

Imminent Domains Podcast

Episode 3, SERAPHINA CAPRANOS: The Wound Reveals the Cure

Alessandra Naccarato 0:08

Hello and welcome to Imminent Domains: Conversations at the Crossroads of Art, Ecology and the Body, a companion podcast to Imminent Domains: Reckoning with the Anthropocene, an essay collection by myself, Alessandra Naccarato. Today, my guest is herbalist, ritualist and homeopath Seraphina Capranos. Welcome Seraphina.

Seraphina Capranos 0:36

Thank you so much, Alessandra, for having me. It's such a pleasure to be here.

Alessandra Naccarato 0:41

It is so wonderful to have you here. Such a true honor. And I am so excited for the conversation we're about to have, after years of long conversations and studying with you, at your hearth in your home, fireside, deep in the woods. This is a real pleasure. And I'm going to start just by reading your bio to give people a bit of a sense of who you are, and then we'll dive right in. Seraphina Capranos is a clinical herbalist, homeopath and initiated priestess, with a practice spanning across two decades. Her journey onto the path of healing was inspired by her mother who is a healer herself. Like many cast onto the path of healing and spiritual training, it was pain and suffering that led her into the forest to seek the answers to life's big questions. First, it was an injury that left her bedridden with debilitating pain as a teenager. And just a few years later, the intractable disease, then sudden death of her father that sent her on a spiritual quest at such a young age. Today, as well as being a deeply engaging teacher, and speaker, she has a clinical practice on Salt Spring Island. Her unique blend of gifts straddle the vast worlds of plant medicine, homeopathy, and ritual and ceremonial magic. She is a sought after international teacher, and the founder of the Center for Sacred arts. She's also my teacher, my mentor, and my friend, someone who has transformed my way of knowing and understanding the world around me. And you're someone who really came into my life at a moment of transformation, initiation, really a crisis of illness. And I would say, who helped me navigate those waters, those dark forests, in a way that brought me to a place of deep meaningfulness and relationship and wellness within with myself, really, and with lineage and so I am so grateful for your presence in my life. I'm so grateful for the work you do in the world. And I am really just so glad to be here in this moment with you.

Seraphina Capranos 3:36

Thank you so much, Alessandra. It's mutual. I love how our lives have woven together for many, many years.

Alessandra Naccarato 3:44

I would love if you could introduce us a bit to your work, in your own words, and to what brought you onto this journey, this path that you're walking and bringing other people on to as well.

Seraphina Capranos 4:03

Sure. So while my title is herbalist, homeopath, teacher, ritualist, I'd say my deep commitment to the earth and my mission in life is to help people remember what it means to be human on the earth today, and I really believe that so much of our purpose as a human being is to be of service to the land and each other. I think, by our very nature, human beings are helpers. I think we've gone way, way off that course. But I think at our very heart and soul, I think human beings, and you see this in children, where there's a natural proclivity, there's a natural desire to help and to help the wounded bee, I watch this in my baby nieces, right? They want to help the hurt cricket and they want to help the little sunflower that bent too strongly in the wind. So I think part of our human nature is truly to be of service and being of service, this is what I've seen in my clinical work, it brings meaning to people's lives. So, my work, my passion, my mission is to help us remember our way home. And to help people feel their sense of meaning and have it be in service to others and not others being human beings, but non human beings as well. So how I got here, much like you spoke to in the introduction, like many people's through hardship, so the blessing of my family was I was born in a family that immigrated to Canada when my mom was small, and they brought with them their tradition of healing, which is herbal medicine using plants. My grandparents, my maternal grandparents, grew up in a village that didn't have a doctor, so much like many of our ancestors. That meant you had to learn how to take care of a lot of things on your own in your own home. And if things got really bad, you could travel by a day or maybe even longer to get to the nearest doctor. So things were very different 80, 90, 100 years ago, and so I grew up in a home where we didn't go to the doctor. And it wasn't because my family was anti-establishment, it was just merely not what they knew. So I was raised by a mother, I think I saw Doctor once in my whole childhood. And it was because I was bitten by a squirrel. I was feeding a pregnant squirrel peanuts every single day. And one day, I was a little too enthusiastic. And she ended up biting me. And I still have that scar today. So that was my one adventure to the hospital when I was I guess, six or seven years old. And I would, I would spend a lot of time in this maple tree, I would bring my books up to the maple tree and I'd sit in the maple tree, I'd bring snacks up to the maple tree, and I'd sit quite high up. And that's where me and my friend the squirrel would hang out. So that was my one trip to the hospital. I wanted to help I wanted to make sure she was getting all the food she needed. Her belly was so huge, I still remember it vividly. She did bring me her babies and introduce me to her babies later. So we kept up a good friendship. So I grew up with herbs, I grew up with camomile for our conjunctivitis, and lindin for our fevers and sage for indigestion and drinking cod liver oil to keep our immune systems up and herbal plasters and poultices and all the rest, fresh garlic for sore throats. So I grew up with a lot of home remedies that are in many families. This is not unique to me, this is how humans have been doing it since the beginning of time. And so I grew up in steeped in this tradition. And then when I experienced my own health crisis as a teen, my mother did bring me to doctors and they all said surgery was the only option and I'd never be able to ride a bike. And I'd never be able to do all these things that I now do have and have since in my 40s now, but it did set me on a path of being really

curious of two things. Number one, like many I wanted to rebel against my family and go to medical school, and I ended up going to University of Toronto and pursuing sciences. But on the other hand, it was the herbs and then seeing a homeopath from India, that took away the pain. It was incredible how it happened. And not only did I ride a bike and get to do all the things I lived without chronic pain. After a couple of years of treatment, I was able to find my way out of chronic pain and so I wanted to help other people. I wanted to know what this was like I knew herbs for cough and colds and flus. But could herbs really help for more serious complicated conditions? And if so, how? And same with homeopathy, which was elusive and these little white pills that you dissolve into your tongue that are made from these dilutions. How did that work? And this homeopath from India had, you know, long waitlists and people around the block getting to wanting to see him, and I was intrigued. I was intrigued that we barely spoke the same language, and yet he completely knew what to give me. And it helped, and it helped. So as a teen I was straddling going to university, applying, getting into sciences, but also being drawn to the path of my what my family introduced me too, which was natural medicine, and fascinated that the earth could heal and fascinated that the Earth held not only remedies but a legacy have medicines that have helped people throughout the arc of time. And this pull that me it was like this thread that just coaxed me and courted me, as I was trying to be the studious university student, which gave me a lot of information. I'm very grateful for my university studies. But it was the lure back home, I would say to the earth, and then of course, coupled with my father's tragic sudden death, he was dying a very horrible disease and, and the only thing that brought him relief in the evenings was when I would press acupuncture points on his feet, acupressure points on his feet. And then he would take certain herbs and he that he was able to pass urine and he was able to be comfortable. And once again, I had a foot in my university education and saw this literally at home where medications weren't helping him in the way that we all hoped and thought. I want to clarify something here that I am not at all anti-medicine and pharmaceuticals and good hospital medical care, I think it can save lives, and it does save lives. But my my goal, my mission, my love is seeing the two rivers together, right is to see these traditions weaving. And over the years, as a clinician, I've seen that, and I think that's the ultimate healthcare is the the technological medicine of today and the traditions of this timeless practices. It's the integration of the two that I think will help us move forward.

Alessandra Naccarato 11:44

Thank you so much for speaking to that, and sharing that. And I know for me in my life, I feel like my body, my life, my health would be very different if I hadn't had the opportunity to use both in tandem if I wasn't living every day with having been able to find people who knew about using like antibiotics with herbs and how they might work in tandem, which is really what transformed my life. And I have this quote you once said, which just spoke so deeply to me. And it was in reference to the need for us to have access to both and it's: "Sovereignty and health freedom includes access to the safest health care option that supports an individual with dignity and care." And that means sometimes allopathic medicine, and it means sometimes herbal medicine, and often it means both. And in all cases, it means that we have a say, in our way forward, sovereignty and choice in our bodies and in our health is part of that dignity and its part of connecting with the lineage of those and our families and our communities that came before us, where information wasn't just held by someone else, but by those we're intimate

with by those we're in relationship with by our beloveds. And so I so appreciate everything you just said and this way of following piece by piece, the call to help each other, the call to know what can, how we can care for each other. And that being such a core human instinct.

Seraphina Capranos 14:01

It is a human instinct. And, you know, the other piece that I don't think is spoken to enough is that modern medicine, which is technically, technologically based and so important, it is also it comes from the lineage of colonization and patriarchy. And if we look into medical textbooks, we see the origins of a lot of treatments. I'd recommend the book *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*, which is a book all about how an African American woman was medically abused for the purpose of discovering how we have many chemotherapy treatments today and how we treat cancer and which is wonderful, but she was abused and didn't give consent. And her family was never written remunerated, so I'm sharing that just to say that it's always interesting to me to watch the kind of fighting that can happen between so called natural medicine, and so called modern medicine. And I want to just say that while the origins of modern medicine have, have a bleak, bleak history, we can and ought to work towards medical justice, so that practices are employed in a more favorable, honorable way. And, and that traditional medicine, and by that traditional I mean, herbs, Ayurveda, Chinese medicine, Indigenous medicines that come from every culture around the world. They have a time tested history, right. And they're based on oral traditions, which does not make them any less powerful, impactful, or potent, really, or reputable or honorable then then modern medicine. And I hear that a lot. And I see that on a lot of students who favor modern modern medicine as, and we should respect it. But natural medicine also has a powerful history and legacy. And just to consider, you mentioned lavender when we first got on here, now you remember the fragrance of lavender in my garden, well, you know, lavender is written about in ancient Egyptian tablets going back 3000 years for the treatment of insomnia or fussy babies. So again, we're drawing upon an old old lineage. And I just want to honor the ancient, how ancient and old that lineage is, we're not talking 100 years or a couple 100 years. We're talking thousands and thousands.

Alessandra Naccarato 16:41

Yes, thank you for speaking to all of that, and naming some of those deep complexities and frameworks that are like really profound in shaping how things in turn, shape us really.

Seraphina Capranos 17:04

yeah.

Alessandra Naccarato 17:07

I thinking about your work and the way you teach and your offerings. The day we met, the first time I worked with you, I have this beautiful memory. You brought a group of us to this enormous weeping willow, that was down near the edge of a lake. And really, in a, in this gentle way, had us find a small piece of a leaf that seemed like it was okay to, take a small piece of, and to sit with and taste and be with this piece of willow, and to find out in that way to intuit some of the medicinal pieces that the willow holds. But part of what you shared and part of what you

shared in that moment that really struck me that has transformed my understanding of the world around me the world within me in a really profound way, was that how plants and trees work on landscapes is how they work within our bodies and how they work within our bodies is how they work on landscapes. So the way willow beside that river was moving the water in that river moving large amounts of water might be the way willow can move water in our bodies or you spoke really this is the one that just like I was like, whoa, okay, so milk thistle might grow beside a lake that has toxins in it that need to be cleared as a way to help clear and clean that lake. And in that same way, milk thistle might help us with our liver with and please, this is not my field of expertise. I'm speaking from memory here and likely you have a clearer take on this. But just this kind of idea of the body and the body of the land and understanding it in this way really shifted kind of my understanding of the symmetry in dysbiosis the symmetry that in symbiosis, like all of the possibilities, I would love if you would share, speak to this. Yeah, yeah.

Seraphina Capranos 20:09

It is a profound notion that I always like to remind people we are nature. We're not just connected to nature, we are nature. So, of course plants are on the planet, not just for human benefit to eat or use as medicine. Plants are on the planet to serve the earth and the bees and the insects and the animals and the whole ecosystem, an entire complex interweaving. So that milk thistle that draws that deep taproot that breaks up soil and does so many good things for the Earth, people, humans, don't like, farmers don't like thistles, because they go into an a landscape that has been torn or bulldozed or eroded, tilled, and thistles will happily go in there, and they'll break up hard compacted soil. And guess what, they do that for our bodies, too, they go into our body milk thistle seed, goes into our body and breaks up all kinds of waste and stagnation and improves the functionality of our liver. That's just one small thing. So as herbs, so called weeds, which are medicinal plants. As they do that to the soil, they do that to our body, because we are part of the body of the earth, right, we are one in the same. And this is how humans have been learning about plants since the very beginning of time: observation. What happens in an ecosystem when you study a plant for a long period of time, and you notice what kind of soil it's drawn to? Or is it drawn to water, plants that grow around water, like the willow tree tend to have an impact on our lymphatic system, our kidneys and our waterways in our body. So it is it is remarkable and beautiful. And a good reminder of how human beings have forgotten that we are part an intrinsic ingredient, we are part of the ecosystem, we're part of the larger web. And we can try as we might to remove ourselves from that web and look at where that got us. Right, we're in a pretty fraught place in terms of the climate crisis. So and that is the result of humans. You know, drinking and swallowing this lie that we are somehow greater than or outside of the ecosystem, right of the health in ecosystems are systems. They're like, a beautiful web or a symphony, let's say an orchestra. And when the trumpet goes out, the whole symphony is off. It's very much like that we've, we've somehow believed that we can be outside of that delicate balance. And so our impact is great. And it's impacting every single system on the planet natural system. This is why we see so much illness and our illness, our modern illnesses reflect what's happening in nature. And this idea is not unique to me, many people who are health practitioners are looking at modern illnesses and the phenomenon of pandemics epidemics, they are a direct mirror of the earth. And it's one way that the earth is communicating it's its imbalance is why wouldn't the earth communicated its imbalance

through the human species as well? Why would that imbalance and communication of imbalance only be regarded through butterflies or frogs or wolves, right? Of course, it's also going to be communicated through the human being. So we're we are experiencing that. And that's what we've seen in the last couple of years, the pandemic was an echo call in response to the environmental crisis, no matter which way you look at it. And so too, are other other common diseases.

Alessandra Naccarato 24:27

Thank you for naming that. I think about that a lot. And it's at the heart, really of the book I just wrote, of Imminent Domains, and a lot of the research that I've done over the past many years, and it's, you know, what the World Health Organization is saying in their keynote addresses, but it's not largely what we're hearing reported on so much that an experience, like COVID-19 is likely the greatest shared experience of climate crisis that we have had collectively in an acute way so far, right? And it is. Yeah, eye opening and helpful to just hear from a health practitioner standpoint or from someone working in your field like to I don't know if helpful is the term but it is an it's a specific insight that I imagine you hold as someone who is seeing in real time how these things are evolving. And something I've noticed, in my own experience of trying to figure out what the heck was happening to me and my health and knowing so many other people, navigating chronic illness is often the way we are spoken to. And the way we speak about climate change bears a lot of similarities, ie it doesn't exist. This is unreal, like we have no proper records or recordings or like clarity or proof. And so there's a great deal of knowledge that is held in the grassroots that's held by people who are supporting each other and practitioners like yourself, and it's I'm grateful to hear your reflection on that. It brings to mind also, one of the main herbs that I worked with in recovering from chronic Lyme was Japanese knotweed, which is such a gnarly giant like it is huge, and it really breaks things up. And it is growing vastly. On the coast in like Lyme, Connecticut is full of Japanese knotweed. And it is this weed this medicinal plant that is really central to a lot of protocols for healing, Lyme, and it is an invasive species. So it's complicated in how it interacts in ecosystems that it really goes. And just like, bust things up. Like I heard in England, you can't even get insurance on a house if you have Japanese knotweed growing anywhere near it. And it's so hard to get Lyme out of your system. And my personal experience was like antibiotics and Japanese knotweed, together were what could finally shift something in my system. So this really interesting interaction of like, the systems like meeting each other in my body, finally creating this room for this whole other system. And something I speak to a lot in the book is about the cause of Lyme disease growing so great being from deforestation, from the gentrification of forests, specifically in these areas. So Japanese Knotweed growing wild in them is like, it's pretty remarkable. So yeah.

Seraphina Capranos 28:43

Yeah, that's such a great example of how plants speak to us and through us. And that's something that I teach my students is that plants are talking to us all the time, there's lots of conversation happening. And we just have to remember and train ourselves to be able to interpret the language that they are sharing with us. And so when a plant like Japanese Knotweed, it will only grow in unless it's in its natural habitat, where there's other organisms that are keeping it in check in a nice balance, right? That's the beauty of native species in their

home and the the balance that we see in an undisturbed location. But when a plant like Japanese knotweed, or here where I live, broom, is a Scotch Broom, Scotch Broom is a big one. When you have a native...an invasive so called invasive species, it will show up as a way of expressing and calling to our attention calling to the earth's attention that this is an area that is disturbed. So you have that that community, right, that diverse community of native plants are no longer there to keep things in check. So an area that naturally has a healthy water balance might become too dry or too soggy and wet. In areas where we need some shade, that shade is removed because a certain groupings of trees are removed. So that's what an invasive species do, they come into an area and they overtake it. Now, they may be coming in like Scotch Broom where it's coming to bring lots of nitrogen to the soil. But it's out, it's crowding out a lot of those native plants and flowers especially, so it throws off the entire ecosystem. But my point here is that I love that you bring up Japanese Knotweed because yes, it comes in a disturbs in a location. And as nature's always communicating to us the remedy the wound reveals the cure. That's an old ancient Greek axiom. That's credited to the Goddess Hygieia. Right? The wound reveals the cure. Now, yes, that's poetic, but really sink into that, right? the wound, the ecological imbalance of Connecticut, North East United States where Lyme was first identified, the wound reveals the cure here it is Japanese Knotweed moving in, overtaking, out crowding a lot of important plants. As a response. It's not the Japanese Knotweed fault, right. It's a response, it's responding. And it's responding, the knotweed is responding to the imbalance in that ecosystem. And which gives rise to a disease, right, a call, that we call Lyme that is affecting those populations. And so the wound reveals a cure. What happens is that knotweed, which people don't like, is actually the very remedy that people need that you so articulately shared around your own health journey. And so that is how plants, invasive species have a role. They're, they are a conversation that we need to unpack. And they are, amongst herbalists, there are herbalists who dedicate their whole careers to making medicine from invasive species, think about that, that's very profound. And many of the Lyme protocols not involve many herbs, not just knotweed are made up of these invasive species, because they are the call and response to these ecological new phenomenon, these ecological diseases that are giving rise. And so every time I make medicine from one of these invasive species, I'm thinking about that and I'm thinking about how out of that wound rises the remedy. And that's partly the job of the herbalist is to pay attention to this right to listen to this conversation that's happening in nature through our own bodies.

Alessandra Naccarato 33:07

Wow. Thank you. It's amazing to spend time with herbalists which isn't a personal background I have. And it seems like it's this way of making medicine as well as this way of story-ing the world. It's, as you were saying, a conversation. That's ongoing with the more than human world, it's this conversation, it feels like, that through these medicines, is almost like that's how we receive the story. The way I might tell you a story, like the tincture that you're offering is, is that story. In a sense, does that make sense?

Seraphina Capranos 34:19

Yeah, so the origins of the word physician is teacher. And what you're picking up on is, again, the timeless wisdom, the ancient practice of being a healer, which originally was a teacher. And this

idea that a physician or a healer, health practitioner is just somebody who provides protocols is modern, it's new. But once upon a time, many, many times, many, many generations ago and the time before that, and the time before that, and the time before that: The role of the healer is the teacher. It's the one who's able to translate, and mediate, the conversation between nature, the human body illness and everything in between. And it's one who sees the different, the whole weaving of it all. Because we don't get sick in a silo. And we don't heal in a silo. It's the interconnection of all things, right? And it's how is your heart? And who is your community? And how are you being fed? And what is your relationship to food and water and nutrition and light, and other beings. And this isn't just romantic. This is truly, right, healing it, we heal and we get sick in an ecosystem, whether that ecosystem is healthy or broken down. And so yes, you're right, herbalists are one of many traditions and Arts where one cannot help but see the interconnection of all things. And as soon as even if I have medical doctors come and get to know me and get to know my practice, often what they will remark is their, their heartbreak, that all they that that they say to me, it's more than just giving somebody pain medication, like, what do I do with all this other information? How how do I I wasn't taught best in school, not just medical doctors, any kind of practitioner that is trained in a more modern framework, that they they're not given the whole story. So yeah, that's partly why I love herbalists is that they can see the interweaving of it all. And that's part of our job, I would say.

Alessandra Naccarato 36:56

It makes me think about listening to you, and remember, this working of how we, we don't get sick in isolation, and we don't heal in isolation. So real, right, and still a lot of narrative that we either overtly or subtly, are taught and carry is like, illness as a personal failing, deeply. Right, and I think this is something that's at the core of ableism, something that I'm always working to unlearn in something that is so prevalent when people get sick, even with cancers, or with really anything, that our bodies acting as bodies and our bodies acting like they are part of nature, when they respond and are part of nature and are part of these ecosystems that that's like, if we get sick, that's our fault. And because it's our fault, it's our personal responsibility. And like, the only way that things can improve as if we solo on our own, with one practitioner. He'll just based on their advice, and and there are other models, and not only are there other models, that model is very recent, very limited, right. So, yeah, I'm just the way in which you were articulating this piece of healing, and community and what I know to be true of my own experience of like, being in moments of acute illness and entering spaces with you. Where there was a lot of collective work being done, of how do we show up collectively as community in a whole bunch of different ways. And I would love if you could speak to this piece of like the role of community and empowering each other and in healing work. Yeah.

Seraphina Capranos 39:30

yeah. I mean, we we feel seen and community, we heal together. That's one of the ingredients of healing, is having I'm sure you and listeners know the moment know what it feels like to be deeply heard, and felt and listened to, and how healing and therapeutic that is, whether it be a good friend, a health provider, a family member. It's healing to be seen and to be met in it. I am a ritualist I've held as you know, that's how we know each other one of the ways in which we know each other, I've been in hundreds, hundreds and hundreds of community rituals, some



very small, as intimate as 12 or more, and then some in the hundreds of people. So I have a few healing rituals, specifically healing rituals in mind that I'm thinking of right now that come to mind, as I'm listening to you, and some of the ingredients, when I think back to those healing rituals is how important it is for someone who's struggling to know that they're not alone. They're not the only one, I think, a wound and a swallowed lie that I knew I had as a teenager experiencing chronic pain, I didn't know any other teenager who had chronic pain. If they were I didn't know, I didn't know that, I hid it. Think about that. I didn't tell anyone at school what was happening. I hid it, I felt so ashamed. And, and then as I entered my early 20s, and I began to meet other people my age who would say, oh, yeah, I, I had an accident, or I had an illness, or I was born in such a way where I've experienced chronic pain, too, I suddenly felt met. And my shame began to melt. And so I see that happen for others, when they know that they're not the only one in the whole wide world that is experiencing a thing, a hurt, that that is healing, to both be witnessed, and to be the witness or to be the one holding space is very, very healing. So in many of the rituals that we've shared together, that is a component is the seeing and being seen. The sacred witness and the one being witnessed, right is that is a role. And that's an important role. And it hits that tender place of the inner child that just wants to be heard compassionately. And ritual can heal. Because it's, expression is health. Expression is health, and ritual's almost like an enacted poetry, right, we're able to move, to express. Now we don't need to make sense of things in ritual. It's about coming out of the talking self, it's about quieting our intellect, even for a little while, and singing together, or grieving together or moving together or, or whatever it might be. We're in an enacted poem together. And this rhythm, and rhythm and drum is an important part of ritual to get us out of our head and into our body and, and what happens when all those pieces begin to move together. The music, the drumming, the cadence, the witnessing, the being witnessed, the dance, the the enacted poetry. When that happens, we enter a place that I call, for me, what I experience is it's we enter that, that vibrational frequency of the sacred order of all things where we are in conversation with the Soul of the World, we're in conversation with the great weaver. And what happens when we're in that synchronicity, when we're in that conversation with all things, synchronicity happens, magic happens, where out of 150 people you happen to be standing next to somebody who has a very similar history to you. Or the person who grabs your hand in the dim lights of the ritual and offers you a cup of water happens to be the person who was born in the same town and has a very shares a similar grandparent. That happens in ritual. Because we enter that conversation, a conversation that is bigger than the individual. It's even bigger than the community. It's that conversation with the soul of nature. And that is healing. Because it's a step into timelessness. It's a step beyond time. It's a step into that river of time that connects us with our ancestors and the future in the past all at once. Right? It's a break from the modern everyday chaos. And when we get to share that together, like together, we do that together. That is healing. We're met we're seen we find that we are not alone. And that we can enter the conversation with all things in community with people. And because we're social primates that is a that is medicine to do that together.

Alessandra Naccarato 45:09

Fundamentally, yeah. It makes me think, you know, in writing this book and speaking about it, people have sometimes asked me about solutions, or I've been thinking about how we can talk

about climate change and crisis in a way that can stay within our threshold of tolerance. And for me, where I find resilience or comfort or space is in the depth and breadth of the unknown, in the deep and profound truth that we do not know, which we could call mystery, we could call spirit. It has many names, and maybe a more non spiritual name is just to say, the unknown, the unknowable fact that we are the small players, right. And often, the way we talk about climate change in the way we talk about health uses only the language and the frameworks that have created the problem. So we talk about, if we're only talking about climate change, in terms of the like constructed measures that have created the problem, or we're only talking about health, using frameworks that are, in many ways, part of the framework that caused the problem, then we are not stepping out and back and away from these like colonial frameworks that are part of the problem. And I deeply believe that it's in the space of the unknown, and it's outside of their right, that something else is possible, that something else always has been, then a much bigger, greater legacy and truth exists. And if I am looking for solace, if I'm looking for a greater capacity to hold both the beauty and the terror of what it is to be here in this moment, what I find is beyond and outside of, and that is the place that you're speaking to this place, we find together this place we find and ritual. I'm so grateful for the way you just gave voice to it, because I felt myself transported there. So clearly, and truly, it's you who's led me by the hand, there are so many times and who have been training and guiding me and mentoring others to just find within ourselves how we can step between the worlds in this timeless way that really all of our ancestors, no matter who we are, we're practicing and doing.

Seraphina Capranos 48:37

Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. I think in an intellectual way, what we might be talking one might name what we're talking about is creative thinking, right? And I think in a deeper, more daresay, spiritual or nonlinear way, it's it's again, reaching into an opening, it's opening ourselves to the greater intelligence of the cosmic intelligence of the world of the of the universe. I think it's why I why I feel passionate about listening to Indigenous voices as to lead our way out of the climate crisis. Because it can't be that colonial way of thinking, as you said, that gets us out. It needs greater thinking and imagination. And I truly believe spiritual leadership. I don't think that spiritual is a bad word or a, you know, a toxic word. I think it's an important framework to be thinking and to have spiritual leadership in the world to find our way out of this. And by spiritual I mean, remembering that we're connected to the greater web, right, the greater ecology of the world, both the seen world and the unseen world and I feel strongly that that will help us us out of the crisis that we're in. And it comes from that place of great mystery. And it comes from that place of our ancestors guiding us, our wise ancestors guiding us. And it comes from that place the, I believe the leadership will come from those who have a foot in both worlds, right? The nonlinear world we're talking about, and also the realm of the intellect. And just to kind of bring it right back to the top of this podcast where you were talking about, it was the braiding together of the antibiotics and Knotweed. So the traditional and the technological that helped you out of your health crisis. And that's a perfect metaphor for what will lead the path and lead us out of the climate crisis we're in.

Alessandra Naccarato 50:49

Yeah. And even as you said that it made me think, wow, once I worked with antibiotics and Knotweed, I was able to begin working with other gentler, more endemic plant medicines, herbal medicines. And continue on that journey in this subtle way. Yeah, these days, I just drink a lot of nettle tea. I with everything you're sharing, there is this quote from you that speaks so deeply to me. "Herbal medicine is people's medicine. There is magic in the mundane. The witches and midwives who survived the burnings did so by tucking their recipes into common places, like the Kitchen cookbook, sitting next to the salt and pepper using common garden herbs like lavender, so no one could guess that everyday plants were riddled with a history of magic, and medicine. This is how our legacy lives on."

Seraphina Capranos 52:19

Yeah. Yeah, so there was a time where women were and women, and I'd say people of color anyone different than the status quo was tried as a witch. And this was in the pre modern era of Europe. And it was a time that I think people forget where we didn't yet know what a virus was, or bacteria. And so when someone fell ill it was considered a bad spirit or possession. And so the person to go to was the priest. However, witches and healers, wise women, they knew the way of the plants, and they knew the way to heal and to mend, because usually, it was usually the grandmother before them, and the grandmother before them and the grandmother before them that taught this medicine, just like in my family. And during that pre modern era in Europe, it was dangerous. And so what I'm writing about there is how women had to tuck the recipes of the medicine in between common recipes, like soups and stews, if they could write, if they were literate. And that was a way that they would hide these, the magic, the healing traditions that were given to them through oral tradition, they had to hide it. And it was dangerous, until pretty recent. If we look at history, if we zoom out and look at history, until very recent, it was dangerous to have that kind of knowledge if you were a so called commoner. So that's what I'm speaking to there. And again, that's why I'm so passionate and part of my life's work is to help us remember what it means to be human, which means to have that kind of knowledge. And to carry it with us. And, and to keep these traditions alive these healing traditions, and to remember and to know and educate people that it's more than a trend. It's more than a herb you find in the bottle of a commercial store. This is tradition, right? This is tradition. And just like it's important to know how to grow our own vegetables. I think it's equally as important to know how to grow and tend our own medicine.

Alessandra Naccarato 54:52

Wow. Thank you for that. And I really so appreciate this reminder of all the ways these practices and lineages have carried on and been resilient, and the wisdom and healing and medicine just hiding under our nose, how simple and available and precious and accessible it is. I am thinking about this piece of legacy and lineage, and I'm remembering the last time we were together, and we were sitting in your garden and thinking about this piece of working with ancestors. And I remember I stood up in your garden, and I was standing by the lavender and a bee stung me on the ankle. And bee stings are this particular kind of magic and medicine, right? They just wake you up so alive to the world, and they are also the sacrifice of the bees life itself. And we had been sitting there contemplating this real question about the gift from our ancestors. And this happened. And I sat back down, and there were two pieces of medicine that you offered

me and one was a piece of plantain for me to chew, and then put with my own spit right on the spot. And the other was some homeopathy, which I believe would have had some bee venom in it, which is this piece that you said before, which is within the wound reveals the cure. In this beautiful way that is, you know, interpersonal relationship, interspecies relationship, intergenerational relationship that can reach so far back, it's with our ancestors, we never met in this way of healing, that is not only between us in the room, but beyond generations, I really do believe that so much is, is possible in these workings. And as we come to a close of our beautiful time together, I have a question for you, then I'm asking everyone who I am with in conversation. And this is to ask you: what you think is possible, what world you believe is possible for us?

Seraphina Capranos 58:00

Thank you for the question, it's very moving. I think it is possible for us to come home to ourselves. And remember that we are here on Earth, to love our time here for this short window that we get to be here in this lifetime. I think it's possible. And I feel like the COVID pandemic, especially in the first year, gave many of us a tiny glimmer of what it's like to be living closer to the earth, not traveling as much growing your own food, baking our own bread. Having meaningful phone calls, I know so many people who had resurrected friendships during that time because there was just more time. And I remember looking at that as such a metaphor. And also that first few months of COVID I remember on the news watching a whole town burn from the forest fire and getting a phone call from somebody who had COVID 19 saying I feel like my lungs are on fire. And just feeling the juxtaposition. They had no idea what I was watching on the news. And here was this person had a fever and they were sick and they had COVID and this is before the vaccine before any known treatments. And I thought here it is. Here it is, if only there was the leadership in the world letting us know that we have to listen to the earth. And so going back to what I think is possible. I think that is possible. I think the generations are waking up, our generation, those who are younger than us are waking up, and it's not a stretch for them to to get get it, that we need to live in a rhythm more connected to the earth not as a metaphor, but literally. And if we did that, I believe that we could turn things around quicker than we think I really do. And there are some ecologists and scientists who are working hard to educate, empower, plant more trees, plant more native species, because a lot of good can happen really quickly, if we take action. So I'm, I'm I'm an optimist. Actually, I'm a real optimist. And I tend to spend time reading good news, not the bad news and checking out what ecologists and scientists, naturalists, botanists are doing. Marine biologists. There's a lot of good in the world. So I think it's possible.

Alessandra Naccarato 1:01:03

Thank you so much Seraphina.

Seraphina Capranos 1:01:05

Yeah, my pleasure.

Alessandra Naccarato 1:01:07

I'm holding that vision with you. And I'm just so grateful for you sharing your wisdom and experience and ways of knowing, with us here today.

Seraphina Capranos 1:01:20

My pleasure. And thank you for great writing one of the most brilliant books I've read in a long time. So thank you for your service. And I'm just so proud of you and happy I know you and your book truly is a masterpiece that I hope is in school curriculums not too far in the future. I think everyone needs to read it. So thank you, Alessandra.

Alessandra Naccarato 1:01:45

Thank you so much.