



Medicine Stories Podcast

Episode 28 with Angela Willard

Seaweed: Deep Medicine for Earth, Ocean, & Humans

October 2, 2018

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(Excerpt from today's show by Angela Willard)

I almost feel like that's why the use and practice of them went to sleep for a while because it wasn't needed yet. And that it's starting to wake up again because the call is there, and they're answering it. And, you know, between the seaweeds and then, of course, the mushrooms, which have a lot of similar properties but work in biologically, completely different ways — which is fascinating — but with similar results, it's a really holistic approach to be eating your seaweeds and your mushrooms.

(Intro Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[Intro]

[0:00:37]

Amber: Welcome, welcome. I am Amber Magnolia Hill, and this is Episode 28 of the Medicine Stories podcast.

On this show, we explore the mythic journeys that we undertake when coming to know ourselves through interviews with herbalists, storykeepers, ancestral listeners, consciousness explorers, Earth dreamers, and other wise folk. Story is medicine, magic is real, healing is open-ended and endless.

Man, you want to talk about healing and the deep, deep medicine of plants? Then you want to talk about seaweed, which we will be doing today with Angela Willard.

I'm gonna tell you a little bit about what we talk about, and then I'm going to talk a bit about myself, do some kind of life updates. So, you know, feel free to skip if you want and just get into this incredible interview.

[0:01:34]

Amber: So, Angela and I talked about:

- Conscious conception, evolving as a family, & choosing a new experience
- Naming children is giving them the strongest mantra they'll have throughout their lifetime

You know, that part also reminded me of something that I remember Episode 22 guest, Yaya Erin Rivera Merriman, saying to me, Instagram commenting to me years ago that, like, “The first mythology we give our children is their name and their birth story.”

That's always just stuck with me, and I loved that Angela brought in this idea of their name as a mantra because they hear it so often through their lives, and our names as mantras and our names as our earliest mythology. This is also something Sophia rose and I talked about in Episode 3 of the show.

- Letting the land you find yourself on guide you to your medicine
- Seaweeds are regenerative cleansers for the ocean and earth (and people)
- Addressing the question of radioactivity and the safety of consuming seaweed — because we know that's going to be everyone's first question when we're talking about this medicine
- How to sustainably harvest seaweed
- And then this is really the heart of it: breaking down the medicinal content of red, green and brown seaweeds; which are immunomodulating, which ones are anti-viral, anti-parasitic, cancer fighting, helpful for digestion, thyroid issues, autoimmune diseases, liver issues, detoxification, etc. If you have a body, seaweeds can help you.
- The nutrients in seaweeds, amino acids, iron, iodine, minerals and more; how they work in the body and things to consider
- The amazing, regenerative, bioremedial ecosystem healing properties of seaweed
- And then we get into the constellations approach as a divination practice
- Connecting to the maternal grandmother that Angela never knew
- The vital intelligence of sub-level (underground/underwater) life forms.
- Food is medicine: hot tips for incorporating seaweeds and mushrooms into your daily life
- And the deep soul work that motherhood requires, and the challenges and gratification that family life present.

[0:04:02]

Amber: So speaking of family life, I just wanted to share a little bit about this journey that we've been on with our two-year old, Nixie, over the last six weeks, I think.

And, you know, it's this interesting thing that I know that all mothers in this culture experience; that, like, I feel a little nervous about talking about, spending any time really focusing on my mothering on this show, because I'm afraid that people who aren't parents, or who may be past the stage in their lives will like roll their eyes and be like, “This is not what I'm here for. I don't care about your kids and your problems. Like, I just want to get to the meat of it,” which, again, is fine. You can fast forward on these podcasts, but I know a lot of my audience are parents and Episode 11, where I just talked the whole time about mothering, this is still one of the most popular shows I've put out, if not **the** most popular. I'm not sure in terms of downloads, but in terms of messages

that I received, it definitely is. And I just... we just kind of went through something really big, and I feel like I learned some things. And so I just wanted to share that thought story as briefly as I can.

So as I talked about in Episode 11, we did this very gentle sleep training at seven months old. And Nixie really took to it easily. I think we just were kind of lucky that it was her personality type, and she wanted that sleep. You know, she was missing a lot of sleep, too, by nursing all night long. So it was amazing.

We had been co-sleeping up to that point. I co-slept with my oldest until she was three and a half. But when Nixie was sleeping through the night without nursing I was like, "Wow, we'd sleep a lot better if she was in a crib." And so we put her in a crib, and it was great. It was fabulous for, like, a year and a half. She slept through the night in her crib. I mean, of course, there were, you know, the anomaly nights and all that, but for the most part.

So then, yeah, about six weeks ago, exactly two weeks before her second birthday, we went to put her down for her nap one day, and she was just fighting it like crazy. And naps were always really easy, too. Going down was really easy, naps and nighttime. We would nurse downstairs, and then she would sit up and reach her dad, and he would take her upstairs and put her in the crib, and that was it.

And so she fought that nap time. It took us like two hours, we finally got her down, and we're like, "Wow, that was weird. Well, it's over now," you know. And then it happened at nighttime that night. And then the next day at nap and nighttime, and the next day, and the next day, and we realize like, "Oh, this is our new normal. She is fighting. She doesn't want to sleep anymore." And she was waking up multiple times throughout the night just screaming, screaming, and crying. And you know, it was just... it was so exhausting.

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Amber: And for me, when I get exhausted, I just go right to crying. Like, I just can't help. It just overtakes my body, and there were many mornings during that intense period where I would just wake up to her screaming or crying, especially in the morning when it was like we **have** to get up now, you know, get the oldest to school and all that. And I would just start crying within like seconds of waking up.

And so this whole time I'm like, you know, on the internet, researching, reading, reading, Googling, "24 month sleep regression" which seems to be a thing that a lot of two year olds go through. Also, at this point, we were starting to go to parks a lot more often and this toddler playgroup, and I was asking everyone with a kid around her age, "Did your child go through this?" And a lot of them didn't, you know. Some of them did, but none of the stories I heard were as severe as Nixie's. And what I kept reading from that "experts" is "This will last two or three weeks, like, maintain the routine, maintain the boundaries, and just keep doing what you've always done and wait for it to go away."

But about two and a half weeks in I was like, this is not gonna go away. This is different, like, her brain just woke up in a new way. Something's different and, clearly, us trying to keep putting her down on her own, like we had been, and not bring her into bed during the night, not nurse during the night, isn't working.

So after, again, like two and a half weeks of just hell and torture and crying, and feeling awful and getting nothing done, I just had this big shift in my thinking, where I stopped framing it as a regression if she comes back into bed with me, if I start nursing her again at night, if I have to nurse her down to sleep, all three of those things, which we are now doing. Because thinking of it in terms of regression and following this advice that “You have to maintain things the way they were. Don't let the kid push you, and don't let them win. You know, they're just trying to push the boundaries and see who can win,” was making us all miserable and was clearly not what she needed, you know.

She was asking for what she needed. Her brain changed, and she was wanting more of that closeness and connection. And this was being reflected in her daytime hours, too. I mean, not only was she totally sleep deprived because of everything, but she just wanted to be with me all the time and nursing like crazy.

And it was funny too, because we had just started thinking about maybe starting to slowly, slowly wean, like a month, month's long process. And we'd made a whole plan for (*Amber laughs*), and all of a sudden, she just needed me, and needed to nurse more than ever. So that was another thing that we just had to abandon was that plan, because we could see what she needed, and it's me, and it's closeness, and it's physical touch. And it's just knowing that that love and warmth is always going to be there for her.

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Amber: So as soon as I reframed it, and let go of that idea of regression, and realized that well, this is just progress for us. For us, the forward motion right now is that she comes into bed with me, and I nurse her to sleep every time because that's the only way she's going to go down. And it all just softened as soon as I was able to to change my paradigm and so yeah.

I completely nurse her to sleep for naps and night times now, which is fine, she loves it. We're both happier, it's so much smoother, and I still put her in the crib at night and most, almost every night she ends up in bed with me at some point. There's been a couple where she sleeps through the night, but it's been super sweet.

And I am not nursing at night anymore. I did that the first, like, week when we were transitioning back into the “regression” — but not regression — but then I remembered about this product I'd heard about. It's called Stoplight Golight, and it's a little stoplight, and you — the yellow doesn't work. It's just there to make it look right, you know — but you set a timer and the light is red, and then at the time you set it for it turns green. So we put that in the bedroom, and luckily it's not too bright because I hate having lights at night in the room. It's pretty mellow. And she knows now. She wakes up at night, and she's like, “Nurse, nurse.” And I say, “The light is red, you know, we can't nurse.” And she's like, “Okay.” Then she lays down and goes to sleep, and then in the morning when it turns green, she's stoked. She's usually still asleep, although she'll wake up a few minutes later, and we nurse.

And it's just been... I feel like I really learned a lesson. One about following internet advice: like you think I would know by now you know, I've been mothering for 12 years. And it's just it's funny because with my oldest I was so just giving all the time, and, you know, very, very into attachment parenting, never would have dreamed of sleep training, even in the gentle way that we did with Nixie.

And I had kind of really fallen so far away from that and really gotten into like the schedule and the routine, and like drawing my firm boundaries and not letting her win, and that was just not working, not working. So I learned so much about observing the child, of course, and following, following what their needs are.

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Amber: And, you know, at some point, about four weeks into this, even though things had gotten a little better, she was still screaming during the night. It was almost like night terrors, and maybe that is what was happening, but I just started to think that there was a larger... I've been thinking this was all physical, like, her brain, you know, because she did. She changed so much in this few weeks when she turned two. She's talking so much more. She's more active. But I started to realize that I think there's a really emotional, spiritual thing happening with her, too.

And I started thinking about the day, August 15, that our dog, Banjo, was killed by a car right in front of our house, right in front of our eyes. And we were out there, me and my husband, Owen, and Nixie, and Banjo was there too, and, like, we heard our neighbor's truck coming down the road, but Banjo just, you know, hadn't gotten himself killed yet. Like, I don't know, we just didn't, of course, didn't anticipate that this was going to happen. We had just turned on the bubble machine, and we hear the neighbor's car stop, and I thought he stopped because Banjo was in the road. So I started calling, "Banjo! Banjo!" And then all of a sudden the neighbor's out of his truck saying, "I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry." And we looked, and there's Banjo just lying there.

So Owen immediately went up to the road to be with Banjo and to talk to the neighbor, and I just was, like, holding on to Nixie so tight, and she was screaming, screaming, and screaming. And you know, Owen needed to be able to talk to our neighbor about what had happened. So I took her inside, and I needed to tell my oldest, who had turned 12 the day before, what just happened to her dog.

So we went inside, and, you know, we brought Banjo down into this building on the property and laid him there, and later I surrounded him with some stones and, like, some burning candle and some flowers. We kind of all had our time with him except for Nixie.

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Amber: And, you know, I still, I really don't know what we should have done. We also didn't bury him with her there. We waited until her nap the next day to bury him. And as much as I think that kids should really be a part of death and saying goodbye and knowing that, she was not even two yet when this happened, and I was really worried about how she'd feel seeing, like, you know, dirt thrown over his body, and his body totally buried. And, in retrospect, that might have been a mistake. Maybe she should have been there for that, or maybe she should have spent some time with his body before we buried him.

But she didn't talk about it after that. You know, we all cried about it for days and days. It was very shocking.

And then about 10 days later, about the day that the sleep stuff started, she just started looking out the window or pointing to the spot on the street when we were outside and saying, "Banjo, car

hurt you. Banjo, car hurt you, parking lot rules” — and, you know, parking lot rules: when we're in a parking lot, or by the road, that we hold hands, and we're very careful of the cars around us.

And so, you know, I think maybe those 10 days I don't know what was going on. She was digesting that experience or something, but I've really come to see that this might have a lot to do with Banjo's death and what she saw. And then, again, her brain sort of waking up, and her being more aware of danger, in general, in the world.

[0:15:27]

Amber: So I finally called her homeopath about it, and she really helped me to nail down the Banjo connection. I had had it in my mind, but there was that 10 day lag, and I just wasn't sure, and at that point, I was still thinking it was purely a physical brain thing happening.

And, you know, we talked about everything that had been going on in our lives. And then she said, Well, Amber, I just don't know if it's not like she didn't have a big round of antibiotics, or some sort of injury, or her dog died. I was like, “Oh. Oh, Marcy, let me tell you about Banjo.”

So the homeopath recommended aconite, which is specific for shock and for shock of death. And we gave her some. We all took some that day, and she slept better that night, than she has this whole time. And so we've been doing it every few days since then, and it's really seemed to shift things.

And very grateful for homeopathy, as a mother. It's just so amazing. I didn't really believe in it until becoming a mom, which is a story I hear so much about, and actually is going to be somewhat what we talked about in the next episode with Cilla Whatcott.

So, there's that story. I've just been wanting to share that. A lot of people on Instagram have been wanting to hear more about Banjo and about what's going on with Nixie's asleep.

[0:16:40]

Amber: And the other thing I want us to talk about, briefly, that ties into today's episode is my recent journey with food.

So in Episode 18, 19, 20, 21, and 22, we talked a lot about food and the intersection of food, healing, and the ancestors. And something I said in a few of those episodes, I think, is like “I really need to hear this,” because I'm pretty disconnected from food, at least in the way that I haven't been preparing it very much at all since Nixie's been born. I'm really lucky that Owen is a good cook and prepares most of our meals. And I had a really hard time with food when I was pregnant with her, too. And I just remember being like, “I'm gonna need a total food reset after this kid comes out because I feel so confused about food,” you know.

Darla talked about this in Episode 19, Darla Antoine, like, diet culture, and just how confusing food is for so many of us. And I felt that, too, as someone who always wants to be healthy (*Amber laughs*) and trying to figure out what to eat and what's best, and it just gets so overwhelming. And then having a baby and feeling like you have no time to actually prepare the food you want to be preparing, especially if you're trying to put out a podcast and most of your energy is going there.

But back in the spring, I was really looking at brain healing and just better brain function, wanting to feel less fatigued, and wanting to have less brain fog, and help people around me who are pretty brain foggy, too, to get better with that. And I'd also read the book *The Metabolic Approach to Cancer*, which is amazing and you should read it. In another upcoming episode we're going to talk about cancer with Tara Coyote.

And, you know, both... The recommendation is the same thing for both things, for cancer and for any sort of brain health, and that's a high fat, low carb diet, the ketogenic diet. And you know, I'm just thinking like, "Oh, keto. Like keto bros, like weight lifters, weight loss, what's this all about?" And then I learned what it is, and it's really simple.

You know, the body can live off of, kind of run off of, two types of fuel. There's either glucose, which is sugar, carbohydrates, or there's ketones, which you get from fat and running off of fat i how our ancestors lived, and it is much preferable to running off of glucose. If you're running off of glucose, you're inflamed all the time, and you have so many diseases, so many diseases — heart disease, diabetes, many autoimmune issues, cancer, brain issues, so much more — is made worse by running off of glucose, which almost all Americans are, unless you're specifically like eating a ketogenic diet, basically.

And running off ketones, it's just like the body goes into self-healing mode. The body goes right into self-healing when you are in ketosis. And of all the three macronutrient categories — proteins, fats, and carbs — carbs are the only one that you could live without. You could live without them. They definitely have their place in small amounts, but you would absolutely die without fat or protein.

[0:19:55]

Amber: We talked about fat, too, with Darla, and I think with the Yaya in Episode 22.

So, you know, eating fat doesn't make you fat. It's just kind of like an accident of the evolution of language that those two words are the same thing. But they could be different words because they are different things, and it's so sad that we have that idea in our culture. And there's some good books out there about how this all evolved, how we got the idea that eating fat makes you fat. But you know, eating carbs makes you fat. Like, we know that now. That that's what gives, that's what creates the fat on our bodies.

And I don't want to focus on being fat or weight loss, because I also very much have a problem with diet culture, and fat shaming. But I just want to like, bust that myth real quick for anyone who thinks that eating fat makes you fat. Eating fat doesn't. Eating fat gives your body what it needs to heal. Every single one of your cells has fat in it. It needs it. It's that lipid bilayer around each cell, and especially the brain, you know, the brain is just a fat burning machine.

[0:21:05]

Amber: So, about a month ago, a dear, dear, dear friend, my closest friend, the woman I've spent the most time with over the last nine years — and her daughter's one of my oldest best friends, too — was diagnosed with cervical cancer. And she had borrowed that book from me back in the spring, that *Metabolic Approach to Cancer*. We both just found it really interesting. And so she immediately started eating keto, and I was like, "I'm gonna get back into it, too." Y

You know, I was loving it back in the spring when I was doing that. I felt so good. And then we had this, like, horrible summer that I've talked about before, starting with me getting shingles. And then we just kind of reverted right back to comfort food, you know, but I knew I wanted to get back into it. And so her getting cancer and needing to eat this diet to heal because cancer cells live off of sugar. That is their fuel source. If you deprive them of that, they can't grow anymore. They can't Spread.

So I decided to start eating keto again as support for my friend, and because I wanted to do it, and I just feel amazing. I love it. It makes me feel so good, and I love it that it is in a very, like, broad, broad sense, connecting me to my ancestors, to the 99.5% of my ancestors and yours, who were hunter gatherers, and who were mostly focusing on animal fats, and then some animal protein as well in their diets with minimal grain, if any, I think, depending on where they lived and what was available to them.

[0:22:40]

And so if you had — I posted about this on Instagram yesterday and had a bunch of people interested in what resources I would recommend. Just last night, we watched this film on Netflix called *The Magic Pill*. And I know that that's kind of an ironic title because it just seems like too good to be true or, you know, that kind of marketing that's just trying to like grab your attention. But I understand also why they chose that title because when the body is in ketosis, it can heal what whatever is going on in it.

And in the film, they look at some Aboriginal peoples in Australia and talk about, you know, their original diet, and then how that changed when White people came along and introduce processed foods to them. And this is something I've always been interested in, since finding the work of Weston A. Price, and all the different indigenous peoples that he studied back in the 20s and 30s, and how their foods and, therefore, health changed so much when White people came in, Europeans, and introduce processed foods into their diets.

And then the other part of the film is focusing on individuals, someone with diabetes, a few people with diabetes, you know, weight issues, asthma, and actually a whole bunch of issues. They end up talking to a lot of people, and a six year old with autism.

And that, especially, that story made me so emotional. It really hit me watching the place that this little girl was in, in her own mind. She's six. I think they say that at the beginning of the film, and you know, they're just eating goldfish Doritos, macaroni and cheese, highly, highly processed foods. And bless her parents for being so open with this film crew about what they were eating and what they were doing.

And so they throw out all that food, and they teach them how to cook high fats, how to cook a diet high in fat, and good fats, you know, not rancid fats and not, of course, vegetable oils or those kind of fats. And they, like, document her first five days of eating this way, and she hates it, right. She's freaking out, her sister, too. They want the food that they're used to, and the food that they are, literally, physically addicted to.

Her dad actually talks about how it reminded him of when he was a drug addict and just desperately need that fix, that fix. But the parents, they know that this is not good for their children, and they can't do it anymore. And they have to take this opportunity to do this.

And so on day five, the little girl, Abigail, finally shifts and starts eating the food that they're making for her. And you can imagine, I mean, you know, I'm talking about how terrible these three, now six weeks, of Nixie not sleeping were. But five days of your kids like not wanting to eat, and not eating, and freaking out about food, that just sounds absolutely terrible.

But they make it through, and the girls start eating this good, whole, fatty food. And within days, within days, Abigail... just watch the film.

She makes these changes, she becomes more present. They'd always had to feed her with a fork, and she starts, she just picks up the fork one day and puts it in her mouth. And later in the film, they show her handing things to people when asked to, and her sister says, "She's never done that before."

And I just cried every time this child was on screen, especially as she's healing, and her parents are talking about all the changes they're seeing with her, because it's so profound what feeding our body the right nutrients does for the brain, for the cells, for the mitochondria, for everything.

And I, you know, a lot of people talk about the GAPS diet Yaya and I talked about that in Episode 22. Very similar, it's just, you know, not giving our kids these crazy foods that disrupt their body systems, disrupt their very cells, and ourselves as well. You know, some of the weight loss stories are so dramatic in this film, and one woman, who was on very, very high levels of insulin, completely goes off her insulin after 10 weeks eating ketogenically.

And it's delicious. I love it. I'm like, this is the food I crave all the time anyway. Eggs, egg yolks, raw dairy works for me. So a lot of raw cheese and bacon and butter, so much grass-fed butter, lots of veggies, and it just... I love it. It's been amazing.

[0:27:21]

Amber: So some other, some resources I'd recommend besides that film, *The Magic Pill*, are everything Bulletproof. You know, a lot of people have written to be like, "You're into Bulletproof? That's so surprising to me." And I think it's for the same reason that it seems kind of like "bro culture" and, you know, techie.

And it is, but also Dave Asprey is amazing. His story's amazing, and I love his books, and I love his podcast, and he really understands the science and the body and the mitochondria. His book, *Head Strong*, is all about mitochondria, and it's just fascinating.

And the Bulletproof diet is a lot stricter than just keto, but I really appreciate at least having that book around to refer to like, "Oh yeah, what did he say about this food and that food? And what's the science on this?" And I'm a lot more flexible than the Bulletproof diet, but it's still very much the foundation of the way I'm eating.

And his podcast is incredible. I would listen to almost any episode at any time because there's always going to be very, very good knowledge in there.

I've also really been liking the podcast the *Keto for Women* show with Shawn Myner. If you are a woman thinking about this, for sure, listen to the first two episodes, and you can see which other episodes speak to you. But there's definitely some special considerations for women. An keto is kind of a bro culture, you know, so I love having that resource around.

And then books by Nora Gedgaudas, who is interviewed in *The Magic Pill*. It's G-E-D-G-A-U-D-A-S. She has *Primal Body, Primal Mind*, I think it's called, and then *Primal Fat Burner*. She's great. She, oh my gosh, she just goes like deeper than anyone into all of it. Super, super educated, super amazing. And in *Primal Fat Burner*, she tells the story of her months in Alaska — not Alaska, like near the North Pole in the Arctic — studying wolves. And how she just naturally gravitated to, like, almost a full fat diet and how amazing that was and how much weight she lost and how much clearer she was.

And like so many of us who are conscious of health and food, she had been, you know, vegan, and even a raw foodist, I think, before that, and she couldn't believe how much better she felt. And so that kind of started her on this lifelong journey of interest in nutrition.

And you can also look for on podcasts, she's been on a number of podcasts, and she's amazing, and maybe I'll invite her to be on this one someday, too. I am going to take a little break from interviewing, but there will not be a break in terms of shows coming out because I really need to catch up on interviews I've already done.

Okay, if you're still listening, thank you. Thank you for listening to me talk so much about things that I love talking About.

[0:30:00]

Amber: Let me tell you a little bit about Angela Willard:

She became a clinical herbalist through the Wild Rose College of Natural Healing in 2005. She has since practiced as an herbalist through many avenues including consulting, growing herbs, wildcrafting and co-creating the Harmonic Arts Botanical Dispensary. Angela actively adds herbal and health tools to her basket of wisdom by continually upgrading her knowledge with a strong focus on women's health and wellness.

Her love for the sea has also led her to exploring and understanding the deep underwater world of seaweeds, which you will find her... which will you often find her teaching out and about in the community. Her excitement for the positive impact on health seaweeds have on people and planet has her embarking on a new journey with a new endeavor called Seaweed Gardens.

As of this fall, she will be planting her first crop of ocean plants. We talked about that a little bit in the interview. Sharing information that empowers people to live with integrity and reach their highest potential as a true calling, one which fuels her on her path, Angela balances her time between raising a young family and nourishing her passion and purpose as an herbalist.

You can find out what she's been up to on her company website harmonicarts.ca and watch for more to come from her newest work on SeaweedGardens.ca.

I want to briefly mention here that when we talk about cancer fighting properties of brown seaweeds and fucoxanthin, as soon as we hung up, I told her about my friend's cervical cancer diagnosis and got on her website and bought her a fucoxanthin extract for my friend, and my friend is just so excited to take it and feels, you know, very blessed to have this medicine available. And thank you so much, Angela, for harvesting these seaweeds, learning about them, knowing how to properly process them, and make the medicine as strong as it can be, and putting it out there into the world through Harmonic Arts. We're so grateful to be able to have these for my friend, and I also got her the Five Mushroom blend, also cancer fighting.

[0:32:07]

Amber: And something else I just want to briefly mention, since I just talked about ketosis and talked a lot about babies and children here — and Angela is going to talk about that, too, in the interview — is that babies are naturally in ketosis when they're breastfeeding.

Breast milk has... it has some sugar, but it's not very much, and, you know, it's mostly fat and a little bit of protein. And so babies are — okay, I'm not a breast milk expert. I know it's sweet because there's the sugars, but it still meets like the keto ratios of the macronutrient contents, and so little ones are in ketosis all the time. And if they're just breastfeeding, I think that's really sweet.

And it's only when we start to feed them carbs that they break out of ketosis and can start becoming glucose burners. And if you're a glucose burner, you are inflamed all the time, and it's so hard to eat from that state.

And I just love thinking about how indigenous people, still eating their traditional food,s and prehistoric humans were just so healthy and robust. There was no degenerative disease, you know. There's always the odd cancer mutation, and that's just part of being human, but so much less so. So, so much less than today.

And one final thing I want to say is that when I went into my email just now to search in me and Angela's emails, I accidentally typed her name into, like, the Google search. And what came up was all these videos of her talking about seaweed. I haven't watched them yet, but if you're into what she talks about, I think you probably would be into watching these videos, too. So you can just Google her name.

Oh, and her Patreon offering, you guys, is a resource page. So you can go deeper into what she shares on this show because it's super, like, packed with information. The parts where we talk about seaweed, there's so much good stuff. Like, if you're a note taker, you're gonna be furiously scribbling things down. Because, again, if you have a body, like, you want seaweeds in that body. So there's books, cookbooks, books on the nutrition and medicine, and topical applications, which we're didn't even get into, guidebooks, you know, like, foraging your own, studies, and then websites to follow up on. And, you know, things about the constellation work that we talked about and their seaweed product that they sell, too. So that's it. [Patreon.com/MedicineStories](https://www.patreon.com/MedicineStories). You can check it out there, a beautiful resource page. Thank you, Angela.

And so, yes, I also want to say — sorry, very quickly — that at the beginning here, I kind of I talk about a masculine and a feminine presence and energy that I was feeling. And I just want to say that I know that these binaries are... what's the word? What is that word? Like, I don't know. I can't think of the word, but culturally-constructed. I'm always aware of that when I'm speaking of

masculine, feminine, male, female, that, of course, there's so much more and so much in between. So before you hear me talk about this “masculine room” I was in and then this “feminine room” that I went into and masculine presence and feminine presence, just know that I understand how culturally-constructed these ideas are, and that I love all the spaces in between.

Okay, let's hear from Angela Willard.

(Transitional Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[Interview Begins]

[0:35:42]

Amber: Alright. Hi Angela. Welcome to Medicine Stories.

Angela: Hi Amber. Thank you for having me. Nice to speak with you.

Amber: Yeah, you too. So we connected at the Good Medicine Conference this year, and I just want to tell the brief story of the day I went into your class.

So I think we had spoken briefly the day before, because you were in my ancestral medicine class with Milla. And this day, I could not decide which class I wanted to take. There was your seaweed class. And then there was another class that also was intriguing me, and my friend who I was there with, we were texting back and forth about which one to go to. And I said, “I just can't decide. So you decide.” And she chose the other one.

So I went and I met her in the other class. And it was in that. like, industrial building, you know, where I think where you taught your class with her?

Angela: The thalassotherapy class?

Amber: Yes, yes, and it was just, you know, kind of like this very... it was a man teacher, very masculine class, very masculine setting. And, I mean, that's fine, but I just wasn't feeling it. I wasn't feeling this subject either. And you know, you feel bad leaving a class even though teachers always say it's okay, you just don't want to do it. And after like, five minutes, I was just wanting to go to you so badly. And I was like, “I gotta go,” and left that environment, that classroom, that energy, and walked into your class, which is like, you know, you walked down the stairs to get there.

It was just kind of a whole other field. It was almost oceanic, you're wearing this like oceanic outfit. *(Amber laughs)* Do you choose that especially when you teach about seaweed? You had, like, this green on. It was very flowy.

Angela: It depends. Sometimes I like to wear green or blue for seaweed class.

Angela: It really was like it felt like a womb in that classroom.

Amber: Yes. Yeah, exactly! And then your energy is very maternal, you know, and female. And I just was really struck. Like I hadn't really realized, you know, what I was saying earlier about how masculine that space and class had been. But as soon as I walked into your classroom, I was like, "Oh, so that's just like the polar opposite of where I just was, and this feels like exactly where I want to be." And then I lost my mind over your content, and we'll get into that.

But first, I would like to, I would just want to acknowledge that you're pregnant.

Angela: Yeah, yeah I'm 29 weeks tomorrow so expecting a winter baby and really excited to nestle into the colder months and raise this child.

Amber: Wow and how old are your boys?

Angela: My other two boys are eight and 10, so after I think it was, as you know, it's a big choice to bring a child into the world and having done so twice before I think I over thought it. And so we, it took us about three years to decide and really go for it, and figured we just wanted to have one more, one more experience with another being in that way.

Amber: Wow, both of my girls, born 10 years apart, were surprises, and I just, you know, longed to have that experience of consciously conceiving, which I will not ever have, because I'm not going to have another one. But that's so beautiful, especially to do it eight years later. I mean, you know, you're putting yourself back at the beginning in a very real way.

Angela: I am, and I wonder sometimes if I forget what I'm in for a little bit, but also, I want to rewrite that story.

And when we had our two boys, we also started our business right in between. So we have an eight and 10 year old, and then a nine year old business going on 10. So it was a really hard juggle for me, especially raising little ones and needing to be very committed and involved with building our work that was going to feed our children our family. So it is a little bit blurry the first couple of years, and I felt, you know, my predominant emotion was frustration throughout that. And I wanted to — now that I've we've landed and we've grown roots, and things are a lot more stable in our lives — we wanted to do it in a different experience. So yeah, just for the sake of change and new and growth and new experiences. Even though we're having another child and have had two before — this is the fourth for my husband. He also has a daughter from a previous relationship, a beautiful 18 year old girl named Reishi — and well, we just we just thought this would be a whole new experience for us, and we're really looking forward to it.

Amber: Aww, what a lucky baby. That's so sweet. So, yeah, what are your boys names, and do you you know... you just mentioned Reishi's name, and your husband is Yarrow, or "Yarrow" as Canadians say (*Amber laughs*).

Angela: Yeah, and well, our oldest son is Rowan, like the tree, the mountain ash, in these parts. Rowan in more of the Celtic and Druidic culture, and then the Linden tree as well. So two trees for boys, a mushroom for girl, and not sure. We're really struggling, actually, with a name coming through for this child, and I guess we just have to wait to meet him.

Amber: Is it a boy?

Angela: It's a boy. Yeah.

[0:41:45]

Amber: Wow. Yeah. My oldest is named Mycelia.

Angela: Oh, wow! That's beautiful.

Amber: Yeah, it was funny because it was a joke I had made when I was two months pregnant to her dad. We were in the car, and I was like, "We could name her Mycelia," and we were like "Hahaha." And, really, by the time she came, we just didn't have a name.

And then we did a lotus birth, and, you know, kept the cord attached until it fell off on its own, which I did not do with Nixie, with my two-year old now, you know. We waited a few hours for the cord with her, but with Mycie we waited those two days. And then when it dried up on its own, we, like, snapped it.

And then it just so happens that her, my dad, my mom, my grandma, and my partner at the time's mom were all there. So she had three grandparents and one great grandparent there that day. And we went out into the garden and did this, like, impromptu ceremony for just saying goodbye to her to her placenta, and I cried. It felt like this severance that I wasn't ready for, and, you know, it was a real pain in the ass carrying that thing around for those two days postpartum.

But then everyone went inside, and we stayed outside, and we kind of ended up, like, presenting her to the sun in this way that was very Lion King. We didn't mean it to be, but she was a little Leo. And then we looked at each other, and both of us were like, "I think her name is Mycelia. Yeah, like that's her name."

Angela: Wow. Covered in goosebumps right now. That's beautiful. I love that story.

Amber: Yeah. And, you know, it's kind of funny ever since. Sometimes I'm like, "That's a crazy name to give a kid," (*Amber laughs*) you know. And some people are like, "Weird," and some people are like, "That's amazing," and some people just like, "Cute! That's pretty."

But I just kind of hoped that it would help her find her people, you know, that it would attract the right people to her as she goes throughout her life. And she likes it, so.

[0:43:40]

Angela: Well, and I also believe that a name is like it's the strongest mantra you can have throughout your lifetime because you hear it so much. And so the tone and the rhythm in which it's spoken, and all of the different sounds have an impact on your being and so trying to be really mindful around the quality of the name, as far as how it will fit the spirit and help to carry it through his lifetime.

And I really wanted — as my husband is quite energetic and full of life — I was hoping to cultivate, also, some rooted and grounded qualities in our children, in our two boys. So I chose Rowan and Linden partly because of the softness of the sounds as well.

Amber: And what... how are those boys? (*Amber laughs*)

Angela: They're crazy. (*Angela laughs*) We're still... We're working on it. No, they're crazy, it's all I can see is such strong health and vibrancy. And I love so much that they have that zest for life and that wild edge to them, and also grateful that their father has that, too, to counter with them and play out with them in ways that aren't me.

I'm, as you had mentioned experiencing our first meeting, I'm very maternal and more grounded in that sense. And so we do play strongly polar opposites to one another, and so grateful that each other has the other end of the gift of life that we could bring into that wholeness together as a family.

It's something that we really, you know, acknowledge and honor within one another that there are those differences and how it brings strength to the family and to the relationships.

Amber: Mm hmm. Yeah, again, Lucky boys. I could really see that health and vitality in them, you know, just observing from afar at the Confluence, they're really beautiful. And you can tell that they have a like living relationship with nature.

Angela: Well, we're fortunate to live in a, I mean, I guess anywhere in the world, you have the choice to emerge into nature. And however, here on the West Coast, I find that they're able, we don't shy away from the colder months, the way I would have at the foothills of the Rockies where I grew up, where we'd get -30, -40 degrees Celsius in the winter sometimes, and it wasn't as much of an outdoor lifestyle all throughout the year.

Whereas here, the milder temperate climate, it really speaks to us, and it resonates with us on a cellular level. So we're always wanting to be outside and be in communion with either the land, the forest, or the sea. And it's a lovely place, a part of the world from mountains to forests to sea right down below.

[0:47:12]

Amber: And so did you move up there when you got together with Yarrow?

Angela: Yeah, so we both studied at the Wild Rose College, and we took our clinical herbalist diplomas there or studied them and then that was at the foothills of the Rockies in Alberta. And we wanted to come out to where there was more plant life.

And so what's interesting is, even though in the tropics there's the most biodiversity of plants per square foot, for example, or per square meter, here in the temperate rainforest, there's the most biodiversity of life which is a great deal from the mycelium as well and the fungi kingdom.

So we decided to move out here. Yarrow had... his mother had already moved out here, and we came to visit and knew it was right. The day we arrived to visit we knew that this is where we wanted to be.

And I spent a lot of time in Alberta begging plants to grow just based on the climate, and here it's a matter of cutting back, and I just love that lushness and feeling as though my breath is inhaling

the plants and the environment. I just thrive so much on that. And so we did decide to move here about 15 years ago now and grow our family.

Amber: Wow. And were you... so you guys really have this focus on mushrooms and seaweed. I mean, plants in general. Pollens, also, I remember at the Confluence just being like, "Wow, they're just like next level. Like, we're moving beyond just the plants. We're going to mushrooms, seaweeds, pollens."

And I would think, yeah, with that temperate rainforest up there being so rich and heavy in mycelium that perhaps that guided that interest and then being near the ocean, and yeah, I guess I just I'm curious about how those interests and focuses unfolded for you guys.

Angela: Yeah, it was absolutely from the bioregion we had found ourselves in it. It wasn't something that we had studied a lot of, other than some theory throughout the program that we took, but didn't have a lot of relationship with the algae, the macro algae, the seaweed, or the mushrooms.

And so once we moved out here, it was really interesting how we branched into different loves of nature within the realms of Vancouver Island. And Yarrow really resonated and drew towards the mushrooms and myself with the seaweeds.

And you know, I didn't learn a lot about seaweeds much more than mostly bladderwrack was what was in a lot of the herbal literature being good for the thyroid because of its iodine content, but it didn't... there wasn't a lot more on offer other than some basic kelp information. And so I was really curious about what it was that they had to offer because I was convinced that there was so much based on their energetics and their beauty, and their their ability to communicate felt so strong; that they had a message and gifts to share. And so just started to really dive deeper into that.

And then on the other side of also becoming a mother and really knowing that time being so important to focus on my health I started to really explore and expand on on women's health. And more and more I started to learn that the seaweeds were really something that could support times of transition that women go through cyclically throughout their life, where they need that extra nourishment and medicine, so to speak.

[0:51:33]

Amber: Before we go further into seaweed, let's address the question that everyone will have, which is about, you know, toxicity and radioactivity issues.

Angela: Yeah, well, they are the ocean's and the Earth's cleansers, as are many of plant life and mushrooms and seaweeds. They're all bioremediating throughout their life cycles. And so one of the things with seaweeds is they do tend to remove radioactive isotopes and heavy metals from the ocean. They also deacidify the ocean and reduce carbon emissions in the atmosphere. So they're powerful.

What I love about them so much is that they're actually regenerative. So they do more than they bring things back to neutral. They actually help to heal the planet, based on where it's at today. And so it's something that is really important for us to look deeper into and into how we can work with them further without having that fear of them having those toxicity factors.

And so, really, a lot of the radioactive isotopes, like the strontium and the cesium, they're very heavy, heavy, heavy particles. So they tend to sink down deep into the depths of the ocean. And that's where you know a lot of the... it ends up in the food chain, primarily concentrated in the deeper cold water fish like the tunas. And so it's more... you have to proceed more with caution based on the fish that you're eating if you're concerned about those aspects of radiation.

Now, with the seaweeds, they do absorb iodine, and they don't decipher whether it's natural iodine or a radioactive isotope, which is the harmful version that once we ingest can affect our thyroids, our ovaries, our testicles, the colon, and breasts, primarily in those areas.

So the radioactive iodine has a very short half life. And basically, once the seaweed is harvested and dried, if there's concern of there being radioactive iodine within the fronds, within the seaweed that you're going to consume, if you leave it out to dry for 60 days, then that iodine evaporates out of it, and there isn't... it will test to be clear after that point. Now, that's only if it's growing in areas where it is needing that kind of cleansing.

So there was a big scare, I'm sure many of us heard about the Fukushima and the iodine coming over to this part of the world, the West Coast, especially here, and being absorbed into the seaweeds. Well, the only indicator of radioactive iodine levels changing after that incident, it was about two weeks later, and it came through the clouds, and it came through the rain. And that blew through and then everything was back at stable levels.

So all in all, we do have the ability to be careful with our choices with the seaweeds that we're consuming, especially if we're willing to wait a little while after we harvest it or after we purchase it. Now, generally, once you're purchasing some seaweed off of the shelves, for example, they're probably have already been harvested for at least a six-month, or sorry, 60-day period. So usually, you're safe, even just purchasing the seaweed as is.

And there's also very strict testing I know in Canada, but also happening in the US now with certificates of analysis for quality control and making sure that it is safe for human consumption. So what you're going to find on the shelves in the stores is usually going to be very safe, and if you need to take that extra step of precaution, you can wait the extra time.

[0:56:25]

Angela: The other part is, if you are going to be wild harvesting yourself, then just being sure that if you're in the Northern Hemisphere that you are not harvesting seaweed anywhere south of industry or cities. So if you can go north of a big city or metropolis then you are more likely to find cleaner patches of seaweed that you can harvest from.

And you do want to be sure that you're doing it sustainably if you are harvesting yourself. So you just give it a little haircut up top, the fronds, the leafy bit of the seaweed, never pulling the seaweed directly from its holdfast, which is similar looking to a root that holds on to the bottom of, perhaps, a rock or a seashell, or some wood, or it fastens onto something so that it can stabilize as it's growing and not just float around the ocean. So you'd never want to pull that off. You just want to generally cut the top third of the seaweed frond or leaf. It looks like a leaf; it's called a frond. So for your consumption, and then that way it can continue to grow and respire and continue to reproduce. So it's a sustainable way of harvesting.

And then one last thing to look for is if you notice that there are a lot of green seaweeds in the area, and there's a lack of balance, and it's mostly green that is predominantly taking over the area growing seaweed, that they are really heavy feeders. And so they can be indicators that it's not the cleanest area to be harvesting from. So if you have a nice balance of reds, greens, and brown seaweeds in the area, which are all the three color categories that nature offers them, then you know that it's quite likely a very clean area to be harvesting from.

[0:58:40]

Amber: Those reds, greens, and browns are color categories, but they also seem to really break down into, like, nutrient categories as well. Is that right?

Angela: Yeah, yeah. So they have... overall seaweeds have... they're generally very high nutritive and mineral, vitamin, mineral content foods. So overall, all categories are high in vitamins and minerals about, let's say, 10 to 20 times the amount of land plants.

And then as far as amino acids go there, they're comparable to legumes and eggs. So they're very good nutrition for us to be consuming. However, there are other aspects medicinally that we don't want to consume too much. It's, as we know — or you may have heard before — that the medicine or the poison is based on the dose.

And so we look to cultures that have been consuming seaweeds for a long term to see what is a, you know, a safe amount now. Now we don't want to necessarily go right up to that amount that the Asian culture, for example, in Japan, where it's very widely consumed on a regular daily basis and has been for a very long time.

So the body's ability to process and work and recognize the nutrients and the components in the seaweed is stronger than ours in North America, for example, where we have kind of forgotten the ways of eating seaweeds and including them in our daily diet. So we want to start low at about 2-3% of our overall daily consumption of food being seaweeds. And over time, and a long period of time, so gradually building that up, up to a maximum of about 10% which is what is consumed in Asia. And, you know, they'll even eat about seven to 10 different species throughout the day as well.

So a lot of variety is very important. And the reason I like to talk about variety is because of the red, green, and brown factors. The more variety of those colors that you're consuming, the more you're going to get a holistic, full spectrum benefit of what the seaweeds have to offer.

[1:01:26]

Angela: So, essentially, the greens and the reds are quite similar. They're mostly immunomodulant, especially the greens, based on something in them called the ulvans. And so the immune modulating properties basically helps with either overactive immune systems or underactive immune systems. And there's an intelligence in there, within the seaweed, that it knows how to give the body what it needs based on what it's missing, or based on if there's too much going on, and it needs to cleanse that from the body.

So mostly greens are very helpful for immunodeficiencies or autoimmune disorders. And then of course, they are high in iron, and they are, again, the true sense of a superfood, where it's a lot of

nutrients and very little calories. Also, all seaweeds really are the only superfood that I know of that really can attest to that statement of being high, dense nutrition and very, very low calories.

And then the reds, they are, they're mostly antiviral, and it's the branch, the sulfated polysaccharides in the reds that help the body keep viruses from penetrating the cell walls. And so, this has been known in industry for years and has been even used in contraceptives. It's quite often you'll find red seaweed extract extracts in contraceptives for the sake of blocking STIs from transferring. And so they're often in lubricants or used on condoms and such so that helps to prevent the spread of any viruses.

Also, in red seaweeds, they have an antiparasitic effect. And so this is one of the reasons that you wouldn't want to eat copious amounts of red seaweeds on a regular basis. So anything that has a very strong antibiotic or antiparasitic or antimicrobial effect, it can be too strong on the body in larger quantities. So there's the, it's called the domoic and kainic acid components of the red seaweeds that help with, as a vermifuge, helps with any kind of worms or intestinal parasites that could be contracted through food or water. So that can help keep the digestive tract clean if eaten on a regular basis in smaller amounts. So that would be, smaller amounts would be, about 1-2% of your daily diet of reds. And so that even includes nori is considered a red, dulse, those are the two most popular reds, irish moss.

The carrageenan extract that comes from irish moss is also a red seaweed. However, carrageenan and agar are there the two parts of the red seaweed that help with emulsification and binding and gelling properties that we'll use in all kinds of industry and painting and toothpaste and ice cream, like, in everything that's thick. If you can imagine any substance that's thick, it quite likely has seaweed in it, specifically the reds.

Although they have a very strong ability to gel, they don't have a lot of bioactive to them, that part of the red seaweed. So even if you see that there's carrageenan, for example, in your almond milk, it's not going to have any bioactive action on your body or benefits the way consuming whole seaweeds would have.

[1:05:56]

Angela: And then we'll go into the browns. Generally, this is where all the kelps live, in the brown category. And they are my favorite in the sense that they really address a lot of the issues that we see today in people's health. Specifically, there's over 1000 studies on their ability to create apoptosis in cancer cells. And it's an aspect of the brown seeds called "fucoidan" in that.

What it does is cancer can go, it can be really stealth and hide in the body until the immune system's ability to recognize it can be a bit too far gone, and it's already taken a stronghold in the body. So what fucoidan does is — it's brilliant — is it goes around to these foreign mutagenic cells and flags them to the immune system and helps them recognize them as foreign and invasive so that it can then follow suit and do its job and work to eliminate these rogue cells in the body. So that's a really important piece that is being recognized all throughout the medical industry across the planet right now in many studies.

And what's really exciting about it is not only is it a very effective approach to help support the body working through cancer, but it also can also be helpful in conjunction — they're finding in the studies — with conventional therapies like chemotherapy and radiation.

So there's a lot of concern in the medical world around using complementary therapies and herbal therapies alongside conventional medicine when it comes to cancer therapy, whereas, so far until this point, none of the studies have come back as it being interfering. It's actually something that is supportive to the two working together.

[1:08:23]

Angela: And then all of the seaweeds do have iodine in them. However, the brown seaweeds have the highest amount.

So, if you're looking to increase your intake of iodine, then you, really, you want to focus on the browns for that sake. If you're looking for getting the least amount of iodine, then focusing on the reds would be more ideal because they have the least amount. Specifically, the nori has the least amount of iodine, and that would be so for things like a hyperthyroid condition, or if you're concerned, if you're working with Hashimoto's then, and you're concerned about iodine feeding the thyroid, then you would, you could, still work with seaweeds, but focus more on the reds. And that way the body can still get the vitamins and minerals that it needs.

Now all of these seaweeds are fantastic for a vegan diet or a plant-based diet because of their high amounts of minerals and amino acids and iron. So that's one one area where I would most especially recommend that if you're not getting those building blocks from animal proteins, and animal sources of food, then making sure that you're getting enough seaweed in your diet to supplement those needs is quite important.

So, iodine, as I had mentioned before, is used and accumulated in the thyroid, breasts, ovaries, testicles, and colon. And what iodine does is it can help protect the body from absorbing any kind of environmental toxins, specifically in the form of xenoestrogens, which basically are delivered to us via plastics and heavy metals and even in some fungus.

And so, the receptors in the body basically, if they are topped up with sufficient amounts of iodine, they will protect the body from absorbing the xenoestrogens and the environmental toxins — that that are circulating more and more around in our planet, unfortunately — from penetrating our bodies.

And so, along with that aspect, the protective aspect of the iodine, in conjunction with something else in the brown seaweeds called alginates, which is basically an insoluble fiber that moves through the digestive tract, and it acts like a toxin sponge. And it's brilliant for especially heavier particles, like heavy metals, and just cleansing out the GI tract from any kind of bits of food that can be stagnant and haven't moved all the way through, just cleansing out the colon, and then, of course, from heavy metals and radiation.

It's like a toxin sponge. It just gathers all that up and moves it straight out through the body. So it's between the iodine, which prevents the absorption of these particles, and then the alginate, that moves it out, it's a really great shield that we can use in consuming kelps on a daily basis to protect our bodies from the distortions of chemistry that have been happening through industry.

[1:12:33]

Angela: So, overall, I've just been finding that when I'm working with anybody's health in a consultation, and there are hormonal imbalances, stress from lack of — well, number one, from lifestyle — but then, combined with lack of proper nutrition to support stressful processes in the body. Any kind of environmental toxicity build-up issues with digestion.

Fatty Liver is a big one. I didn't mention that, but the brown seaweeds also helped protect against fatty liver and encourages the liver to dispel any fat accumulations around and deposits around the liver. It's been shown in studies that is a very effective approach to work with fatty liver, the non-alcoholic version, because there's fatty liver that can be acquired from alcoholism, and then there's also from a high fat and sugar and carbohydrate diet. So when it's especially from inbound diet, the kelps can help to counter that effect of the fatty liver that is as a result of such a diet. So there's, I mean, there's just so much.

It's usually the number one recommendation I'll make for any health concern is to start to bring in a variety of reds, greens, and brown seaweeds into the daily diet in balance of all three colors. It can be in dried form, fresh, cooked in soups and stews, used in salad dressing, I put it in my kids' oatmeal. It's a really easy medicine to incorporate into your food. So it's one of my favorite ways of letting food be my medicine is consuming seaweeds on a regular basis and sticking to that.

Overall, I find that maintaining those choices helps to to keep me resilient in a lifestyle that is pretty full-on between raising children, growing a baby, building this or keeping up with this, the life of this business that's taken on its own vitality and just needs more and more attention and energy to keep it moving. So yeah.

Amber: That's amazing. (*Amber laughs*) It's just, like, overwhelming just how amazing seaweeds are and their interaction with the human body, and it really just seems like medicine for these times with all the toxicity issues that's happening.

And 1 in 2 men and 1 in 3 women will get cancer, and they're expecting that number to greatly increase in the next few decades. It seems like everyone I know has been diagnosed with autoimmune issues lately.

Angela: Yeah.

[1:16:12]

Amber: And, you know, there's just, it's just amazing. Again, I'm going to use that word for a third time. That these ancient life forms that have been in the oceans forever can be so supportive of the specific health crises facing humans today.

Angela: And I almost feel like that's why the use and practice of them went to sleep for a while because it wasn't it wasn't needed yet. And that it's starting to wake up again, because the call is there, and they're answering it. And, you know, between the seaweeds and then, of course, the mushrooms which have a lot of similar properties, but work in biologically completely different ways, which is fascinating, but with similar results it's a really holistic approach to be eating your seaweeds and your mushrooms as regularly as possible.

They both dry up really well and so even if you don't find that you're in a climate zone that is offering them for you to harvest directly, you can still source them and know that they will be, generally, of a very integral quality.

So for example, with seaweeds, they keep their shelf life for — unlike herbs, which is one, maybe two years at the most, when dried and stored properly away from heat, light, and oxygen — when you have them contained properly, they keep their nutritional profile for 10 years. So you can do a big, you can go out and travel somewhere, where you feel really comfortable to do one harvest for yourself or your family or your community, and do it every five years if you need to.

They also are the fastest growing organisms on the planet. So not only are they cleaning the atmosphere in the ocean as they grow, they grow really quickly. So it's such a regenerative, sustainable resource that doesn't require land or irrigation.

So we can, for example, the giant kelp that grows out in these waters is the fastest growing organism on the planet. And it can grow up to two feet during the height of its season.

Amber: So your saying two feet a day?

Angela: Two feet a day, yeah.

And then another one that's out here that is just such a beauty is the bulk kelp, *Nereocystis luetkeana*. And that's the second fastest growing organism on the planet, and it grows about 10 inches a day.

And so, their life cycle is so fast and so wondrous. Like it's offering its food to us in a very sustainable format, and so it's important for us to be consuming these. They can keep up with the amount of people on the planet right now.

There are a lot of successful cultivation models, aquaculture models, that are embracing seaweed cultivation, and, specifically, the kelps that are growing so quickly. And so it's becoming a solution for supplementing foods with the proper nutrients that people are needing.

[1:20:02]

Angela: It's also at this point they've found that the kelps are when about 3% of kelp is added to livestock's diet it's minimizing methane emissions by 90% from livestock. So there's just so many pieces to working with seaweeds that helps heal everything across the planet in so many ways.

And so I really encourage people to consume seaweeds because, in doing that, it's also creating more demand, which is creating more farming of the seaweeds, which is done... It's basically the more we grow seaweed forests, the more we're giving homes for all the marine life and all the biodiversity within the oceans.

And so it's something that we really want to encourage because these forests also help to keep the currents regulated within the seas and then lessen the impact of the waves on the shores. And also then a lot of the seaweeds that are offcast from the storms remineralize the earth, too, when they're washed up along shore.

Amber: Oh, wow. Yeah, I remember you spoke about using seaweeds as like compost, with compost tea, right?

Angela: Yeah, there's a couple of ways that you can do that. I was just visiting my good friend, Prannie Rhatigan, in Ireland in June when I went to speak at the Seaweed for Health Conference there. And when we went up to her place in Sligo, and she was showing me how they put a very thick layer of seaweed mulch on their gardens at the beginning of the winter season, so that it has time, throughout the storms, to break down and be like a slow release of nutrients back into the gardens.

It also really helps — because it is a damp climate there — with the slugs so when they don't like the saltiness of the seaweeds, so they stay away, but then also when the seaweeds are dried, they can slice their bellies on the seaweeds. So they stay away from the garden beds when the seaweeds are on there. So it's really great at feeding the soil.

And then also for mulch, to protect it from weeds from growing, so that you can grow what you're choosing to grow and then also from certain pests as well.

Amber: Wow. And that woman that you just mentioned, She's the author of the book, right?

Angela: *The Irish Seaweed Kitchen*. Yes, it's fantastic. She grew up in northwestern Ireland. And seaweed was part of her daily life, and it still is. And so has a lot of wisdom and folklore to share around seaweed. And yet, within her book, she's also approached a lot of chefs from around the world that work with seaweeds and ask for their favorite recipe. And then the photography and the layout is beautiful in this book.

It's a really nice, user-friendly way to start incorporating seaweeds into your culinary explorations because it all tastes good, and it's really easy to follow.

[1:24:00]

Amber: I love that on this podcast, we've talked quite a bit about food and ancestry, and, you know, using food as a way to connect with your ancestry. And I've really been uncovering my Scottish, and just last week I found Irish in there. I knew it was there and Ancestry DNA updated its results, you know, the science is always getting better. So the same day I got new results that finally showed Ireland. I actually found, like, genealogy in my family tree on Ancestry also, people in Ireland.

Angela: It's a powerful place. I had just gone there for the first time in June, and I couldn't believe how the land spoke to me. I didn't expect that because I had traveled a fair amount before rooting in with family, and it's rare that I felt that. And, really, the first time I had felt so strongly was coming here to the West Coast.

But now, since going to Ireland, it was another strong sense of the land telling stories and in ways that hadn't been covered up or distorted. Like, it was just so clear and beautiful. What a lovely, magical land.

Amber: Yeah, when I see photos of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands, it just hits me in a way that nothing else does. And yeah, when Nixie's a few years older, I want to take everyone.

So okay, that makes me want — I've so many seaweed questions, but we do have limited time, and we'll get into some resources before we hang up and further reading for listeners.

[1:25:45]

Amber: But I wanted to ask you, you said that you worked with family constellations, and I've always been really curious of what that technique is and how it works.

Can you tell me a bit about your experience with it?

Angela: Yeah, well, it's a family member of ours is a facilitator of working with constellations. And so I've done some work with her guidance around, basically, the theory is that all of the answers are in the force, in the matrix, in essence, in life matter that surrounds us and is interpenetrating us. And so when we're looking for confirmation or guidance or direction, and have trouble accessing that within, then there's a way in which constellations are facilitated with other beings in the room, but it can also be done with objects where the questions are asked to either the objects or the other beings in the room that then are able to embody the messages, and sometimes the spirits that in which that the person that is on the learning journey and asking the questions within the process can ask and access.

And it was very powerful to see how — especially when there was neutral people in the room that didn't know one another, could come in without any kind of preconceived ideas or notions, and just be an open vessel for what was to come in, and the guidance that was to take place within it.

Also, we've worked with it a few times for our own family direction, sometimes our business direction, just when we feel really at a loss for decisions, and we've gotten all of the concrete information that we need to logistically make a decision, but then when we need extra help within the heart and spirit realms. We've gone to this person who's helped us find answers that were already there inside, but just to hear them more clearly from an objectionable kind of point of view as to see it kind of all happening outside. So it's definitely... it's not something that I've ever facilitated, but I've participated in and found great value in throughout difficult times and process.

And it's similar, I think, to any form of divinity work where it's being asked to Greater Spirit for help and just another tool or a way of hearing or receiving that information.

[1:29:02]

Amber: And does this relate to your relationship with your maternal grandmother?

Angela: Well, there was one, the first time that I took part in a constellation it was specific to healing the feminine ancestral lineage. And my maternal grandmother passed when my mother was three. And unfortunately, along with her passing, a lot of stories were lost, and I think because of the pain that was experienced from such a premature loss in my family's life, the family members that did know her, a lot of the stories were not spoken after that.

And so I didn't, neither my mother nor myself were able to really know the stories in that line and those roots other than just through feeling. And so being able to work within the constellation it was it was profound to hear and to bring her essence back and ask some questions, and I think that they were all within me, as I was in her at one point when when she was leaving, as my mother

was being formed, as in one of the eggs that was being, going to be conceived from my mother at one point.

But I feel like it gave me such a profound sense of getting to know her and understand her in a way that felt so mysterious for so long. I could really touch in with her essence and know who she was and what she had wanted to bring to this line that had otherwise been cut off through direct forms of communication in the physical world.

Amber: Wow, that's, yeah, that really makes me want to explore that work. I've had it recommended to me so many times. It's beautiful.

Angela: Yeah. And it's, and if and when you do embark on on those experiences, you'll probably notice the similarities of, throughout many cultures, different forms of divinity that have a similar theory, but perhaps just a different way of expressing it. Like perhaps it could be compared to Tarot work, or it could be compared to working with ruins or, you know, there's similar forces at play that are offering up that information.

Amber: Like different systems that reflect you back to yourself.

Angela: Exactly. That's right.

[1:32:25]

Amber: Yeah. So okay, let's circle back to seaweed quickly. I'm thinking if I was listening right now, and was a total newbie, that these might be questions I've had. So, of course, people can find a good identification guide for their region. You recommended Pacific Seaweeds, which I got, and it's great. But something that really blew my mind that I think he says in that book, and maybe you talked about, too, is that there's really like only two species that are not good to consume. It's like a really across the board you can harvest and take seaweed.

Angela: Yeah, and that now, I mean, that's — just for clarity — that's for here in the Pacific Northwest, and those are the seaweeds I've studied and I know best. So there's one called prionitis and one called desmarestia. And so the prionitis, the bleach weed, it smells like bleach, and as soon as you encounter it, you're turned off and not really wanting to consume it anyways because of its strong smell.

And the desmarestia, the acid kelp, it's got a bit of it burns a little bit on the hand. It's more acidic. So you wouldn't be drawn to also consume that seaweed, or if you put it in your bucket with your other seaweed it can start to burn holes through the other seaweeds.

Now, none of them are like mushrooms though. So you're not... it's not a lethal decision if you're not clear or educated properly on the seaweed species. It's a lot safer to explore seaweeds on the coast than mushrooms in the forest if you're a novice.

Ideally, you are going with someone that knows. However, I can safely recommend that, or did choose for myself to go out and start to learn a little bit with a guidebook, and it was okay to nibble a little bit here and there.

The worst that would happen if I did consume some of the prionitis or desmarestia is some severe indigestion. And I'd be uncomfortable for a couple of days, and it would run through and that would be it. So yeah, it is good to know that piece. But ideally, you are getting at least an intro class from phycologist in the area that knows the seaweeds and can point out the ones to look for that you don't want to consume or harvest.

[1:35:08]

Amber: I was just struck by it. Like it's so neat that they're so renewable and regenerative because, you know, as an herbalist, you really get in the mindset of conservation all the time and this almost scarcity mindset around it, you know, which is just being responsible, a responsible harvester, but not that I'm saying, "Just go out and take it all," but it's really neat knowing that you're working with something that has the ability to regenerate itself at that level.

Angela: That's right. And so it's, again, most important to recognize that tearing the seed off of what it's holding onto is not a regenerative process. And so going out with a pair of scissors when you're going to be harvesting and just giving it a little haircut is ideal.

Amber: I'm struck, too, by the parallel between the seaweeds and the mushrooms as being such modulators for so many bodily systems and really just helping to like support life and the life force at a really deep level, like working with the vital force, and both of their roles in, like, remediation and regeneration of ecosystems.

Angela: Well, there's a level of intelligence there that seems — I don't want to say advanced. It's not like greater or lesser than. But it's different than what we're used to working with within our gardens.

And I think, probably, because it's underneath, like, whether it's the mycelium that's underground, or the seaweeds that are underwater, there's something about that sub-level of communication that can work in different ways. That has more of a magical feel to beings that are more conscious-level, you know, above ground, where they operate day-to-day.

There's something about going swimming with the kelps in the ocean and seeing them, each and every one, for their own spirit, and the way in which they speak to you is so profound. It's like nothing else to be under there with the community of kelps and meet them, each one, individually, as their own being, and it's one of the most magical sensations.

Amber: That sounds lovely. I miss the ocean.

[1:37:52]

Amber: And I also wanted to ask about you mentioned putting like seaweed in your kids oatmeal, but do you have other tips or other ways you incorporate both seaweeds and mushrooms into your daily life and make sure that your family is ingesting them?

Angela: Well, yeah, I mean, just this morning we had chanterelles with eggs. That's one of our favorites for mushrooms. But we also do mushroom drinks. They have a real nice, earthy flavor. So I'll do medicinal mushroom hot chocolate for my kids. You can make a really strong mushroom tea and then add some cacao powder and some maple or honey. So that's one way. Smoothies is always really great. Whether it's fresh seaweeds or dried I can pop that into their smoothies.

One of my children he'll live off of beach seaweed and garden kale and raw broccoli. Like, he just loves that. The other one it's, like, if it has any color he's not interested. (*Angela laughs*) So especially for my younger, Linden, I've had to really get creative with my ways in which I put them into the foods.

Putting them in smoothies is always just such an easy way to do it, and/or hot drinks in the wintertime, hot herbal drinks with a little bit of honey, and some kind of fat, whether it's a creamer from a nut or butter or whatever your choices to add fat just because then it slows the absorption, and then they get the most out of the medicine.

And they also love the flavor kids — I think we all do. I think we all thrive off of good fats and so be sure to add that in, and it's a really good vehicle as well as is the sweetener. The sweetener can be a vehicle to drive the medicine further into the tissues. So making sure to include some of that in the drinks is something that I know is benefiting them if I'm pairing it with bioactive, nutritive foods. If it was just sweetener for the sake of sweet, then that's something else, but it is a great delivery mechanism into the body.

Amber: Right, deeper into the tissues.

Angela: And then lastly is the broths. And, you know, you can make a really rich broth with all of the medicine, and then add in the things that they like, and know that base, that foundation, is nourishing them in the way that you're intending.

[1:40:50]

Amber: You also remember spoke about using seaweeds in your ferments, like you make sauerkraut.

Angela: Yeah, and that was something I hadn't mentioned.

Raw brassicas are goitrogenic which means, when we eat raw broccoli or kale, or anything in the brassica family, they actually require more iodine for absorption for the body to process these foods. And so what I do is I, for a couple reasons, that reason for one is, because of the iodine content in the seaweed, I add it with my ferments, my sauerkrauts, but then also it helps it from going mushy.

So, the extra iodine helps to counter the need for more iodine in eating the brassicas, but then also, its ability to absorb water. So a dried form of seaweed will absorb 10 times the amount its weight in water. And so it can be really helpful if you're struggling with mushy krauts ferments which can happen at the beginning when you're just getting that balance and that art right. So seaweed seems to help really mitigate that issue.

[1:42:11]

Amber: And then you guys, Harmonic Arts, you sell powdered and small little flakes of seaweed and mushrooms, as well, and we've been using the powdered reishi in our morning coffees or teas that we also have butter in, and just been sprinkling your seaweed mixture, you know, onto our food, and that's kind of been my intro into incorporating those foods into my daily life.

Angela: Yeah, those are definitely some of my favorite products in my household with my kids is the mushroom powders. They're so easy just to make those drinks or add to sauces or soups or anything, really. And they absorb in really minimally. It's not like there's a bunch of grit and the kids...

And then the Sea-Veg, it's called a Sea-Veg Blend I just I love this because it's got a blend of red, green, and brown seaweeds in flaked form. So really, you know, a tablespoon of that a day is all you really need for your seaweed needs. And it's simple and easy, and it doesn't have a strong flavor. For some that are really sensitive to the flavor of seaweed that's another aspect, but usually it's because your body isn't used to absorbing its glyconutrients.

So, the fucols in the seaweeds, the cell receptors, take a little time to remember. If seaweed hasn't been a part of your diet in your lifetime, or even throughout your ancestors' lifetimes — so throughout the last 20 to 60 years — then it can take up to two months of a little bit of seaweed each day for you to start enjoying it again.

And so we see that often, and then all of a sudden, people can't get enough of it once the bodies know how to process it, which seems quite naturally the way, you know. You would be having an aversion or attraction to something, based on how your body's ability to process and work with it would be.

So the Sea-Veg I love because it can go really... it can sneak into other foods without taste, or you can have it as a feature as a garnish, and it can really enhance the flavor as well.

Seaweed has a classic flavor called “umami” which is that special sixth flavor that is kind of like a universal flavor of all of the flavors tied into harmony in one and very big in Asian culture and cuisine, and it's through the seaweed that that flavor is acquired.

Amber: Yeah, my two-year-old loves the Sea-Vege, you know. If I put it on her food she just tries to eat the seaweed on top (*Amber laughs*) and just leaves the food and “More, more, more.”

Angela: Kids love seaweed. They really do. I feel like they were born ready to absorb and use seaweed. It's just if a number of years go by when it hasn't been introduced into our diets — other than maybe the odd piece of sushi — then it can take a little longer to start to enjoy for some. But I would recommend pushing through that because over time people... I've yet to see if someone that has had it regularly, not enjoyed it over, you know, a few weeks to a couple moon cycles time.

[1:46:09]

Amber: Well, as we end, I'm feeling called to circle back to the beginning of our conversation and to read back to you something that you wrote to me in preparation for this interview. You said:

The greatest journey of healing I've experienced is in raising a family.

Prior to committing to family life, I had led a very independent transient path. 14 years into my partnership and raising our children together, I have been called to face so many depths of learning and soul work that I would have otherwise been able to walk away from and find the next great adventure to bring instant satisfaction.

The long term work we've been doing as a family keeps me rising to higher and deeper levels of myself than I have ever known.

Angela: So true.

Amber: Yeah, just really struck by that and really resonating with you as a mom.

Angela: Yeah, I mean it's just... it's my greatest joy and has been the biggest amount of work to maintain, and it's definitely stretched my levels of commitment and loyalty in ways that I never knew possible, and the rewards that have come through that have been many fold.

And it's always in these sweet little moments that are invaluable, and yet the greater picture is a wonderful thing, too, but it's those moments of connection and love, and seeing your impact make a difference on the lives of the people you love, including yourself, which has also been a big full circle learning for me. I definitely, I put myself last and still work with that within my family dynamics, and, however, now I see putting myself first is the best thing I can do for them, and it feels really good, too, on my end.

Amber: Yeah, I was lucky to have learned that eventually with my oldest and been able to incorporate it as much as I can now with my little one.

[1:48:30]

Amber: And I found, too, you know, we have similar lives. We run a similar business, while mothering two kids, and with our partners, you know, just being in full partnership as far as family and business goes.

And, you know, it's just amazing, as a mom that your time is so limited your "free time", your time away from intensive mothering, that I just find I get so much done in my, like, nine to 12 hours a week when I'm not intensely mothering that it's just like, I'm so much more focused and efficient than I was before being a mom.

Angela: And it's so gratifying isn't it? To know those abilities are so strong and able and rewarding, to take that time and have that contrast from doing you and then doing family.

And, like, even right now speaking with you is, is the most wonderful thing. I am so grateful to have this sacred space, quiet surroundings, to be here and speak and communion with you in this way that isn't so like the other end of my life, which can be... it can feel very chaotic, you know, in the throes of it all. And so, to have those balance is going to bring me back to my family after I leave you here with so much joy and appreciation for the excitement and that kind of Tigger kind of energy that I hold onto. (*Angela laughs*)

Everything is vibrating at a much higher level in a different way. It's... I love the contrast. It keeps me in a space of gratitude throughout it all, and I'm really grateful to have the opportunity to do both.

[1:50:37]

Amber: Thank you so much, Angela. I just, I mean, hearing you speak about the seaweed, I know that you present at conferences and are really, I'm thinking, like emerging as a leading voice in this

moment, because it seems to me like it's been somewhat underground, you know. There's not a ton of books. It's hard to find the information, and I'm glad you're doing this work. And I wonder if you... what's on your horizon? Have you thought about writing a book?

Angela: Yeah, it's interesting. I've been thinking about it for so many years. And I need to figure out that balance of going deep in the book and staying deep with my family, and then still connected to the responsibilities of this business.

My dream, mostly, more than anything, is writing a book for herbalists around working with seaweeds, something really in depth, in the language in which we use within herbalism to apply it on a daily and clinical level, too. So yeah, I mean, it's definitely something I need to follow through with. I have half of it written. It's just getting that last bit.

And then I'm also really excited to be, because I believe so much in the seaweeds, I'm starting a seaweed garden. It's called Seaweed Gardens, and we're going to be growing kelps out here in these waters, too just as a way of giving back and doing something to model after a regenerative model, that I can then share with others as a sustainable practice that we can all be doing here in the Pacific Northwest waters.

Amber: That's amazing. And that seems like it could really be a teaching space as well.

Angela: Yeah, well and then lastly, I'm affiliated with the Wild Rose College, where I studied and did my clinical herbalist program. My husband is currently the Director of it as his father, Terry Willard, had created it. And it's been going for about, gee, 30, almost 50 years I think now, and it's a fantastic program, but it still has yet to add a seaweed component, which I'm also working on in tandem with the book, to offer this seaweed course. Hopefully, by springtime is my goal, early spring, which is going to be when the start of the next seaweed season is so that will be probably about February, March through the Wild Rose College of Natural Health.

Amber: And where can people find you online?

Angela: Well, two places, really, is Harmonic Arts, www.harmonicarts.ca, is the company of plant medicine that we source and create and make all kinds of concoctions for people's good health. And then the wildrosecollege.com is where my seaweed course is going to be up on offer, come early spring, and then there will also be a mushroom one offered by next fall, as well.

Amber: Wonderful. I'm so glad you guys exist.

Angela: Really great to meet you this past spring and hopefully get to see you again in person soon.

Amber: I would love that.

Angela: Yes, I would love that, too.

Amber: Okay, thanks, Angela.

Amber: Thank you, Amber.

(Exit Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[Closing]

[1:54:54]

Amber: Thank you for taking these medicine stories in. I hope they inspire you to keep walking the mythic path of your own unfolding self. I love sharing information and will always put any relevant links in the show notes. You can find my blog, handmade herbal medicines, and a lot more at mythicmedicine.love.

While you're there, be sure to click the black banner across the top of the page to take my quiz, "[Which Magical Herb is your Spirit Plant?](#)" It's a fun and light-hearted quiz, but the results are really in depth and designed to bring you into closer alignment with the medicine that you're in need of.

If you love the show, please consider supporting my work Patreon.com/MedicineStories. There's some cool rewards there like exclusive content, free access to my herbal e-book and online course, and the ability to chat with me.

I am a crazy busy and overwhelmed mom and adding another project into my life with this podcast is a questionable move. But I'm also so excited about it and just praying that the Patreon will allow me the financial wiggle room to keep doing it.

Another way that you can support if that's not an option is to head over to iTunes and subscribe and review the podcast. That would be super helpful. Thank you.

And thank you to Mariee Sioux for providing the music that I use. That's Marie with two E's, S-I-O-U-X. This is from her song "Wild Eyes", one of my favorites. Check out Mariee Sioux. Beautiful music.

Thank you, and I look forward to next time. Bye

[1:56:32]
