

## **Podcast Series: Holistic Nature of Us**

### **Episode # 40: Meet Janet Verney, Wellness and Nutrition**

**<http://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'm delighted to introduce you again to Janet Verney. This is Janet's second time here on The Holistic Nature of Us. She has a wealth of knowledge about creating delicious food and an abundant life style. She is certified in integrative health and specializes in women's' wellness. As a wellness designer she creates fun and educational programs for women around the world.

Welcome Janet! It's a pleasure and I'm delighted to have you back again.

JANET: Oh, thank you so much Judith. I just enjoy doing this so much.

JUDITH: Janet is the author of a book called *Roots2Wellness* and I'd like Janet, if you would, to please give us a little bit of your background, about creating the book and your passion for creating good food and an abundant life style.

JANET: Absolutely. So *Roots2Wellness* actually comes from a chronic illness that I have had for over 30 years. I was quite sick and on medications and machines and as a result of, you know, really working hard to optimize my health I did a number of different things and that can be a story in itself. But the book bloomed as a result of that and over the years I really developed sort of a methodology, if you will, for healing. It included things like unearthing what's at the root cause of disease. Weeding out any obstacles that are standing in your way to good health and also nourishing yourself back to really good health. So those are the things that really worked for me and then in the end you're blooming wonderful health. I've gotten literally off of all my medications and machines.

JUDITH: And that in itself is a huge accomplishment. I'm a nurse, retired nurse. I've worked in the field of oncology. I've seen very serious illnesses and it takes incredible inner diligent effort to switch around or to turn around a major illness, which is what you did, and which is why I find you so inspiring, because you made some of the steps practical. We still have to do them. We still have to act but if we understand things in smaller bites and in practical ways it can make a huge difference in the long-run, and that's what I appreciate about your message.

JANET: Well thank you so much. Yes, we had talked I think on our last podcast about how important gut health is. And that was a major...it played a major role in my health. And those things take time and we don't deteriorate our gut in just an overnight situation. It's years of not eating right or eating on the run with stress levels, etc. I think that in this world we're so focused on 'pop a pill and make it better' and it's, you have to do the work. I tell people who may want to work with me, if you're in that mode where all you want to do is pop a pill and make it better than that's not going to work long-term for you. You really have to start making those small changes over time to really begin to get your health back, and it does take some time. Which is what I think most people don't realize but when you do it the joy and the positivity of life is just so rich as a result of doing that work.

JUDITH: It's true. I know there are a lot of coaches out there on all different levels. Recently a family member was looking for a business coach for leadership skills and to understand the pluses and the minuses from a leadership point of view, because this person runs a company. And the woman that they want to work with is excellent. She has an excellent

reputation, but do you know what she says to them? “If you’re not serious, I’m not working with you” and I can appreciate that from a health point of view. I also have a story of how I turned around a serious chronic illness and it took time, but it was so worth it at the end of the road, you know?

JANET: Absolutely. It makes all the difference.

JUDITH: Janet just shared with me that she’s written article that’s called, “Thankfully Healthful Feast”. I love the title. She’s writing it for the Haddam Killingworth News here in Connecticut and I’d love her to go over some of her key points in this article because the holidays are here. One of the reasons I’ve invited Janet back is for her to share some great tips for healthy eating, positivity and feeling good and enjoying our family time because it’s an intense time.

JANET: Absolutely, absolutely. One of the things that I absolutely love are the flavors of fall. I mean I grew up in a Pennsylvania Dutch household with a grandmother who made the best apple pies on the earth and often we had apple pie for dinner. We had apple pie for breakfast. It was really something that was part of my childhood. But as a result of my illness and working towards healing over time and so much of disease begins with too much inflammation in the body. One of the things that I recognize at the holiday time is when it comes to the food in life, I need to make it healthier. And I need to get rid of some of the gluten. I need to reduce some of the sugars and the refined ingredients, so I really try to work from a whole foods perspective. Keeping things as simple as possible is important. Cleaner ingredients is critical for me. Removing those starched carbohydrates are all things that I really work to avoid. I’ve remade some recipes that I will be happy to share with you. But before I do that, you know one of the things that I really feel is important around, especially Thanksgiving which is upcoming for us in the U.S., is the fact that it really is so much more about gratitude and family and friendships than it is about food. You know the food’s pretty spectacular. It’s really so important to be with family and friends and just spend the time enjoying their companionship. So, for me, one of the things I think is so fun to do, and you can do this at any party, but I think this is especially good at Thanksgiving, is if you’re going to have a sit-down dinner having a small jar or a cup at each place setting with the person’s name on it. Then giving each guest a piece of paper where they can write down either what their thankful for about that person or what they appreciate most about that individual. And it can be anything from, if it’s

somebody you don't know well, like you've got a mixed group or mixed guests, it could be just that you love their sweater. That their sweater is beautiful. That their blue eyes are absolutely stunning. Or it could be something more in depth about how they were so supportive to you when you lost a loved one. Or how they came to your rescue with food, or what have you. And then all of those little pieces of paper get folded up and put into this little thankful jar and then they can either be read aloud and shared at the beginning of the meal, or at the end of the meal, or they could be kept for private. You could read them when you get home. However someone feels more comfortable doing it. But I think that when we focus on gratitude and what we're thankful for and friendships, in my opinion that's first and foremost. And the next thing is trying to keep stress down. Holidays can be very stressful and oftentimes these meals can take a lot of preparation and I'm a big believer of trying to do things in one bowl and also keeping it really super simple and not making a huge fuss out of it but yet keeping it healthy and clean. If you'd like, I'd be happy to share some of my recipes that are some of my favorite.

JUDITH: Well how about if you could give us an example of a one bowl that could be appropriate for say a Thanksgiving Day or weekend with lots of company.

JANET: Yes, absolutely. One of my favorite foods at Thanksgiving are sweet potatoes. And of course, they're a super, super powerhouse type food. You know they are anti-inflammatory, and they've got all that beta carotene and I mean they're just so full of vitamins and nutrients, so I'm a big believer in sweet potatoes. But unfortunately, we criminalize them with heavy fats and butter and you know sugar. We're adding sweet to sweet. And although we like sweet, and I do add sweets to my sweet potatoes I like it to be cleaner, getting rid of some of those refined sugars and getting rid of some of the fats that are full of saturated fats. With my sweet potatoes what I do, and again this is keeping it simple, is I always buy them organic because I love to leave the skins on them. And what I do is I just give them a cleaning, a quick rinse and then I cut the ends, the very tips of the sweet potatoes off and then I cut them into 1" round disks. We leave the skins on so that stage of the peeling you don't have to chop them up into small pieces. You're keeping them in these nice round disks. And then what I do is in a casserole dish I mix right in the dish that I'm going to cook them in. I use some avocado oil. I use a fruit sweetened apricot jam. I find an organic one. You can find it at your local market. I put maple syrup. I will use

about a tablespoon of like an orange liquor, like triplesec or Grand Marnier. If people don't want to use the alcohol, I use a squeeze of a little fresh orange in there. I use a little pinch of sea salt and then I sprinkle some cloves and allspice and then I just whisk that right in the... or I stir it with a spoon right in the pan that you're going to back it. And then you take your sweet potato disks and you dip them in it and then turn them over. And you can just cover that and throw it in the fridge. And then I would say for the pan sake take it out for about an hour before you're going to bake it. I usually bake those at about 400 degrees for 40-50 minutes and I flip them half way through. But they're just so easy. They're so simple and there's not a lot of fuss but yet they're super healthy and they're delicious. I get a lot of compliments on those when I bring them to events and things.

JUDITH: And it's easy because it sounds to me like you can make it up ahead of time, keep it in the refrigerator, which is what I like to do for the holidays. If I can get stuff done 2 days ahead of time and then just bake them or put them out on the table, I have more time to visit. I'm not spending all my time with preparation in the kitchen. I've learned to do that over the years. This is a great dish that you could do that with so easily and of course sweet potatoes are abundant at this time of year. That's a great recipe, thank you!

JANET: You're welcome. Yeah, so one other that I really enjoy because again I work to be gluten free and I don't want all the carbohydrates during this meal. And if you're interested in food combining, sometimes people who have digestive issues or have a lot of inflammation going, they need a little bit of extra help with food combining. And what I mean by that is that we want to stick with.... you're going to have the turkey, then you really shouldn't be eating a lot of grains with your turkey and stuffing is a grain. It's bread whether you're using white bread or wheat bread, it's still grain, and it basically slows down, or the animal protein will slow down the process of digesting your grains and your grains are going to stick in your gut and pretty much ferment if you will. Which is not a good thing because it really slows down the whole digestive process. What I love to do with stuffing – I call it “the other stuffing” and it's really not meant for going in the bird per say but it's a wonderful side dish. With this one, again, I do it in advance. I basically sauté, I put my herbs in first which is poultry seasoning which is Vegan. When I say poultry seasoning people think well maybe it has poultry in it but it's really just sage and thyme and a mixture of different herbs. I use poultry seasoning. I use some Italian herbs. I use a little sea

salt and some olive oil and let it simmer a little bit on medium low heat and then I add a bunch of chopped onion and chopped celery and I stir that until it's nice and translucent, nice and cooked and caramelized. Then I chop up a whole head of cauliflower into little bit-sized chunks just like it would be in stuffing. And I throw that into the pan and get it a little bit browned up, not too browned because you don't want to add all that, but you want to get it a little bit browned. Then I will put in a little bit of water just to steam it a little bit and then I turn that into a greased casserole dish that I can then throw in the fridge. I let it cool. I cover it and throw it in the fridge and when you're ready to serve you can take it out, bring it to room temperature, uncover it, throw it in the oven for 20-30 minutes to heat up and you've got a sort of "the other stuffing".

JUDITH: Oh, that sounds good. I see so many recipes now using cauliflower from pizza crust to roasted cauliflower. It's another way of using that great vegetable. And this stuffing here, again as you said, is a side dish. It can be made ahead of time. It helps with preparation. It sounds easy to make and you're probably only spending 15-20 minutes making it tops. Then it cooks, and you're done. It can be a wonderful compliment with your sweet potatoes and your turkey and you've eliminated another carbohydrate grain dish.

JANET: Yes, exactly. And I have in my little news article that I've just written, I put cauliflower is a member of the cruciferous vegetable family and the cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, kale and cauliflower and brussel sprouts. All of these cruciferous vegetables are so amazing with their cancer fighting properties. You're not only just decreasing your blood sugar spikes in this meal, you're also getting a good fight back against cancer and it's also a terrific anti-inflammatory (food). It's full of antioxidants. It's rich in vitamins. It supports digestion and it's also a good detoxifier for the body. It is a power house vegetable and I think that's why, you know, it's like they say chicken is the other white meat well you know I call it the white greens because greens are so good for you. But it's like the white green of the vegetable family that is just so powerful. And it's so versatile.

It can also be made into mashed potatoes. Some people think I'm crazy when I say that but all you have to do is steam up some cauliflower. You mash it. I use a little bit of almond milk with it and some olive oil and a little sea salt. You mash it really well and you've got this beautiful, I use the electric wand and I call it the jeurjeur so just make sure it's really thoroughly

pureed and then I'll pop it with a little pine nuts, a little fresh basil. It's just delicious.

JUDITH: It sounds great. Again, are reminding the listeners is that one food such as cauliflower, actually is a powerhouse of complimentary nutrients and these nutrients are designed in the cauliflower to help in various ways and in various issues. So not only do we get the immediate benefit of fiber and increase the fiber, because that's really important in cancer prevention is to get our fiber up. In our country we tend to go with some of the fast foods which have no fiber in them what-so-ever and then we wonder why we have such ill health, seeming to explode in a way within our communities. This is a great reminder and it's a great food to incorporate if you don't typically use it. I find with the cruciferous vegetables people tend to have one favorite one, but they don't really use the others. I was just traveling recently, and I had a chance to have brussel sprouts crispy in a restaurant and they were really delicious. It's not a food I grew up with so it's a food I've had to acquire a taste for and again, it's a cruciferous vegetable but it was delicious.

JANET: Yes, when you mentioned that you reminded me, I just made a dish the other night because I often am interested in food synergy and how when you combine certain foods, like if you put a sunflower shoot and pea shoot together, they make a complete amino acid. If you eat rice and beans together, you're getting a complete protein. Another one is brussel sprouts combined with broccoli.

JUDITH: Okay.

JANET: So, what I do is I cut my brussel sprouts in half and I chop the broccoli into good bite-sized chunks and I'll drizzle either a little bit of some maple syrup with some sea salt or a little bit of balsamic vinegar. I'll oven roast them with a little olive oil in the oven and they get that little bit of brownness about them, but they are just delicious. I've had people who have said they don't like brussel sprouts that will eat that and love it. And what's so cool about that is that together brussel sprouts and broccoli, they make a complete enzyme which is like so cool. I mean I find food combining really interesting. You know there's the good, the bad and the great.

JUDITH: Just tell us a little bit more about a complete enzyme. I think we hear about a complete protein. That's out there but I'm not too familiar with

a complete enzyme and I think that's an important point to make, if you don't mind.

JANET: Yes, well it's been awhile since I've read up on it, but I will tell you that enzymes do help us with our digestion. It's the whole process of digestion. It's another one of those things that when you bring them together and they're even more. They're already power house super foods unto themselves but when you get that they're a complete enzyme you're actually really helping your whole digestive process. That's why as you age, sometimes we need a little help with digestive enzymes to help us process foods. One of the best things you can do to trigger enzymes naturally would be just chew. And I say even if you're going to have the green juice or a vegetable fruit smoothie, a lot of people sometimes get bloating with that. If you chew it and even though you don't need to chew it necessarily because it's a liquid, if you chew it, you're triggering enzymes in the mouth and saliva that are going to help with the digestive process. Enzymes play a really important role in digestion.

JUDITH: They do. I think some of us are lacking in that just because of the toll that life takes on us and we can go back to the beginning about stress. Stress tends to throw everything out of kilter including how we digest. Some of these foods can at least help us reset the buttons for good health.

JANET: Yes, absolutely.

JUDITH: Alright, did you have any other tips that you wanted to mention?

JANET: I think one more. At the beginning I talked about my apple pie.

JUDITH: Yes!

JANET: Grandma's apple pie. Well this is probably my favorite and again you can make it... I would not make it the day ahead but maybe the morning of and when you're done with dinner and your oven is warm you can throw it back in the oven at the end of your meal and just serve it warm. I use a dairy free coconut-based ice cream that I really enjoy, and I'll serve it with that. But basically, what I do again, I'll take a bowl and I use all organic ingredients whenever possible. I'm really a big advocate for that. In fact, there was an article in the environmental working group recently that talked about folks who eat a primarily organic diet are really preventing cancers. It was really fascinating. But anyhow, so I'm a big believer in that. But what I

I use organic apples. I peel them. I slice them up, discard the core and then I add a little bit of pure maple syrup, some lemon juice, a tablespoon of either gluten free flour or maybe a teaspoon of arrowroot if you don't want to use a grain. I use cinnamon and nutmeg and sea salt. I mix that together in a bowl and then put it into a baking dish that I've greased with a little bit of avocado oil. Avocado oil is one of the best oils for baking with that doesn't have saturated fat and it's just a really good oil to use in baking. And then my topping, I'll use the same bowl that I just mixed my apples in, that I poured into the casserole dish, I then use that same bowl and I put in some avocado oil, some pure maple syrup and little vanilla extract, a pinch of cloves, some cinnamon, nutmeg some sea salt and I add in about 2 cups of organic almond flour and I actually get mine at nuts.com. It's a great resource for organic almond flour and I just love the company. They're family owned, and I order it on-line. And the reason that I mention this is because organic almond flour is so very difficult to find in the stores. They have a lot of almond flour but not organic. And almonds are one of the most heavily sprayed nuts on the planet. It's actually a fruit not a nut but we treat it as a nut in the U.S, And, it is so heavily sprayed with pesticides that you're getting a huge dose of toxins. If you're drinking a lot of almond milk or eating a lot of almond flour that's not organic it's not a good thing. I use the almond flour and I mix it all together with a fork until it kind of chunks up and then I spread that across my apples. And then I throw it in a 350-degree oven and bake it covered for 30 minutes and then I uncover it for about another 15-20 minutes or until the apples are tender. But it's like my apple pie fix and it's so full of good protein and I'm not getting all of the refined sugars, none of the bad fats and it's gluten free and it smells delicious.

JUDITH: Oh, I bet. I can smell it already. I want to come to your house for Thanksgiving. These recipes are wonderful!

Well let's just summarize everything that you've shared if you don't mind, because you gave us a couple of good points, some great recipes and if you don't mind just summarizing that a little bit before we close I'd appreciate it.

JANET: Yes, absolutely. Well I think it's three parts. It's basically **planning ahead** so that you're keeping your stress levels down and simplifying your recipes. I think the second part is bringing in **the gratitude and being thankful and what can we do that day to really honor family members and friends** and then the third part is keeping us healthy and

finding, you know, **basically redesigning the recipes** to help them out, and that way it's a win, win for everybody.

JUDITH: Right. This is great. Thank you. I think that's a great summary and certainly the recipes will all be listed in the transcript of the podcast and of course the podcast will direct everyone to your site too for whatever tips you might offer, you know, through your website.

Janet, before we go give us your contact information.

JANET: Absolutely. You can e-mail me directly and I encourage people, if you have a favorite recipe that you want redesigned it's one of my favorite things to do, so send it on over. You can get me at [connect@roots2wellness.com](mailto:connect@roots2wellness.com)

JUDITH: Great, thank you. Janet you do classes as well, right?

JANET: I do. I'm done for the year as far as teaching any classes and then in the spring I plan to be doing some more but I'll be traveling in the winter months for a little while. And I've also started and took art as a big part of my life. I'm doing a fun holiday market here in CT so that will be a blast. In Higganum, a pop-up market, for the month of November and December.

JUDITH: Yes, it is. Great opportunities and great experiences that you can share through your art and through your cooking and your deep desire to create wellness, so I thank you for that.

JANET: Well thank you so much for having me.

JUDITH: You are welcome. I want to say to everyone, I'm inspired. I think it's very practical. I think we've gotten some great recipes and try and experiment with. In fact, I'm going to try one this weekend because I have company coming over, so I want to try one this weekend. Thank you again Janet. Your expertise, your advice is deeply appreciated.

JANET: Thank you!

JUDITH: This is Judith Dreyer. I'm the author of "At the Garden's Gate", book and blog. My book is available through my website <http://www.judithdreyer.com> as well as several distribution arms such as Amazon, Nook, Goodreads and more. And again, I'd like to remind all of

you that a transcript is available for each podcast. And please like and share these podcasts. Let's get the word out and support each other.

And remember, **now** is the time for practical action and profound inner change, so we value our world again.

Enjoy your day.