

Podcast Series: Holistic Nature of Us

Episode #34: Meet Janet Pagan, Ayurveda Nutritionist

www.judithdreyer.com

Hi I'm Judith Dreyer,

Thank you for joining me for this pod cast series "The Holistic Nature of Us".

My intent is to take us, you and I, into a better understanding of the concepts behind our holistic nature and how that ties directly to the holistic nature of the world around us. How can we connect the dots in practical ways that we are nature and nature is in us?

I will be featuring authors and educators, practitioners and others whose passion for this earth helps us create bridges. We'll see what's trending, what's relevant to our world today, not just for land use, but to connect the dots between nature and ourselves. It's time for practical action and profound inner change so our natural world is valued once again.

Today I'd like to introduce you to Janet Pagan. Janet is a certified Holistic Health Practitioner with the American Association of drugless practitioners. As a certified health coach, Ayurvedic nutritionist, Reiki Master and spiritual counselor she works in the field of child welfare, serving children and families and she has done this for over 15 years. She is also a spiritual counselor. Please welcome the Reverend Janet Pagan. Good morning!

JANET: Good morning Judith.

JUDITH: I want to tell our listeners that I met Janet at a very wonderful event recently and she let me know that she was an Ayurvedic nutritionist. I invited her here to talk about Ayurveda as a science and as a medical model, as well as from a nutrition point of view.

Janet why don't you tell us something about your journey and how you got into Ayurveda and what that has meant for you? How has that helped you?

JANET: Yes. I started my journey with the Institute of Integrated Nutrition and that is where I got my health coaching certification. During that certification process they go over more than 300 dietary theories and practices and one of them was Ayurveda. And at the time, I was actually 90 pounds heavier and learning about Ayurveda and being exposed to the concepts supported me in my spiritual journey as well as my own health journey. And from there I found out about an Ayurvedic nutrition program in New York City where I studied under Dr. Niena Marbali from India at Ayurvedic World. And that's how I got started in Ayurveda. Since then I have been able to minimize my own health problems and not suffer from sinus infections, which I had been doing regularly for several years. And had somebody, a doctor or a medical person, asked me about my diet and what I was eating I could have avoided surgery. I could have been more in balance. I'm really happy where I am now with my health and holistic model and the medicine model. And it's been very, very enlightening.

JUDITH: That's wonderful. My understanding of Ayurveda is that it's the science of life. And they have two key points to their medical model. That one: is to keep our immune systems strong and two: to promote longevity. And they do that through a mind, body, spirit approach. Every aspect of who we are from the mind, to the emotion, to the psychology, to the spiritual, to the physical is all incorporated in their approach and from what I understand, it's based on nature. Could you tell us something about that?

JANET: Yes, so it starts with when we are first entering into this world. It starts with our biological parents and their constitutions at the time of conception and that is what leads us to be who we are. The connection between the pure consciousness, the spirit and the prana. And what happens is, with the doshas the Vata, Kapha and Pitta, which I'll go into some more detail in a few minutes, they are also associated with the elements. So the Universe, Ayurveda states that the Universe and everything around us is made up of 5 elements; earth, air, fire, water and space or ether. And each element exists in each of our cells. It exists in our body and that's what is the beginning of us being in tune with nature and the seasons and the life cycles. We know that fire is in our body as our metabolism. We all know that our bodies are 90% water and the liquid in our bodies also includes our blood, our saliva, our sweat. Earth is represented by our bones, our cells, our tissue. Air we know that it's necessary to breathe oxygen and that ether is the source of all matter, the sound of vibration, the space that we occupy,

the space between ourselves and our bodies. And each of those are associated with the doshas and with the seasons as well.

JUDITH: So just to be clear, the basic framework for understanding ourselves physically and in relationship to the earth is through the dosha types which incorporate the elements, correct?

JANET: Yes, exactly. Dosha types, for the individual, there are seven different dosha types. So Vatta, Kapha, Pitta a person can be, you know, one of those. Or a person can be tridosha which is they have Vatta, Kapha and Pitta and then you have individuals that can have a dual dosha such as Vatta/Pitta, Pitta/Kapha or Kapha/Vatta. And as far as the seasons go, Vatta is represented by the elements in air and space. The seasons associated with air and space are autumn into winter. Kapha is represented in the elements of earth and water which are the seasons of late winter into spring and then Pitta is fire and water and that is represented in the season of summer. Knowing your dosha will be able to tell you what element you're most prone to have these imbalances and connections with and then how that relates into the seasons.

JUDITH: Give me an example. We know Pitta is summer. We know Pitta is fire. So what should a predominate Pitta type be aware of? You know we had intense heat this summer. How would a Pitta approach that?

JANET: Although Pitta doshas may like to lie in the sun, it's really not good for Pitta individuals because it's fire. The sun is represented by fire. So now you have fire on fire. And for Pittas, it's best to stay as cool as possible, not inundate themselves with so much heat and that fire energy. The recommendation would be to remain cool, go to the beach, go swimming, go to the pool, stay in more air- conditioned spaces. Pitta individuals need to be very careful about overheating themselves and burning themselves out.

JUDITH: Right. And we can do that with food, can't we? I remember somebody I met a few years ago who drank lots of coffee during the day, which I understand is heat producing and had tons of garlic and loved the spiciest foods possible, but the person had some health issues. Does that create an imbalance?

JANET: Absolutely! All of those things that you mentioned, right, garlic is associated with Pitta. It's hot. It's spicy. Spicy red peppers, spicy chili

powder, you know all of these hot spices, these hot foods again it's fire with fire. Pittas need to be careful with, all doshas need to be mindful of the spices that they use. So, Pittas for example, having garlic maybe balancing that out with some rosemary or basil. There has to be something to offset and balance out some of those heating foods and you want to use some of the cooler spices. Some of the spices that, you know, don't have as much heat so that it can be balanced. And especially in the summertime Pittas should definitely be staying away from some of those hotter spices, because again, you know, it's summertime, you're Pitta, your fire, you're out in the sun so that's more fire. Now you're having these hot spices, that's more fire. Pittas need to be really, really careful in the summertime.

JUDITH: Interesting. Do you have any suggestions for all of us as we go into autumn because that means the season is changing; things are getting cooler. You said it's related to Vatta. What would you suggest for that season, because we're approaching that now.

JANET: If one is a Vatta dosha and we are approaching autumn as the seasons start to change. We are entering into Vatta season. So, for our Vattas, who are those people who are always on the go. They are the ones who you hear say, "oh I don't have time", or they're walking and talking and they're on the phone and they're having breakfast on the go. You know our vattas during this season as we approach autumn, if that sounds like you vattas, please stay grounded. Incorporate some earthy foods into your diet. Something that is going to support you and ground you. Vattas are the ones...vatta imbalance is when, you know, you're looking for that one piece of paper and it's like "Well where did I put it? I just had it." So if you find yourself a little bit more disorganized, a little bit more, you know, out there, do something that can support you in grounding yourself and some really good, you know as we go into this....You know vattas can benefit from garlic and clove and black pepper, cayenne pepper, right? So the complete opposite of Pitta. You know vattas can use some fie. The can use some earth, you know some minced meat, things like that. They benefit from hot oily foods.

JUDITH: Hmm. Interesting. Well those are great tips for us too as we go into the next season. I like that.

You talked to me about the psychological constitution with the senses. Could you go into more detail with that?

JANET: So yes. We spoke a little bit, I mentioned about our physical and the doshas and the elements and the seasons. Ayurveda also takes into consideration the astral body. Going back to the ether and space. And that's where psychological constitutions come in. Our psychological constitutions can be Satvic, Rajicic and Tamacic. And our psychological constitutions can be shaped by social environment but also influenced by nutrition. And again, there are several different combinations of those constitutions in the psychological sense and this is where our, you know, people who have depression, you want to look at, for example, coming into the winter, like I said winter is Kapha time. This is where our Kaphas need to be careful with kind of like those winter blues. And if you feel yourself becoming depressed you want to take note of your mental state. A lot of people say, "oh it's raining outside, it's bringing me down." And other people will say, "oh it's raining outside I feel like dancing in the rain, right? So really paying attention to how these weather systems affect you mentally and emotionally and psychologically. You know, are you drawing in the blinds. Do you find yourself with less energy?

For my kapha people as we come into, you know when winter approaches, be mindful of maybe you might be too grounded, and you need something airy to lift you up. Or you need some spice in your life to lift you up. Psychologically we also want to be in tune with how we're feeling emotionally and energetically.

JUDITH: And you like to recommend working with our senses to sort of shift some of our emotional responses. You talked about sounds, and smells and touch and sight. And there are also yoga poses for each of the dosha types, is that correct?

JANET: Yes, that is absolutely correct. So, this is Ayurvedic, again my interest in Ayurveda spans over all of these and it is very comprehensive. For those who like yoga and are interested in learning more about the yoga poses, in terms of yoga poses there are Ayurvedic yoga teachers and practitioners. If you are a yoga person and you are looking for something to balance you out, take into consideration taking an Ayurvedic yoga class. You know kaphas, again if you're grounded you may not be doing a downward dog. You may need to be doing another position. And Vattas maybe need that downward dog position to help ground them. And Pittas, you may be somewhere in between. So, looking into what type of yoga would be beneficial for you, would also be another way in terms of self-care.

What I like about Ayurvedic is the expansiveness of it. So even taking into consideration physical activity. Physical activity in terms of exercise, some doshas benefit more from gardening, things of that nature that are not as aerobic, where there are doshas like pitas for example I mentioned swimming in the summertime. Pittas do very well with more aerobic exercises and things that keep them moving. So that can also be discussed as well with an Ayurvedic nutritionist and practitioner in terms of what exercises may be beneficial for you, what activities might be beneficial for you. Going with the senses, I do a lot of work with, as you mentioned Judith, with the five senses and what smells, tastes, feels and sounds and sights and colors are beneficial for each dosha as well. And we talked a little bit about that in terms of some of the seasonings with the food. But there are also color schemes and sounds and feels that go along with that as well.

JUDITH: That's really interesting. So again, it's a very holistic model because it takes all of our, as I said in the beginning, all aspects of ourselves as a human being. But it also looks at nature to find some of those answers.

Janet could you talk a little bit about how Ayurveda tries to find the root cause of a disease. Could you give us an example of, (you know in Western medicine we talk about the symptom). In other models they try to find the root cause. And Ayurvedic Medicine is one of those. Could you give us an example of that?

JANET: Right, absolutely! Yes. And again, I'm very much about that. As I shared earlier I have my own sinus issues and for me it's you know, I go to the doctor, I have this sore throat and they give me antibiotics for the sore throat and then next thing I know I have this build up in my nose, you know this mucous, and then they're like okay try a nasal spray and we'll address the mucous. And then you know I have this full blown sinus infection. What started out as a sore throat, you know, it increased and now it's affecting my thinking, my brain. I don't know if any of the listeners have had a sinus infection, but it really affects everything, your sinus, your eyes, your head, your brain, your mind. It's horrible. Had somebody done a more in-depth, you know any practitioner, doctor had done more of an in-depth assessment, like I said in terms of asking what is your diet or what do you think is causing this congestion and these things, getting to the root of it would have avoided me having to have surgery for my sinuses. And since

I've become a holistic health practitioner I haven't had a sinus infection in, you know, several years.

JUDITH: That's amazing. That's what I love about these systems. You know you have direct experience with that. My understanding is: sometimes we get a cough, we accept it. It's a little catchy cough. We don't think about it. We get very busy. We maybe add more stress to our life and before you know it, we've got bronchitis. And then there's folks here that always seem to have some kind of chronic bronchitis and eventually they end up with pneumonia.

What I see is a progression through the one system of the lung and breathing system that's going deeper and has more serious consequences and Ayurveda tries to nip it in the bud, so to speak. And I love the garden terms with Ayurveda, you know, nip something in the bud, go to the root. Nature's got the answer.

JANET: Always, absolutely and that's the thing. Once we're aware of those imbalances, as soon as an individual is aware of any little imbalance, getting to it immediately and addressing it immediately does save a lot of stress in the long run. Now I'm at the point where, and I keep going back to myself as an example simply because as an Ayurvedic nutritionist and as a holistic healer, I never recommend something to my clients that I work with that I haven't tried myself. And not to say that what I have done for me is going to work for someone else. However, it's the approach. Right? So whatever approach I have tried. If I have tried a certain ointment, you know, and I know that an individualized ointment could be the answer, then I would come up with an individualized ointment for my client or clinician because I know that that type of ointment will work. It's just a matter of, you know, again, changing the herbs or changing the ingredients that I use to accommodate that person's imbalance or dosha. The minute I have a sore throat, or I feel something coming on, I'm drinking certain teas with different spices, whether it's cinnamon and honey or a chamomile tea or a mint tea or a eucalyptus tea. Whatever I'm feeling, drinking some type of tea or using some type of poultice, nipping in the bud immediately I am telling you Judith, within 24 hours I'm fully recuperated. The symptoms are gone, and it doesn't escalate into anything else. I haven't had the flu in over 5 years.

JUDITH: Yes I believe you because I've stepped into these models myself personally and I know from first hand experience that they really do work. And our body is resilient. If we can access the intelligence that's in the cells and the herbs help us and some of the foods help us and as you mentioned, you know, what are we looking at? What are we hearing? What are we tasting? If we really pay attention to our whole being in that moment and approach ourselves from each one of these senses and experiences with something specific, we bring in healing. The body knows how to heal. We just have to give it a little boost or a little bit of help in some way and I like Ayurvedic for that.

Is Ayurvedic, are they vegetarian?

JANET: Mostly yes. So a lot of my practitioners, my doctor Naina Marbali who I studied under, she was a vegetarian and despite that, however, there are still recommendations for those who eat poultry, who eat beef. So again, going back to the doshas, you know it's like if you're going to eat chicken, you know Pittas stay away from the skin that you love so much.

JUDITH: That's funny!

JANET: Stay away from the legs, the thighs. You know, stick to the white meat. And for my vattas who need a little extra oil in their life, have the crispy chicken skin. So again Judith, it really is about mindfulness. It really is about, you know, we crave the things that could be our worst enemy. Kaphas, you love the carbs. Kaphas, you've got to stay away from the carbs. Find another way to meet that sweet tooth, that need for sugar. Use natural sugars, fruits and things of that nature. Stay away from breads, cookies and cakes. A lot of it is, a lot of practitioners talk about well don't do this, don't do that and Ayurveda really talks about this is what you should do, and that's also what I like about it, right? Because the minute that a lot of us put limitations on ourselves we become somewhat rebellious. It's human nature. It's like well I can't have this, and I can't have that. Well this is what you can do, right? This is what you can have. You know try it. See if you enjoy it. See if it resonates with you. And you know you very well may be very surprised.

JUDITH: Yes I agree and I've also seen in my travels and in my own nutrition experiences working in the health food industry, usually what we

crave is probably not the best for us, you know? That's a pattern we have to break in some way.

Well Janet this has been very enlightening and very informative. Could you give our listeners some practical tips to bring into their everyday life?

JANET: Absolutely. So, because Ayurveda is very individualistic, one of the things that everybody can do is **chew your food at least 30 times** when you're eating. Sit down to your meal, enjoy your meal, be present, be mindful, taking in the spices, the flavors. Try different flavors. Try different spices. **Listen to different sounds** of music. See how you respond to them. Are there some sounds that you find more calming, more soothing? Are there some sounds that you find aggravating or irritating? And which sounds do you find invigorating and energetic, because it's different for each person. In terms of our sights – you know looking, thinking about **your color scheme**. What kind of colors do you have a tendency to wear more? Are you one of those people who wear black all the time? How would it be for you to wear a brown or even a green? And if there's somebody who always wearing light colors, you know pastels, what would that be like for you to switch to a brown or a neutral color even? And in terms of touching and feeling, how often do you **give yourself that self-massage**? How often do you allow that tension in your shoulders and your neck to have some relief? Or how often do you soak your feet after a long day if you've been on your feet, right? Paying attention to those little aches and pains in our body, so again going back to the root causes and first signs, thinking about those. And then smell; you know are you using aromatherapy? What do you smell? If you are a cook do you, **do you pay attention to the smells in your kitchen**? If not, do you use incense or oils? And pay attention to the different types of again feelings or sentiments that come along with these types of smells in your life. And so, using our five senses and being aware, **being present, using mindfulness**, that's something Judith that everybody can do and start to work on and practice and taking the time to just quiet your mind even if it's for five minutes.

JUDITH: Oh, that's great! We always need reminders about being in the moment. So to all the listeners out there when the podcast is over, enjoy this moment that you're in wherever you are. I think that's great. And I love how you tied in all the senses, which are very simple things to do in our daily life and I really appreciate that.

Is there anything else you'd like to add before we go?

JANET: Not at this time. It's just going back to reiterating that, be present and take that time because you're the most important person to yourself. And if you don't take care of yourself you're not going to be able to be productive and do the things that you need to do around you and for those around you and for those you care about. And often times with self-care we forget that the most important person is yourself.

JUDITH: Wise words Janet. All I can say is thank you!

I want to thank everyone for joining us at the Holistic Nature of Us. I want to thank Janet again for all her sharing. Here is her contact information:

Phone Janet at 646-408-0759.

Her e-mail is phoenixsolhp@gmail.com and then she has contact information on Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram and she uses the Phoenix Sol HP for all of them. So phoenixsolhp for Twitter. Phoenixsol,h.p.inc. @ phoenixsolhp.inc for Facebook. Pinterest is phoenixsol. Instagram is phoenixsolhp.

So once again this is Judith Dreyer. I'm the author of "At the Garden's Gate", book and blog. My book is available through my website www.judithdreyer.com and it's also available at several distribution arms such as Amazon, Goodreads and more. I'd like to remind all of you to please like and share the podcast. Let's get this word out. It's time for practical action and profound inner change so our natural world is valued once again.

By for now and enjoy your day.