

Podcast Series: Holistic Nature of Us

Episode # 64 Meet: Kathleen Gage

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Hi I'm Judith Dreyer,

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

I invite you to journey with me into a better understanding of the concepts behind our holistic nature and how that ties us directly to the natural world around us. My intention is to be your guide for this half hour as we begin seeing our world with fresh eyes, gaining more understanding and learning how can connect the dots in practical ways that we are nature and nature is in us.

I feature a broad range of guests deeply concerned about the environmental issues of our time and more, authors and educators, practitioners and others whose passion for this earth and for all species helps us create sustainable bridges of understanding. These folks are innovators, action oriented, creating solutions in a variety of ways that honor us and the planet's holistic nature. I am honored to share their stories, their projects, and their passion with all of you.

And today I'm delighted to introduce you to Kathleen Gage.

As a marketing and business strategist, Kathleen Gage has made it her mission to teach solo and small business owners how to become visible to their market through the power and clarity of their message and to package their core message into speaking engagements, books, etc. After nearly 25 years in business, Kathleen Gage is doing what most entrepreneurs would never dream of doing, changing her business direction and market in a big way. Creating a level of success many entrepreneurs aspire to achieve Kathleen discovered a passion that had been percolating under the surface for years, a whole food plant based lifestyle. On a mission to raise awareness about the health and benefits of a plant based lifestyle Kathleen has immersed herself into a lifestyle that is healthy, compassionate to animals and kind to the earth.

Welcome Kathleen, it's a pleasure to have you here today.

KATHLEEN: Judith it's great to be here. Thank you.

JUDITH: Well let's get started with your journey. I always enjoy hearing about what motivates people to change directions. Tell us something about your journey into that plant based lifestyle.

KATHLEEN: I'd love to. You know actually I've explored it for years but never really committed 100% and a lot of it has to do with compassion for animals, because I do a lot of animal rescue. We actually have three horses, two dogs, a cat, chickens and most of them are rescues. And about eight months ago, that's actually when I went plant based about eight months ago, I was getting a lot of inflammation. I'm going to be 65 pretty soon and I'm at an age where inflammation seems to be pretty prevalent so as I did my research everything pointed in the direction of plant based eating. That if I got rid of animal products and I got rid of dairy products that I would in fact get rid of the inflammation. And it was almost too good to be true. So, I thought, I'll give it seven days and after two days the inflammation was completely gone. After the seven days I was feeling better than I had in awhile. I read almost every book I could get my hands on. I watched video after video. And then it was kind of like I had an epiphany and I connected the dots of compassion for animals and plant based eating and it was like wow. Here I say I'm so compassionate to animals. I work in the pet industry. I go to conferences and speak at conferences and there was such a disconnect. And so, for somebody who thought they were very aligned with their mission, I realized I was completely out of alignment. And so that was eight months ago. I have had incredible, incredible changes as a result. One of the greatest changes, my improvement in energy, my focus, my clarity and I dropped 37 lbs. without dieting. One of the most surprising things was that I wasn't focusing on weight loss, even though I was definitely in need of losing a few pounds. I didn't focus on this being a diet. I actually focused it on being a protocol, a way of life and I dropped 37 lbs. without trying. And that's been the most shocking part.

JUDITH: Hmm. I've heard that and as a medical professional myself I've seen people who, for example, will turn to a vegetarian diet to try to heal a serious disease and they do lose weight, and we forget how much fat, processed foods are in a typical diet. And I think your plant based diet, from

what I've read, is also concerned about avoiding as much processed food as possible. Could you speak to that?

KATHLEEN: Absolutely. And that's why rather than calling myself Vegan, I like to call myself plant based because I eat a whole foods plant based diet which means I avoid processed foods, because in processed foods you have a lot of hidden salt. You have hidden sugar. You have hidden oils and all those will prevent you from releasing the weight that would be unhealthy weight. So, for me it's low on the salt, oil and sugar. I don't do any processed sugar and I do no processed foods whatsoever. It's like fast foods are completely out of the question and with Vegan, a Vegan can actually eat junk food and still be a Vegan where with plant-based you're really looking at foods that are in their most natural state. So, you're looking at a lot of vegetables, fruits, legumes, beans, nuts and avocados are a big thing that I like to consume but I have to watch over consuming that because they have a high level of fat. And also, if you eat too many avocados you can actually trigger gout, which is interesting.

JUDITH: Hmm, that is interesting.

KATHLEEN: I'd rather not have that experience.

JUDITH: Yeah, that is interesting. But you know you bring up a good point about going to a "more natural diet" and I've seen people do this. To be vegetarian they just simply eliminate meat, but they don't eliminate all the other stuff and that to me doesn't really solve a problem in the long run. It helps in the short term but not in the long run. And you're looking to not only change health in the long run but to sustain it, correct?

KATHLEEN: Absolutely. And this has been the most sustainable protocol of eating. And the evidence that I have, when I went for my last physical, my doctor was off the charts excited. She's like "your numbers are the best that I've seen in a long time." And she said not just for you but for women in your age. She said I don't see these kinds of numbers very often at all. And so, she really encouraged me to continue with the plant based diet where with vegetarian, yes you can still consume foods that health wise are not really good for you. Like the Keto diet is a big thing right now and Keto is probably one of the worst diets that people can do because they're consuming so much fat and so much animal based protein. Where the number one question I get Judith, which is really interesting, the number one

question – where do you get your protein? Well in beans, legumes, in grains you're getting as much if not more protein than you would from an animal based diet.

JUDITH: And that's, again, a misconception. People have to understand that plant based proteins are just as valid as animal based proteins and they also have some level of fat in it. So, we're getting some of the good fats. And that's all about education, isn't it?

KATHLEEN: You know it really is and the thing that I really emphasize to people is I'm not a nutritionist. I'm a lay person. I'm a middle aged woman who, well actually now I'm a senior citizen officially, but I'm just a woman who wants to be my healthiest possible and I'm probably healthier now than I've ever been at any point in my life. My numbers, like I've said, are really good. I'm at a great weight. I have incredible energy. Just this morning I went on a three mile run, and that's a short run for me. I either go to the gym to do weight training. I do spin classes. I do yoga. I do run and this is something that keeps improving every day. The longer that I've been plant based, the more improvement I have and the more toned I'm getting, which is really interesting.

JUDITH: Well on that level that's how you can be a good coach. You have a website. You share the data with your listeners, your readers and your followers and that education alone is going to make a difference because Baby Boomers as a large generation we're 60, 65 and over, we are looking at how can we define this last chapter of our life. And I know for me I want to stay healthy and have energy and contribute in this last stage of my life, because I'm a senior citizen as well. I think these are very, very good reminders.

I want to go back to one point that you made. And this is something that I find, and I'm not trying to be critical of others, but I find that some people who are animal activist haven't connected the dots that some of the factory farm animals that they love to eat are just as abused or more abused than the dog we find on the street. Can you address that a little bit?

KATHLEEN: I would love to. Thank you for bringing that up because I actually speak at pet conferences and I remember the first time I got invited to speak at a pet conference. I expected them not to have meat on the plates. You know that was kind of my expectation of the way we would eat, and I

was shocked at how many people ate beef, chicken and fish. It really was surprising to me. And as I've researched and really, I've gone deep into the whole topic of factory farming, it's horrendous the way animals are raised. It's absolutely horrendous. And then I've had people give me the argument, and I'm not going to argue the point with them because no matter what I say they're not going to hear me but they say, "well you know out in the wild animals are so cruel to each other, so they have a really bad death. So, the way we kill them is more humane." And it's like oh my gosh no, no, we're not even going to have this discussion. Because the majority, about 95% of meats that are consumed are factory farmed and I would encourage people to actually watch these like Cowspiracy, that's a good one. There're plenty of documentaries out there that show you the truth about factory farming and it is horrendous. I mean...and I actually have had people say, "Oh I don't want to know what that's like because then I would lose my appetite for meat." And it's like great, I hope you do! But it's really cruel and I think that the more that we just do what we do and educate people on what ever level we can the more people will understand that they have had a major disconnect.

JUDITH: Yes, and that's the point of this podcast. It's all about holism. If we take care of ourselves, which your message is in terms of the plant based diet, we end up taking care of the earth. But we take care of the earth in a variety of ways with plant based diet. You know, I'm assuming that you want to buy more local organic food to put on your plate. It's not just going out and buying a head of broccoli but there's a different level of awareness in terms of the quality of food that you want to put on your plate too that comes with this approach. At least that's what I'm aware of.

So, let's talk about some of the benefits of plant based diets.

KATHLEEN: Well some of the benefits to the environment, one is we use less water. When you really look at how much of our resources are used to raise the factory farmed animals it's shocking. Then if we took the grain that was used for the cows and the pigs and the chickens, if we took that and fed it to people, we wouldn't have a problem with starvation. I mean we just would not have the problems that we have with people starving. The amount of water that's consumed for the factory farming; the gases that are admitted into the environment; the land that is literally raped; I mean we're stripping the land away for the resources to feed these animals so that we can kill them and put them on our plates. So, it's really kind to the

environment. And you know the whole issue of Climate Change and Global Warming? Some people say that it's made up and we're making a bigger deal out of it than it really is, but if you look at the way, the number of storms we have now, the weather patterns that have changed. We recently had a flood in our area where we were literally evacuated. At 11 o'clock at night I got a robo call and they said this is a mandatory evacuation. So, we had to load up our horses and take them off our property and take them to higher land. And we don't experience floods in this area but this year we did. And it's getting worse and worse and they're more intense than they've ever been and that has to do with a lot of animal production.

JUDITH: It does and again, just awareness of our practices, awareness of every purchase that we make, contributes to the overall picture. And what I like about a plant based eating plan and menu is that by buying vegetables, fruits and legumes and grains that are wholesome, we're casting a vote out there and that will help change our model. But you also brought up another point with the cattle. They actually did, not a study, but they did an experiment on a farm out West where if they stopped feeding the grain to the cattle and let them graze naturally, their poop was actually different and it was more easily broken down, and it was more easily absorbed into the ground and it also helped the ground water. But the way that we treat our cows and feed them this grain, the poop is different. It's harder. It's more compacted. It doesn't break down as much. So, you're talking about a whole level of complex issues with one eating pattern and I think that's the thing you and I are both interested in educating, you know, our listeners about is to consider that. Even one meatless meal a week would be a tremendous contribution,

But what do you know about specific diseases? When you start doing a plant based diet you mentioned inflammation.

KATHLEEN: Oh, you're asking such great questions because this all started with me just wanting to get rid of inflammation and I kept going deeper and deeper and I discovered that a plant based diet actually can reverse heart disease. It can reverse diabetes, almost like a miracle food. And I'm taking a class right now in my local area called food as medicine. And the gentleman that conducts that class is a physician's assistant at Orvan Medical Group and he said when you go plant based you need to talk to your doctor about this, to let them know that you're going to be going plant based because you don't need as much medicine as you progress into the diet. And

eventually many people get off of their medicines. And what's interesting is I have interviewed people that have dropped significant amounts of weight and most of the people that I've interviewed they've dropped 100 lbs. or more. They've reversed their diabetes. They were doing incredible amounts of insulin. They reversed heart disease. One woman actually prevented the need to have a lung transplant by going plant based. Her name is Kate Megoie Smith, a phenomenal, phenomenal story. She dropped 120 lbs. She was pretty much home bound as a result of many diseases that she had and now she goes out and speaks on behalf of plant based eating.

It's phenomenal when we look at all the different aspects. And when people throw the whole animal thing at me that out in the wild, they're meaner to each other, then I bring in the health issue. It's like okay, forget the animals. What about your own health? And I know like for myself I'm at very high risk for colon cancer. I've actually had precancerous polyps taken out and that was a few years ago and it took me awhile to really look at the fact that I have some control over that. I don't need to contribute to that risk factor. If anything, I can reverse it. And so, for me I know that I want to have a healthy heart. I want to minimize my risk of breast cancer, colon cancer, diabetes, all of the things that are becoming more prevalent every day. When you look at the percentage of people that are obese, not just over-weight but obese, it's shocking. And the thing is, is that a lot of people don't look at their responsibility in their health. They give it to the health care system. And you and I both know that our health care system is very, very broken, and it's very expensive, and it's getting more expensive by the day. So, I encourage people to look at really taking control of your own life and the choices that you make so that you can have a better quality of life. You can have more vibrancy in life and no matter how long you're on this earth, you have a quality of life that can't be compared to what you have now, because the majority of people don't have the energy to live as fully as they would like to.

JUDITH: That's true. You know I taught at a university level and my students, I would give them 5 fast foods, break them into 5 groups and they would have to get one common meal from those fast 5 food restaurants. And they were absolutely shocked at not only the fats, the sugars and the salts that were in there but also the additives that were in there. And I had them count the number of ingredients in one entrée and that was a huge eye opener to them. Things like that and the way you go out and educate folks all the time with your podcasts, you're a fantastic speaker and in demand

and we're making some difference in some way along those levels. But the other point that you brought up that I think is a good one is that I find that some people in some areas really don't have a conception of what vegetables and legumes and grains really are from a health standpoint. You know they really do rely on the fast food and they have no awareness and that includes children, and that to me is very sad.

KATHLEEN: You know I was actually talking with a woman recently who is the executive director for the, I think it's called the Vegetable Project or the Garden Project and it's where they educate young people about different fruits and vegetables. And she said it's shocking the number of kids who didn't even know what a cucumber was, or they didn't know what spinach was. They didn't know what kale was. So, their whole premise is they educate children so they can make better choices. And they teach them about the nutrient value of eating more vegetables and fruits in their diet. It really is about people doing, for those of us who are really passionate about this, is doing what we can to educate others. One of the best books that I feel is a great starter book and it's not even a starter book but "Eat to Live" by Dr. Joel Furhman is an excellent resource. "The China Study" is a little heady but it's a great resource to look at the science behind the food choices we make. And going back to what you said about local farmers, I love going to our Farmers' Market and supporting the local farmers and knowing that I'm eating organic and I'm helping to contribute to my community financially.

JUDITH: Yes, you are, we all are that support the Farmers' Market. The only caveat to that is to make sure that you know they're organic, because not everybody at a Farmers' Market is organic. And I've actually had some interesting experiences with farms who are not organic when I asked the question. And I just have to walk away and say okay, I've got to find the organic one and let it alone. And my answer to them is why aren't you? You know? Why aren't you? Well why aren't you looking at what you can do because everything that we do has an impact, as you and I both well know.

So let's go back into 3 tips you can give our listeners for this podcast based on your experiences and what you'd like to leave with them.

KATHLEEN: Absolutely. The first tip I would give is to actually **journal your food for one week and notice what happens after you eat certain**

foods. And just kind of check in with yourself to see what's going on with your body and you might be shocked to find that when you eat certain foods, you have an energy crash, or you get really hyper and then you have an energy crash. So that would be one thing. The second thing I would give as a tip is to look at the **quality of your health and what you can do to improve the quality of your health.** And then for seven days, make a decision to go plant based. Just try it for seven days. And really give it 100%, no processed foods, drink plenty of water and make sure it's clean water. Make sure that you have a well balanced diet and there's plenty of recipes on the internet. So, I would say one of the best tips is go to the internet and just key in plant based diet meals, or plant based meals and you'll get plenty of recipes. I've done enchiladas. I've done stews. I've done chilis that are all meatless and they're delicious. And I never used to like to cook. I actually did not like to cook and since I've gone plant based, I love doing stews in the crockpot. So those would be my tips.

JUDITH: Oh, those are wonderful. Well I understand that you're also an author and you wrote the beginners guide to plant based eating so tell us about that and people can access that.

KATHLEEN: Absolutely. Thank you. It's a very short e-book and it chronicles my first 90 days of going plant based. I wrote it because I wanted to share my experience with other people to show them that it's actually a lot easier than many people assume. And they can go to www.plantbasedeatingforhealth.com and on the main page you'll see a place where you can actually opt in for it. It's free. There's no charge for it whatsoever.

JUDITH: Well that's great. That's great because most of us like those freebies and we can glean something from it and hopefully entice us to go back to your website. I know you have a blog. You're on Facebook. You offer great tips and advice. So how about giving us that information?

KATHLEEN: Absolutely. My main website is www.powerupforprofits.com and I'm actually in the process of transitioning my market from just general marketing strategies and marketing consulting to plant based green, Vegan and sustainable companies. I really want to put my efforts there and help those companies gain lots of visibility, so that we can all do what we can to improve the quality of the earth, the quality of the lives of the animals and our own health.

JUDITH: Oh wonderful, wonderful. Is there anything else you'd like to end with based on your journey, your story, and your experience?

KATHLEEN: Thank you, absolutely. And what I want to leave people with is **love yourself enough to do this for your health** because if you have a family that you care about, if you have a community that you care about, why not be as healthy as you can possibly be so that you can be there 100% for the people that you care about?

JUDITH: I agree with you there. I have a history of working in the cancer profession and I have to tell you people wait until the last minute to take care of their health. They put it on the backburner because they feel okay, whatever okay means to them. And I would see people in the end of the third stage, beginning of the 4th stage of serious illnesses decide to make a difference then and it's a lot harder to turn your physical body and health around when you wait until the last minute. So, I find your message very inspirational. If you have polyps you have something that's a precondition, take care of it today don't wait because we're worth it. You're worth it. I'm worth it . . . to take care of yourself for the benefit that you offer to your own community. If we could see ourselves in that light, I think we would do a little bit more to help ourselves out. I have a couple of relatives that have been very ill and unfortunately, they have a history of smoking and they have a history of not really paying attention and they wonder why they're in this really difficult situation and I saw that as a nurse over and over and over again. As you mentioned right from the beginning, we are responsible for our health, period.

KATHLEEN: Absolutely, absolutely. So, thank you for this opportunity to share my insights. I really appreciate it.

JUDITH: Oh, you are welcome! I want to thank you again Kathleen for joining us at The Holistic Nature of Us. I know I'm inspired. You have very practical advice.

And I want to thank my listeners for joining us today.

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 as well as several distribution arms such as Amazon, Nook, Goodreads and more. 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.