

Transcript of **Out of The Woofworks** Episode 4: “Hanna Fushihara (Nosework Cats)”

RACHEL: Welcome back to Out of the Woofworks here with me, Rachel Forday, on a podcast where we'll be talking about dogs, training, and more importantly, human social issues, both in the dog industry and in the world.

Actually, today, we should be called Out of the Meow-works because we have Hanna Fushihara from Hot Fuzz Dog Training and Nosework Cats here with us. And so there will be some talk about cats and, of course, Hanna's experience as an Asian American trainer.

[Intro music]

RACHEL: Hey Hanna, it's so wonderful to have you here. Thank you so much for your time and for being here with us.

HANNA: Hi, Rachel.

RACHEL: Could you tell us a little bit about yourself and kind of what you've been up to?

HANNA: Sure. So my name is Hanna Fushihara. My pronouns are she/her. I live in New York State in the Hudson Valley in the U.S. which is unceded Mohican land.

I work as a dog trainer. I run Hot Fuzz Dog Training for work. And I also currently have an online self-study cat nosework class. That's called Nosework Cats.

RACHEL: I love that.

HANNA: *[laughs]* And that's my big project right now. I also work as a creative director for a Japanese company. I've been doing that for a really long time, doing like art and like fashion stuff, so I'm very diversified in my activities, I guess.

RACHEL: That's amazing. That's wonderful. And I think it's super cool that you're here because you're someone who works with both cats and dogs and that's super special. So I just would love to know how you started your journey in working with both cats and dogs? Which like came first for you?

HANNA: Dogs, partially just because I adopted a dog first. So I'm in my late forties right now, so when I first adopted a dog was like, sort of—somewhat soon after college, and it was the late nineties. So there just wasn't a lot of good information out there at the time, and like I knew nothing.

My dog, his name was Coleman. He had a bunch of issues, um, even though he was basically just like my heart and soul, and like was everything to me, but he had a bunch of issues.

RACHEL: Yeah.

HANNA: And the advice that I had been getting at the time was stuff like, "Throw a chair at him."

RACHEL: Oh, no.

HANNA: Like not even sort of like anything logical. *[laughs]* And so I was, I sort of kept on going, "This doesn't sound right at all. Um, I don't want to do this." And so I was poking around online, which was like dial-up at the time.

RACHEL: Yeah.

HANNA: There was only really basic, like text-based websites and Yahoo groups and stuff like that. But I somehow magically found clicker training and like one of my first educational things that I got was a VHS tape that came with a clicker.

Um, and I, you know, learned how to train that way. And I experimented a lot because there just wasn't a lot of information. So like with the basic sort of understanding of how marker training works, like I was trying to experiment on my own and also trying to find out through like the Yahoo groups, like just the most basic

things. And so that's sort of how I got started with just training my dog.

But then Hurricane Katrina happened, I guess in, I think 2005, I think. Um, and I saw a documentary and it just affected me a lot. I just remember seeing like the images of like the dogs on roofs basically going like, "Hey, like, uh—" I don't know if it was like, "Hey, help," or like—

RACHEL: "Yeah, please save me."

HANNA: Or, you know, "What the fuck."

RACHEL: Right.

HANNA: Like, and it just affected me so much, and so I was like, I got to do something just in terms of just helping, not just my own dog, but like other animals.

RACHEL: Right.

HANNA: And I should also just say that I've been vegetarian or vegan since I was in high school, and so it's always been something that like mattered to me. So I started volunteering at the city animal control, and I just got really lucky that the person that was the behavior person at the time there.

Her name is Melissa Chan/Melissa Taylor, who is now the Behavior and Training Director at Friends for Life in Houston, Texas, but at the time she was at the city shelter in New York City. And I just saw her and another person, like just sort of taking dogs one by one into a mysterious room and then like magically appearing again.

And I was like, "What are they doing?" I'm just the type of person that likes to ask questions. And so I literally was like, "What are you guys doing in there, taking dogs and then coming back out?" and they were like, "Oh, we're doing behavior evaluations." And so I was like, "What's that?" and I also said, "Can I help?"

And I think at the time they didn't have anybody helping them.

RACHEL: Right.

HANNA: But they agreed to let me sort of record everything so that they had their hands free. And so I was just an observer and like, you know, writing things down for them, but that was just such a good start to like being able to watch and read body language and what things meant.

RACHEL: Yeah.

HANNA: And so that's sort of like how I started. And then she started letting me do some on my own eventually after maybe like six months. So that if there was a dog that I felt comfortable doing what they were sort of doing as a quote unquote "test" at the time, then she would let me do it. So that's sort of the first hands-on experience that I had.

And then when I moved to here, the Hudson Valley, I started volunteering with a different shelter. I became staff also because I started asking lots of questions. *[laughs]*

RACHEL: Good!

HANNA: Because they would have like these staff sort of classes and I'd be like, "Can I come too?"

RACHEL: Oh, that's so good though.

HANNA: So that's sort of how I got started with like dog training and then with cats, it was sort of like a parallel journey.

In the city—in New York City—I ended up becoming a member of a community garden and there was a cat that was causing problems because it was peeing and pooping and people's lettuce. *[laughs]* And half of the people were like, you know, "Get rid of the cat!" And the other people are like, were like, "No, we're feeding the cat!"

And so my first meeting at the community garden was like me going, "Oh, no... like everybody's fighting about this cat." And so I just kind of like raised my hand and I was like, "I know that there is

something called TNR. I don't know exactly like how it works, but like maybe we could, you know, at least like, get it neutered and maybe that would help."

And so then they're like, "Okay, so you're going to do it." And I was like, "Okay..."

RACHEL: So just to make a note, TNR stands for Trap, Neuter, Release, right?

HANNA: Yes. Correct.

RACHEL: Okay.

HANNA: And so the nice thing about New York City is that there's a really good resource in partnership with the ASPCA there. But like —smaller feral cat groups in the city that basically you can take a class with for free and also borrow traps and also get the cats spayed or neutered for free.

And, you know, if you had a really big colony, you could even sort of like ask that they bring the van to the location, so you don't have to move all of them. But, so that's sort of how I got started with something more than just having a pet cat.

And I could basically tell you really crazy stories about TNR, like things that happened because I'm somehow like that is really sort of something where you're interacting with the public and like the community.

And so like the crazy places and people that you end up meeting *[laughs]* like...

RACHEL: Yeah.

HANNA: It's just really different because it's not like you're going to a client or anything.

Like there are people that just either want your help or something. Um, so that's how I sort of how I got started with cats and then just jumping forward to what I'm doing now, just sort of started

happening partially because they were—my cats were a second class citizens until my last dog passed away.

And, um, I just have been taking the opportunity to sort of like develop some kind of relationship with them that is more than just, you know, they're nice and cuddly. So, I'm basically been taking everything that I've learned and just applying it to my cats.

RACHEL: That's amazing. And I think it was so interesting when you talked about TNR because I've been through a difficult cat TNR in our situation where, you know, there's a cat in the community of like an office space.

So people are working there and some people want the cat to be spayed because it's young and had two litters already. And so people are like, "No, it should just be natural. Things should be natural." And so I got in the middle of it, cause I was like, I was the one going to take the cat to be spayed and it's a lot, you know, so, and plus I was just like a temp worker. I wasn't like a proper member of staff. And so the fact that I was doing that everyone got like up in arms and I had two sides kind of yelling at me. *[laughs]*

HANNA: Yeah. That's exactly what I feel like. Is that what you went through doing that work is I feel like it's, it's so much about, I don't know, community management or something.

RACHEL: Yeah. Yeah. You just think that dealing with cats, but it's actually, it's all people around really, as well, around the cats as well. But yeah, no, I love cats personally. I've always had cats and you know, I've said in a past, like Dave is my first dog. Essentially, I'm more used to cats, but it's only after working with dogs in the shelter that I kind of learned more about enrichment.

And then also got some of that enrichment to me and my mom's cats. So now my mom does daily enrichment with the cats, you know, snuffle mats, the licky mats, the puzzle toys, and it's really good.

Of course, you run Nosework Cats. And so I wanted to ask, could you tell us a little bit more about that and why you started it and what results in cats and their humans have you seen from it?

HANNA: Sure. So, my last dog who passed away two years ago. He and I, we did lots of different kinds of training and we ended up doing some competitive nosework and we actually had a lot of fun doing that. I would never have thought that I could become any kind of competitive person, but with him as a partner it was really fun.

And so I got really like deep into that. And when he passed away, I had all of this knowledge and like not a lot to do with it other than obviously like teaching clients, but sometimes like there was a little part missing. You know, like me learning something new with a partner, like an animal partner, because something about that just sort of feeds the soul, like...

RACHEL: Totally.

HANNA: ...the fascination with like animal learning and watching it happen.
It just is infinitely amazing.

RACHEL: Yeah. Totally. I get that.

HANNA: Um, and so I was like, well, when these two well-known canine nosework people that I knew were running an online event—because it was the pandemic—that was for dogs. And I was like, "I don't have a dog, but all my friends are entering!" And so I was like, "Oh, I'll just try it with my cat."

RACHEL: Oh, that's so cute.

HANNA: And so I just, you know, like I just jumped in with whatever I knew. And I kind of experimented along the way and it was just for fun. So I was posting the videos and a lot of people were intrigued and interested and sort of like applauding me, you know, along the way, for just sort of trying it out.

And I realized after that, like, number one, my cats enjoyed it, and also in particular, my cat Muncho was really good at it. Um, and the part that I was talking about where like, you know, you get to witness like animal learning. It was happening every single time that

I ran a search and it was fun for me to be watching. And also like the problem solving that I get to do also, like, I love that part.

So I was like, "I should try to do something with this," and nobody else seemed to be doing it in-depth at all. I couldn't find anybody that was doing it in depth. And so I was like, "I guess it should maybe be me."

RACHEL: Yeah. Wow.

HANNA: And so I took several months to sort of figure out how to lay it out and also videotape all of the demo videos for it, and then figure out how to make an online class. So once it sort of like launched, then the other part was just also the learning about, um—because it was fully online and my dog training was—I would say maybe like at the time, like 50/50 like sort of remote training and in-person learning—I just had to learn about how to also figure out how to get that to people: a fully online platform. I'm still learning about that, I guess.

But, so—the cool thing is that I learned that what, so it was kind of an experiment also.

Because you know, like for me, like I, when I made it, it's an experiment of—not maybe one, but an experiment of two, because I have two cats—and I'm sort of, you know, assuming that it's gonna work for everybody else. Um, and I've tweaked it a little bit or added some things, but just having people try it out at first, I ended up giving it away for free, for a little bit. And that just helped to sort of get some people to try it so that I could just even see if it worked really well like I think it would and get some feedback.

I've also been working with a shelter that has long-term resident cats and that sort of works really well with them for enrichment and training. And also just because they're there a longer time and like we can kind of see over, you know, months how they've been doing.

But it's been really great for, you know, for shy cats, especially at that particular shelter, because the way that I laid it out is really hands-off. And so, I mean, you could even just set up the search and then leave the room if you wanted to, because it's just the cat

figuring out the scent problem on their own without us sort of interfering. And so it works for basically all cats.

I have a wonderful student who has three blind cats and they do awesome, and it's so cool to be able to also show how well her cats do. Um, because that has opened the activity up to other owners with sight-impaired cats.

And it's also cool to just show other people that those cats don't have a problem at all.

RACHEL: Right. Exactly.

HANNA: They're basically like every other cat. It's just been really cool to see that it works and it works for almost like every cat. I can't even think of a cat that really—

RACHEL: —wouldn't do it.

HANNA: Or, yeah, and I guess like, when a student tells me that the cat wouldn't do it, then we're just working out the why of it, because it's literally the act of eating and then trying to sort of find what you are going to eat. So we can really make it easy, like the first few exercises in the class are literally just eating out of bowls and you know, your cat already does that. It's just sort of a matter of how we're setting that up.

What's cool to me at least about nosework cats and that's maybe a little bit different than like clicker training with cats is having people focus on the training set up. So how we set up the exercise for the cats: Everything happens before the cat even starts to work.

So that's sort of the muscle that I'm trying to get my students to sort of work on as opposed to feeling like we are actively training the cat or like... I still feel like sometimes even if you're using marker training that you're almost thinking that you're making the cat do something or the animal do something...

RACHEL: It's like, you know, much pressure sometimes, especially with—

HANNA: Like social pressure. So just focusing on the way that you set up a training exercise, and that's literally all you're doing is really cool to me. So, yeah.

RACHEL: And I think people have a lot of preconceived ideas about cats and how they learn. I mean, it's the same kind of with dogs as well, but a lot of people think you can't get cats to do these things, or you can't train a cat, like they wouldn't be interested, but actually it's kind of about setting up the environment to begin with and just kind of teaching them from an easy level, like you say, with the bowls and then working up to more challenging stuff, isn't it?

HANNA: Yeah. The one thing that I noticed and started to witness, is that when a cat is problem-solving, they actually look like they're not doing anything. They literally just sort of stop and then they kind of almost look like they're just looking out into space, but in the context of nosework, basically what happens is they might reach a point where they have to make a decision. Like, you know, and it could be just directional, like, "Do I go left or right, or forward or backwards?" At the decision point, they stop and they're thinking, it's almost sort of like, they want to stop their bodies as they're processing the information.

And then once they make a decision, they move. It had happened so often when I'm watching video that I was like, that's kind of really interesting because if you didn't notice that then when a cat is just sort of standing still, you think that they had given up. And sometimes like, you know, it can be like an uncomfortable amount of time for a person watching, like it could be like 20 to 30 seconds. And that's a really long time for somebody to sort of like look at their cat and not do anything.

RACHEL: Yeah.

HANNA: Like you're like, "Oh no, they don't know what to do." And I'm always like just wait, because like you just have to see whether or not they really have given up or if they're just processing. And so that's sort of been the biggest sort of behavioral find that I've seen." And I have so many examples of that on video.

RACHEL: That's so amazing because I think about like how my mom sometimes tells me, "Oh, she's not interested in to do snuffle mat," and I'm like, maybe they're just having a think about it first. And ah, you've just blown my mind about this standing still thing. That's really interesting. *[laughs]*

HANNA: Yeah. It's—it's the coolest thing because in the context of nose work, like I know where the hide is. And I can, because of my experience, I can kind of read where the odor is moving or flowing too. So when the cat is stopping and not moving and sort of just looking out into space, I can kind of tell that that is obviously a decision point, that they're sort of like stopping at and then just being able to observe that the moment that they make a decision, like they actually really know where it is. It's so cool.

RACHEL: That's really cool. Are your human clients impressed by their cats and kind of surprised of how much they can do?

HANNA: Yes. Although I would say that sometimes it's so—it can be really subtle with cats. And because they don't move as fast, usually depending on the cat, but most cats, they move slower. So people still have—especially if they also have dogs—they have to get used to the pace of things. I'm often having to tell people, "Just breathe in and out."

RACHEL: It's an exercise in patience.

HANNA: Yeah. I know that it feels like you're watching water boil, but like the cat is still working. But once you get used to that, it's just really fun to watch and yeah, like just getting people to sort of understand that there are still things that we could change, even if you think that the cat is not motivated by anything you've tried or that they give up too easily, quote, unquote "too easily." There's other things that we can change.

RACHEL: Yeah, totally. That's really, really cool. I love that you're doing this and so many cats are benefiting from it, so that's really amazing.

But just to switch gears a little bit, and of course we kind of touched on it a little bit about how, you know, with the TNR stuff, with looking

at community and, you know, cats and things, eh. Even though we're thinking about helping the cat, it always comes with a community. So I really want to talk about the people aspect of our lives now and wanted to ask, how was it like for you growing up as a Japanese person in New York?

HANNA: So the schools that I went to from an early age were really hippy dippy school and like, so open and diverse that I was really lucky. Um, I can really only remember one really overtly hurtful incident

RACHEL: Right.

HANNA: Where like—it was a really strange little, like little thing where we had like a chart of like everyone's hair color and eye color. And for some reason they were saying that my eyes and my hair were black when I'm like looking at the mirror and going, no, it's dark brown.

RACHEL: Yeah.

HANNA: I was like, you're making an assumption. And I think I was maybe like five and I'm like looking at the mirror going, "They're wrong." They're just like not seeing who I really am. But other than that, like at least up until I was maybe like 10 or so, I lived in a really, really safe sort of feeling bubble. Um, and I can only sort of remember one other thing where like, you know, my parents had an accent.

And so, you know, they may have gotten treated slightly different than maybe I did because I didn't have an accent. Or at least, you know, once I was fully sort of talking because my first language was Japanese, um, up until I went to kindergarten. But I remember being in a taxi with my parents and knowing that the person driving was taking advantage of my parents because obviously they had, uh, an accent and that was upsetting and just stuff that you just sort of learn that happens as a child of immigrants.

Um, and so you never sort of forget really that like you're maybe not of the majority. But at the same time, just because of like the

diverse nature of the city and also the schools that I went to, I still feel like I was sort of in a bubble of sorts and feeling really safe.

RACHEL: Yeah. Even though you still had that bubble was quite safe, like no one should have to go through these experiences of being so uncomfortable just because of the accent and how they look and things like that. So I'm sorry that happens as well, especially when you were so young and it still has an impact.

HANNA: Yeah. And, you know, I had a friend who was African American and I was also very aware of the fact that she felt different, um, in, in a way that made her feel really vulnerable because we had an incident between us, even though we were friends where I said something that I didn't mean to hurt her feelings at all, but she took it in a way that felt hurtful for her and she was crying and I was like, "What did I do? What did I do?" And so at an early age, like you just sort of realize that different people have different experiences and like even something that you didn't mean to hurt somebody, but you said something and they experienced it differently than what you intended.

RACHEL: Yeah, definitely, and a lot of people don't realize that if they are in the majority as well. And I say this because as a Singaporean person, as a Chinese person in Singapore, we are kind of the majority people. So I also never really experienced racism until I went abroad, you know, on holiday or like when I moved to the UK.

So I guess for now, at the moment, the biggest thing that concerns me is obviously to increase hate crimes against Asian people. Uh, this is kind of everywhere, like in the UK and in the US, especially since COVID-19 started and it's still happening till today. So I was wondering how that's been affecting you if you're comfortable to share.

HANNA: Sure. So now I live in a rural area and so I actually weirdly feel more insulted from that just because I don't physically come into contact with as many people as I did, you know, when I was in New York city. Beause if I literally just walked out my door and walked a block, I'd be coming into contact with like 30 people in the city.

But here I might not see anybody other than the clients that I'm going to, and maybe people at the grocery store. And so I actually weirdly feel more insulated from that right now, in terms of just my physical safety or anything like that.

Although I would just say that just living in our rural area in America and being Asian, just outside of even like COVID times like that in and of itself is just sort of like, I'm always aware of my surroundings. Um, so even just, you know, if I'm going to a gasoline station and I walk in, like, I can feel like when the person behind the counter might just be either uncomfortable or sort of like seeing somebody that's Asian, it's just not as normal as somebody else walking through the door, and maybe it's not necessarily negative, but it's just sort of like, you can weirdly feel the air change.

RACHEL: Yeah. Yeah.

HANNA: And so that's just sort of like a daily thing. And when I used to travel for nosework competitions with my dog, I actually sort of tried to not go to some states or places where I maybe was like, well, maybe like that's not somewhere I would want to put myself, whereas like other parts of the country/areas that are sort of close to me. I'd be like, ah, that feels safer because just as a single female driving and being in on a back road or something like, you know, it's just—

RACHEL: Yeah, like if your car breaks down or something, you know, you don't know what could happen, and there's that stress there, I suppose.

HANNA: And so the other part also that's maybe like a side note, but for me was sort of like overlapping that was my dog was a pit bull. And so there are also either towns and/or states or areas where, you know, I had to be careful like actually, either driving him through because he, you know, like they're not allowed or if something happened, like I'd be worried.

Like he was really the most non-confrontational peaceful dog, but at the same time, like, if we were in a car accident and he got scared and ran off. And then, you know, somebody thought that he did

something to me. So there is a specific state that I would not go do because number one, I'm not sure if, you know, like I don't even think that he would be allowed in that state. Or something like that.

RACHEL: So it's not only worried about your own safety but also so the stigmatization of the dog that you had at the time.

HANNA: Right, and I guess like, not the state, but like a certain municipalities in a particular state, but there were many municipalities that I'd sort of have to be careful of.

Um, so that sort of just like a side note, but somehow relates to it I guess.

RACHEL: Yeah. Yeah, it does. Um, it's something that a lot of people don't think about when they have dogs going to competitions and, you know, thinking about the community that is at the sports competitions are, you know, like nose work competitions, like kind of the demographic and also the location and how that kind of affects us as Asian people entering it as well.

And I was wondering, you know, you mentioned a little bit about it already, but how has your general experience been like as an Asian dog and cat trainer, just in the world with clients or within the industry?

HANNA: Yeah. So with clients, it really hasn't been our problem because—you know, I put my picture on my website.

RACHEL: Yes.

HANNA: My name is there and so even if they have talked to me on the phone and they hear my voice and I don't have an accent, you know, my last name is Fushihara and that kind of already sort of is very obvious that I'm probably Asian Japanese, and you know, my face is on my website as you can see.

So I really haven't had a problem with clients because they have chosen to pay me.

RACHEL: For sure.

HANNA: I guess in terms of just sort of outside of that context, but just in terms of being in the greater training community or something. One thing when I was working in a shelter that made me feel a little bit sort of like, "Hmm," was when we were naming dogs, it was very sort of obvious that we were naming dog so that it was a desirable name for a certain population.

Um, and so I was always sort of like, "Why can't we name the dogs, somethings sort of, that sounds different." And I felt like I was always getting shot down with my suggestions, and so that was one thing.

And then I guess in terms of more just dog trainers and stuff. Like, it's sort of more like, it's never, at least for me, hasn't really been overt. And that might just be because of the Asian-ness where like, sometimes you were sort of like lumped into the majority somehow, and then sometimes you are on the outside and like, sometimes you don't know where that's going to be.

And so there have been times where I have sort of been like, "Ehh, what you were promoting right now is not okay." And just making sure that I sort of voice that opinion. I do feel like generally speaking, even if they maybe don't agree, I've at least had cordial conversation with people about it.

But at the same time, I don't know if there has at least so far been a community where like, I feel completely like I am really seen and a part of, and so I guess, like that's maybe my feeling about how I, as an Asian person, like, I know I've been in the training community I guess.

RACHEL: Yeah, no, I totally relate to that. And even though thanks to like social media and stuff, I connected with you and a number of other Asian trainers, you're also far away from me.

HANNA: Yeah. I know.

RACHEL: I guess everyone's also really far away from you and it's just like, you don't really feel that community kind of thing, and it's— I know what you mean about that, because even though you're Japanese and I'm Singaporean, there is kind of like a nice

connection. We can talk about things like naming, naming our pets into like, different way.

Um, so I totally get that, and I would love to know, you know, we talked a little bit about that, but I was wondering if there are specific or maybe more broadly changes and improvements you really wish to see in our industry, like how can we make it better for people of color or the Asian trainers who are just starting out?

HANNA: Sure. I was kind of really thinking about that question and I actually have almost sort of just decided I almost don't care about like other organizations changing because they don't feel like they will.

And so, because no matter what you say or what you sort of share with them. Like maybe it changes it a little bit or like, it changes for a certain amount of time, but like then it sort of reverts back to like whatever was happening before or just, you know, like so many organizations are really top down and I just feel like there isn't one that I've found to be like, "Oh, this feels right."

And to the point where I'm sort of either distancing myself already Or planning on, you know, not re-certifying certain things. Um, so stuff like that, because I've always been the type of person that I try not to put my dollars where I—

RACHEL: I'm with you.

HANNA: If I don't agree with something, like, that's not where I put my money, or I try to do my best with that.

And so, like right now I haven't really thought about really what that then means. But in terms of just historically for myself, like I've always been the type of person that if it doesn't exist, just build it yourself. And so if there were other people that were sort of like, "Hey, like let's make our own little group of people and we do this," and that felt right, like, that would be something that I would want to do just because like, I just feel like trying to change something is so difficult, but building something yourself is sort of... awesome.

RACHEL: It's like when the system is so broken already and you've tried in some ways to kind of tell them or suggest things and things,

like you say changes a little bit, or it changes on a performative level. Like you get like a little statement or something and then nothing genuinely changes, then it's like time to kind of build it ourselves, like you say.

And I guess part of that is why I'm doing this podcast as well, because—

HANNA: It's so cool.

RACHEL: Yeah, because I want to give a voice to everyone that isn't normally heard in this industry and to not feel like you're being tokenized when I give you this platform as well—that we really want to listen to what y'all have to say. I think that's really important, so I totally get you. I am also kind of in that distancing myself process dropping some other things, and I know that in the end, you know, when we work with clients, they're not that bothered about all of the organizations we're with.

HANNA: I know. They really aren't. *[laughs]*

RACHEL: In all honesty, I've never had anyone ask me about that before. So it isn't that huge of a deal, but it would be nice to have a community, like you said, if we could build one ourselves, I think that is definitely worth thinking about where people feel included and they feel safe and, you know, um, that there's real direction in making it a more inclusive, safe space for everyone. So I really appreciate you sharing that.

Uh, is there any thing that you might want to say, or any words of wisdom or encouragement or advice you might have for kind of upcoming or other experienced Asian trainers or dog lovers thinking about becoming trainers, anything that you would like to share with them?

HANNA: Yeah. So what I would maybe like to you know just say is just try to be yourself, because I think a lot of times we try to make ourselves fit into what other people perceive as what, for example, if we're talking about dog trainers, what that should look like. And also even like how you should present yourself or whatever.

But because we live now, luckily in an age where we can also connect with people online and even take clients online.

RACHEL: Yeah.

HANNA: You know, there's so many people that you could reach and you could probably find like your people that you are comfortable with and who are comfortable with you just as you are.

So you don't necessarily have to sort of fit, like, for example, like your geographical location. And so just as an example, I remember, so my dog training businesses called the "Hot Fuzz Dog Training." And when I told my husband that that was the name that I was thinking of, he was like, "I don't know if that's a good name."

And I was like, "No, that's kind of just encompasses what I like, how I feel about like what my dog training is like, and so I'm just going to name it that. That's who I am." And you know, like it's never been a problem, and also like, I don't know, like it, it brings the people who are okay with that name, right?

RACHEL: Exactly.

HANNA: So yeah, just sort of like being able to present yourself however you feel you really are. Like, I would want them to do that as opposed to thinking that they have to be a certain way.

RACHEL: Yeah. Just being really authentic because your people will find you.

HANNA: Yeah, exactly.

RACHEL: And that's also partly, like you said earlier, it's kind of putting your face on the website right here. "Here I am, I am Japanese and this is how I look like, if you're, you know, racist, then just leave." *[laughs]* "You don't want to work with me in any case."

So it's fine, you know, and I think that's and just kind of being your authentic self and that's how you get the people that you would love to work with as well, I think. That's a really good point.

So finally, can you tell us, like, what's the best way for people who want to know more about you, your training, or, you know, Nosework Cats. How can they get in touch with you?

HANNA: Um, so because my NoseWork Cats project is basically the one that I'm sort of like putting most of my time into right now. They can find me on Instagram at Nosework Cats (@noseworkcats), or on my website, which is noseworkcats.com and all the information about me, the class, and, just videos and stuff that you can watch to see what I'm doing is on there.

And I basically abandoned my social media for Hot Fuzz Dog Training, which was only on Facebook, and then I'd basically abandoned it, um, recently, or not even that recently, just because I actually have enough clients that I don't want more, most of the time.

So I basically just don't promote it as much, but at the same time, if for some reason, somebody would like to contact me or work with me, they can go to my website, which is Hot Fuzz Dog Training.

RACHEL: Brilliant. Thank you so much. And also with the Nosework Cats, people can do it virtually, so anyone can just have a go with it.

HANNA: Exactly, and it's a self study online class and I'm actually sort of thinking about, so—just really quickly before we end—I also want to quickly talk about the fact that I am also super aware of sort of that different countries have different, you know, monetary value in their currencies and stuff.

And so, it bothers me that the base rate for my class may not actually be affordable for some people around the world. And so I've tried to make it affordable, like just off the bat, but also I've been having kind of have enough promotions that you could hop in when there's a discounted time, but also sort of just mentioning that if for some reasons, you live in a place or you are not able to purchase it at the full price to just let me know. I'm trying to figure out a way that I can just sort of set it up where it can also just be "pay what you wish," but not have to actually contact me.

So it doesn't sort of require you to do anything other than just sort of decide, "You know, I can pay this much," but that's something that I'm trying to figure out technically speaking on the platform and I'm working on how I can set that up because I do want it to be sort of available to whoever wants it, but also still be able to make a living.

RACHEL: Aw, that's so wonderful. I think a lot of people in any case will find a lot of value in Nosework Cats and everything that you do. So I will definitely put all that information into show notes for this podcast. And thank you so much, Hanna, for being here with us and being so open and sharing your experiences and thoughts with us.

HANNA: Thank you so much for having me, Rachel.

RACHEL: Oh, it's really, really lovely. And thank you, so take care now. Bye.

HANNA: Bye.

[outro music]

RACHEL: Thank you all so much for listening! As mentioned, you can find links and transcripts in our show notes. If you can't find a link in the description, you can find them on my website, dogatheart.co.uk.

If you enjoyed the podcast and would like to support us in what we're doing, you can also buy us a coffee at buymeacoffee.com/dogatheart.

So thank you again so much, and I'll see you in the next one.