me to be like, Oh, this is very interesting. I'm seeing a pattern here. Yeah. You were curious. You were curious, right?

That's the whole thing. It's like how, you know, we don't read about this. We don't, you know, this is not something I'm sure you're taught because if you were taught it, it would be in the textbooks and, you know, this would be part of your knowledge base.

But it was like something out of your knowledge base that was kind of a correlation happening. enough times to where, and these are physical symptoms, these are actual disease processes that are happening in both the animal and human bodies.

So that brings us to this kind of idea of integration, right? Integrative. We're in the environment together. You know, the animal and the human are both these biological bodies in a context.

But tell me a little bit about what you're noticing, you know, outside of the physical symptoms. Were there others? Were they emotional? Was there kind of, you know, stress or grief or unhealed trauma?

The biggest thing, I can't specifically go into, like, the trauma portion because I wasn't asking them about, you know, like, oh, to be going through some trauma and grief, all of that, unless they brought it up.

But the most common thing, so for example, in the conference, like, I know Gabor was saying that one of the most common mental issues, if you will, that a lot of people were faced with was anxiety.

And funny that he said that because one of the most common things that we see in terms of mental, if you will, with the animals was anxiety. And then it's kind of like an unspoken knowledge among the people in the veterinary field that if the dog was anxious, more than likely the people were also anxious, even if they weren't externally showing it.

We're like, oh, like, more than likely, it's actually coming from the people. Like, the people were influencing the dog's anxiety. Yeah. Yeah. And, you know, as we know about these conditions, they have to do with what we're

exposed to, you know, whether we're talking about loud sounds, whether we're talking about sirens going off and helicopters going off, traffic noises.

You're talking about the overall, what we call the allostatic load, right, is happening on both the bodies. And I love how we can detect the same patterns in both.

So the expression of that allostatic load is coming out in both. However, maybe the human is not taking care of it or paying attention to their own. and they may be taking care of their pet.

And I know you have your beautiful animal behind you, Mi-Ai, and, you know, tell me a little bit about that relationship. Like, you know, what's, you know, what does that relationship mean to you?

So, Mi-Ai. Of course. Her name is My Love. I named her to be My Love. She is, well, obviously, She is my love and my fur baby first and foremost, but she definitely helps with like emotional mental regulation, for example, in times of stress to help kind of brown me.

Anxiety, Co-Regulation, and Mi-Ai

And it's so funny because, you know, it's funny that we talk about like, I've said that oftentimes if we see the animal so anxious, owner is anxious and it's honestly and I've applied it to myself in which I noticed because she gets really anxious when we travel and in the car and so what basically I kind of pay attention to things such as those in which if she's showing anxiety in the car and then I start reflecting on myself what am I doing how my energy levels how is that kind of affecting her in the sense And then I realized that I actually did have a lot of anxiety traveling because I'm like trying to get to the next spot.

I want to be like making sure that I'm in there on time. And like, for example, when I traveled to San Diego, like you think, oh, I'm not really working, working, but I'm going to conference that I shouldn't be.

Stressed but one of the things for me personally is that when I get stressed I get canker sores and that's what happened when while I was in San Diego Which is really interesting because you wouldn't think that I would be stressed if I'm just like going to conferences, right?

but The fact of the matter is my body was showing that I was actually stressed, even though I didn't think that I was stressed. But my dog, Mi-Ai, she was showing up and telling me, in a sense, that I was stressed because she was panting, she was anxious in the car, and so that's when I was like, oh, maybe there's more that I wasn't realizing that was happening.

And then, for example, there's another great example. It was really funny because we're talking about this. So me, I reacted to whatever was happening in the environment.

So she got kind of like, not quite high, but like bumps along her skin. And it's funny that it happened to her because it also happened to me. Like, I don't know where there were bites.

and then I was breaking out. And then I went to like this head spa and they were talking about like, oh yeah, your skin's a lot more dry, but at the same time, we're a little bit concerned that you might have a little bit more going on, which is really interesting because she was flaring up, then I was flaring up.

So again, that like bond is a lot. That link, that neuro biochemical link that Gabor was talking about, it's so much more present and stronger than I feel like we're aware of.

a lot of times. Absolutely. You're co-regulating. There's such a word for it, right? Co-regulating. Like we're getting on that same wavelength or when we're not on the same wavelength, noticing that we're not on the same wavelength.

And I love how you're treating or taking the nature of what's happening to me as kind of like an indicator. to you like

pay attention check in with yourself what's happening with you because had she not been there you might have just walked around with your anxiety just you know in the headspace going well this is me this is normal i feel like oh maybe i just ate some spicy too or something like that, I don't know.

I mean, again, it's like some people would be like, ah, it's just coincidental or correlation versus causation. But it's just happened so many times that, again, that I'm like, this is very interesting, the timing, things that are happening.

The system that's involved, right? The scan and the scan. Yeah. And what I'm kind of, thinking about too is that because animals are so somatic, they live in their bodies.

They don't escape out of their bodies into their heads like we do. That function that the bond with your animal can have of a way of bringing you back into your body.

of reminding you, you've got a body because your dog has a body, it needs to be walked, she needs to be fed, you know. It really reminds us that regularity of taking care of our pets can really remind us that, oh, we also need care.

Yes. Oh my gosh. Yes. I definitely think I could have so much more stories in correlation, not just with myself, but like other people that I like. This is very, very interesting and you need to start looking into your health because.

You know, like this, like how our habits can extend to like people. You know how like when you start hanging around with someone long enough, you start picking up their mannerisms and their habits?

I feel like that happens in a similar manner to animals, but more so because we literally aren't like the providers. We are providing the environment for them.

We are the ones changing anything. So they are definitely influenced a lot. easier than other people would be, I feel like. Yeah, it's like there's this kind of unseen network of meaning that's there if we pay attention to it.

And we can kind of forget if it's even there because sometimes we get busy. Speaking of some of these common invisible things that harm pets that owners don't even realize.

What do you think people do kind of, you know, subconsciously or unconsciously that may end up harming their loved one in that way? There's a few things.

So the first thing that kind of, you know, that bumps to the top of my head, one is the anxiety component. So like being high stress all the time, whatever workload I be, whatever they're doing.

I think they realize or are aware of how much it does influence their well-being, their fur babies, I like to call them, well-being. The other thing is like nutrition is, you know, just like how nutrition is becoming a big component in a lot of things that we're finding in integrative med and mental health.

is very similar to the dogs, for example. And I'm not talking about mental health because that's not as much studied in animals, but I'm talking, for example, like just one example is like being overweight because, you know, a great majority of Americans are overweight.

And again, their habits extend to their dogs. So oftentimes I find that you know, if they're overweight and unhealthy, this has a tendency to kind of extend to their own fur babies and affect their own health.

And a great example is when me, I, for example, I have her in a healthy way, a perfect weight, but by others, they think she's skinny, but that's only because like compared to what they're used to, they think it's actually skinny when it's actually a perfect weight because in comparison to other dogs, her actual, like, her actual breed, they might think that she is skinny compared to their dogs that are overweight.

But that's only because their habits also has lent them to being overweight. And so it's just little things like that, that I've seen and I wish people were more aware of.

Yeah, absolutely.

Invisible Habits That Affect Pet Health

So there's invisible things, those habits, those whether we're up, you know, watching, you know, couch surfing, not couch surfing, but just watching TV and snacking and then the dog is snacking and we're up late and we're not getting enough sleep.

and those kind of things where if we would look, so it's kind of like your pet is a reflection of your life back at you. What signs should pet parents look for if their animal is absorbing or reflecting something bigger?

So there could be a few things. And one thing, for example, is just like, one example that I like to make is that if it's not something normal for them, but is happening to both them and their animals.

So let's say, for example, Well, I'm going to make me and me an example as well, because this happened not just when we went into California, but when we went to another place where I was working as a relief vet.

Both her and I were reacting to the environment, so not just me and her. The patients that I was seeing in that clinic, I have never seen as many allergies as I've had in that space.

than I have had in any others. And so it's like something, it's something that you have to be aware of. You can't be like, like you might just be able to just say like, oh, there might just be allergies.

But the fact is in the clinic, almost every single day I saw three to four dogs with allergies. And in general that you can see that in general practice, but it was way more so in that clinic than I had seen in other clinics.

So it's things like that, that it's just being aware. Yeah. Absolutely, I agree. Being aware is like the big thing to do. And seeing that something is falling out of the usual pattern, you know.

I remember in pediatrics, you know, depending on the time of year, depending, you're right, where the clinic is, who the population is. you know, seeing certain patterns and making a deduction about it to say, oh, it seems like this virus is going around or, oh, you know, there's a lot of allergies of this kind and it's this time of year.

However, that begs the bigger question. You know, I think what we've seen also is that more and more, we're seeing more people reacting to their environment.

You know, we have more toxic stuff. We have more environmental reasons to be reacting to. And I think both children and pets, as we know, are more sensitive because they're closer to the ground.

They put everything in their mouths. There's a correlation there between children and pets, which I love. I want to turn it around because some of this, and I think that's what resonated when we were talking.

We look at mental health in the West as a very individual disease. We're saying, well, it's the person, that's it. There's something wrong with your serotonin receptors or your balance.

And that's the old model, right? And the new model is actually it's a system. You are embedded within a system. Within you is a system. Your mind, body is a system.

Your gut is the system that's interacting with the outside. And then you're in your family system, and then in your household, and then your neighborhood.

So I think this topic really brings us to this awareness that well-being is something that encompasses more than just the person, right, especially in this mental health field.

So let me ask you this, is it possible that healing ourselves can actually help heal our animals? I do believe in that

is because, you know, like there are so many things that we are not aware of that happens all the time.

So, for example, I was just looking through like research earlier about you know, being affected by either moos or being around other people. So, like, being able to, I think that really, honestly, the biggest thing is being aware because, for example, one of the studies that I had found, like, oh, if you are just around another I perform in person, you could potentially even increase your performance by a certain percentage, or if you're around an underperformer, you could decrease by like down to like 30%. So being able to be aware of the environment around you, what's happening, just like how I was noticing my dog's anxiety.

Or for example, there's another example in which I was working and one of the guys the patients or clients that I was talking to and I'm looking at the blood work of this animal and I was worried about this cat being hyperthyroid and I mentioned it and he's like that's really weird this is now the third cat I've had that's hyperthyroid and while I'm like oh that's very interesting I didn't get to go into the details and nuances of that but I'm like maybe just just start looking into what's going on around you because three in a row with hyperthyroidism.

Yeah, and it's very common in older cats for sure. But it's like, is there something more that's going on? Or like if you have asthma and your cat has asthma, it's like, okay, maybe you need to start looking into what's going on into your environment and what's causing all of this.

So those are the big things that I would. consider. Absolutely. And you've been in veterinary medicine now for over a decade in different settings, emergency, as well as outpatient.

Healing Ourselves and Reading Environmental Clues

And how has your view on animal illness evolved with experience from when you first came in to this field to now? I view on animal illness. So before it was of course as, what's that saying?

The more you learn, the less I feel like I know. That's it. Are you there yet? I definitely am there. And I'm just like, when I was an assistant, I was like, oh, it's so simple.

Like, why isn't life just like this, this, and that? And then as a doctor, I'm not like, oh my gosh, there's so many factors. There's so many things. There's so many things that couldn't be.

Like, it's definitely, while it can be explained in a simple manner, there are definitely complexities to it. that you'd have to think and know a little bit more.

And then the more that you know, the more that deeper you get into. So yeah, that's essentially how my journey has been. animal and their illnesses. Yeah.

I mean, I can just see that, you know, like no two cases of asthma are the same. You know, each person and each animal or diet is in their context. And it's really interesting when we first come out into practice or, you know, we're kind of starting to see real world medicine and how it contrasts with, yeah, the frameworks that we've learned and having like, oh, okay.

Now tell me a little bit about how the intuitive self-defense worked into animal health for you. I want to bring that in because there's a lot of different threads here and I think we're circling around the well-being of both.

animal and human and recognizing that, you know, there's more information there. And if we would just put it together. And so tell me a little bit about how you came to Judo and what it's done to you.

Yeah, so I believe everybody has the gift of intuition, whether you think it's gut instinct, whether it is like a sixth sense, all those mean the same thing to me.

And so the one thing that you'll learn in self-defense, right, is being aware and being present and that is essentially tied to the same thing in application to being a doctor, because you can't just be narrow-minded, you can't just be

like, look at this animal and be like, oh, it's this disease.

You gotta be aware of all the pieces of the puzzle, if you will. And like, if there's something that doesn't feel quite right that fit and it doesn't fit that puzzle, you more than likely are right.

Even ones that people that I've worked with, they would say like, oh, there's just… something off or there's just something that's not quite right or it doesn't quite make sense and the way that they and they follow it and when they do it and they and usually they end up being right and so I kind of apply that kind of I would say like intuitive self-defense because that's the part of it is being grounded being aware being kind of open and sensitive to everything that's going around you in this same kind of application for animals because you can, I believe, and I do apply those same kind of principles when I look at it and kind of do an exam on it.

at an animal or a patient of mine because like let's say for example I have like a cat that's really young and has a specific disease and I'm trying to figure it out but I'm like well all these things can point to a specific direction.

And however, if it doesn't match and I feel like something is off, I could start to explore the other direction. And I can oftentimes actually be right.

And I can't quite give an explanation for it. If you will, maybe you'll kind of like woven to the neuro biochemicals that linked somehow and all my senses just coming together to put the pieces of the puzzle together and that is how I use especially coming from Judo because in Judo you have to be you know aware with your balance you have to sense where your balance of your opponent is going You kind of have to develop a sixth sense of where the attack is coming from so you can counter it.

So it's very similar to medicine in which, like, you have to be aware of what's happening right now with your patient, like how they're doing, you kind of, but then, like, goes.

Simple change, you'd be like, oh no, we're okay. Like, where is this going? Do I need to prepare for something more? Is this medication or treatment have to be changed?

So it's like, while they might seem separate and like not applicable, I can actually apply a lot of those same principles to animals. Wonderful. That's such a beautiful description.

I really love that because I really see that, yeah. You know, the intuition, when we talk about intuition, it's contrasted with our rational mind, right?

Judo, Intuition, and Veterinary Decision-Making

But we also talk about this neurobiological chemical system. It's this whole mind-body complex. And so there's messages, there's our gut instinct, there's things that are constantly, we're getting messages through.

It's just sometimes our mind kind of takes over and is so much louder, right? And we only believe things that we can rationally, you know, see, feel, hear, touch, smell, right?

Oh my gosh, yes. Like so many times, like you don't like understand, like it's just, Like you say, because there's so many times in which, like, I don't have a rational reason for what I feel like I should.

Like, for example, there was a cat that I had that was in oxygen, and I think it had pneumonia. And, like, I remember looking and thinking of this cat and seeing the signs of, like, cat.

Do you really feel like we should start adding on antibiotics because I'm a little concerned that this will start becoming septic, which is in the SERS, so inflammatory phase, very severe inflammatory phase, and I'm like, and it's…

It's not, it's actually kind of, it's pretty uncommon for a cat to have pneumonia, to have them go into an inflammatory

phase like that. It's even less common and it's at least in my experience.

And so I was sitting there, I even asked my coworkers, they also asked other people, they're like, ah, it doesn't make sense this time, but I'm like, I'm sitting there, I'm like, I am really worried.

That's what's gonna happen. And I can't explain it. And I really wanted to put it, but because I was an intern at that time, I was like, okay, I'm not gonna do it.

And then the next few days, lo and behold, they ended up putting antibiotics on that cat. And I was like, oh my God, I shouldn't just, I shouldn't. I don't know if it would have changed the outcome, but it's stuff like that.

Yeah. And learning to trust that, right? I think what you were getting at is that through the practice of judo and through the practice of listening so closely, you know, being sensitive to those nonverbals on that instinctive level, I think you've honed that.

instinct, that intuition. And when it comes up, it's ringing some alarm bells, but there's no verbal correlate for it because the books tell you cats don't get so sick with ammonia.

And even though you're seeing the systemic inflammatory response syndrome happening in front of you, It's not gelling with what everybody and you have read in the books and learned with your minds that this is how it's supposed to go.

So I feel like we're in this place of even discussing like, you know, yes, we've learned a lot of things and then there's reality. And when the two are in contrast or we can't reconcile them, it takes a lot.

And I think what you're describing is that you were early in your career, you weren't experienced, you hadn't really learned to trust your intuition yet, but you still felt it.

And now with time and giving yourself permission to be like, yeah, and the confirmation that you've had, is it's okay to trust your intuition and actually your intuition can be right a lot of times.

It's such a big kind of piece here. It's just like, I think people, I believe people actually rely on, they might call it their gut instinct, intuition, sixth sense, whatever.

I believe they rely on it more than they realize because like, So many times I hear, whether it's from people I work with or my supervisor, they're like, God, it just doesn't feel right.

It just feels there's something wrong. So they go exploring and then they end up, you know, either figuring it out or not figuring it out. And I want to also make that distinction because as we're talking, I'm like, well, what's the difference between intuition, let's say that voice in your head that says, wait a minute, have you thought about this, and the voice of anxiety?

And I know we didn't prepare for this, but it's like, is there a qualitative difference there that we can kind of be like, yeah. And because it's two different things we're talking about.

One is like, you're getting quiet. And the other one is it's getting noisy, maybe. You know? Yes. So I have done a lot of work to be able to distinguish what is, let's say, my intuition versus what is anxiety.

However, okay, I'm gonna first go into that part because I know myself and I know when I am anxious and what causes my anxiety and what can put me in an anxious state.

I can tell when it's like my intuition slash gut instinct slash sixth sense versus, oh, this is actually like, oh, a past. history, if you will, where I had the same cat present for the same thing and now I'm just anxious because I think the same thing is going to happen.

So I like being aware and being grounded, knowing myself, knowing my history, knowing why I'm feeling all these certain things definitely can help separate whether it is my intuition versus you know, anxiety.

However, I do believe to a certain extent that anxiety can kind of help in part of that link to your intuition because, like, I believe your intuition can a blink anxiety, like kind of an alarm bell, if you will, telling you like, maybe you should be concerned about this.

Maybe there's something more that you really should be thinking about. So that's where like, again, you'd have to be very aware and very present and brain, like know really who you are, your experiences and your emotions to be able to differentiate which it is.

Sometimes it's really hard. It's really hard sometimes. You're human, you're gonna make mistakes, and then you just learn. But then other times when you are able to hit the nail on the head, then you're like, oh my gosh, I was right this whole time.

I'm so glad I listened. And thank you. That's such a kind of a generous response because yeah, it's not always either or and it can be both. And I love how the anxiety can be like the first kind of wake up call to be like, hey, you're ignoring something.

Maybe it's just a louder alarm bell, right? Intuition is kind of a whisper and the anxiety is kind of like, wait a second, we whispered. You did, you whispered.

Yes, exactly. I love how you said that. Exactly, anxiety is like, hello. It's like rising up, you know? And that's just this beautiful system we're in, right?

And I love how, you know, I have a patient, for example, who is doing some therapy with a horse. And I know that this is something that kids and people who really are struggling with anxiety, when we're with this gentle, powerful animal, like what is happening to us, right?

Do you have words for that? Because I'd like to just know what is the basis of that. Horses first and foremost are prey animals. They are highly sensitive to their environment because they have to be.

Because they are prey, they have to be able to be aware if like, you know, a tiger or a cougar or whatever comes running after them. And so while we are in awe of horses because they're beautiful, they're majestic, they have all this musculature, they literally can trample you if you want.

But we also have the capacity to be able to befriend them and have them be able to ride them in such a way. that I think is beautiful that they allow us to, by the way.

However, people learn. So this is how I've heard. I haven't personally done it myself, but I've heard how horses can heal people is because people cannot come.

and either an angry or upset or like chaotic energy if you will or state of mind when you're in your horses because horses are so sensitive because they are prey animals that they will pick up on them and they will more than likely not allow you to be around them.

So that's where like I think where you're saying the co-regulation comes in because there was also a study before I was looking into about like horse rider and like their heart rates and they were able to like co-regulate together essentially and that's where horses can really help humans and their like mental and emotional capacity.

And that's where a lot of people are actually helping like use forces in that way.

Distinguishing Intuition from Anxiety

Because like in, for example, in the integrative med conference, I believe there was like even a ranch that literally

used horses that was handing out flyers and brochures to help heal uh like people that were abused or like addicts and whatnot because you really really have to have presence of mind and to have a calm grounded energy you can't you cannot come at like those horses like that because they're so sensitive it's very similar to like Dogs, like scared dogs, fearful dogs, or like any aggressive dogs.

Animals essentially that are very sensitive, you like cannot come at them. And that's, there's a reason why specific animals are more aggressive to other people versus more calm around other people.

So it's kind of that similar mentality or frame of mind. Yeah, thank you for explaining that. I really love that because, yeah, we get forced, right? And I think in all of this practice, in all of this, you know, psychedelic medicine that we're doing, integrative medicine, there's this place where we get to where there's a point where you realize like, oh, it's the ego, you know, it's my monkey mind, it's my anxiety, it presents in these ways.

But when you're next to a majestic horse that can also trample you, If you don't pay attention, that really recruits the survival instinct also into being right.

You're dealing with maybe the balance of the two, how to stay within presence, attention, but from a place of alertness because you're also having to move with.

I think that's maybe a network that we don't use very much. Our networks are very much geared towards, I'm just in my head and I'm projecting everything that I think the world is outside of me.

Anything that comes in from reality that doesn't match with my prediction model, I'm just going to let it go. I'm just going to go with what does match my prediction model.

That's one of the ways I feel like as a society, we're all going into comfort. And staying in that mode and what a beautiful kind of like reminder that we can come out and that our animals, when we meet them, like what I loved about coming home to a pet was you're immediately in presence.

you have to be present. You can't just, you can't be scrolling, you know, and like in your own head. Cause if you are, the dogs, you just be like, what the hell, dude.

I'm waiting for you all day. And you can't even be bothered to show up. I, you know, and that does something to the bond, right? You can feel that. And yes, yes.

Like even something simple as like, feeding yourself, because sometimes I get so busy, and then Mi-Ai is like, she will definitely let me know if I haven't fed her.

She's like, brrr, digging at my bowl. I was like, oh, gee, I haven't fed you yet? It's just like simple things like that. Yeah, and just that, that could have just, and we need that, you know?

I think that's another thing is like, we need reminders of that in our everyday because our lives have become so kind of frictionless. in some ways to allow us to just stay in that spin.

I mean, you know, as we're kind of getting towards the close, you know, a couple of questions. What's a small shift every pet parent could make to support their animal's well-being today?

I want to leave our audience with kind of like pearls that maybe you've learned about from your experiences that might help them. And so, like, small shifts because, you know, I keep coming back to, if you will, like, the anxiety, for example, because I feel like, especially nowadays with how everything is turning out, I'm willing to bet everyone has anxiety, even me.

If I try not to, like, try to be grounded, but I'm sure there's times that I have to be like, around myself. So just being able to be aware and have practices in place that can help kind of settle down like your stress levels so that indirectly you know your fur baby can also calm down as well and not have such a high stress level because we

know that having high stress levels is not good for long term, it can cause eventual other diseases if you continue that.

So it's literally just, you know, it could be just unplugging from your phone and not having that as the first thing that you look at in the morning, or it'd be going out in nature, or it could be literally, you know, whether it's journaling, whatever it is that helps you bring back to yourself, It could be art, it could be like judo, for me it could also be dancing, it could literally be playing with miyai.

Those are one thing that can like help in general and hopefully we will start to see the effects of it as well in your dog or your cat or whatever animal you're with.

And then I think even just one big thing I feel should, like we really should look into a little bit more is definitely like nutrition because, you know, integrative health, we've learned so much about how nutrition plays such a big role in human medicine.

And honestly, animals, there are some nuances and differences, but there are so many things that we are also very similar to animals because I literally say that we humans are also part of the animal kingdom.

We file ourselves under the animal kingdom. And so we like nutrition is also going to be very important if you really it's simple.

Horses, Presence, and Emotional Regulation

but consider it, don't feed junk food all the time, don't feed all these things that the dogs are not supposed to be eating, be a little bit more aware of what they're supposed to be eating, or even just the portions that they're supposed to be eating, because some people are like, yeah, I just give them as much as they eat, and I don't know how much I feed them, and I'm like, Okay, well maybe we start quantifying how much they're actually eating because they're kind of, you know, they have a little loving is what I like to say to them.

And then just being aware a little bit more about like things that like patterns if they're able because you know. Yeah, makes me think of something. You know, we're talking about this kind of time that we're living through where our food systems, our water, our soil, our air, you know, we're much more aware of the ways in which the contamination of these, you know, are impacting us.

And we're seeing these diseases like lymphoma and chronic illnesses. more and more in pets as well as animals right so you know i'm kind of just really reflecting on the fact that what's happening to our animals like you said we're part of the animal kingdom.

is happening in our bodies. And I'm always drawn by the fact that if you show Americans, mostly, but people a picture of a puppy in pain, they'll be like, aww.

But if you show them a person in pain, they'll be like, yeah, OK, fine. There's this greater sense of empathy that we have for our animals because we feel responsible towards them.

We know that they can't help themselves. you know if there's anything in in this episode you know that you're kind of as you're going forward in your practice and you know you're just starting out kind of in your in your career here and as you're looking forward until yeah like what's happening what kind of diseases are we seeing what kind of Like you said, the books no longer start explaining what you're seeing in your clinic, right?

There's new patterns that are showing up that haven't even been investigated or given much credence. And yet, we're all talking about the same things, lymphoma, multiple myeloma, diabetes, hypertension, cancer.

It's happening in both. And so I'm really curious about what you want to see happen about this correlation that we're living through. What would be the way through?

And I don't even know if you've thought about this in that kind of overall way, but we're all in the same boat here. Yes. Honestly, I feel like what comes to me when you know you ask these questions in terms of like animals and humans and the bond and like the link and everything like that.

I feel like the more people are aware and really start believing that all the things that they do can affect everything around them. I think we'll start changing not only how we interact with other people, how we treat with other people, but also literally like our earth, our animals, and treat each other, if you will, a little bit more It's a lack of a better word, sacredly, because we are so interlinked.

I believe we are so interlinked in ways that we don't always understand on a scientific and evidence-like level. But the more that we understand it, I feel like the more we would really put in the effort to taking first and foremost care of ourselves.

And then by extension, because we care of ourselves, we take care of our animals, we take care of the earth, we take care of… So then everything, it's like a domino effect or snowball effect, if you will.

And I am, I believe more and more people are being aware of this. And I'm honestly like, I know the world right now is kind of like into chaos. But I like to think of it as like, oh, you got to like, put down the like, tear apart your like, funky foundations first, the ones that are like, cracked and like, terrible and diseased before we can get, build the right foundations, the strong foundations that can last us a lifetime and more.

And so I'm like, honestly, I guess, Nowadays, you know, a lot of stress, all of this, I totally recognize that. But at the same time, I am pretty excited about what the future can bring because I feel like more and more people are aware in the integrity of health space, especially in realizing all these things, whether it's nutrition, mental health, genetics, like women reproductive system.

They're realizing, you know, like miscarriages. All of that is actually really not the women, for example. And so like then the more empathy, more like kindness and the more I feel like wealth indirectly of everybody will be and wealth and health will be affected.

Closing Reflections on Sacred Interconnection

And I am honestly just, I can't wait when science starts catching up and showing up all these links that I feel like are in there. Yeah. Yeah, absolutely.

It's high time. And I think we're on the edge of that, on the precipice of that. Because what you just said is so, like, I think grounding is the secret.

You know, it is the sacred kind of recognition. I feel like you expanded upon the fact that if we can recognize that this bond is real, that we are one thing.

right? That we're all in this one thing. It breaks down our kind of ego strength, you know, ego system of thinking ourselves as separate, which is part of the loneliness piece, right?

It's like when we can find ourselves so like, oh, well, I'm this and I'm not that. But if I can say, look at my pet's face and go, I'm you, you're me.

Like we reflect each other. You know, you go through the same things I do and I go through the same things you do and we're in this together, right? Our food, our water, our air is all going to have an impact on us and I care about you and I want to care for both of us, right?

So it's this beautiful way of, for people who've not had the experience of being cared for or that attachment, caring has been traumatized in some way or not being given, I think what we find is that that heals something within us when we can care for something and it cares back for us, right?

I've actually heard somebody say that even when you take away, like somebody who was in prison, right? Even when you take away everything, your family, your job, your every single indicator of who you are, a human being will want to care for something.

And even in prison, these prisoners were caring for the ants because you're not allowed any pets. They were caring for the ants. They were bringing little food.

I mean, just that, right? Like that humans, we want to care. And that's how we find our humanity is in caring. And I really love how this conversation has really expanded upon us, this idea that it is sacred, not just because we believe it's so, it's because we're sacred and what we're in is sacred.

And if we don't take care of it, take care of all of it, it's not going to be there for us. Yes, it's not if we don't, you know, I'll take care of things.

Definitely things are going to fall apart just like, you know, my head. Right, right. Well, let's tell our audience how to find you. So where would you like them to connect with you and then, you know, whatever you'd like to say to our audience.

So I have my Instagram. My handle is Dr. Nadine Sensei, because I'm a doctor. And then I am also the Black Belt and Jiro. And then I do have a website I just put up.

It's under construction, so you're going to have to forgive me. But I'm very excited. I just put it up today. It's IntuitVet.net for my veterinary things.

But I also have Mind, Heart, and Body Dojo. Dr. Nadeen Sensei for my Instagram and IntuitVet.net. Okay. And that's Doctor with a D-O-G-T-O-R. I love that.

So, it was Doctor, D-O-G, now it's D-O-C, actually. Okay. So, changed over. All right. Well, Nadine, it's been a pleasure. Thank you so much for giving us your time and your heart and your expertise and your just ability to sit with all of that and just this lesson in trusting, trusting yourself, trusting your journey and trusting that you're on the right path.

Because I felt that when I met you, I think you're on the right path. and it's all beautiful. Thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you for having me. It's been wonderful.

You're welcome. I love our talks. Thank you. Thanks for joining us on the Too Curious Andy podcast. We hope today's episode inspired you to ask new questions and explore fresh perspectives.

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