Transcript of **Out of The Woofworks** Episode 17: "Colonialism & Animal Welfare with Mel Trueblood-Stimpson"

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 the world.

On this episode today, we'll be chatting with Melinda Trueblood-Stimpson who goes by Mel. They are a scientist with 15 years of experience with felines and many years of experience with other species. They have also worked and volunteered in veterinary clinics, zoos, wildlife centres, laboratories, and other animal-oriented facilities.

We'll be talking about decolonising animal welfare and also Mel's experience as person who is Roma, Indigenous, Jewish, and Two-Spirit.

Mel has been a really helpful person for me as I learn more about anti-oppression and decolonisation and so I really appreciate them and their help. I hope you all will enjoy this episode, so let's get right into it!

[Intro Music]

RACHEL: Hi Mel. Thank you so much for your time today and for being on this podcast. How are you doing?

MEL: Hi, I'm good.

RACHEL: Could you start by telling us a little bit about yourself and what you've been up to? And feel free to self-identify, you know, whatever you're comfortable with.

MEL: Yeah. I'm Mel, short for Melinda. I'm a scientist, a consultant, a charity director, an educator, and I like to call myself a

professional disruptor focused on decolonization of all things science.

As for self ID, I'm Roma, Indigenous, Jewish, Queer, and Two Spirit, and I also identify as neurodivergent.

RACHEL: Brilliant. I have so much to talk to you about today, but let's kinda start with, you know, how did you get started in ethology and can you tell us what it's about and what drew you to it?

MEL: Yeah, so as a kid I was always around animals and, you know, sort of being that odd child that always wanted to be outside, playing in the dirt and just really wild and rambunctious.

Uh, it was very hard for my parents to get me to sit still and stay inside, which, you know, later I learned was part of being neurodiverse, but at the time my parents were really good about, you know, letting me go outside and wander.

We lived in the mountains in Appalachia, so they were really good about letting me explore, letting me go collect bugs, letting me go catch snakes, and bring them back home. *[laughs]* And, you know, things that are not so great for the environment, but it was always encouraged for me to just explore and be the natural world and just really take in the environment we were in and appreciate the earth we were around.

So, always loved animals, you know, like most people. And I thought when I was a kid I never saw veterinarians. And you know, being in an area that's very remote and an insular Roma community in Appalachia, whenever there was something wrong with our animals health wise, we always had to take care of it.

And I noticed very early on, around age six or seven, that maybe there are better ways because I would start hearing about extended relatives in the city, how they would take their animals to veterinarians, and I thought that was the coolest thing. I was just enamored with that. So about age seven, I was like, I'm going to be a veterinarian. You know, I'm going to be an animal doctor.

So that's sort of my path that I was on until freshman year of university and I had a lot of, you know, things I had to learn about the world outside of my very insular Roma community, that being a first generation college graduate, I thought I knew a lot of things cuz I always like excelled at school, you know, I had tons of scholarships, grants, all sorts of things for academic merit.

And I thought, you know, college is gonna be easy. It's gonna be a breeze. I'm so great. And I learned, within my first couple of months there, I learned very quickly that I didn't know the world around me. I had a lot of life skills and I was very savvy at a lot of things, but I was kept in a very insular community. So it was just like flooding, essentially. Just like lots of flooding, right.

And I realized veterinary school was not the path for me and I really wanted to focus on wildlife environment and sort of restoring Indigenous knowledge in terms of the environment and taking care of the earth. So I ended up changing to a zoology program and an environmental science program.

RACHEL: Oh, that's brilliant. I mean, I think that's something I kind of missed out on a little bit, you know, growing up in a city, that sort of really natural way of just engaging with your environment and kind of getting to know the animals around you. I never really had that. My mom did though–

MEL: Yeah!

RACHEL: –but I didn't, and I kind of missed out on that. I think it's amazing that you had that experience and hearing about your journey, getting to where you are now is really great.

I know that you also do DEI consulting, which our industry, the animal behavior welfare industry, really desperately needs. So can you tell us what is DEI and why is this work so important?

MEL: Yeah. I guess I would start with my background. My first year as a first generation college student, I had a lot of mental health issues with myself and you know, Who knows if those things were always there or if they became present because I moved to the city,

what have you. Who knows, right? But they surfaced, and I was really struggling with my mental health, and so I also quickly realized that I was very, involved in like peer support and mental health services. And I had a love for neuro-decolonization, which is like applying decolonial practice, but to our brains and I really love neuroscience. So that sort of got me into neuroethology. So zoology degree and undergrad gave me a solid foundation in ethology. And then now I've moved to like Neurotology and then I realized, "Wow, there's no one that looks like me in these fields, whether it's zoology, environmental science, veterinary medicine, or even mental health." There was no other Roma people I could find. So that's sort of what led me into DEI.

RACHEL: Yeah, mo, that's really interesting and really important , because you know, it definitely feels like something this industry doesn't want to hear...

MEL: Yeah. I had to become my own self-advocate almost.

RACHEL: Yeah, for sure. Because who is going to advocate for us if we don't ourselves?

MEL: Yeah. And there are tons of lovely Roma people I eventually found. Sure. There's lots of us now in academia. I mean, it's still not enough in my opinion, but at the time, you know, that was a tumultuous four to eight years, right? So like I had no one else.

And my family weren't exposed to city life and that world, so they didn't know how to help me. They tried, but aside from, you know, ceremonies and rituals, which really weren't cutting it for me, they really tried, but I needed more.

RACHEL: Yeah, that's why it's so important and it matters so much. I think in this industry, sometimes we think, "Oh yeah, you know we're kind of animals, therefore we're fine. You know, it's not on us to worry about other issues going on for people", but it really is. It really is a huge issue.

And given your identities, would you mind sharing a little bit more about kind of the challenging situations you've personally

encountered, whether that's in your professional life or your personal life?

MEL: Yeah I have a story that I tell a lot, so I apologize if anyone is listening has heard this before, but it's really my... one of my best stories.

So freshman year, this was towards the end of my freshman year at university, I was sitting in my Intro to Environmental Science Statistics course. And their first week they did some sort of historical background of environmental science, and when we got to North America, specifically like United States and Canada, and we started talking about Indigenous people, the professor put this photo up of this mountain of buffalo skulls and these white Western "pioneers" standing next to it.

So most people want you to believe that Native, he actually said "Indian", which is yeah, very tumultuous word. Native as a Native American. We'll use that here. He said, "See, a lot of people want you to believe in environmental science that Native people are somehow protectors of the earth and know how to care for the earth, but a lot of the buffalo decimation population numbers started with them. It wasn't the pioneers that really contributed. It was really the Indigenous people were already on a path of destruction of their own buffalo."

And the buffalo are sacred animal to plains Indigenous groups here in North America. And I just looked around this lecture hall. This was a big lecture. This was like a thousand people. I looked around this lecture hall... just, time froze for me.

RACHEL: Yeah.

MEL: And I'm trying to find another face, searching the crowd for me. And I didn't find anyone, and I'm just shocked, you know. And again, time's still frozen, you know, just like, just dream sequence, like it's just frozen. And I'm searching. I'm like, surely someone's gonna raise their hand, Surely someone's gonna say something. And no one did. And he kept going.

And for me it felt like it was 30 minutes later. But in reality, it was probably only like five minutes later, I finally raised my hand to interrupt him, which he gets mad at.

RACHEL: Mm-hmm.

MEL: And then I was like, "Can we go back to what you said about Indigenous people decimating the buffalo population? Because I would like to see some data for that."

And of course, he sort of fumbled and got very arrogant with me and told me I could talk to him after class and then continued on. I talked with him after class and it was the same, you know, white-splaining of my own culture and he's never provided data.

And I told him, cuz at the time I really did not have the English words or the tools or resources to really communicate this. But I told him, "Even if it were true, that us indigenous people to this land were on a path of destruction, destroying the buffalo population, the lens at which you are presenting this without any nuance in context, harms us and further dehumanizes us. And adds to the "white savior complex" that the Western, the people that moved westward, were somehow saving and helping us, reforming us, civilizing us".

And it didn't go well, you know, the meeting did not go well. I don't know how I got through the class. The class is just a whole blur to me. I wish I would've done more. I wish I would've talked to, you know, my academic advisor. I wish I would've made a complaint to the department or something, but that was really the first moment I realized that I have to self advocate for myself, for my ethnicity, and for my neurodiversity and for being low income, being nomadic. Like I've just realized I have to... I have to be the champion for my people essentially.

RACHEL: I'm so sorry this sort of thing keeps happening. And of course, you know, you bring up this one story, but it's not the only one, isn't it?

MEL: No. No, it's not. It happens all the time.

RACHEL: Yeah, I mean, I've been witness to some of the things that have gone on and it's just so, so frustrating and I can totally relate to that, you know, being the only one of your culture in a room full of people that aren't gonna say anything and you know, the pressures on you to say something. But then when you do, and you know, we can say it in a most polite way possible, we can phrase it in a way that is curious, "Why are you saying this?" But people will still say that we're "hostile" or "bullying" or being mean somehow, isn't it?

MEL: Yeah. Hostile, bullying, problematic, toxic... Literally all the synonyms you can imagine. And that's sort of the... what a lot of Indigenous people call the "White Anthropologist Effect", where we have people that don't belong to our particular identities. They don't have that live experience, so they talk about us like we're just some big experiment to them because they have no real investment in us being liberated and achieving.

And that's what I realized very early on academia. especially, I had to tackle because I'm not an experiment, I'm a person and these are real people. And the most common thing you probably see a lot for Indigenous people in particular that's kind of a global phenomenon is people talk about us in past tense.

RACHEL: Yeah.

MEL: We're still here.

RACHEL: Yeah, absolutely. And sometimes they talk about us as if we're not here and not listening, like, you know, talking to us in past tense. But colonialism and systemic oppression, it has seeped into everything and it still has its impacts today. And I think that's so important to acknowledge and I feel like it's wild that we're at a stage where people still haven't acknowledged that.

And in what ways do you see these issues or sometimes, you know, I just say "colonizer energy", show up more specifically I guess in the world of training behavior and ethology?

MEL: Yeah, "colonizer energy". I love that. "Colonizer mentality". Whatever spin you wanna put on it, it definitely is, because you know, anyone can have a colonized mind, regardless of what your background is, what your ethnicity or race is. We can all fall prey to it because that's why it's so insidious, right? That's why it works so well unfortunately.

I would say some ways I've seen that in animal welfare in general is the lack of diversity for starters. There's not a lot of unambiguous visual diversity. You can't just look at a person and see that diversity. We see a lot of homogeneity, a lot of the same looking people over and over. And like for veterinary medicine for example, was once the whitest profession worldwide. I think it's changed now so it's like third place, but it was number one there for a very long time, and that's veterinary medicine.

Once we get into animal training, it's pretty much the same story over and over. Sometimes it's worse, sometimes it's better. Zoo world is getting a bit better for diversity. But then other areas of animal welfare like rescue and shelter are kind of getting worse. So yeah, it's just not great. That's really the effect of colonialism I see.

RACHEL: Yeah, no, I think there is definitely a huge lack of representation and considering that, you know, so many people in the world have animals in their lives, like all around the world, and to just not have that representation means that we're not reaching people or being able to help people as effectively as we should be able to really.

MEL: Yeah and it's not just representation. That is one component, sure. But it's the way in which we speak about other groups we don't belong to.

RACHEL: Yeah.

MEL: The way we write about them, the way we observe them again, like they're some experiment. The way we talk about things... Again, past tense is pretty brutal. It's pretty awful. But it's just that sort of... that conditioning, that social conditioning. Well, this is the

way it's always been, right? This is just the way it is. And that may be the way it is in your paradigm, but not for the rest of the world.

RACHEL: Yeah, for sure. And colonialism, you know, is so much about power as well, and I mean, I've been thinking a lot about kind of the power structures in the animal training and behavior world recently. You know, we're always hearing from the same people like you say. There are people that look up to and almost kind of worship a specific group of people. And it bothers me that what we have is so hierarchical at the moment.

MEL: Yeah.

RACHEL: And you know, especially in an industry that is unregulated at the moment, I mean, it just baffles me how some people go into the quote unquote "top" of the industry or top of the field and how some people don't get heard or are shut out, especially if we dare say something to let people know that, "Oh, this thing is harmful, racist, queerphobic or just generally dehumanizing".

MEL: Yeah. And that in itself really shows just how much people are just conditioned to think in one way.

And the hierarchies itself, that's not a part of Indigenous culture or Roma culture for me. And I say something all the time cuz I do a lot of animal assisted therapy work and the human animal bond is a very fascinating area of research that is growing and that's lovely. I love that for us. But human-animal, that distinction alone is a colonized hierarchy for me because animals are kin, plants are ancestor. We don't have a difference, I guess, if that makes sense. Animals are a part of the same playing field or however analogy works for you. Animals are the same as humans for us

RACHEL: Yeah, absolutely. It's that thing with colonialism where things are very binary and separate, and we're made to see nature as less than in some way.

MEL: Yeah, it's like a lack of interconnectedness.

RACHEL: Exactly. And we kind of lose touch with community in our world around us. You know, colonialism teaches us to see a certain viewpoint as the correct ideal view, and like that's the correct way of life that we should all have.

MEL: Yeah, we have this saying, this is not an original idea of mine at all, but I can't remember where I got this from. I imagine somewhere just in my life journey, someone Indigenous said this, but there's a question in science that I think you can ask. Even if you're not in science, you can ask us about every little thing. So you can just replace science. Uh, "Is it confirmed by science, or is it confirmed by whiteness?" And again, you can take science out and you can, "Is it confirmed by a dog training expert or is it confirmed by the white dog trainers?" You know what I mean? Like you can rotate that however you want, but I think this is what happens all the time.

RACHEL: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. And you may have touched on this a little bit already, but how hard is it for you doing both your work with animals and also DEI? Do you get questions or even pushback from people about why you are bringing up DEI stuff into this field?

MEL: Oh yeah. Yeah, this is something I tackled with for years myself personally, and then I still get asked this or getting like negative reviews or something like that. Or little, you know, snide comments on social media. "Why is an animal page talking about this particular social justice issue?" Insert whatever issue, whether it's racism, homophobia, transphobia, whatever it is, we always get the "Why is an animal page discussing this?"

RACHEL: Yeah.

MEL: And I used to get very mad and upset. And now when I see that, I just get sad for them. I feel bad that they have been put into this colonial thinking, you know, that humans and animals are different. Animal welfare, human welfare are two different things. No, they're the same for me.

RACHEL: Yeah. They are so interconnected and I feel like we miss out on a lot. You know, we miss out on a lot of ways to help animals.

MEL: Yeah.

RACHEL: We miss out on a lot of ways to help people who care for the animals when we don't have these conversations.

MEL: And I know that sometimes I can be a little harsh when it comes to white people, colonizers... But I wanna make it clear. I try to always make this very clear. Having those strict hierarchies and dichotomies and binary thinking, it harms all of us. It takes away from everyone, regardless of your background. It takes away a closeness with nature that is just so fulfilling.

And I sound like you know... I sound very existential, but it's something that once you experience and you get it, it's just, it's really beautiful. So that's why I'm so passionate because this helps everyone. Decolonizing your mind and decolonizing everything you can, possibly decolonizing your life. It helps all of us.

RACHEL: Yeah, for sure. We're missing out so much, honestly. And I mean, I hope that this conversation will definitely make people think about it a little bit more and have a listen and just listen sometimes when we are talking about it. *[laughs]*

MEL: Yeah. *[laughs]* And I'm a talker, so I get it. I'm a big talker. I have to listen too.

RACHEL: Yeah. And. We're really open to talking about it. Obviously, not everyone has to take the time and the emotional labor to explain things to you, but so many of us are here–

MEL: Yeah, the burden is great. It's massive.

RACHEL: Yeah.

MEL: I got here to be so open through probably a decade of turmoil, right. And a lot of therapy, and a lot of ceremony. And like a

lot of traditional Western medicine and you know, more ancestral medicine. Like I've gotten here through my community. I did not get here alone, you know?

RACHEL: Yeah. Yeah. Community is so important. And how can people, as individuals, perhaps make the animal training, behavior and ethoology world a safer and better place for marginalized communities?

MEL: Yeah, that's the big question, isn't it? And for me, it depends on who's asking me, but my most generalized advice is stop and just look around you. Who are you surrounding yourself with? Do they all look like you? Do they all have the same financial backgrounds? Do they all have the same ethnicity? Do they have an ethnicity, a particular ethno-racial identity that they're, you know, attached to? Like, just look around you and see what your immediate world looks like. Your friends, your family, your colleagues. What do they look like? What are you actually seeing.

RACHEL: Yeah, exactly. I can't believe that in, you know, in 2022, we're still getting loads of conferences that are just all white people.

MEL: Yeah.

RACHEL: It's just unbelievable almost because it feels like it's the bare minimum that people just should know by now right?

And you know, we've had all these conversion in 2020 when people were putting out statements about Black Lives Matter and saying that they're gonna do better, but have they done better is the question? There's no

MEL: There's no actionable steps and no like follow through, and that is extremely frustrating, especially if you're a person who experiences marginalization, disenfranchisement, whichever label you prefer. It can get very frustrating and it can be defeating. It can make you feel hopeless.

And my recommendation is to remember generations before us felt the same way. People who are fighting for any form of liberation felt this pressure. People who were fighting for civil rights felt this pressure. People that were fighting for women's equality felt this pressure. Everyone has felt this.

Yes, it's very disappointing we're still here. I make the joke that I hope I never have to be a DEI consultant. I hope I like go obsolete. I hope that job title completely disappears because I hope by the time I'm old there's no more need for it. *[laughs]* I hope. Right? But that's the dream would be

RACHEL: That would be great. And then you could focus on more cats.

MEL: Exactly. I hope I don't have to do de consulting when you know I'm in my seventies ideally.

RACHEL: Exactly. Okay, so I just wanted to say, because I know you have cats, and I tell every guest with cats about how much I love cats and you know, Dave is my first dog and before him I was always around cats.

So with regards to your cats, is there anything that we can learn? Because I know that cats teach us kind of so much you know about choice and consent and I just wanted to ask your thoughts on that.

MEL: Love that. I know that sort of analogy and comparisons not for everyone, but I absolutely love it and it works very well for my brain.

I love comparing my cats to stuff like that. Because in my perspective, cats are definitely the ultimate example of consent, choice, and decolonizing. You know, because cats just do what they want. If they are not feeling something or something doesn't feel right for them, they won't do it or they won't engage. They're going to tell you the situation is pretty messed up.

RACHEL: Yeah, exactly. They're gonna let you know. They just teach us so much, don't they?

MEL: Yeah. And I just... cats to me, really are the epitome of who I strive to be as a person. *[laughs]* I strive to be able to like, you know, communicate that and express my needs and wants in the moment and to tell people like what I need and this boundary I need to put in place. I definitely strive to be a cat. *[laughs]*

RACHEL: *[laughs]* Aww I love that! I think, yeah, I mean there's so much to learn from cats and sometimes Dave's a little bit like a cat, you know? He just does what he wants and I mean that's also part of him as a street dog. It's all about having choice and having control and, you know, I really love that about our animals.

Just before we go, is there anything that we kind of missed today that you would like to talk about a little bit further?

MEL: Again, my best recommendation is really self-reflection. To really look at yourself, the people you surround yourself with, and you know, if you're not ready for anti-oppression or anti-racism work, that's okay.

If you're not ready, the best thing you can do is stay out of the way of those of us that are doing the work. We're here and we don't have the time to waste. I don't have any time to waste. For example, in the UK, our way of life as Roma and Traveler people is being made into a crime. They're outlawing our nomadic ways of life. So my people don't have time to wait for someone to have a reckoning of, "Wow, racism is bad", right? Like, I don't have time for that anymore. I am in it. So best thing you can do is just try stay out of the way and just, yeah, I think just listen, absorb, really reflect.

RACHEL: Yeah. And you know, there are so many DEI consultants out there, you know, if people do genuinely want to learn more and really put in the work.

MEL: Yeah. You know, the internet's great. Sometimes I am in a mood where I'm like, I'm not here to give you free education. There's Google, right? But then other times I'm like, "Yeah, I wanna educate" because I want people to get the right information. I want people to make sure they're getting information from, you know, if they're trying to learn about Roma people, they're actually learning

from Roma people and not non-Roma people are writing about us, you know?

Um, I don't really have any great advice other than we just have to, I guess it sounds very silly, but we just have to be more empathetic and really take in and absorb the world around us.

RACHEL: I mean, it's not silly because it's the bottom line of it, and I think a lot of people think that they're being kind, but there is so much more to being kind. And I know you and I wrote a post–

MEL: Kindness takes work. Yeah. There is real work you have to do. And it's messy. It's uncomfortable. It's always gonna be uncomfortable to be told, "Hey, what you're doing is harmful to me, or a group of people or what have you." But kindness takes work.

RACHEL: Yeah, exactly. And honestly, if, well for me anyway, if I felt like someone was not worth the time to tell, then that's even worse, you know, that I've not even bothered to tell you because you are just too hard of a person to talk to.

MEL: Yeah.

RACHEL: And so when there are people that I am trying to educate, it's like I really do hope to see change.

MEL: Yeah. And like you said earlier, that is so hard because even when we're being nice, and even when we're just saying, "Hey, don't dehumanize us", you know, it doesn't matter how we respond because someone is always going to weaponize that, and that's a part of white supremacy that teaches us to react that way.

RACHEL: Yeah no, for sure. And you know, like you say, I mean, I understand completely that is not comfortable to be told that something you've done is harmful. But like I always say, it's about just acknowledging that, thanking the person for taking the time out to tell you it, and then just trying to do better next time. Really genuinely trying to do better next time as opposed to just being like, "Oh, I'm sorry, sorry, sorry.". And you know, not making any effort at all, which sometimes happens.

MEL: Yeah. No, it just doesn't... It doesn't stop there saying You're sorry. Making amends is great, but then you've got to do real work and we all have to do this. We all have areas in our lives that we don't know a lot about.

I don't know a lot about disability justice stuff. I have to learn, so there's just a lot of areas where we're going to have gaps, and that's okay. It's uncomfortable. Yeah, but there's nothing wrong with being uncomfortable. It's where you learn and grow, I promise.

RACHEL: Yeah. I think a lot of people are so afraid of that discomfort and kind of making a mistake, even though, you know, I really try and emphasize that we're all gonna make mistakes. It's, it's part of the process.

MEL: Yeah. Make 'em!

RACHEL: Yeah. Make 'em, and let yourself get told, you know, just be open to kind of getting told. *[laughs]*

MEL: Yeah. I agree. Make so many mistakes. Make all the mistakes because you're going to learn something from it. Yeah. Is it nice and ideal that we don't make those mistakes? Sure. That's great. If you can try to, you know, educate yourself, expose yourself to other groups and experiences. Great. But also just don't be afraid to make those mistakes.

RACHEL: Yeah, I mean I've made plenty of mistakes and I think about, you know, not realizing about how harmful ABA, Applied Behavior Analysis, is until I actually spoke to you and you kind of mentioned it. But I didn't really ask you too much because I didn't wanna like burden you with all that. So I went to look it up and that's it. And now I understand, you know, it's things like that/

MEL: . Yeah. That's great. I love that. I love that for you. I love that for me too. *[laughs]* I selfishly love that for me as well.

RACHEL: I know. Um, I mean you post some great resources and so that's what I do sometimes when I'm like, "Oh, is that right?" You know, there are things that I definitely have learning gaps

about. And so, um, I mean, we all have them to so much in this world to learn for sure.

But yeah. Finally, what's kind of the best way for people who want to know more about you and your work, how can they get in touch with you?

MEL: Yeah, so I'm a Master's student right now in psychology, and if you strictly wanna talk like academic scholarly things, you can contact me by my academic email. I can give that to you.

And then, The other most public way you could reach me is through Ludar Animal Behavior. We call it LAB for short, so it's just ludaranimalbehavior.com. That is the best way.

And I am the founder of that, but we're also a collective of people, so we have other volunteers there. For some reason, you don't feel comfortable asking me a sensitive question. There are other volunteers that check our email there, so just don't worry about offending or anything like that. Just come and be open, transparent, and honest with us, and we'll get through the mess together. It'll be okay.

RACHEL: Yeah. Oh, I love that. Definitely. We always allow each other for some messiness. This is what the work is like, and yeah.

Thank you so much. Those will be on our show for our website. Thank you so much for sharing your knowledge and your emotional labor here on the podcast today. I really appreciate it and I'm sure you know many of our listeners would have learned a lot from this chat as well, so thank you.

MEL: Yeah. And you know, back to no hero worshiping, I appreciate and respect being in community with you.

RACHEL: Yeah.

MEL: I appreciate that we have this space together. I really love that for us. It's really what it's all about. Not the individual, but collectivism and being together in community.

RACHEL: Yeah, absolutely. That's what it's about. So thank you so much. I'll talk to you later.

MEL: Bye.

[Outro Music]

RACHEL: Thank you all so much for listening! As mentioned, you can find links and transcriptions in our show notes. If you can't the link in the description, you can find them on my website dogatheart.co.uk/podcasts. If you enjoyed the podcast and would like to support us and what we're doing, you can buy us a coffee at buymeacoffee.com/dogatheart . You can also get updates about future guests and episodes on our Instagram @dog_atheart, I'll see you in the next one!