



## Medicine Stories Podcast

Episode 55 with Lola Pickett

Highly Sensitive People are the  
Psychedelic Plants of the Human Realm

September 9, 2019

[0:00:00]

*(Excerpt from today's show by Lola Pickett)*

*To know that things aren't what they seem, both on a time scale, but also, just as you're saying, all is well, not as a bypass, not as a way of being ignorant to the problems that are happening, but having a deeper relationship with the consciousness of nature and how there's so much more wisdom here than we could ever **possibly understand**.*

[0:00:26]

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

**Amber:** Hello friends! And welcome to the Medicine Stories podcast, where we are remembering what it is to be human upon the earth.

I am your host, Amber Magnolia Hill, and this is Episode 55. Today I am sharing my interview with Lola Pickett, and before that, I'm sharing a little of this interview with me, so it's somewhat of an unusual format for this show. And how this came to be is that maybe a month ago I posted a video on Instagram, an IGTV video, of myself talking about herbal body oiling...

-- Sorry, a fire plane just flew overhead so now I'm like, "Oh my gosh. Should I stop recording and see if there is a fire nearby?" I am in California for those who don't know. Yeah, talk about nervous system assaults, unexpected nervous system assaults throughout the day. --

... A video about me talking about herbal body oiling as it relates to the nervous system. And a follower, named Lola Pickett, **the** Lola Pickett, left a comment, and it started a back and forth between us, and she invited me to be a guest on her podcast, [Empath to Power](#).

And I have thought for a really long time about doing an episode specifically on being a highly sensitive person and/or an empathic person and was really wanting to find the right person. I thought about a number of people and always felt like there was something missing, something flat maybe about the approach that a lot of people bring to this conversation. It's very buzzy, right? Especially "empath" - it's such a buzz word, and it's not a word I love, but it's a word that certainly says something important. I tend to use it more as an adjective, "empathic," than as a

noun, but you know, whatever. I'm fine using that word, too. It says something. It communicates something. All language is imperfect. And for me, that is just one of those words that I see misused a lot, and I think it's because it's a concept that's commonly misunderstood. What I like about Lola is that she **really** dives deep into everything beyond the memes around being empathic or highly sensitive.

So I said yes to being interviewed on her podcast and really enjoyed it. In fact, when we stopped recording but were still speaking, I said, "You know, do you think I could play this interview on my podcast, too? Put this audio in my feed?" Because even though Lola was interviewing me, the insights that she had were so wise and brought a lot of the things that we have talked about on this podcast before into new depth.

And so, long-time listeners, you will hear a lot of things that have been covered on this show brought up again, but really expanded into new territory. So I just appreciate that so much. And then decided that if I was going to do that, I would tag on an extra 20-minute interview of me talking to Lola so you can know a little bit more about her, as would usually happen when I would be playing an interview with someone on this show.

[0:04:13]

**Amber:** So I would like to say just a few really important things, too, about the empath and the highly sensitive person conversation:

The first one is that these are two different things. There's a **lot** of overlap, and many of us are both, but they're not the same thing. So a highly sensitive person, as defined by Dr. Elaine Aron back in the 90s, especially in her book, [The Highly Sensitive Person](#), has a super finely-tuned, highly sensitive nervous system. Sensory stimuli is more stimulating to us than it is to other people, and it's different for everyone, but lights are brighter; sounds are louder; we can be easily overwhelmed by things that seem like pretty common everyday kind of stuff to other people.

Empaths feel what other beings are feeling or sense what they're sensing. So, as you can imagine, again, there is a lot of overlap. But like my mom is a really good example: she was **very** empathic. Her heart just resonated with the heart of whoever she was talking to, but she wasn't a highly sensitive person. She worked in the casinos at Harrah's Lake Tahoe for 40 years. Those lights, those sounds, that cigarette smoke, the cigars -- she hated the smoke, to be clear -- but she was fine with the lights and the sounds. It didn't get to her. So that's just a good example of someone like that.

And then there could be (and there are) many people who would be really sensitive to the lights and the sounds but just are not, like, empathizing with everyone they come into contact with every day. So I like making that distinction.

I also really like making sure people understand when we're using the word "sensitive" we are not meaning that, you know, in that childhood playground taunt, that this person cries all the time or is super emotional; literally just mean that the nervous system is highly sensitized. Although, since there is so much overlap between HSP and empathic personalities, some of us do cry a lot because we really feel everything that is going on in the world.

I also really love how Dr. Aron points out that about 20% of the population are highly sensitive, and she speaks about this in evolutionary terms: That it always made sense to have someone, or to have 20%, in the village within the tribe be highly sensitive. Those are the folks who gonna hear what's coming through the forest when other people aren't tuned into it, or smell a change in the air that indicates a new weather pattern is forming. And then, you know, the other people have their roles, like, maybe they'd be more the warriors or the hunters. To put this in terms of the Boudica book series, which I spoke about in the introduction to the most recent episode 54 with Sharon Blackie, the warriors would have been the not-so-highly sensitive people while the dreamers would've been the highly sensitive people. And of course, there's overlap and everyone has their own strengths and being highly sensitive could have many many benefits in battle.

So she also points out that in many mammal species that have been studied there is about a 20% portion of the population that have highly sensitive nervous systems. So it's an evolutionary adaptation, and this way of being is not honored (*Amber laughs*); not even really recognized, let alone honored, in our culture. And I think maybe, like, the overuse of the "empath" buzzword is part of, is a reaction to it not being recognized.

So when I read Dr. Aron's book and came upon this highly sensitive person framework it completely changed my life. I **cannot** put into words how important it was for me to understand this about myself and to be normalized, to be normalized. And my sister's the same way as me, so she read the book, too, and like I said, our mother is **not** a highly sensitive person, was not when she was still embodied with a nervous system here on earth, and she read the book, too, and was like, "I wish I had known this when you guys were little. I would've made different decisions. It would have been so **good** for me to have understood this about you." So I really understand this drive to bring this into public conversation and the larger collective consciousness because it's so good for people to know this about themselves, and so good for parents to know this about their children, too.

I have helped many a parent understand that their kid is an HSP just by hearing them describe issues or problems or blessings of their child's personalities. There's a quiz you can take, both as a parent taking it for your child and for yourself, to see if you are an HSP. You can just search for it. It's on Dr. Elaine Aron's website, The Highly Sensitive Person.

When I first met my husband, he's very empathic, and I couldn't tell if he was an HSP as well. So he took the quiz, and he's not. He doesn't have a highly sensitive nervous system. And I retook, and I think it's 26 questions, or it was then, and I scored 23 or 24 out of 26. It was just, like, this is so validating. It's just so validating to know this about myself and have this framework.

[0:10:16]

**Amber:** So I wanted to tell you about today's Patreon offering from Lola:

She is giving patrons of this podcast free access to her guided meditation library. So when I was first reading her email, I was like, "Oh cool! Free access to a guided meditation. That's awesome!" I've talked so many times about how useful I've found guided meditations. And then when I reread it I was like, "Oh, no, this is to her **ENTIRE** library of guided meditations."

There are many of them. I just wrote down the ones that were exciting to me:

- Get Grounded
- Energy Protection
- For Pain Relief
- For Reproductive Rest
- Call Back Your Power

And so many more. So normally this is a one-time access fee of \$97, but you will get a coupon code, a 100% off coupon code (*Amber laughs*) to have lifelong access to these meditations.

They are useful for clearing energy, grounding, releasing anxiety and yeah. As I read there, even pain relief and function very well to help folks both prepare and re-integrate post-ceremony or medicine work. We talk a little bit, or actually quite a bit, about that especially in the second interview. And there are even medicine songs from Lola's teachers with lyrics. So you can learn and/or practice those if you would like to.

So that's at [Patreon.com/MedicineStories](https://Patreon.com/MedicineStories) to get the link to that 100% off coupon code. It's available to patrons at the \$2/month level, and there is a **ton**, over 50 gifts from past guests as well.

And, before we get into it I also want to let you know about an upcoming online course with past guest, Dr. Daniel Foor. He was on episode 26 and 44, some of the most downloaded and loved episodes that I've done. This class is called [Foundations of Ritual](#), and it's an online course starting September 26th.

I am really excited about it because, you know, we aren't -- in America here -- most, the vast majority of us are not raised with ritual in our lives; with meaningful ritual in our lives. And many of us want to come back into that relational space of remembrance, and it's hard.

I really remember the first time I was in, especially, in a group ritual. It was at the Spirit Weavers gathering in 2014 in Joshua Tree, and, like, the sort of opening invocation to begin the gathering was this community ritual, and it was very simple. We all took some kind of plant that had been dried and offered it to the fire one at a time. It was, like, that simple, and I felt so awkward doing it (*Amber laughs*). I was like, "Is this for real? Like, are we all taking this seriously right now?" And that's just how out of practice I was in thinking, like, this is so awkward and so unknown to me.

And since then I've really tried to strengthen that muscle in myself, and it's definitely mostly been an individual practice; just me alone figuring something out and some very powerful. I've had some amazing experiences, but since I wasn't raised with mentors and elders in this way, I'm really excited to dive into this course.

So if you are also interested, can learn more at [AncestralMedicine.org](https://AncestralMedicine.org).

[0:14:03]

**Amber:** Alright, I'm gonna tell you a little bit about Lola, here:

Through her courses and programs, Lola Pickett empowers empaths to rewire their brains, behavior, and bodies so that they can create sustainable success and happiness. She is the published author of *The Wild Messengers Alchemical Tarot*, and Founder of Empathology. Her

outrageously popular 10-week online course. Her offerings blend cutting edge neuroscience with trauma healing and playful adventure to create powerful and lasting results. When not facilitating transformational work, you'll find Lola on a hike, wildcrafting medicines, and loving up on her husband and kids in the mountains north of San Diego, California. You can connect with all of her work at [LolaPickett.com](http://LolaPickett.com).

Okay, let's get into the interview.

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

### ***Part I: Empath to Power Episode***

**[0:15:01]**

**Lola:** Hello everyone!

This episode of *Empath to Power* brings you a fantastic guest. I have with me, live here, Amber Magnolia Hill of *MythicMedicine.love* and the *Medicine Stories* podcast of which I am a **huge** fan.

And I brought Amber on the show today because I've been following her work for a few years, and as a fellow herbalist, I am fascinated by and continually learning about the plant allies, the fungi, the natural friends we have when it comes to supporting our nervous systems, to soothing our souls, to working with and partnering with our anxiety, and just supporting our moods. There's a lot of demands on our time and attention, and as sensitive beings, the world can feel like too much often. And so, whatever I can bring forward as tools and resources for you I feel like it's in deep service because I want all of us to be in positions of power and leadership and that's not gonna happen without some help.

So welcome to the show, Amber!

**Amber:** Thank you, Lola! I'm happy to be here.

**Lola:** Yay! So I have a helicopter going overhead, which will happen frequently because I'm in the flight path for the local military base. So we'll just kind of continue. That's fine.

So, Amber, I'd love to hear from you:

What brought you onto the plant path to begin with? -- It's kind of a fascinating story-- And as you've grown in your repertoire of working with herbs and supporting your own system and then providing medicines for others, let's just begin to dive into this idea of how do we support our nerves with plant allies, and what's even going on when it's beginning to feel like overwhelm, physically?

**Amber:** Umm. Yeah, so I think about this story that herbalist and teacher and author, Stephen Harrod Buhner tells about all the hundreds of students he's taught, and when he asks the question, "What brought you to herbalism?" He says, "You know, some of them say, 'I've just always been into plants. Like, since I was a kid I was talking to the plants, and they've always been my people.'" And some people have a big dramatic health scare or hell story that brought them

onto the plant path. But he says that most people say, "I don't really know. I just felt called. It was nothing in particular. It's just been like a slow listening to the yearning of my soul," and that's my story.

It's just been an evolution of knowing there was, had to be a different way to live. I don't really know how to put it into words: maybe more authentic, but I think that even that word is problematic.

*(Lola laughs)*

Umm. Just more ancestral? That's not how I thought about it at the time, but I just knew there had to be more than the mainstream American culture that I grew up with in the 80s and 90s.

And that led me to work at the Sacramento Natural Food Co-op in 2005 in the wellness department, and that is how I met my first (and my most important) teacher, Kami McBride. And Kami ended up getting me on board for a year-long training, apprenticeship -- I'm not sure what we'd call it -- a year-long class. We met once a month on Sundays. "Cultivating the Medicine Woman Within" is what it's called. I loved what I learned there, really completely turned my life around.

At the time I was a post-partum mama, totally malnourished, not eating the right foods, not taking care of myself in any way, super overwhelmed all the time. **ALL** the time. I think at that point I hadn't yet learned yet that I was a highly sensitive person. I didn't have that framework for myself, and I wasn't even thinking about it in terms of my nervous system.

I was just like, "Oh my gosh. Having this baby is crazy!"

*(both laugh)*

I didn't know it was gonna be this hard!

And I thought I just had to power through until she was older, and then I would feel better. But through Kami's course, I really learned how to take care of myself as a person with a highly sensitive nervous system.

**[0:19:36]**

**Lola:** I love that so much and one of my favorite, favorite stories of yours is how Kami went and got some fish for you because you were vegan at the time, and she said, "Look. You've gotta... you've gotta do something different."

**Amber:** Yeah, I had been vegan for years at that point and vegetarian for even longer. And it's funny because during my pregnancy I was really craving dairy. Like, I bought cottage cheese, and my partner, who was also vegan, got really mad at me. *(Lola laughs)* And I was like, "Look bro: I'm the pregnant one."

And I've heard this exact story from so many women. Because usually if you're vegan, you're usually in a partnership with someone who is also vegan, you know? It's hard for the two to be in the same partnership. And when women get pregnant they tend to really crave animal fats or

protein, and then, you know, the partner's like, "NO! But our ideals!" And the woman is like, "But my body (*Lola laughs*) and the reality of the fact that I am an animal and a human who evolved eating these products."

So yeah, like, seven, eight months postpartum in kami's class at lunch one day, I was so thin. I was, like, just emaciated, tired, exhausted, bags under my eyes, weak. I was so weak, and had this fat baby, right, 'cause she's sucking the life out of me.

*(both laugh)*

**Lola:** That's what they do!

**Amber:** They do!

And I was sitting there eating my lunch, and Kami sat down next to me and so gently, but strong and lovingly, she said, "You're vegan, aren't you?" And I was like, "Yeah!"

And she was like, "I can tell. I can tell by looking at you, and I can tell that it's not working for you, especially as a breastfeeding woman." And I was just like, "YES!" (*both laugh*) You know? Like, this is what I've been waiting for someone to say to me basically.

And yeah, she was like, "If I go into my house right now and get some sardines, will you eat them?" And I was like, "I think so!" (*Lola laughs*)

And she did, and I did, and it completely turned my life around.

**[0:21:34]**

**Lola:** Ugh. I love that, and I love your advocacy for animal fats because I think there's such a misleading cultural narrative happening in the health and wellness field around fats and how unhealthy they are, and how we have this "clean eating" movement, and all this spiritual superiority when it comes to the way we eat. And I feel like we've really lost our wild nature in that approach to nourishment, and I think we've lost a lot of the support that our body -- many bodies, at least -- frankly needs.

I know that my nervous system, when I was vegetarian, was much more raw-feeling; it was much more on edge. I didn't understand really that that's what was going on, but when I went back to eating a more varied diet and incorporating meats and animal fats and other things like that, it just totally changed my resilience, like, my emotional and physical resilience with showing up for the demands of motherhood and entrepreneurship and all the things that I have going on.

So I find it fascinating that you had this similar kind of journey.

So, tell me a little bit about your understanding of where fats play a role in the nervous system because I've fascinated to hear some of this exploration on your show.

**Amber:** Yeah, I think that's such a good point.

First of all, I don't think I've ever really put that together before, but when you were speaking, I'm thinking of ALL the stories I've heard from former vegans or vegetarians, who were so anxious and so on-edge all the time after years of eating that way, and then one or two meals reset it for them...

**Lola:** Yeah!

**Amber:** ... as they brought the animal products back into their lives and over the years completely changed their physiology.

Yeah, so this is something that I find so fascinating, and there's a lot more to know than I know. For me, I'm like, "But what EXACTLY is the mechanism by which..."

*(Lola laughs)*

But basically, our nerves are sheathed in myelin, and it needs fat. It runs on fat, or maybe it's even made of fat. It's one of those two things. Like, fat surrounds and holds the nerves and the nervous system. So if we are not getting adequate amounts of, like, deeply nourishing and bioidentical fats that we can get into our bodies then yeah, our nervous system is kind of dried out, you know?

It's just not getting hydrated and nourished in the way that it needs to. And this works as well with herbal body oiling and putting fats on the skin: it's just as important as putting them in our mouths.

**Lola:** Ugh! I love everything about this.

**[0:24:31]**

**Lola:** I talk about how in permaculture there's this idea of continentality, and when you get closer to a body of water, the climate is modulated and moderated because of the insulating effects of the water.

And so the farther inland you go, and the drier you get, and the less close you are to the edge of the water, the more extreme the climate gets.

And I think our bodies are so similar in that. When we don't have our inner ocean immediately accessible because we're not nourishing it, we're not hydrating.

We have our inner weather, which is our emotional state, which is just extreme, just like it is in the high desert. And I've seen some articles recently about how that is now being proven by science -- and I'll have to find the sources and stick it in the show notes -- but there is a connection between hydration and our emotional state, our emotional resilience, our ability to kind of release ourselves from the grip of anxiety.

And I love what you're saying here about the nervous system specifically getting this lubricated, hydrated effect from fats, and it's not what we think. Like, we think, oh fat is hydrophobic. Like, fat makes -- you know, oil and water don't mix, but we need something to hold in our water. We need a container for it, and I feel the fats almost do that for us inside.

**Amber:** Yes, that is a perfect way of looking at it. I love that.



And we are recording this at the summer to fall transition time, and Kami taught me all those years ago about seasonal transitions being like this sort of liminal space, and a space where we're a little more permeable and porous which we already are, right?

**Lola:** Yes! (*Lola laughs*)

**Amber:** As highly sensitive and empathic people and so to pay extra attention to that and to take extra care of ourselves and especially at this seasonal transition, where, for many of us for me here in the foothills of the Sierra in Northern California, it is SO dry. It is, like, dry as a bone out there. And that is reflected in our inner state unless we are really deeply hydrating and nourishing. So yes, drinking water, but also herbal body oiling (for me, every day at this time) makes such a huge difference.

As Kami has pointed out, this is the high Vata time, like, in Ayurvedic philosophy, and people tend to extra-spinout into anxiety and frazzled nerves during the early fall transition dry season if they're not paying attention to getting those fats on and in the body.

[0:27:12]

**Lola:** Ugh I love this! I have been meaning to for years get my hands on some of your herbal body oils, and I finally did recently grab one of your St. John's Wort oils.

It is so incredible! Not only how it makes my skin feel, but I really did notice that emotional response that my body has to the medicine of St. John's Wort. And I would love to hear from you your practice around that because I know you've made Instagram Lives about how you body oil, and you don't go around being a grease ball all day.

(*Amber laughs*)

How do you use this as a practice, and what have you seen in your work with creating these medicines?

What have you seen shift for people?

**Amber:** It's so amazing! (*both laugh*)

I was thinking about it recently, I was like, "Man, I feel bad for people who are selling something that they know isn't that great." You know? Because I love selling something that I know changes lives, like, immediately.

And I've heard from **hundreds** of customers over the years I've been selling it for seven years now. But I also want to say, if you're listening, you don't have an herbal body oil on hand, and you want to feel this effect, you can go into your kitchen right now and just start with some olive oil. Like, really, the fat is the most important thing, and then you just add all these extra awesome bonuses into it when you infuse whole plants into the oils. So we're not talking about essential oils; we're talking about whole herb-infused body oils.

So, my goodness. Okay, first let me say a little bit about the body oiling, and then I'll get into the specific how-tos and my tips. But as we've already talked about, nourishes the nerve cells, gets the fat in there.

And what it has done for me -- Well, what it does for everyone -- is the first time you do it, you'll feel it. You'll feel it right away. You feel your nervous system shift, and especially if you're in that sympathetic fight or flight state of mind, state of body, state of being, it can... it's the most powerful thing that I have found to shift me back into the parasympathetic.

I can drink my chamomile tea. I can take a lavender tincture. Whatever you want to do, no thing that I can take internally, or no other practice that I've found, shifts my nervous system into this calm state as quickly as body oiling does.

Someone explained it recently in a comment in my Instagram as "It's like having a shock absorber."

**Lola:** Oh yeah!

**Amber:** Yeah, I thought that was such a good way to put it. I've been saying for years, when I body oil it's like a protective layer around me. So when sensory stimuli is coming at me, it's like it gets stopped and filtered down before it actually hits me.

**Lola:** Yeah! It's like an extrasensory gate or a physical boundary that you get help with without having to have an uncomfortable conversation. It's like your body can begin to be your ally in that process.

**Amber:** Right. It helps in self-regulation in a really deep way.

But I love the idea of a shock absorber; it just softens the blow of whatever life's gonna throw at you that day because it's gonna be something. And if you have a highly sensitive nervous system, for me, even just going to the grocery store can really -- I can come home and need to recover, you know.

So there's all sorts of ways that you can do it:

The simplest baseline is to oil your feet. Oil the soles of your feet, especially. They're super porous, and in the Chinese medicine reflexology framework, every part of your foot connects to every other part of your body. So it's a really nice way to give yourself a little foot massage and encompasses the whole body at the same time.

And I'll say here, too, a little bit goes a long way. I think a lot of people hear this and think, "I'm gonna be so oily!" Or they do it for the first time and they're like, "Now what? I can't even move. I'm dripping with oil." (*Lola laughs*) It shouldn't be like that. It shouldn't be like that at all. A very little bit goes a long way.

And then Kami recently introduced me to the idea of earlobe oiling, and this has been huge, **HUGE**, for me. So I had started, like, the highest part of my body that I would oil was my jaw. I've never done the scalp. People might want to try that, but I just... Actually, I did it once, and my hair was greasy for, like, a month. So that doesn't work with my hair. So the jawline was the highest I would go, but since Kami introduced me to this idea of oiling the earlobes (and I just do my whole

ear, actually), it's been amazing because, like the feet, the ears have counterpoints throughout the rest of the body, and they're also really sensitive and porous.

For me, my ears are the most sensitive part of my body. Even before we got on this call today, because I've been working on my own podcast, and I've just been on my computer and listening to digital sounds coming at me from my computer, and I was listening to your podcast an hour before we got on the call, and I could feel my ears kinda just bugging out, and they were like, *Eeeeeerrr!* (*Amber makes screeching sound*).

*(Lola laughs)*

I don't know how to describe this thing that they do, but I pushed pause, and the second I pushed pause they stopped, and I was like, "Okay, I need to just be in silence for a while." My nervous system is like, it's had enough of this all day! And I stopped listening to things, and I just oiled my ears, and it just really was like, "Ahhh. Okay. Everything is good now."

So I think as a starting point for people, the soles of your feet and your ears are amazing. For me, when I can't sleep at night, doing those two points on my body, when I get back in bed every single time I fall asleep really easily.

**[0:33:22]**

**Lola:** Ugh I love that. I have so many clients that struggle with going to sleep and staying asleep, and that's such a good tip.

**Amber:** Oh my gosh. (*Lola laughs*)

Herbal body oiling for sleep is mega. People ask me, "What can I take internally?" And there are things that you can take, and we do make a sleep elixir that people love, but I'm like, "Oil yourself. Go in the kitchen and get your olive oil and oil yourself."

You'll be amazed. For me, the St. John's Wort oil is helpful for that because it's just so relaxing.

But really, any oil and any body oil.

**Lola:** I love that so much.

**Amber:** Yeah, I know! It's so simple. It's like a very ancestral practice. It's something traditional peoples the world over put the animal fats that they rendered onto their bodies.

**Lola:** It feels so delicious, and it feels so old and nourishing at a spiritual level if that makes sense.

Like, your body is for sure getting this deep, deep enrichment and nourishment and care, and at the same time, it's like a soul-spirit homecoming in a way because you're making your body feel more at ease with its humanness.

Does that make sense?!

**Amber:** No, it absolutely does! Yes!

Yes, I write about this in my e-book. And I was not at all surprised to hear my teacher, Kami, say the exact same thing in my interview. (*Lola laughs*) on my podcast which is that it is a way-- your self-knowledge increases so much when you make herbal body oiling a regular practice. Yeah, exactly. It's like coming home to yourself over and over, both on that deeply spiritual and emotional because you just get to, like, baseline. You get to chill. Everything kind of falls away, and you're like, "Oh, this is who I am. This is who I am."

**Lola:** Yeah, it's like your baseline, too, not the patterns that your nervous system has been habituated to.

**Amber:** Right. Exactly.

And then on a physical level, you get to know your body really, really well. So if you're like, "Oh, my lymph nodes in my armpit are a little swollen. Oh, I might be getting sick. Maybe I should take some vitamin C and elderberry and go to sleep early tonight."

You can just really start to anticipate what's coming up for your body if anything is starting to be irregular or different, and just this very, very deep level of self-knowledge about the physical body; the only thing that you're going to inhabit in your entire lifetime.

**Lola:** Yes! Yeah, your only real house.

And I think that this is such a radical consideration, especially for those of us who are listening who identify as empaths, because we have -- I don't want to generalize too much -- but from what I've observed in my work with myself and my client base is that we are the last place that we focus. We are so used tuning in to everyone else's needs, emotions, energies, maybe out of a childhood patterning of survival by being hypervigilant and aware of everyone else's place so that we're safe.

But as adults, to turn that focus back inward and to really get to know ourselves, to me that's what self-care really is. It's self-caring; it's a verb. It's a way of prioritizing intimacy with ourselves, and this is just such a beautiful whole way of doing that. That's so simple.

**Amber:** Mhmm. Yeah.

Yeah, and as far as being really empathic goes, again, the boundary setting that herbal body oiling sets up immediately the first time you do it, and then how strong that boundary gets over time when you make it a regular practice in just really differentiating self from other.

**Lola:** Yes. The coming home to the self and really owning that you are this body. And you are -- well, you aren't. Okay. You are and you aren't this body. (*Lola laughs*) You live in this body, and you are more than this body -- but to really take ownership of your human experience in that way and stand in your being-ness, again, like, such a revolutionary and rebellious thing to do when the world is set upon vampiring your energy, vampiring your heart, and you know, our kids suck the life out of us and our businesses suck the life out of us and our relationships are demanding in the best possible ways, I hope) and so there are so many things pulling at us all the time to have this practice of setting a physical boundary between you and all that is so deeply caring.

**Amber:** I like that verb, “vamping” our attention as well.

**Lola:** Yes!

**Amber:** Everything is clamoring for our attention all the time.

And that, for me -- if I get pulled into an addictive Instagram day or something, you know, like I did a post that morning, and then all day I’m like, oh, checking it, checking it, checking it, and the little notifications -- that really spins me out. That really spins my nervous system out, and we’re all dealing with that. Anyone with a smartphone is dealing with the grabs for attention coming from outside of us constantly. So it’s like, man, just having your attention on your own self and the present moment for a while is a huge shift.

**Lola:** It’s a huge shift, and it’s -- talk about ancestral medicine -- it’s one of those ways we can return to what it is to be a human being. Not in these times, not right now, but just a human **being**. You know? It’s so easy to just get lost in a human-**doing**.

I just feel so much peace, even, talking about this with you, much less my own practice with your oil, which is just so beautiful. I posted on Instagram last week: my husband gave me a massage with the St. John’s Wort oil, and it was like, I am not kidding, everyone, the BEST massage I have ever had, and it was partially because my husband is awesome, but also because you really can have that instantaneous sense of your nerves. It’s almost like ahh.. okay. If you’ve breastfed a child, and you’ve had the letdown of your milk, it’s almost that same sensations of your nerves going, “Ahhh...” (*Lola laughs*)

**Amber:** And like, the pleasure release...

**Lola:** Yes. Yes, exactly!

**Amber:** ... Of like, oh I feel **good** right now. I’m enjoying being in my body right now.

**Lola:** Mhmm. It’s not such a foreign territory for a few moments.

**Amber:** Yeah, or a painful place to be.

**Lola:** Yeah. Yeah, exactly. Ugh, it’s such a good ally for this. For all of you listening, I know that Amber sells St. John’s Wort oil on her website, and I will link that up in the show notes and a number of other body oils.

**[0:40:36]**

**Lola:** And also, I believe you have a direct link into Kami’s work, as well. Is that correct?

**Amber:** Yeah, so Kami has -- she took everything that she taught me and that she taught so many people in person for over 30 years (over 30 years she’s been teaching people how to make herbal oils), and she put it into an online course.

It’s open for registration sometimes and closed at other times, but you can always get on the waitlist.

**Lola:** Okay. So we'll link that up as well.

**Amber:** Yeah. Yeah.

[0:41:05]

**Lola:** That is one of my favorite things.

Oh, sorry. I was just gonna say...

That's one of my favorite things about you, Amber, as a person, is that not only are you in such deep integrity with what it is that you're providing to the world in the form of services and products and things like that, but it's like, "Hey, also, you can do this yourself. And so, maybe I'm the place that you purchase these oils from, and also, why not empower you to learn how to do this so that you have an infinite supply from your own local plants?" and you make it really accessible for people to begin to go on that journey of self-healing.

I really like that.

**Amber:** Yeah, I truly (as with Kami) want to embed a culture of self-care, self-healing, and simple herbal medicine making and using back into the home. Like, really, again, deeply ancestral human stuff here. Before just a few generations ago, all of our ancestors knew how to take care of simple things at home.

And as Kami said on my podcast recently, "Every woman throughout time has taken some sort of plant, and some sort of fat and put them together and made a body oil." This is just basic human living on the earth stuff that has been removed from our culture. And a lot of people are wanting to reclaim it now, and I'm all about that.

And yeah, it's expensive to buy body oils from another person, if you're going to be doing it over the long term. Because of how expensive it is to run a business, I have to charge what I do for my oils, and you can just save so much money doing it yourself, and I want everyone to do it because imagine: Imagine a world where everyone is in the parasympathetic, tend and mend, you know...

**Lola:** Mate and relate.

**Amber:** Mate and relate, you know, nervous system state instead of the fight or flight. Like, what a beautiful planet/world/society/culture we would live on and in if that's what was happening!

So, you know, I think we're all doing our little parts right now (hopefully) to counteract a lot of the destructive tendencies in the world and in our species right now and yeah. This is one of my mine.

[0:43:34]

**Lola:** It makes my heart so happy because there are so many different tendrils of approaches to this work, and I really feel like so many of the cultural, societal, destructiveness that's happening is from -- what is the word I want to use? -- It's like from anthropocentrism. It's from elevating the human above the rest, and that also includes human intelligence.

One of the things that I love about coming back to the nervous system is that we're bringing a sense of our intelligence away from just living in our heads in the grey matter in our brains, and really remembering that it's woven throughout every fiber of our body; that there are neurons in our gut, more neurons in our guts than there are in our heads. It reconnects us to this divine network of intelligence that is very mycelial in nature that is far beyond human.

**Amber:** Wow.

**Lola:** Way far beyond.

**Amber:** Yes, I love the connections you're making there. It's like elevating human intelligence above everything is easy when you just live in your mind, as most of us do, and as I absolutely did for most of my life, and it's still a tendency that I have to pull myself down from.

**Lola:** Me too.

**Amber:** And oiling is one of the ways that I do that.

When we're really fully inhabiting our bodies we remember that we're animals, too. And that, yeah, we are embedded in this larger web of life.

**Lola:** It's so healing because I think as HSPs, it can be very tempting to isolate and just shut everything out because the world is so much right now, and there's so much input. There's wifi signals, and EMFs, and social media notifications, and traffic, and pollution, and everything, and the news, and so remembering that we're animals, and that also we are amazingly resiliently (amazingly resilient animals, at that), it helps me, as an HSP, stay engaged and not completely check out because that was my tendency was to just shut it all off. Like, okay, this is way too much. I'm gonna shut it all out. I'm not going to feel anything. I'm not gonna look at anything. I can't handle it.

And so these practices, this re-remembering of my own nervous system and finding ways to support it (like herbal body oiling) has really helped me stay present to the divine catastrophe, you know? It's like -- it's all here. It's all unfolding, and also, there's so much beauty, and if we shut out the pain, we shut that off, too.

**Amber:** Right, and think about all the ways people shut down. So, maybe you'll watch a little Netflix, whatever, but drugs, alcoholism, abuse - there's so many ways that people can express their nervous system overwhelm.

Like my dad is a really good example. He's a highly sensitive person, my sister is, too, my uncle, my grandpa, and we're pretty sure his dad and his dad, based on stories and even the posture of my great-great-grandfather in one of his photos. Yeah, just hearing stories. And so, except for my sister, they're all alcoholics.

It's just this ancestral thing where alcohol's been used to blunt and numb because... I can just speak for my dad: He's so sensitive. His nervous system is just so sensitive, and of course, he has no framework for that; no one's ever told him about it. And as a man, growing up in this culture he knew he just had to stuff it and power through.

And so at some point in his early thirties, when he had young kids and his full-time job, he was just like, “Oh yeah, this alcohol helps me deal with this,” and here he is 40 years later a total mess, you know?

**[0:48:00]**

**Lola:** It’s very tempting and also societally acceptable to turn to these coping mechanisms.

*(Lola pauses when there’s a faint sound of helicopter in background)*

-- I have another helicopter overhead. Talk about HSP challenges *(Lola laughs)*: these planes! *(both laugh)* It’s like, “Agh!! Jangles!” --

But it’s become, like, the norm to numb out these different ways. And I actually, in my client practice, I came up with this term for addiction patterns (among other things) as a side-effect of what I call “Empath Stress Disorder” because everyone in my practice is dealing with addiction patterns like that, for that exact reason, along with anxiety, and oftentimes depression, financial instability.

It’s just this set of side effects that are so toxic, and when we can connect them to our sensitive natures, there becomes a solution that’s so much more well-rounded and beneficial, not only to us but to everyone who we’re like the future ancestor for.

And I love thinking about it that way: that we’re learning from our legacies. And for all of us who are being courageous enough to even look at our addictions, to perhaps connect the dots between where they’re serving us in making things more tolerable, and maybe where they’re not because they’re tuning us out of our gifts, it’s such a brave thing to look at. And almost everybody listening to this show, I’m willing to bet, is kind of exploring these at these moments.

It’s like, how can I show up more without losing myself or sacrificing myself in the process?

**Amber:** Yeah.

**[0:50:00]**

**Lola:** So, along the mycelial threads, I want to just shift a little bit because I had, on the last podcast, I actually brought on Stephen Harrod Buhner as well. He is one of my favorite herbalists and authors, and in my work I call the empath and HSP’s “the psychedelic plants of the human realm,” because we are so perceptive, and also, I think it’s our job to come in from the fringes and shift the paradigm of perception because of our sensitivities.

And I know, from what I’ve learned in your work and your conversations, you don’t shy away from psychedelics as a topic and perhaps as a tool, and I would love to just dive into the world of microdosing and mushrooms, in particular, as an ally, and why that might be a natural fit for work with the nervous system.

Just in your opinion, I would just like to riff on this a little bit.



**Amber:** Yeah, it's interesting because I hadn't so much put those two things together in my mind, but it totally makes sense.

So I think about the **big** psychedelic experience (*Lola laughs*), you know, the full-blown mystical experience. So let's just go to that end of the spectrum first, and then what people commonly report back (and I had one of these experiences in my life. I was 17 on mushrooms) is the "ego death" that happens.

And for me, I actually think that was really helpful, and that it's really helpful for everyone who has a good psychedelic experience (which you can do a lot of things to make sure you have a good one or the conditions to give you the best possible experience), but it sort of broke me out of my patterns of being like, "I'm shy. Everyone's looking at me! This is so embarrassing;" things that I think a lot of HSP's and empaths often feel when we are in public or even on the internet.

For me that experience just kind of shattered that part of my ego that was caught up in "I'm shy, and everyone's looking at me, and this is so embarrassing," and then I was just able to be like, "No, it's okay to be me. It's okay to be me."

**Lola:** Yes! Oh my gosh, I just want to break in for a second, because, oh gosh, we are so served, especially when we have independent businesses to run, to get out of our own way in some way.

And I feel like experiences like that at some point in our lives is so beneficial, not only for helping us see the ways that we are in our own way but also to make us so grateful to come back to ordinary consciousness.

I've had clients in experiences that have said, "Well, God, I'm so glad the rainbows are gone." (*Lola laughs*) It's like this: there's so much happening, that we actually look forward to being back to this place that has been boring, overwhelming, scary, a painful place to avoid. And I think that's a huge service of the kind of expanded state that you get into is just to be so grateful to come back home.

**Amber:** Totally. Yeah I think of just the title of Michael Pollan's book, [How to Change Your Mind](#), and that's the whole point of that book and that title is resetting deeply engrained patterns.

**Lola:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Amber:** Umm.

**Lola:** And... yeah, go ahead.

[0:53:48]

**Amber:** Well, I was then going to talk about microdosing.

So the amazing thing about microdosing is that... so, the man who -- I don't know. I keep meaning to ask him this. I don't know if he invented it, but he has certainly popularized it. --

James Fadiman is a friend of mine. He was on Episode 13 of my podcast. He's an old-school, original psychedelic researcher from the 60s, and what I've learned from just talking to him and

just reading his work is that it's like it works, it works differently for everyone, and it kind of seems to do exactly what **you** need doing for yourself, whether that be a physical or psychological or spiritual shift in your life.

So I would just be so curious to see how microdosing could and would change the individual lives of HSP's and empaths out there, but I'm also thinking about reishi right now.

**Lola:** Ah yes!

**Amber:** Yeah, and my friend and herbalist, Asia Suler's, teachings on reishi as a really subtle psychedelic, and I've experienced that! I experienced it before I heard her say this. I took a reishi tincture and was like, WHOA.

*(both laugh)*

What is happening right now?!

And I wasn't like, tripping balls or anything, but I was like, WOW. Something shifted. I'm perceiving things differently, and it feels really good.

So for people who are maybe nervous to really, like, dabble in psilocybin or another psychedelic in any way (especially for super, super, sensitive people with those wide-open sensory gated channels), reishi could be a really sweet place to start 'cause it's not actually a psychedelic, but there is something about that fungus, that mushroom, that when we take it has similar, but really subtle, properties.

**Lola:** Yes, I love that reminder, and you know I wonder what it would look like to combine reishi and psilocybin in a microdosing regime. That would be really interesting...

**Amber :** Yeah, well --

**Lola:** ... because they have different energies.

**Amber:** Totally! And James teaches -- and this is based on hundreds of feedback reports of people who have microdosed given him -- if you're going to do it regularly, especially (you can just do it whenever if you want), but if you really want to see the changes that come, to do it every three days because, with all psychedelics, there is a threshold effect.

If you did the full-on heroic dose every day for a week, by the end of it you wouldn't feel anything.

So, the same with microdosing: so you do one day, two days off, one day, two days off. So it would be cool on those two days to do the reishi.

**Lola:** I like that idea as well.

[0:56:41]

**Lola:** And the other thing I love about microdosing, because I take people abroad for psychedelic experiences, and I have one with psilocybin in Costa Rica next year, and I recommend that they pursue a microdosing regime much along those lines **afterward** to integrate, because it's almost a way of bridging that expanded reality with the everyday because the microdosing is sub-perceptual, and it's just working on the neural pathways and the repatterning, kind of helping it sink in to the everyday experience.

So I think it's very HSP and empath-friendly because it's not... it's not overly opening your gates to where you cannot go to the grocery store, you can't drive, you can't mother, and do all the things that you need to do and show up in your life.

It's a really beautiful way of bridging between the grandiose, big trip and our humble everyday human lives.

**Amber:** Yeah, that's lovely. I love that idea, and, of course, that post-big-trip integration is so important and almost never done or looked at.

**Lola:** No, it's a huge aspect of that work, and I think that's what sets our retreats apart because nobody else really cares about that. It's like, "Oh no, I'm just gonna blow you out, and then the rest is up to you."

**Amber:** "Go get on the airplane and fly home."

**Lola:** (*Lola laughs*) It's like, what?! That's not fair!

And all of my clients, being who they are, which is beautiful, heart-centered empaths, it's like, "No, no. I'm not gonna send you out into the shark tank. That's not kind. Let's give you some tools for really making this last."

I'm not interested in sending people on an escape route.

[0:58:29]

**Amber:** Yeah, I'm glad you mentioned that it's sub-perceptual, too.

That means that you literally don't feel it. You're just kind of like, at the end of the day, are like, "Oh. Well, that was a great day!" You know? Or "I had that brilliant idea."

But I'm also thinking and wondering about the idea of microdosing, or at least, somehow engaging with the spirit of the mushroom in preparation for going on a trip like that or having an experience like that; just to be like, just to greet the being of the mushroom that you will be engaging with and start that relationship before you, like, full-on jump into bed. (*Amber laughs*)

**Lola:** I think that's absolutely essential, and one of the things that a lot of people don't know -- and this is just for those of you who may be more familiar with psychedelic work -- is that our digestion begins at our fingertips.

And so, the way that our body begins to prepare its enzymes and its digestive juices is based on what we're touching with we begin to eat, which is why cultures who eat with their hands tend to have better digestion than those of us who are using utensils

And so when you're engaging with a plant, even an herb, this can apply to working with mint or lavender or nettle (well, nettles are a little bit more stingy, but still good. Still good to touch), and if you start to touch the medicine, the herb, the fungi, before you ingest it, you will have a literal conversation happening between your digestive system, your nervous system, and that medicine.

So you connect with the spirit first, yes, and then touch it and let your body begin to prepare for the experience ahead, which is a much kinder way than just shoving it in your mouth and trying to get it down as fast as possible, right?

**Amber:** Yeah! That is so beautiful., thank you.

**Lola:** You are welcome.

**Amber:** Not speaking from personal experience.

**Lola:** Not at all! I've just "heard."

**Amber:** Well, I've noticed that if someone brings psilocybin mushrooms into my space, like puts it down on the counter in a jar, I feel it in my body, and that is something that didn't happen the first time. It's just like growing a relationship with it over time, when it comes into my space now, my whole body is like (*Amber makes purring sound*), "Oh, you're here! You are a being, and I am feeling you."

**Lola:** Yes, and I think we can tune those superpowers everywhere in our life. As HSP's especially, talking about the grocery store being a place that can be super overwhelming for us, 'cause that still happens to me too, like I'm like, "You can go husband! I'm gonna stay home."

**Amber:** Yeah, actually my husband does the grocery shopping. (*both laugh*)

**Lola:** Yeah (*Lola laughs*) it can be a lot.

But I like to go and practice my felt sense intuitive connection energy with my food, so that's what I focus on when I go to the grocery store, is like, is this cantaloupe ripe? I'm not just gonna smell the blossom end of the melon, I'm going to tap into its energy and see if it **feels** like it's in resonance with me, you know? Because who cares what science says? If it's not going to be in harmony with me, it's not going to be fully received by my body. At least, I don't believe so.

**Amber:** Yeah, so this is so helpful for me to hear because I'm realizing all the ways that I still shut down. Like, if I go to the grocery store, I'm like, "GET. THROUGH. IT." (*Lola laughs*) You know?

I'm like, "THIS CANTALOUPE IS FINE!" Throw it in the cart... (*Amber laughs*) So it's really, really helpful for me to hear you talk about this.

**Lola:** Oh good!

Good, yeah! We have these superpowers; they are freakin' incredible! It's so easy to rush through and kind of put them to the side or just feel like, oh, it's going to be too much if I tune into that.

**[1:02:37]**

**Lola:** One of the things that I **love** practicing is like an umm... I don't know if there's a better word for it, but it's almost a shamanic way of engaging with our senses so you learn to play the game with your sensory gating mechanisms.

So, like, if sounds are overwhelming, work with your vision, or work with taste, and really focus **ALL** of your attention on that sense, and you will watch as the gates of the sense that's overwhelm narrow and begin to close. And it's this game we can play; the kinds of games our healer-witch-ancestors did all the time to build up their skillset.

So, that's another thing I like to do is just play sensory games with myself to tune my relationship with my ordinary senses, which of course then translates into intuition and all of that. It can become a really fun practice, which then takes the overwhelm out of it as well.

And they say that play reprograms neural pathways like 400 times faster than study. Something like that. I'll put the link to that resource in the show notes, too, but it's like ridiculous. Play is, like, I don't know, it takes, like, one repetition to learn something by play and 40 any other way.

**Amber:** Wow! Yeah.

It makes me think about my sister and my father, who are I would say more sensitive than me. They get easily agitated and anxious very easily, and they're both, like, super psychic. My dad would get visitations from our passed-on ancestors, and my sister gets communications from animals and animal spirits.

And, you know, again, my dad shut that down, but my sister she's really had to learn, yeah, how to play with her sensory gating channels and how to tune into these natural gifts she has that she tried so long to shut down because she was trying to shut **all** the gating down.

**Lola:** Yeah, it's just too much. It's like, "Okay, everyone, go to sleep. Not cool."

**Amber:** Yeah.

**Lola:** Ugh. I can so relate to that. I have the animal thing, too, and it's really overwhelming when you're a caucasian-suburban white girl who can tap into the spirits that are animal-flavored in other people. It's like, what do I even call this that's culturally acceptable at this point?

I still don't know the answer to that, and I'm not willing to use terms that are offensive and do harm. So I'm like, well, okay. We're gonna work with empaths! (*Lola laughs*)

**Amber:** Yeah. I loved your quiz! I wanted to mention that, in case anyone who's listening hasn't taken it, because I was always like, oh, my dad talks to the dead, and my sister talks to animals, and like, why can't I have those gifts?

But what I perceive is, yeah, exactly how other people are feeling. And I've always done it, and I can just immediately at a party in a room tell. I can really tell what's going on between two people without hearing any words or any stories spoken, you know. Like, she's jealous of her. He's mad at him. And those two are gonna start dating in two and a half months. (*Amber laughs*)

**Lola:** (*Lola laughs*) Mmmm emotional empath.

**Amber:** Yeah, yeah, exactly.

So that was really nice framing for me. I hadn't really thought of it in those terms.

**Lola:** OH that's awesome. Yeah, because it's so easy to look at the way that it shows up for other people and wish we had that or not understand that it's just a different set of the same gifts, and why waste our time being envious when we can just celebrate and really develop ours?

**Amber:** Right. Yeah, So thank you!

**Lola:** You're welcome!

[1:06:30]

**Amber:** And I want to finish my thoughts on how to herbal body oil because there's just one more piece of it.

**Lola:** Oh good!

**Amber:** And this tends to be how I do it.

So I give the really easy starting places: feet, ears, and of course, if you're having pain somewhere you can spot-treat wherever your pain is.

For me, the ultimate, and what I need to do at least 3-4 times a week, is a full-body oil. An easy way to do this is in the bath if you want. Just put a little bit in your bathwater. I take baths almost every night. That's a huge, huge way that I take care of myself with Epsom salts and some body oil, and it will just kind of, like, diffuse throughout the water, throughout the bath, mostly get all over your body. It doesn't absolutely have to be everywhere.

Or sometimes after the shower (and you can do it before the shower, as well, if you want, especially if you want to be, like, completely oil-free when you get out of the shower, then you can make sure the water and/or soap gets all the oil off you), but after the shower your pores are open from the heat. So I find (and I've heard this from many other people) that the oil absorbs super quickly after a shower compared to before it. So you really, like, make use of your oil; you're not wasting any of it.

And then you can either stay naked for as long as you can, or have a pair of clothes that you use when you oil, or a towel that you use, or I have my oiling bathrobe, and I replace it, I don't know, once or twice a year. You can tell by the smell, and it starts to get heavy over time, but, you know, I'll just wear that for, like, half an hour, and then at the end of that period, the oil is absorbed. It's off my body, and I'm ready to put my clothes on and go about my day.

And that full-body oil is just a total reset. I often do it at night, but I love doing it in the morning if I'm doing something big that day; if I'm teaching a class or having someone on like my guest, Buhner, who's a big deal and a hero of mine, and I'm nervous!

Yeah, it's just a great... yeah, putting up the boundaries and nourishing the nervous system practice before I do something that's big.

**Lola:** I love this so much, and that's a big question that I've had. Like, okay, so what do we do with this oily body that I have now? I'm not going to put it right in my bed. What's the best time of day?

So, yeah that's super practical and super helpful, and I love the idea of just going to a thrift store or TJ Maxx or something and picking up an affordable little robe for just that purpose. So smart.

**Amber:** Or a sheet. I've heard from a number of people who have sheet so that they do sleep naked with oil on their body with their sheet. Yeah.

**Lola:** Mmmm. I like that idea, too, and I know my husband would be a giant fan. *(Lola laughs)* I mean, just for himself. He's like... yeah. TMI on the naked front, but no, not at all. *(both laugh)*

That would be no different from usual, but having special sheets is a good idea.

**Amber:** Yeah, I wanna try that. I haven't done that yet.

**Lola:** Yeah, I like that a lot.

Oh, this is so helpful, Amber!

[1:09:40]

**Lola:** And for those of you who are not familiar with her podcast, which is Medicine Stories, it is so good!

It is truly medicine for the soul: there's ancestral conversations and herbal conversations and just living a life that's more human and cosmic and divine and grounded, and it just really, I feel like, covers all the bases that my little soul needs to feel happy when I'm driving my car, just, "Oh yes! This is what I need to remember about being human today!"

So definitely subscribe to her podcast. You have a Patreon, as well. Is that right?

**Amber:** Yeah. Yeah, there's bonuses to go along with almost every episode, so that's at [Patreon.com/MedicineStories](https://Patreon.com/MedicineStories), and I work really hard to make them good and relevant to ancestry, herbalism, and all the things that we talk about on the show.

**Lola:** Fantastic! Yeah, Amber's just got some really amazing stuff going on.

And for being somebody who's highly sensitive, and has a hard time, sometimes, going to the grocery store, I am so impressed with your social media presence and resilience, and you've grown a fantastic audience, and it just goes to show that we can do this. You know? We can do this, and

we can be visible, and we can be outspoken, and we can say our piece and still maintain our sense of self amidst all that.

I admire you for that.

**Amber:** Yeah, thank you! It's definitely been a process, and it's still challenging, for sure.

Yeah, at therapy yesterday I was talking about social media and boundaries and how overwhelming it can be and how hard I try, and yeah.

It's an ongoing process and a learning opportunity, but thank you for saying that.

**Lola:** Yeah, it's just a beautiful thing for me to witness and observe and find strength in as I grow myself, and I know we're all on our own paths of growth, and you're still growing as well. So just thanks for doing it so we can participate with you in that process and learn from you.

**Amber:** Yeah, thank you so much, Lola, for your work, and this podcast and just everything you said in this last hour was mind-blowing for me. It makes me want to dig deeper, so thank you!

**Lola:** Yay! That makes me so happy to hear. You're so welcome, and we can start a mutual fan society, and I'll be so happy about it. *(Lola laughs)*

**Amber:** I'm there.

**Lola:** Awesome. We can wear vintage dresses, and yeah, have sparkling water. It will be great. *(Lola laughs)*

**Amber:** Perfect. *(Amber laughs)*

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

[1:12:22]

**Amber:** Okay, hi Lola! I'm so happy to be talking to you again.

**Lola:** Me too, thanks for having me back on.

**Amber:** Yeah, I am excited to have you speaking more this time, and learning more about your story and how you came to be doing what you're doing. And I'm especially intrigued by this piece of working with psilocybin mushrooms, and I'd love to know how they came into your life.

**Lola:** Well, they just seemed to find us at the right moment in time, as I've discovered in my work with them.

For me, that was at a seminal girls' weekend that I took with a dear friend back in 2011, when I was at a real precipice of change in my life. My first marriage was falling apart, even though I didn't realize that was happening, and so I went on this girls trip with the intention of just opening up to new possibilities in my life and kind of deconstructing the rules that I had set for myself and the boxes I had put myself in over the last decade. I was about 31 at the time.



So my girlfriend, knowing that this stuff was unfolding for me, suggested we do a ceremony with psilocybin. And I'm a recovering good girl and someone who does not love to lose control or alter my state of consciousness. I had a brother with drug problems, an older brother when I was younger, and so I really stayed away from intoxication for a very long time. So this was a very exciting prospect, but also a very confronting one because I had never done anything like this before. I had gotten drunk. I'd smoked cannabis a few times, but nothing to the extent of going into a truly altered state of consciousness in this way.

So I appreciated this sacred space that my friend set up for us. We had this little kiva-type space in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and she just held space for us and did so in such a loving way, and I trusted her with how much she was giving me and just trusted the whole experience, and what happened in that experience was a completely and utterly mystical journey.

I came to understand time in a totally different way. I had this vision at one point of moments of time being like bubbles that we can leap from bubble-to-bubble in a non-linear fashion, and I was remembering things that hadn't happened yet. And like, the rational side of me, the normal Lola self, knew that I was remembering things, not projecting out into the future. So it was this very strange sensation of "things do not operate the way they seem."

And I came out of that experience with so much trust in the unknowable and the unseen that I didn't have before that weekend. And what happened after that point is that I came back home to this relationship with so many more possibilities for what the future could look like for us; either as a couple or not as a couple. I came back a different person.

The mushrooms helped me remember a deeply spiritual aspect of myself that I had totally turned off as a matter of survival in everyday modern life, and it turned it back on and it hasn't turned off since then, and it's now been 8 years since that journey.

**Amber:** Yeah. The changes, the insights, they leave lasting impressions.

I love what you said about trust because that's very much what happened to me with my first and my only really big psilocybin experience when I was 17 is (the way I always word it is) like the *deepest knowing* that everything is okay, and everything will always be okay.

**Lola:** Yeah. Exactly.

**Amber:** No matter how bad it is or if it's death, illness, the end of the world, on some level beyond this reality it's safe. It's safe.

[1:16:53]

**Amber:** And I'm thinking, as well, about that Einstein quote that time being the most stubborn illusion.

**Lola:** (*Lola laughs*) Yes!

**Amber:** Yeah.

**Lola:** Yeah, it is.

And to know that things are not what they seem, both on a time scale, but also, just as you're saying, that at some level all is well; not as a bypass, not as a way of being ignorant to the problems that are happening, but, like, having a deeper relationship with the consciousness of nature and how there's so much more wisdom here than we could ever possibly understand, and that's okay.

**Amber:** Right. It's a really deep understanding about how limited our senses are in this embodied human experience and a trust in the vastness of what we don't know.

**Lola:**

I have so much respect for these medicines, and I really do see a stark difference between recreational use of any method of altering your consciousness, whether it's a beer or MDMA or any of these things, and really truly sitting and calling in a ceremonial space for the purpose of working with an intention, going deep inside yourself, undoing unhealthy patterns.

That's a very different process... one of the things that used to really trigger me about this kind of work is see people doing something, like drink ayahuasca, once and then say, "Oh! I'm a shaman now, and I'm supposed to hold circle because the medicine told me."

There's just so much more to it than that, and I feel deeply it's not only disrespectful to the traditions of these medicines and the peoples that are the carriers of that, but also it's not safe for participants, and it really, really bothers me.

[1:19:04]

**Amber:** Yeah, absolutely!

**Lola :** I'm really about integrity, and if I'm about integrity, I'm not gonna just follow some medicine message without really seeing: is it literal? Is it metaphorical? Is it meant for me in this lifetime? Is it my ego that's trying to convince me of something? What's really going on here?"

The first time that I got the message really clearly was in a medicine experience, and I'm really careful to be not-literal with interpreting those signs because oftentimes it's just a story that you need to receive in that moment. It's not necessarily something that you need to take literally and implement in your life; sometimes yes, and sometimes no. Being able to discern that is really critical, so I'm super careful about that, and yet it was persistent. It was happening in my dreams, even when I would partner with other herbs like mugwort to amplify the inner vision, these things would be consistent.

So I turned to my ancestry, and I said, “Okay, why is it that this particular teacher, the mushrooms, why do they keep showing up in my field? What is it? And so I went and did my matrilineal DNA journey with Family Tree DNA and really came to understand that the reason why, I believe, psilocybin continues to tap me on the shoulder, is that my ancestors, when they left Africa all those tens of thousands of years ago, the way we came to Europe was by way of Siberia and into Lapland, and then down through the Scandinavia area into the British Isles. So my path was the path of the healer with these particular mushrooms.

As I’ve done research into the Druidic healing traditions, and what they’re finding now about stone carvings and these healing spaces that were almost underground, very similar to a sweat lodge you would find in Central or South America, but in Ireland, and these spiral carvings and mushroom figures, all of these are kind of planted along the lines of where my family came from. Having had a curandero down in Mexico when I was training with psilocybin tell me I’m carrying a lineage, I really sat with that. I hadn’t done this research yet, and I thought, “Well, is he just telling me that because he knows that’s what I want to hear as this white woman who’s coming here to learn this work? Or is this really truth-truth?”

As I sat with that DNA journey and really felt into this weird way that we came into being Europeans, very unusual (according to Family Tree, anyway), it really seemed to become clear to me that this is something that I carry, and this isn’t me trying to overlay my egoic desires onto a cultural tradition I don’t belong to. This is actually something that is a part of me. It’s a part of my lineage, and I can feel good about that.

I always knew, even though I have worked with the ayahuasca, that was not my medicine for so many reasons. And there’s a lot of people that apparently don’t listen to those reasons for themselves, or serve it in Oakland or Sacramento or any of these places, and I just feel for me, that’s so deeply incongruous, not only with who I see facilitating, but also with the medicine itself, and the kind of opportunities we have with the herbs in our own backyards to be our probable, most powerful allies.

**Amber:** Yeah, I mean that’s one of the foundational tenets of the herbalism that I’m most interested in and the herbalism that I trust the most.

It makes me think of several years of living in Northern California and Nevada City, I’ve been invited to so many ayahuasca circles, and, yeah, they’re like, “It’s this DUDE, Josh!” You know?

*(both laugh)*

And I’m like, no.

**Lola:** “Come to his apartment!”

**Amber:** *(Amber laughs)* Just always, even before I was consciously thinking about these issues, was like, no. That’s not how I would want that to go down.

**Lola:** Yeah. I mean, I get it, and I think that medicines have their own agenda working through us, but I also have my own integrity, so people can make their own choices, but for me, that just feels deeply misaligned.

So what I want, what I really want people to receive from my contribution here today is to make that inquiry into what is correct for you and do your homework around the traditions of these medicines. It is no thing to joke about. This is powerful, powerful medicine.

[1:24:50]

**Amber:** I'm curious. Which haplogroup is your motherline?

**Lola:** I am I4A, and she goes by "Iris," and it is among the least common, but oldest, haplogroups that ended up in Europe.

It's like, when I see the dotted line of where the migration and the ancestral DNA has shown up, it was like, OH! I'm not group H. I've never resonated with that, and that's why. We came about a totally roundabout way and went through Siberia. We froze our asses off on the way to Europe!

*(both laugh)*

We really did, and it explains why I'm so pale and why my constitution is so strong, and some of the things that I carry.

And one of the interesting things that said about the I4A group is that you are more sensitive to light, and you're -- what was it? -- there's, like, some DNA variant in the mitochondria that makes you... it's something to do with our relationship with light, and the way that it was worded it was, like, oh my God! This makes so much sense!

I have blue eyes and light hair and light skin. I don't sunburn. I have a weird relationship with light, and of course, as a medicine worker, I have a weird relationship with shadow, too, right? It's an interesting exploration, for sure, to start to overlay my experiences and stories with what seems to have been the case at least in that one little, tiny, thin thread in my ancestry.

**Amber:** Right, but such a strong thread, you know? It's the pure motherline.

Mine is haplogroup V, or "Velda," and they were the northernmost peoples in Europe during the last ice age. So also, that cold medicine and according to Brian Sykes, *The Seven Daughters of Eve*, he writes that Velda's group were among the first, or were the first, cave painters.

**Lola:** Ugh!

**Amber:** Yeah, which is so beautiful and powerful, and it makes me think of this book that you also made me think about, telling this story, by Paul Devereaux, [The Long Trip: A Prehistory of Psychedelia](#).

Where, yeah, he goes back into prehistory and just kind of, like, gathers all of the archaeological evidence (archaeological and all the other evidence we have) of people using psychedelic medicines in the far, far past. And it just... I always remember this one scene he paints about people going deep into caves with the bones of their ancestors and taking mushrooms.

**Lola:** WOW!

**Amber:** Yes, yes! I was just like, (*Amber sighs*) "Oh, I want that."

[1:27:58]

**Lola:** That's so incredible.

Yeah, I mean it's such powerful medicine, and I have a lot of frustration with the state of things when it comes to regulations and legalities because all of the science says that psilocybin, in particular, is **the** safest entheogen out there as far as, like, risk factor goes.

I think it's been said, that in order to kill you, you've had to have two kilos of mushrooms.

**Amber:** Yeah, it's never happened.

**Lola:** Which is... yeah, no. It's never happened, and it's not gonna happen because your body would reject it about 1.9 kilos prior to that situation. (*both laugh*) It would not happen.

So I feel we're really missing out on huge opportunities, and I know there's legislation moving forward to legalize it in therapeutic contexts, and I think that's really important because what the science is showing us about neurogenesis and neural pathways and healing childhood trauma is incredible with this medicine. I've seen it myself when I take people on retreats and work with it in deep intention that it is not until we can get out of our heads and out of our stories and connect with this much deeper more ancient consciousness that we can really release ourselves from the grasp that stuff has on us. It's very hard to do it in any other way.

There are certainly pathways to it and support practices that can help continue that work, but in my now eight years in working with it and holding these spaces, it's incredible when you combine things like psychotherapy and EMDR and craniosacral and coaching and mentorship with something like this. The possibilities for healing are just accelerated exponentially, and it's not because it's a shortcut. Let that be clear.

This is not a way of bypassing the work. For anyone who's done the work, you'll laugh at that idea. It's like, oh yeah, it's a "shortcut." Sure.

**Amber:** It's rewiring the brain.

**Lola:** Yes, it is. You can feel it happening sometimes.

**Amber:** Yeah, and that's literally what it does. Science tells us that. Brain scans tell us that, and it reminds me of something I read, someone's story, sharing on their psychedelic healing. It was like, 30 years of therapy in one night, and they **had** done 30 years of therapy.

**Lola:** Uh-huh. Right. They had context.

**Amber:** And it had gotten them almost nowhere.

**Lola:** Yeah, and it's... this is not a criticism of therapy: It definitely has its place and certain people really get a lot from it, but I know in my life, I have a history of maternal depression and anxiety disorder, and all kinds of mental illness (probably thanks to the suppression of our highly sensitive natures). And so, working with these kinds of things are deeply healing for me in ways that just talking about it are not ever gonna do because I've seen how effective that is in my family, and it's not.

**Amber:** Right. Right, especially for trauma and complex post-traumatic stress syndrome. We really need to go deeper.

**Lola:** We do.

[1:31:12]

**Amber:** Umm... okay, Lola. Thank you thank you thank you thank you. I just loved drinking in your wisdom and your stories through both of these conversations we've had.

You have a lot of offerings, a lot of amazing things that you're doing in the world, so please take your time telling people how they can find more of you.

**Lola:** Thank you so much for the conversations and that invitation.

I do have some incredible work happening. For psilocybin work, in particular, but I do have a retreat that's called "The Art of Ceremony." That's gonna be in Costa Rica in early April of 2020, and all the information is on my website about that, and it is actually designed for people who want to take their relationship with sacred medicines of any kind (but particularly with psilocybin) and begin to ground into the role of a space keeper and a facilitator of this work: How do we do that in integrity? How do we keep things safe? What kinds of things do we need to know? How do you find your own medicine songs? How do you connect to your lineage? You know, those kinds of things are so important in your integrity as a facilitator. And that retreat's gonna be incredible, totally beautiful, lots of play because, as they've shown us, play is (aside from working with things like psilocybin) the most effective way to rewire our neural pathways. It's like, 40 or 50 or 4000 times effective than study. So we're gonna do a lot of play on that retreat as well.

As far as, like, my everyday reality work: I teach people how to partner with their nervous systems to change their biology, their brains, and behavior. I specifically do that with empaths and highly sensitive people, and that work is incredibly powerful as well. It's kind of like a sober psychedelic journey, where we talk about the nervous system and our senses, and kind of combine science with really fun ritual, powerful self-exploration with expressive writing, all kinds of things like that, and that class is called "Empathology," and it's coming up in early September. So when this conversation goes live, I believe we're going to be in the midst of enrolling our next round of students. So definitely check out those links on my site as well.

And you can find me on Instagram. I'm constantly riffing on how the empath conversation is SUPER limited and disempowering most of the time (Lola laughs). So I am a very opinionated person to distill different ways of really embracing our sensitivities and actually turning them into superpowers instead of just turning them into a meme.

*(both laugh)*

I have kind of a fiery attitude a little bit.

So people can find me @animamysteryschool Instagram, and then my website is lola-lamour.com so please come in.

I am an herbalist, so there's always surprising aspects of a holistic approach to healing and wellness and true personal development that's woven through everything I do. You know, I said earlier in our first conversation that I believe that HSPs are the psychedelic plants of the human world, and so working with this topic and our nervous system and supporting that really helps us be that edge of consciousness, that frontier that we really need to go as a species at this moment. So, you know, please come in and explore.

**Amber:** I love it so, so, so much. Thank you for broadening and deepening the conversation around being empathic and being highly sensitive.

You're right: it's so easily memed and collapsed into one thing or a few things, and it's so much bigger than that. So I'm super, super grateful for your work and your shining heart, and your willingness to put it out there and be of service to others.

So thank you again, Lola, so much.

**Lola:** Thank you so much, Amber, and thank you, everyone. We're all doing our best out here, and it's a wild, wooly place, so good job!

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

[1:35:38]

**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 past episodes, my blog, handmade herbal medicines, and a lot more at [MythicMedicine.love](https://www.mythicmedicine.com). We've got reishi, lion's mane, elderberry, mugwort, yarrow, redwood, body oils, an amazing sleep medicine, heart medicine, earth essences, so much more. More than I can list there. [MythicMedicine.love](https://www.mythicmedicine.com).

While you're there, check out my quiz "[Which Healing Herb is your Spirit Medicine?](#)" It's a fun and lighthearted, but the results are really in-depth and designed to bring you into closer alignment with the medicine you are in need of and the medicine that you already carry that you can bring to others.

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And please subscribe in whatever app you use, just click that little subscribe button and review on iTunes. It's so helpful, and if you do that you just may be featured in a listener spotlight in the future.

The music that opens and closes the show is Mariee Sioux. It's from her beautiful song "Wild Eyes."  
Thank you, Mariee.

And thanks to you all. I look forward to next time!