



# INSIDE THE WOONIVERSE

A PODCAST BROUGHT TO YOU FROM THE CORNER OF FRINGE & MAIN

## EP36:

# Plant Wisdom, Woods & Ayahuasca

With Dr. Maya Shetreat

Colette:

Hi there and welcome to INSIDE THE WOONIVERSE, a podcast brought to you from the corner of Fringe and Maine. I'm your host, Colette Baron-Reid. Joining us today is the fabulous Dr. Maya Shetreat, a neurologist, an herbalist, urban farmer, Hellenistic astrologer, and author of *The Dirt Cure*, fabulous title. Anyway, Dr. Maya is considered to be a visionary in the field of psychedelics. She founded the Terrain Institute where she teaches earth based programs for transformational healing, including professional training programs for psychedelic assisted approaches. She works in studies with indigenous communities and healers from all around the world and is a lifelong student of ethnobotany, plant healing and the sacred. I can hardly wait to talk to you. Welcome to the Wooniverse, Maya.

Dr. Maya:

Thank you so much for having me.

Colette:

So excited to dig into this conversation with you, pun intended. Now you have a ton of training and you've accomplished so much in a variety of fields, but I want to go back to the beginning. When did you become interested in healing, for example? Maybe healing and plants, because the two of them go together with you.

Dr. Maya:

You know, I think that people always say, "Oh, how did you go from being a conventional neurologist to being a - all of these other things that you do?" And what I want to say is that I think I started out very unconventional, found my way into being conventional, and then kind of busted the whole system open. So, you know, when I was a little kid, I was very connected to plants and trees and I would go and like... I was an only child, so I had to keep myself busy a good amount of the time. Part of the time I'd read books and part of the time I'd go to this creek



that was near my house and it was totally polluted. It was iridescent rainbows of gasoline in it, but I was like, this is my magical place. And I would make my little potions and mandalas out of the sticks and leaves and I didn't even know what I was doing, but I was very, very deeply connected to that magical world of plants and of nature and of the water and all of those things.

And then as you get older, nobody thinks that's very interesting or normal. And while I never was really all that normal, you know, once I started to decide, okay, I'm going to care about school, I want to achieve, I want to do these things, I more pushed those things to the side. But the reason I even went to medical school was because I was interested in healing and the mind.

Colette:  
Right.

Dr. Maya:  
I saw Bill Moyers' special, actually, that totally changed my ideas about medicine and I thought, "Wow, you know, they're using all these amazing mind, body approaches and that's what I want to do and I'm going to go to medical school and do that." And I wrote an essay about it and they let me in somehow to medical school. So that was really the beginning of my journey that was, actually I think, pretty unconventional. And then I sort of passed as normal for a little while.

Colette:  
I love that you said that, "I pass as normal for a little while." Darting out, you know, really unconventional – whatever conventional means, in that box, you weren't there and then you found your way into it. And I also, by the way, was really impacted by Bill Moyers. When I saw Bill Moyers and Joseph Campbell together was when I started studying Campbell and then Jung and which is now my background, that's where I dove in. But when you think about busting the system open, it's like I think that the conventional gives us a safer container to explore these ideas and then we have to figure out a way how to marry it with the more organic truth that we have that's in us waiting to come out. Would you say that's true?

Dr. Maya:  
I think so. I think, honestly...you know, I was just talking to my girlfriend the other day and we were saying, "Are any of my friends really normal?"



Colette:  
Right.

Dr. Maya:  
We're like... She assessed all my friends as being weird. And then I was like, "Well what about your friends?" And she's like, "No, my friends are weird, too." And then I was like, "Well, what really is normal, right because...?"

Colette:  
Right.

Dr. Maya:  
I think we all start out our little weird, eccentric selves. That's what a lot of kids are if you actually pay attention. And I worked as a pediatric neurologist for years with kind of little weird kids and they're amazing. I mean they're like the best. And I just spent a lot of time reassuring parents, mostly, that just because school wants us to be these little pegs that fit into these little round holes, it doesn't actually mean that there's anything wrong with your kid if they don't fit. And in fact, it's actually maybe going to be better for them in the long run if they don't kind of get stuffed into this normal box that we all try to put everybody into. So, to me, it's like we come out weird and we come out eccentric and then we do this thing that straight jackets us. And then there's this whole peeling of the onion or unfurling of ourselves that has to happen as part of our hero's journey to be able to come back to ourselves and really live as we are.

Colette:  
Right. And that's why I called it organic. And I think the fact... So I didn't know that you were a pediatric neurologist, so you were working with neuro divergent kids a lot, right? So, you're exploring these concepts with them and checking their neurology and that's very close to where we come back to with psychedelics. But I want to go segue from working with kids into working with plants. When did you become interested in working with sacred plants - like the concept of plants that are sacred or sacred medicine?





Dr. Maya:

Well, so I'll just say that first of all, I worked with children and adults, so my spectrum was wide, but definitely a lot of kids for sure. And, you know, I think of plant medicine...people now talk about plant medicine, they mean psychedelics. But when I talk about plant medicine or sacred plants, to me that includes a whole array of different kinds of plants that might, for many people be like, "Why would you say that's sacred?" Like tobacco or like tulsi, like holy basil, or... I will encounter all different kinds of plants and I think that all plants have incredible magic to them. And I think that we can journey with a lot of different kinds of plants. And I do guide people through journeys with rose or with tulsi or with cacao or... What I would say is that's been a journey since I started really working with plants and herbs at all. When I started working more with psychedelic plants, started when, um, I mean, other than whatever we do when we're in our teens and experiment in our friends' basements.

Colette:

Sure.

Dr. Maya:

Or whatever...or beyond that, for some people. It was really when I journeyed to Ecuador. So I went to Ecuador because my son was sick, actually. And I started working with a spiritual teacher who was a fourth generation shaman and a PhD in ethnobotany and I wanted to go to Ecuador and learn with her. And that was when... she lived in the jungle and she had this massive ayahuasca vine that really went to the top of the treetops. It was so...she was this huge, massive, gorgeous plant and she grew cacao and she had... We met San Pedro cacti all over. It was just this really incredible experience, not just around these kinds of sacred psychedelic kinds of plants, but that was a part of it.

Although that was not why I went. It was how I cultivated the beginning of my relationship with these plants. And it's interesting because I think of plants as teachers and spiritual guides. And so I always think I was probably once a plant because I just feel so connected to the plants like they are family. And I think what you speak to is that idea that we are in relationship and even in an almost family relationship, a real deep kinship with the plant world and I would say with the mushroom, the fungi world and all of them, the animal world as well. And that's part of what these sacred plants do, they open a portal that helps us see that rich kinship that we have.



Colette:

Oh, I could listen to you talk forever. So, I also feel that very same feeling that they are kin. Tell me about how your interest with plant consciousness,...Like, when did you first encounter a consciousness with plants? And I'm glad that you brought up that it's not always about the psychedelic plants, and holy basil - we actually have that in the evenings, Marc and I, you know... we have cacao for certain times of the year and things like that. We actually, ourselves, know that these things are that, and, you know, medicine that can offer you are in there in these array of combinations and stuff. So, it was really interesting that you brought that up because people immediately go to: all plant medicine is magic mushrooms. You know what I mean? Or ayahuasca. And that's not true. So again, let's go back to the consciousness of the plant. Tell me about your first encounter.

Dr. Maya:

Well, so, here's what I would say. I think that comes from my childhood. And I think psychedelic plants speak really loudly to us.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

But, all plants are speaking to us. And, the way that they speak is not in words. So, there is this, I believe, a universal language that has no words that we all once spoke... and water, wind, seeds, sun, soil, all the plants, all the animals. And that we have forgotten that language to some great extent. And, I think why people feel so passionately about psychedelics, one reason is that there is a kind of remembering that happens for many people, not all people, but for many people when they in some way ingest those plants or work with those plants. But to me, I've always felt that I spoke that language.

And so for example, when I was a little girl, we used to sometimes see a wooded lot that would be clear cut because they were going to build a house or whatever in my neighborhood. And I would say, "Those trees are so sad. I feel, like, so sad for those trees." And I felt this really deep kind of empathic connection with the trees, the plants, what had been cleared. And I felt that I had a really strong potent communication. And I actually, it may have been stronger for me than



for other people, but I don't think I'm the only person. I think many of us have that language when we come out.

Colette:  
Yeah.

Dr. Maya:  
And what happens is that we are, as we discussed before, it's really we're told that's not a thing, it's pretending or it's imagination or all of that. And so for me, I always tell people if they train with me or they work with me, people say, "Oh, well am I just imagining this?" And I'm like, "What do you think your imagination is?"

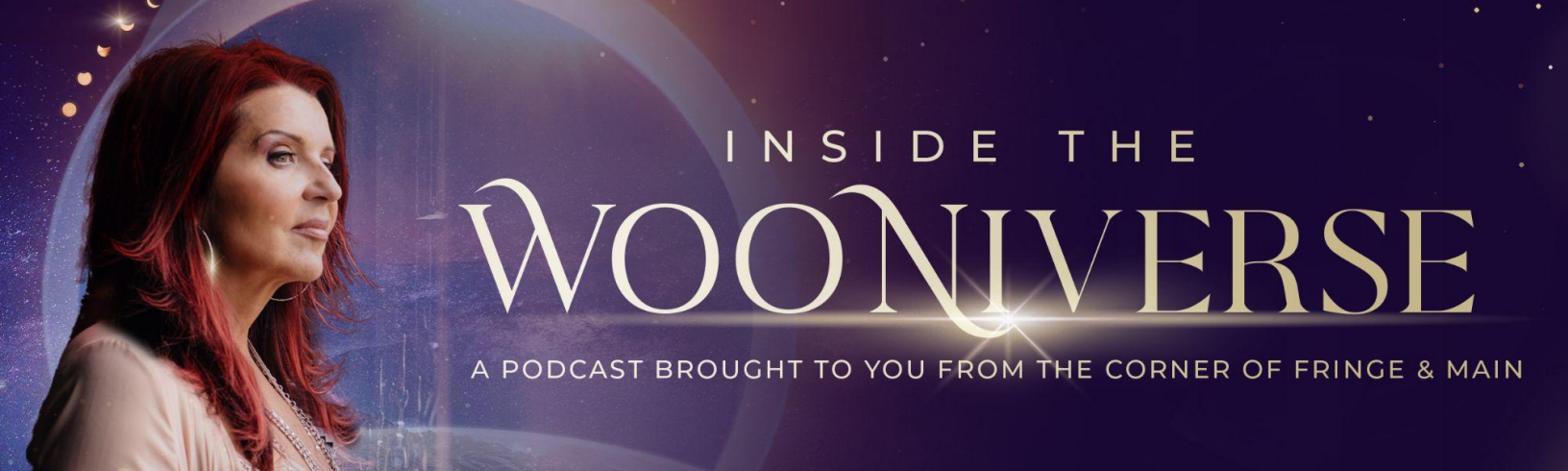
Colette:  
Right. It's the bridge.

Dr. Maya:  
Yeah.

Colette:  
I've always believed that our first sense of consciousness comes from the fact that we are spirit first, we are human being second. And that common language that you talk about is about the consciousness that brings us all together, whether it's a plant or whether it's a person. And I do think that the advent of monotheism after the goddess culture was annihilated many thousands of years ago, was when we started to dominate nature. The concept that we are on top of it as opposed to being a part of it or being part of a system of conscious beings and sentient beings. And people think, oh, plants don't feel, but they do.

And, I have to tell you this crazy story, though. So, you were talking about the big ayahuasca plant. I'll segue into the story. So, I was doing a reading, this is just a few years ago for a woman, a German woman in Germany and this was before I retired and I was still doing one-on-one readings. And I said, "I'm getting a real clear indication that your grandmother, she speaks Spanish or she's Spanish, I think she's Spanish." She goes, "I have no Spanish grandmother." I said, "I know, but there's Latin America here, whatever." She goes, "No, no, no,





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I'm German." I went, "Yeah, I know, but I'm telling you, she's telling me she's your grandmother." And I'm arguing with this woman and I couldn't help myself and I said, "And she smells like earth." I said, "And she's really mad at you right now." And she's like, "Oh my God." When I said, "Not mad at you, but you haven't done the work that you came to her to do." And I'm like, "Does this make any sense to you? Because you're saying you don't have a Latin American grandmother?"

She's claiming, she goes "I just came back from the Amazon and I went on an ayahuasca journey and she told me she was the grandmother." And I'm talking to this plant, I'm hearing the plant, I'm smelling the plant. The plant is old. It is so... And it's basically was you didn't come here and honored the sacred covenant that we had together. It was very, very deep. And I was completely freaked out, I'll be honest. Because I mean I've experienced a lot of crazy things doing what I do. And I'm always amazed when something like this happens.

And it was the first time that this sense of real conscious connection and storytelling that was coming to me from this plant... that because she didn't complete what she was there to do, which really had to do with some of the content, the unrealized and unrecognized content of her ancestry. She was molested by her dad and a bunch of stuff and she'd had a breakdown prior and she said, "You came to me to heal and you won't do it." So she was bawling and I'm crying and I'm like, "What's happening?"

Dr. Maya:

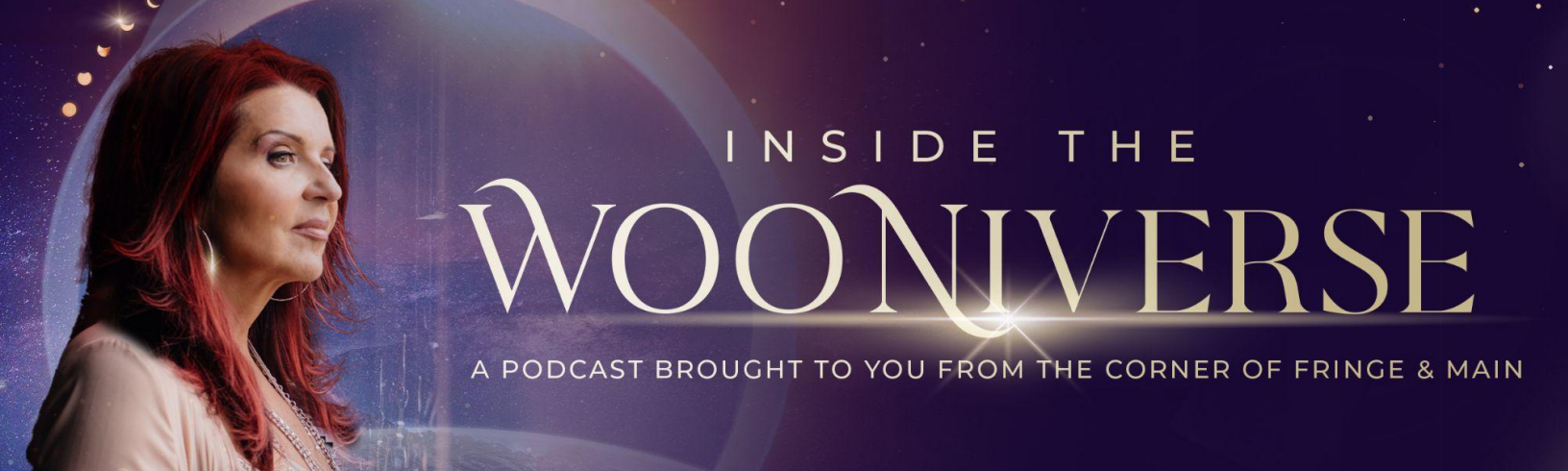
Yeah.

Colette:

So, have you had any kind of encounters? You obviously worked with a woman who had a relationship with these plants and so have you had an actual conversation with a plant?

Dr. Maya:

Well, yeah. And so this is one of those beautiful things is these conversations are happening all the time. And then I'll tell you one something a little more in the psychedelic category. But when I walked in the woods once, just for an example. This is a woods I go trail running in and I go walking in and I go praying in. I was walking through the woods one day and this stuff happens



to me a lot. And I think it happens, actually, to many of us if we have, again, that ability to tune into our subtle seeing and knowing. And I said, "I want to protect you. Show me how I can protect you." And I look down in front of me and there is a big piece of bark that is shaped like a sword.

Colette:

Oh wow.

Dr. Maya:

And it was huge. It was a huge piece of bark and it was unmistakably shaped like a sword. And I picked it up and you would think maybe it would fall apart. No, it was this sword, a bark sword. And I was like, "Okay, I guess this is my message, you know." Now I'm figuring out what to do next. So there are these kinds of moments when you ask, and asking is very key...

Colette:

Yes, asking.

Dr. Maya:

...with the plants, and just in general with ancestors. You know, a lot of my work is with the invisible world as yours has been.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

And so a lot of that has to do with being willing to ask. And by the way, as a side point, people really, I find, struggle to get to a place where they feel that they can ask and then receive.

Colette:

Right.





Dr. Maya:

They feel like I'm not supposed to, I shouldn't, I don't deserve to, I don't know how, all of these things, so much of people when they come into my world, whether it's training with me or working with me one on one in some way is always around permission, beginning with permission to ask. Because if you don't ask, if you can't ask, then how do they know exactly what you need?

Colette:

I do think that there's a lot of conditioning, and I do think that it's societal or cultural or religious, where we're supposed to be the dominators of nature, nature is inanimate. And if we're asking for a conversation with nature, then somehow we're asking for something evil or something bad. There's a superstition around that as well too, that I think we have to identify and say, "Oh wow, okay, so this is in my psyche. So somehow I have to get past that and just say..." I always say, "You've got to be willing to ask." Start there. I'm willing to be willing to ask. I'm willing to let go my fear of the reprisals, and also the fear that it won't answer you back because you've been so trained to see it as inanimate and it doesn't have a spirit or a consciousness.

Dr. Maya:

Yeah.

Colette:

But you always get a message when you ask nature. Always.

Dr. Maya:

Yeah, because nature is spirit.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

So just as we are engaged in spirit all the time, and I think part of this goes back not just to the decimation of goddess culture, but actually even more recently, I have a whole module on this in my training around the European witch hunts.



Colette:

Yep.

Dr. Maya:

Which is about 400 years ago or so. And that was the time of Descartes and the birth of the modern scientific method happened at the same time. And the witch hunts, which were all about actually killing anything...

Colette:

The herbalists.

Dr. Maya:

Right. Well, it was the herbalist. It was the wise women. It was anyone who was doing...magical...celebrating the cycles of nature and the magical world was just really part of village culture.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

And, oftentimes, women were the holders of that, especially older women who happened to also be very - give zero fucks - and very politically active. And at that time it was also the elimination of the commons. The commons were green space that anyone could use so they could graze their animals there, they could grow vegetables there, they could do anything and it wasn't owned land, it was public land that anyone could use. And what happened, which is the beginning of capitalism as well, was the commons were made private. And so all these people had nowhere to graze their animals or grow their food. And it actually caused all these revolts and uprisings that were spearheaded by older women because a lot of the men were killed or imprisoned. And so then the witch hunts began,

Colette:

Right.



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Dr. Maya:

As partly a dominating of women, a dominating of this revolt, a dominating of magic culture.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

So it was a really potent time. And at the same time was when the enlightenment” - quote, unquote....

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

...the enlightenment began, which was really all about being rational. But, if you look at Descartes writings or Francis Bacon, who was the father of the scientific method, it's all about dominating nature. It's about torturing nature, in fact.

Colette:

Right, torturing nature. Yep.

Dr. Maya:

Torturing nature to get her secrets. We put her on the rack just like they were doing to many of these witches - quote, unquote"witches," and other people who were out of the box people at that time. And it was all about betraying – sister betraying sister, a mother betraying daughter. It was, like, neighbor betraying neighbor. So, I think just to speak to that idea of how we're afraid to ask, we're afraid to engage, it's like we're afraid to be destroyed.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:





Because in our ancestry in many cases, and at that same time, even if you're not European, you're not from that particular part of the world, of course that was the beginning of colonization and the whole slavery.

Colette:  
Yeah.

Dr. Maya:  
So, the whole African continent became a part of that. The whole new world, North and South America all became a part of that whole mission. So, this was something that was global that happened and it's in everybody's, or most everybody's lineage. I believe that we're afraid of being destroyed when we engage with this voice, this language that's around us.

Colette:  
That's amazing. I started really diving into my ancestry. I'm 90% Slavic, Polish and Serbian, and I was looking into... Because my father was the one that taught me about spirit animals, he taught me how to read Turkish coffee cups and stuff. So, he really indoctrinated me into the folklore of the Slavs. And the Ukraine is part of that, and that there's a real rich history there. And, why some of the religion, the religious structure there, they call it double faith because they kept a lot of the pagan beliefs and ideas, etc, and decided to take what they like from Christianity and shove it on top.

So just you're going to see a lot of... Yeah, that you see that earth culture in the Slavic traditions. It's really interesting. But still that you're right, that sense of fear like, "Whoa, what if I do this?" Now, today it's sorta trendy, but there still is that pervasive sense of it's not safe because people are afraid or they believed that there was something wrong with the desire to be connected to the invisible world and to respect all nature, etc, and to converse with it. So it's an interesting dilemma. But again, now you exist, your teachings exist and you can and I'm glad that there's a conversation now because I think people are starving. I think plant medicine has become quote, unquote "popular." When I say popular, it's because people are starving. They're starving for that connection. They don't know where to get it.



Dr. Maya:

Yeah, I think that's really true. And my story is both similar and different because my father's family is from Morocco. And, actually my aunts.... they always did these kinds of rituals, and they're also very religious in a more conventional way. And, actually, my grandfather, who by all accounts was not necessarily the nicest person, was actually who everybody would come to when they were sick. And, he would go out into the fields and pick the plants that they needed and give it to them in addition to the other things he did. Because a lot of people had a lot of roles. So I'm like, "Oh I have this indigenous lineage." You look at my aunts and my family, you can see. But they are very ashamed of that indigenous lineage.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

Because it was actually something that put them in a lot of compromise. And they ended up being immigrants and in poverty, abject poverty, for a long time until they moved through it. So I actually had to rediscover that "indigenous knowing" and that extract the spiritual ritual. I was like, "Wait, why do you light 17 candles every weekend?" You know what I mean? And all these things to really get to the meat of it.

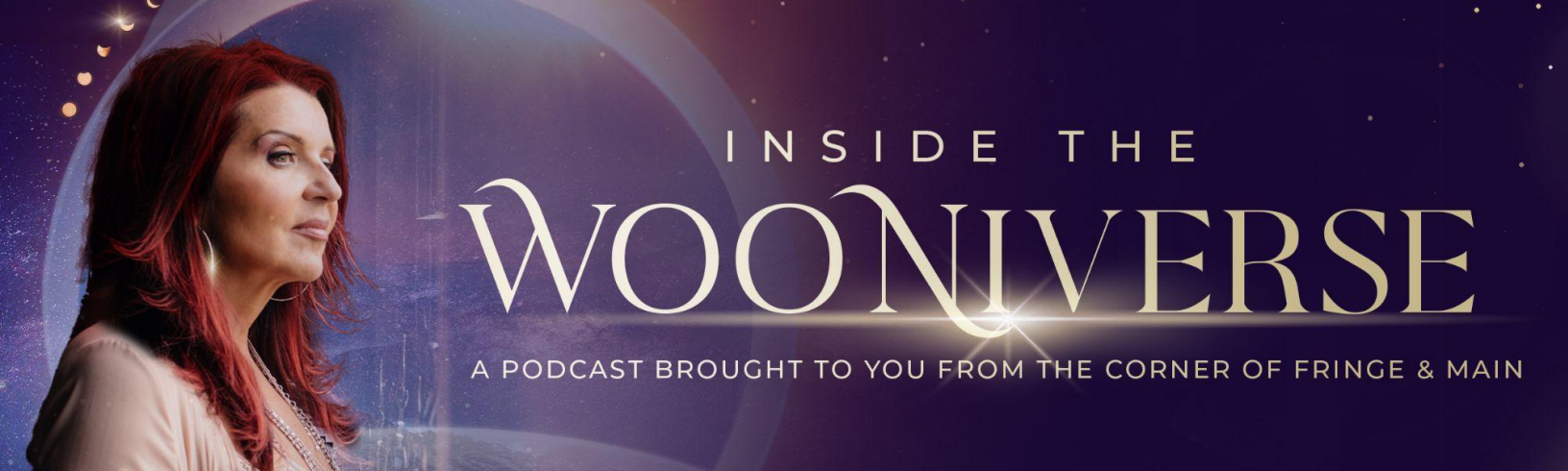
And then I went on just a lot of my family members who had been indoctrinated with that shame of this indigenous background that they didn't even really know about – because we couldn't talk about it – and we really didn't know very much about it. I went to medical school, I did all these... and I got married and had three kids and did all this very conventional stuff. And then at a certain point in time, in my own way, I ended up not long after engaging with plant medicines and this is not uncommon, leaving my marriage.

Colette:

Right.

Dr. Maya:

That was almost a 20 year marriage, someone I was with for 25 years since college. I got married when I was 23. And actually I fell in love with a woman and...



Colette:  
That's so great.

Dr. Maya:  
... got really into a whole different world. What I realized ultimately was there was no way in that relationship I had been in, which felt safe and very... It was doing all the things it was supposed to do, but it didn't allow me to grow and really evolve into the person that wanted to exist here, in this earthly realm, at this time.

Colette:  
Right.

Dr. Maya:  
And I really had to give myself permission in a sense, or maybe the plants helped me to do that so that I could show up not in that safe way, but actually really embracing all of those parts of myself like you.

Colette:  
Okay. So is there a difference between a sacred plant, a master plant and a teacher plant? Or are they the same? And can you share some examples of each type if they are different and if they're not, why?

Dr. Maya:  
So master plants and teacher plants are synonyms, really. And it's basically different terminology for the same category of plants used by indigenous people, generally. And, when I say indigenous people, I want to just add that there are many, many, many, many nations of indigenous people.

Colette:  
Yep.





Dr. Maya:

So I'm being very general for a group that is extremely diverse.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

But this is something that I would say is a common overall idea.

Colette:

Right.

Dr. Maya:

That teacher plants or master plants are things that... they're plants that actually have neurological, if we would talk about it in western language, that have real neurological impact that help you shift or transform in really significant ways, change your state of being or consciousness. That can include, I would like to say something like caffeine.

Colette:

Right. Yeah, I was going to ask.

Dr. Maya:

Coffee is a teacher plant.

Colette:

Right.

Dr. Maya:

Coffee would be considered that, cacao is considered that, kava is considered that. So it's not, again, all about psychedelics, but it's about that sense of being altered and shifting your awareness by this plant that's powerful and speaks in that louder voice, if we could say that.



Colette:

The louder voice. Yeah, I get it. Because you do change, the caffeine will give you energy, the cacao gives you a certain feeling, kava, tulsi, like you mentioned holy basil before, too. Those are things you actually feel.

Dr. Maya:

Well, and I want to mention, because this might not come up otherwise, and you said we could talk about anything...

Colette:

Anything.

Dr. Maya:

So, when I went to Ecuador, one of the things that my friend said to me before I left, he said, "While you're there, don't be afraid if someone offers you coca from the coca plant." Which is popularly and widely known as this evil, evil thing because it's the source of cocaine. He said, "Don't be afraid to chew the leaves or drink the tea because if you're at altitude it will really help you." Well of course, needless to say, at some point on this very adventurous trip I was taking, we were going to altitude, significant altitude and I am sensitive, even though I'd been preparing, I'd been taking reishi mushroom, I'd been taking... I had a whole elaborate array of things I had done to prepare myself. And, yet, we got there and my heart's beating really quickly and I'm lightheaded and I'm feeling terrible and I'm thinking we're supposed to go to these incredible hot springs and then dive into this icy mountain.

We had a whole plan, but I didn't know if I was going to be able to do it and there were other people also who are really suffering. So we stopped in a botanica and they gave us coca leaves. And so I remembered what my friend said and I'm chewing these leaves and it didn't make me feel...

Colette:

High.



Dr. Maya:

It didn't make me feel high. But I started within, I would say three minutes, I felt clear in my mind, I felt my heart rate settled, I felt like a person, I was able to do the whole day. Totally, I would say, really within three to five minutes, I felt a lot better and everyone else experienced the same. So, this goes to that idea of coca as a master plant and I really... Because when I bring up tobacco, also if I'm on Instagram and I'm talking about tobacco being a sacred plant because I grow tobacco every year just because I love her.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

And because she's the most beautiful... If you ever smell tobacco flowers, you'll understand.

Colette:

I have. Yes.

Dr. Maya:

It's a very heady, enchanting fragrance. So, I grow these plants and people are like, "Why would..." And coca plants like, "Oh that's so bad. That's a bad plant." So no, that's a master plant, a teacher plant.

Colette:

Yep. Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

And again, you feel different when you chew the plant. But cocaine is a whole different thing. It's how the westerners...

Colette:

Completely.





Dr. Maya:

And not just the westerners, but the colonizers, maybe we could say, in a pejorative way, wanted to use these plants. And, that's something I always really caution people is – your relationship with the plant, even your language.

Colette:

Yep.

Dr. Maya:

So, talking about the plant as, oh, I use this to do this or that. No, this is a, think about this as a sacred relationship that you would have with someone you are going to be intimate with. And, so you want to cultivate that relationship. I grow the plants to cultivate my relationship with these plants. And so I'm tending them, I'm feeding them, I'm talking to them, I'm watering them, I'm doing all of these things that actually change me before I ever would ingest, whether it's as an essence or in a bigger way.

Colette:

Right.

Dr. Maya:

I want to know these plants and I want them to know me. And that's the beginning of that conversation.

Colette:

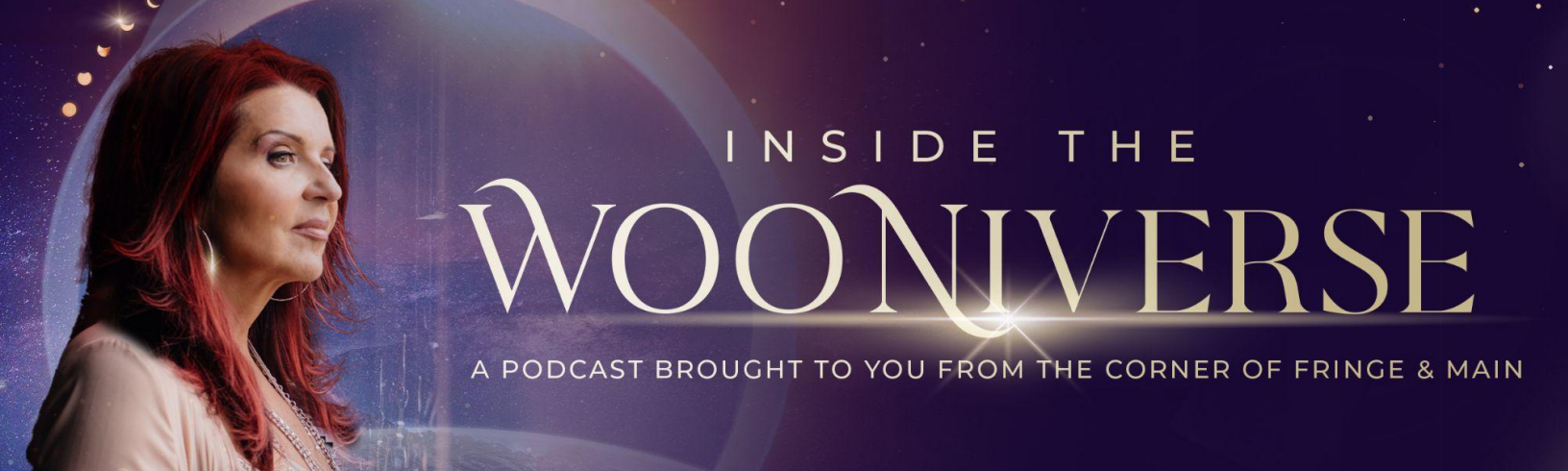
And isn't it about a respect?

Dr. Maya:

Yes.

Colette:

Right? Because if you hear the word “use...” I'm clean and sober, 36 and a half years and used cocaine, and ended up taking the express train into recovery because it was not a sacred relationship. It wasn't at all. It was a way to self harm. And when you think about when drugs are



taken from its original purpose and master purpose and then somehow misused, then there's going to be a negative effect at some point. So, I love that you said that because it is about respect and bringing it back to its original purpose of relationship.

Dr. Maya:  
Yes.

Colette:  
Yeah. That's really cool. This is fantastic. Well we have to take a little break now, so please stay with us. We'll be right back.

Colette:  
Welcome back. Okay Maya, my next question is what are some aspects of little known magic that can be found within sacred plant medicines?

Dr. Maya:  
So for me, when I talk about magic, I think it's really about being able to cultivate a relationship with mystery and with the invisible. So, what master plants can do is heighten your awareness or help. And, we could talk about it from a very nerdy, sciencey, neurologic thing because I love nerding out about that. But, really in a just basic way, help to strip away a lot of the stories that you might have about yourself, about your relationships, about your life, about the world, about the invisible, and basically allows you to see beyond those things.

You know, I want to just preface before I even get into it, because I can get very excited when I'm talking about these master plants and psychedelics, but I also want to just be clear that I don't think this is for everybody. I don't think that this is something people should necessarily be doing a lot of. Maybe for some people they should be, but I think for many of us, and for me, in fact I'm very measured with my ingestion of any of these plants because I have necklaces I wear made from the medicine, I tend them, I grow them, I do a lot of things and I just want to be clear about that so that...



Colette:

Yeah, it's not about doing them.

Dr. Maya:

Doesn't have to be. And, actually I coach people through microdosing experiences and I think microdosing experiences, which are sub psychedelic experiences. So you can do your life, you can do your day, you can go to work or take care of your kids or whatever the things, and still be experiencing shifts and awareness in a different way that doesn't alter you to the extent that you can't operate normally, whatever.

Colette:

Whatever normal is.

Dr. Maya:

We've already said, normal's not a thing, but blend in with the normies. So, I would just say I think there are a lot of really beautiful ways, to your point around addiction, that it's possible also to engage, even though psychedelics have been shown in studies to absolutely treat addiction.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

And when I say treat, I don't use that word lightly.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

I mean people who are on meth, cocaine, heroin, who – certain kinds of psychedelics, particularly iboga...

Colette:

Iboga. Yeah.





Dr. Maya:

... But not just. And ibogas requires a lot of medical prep before you do it because it can really... That is one psychedelic that can actually stop your heart.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

You need to really be vetted and with someone very experienced before you do that. But at the same time, these medicines actually can treat addiction and they can also become addictive – not in the way that we think of something like heroin or cocaine or alcohol, but we can become reliant in some way and think this is what we need in order to be able to see beyond or feel beyond or have that sense of connection. And in fact, that's very much not the case for most people,

Colette:

Right. Yeah, I get it. Because it's true. It's like, oh, I want that awareness, I want more of that awareness. The addiction is really more to the connection to the outer realms, the hidden realms. Because once you have a taste of it, you're like, oh, this is where I should be all the time. But we don't need... what I had to prove to myself, too, is that I don't need any substance to move into those realms. I live there, and I live there most of the time so I can... But I, today, have great respect, great, great respect. I mean like talking to the grandmother, excuse me, he scared me, I've got to say.

Dr. Maya:

Yeah.

Colette:

She was like, "Okay, I never want to meet you in a dark alley."



Dr. Maya:

She's fierce. She's... So, you know, these medicines... and people will say, "Oh, which psychedelic is the right psychedelic for me?" So, I teach a whole in-depth course on all of these medicines. But part of what I believe is that when you feel called to particular medicines, then that's something to pay attention to and start to cultivate that relationship. People will talk about ayahuasca as the grandmother, or we call her mama or grandmother ayahuasca because... And she is like a Kali Ma of energy.

Colette:

Right.

Dr. Maya:

So, she has a very destructive force to her and kind of the death vine. She's the death of your ego, the death of your former self, death and rebirth. But the death part... We love talking about rebirth and when we talk about death and rebirth.

Colette:

Sure.

Dr. Maya:

We don't love talking about the death part.

Colette:

The death part. Now let's just go to rebirth right away.

Dr. Maya:

Yep.

Colette:

Pass right over to the rebirth.

Dr. Maya:

Right.



Colette:

No, it's true. And there was a sense of... It was an interesting sensory experience for me because of the earthy quality to the smell. I don't always smell when I... I thought for sure I was connecting as a medium. I still felt that it was an ancestor. I kept arguing, no, no, no, this is an ancestor. And then I realized, oh, she's all our ancestor.

Dr. Maya:

That's right.

Colette:

And you respect your grandmother. And I was like... So I made it... Well that was a joke that I made, well I don't want to meet her in the dark. It's really if I go... You want to make sure you're willing to do the work, if you meet her, and you will meet her in the dark.

Dr. Maya:

Right. Absolutely. Because it's the death vine, she comes to you in the dark. And, I love that you brought that up. That story is an incredible story. And you're bringing up a really important point, which is when you engage with these medicines, you are engaging in a sacred contract.

Colette: Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

So, those people who are going back every week for their weekly ayahuasca ceremony, but it's like that's just showing you— she's opening doors, she's opening a window, it's a portal, and then you have a responsibility after that. And, this is really why I created the certification program that I have, to guide people and help other people be guided to the “What now?” You've done...

Colette:

The “What now?” Yes.





Dr. Maya:

You've had the awakening, you've had... And that could be through psychedelics or it could be through illness, or it could be through whatever it is. And now you're in this sacred contract that you weren't in before or you weren't aware of before and now what do you do?

Colette:

Right. And that was the point I think when I think back at that, because that was a profound moment for me. I'm like, wow, that was wild. And I realized she didn't know what to do next. There was an avoidance thing, apparently she did know the person to talk to next kind of thing. But I thought, oh that's so interesting because if it's not done correctly or done with the right reverence and respect, etc, and have it flow through, you're left with the shattering and you don't know how to pick up the pieces or you're just in denial and you throw up and you want to go.

And so the fact that you treat this with such respect, and you offer the journey, it doesn't stop after you've completed. There has to be a follow through because the covenant is to step through the portal and to change and then to come back with the gift. It's very much like the Jugian idea of the shaman archetype. This is the truth that everybody right now has been through this initiation, especially through the pandemic and all the social justice issues and the big social change that's being required of everybody right now, a big awakening. But our job, what do we do next? We have to keep going to bring some solution, some gift, some treasure back to the community. That's the next step. And we need guides for that.

Dr. Maya:

Absolutely. You put that so beautifully. And I think one of the things that I would add to that is that we think that this has to be really hard and difficult, I think, in a lot of cases. And it was work, or at least a lot of the people that I have encountered, and even, I think, in my own experience I thought, well this is difficult.

Colette:

Right.



Dr. Maya:

But, what I've discovered is that it's actually very playful. There's a very playful and even potentially joyful aspect to "How do we find those answers?" It's by being really curious and playing and experimenting and making mistakes and being like little puppies, little kids willing to fall on our backs and be like, "Oh, okay, wasn't the right way. I'm going to try this way." So, I think we're in a really beautiful moment right now, even though the world feels, I think, really chaotic and people are really losing it in a lot of ways, even more, I almost feel now than...

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

... during the real meat of the quarantine, and the scariest part of that. It's really, like now, people are so tapped out, and what's next and when's the next shoe going to drop? And it's like how do we keep this momentum going is really about... It doesn't mean ignore the world around us. It doesn't mean that we don't have to come and be in service and good ways and bring those gifts, but it's doing it in the spirit of play and joy.

Colette:

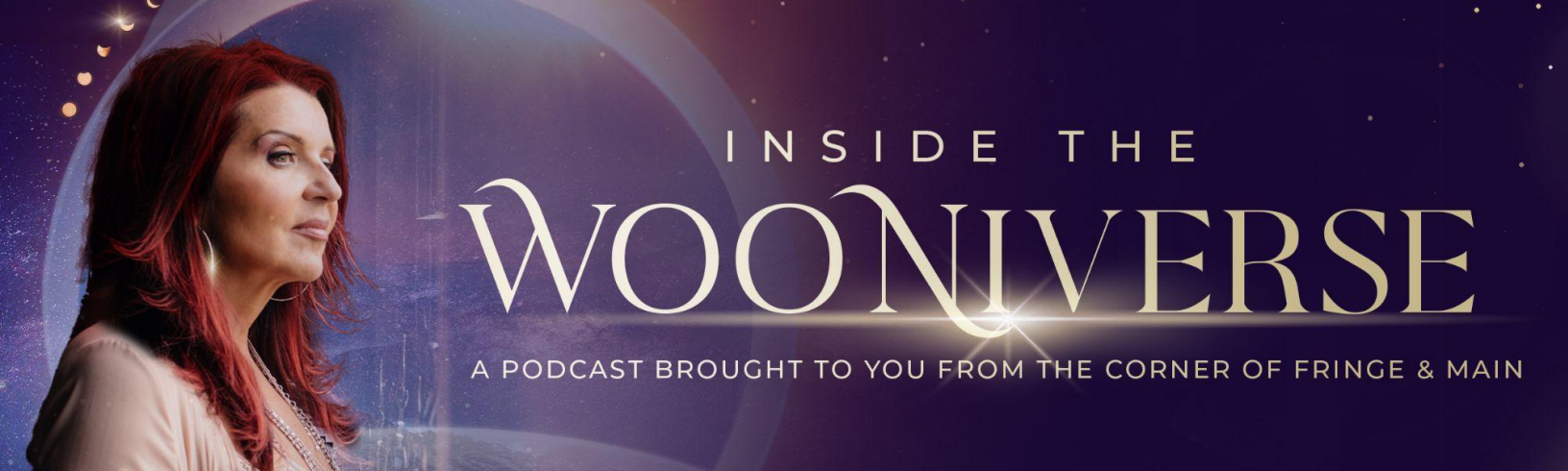
I love that you said that. Because curiosity, play and joy, that's that innocence of the kid, again, enables everybody to make mistakes. But I think we all have to get on the same page with that and say, "We're allowed to experiment." Because nobody has all the answers. So, if we can be playful and joyful –given that we are looking to find a solution – isn't that right? So, then why not play and see? And, sometimes we won't hit the mark, we will make mistakes and...

Dr. Maya:

Often. Often we will.

Colette:

More than often.



Dr. Maya:

But, I would say, even, “What if we just learned how to ask better questions rather than trying to always come to answers?”

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

Maybe if we ask better questions or bigger questions and just be curious, then we might discover and co-create something that's never existed before, rather than rushing to answers that are coming from our limited knowing and our limited mind. So, I think that even goes further to that idea of curiosity and play and innocence. Absolutely.

Colette:

I love that you brought up the limitation of the mind because when you think about who we are, we're memory based creatures. Our subconscious is based on memory repetition. Right? If we're trying to build a world on certainty, that we can only define that by what we know already. So if we're curious and playful and like, ooh, let's see, like you just said, creating something that hasn't ever been done before, that has to come with letting go what we already know and stepping into the uncharted. You literally have to step into uncharted waters and trust that the Loch Ness Monster could actually give you a ride instead of being somebody that's going to eat you.

Dr. Maya:

Right. Well, and this, it's such a perfect dovetail with actually my nerdy, scientific thing I'm going to share about psychedelics right now, which is... So, you know, one of the things that psychedelics do as far as we understand so far in the nervous system is it shuts down something called the default mode network, so DMN. And the default mode network is our me network and it helps run all of our mind and systems and it suppresses, it's actually a suppressive system that... so that you don't remember all your old traumatic memories and feelings and things.





Colette:  
Right.

Dr. Maya:  
So, it allows you to operate in the world successfully when it's operational and when it's not operational, it goes offline.

Colette:  
Right.

Dr. Maya:  
Suddenly these old memories, old feelings, old stories can rise up into your awareness and it allows you to look at them and be in conversation with them. But one of the other things that it does is called predictive coding. And predictive coding... I know it's, ooh.

Colette:  
This is cool, I love nerdy things.

Dr. Maya:  
So predictive coding is when you walk into a new situation, most of us think we're taking in all the details of that situation. So look, I walk into a room and I see the lights, I see the people, I see this person's face, I see whatever. In fact, we're actually not seeing all the details. What we're seeing is a few details of the present moment. We're seeing maybe a few things and everything else, all the other details are filled in from what you know from the past.

Colette:  
Right.

Dr. Maya:  
So every time you go into a new situation, you might... And I want to say actually that's great for survival.



Colette:  
Right.

Dr. Maya:  
Because if you once see a lion and run away and then you walk into a room with a lion and be like, "Oh, sharp teeth. Oh, drooling mouth, oh, big whatever." You want to be like, "Let me get the hell out of here."

Colette:  
Right.

Dr. Maya:  
But if you once met a lion and then you go into a room and every time you're filling in a lot of details as if there's a lion in the room when they're friends in the room, people who love you in the room, then you're going to be creating this whole fear narrative maybe around something that's loving. And, how are you going to be able to differentiate? How are you going to be able to shift that? So, going offline with your default mode network, which happens with psychedelics and other things like really deep regular meditation and fasting, it can happen, and praying, it can happen. There are other things that can offer this as well. But this is psychedelics are – one way and it happens pretty quickly and strongly with that. It allows you to basically shed that narrative, let's say, so that you're able to see more of the details of the present moment.

Colette:  
Oh, isn't that amazing? And then you have choice.

Dr. Maya:  
Right.

Colette:  
Right? Because you're no longer automatically having an expectation that because you've made meaning. Because we're meaning-makers and we're pattern-seekers. So, then all of a sudden, ooh, we can make a new pattern and make new meaning, what are we going to do? And that's



what a little kid comes in. Well, let's throw the finger paint on the wall and stick our nose in it and maybe lick it and see if it's good.

Dr. Maya:  
That's right.

Colette:  
And go, "Whee." And see, like, what was that?

Dr. Maya:  
Right. And we're so afraid though, too, of making mistakes because a lot of that trauma comes from perfectionist - this sort of perfectionist mindset – is like, we can't experiment because what if we screw up? And, then we won't get loved. We won't be taken care of. We won't survive.

Colette:  
Right. Or we'll...

Dr. Maya:  
So I think that is part of it too.

Colette:  
... Get burnt at the stake.

Dr. Maya:  
Right.

Colette:  
We talked about that earlier. Yeah. There's so many condition threads in the tapestry. It's like you were given a coloring book and 90% of it's already colored in. Right? It's just like, here you get only this percentage is the stuff you can add. That's it. Because the rest of it's already done. Yeah, that's interesting. And I can see why that then if you do it therapeutically...or if you engage in the relationship, therapeutically. I'm watching my language. So you don't do the drug. You actually experience, so that you could make a shift because you've turned that, that's





offline. You then actually have that window of opportunity, that portal to make a change. A friend of mine had recently done a series with a therapist and it was extraordinary what it did for her. Extraordinary. There was, I'm talking, real change happened. Real change.

Dr. Maya:  
Yeah.

Colette:  
It was amazing. What is some of the gifts and some of the challenges of being a sensitive being? You mentioned a few times about how sensitive you are.

Dr. Maya:  
Well, so my son, I talked about my son being sick and how he took me on this real journey. And I think of him as being a very high level shaman, a high level teacher in my life. And I think our children are, our loved ones are, relationships are. But what I really learned through him and through my own journey to understand him was my own level of sensitivity. And, actually that all of the patients that I was treating were these, what I call cosmic magnets. So they're the ones...

Colette:  
Cosmic magnets. I love that. Tell me about cosmic magnets.

Dr. Maya:  
Well, it's these people who can hear the bee sneeze three miles away.

Colette:  
That's me.

Dr. Maya:  
You know all these things, feel all these things. And you can perceive things that other people are not perceiving, you experience things. And it's not like, "Oh, you're..." It doesn't have to be you're living in this woo reality. We don't have to...



Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

It can be like, I get sick more often if I'm not careful about how I take care of myself and who I'm around. So it's really just tuning into, again, that... It's tuning into the sensitivity and embracing it and honoring it, and caring for yourself as a sensitive being rather than trying to suppress it or pretend it's not there. And, that I find for many people, going back to the issue of addiction, which is very widespread, is for a lot of people that I have worked with who have addictions, it's because they are incredibly sensitive. And I mean that as a gift.

Colette:

Nope, I know.

Dr. Maya:

Yep. Well, I'm just saying that for anyone listening.

Colette:

I was one of them.

Dr. Maya:

Yeah. Right. That sensitivity is a gift, but that's not what we're taught, that's not how we're treated. We don't know how to care for ourselves spiritually and for our souls in this way so we have to figure out what the hell to do to live with this gift. And if you don't know that it's a gift, then you think it's a liability and you have to maybe medicate it away or I was a workaholic.

Colette:

Yeah.

Dr. Maya:

I had to work it away so that I just didn't know about it, think about it, etc. So, the sensitivity for me, one of the first things I do with anyone who trains with me is train them in spiritual self care, like taking salt water baths or going out and lying on the earth or brushing themselves with



plants. And I have a whole array of different practices that are transformative. And they sound simple probably when you hear this, but they really can go... You could go from being in a crowd of people and feeling like, ugh, and agitated and angry or watching the news. And it doesn't have to be a crowd of people to feeling centered, feeling grounded, feeling again, like you're back in your body and safe.

Colette:

Ugh. That's amazing. So this has been so great. I would love to pull a card. I'm going to use the shaman's dream. This was my latest deck that I did with Alberto Villoldo. And, we're going to pick a card and we're just going to see what Spirit wants us to talk about. How about you decide? Do we want to connect with just the consciousness of Spirit or a consciousness of a specific plant that you're connected to? Who do you want to talk to? Let's ask, what's the good question?

Dr. Maya:

Well, we can connect... So we did talk about Grandmother Ayahuasca.

Colette:

Okay.

Dr. Maya:

We could see what she wants us to know right now.

Colette:

Okay, well, since I did talk to her before.

Dr. Maya:

Yes.

Colette:

Let's ask her.





Dr. Maya:

But now we're not in the dark alley, so we're okay.

Colette:

No, we're definitely not. We're absolutely not. And I'm curious to see. Yeah. Deep, quiet and stillness. And, again, whether you, listening today, believe that we have asked a question of Grandmother Ayahuasca and she's answered us, or that we've asked the greater consciousness or Spirit. We don't know who answered this, but we sure know that this is correct. So the quality of the practice of meditation and stillness, how does that work for you? I can tell you what the card actually means is that it is a call for us to slow down and disconnect and be quiet, get off our technology, go back to nature, be quiet, be still, allow yourself to receive. How do you feel about that?

Dr. Maya:

I love this. I think it's so timely. The idea of: we run away from silence sometimes because then what questions, what ideas, what fears, etc. are going to arise? But, I think what we need right now, the medicine that we need is spaciousness and in silence and quiet, in stillness that allows spaciousness and so that it guides us. Going into that sense of curiosity, it guides us into what we need to know in this moment, in this shifting landscape that we're in. And you'll always be correct when you follow that.

Colette:

You know what's really interesting too? Given that we said, "Oh, well, let's ask Grandmother Ayahuasca." It just hit me, I just got a little mini epiphany right now in my minds to remember that conversation. And, I'm thinking what was the nature of that is that the woman was like, overproducing, went back, worked like a crazy person, wouldn't slow down, wouldn't stay still long enough to receive the...

Colette:

... message and do the work. That was the core of that. So I think we could use that story as the metaphor for all of us –that the message that she gave me for her is we have a covenant. We all have a sacred covenant to be part of this evolution of our species and to reconnect. The only



way that this planet is going to survive is if we reconnect to the truth of who we are, that we've forgotten we have... The great forgetting is we see ourselves as separate from one another and separate from nature. So I think that's what that's about too, is that you have to slow down and be still enough to hear that and to forgive yourself for having disconnected too. That's that the Kali Ma, she's coming in, she wants to destroy those old ideas and say, "Hey, I need you to slow down now." That's the next thing. That's what we do now.

We're going to take a little break now, and when we come back, we're going to switch gears and enter another dimension of the Wooniverse, the tea time after party. So please stay with us. We'll be right back.

Colette:

Welcome back, we are heading into the Teatime Afterparty with Dr. Maya Shetreat and joining us is my Executive Producer, Connie Diletti. Maya, Connie, are you ready to travel to another dimension of the Wooniverse?

Dr. Maya: Absolutely.

Connie: Ready!

Colette: Okay. So you're an astrologer and you're an herbalist and an ethnobotanist. Do plants have charts?

Dr. Maya:

Yes.

Colette:

Okay, tell us. This is very exciting

Dr. Maya:

Anything can have a chart. It's just at its time of inception, it's birth time. So our country has a chart. Like a house can have a chart and a plant could have a chart. It's not like the spirit of the



plant, right? But that particular plant could have a chart. Absolutely. Pets have charts, animals have charts.

Colette:

But wait, why isn't it the spirit of the plant?

Dr. Maya:

Well, because the plant has been around... Plants are much older than we are. We don't know when... I can't be like, unless we're saying when we want to make up the beginning of the world thing.

Colette:

Well, that's true. That's true.

Dr. Maya:

I would say it would be a particular plant that you might do the chart for.

Colette:

Interesting. Okay. Wow, that's so cool. Okay, Connie, over to you.

Connie:

If you could be reincarnated as a plant, which plant would you choose?

Dr. Maya:

Gosh, there's so many nice plants. It's like this is so hard! This is when you ask an herbalist, what herb would you take to if you were on a deserted island? They're like, "Oh no."

Colette:

You have to pick one!





Dr. Maya:

I know. Gosh. I would say Brugmansia. Brugmansia, she's a psychedelic plant. But she's also poisonous and I'm a Scorpio and I'm interested in poisonous plants a little bit. Not to do evil with though. And she's very beautiful and she blooms at night and her smell is very heady and...

Connie:

Intoxicating.

Dr. Maya:

...literally intoxicating. So I'll choose Brugmansia because I'm put on this spot.

Colette:

Oh cool.

Connie:

I'm also a Scorpio so that's a great Scorpio answer. Yes, very nice.

Colette:

Yes. Oh, okay. Is it your turn again, Connie?

Connie:

It is... Okay. You're banned from the library, why?

Dr. Maya:

Okay. I feel like you know me so well. I'm definitely someone who could get banned because I don't follow the rules ever. But let's say in this case, gosh, it could be so many reasons I'm feeling... Okay, let's say it's because I was laughing too loud and causing a ruckus, and I wasn't able to stop when the librarian asked me to stop.

Colette:

Awww. You're my kinda girl!



Colette:

Okay. If you could live in any sitcom, which one would it be and why?

Dr. Maya:

So, I only recently really started watching TV, and the main sitcom that I started watching because my son liked it, is Modern Family.

Connie:

That's a good one. Yeah.

Dr. Maya: I'm not sure I would want to live in that sitcom though. I'm not sure I'd want to live in any sitcom!

Colette:

Right.

Dr. Maya:

But okay. I guess I'll just default to that one since that's the one that I've watched and I haven't watched a whole lot of them.

Colette:

Well that's cute. Connie, let's do one more!

Connie:

Okay. What is your favorite subject to go down the rabbit hole in?

Dr. Maya:

I'm going to give you...

Connie:

Top three or top three? Top seven.

Dr. Maya: So yeah, I'll say a couple. So recently I've gotten really interested in Gene Keys.



That has interested me. And it's been a fascinating little dive. I will say I'm more partial usually to very ancient things, but I like this astrology I Ching kind of combo and walking around with the book from room to room in my house and got teased about it. And amulets. So I've been, actually, I just got this, I feel like, should I even show it?

Colette:  
Yes!

Dr. Maya:  
Can you see?

Colette:  
Yes.

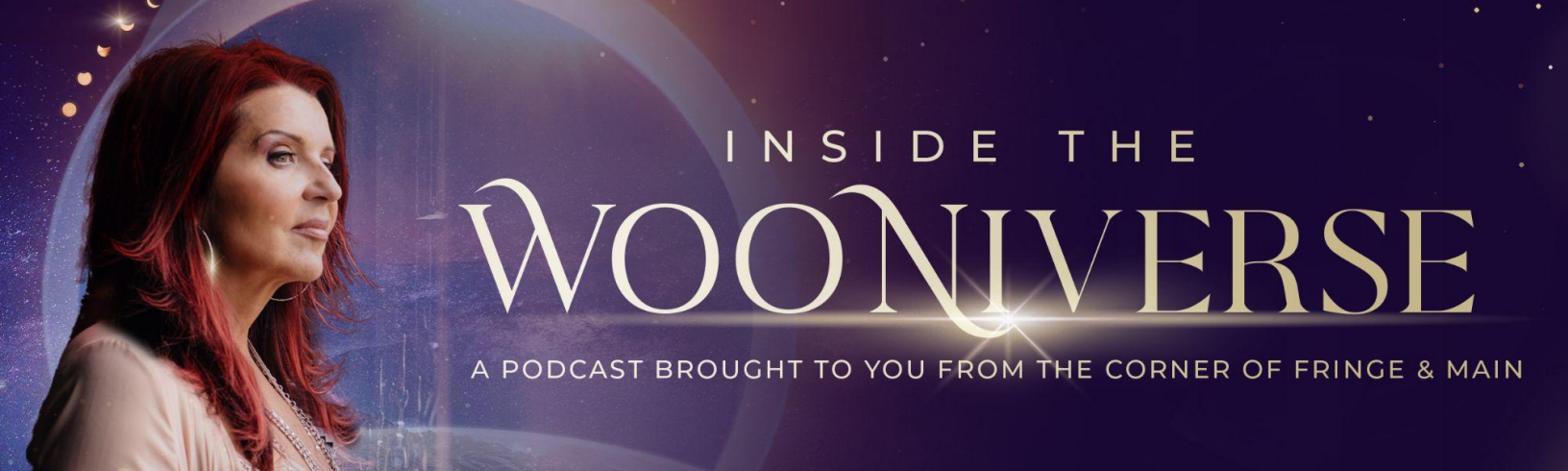
Dr. Maya:  
These are G beads and they're actually these beautiful... I have a few. They basically are considered, they're ancient, although these are less ancient than the ones that I think cost actually millions of dollars. But they are for protection. And they each have their own particular personality. I think amulets are just really interesting because it's a way of partnering the spiritual and energetic world with the material world, and then co-creating together with that material thing. So that is a deep dive too.

Connie:  
I love that.

Colette:  
Oh, that's cool. That's very cool. Okay, I have one last question. This is a very silly, silly question, but if you could only eat one food all year long, what would it be?

Dr. Maya:  
Oh my God, I'm going to seem like such a nerd right now because I really love vegetables. So that's immediately where my mind went, was actually vegetables. And I'm thinking it would be...





Connie:  
Something good for your microbiome.

Dr. Maya:  
Probably, it would be something good for my microbiome. Yeah, I would probably have purple cabbage salad or some... I know, probably the weirdest, weirdest... But you can do a lot of things with cabbage, actually.

Connie:  
Right. You'll say sauerkraut.

Colette:  
I love cabbage. Oh, that's good cabbage. Although it will give you gas potentially if that's all you ate all the time.

Dr. Maya:  
Yeah. Which is why most people do not only eat cabbage.

Colette:  
Eat cabbage. Oh my gosh, this was so much fun. Thank you so much for joining us. I have enjoyed this so much and you're so fascinating. And I know we could have talked forever. To see all of Dr. Maya's offerings, including her online programs and astrology readings, head over to [drmaya.com](http://drmaya.com). You can also click on the link you see in the description of this episode and be whisked away to our show notes page where you will find links to Dr. Maya's website, her fantastic book, a transcript of this episode, and so much more. Thank you so much, Dr. Maya. It was such a pleasure to talk with you today. Thank you so much for coming on the Wooniverse.

Dr. Maya:  
Thank you so much for having me.

Colette:  
So what a great conversation that we just had with Dr. Maya. So I'm going to pull a card because I need to summarize what we learned today. Only, I'm not going to ask Grandmother



# INSIDE THE WOONIVERSE

A PODCAST BROUGHT TO YOU FROM THE CORNER OF FRINGE & MAIN

Ayahuasca any questions, thank you very much. I'm going to ask what I always do, just spirit, universe, show me, give me a reflection of what we learned today or synopsis and see. So the card is Unmarked Trail and it's about revelation. Well, we are revealed when we step into the unmarked trail, the uncharted waters, and that's what she talked about today, that these are allowing ourselves to explore what we don't know. Being able to become curious like little kids and explore what doesn't exist yet. And I think that that's what this card represents, and we all have that within us. It is how we are made if we just allow ourselves and give ourselves permission to step onto that unmarked trail and get curious, what amazing miracles we could find. Thanks for listening. Until next time, I'm Colette Baron-Reid. Be well.