

IH S3 Neil Dumra

[00:00:00] **Neil:** If people experienced this, this would be, this would change people's way of being. If they weren't thinking with their head and they're feeling with their body, with their heart, things would change.

[00:00:22] **Mira:** I am Mira Kaddoura, and this is Into Healing Austin edition on this episode of Into Healing. We sit with Neil Dumra and discover how cacao holds more than flavor. It holds memory, ancestry, and medicine By allowing the heart to open through ritual, he's created a sanctuary of community and connection in the heart of Texas.

[00:00:45] **Mira:** If you support our mission of giving everyone a way into healing, please consider becoming a paying member through our Patreon. Your generosity will help bring more meaningful conversations to the world. I love that we're here to talk about cacao and you've already made us Yes. A glass of or a cup of cacao.

[00:01:04] **Mira:** Yeah. So thank you. Yeah. Thanks for having

[00:01:06] **Neil:** me. Thanks for letting me use your kitchen. Yeah. Love to share this cacao with you. Have this conversation.

[00:01:12] **Mira:** Yeah, me too. Yeah. So, you know, tell us a little bit about. I feel like people know cacao. Like the, you know, we all, we have, we have a meal and then we're like, oh, I feel like something sweet.

[00:01:23] **Mira:** I'll have a piece of chocolate. Like, people know that there's pleasure in chocolate mm-hmm. And in cacao, but like, that seems like the limit of what people know about it. So tell us more. Like, it seems like cacao, the way you talk about it and the way you work with it is more like ceremonial. It's more of a guide, it's more of a medicine.

[00:01:42] **Mira:** Tell us more about that. Yeah. Because I don't think people totally, a lot of people understand like the, the depths

[00:01:48] **Neil:** Sure. Of this, of this Yeah, totally. This medicine. So when you're, when you're having ceremonial cacao, it's not necessarily from, and maybe

[00:01:57] **Mira:** explain what even ceremonial cacao is, is right.

[00:01:59] **Neil:** Yeah, just like farming, when things are farmed agriculturally, it has a different purpose and intention.

[00:02:05] **Neil:** When things are done perma culturally or with nature, it has a different outcome. Mm-hmm. And it's less for profit. It's more for creating a really beautiful experience, also for nature and for sustainability and that. Creates a different essence in the end product. And so when nature is working in a symbiosis, the the mushrooms underneath you, the midges, the all these different pieces are playing in a symphony that only a few can hear.

[00:02:34] **Neil:** And when you can hear it, then you can also feel it. And the cacao literally has antioxidants, polyphenols, minerals that not every cacao will have because it's. Different intention. When you're making it for production, it has a different outcome. Mm-hmm. When you're making it for the essence, it has a different outcome.

[00:02:52] **Neil:** Mm. So that's ceremonial. Cacao has has a love in action, and it has an essence that comes with the flavor and it comes with the feeling. So ceremonial, cacao, like ceremonial matcha, like ceremonial, anything is done with a different intention. Mm. And then it has health benefits. It's organic. Everything is clean.

[00:03:13] **Neil:** Things are protected. The nature in itself is just made for it. So it's, it has a different, uh

[00:03:19] **Mira:** mm-hmm. Hierarchy. Mm-hmm. Vibration and energy. Vibration. Yeah. So, so tell us more about, you know, how, how you work with it as a medicine, right? Yeah. And what it does. Sure. Because, you know, we've heard about like how it's a heart opener mm-hmm.

[00:03:35] **Mira:** But like, tell us more about, about that. Yeah, yeah. How it works.

[00:03:37] **Neil:** So, how it works is, I learned a lot about the nervous system. And, um, I, aside from having a yoga studio, I study a lot about trauma, somatics, feelings, emotions, the actual vagus nerve. Mm-hmm. And, um, you know, the tissue and, and how things were to heal.

[00:03:57] **Neil:** And oxytocin plays a big part in it.

[00:04:00] **Mira:** Mm-hmm.

[00:04:00] **Neil:** And so, uh, when we're, when we're born in our mother's womb, uh, we're just coated with oxytocin. So it's such a beautiful place where we're comforted, we're nurtured. And cacao has a similar essence because it literally puts energy into this place that a lot of times people don't pay attention to.

[00:04:18] **Neil:** Mm. So the heart, and then all these different things like steric acid, um, all these polyphenols, it literally softens the tissue around the heart. Hmm. So. The things that we're not aware of in our unconscious subconscious where we feel betrayed, where we feel victimized with this trauma.

[00:04:34] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. It

[00:04:34] **Neil:** starts to soften that tissue and all of a sudden if you look at Dr.

[00:04:38] **Neil:** Joe's work, you become more coherent with your gut.

[00:04:41] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. And

[00:04:41] **Neil:** you start to think less from Right, wrong, good, bad, but what is for me in this moment? Hmm. And that's when you start to become more coherent and that's when you become more vagal to. And out of vagal tone, you release the common thought of survival and you go into tribal.

[00:04:57] **Neil:** If people experience this, this would be, this would change people's way of being. If they weren't thinking with their head and they're feeling with their body, with their heart, things would change because you're no longer hanging onto the trauma. As a, as a way to survive, but you're able to process it and share it with love where it becomes a gift.

[00:05:16] **Mira:** Hmm.

[00:05:16] **Neil:** So that's how I see cacao. I

[00:05:19] **Mira:** love that. Beautiful. Yeah. Huh. The way I even found you or know about you is because in Austin, what I call a little haven in town for me is Casa De Luz is this, uh, little community that is a community kitchen, a playground, a bunch of different businesses. You know, some, some spaces to do different healing modalities, you know, from yoga to breath work.

[00:05:42] **Mira:** And that's where you have also, um, I mean, what started as a small thing is now a big thing, but where you started Third eye lounge

mm-hmm. Which is where this delicious cacao comes from. So I just wanted to give that context Yeah. So people know kind of

[00:05:56] **Neil:** Totally. Yeah. Um,

[00:05:58] **Mira:** but yeah, tell us a little bit more about, um.

[00:06:01] **Mira:** Yeah, why you were attracted to cacao and how it kind of, yeah. So how did your interest in it, or your curiosity, or when was the first time you tried it? So

[00:06:08] **Neil:** I have had experience with my body that's been very uncomfortable for most people. So I broke my hips when I was 13 mm. So I have metal in my body and I love playing tennis.

[00:06:19] **Neil:** I love playing sports, and I didn't want anything to stop me from doing that. So I've always kept. Doing those things, but also staying mobile yoga helps me do all that as well. Mm-hmm. But the cacao really just helped me feel really comfortable in my body.

[00:06:34] **Mira:** Hmm. So

[00:06:35] **Neil:** I see cacao as a beautiful ritual that you can have, uh, every day.

[00:06:39] **Neil:** The way I made it was so it doesn't have sugars in it. It's, I take the pure cacao with everything. Uh, we don't remove any of the fat. We make it a powder, which then you drink it every day. Uh, it obs it helps your stem cells. So it actually, the proven cardiologists have proven that it'll double your stem cells.

[00:06:57] **Neil:** Oh, as soon as we're born, our blood becomes less and less viscous. So the more and more we, you know, drink things and have things that help our blood flow, it allows our energy or ourselves to communicate better, and thus we're more connected.

[00:07:11] **Mira:** Hmm. I love thinking a canal, uh, cacao as a connector.

[00:07:15] **Neil:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:07:16] **Neil:** I always see it that way. I'm like, oh, it's a beautiful way to connect.

[00:07:19] **Mira:** Huh? I like, I like thinking about it, not just as a connector of people, but like a, a connector to to land, to, you know, to the plant world. To the natural world too. Yeah.

[00:07:32] **Neil:** Cacao is a beautiful way to develop patience because when you're operating from the heart space, you're no longer in fight.

[00:07:40] **Neil:** And so when you're in the head space, you're, you're automatically playing tennis with yourself and others. And it's an unconscious program that people are unaware of a lot of times. So when you're living and operating from this space, spirit is naturally coming to you and giving you all the things you need.

[00:07:56] **Neil:** 'cause you're becoming more in tuned.

[00:07:58] **Mira:** Hmm.

[00:07:58] **Neil:** And so I, I conceptualize spirit as being in the body. And when you're interconnected. With your body, then spirit is always talking to you, guiding you.

[00:08:07] **Mira:** Hmm. It's

[00:08:07] **Neil:** only when you get into that fight or flight that you lose connection with spirit. That's my perception.

[00:08:12] **Neil:** Hmm. And then, you know, there's all these different dogmas and religions and things, which I feel like all of it is right. If you see it from a perspective that is healing, um, you can always find an objection if you want to. And I think that. Being spiritual is releasing objections as often as possible.

[00:08:31] **Neil:** Hmm. And finding that piece.

[00:08:33] **Mira:** And how has it, how has it helped you on your journey? Yes. I, oh yeah. I'm so curious about your, your healing journey, right. And how it's been a guide on totally. On your path. Yeah.

[00:08:43] **Neil:** It's like the more I can learn to, to slow down is the more I learned to speed up.

[00:08:49] **Mira:** Hmm. And

[00:08:49] **Neil:** that it's in that contrast that I find cacao has really helped me.

[00:08:54] **Neil:** Um. Just feel more and process so much. Uh, I don't think I would've been able to experience such an intimacy with every human in my lineage. Without it, I would've lost a lot of experience that I need to learn in order to evolve. And it's like with cacao, you get this grace that you don't get with a lot of other substances.

[00:09:16] **Neil:** Hmm. Yeah.

[00:09:17] **Mira:** It seems like this medicine works in such subtle ways. Mm-hmm. It's not like a big, yeah, it's not like a big healing experience, which you know, a lot of people gravitate towards, but it feels like it's these small, subtle shifts that happen. Maybe speak to that and speak to how you start noticing that you are shedding the layers that don't serve you.

[00:09:38] **Mira:** Yeah. Through this. Through this medicine, right?

[00:09:40] **Neil:** Yeah. I think it's that, it's that subtlety that makes it so palatable, and that's how it works. Mm. It's, it's in the 1%, it's, it's so similar to when you look for those sensational experiences, they keep coming back. Mm. And I noticed that when people are looking for that.

[00:09:57] **Neil:** They actually get more trauma than anything else. 'cause they're not looking to experience the feeling and emotion with it. And the cow helps you do just that. It's the subtlety. Um, and I think less is more. And we, we don't need to heal anything. We're all whole, every human is whole. We all have trauma, which.

[00:10:18] **Neil:** We all get to experience and it's, for us, it's not something to avoid or bypass. It's like for us to learn the gift, uh, and find the essence of why we had to experience it in the first place. Hmm. So I, I truly believe everything is for us, every pain. It's meant to be felt.

[00:10:34] **Mira:** Mm. When

[00:10:35] **Neil:** we're activated in our bodies, we have to process.

[00:10:38] **Neil:** You can't stay a dormant in it. Mm. You know, you can't just think it, you have to feel it, and you have to move it, whether it be through cathartic release or sound, or working out or whatever. You're gonna, you're gonna, you're gonna feel your emotion when you're in your body. Mm. When that consciousness is flowing.

[00:10:53] **Neil:** Yeah.

[00:10:54] **Mira:** Yeah. It's interesting it feel, uh, just because you, you talked about it as like a heart opener and a softener, like once you can soften and open your heart, things can move. Yeah. Versus I think when you're, the trauma right. Makes you brace, makes you kind of Yeah. You constricted, constrict. Yeah. And this is the opposite of that.

[00:11:13] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. Like it's almost, it, it, it allows you to soften so you can be more vulnerable. Yes. So you can kind of move. Things out.

[00:11:21] **Neil:** It's like having a baby. Well, not in that, not for, not in that sense, but it's like you obviously know more, but I'm saying like tissue has to change in order for something to be birthed.

[00:11:32] **Neil:** Yes. And if

[00:11:33] **Mira:** we Or Or things to shift. Things to shift, like energetic shifts shift. Nothing's gonna shift if things don't move.

[00:11:38] **Neil:** Exactly. And the thing goes with trauma is trauma has a very strong ego. It's kinda a weird thing to say that's true, but trauma has a very strong ego of course. And when I consider ego is everything getting organized?

[00:11:50] **Mira:** Mm.

[00:11:50] **Neil:** When everything getting organized, spirit heals it all. It's kind of like stem cells, it just takes care of it all. Mm. And as long as you are vulnerable enough and safe enough to experience whatever you need to be felt, then everything just gets taken care of by spirit.

[00:12:05] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Tell me more about Spirit.

[00:12:07] **Mira:** I'm so interested in like how this, how, how. How the spirit kind of comes into play in this ritual and in this, this medicine. Yeah, so

[00:12:19] **Neil:** it's just that there is no time and space when you're in this realm. It's like a beautiful fairy space, like the third eye. It's like a space and time where you can indulge in and you know, at the same time you wanna find.

[00:12:36] **Neil:** Ground.

[00:12:36] **Mira:** Hmm.

[00:12:36] **Neil:** So like, that's why it's not just cacao. A lot of times I put all these other adaptogens, which help you get into the deeper parts. So it's like, yes, go to the heart, but then go deeper.

[00:12:46] **Mira:** Hmm. You know,

[00:12:46] **Neil:** that's kind of my concept.

[00:12:48] **Mira:** Hmm. Is this work that you can do on your own? Or is this work that you have to be doing in community for It's not

[00:12:53] **Neil:** have to.

[00:12:54] **Neil:** Is this, cacao is beautiful to be experienced on your own, especially when you go outside in nature and just take it for a hike. Um. The most important yoga to me is just moving your body and feeling it. And wherever you feel creeks feel more of that.

[00:13:09] **Mira:** Mm-hmm.

[00:13:10] **Neil:** Yeah. So I just think of it like that. Um, cacao can be experienced in a very ceremonial experience too, but ceremony is ceremony and you can have.

[00:13:20] **Neil:** With tea or with anything.

[00:13:21] **Mira:** Mm, for sure. Yeah. The last time I had like a real ceremony with cacao was in Costa Rica, and it was with a bunch of indigenous mm-hmm. Costa Rican elders, like native elders and, you know, and yeah. It just felt like they were, they've been doing it for hundreds and hundred, hundreds of years, you know?

[00:13:40] **Mira:** Yeah. Yeah. They maybe never called it ceremonial cacao. Yeah. But it's been like that. You know, sitting around the fire sharing in this drink and, and hearing, I mean, there was just so much wisdom by these elders that was shared around a fire. And maybe it's just the ritual of it all. You know,

[00:13:58] **Neil:** it's the ritual, it's the environment, it's all the different ways in which they set the intention.

[00:14:02] **Neil:** Mm-hmm. And then the channel turns on. And

[00:14:04] **Mira:** there it

[00:14:04] **Neil:** is.

[00:14:05] **Mira:** Yeah. All the wisdom.

[00:14:06] **Neil:** Yeah.

[00:14:07] **Mira:** I had taken the kids to really expose them to like, what is, you know, their, their ancestry. They have Costa Rican ancestry. And to really be around those like native elders that have so much wisdom, you know, that like. We need to be exposed to, you know?

[00:14:23] **Mira:** Yeah. Especially like Totally. Because we wanna connect to those ancestors and that lineage, you know? Yeah. It's, how do you do that important? It's like by learning from these, these elders that carry so much of that wisdom.

[00:14:35] **Neil:** That's amazing. Yeah. Yeah. I did some of that in Guatemala. Oh, beautiful. And um, there's a lot of minds out there doing that work.

[00:14:42] **Neil:** Mm-hmm. A lot of women owned. Uh, women cooperatives and, um, yeah. Cacao is becoming such a powerful thing everywhere.

[00:14:50] **Mira:** Hmm.

[00:14:51] **Neil:** It's, it's,

[00:14:52] **Mira:** why do you think that is? Is that people are just realizing it's power or, because sometimes you don't know the diff you know, is it, is it a

trend that people are kind of jumping on the bandwagon of like, oh cacao a thing and it's trendy?

[00:15:05] **Mira:** I don't

[00:15:06] **Neil:** know. 'cause I, I've been doing it longer than the bandwagon started. I think a cow has become popular because. You know, health is important and people realize this is a really healthy thing. It's chock full of magnesium and minerals and our whole world is mineral deficient. Mm-hmm. Like in terms of food, if you're looking for a super food, this is a, you could, this is amazing for you.

[00:15:28] **Neil:** Mm-hmm. So I think, yeah, people are becoming more aware. Um, so people realized, you know, if you want to have gut health. You wanna have heart health, you're gonna need to have different things outside of the traditional diet. Mm-hmm. I don't know. I'm not really sure. Um, yeah. People are interested in it now.

[00:15:46] **Mira:** Yeah. Well, how do you, how do you think people should discern? Obviously there's people that are just trying to make as much money as possible. How, how can people discern what's like really high quality versus not?

[00:15:58] **Neil:** Yeah, think what,

[00:15:59] **Mira:** what should they look for? What they

[00:16:00] **Neil:** should look for? Make sure it's single origin.

[00:16:02] **Neil:** Make sure it's a hundred percent. Make sure the people know where it's sourced. Make sure it's lab tested. Um, you, you also gotta smell it if it has the aroma and flavor. Um, if you, but that's also comes with time. You get to, to have that. But cacao, yeah. Get to know the company, you know, see what they're up to.

[00:16:20] **Neil:** Um. And I would say most companies right now are pretty transparent with their stuff. A lot of the big companies have, you know, had a lot of heavy metal tests done. Mm-hmm. And they've not been good on a lot of them, but when you're making mask a cow, that is what's gonna happen. So I say go for smaller companies, almost.

[00:16:39] **Neil:** Mm. You know, small, mid-size companies.

[00:16:41] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. Well, always, uh, supporting locally too. Supporting local. Yeah. Like, makes the most sense. Right. Yeah. Um, just because you mentioned this previously, I wanted to ask you. Tell, can you, can you dig a little or get a little nerdy about the science behind the, the cacao?

[00:16:58] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. Like a little bit, because you tapped on like the vagus nerve Yeah. Yeah. And all that stuff. Like, tell us a little bit more about what it does to your nervous system.

[00:17:06] **Neil:** Okay. Yeah. So it's kind of like a funny thing. Um. These polyphenols, antioxidants, the oxytocin, all of a sudden it allows you to, to experience like a different shift in how you're feeling, especially when you drink it, you know, after a while.

[00:17:24] **Neil:** Um. You, you may have thoughts, but they're not coming from here. They're coming from a different space. And so all of a sudden, you know, your, your energy inside starts to move differently. Mm. And so the way I see it is when you think about fascia and tissue, um, like when you, um. When we're born, you know, our closest connection to our mom is right from here.

[00:17:48] **Neil:** Mm-hmm. And so when you're putting food in your body and it's nourishing you here and then here, and then all of a sudden here mm-hmm. All of a sudden your, your ORIC field is coming from this place rather than like, potentially out of body. Or in different places in our body. And that center place just allows more of that water in our body, which is, I call the vagus nerve, like our inner river.

[00:18:09] **Neil:** And whenever we take stuff from either side, either lineage, and we put it into the river, it gets washed clean. Mm. And so it's like, that's part of the, the energetic consciousness we're creating when we're drinking cacaos. We're just like allowing everything to heal. Just allowing them to feel, letting everything go.

[00:18:25] **Neil:** Yeah.

[00:18:25] **Mira:** I love the starting to feel, it almost like gets you in touch more with your like. Emotional body, right? Yeah.

[00:18:32] **Neil:** Yeah. And our, our body is emotional. It's such an emotional piece, and we try to think things through. Mm-hmm. And it's like, if you feel things through, it's so much better.

[00:18:43] **Mira:** So tell me, tell me a little bit about feeling things through, through this, through cacao.

[00:18:48] **Neil:** Yeah. So I have these techniques that I call, um, alchemical integration. And it's just. Different things that people are caring when they're unaware of, and I help people touch them so that they become aware of it and then release them. So it's like different tools for releasing layers of compensation.

[00:19:09] **Mira:** Hmm.

[00:19:09] **Neil:** That's basically what it's, and it's kind of like Kundalini, but it's more so we're. Actively taking, creating contralateral movement within our, within our brain, within our heart space, within our legs. And it literally just brings everything in.

[00:19:25] **Mira:** Mm. It's kinda

[00:19:25] **Neil:** like a cool way to release energy.

[00:19:28] **Mira:** Interesting.

[00:19:28] **Neil:** Mm-hmm.

[00:19:29] **Mira:** Reminds me a little bit of tapping.

[00:19:31] **Neil:** Yeah. It kind of is, but it's specifically for vagal toning.

[00:19:34] **Mira:** Hmm.

[00:19:35] **Neil:** You're literally exercising your fears around survival and moving past them. Which is kind of cool. Hmm. Yeah. You're your own hero every day.

[00:19:47] **Mira:** That's cool. So as things come up, you kind of face them and then you move

[00:19:50] **Neil:** That's right.

[00:19:51] **Neil:** Past them. Yeah. And cacao is a great way to do it. If you drink a coffee, you're gonna just find the closest solution.

[00:19:57] **Mira:** Hmm. And

[00:19:57] **Neil:** that generally is the worst Yeah. Thing for your heart.

[00:20:00] **Mira:** Yeah. Yeah. Um, I, I stopped, uh, coffee like nine or 10 years ago. Nice. You know, I realized when I, you know, I, I used to drink a lot of coffee, you know, a couple cups a day, and then I had a series of health things that came up and I just went cold Turkey.

[00:20:16] **Mira:** But what I realized is what I craved more than anything was the ritual. It wasn't the actual coffee, it was the ritual of a hot beverage. Yes. That just like. You know, kind of did something, I think to my nervous system, right? Yes. Just hot beverages, like calm your nervous system somehow. So I just replaced it at the time, I replaced it with like two meric, lemon and hot water.

[00:20:38] **Mira:** And that did the same thing, but then didn't give me the crash after the Yeah. Totally tie, you know? And I was like, oh, this is, this is great. You know, I keep the ritual, I just changed the substance. That's it. Yes.

[00:20:50] **Neil:** And I keep explaining, you can, you don't have to drink a cow, just do something different.

[00:20:54] **Neil:** It's like. In the morning, our body craves something to help the digestive flow. Mm-hmm. So we need minerals too, and magnesium is super good for that.

[00:21:03] **Mira:** Mm-hmm.

[00:21:03] **Neil:** Um, but even tea, lemon, ginger, any of those things you want to, your lymphatic system has gotta be working properly for. Mm-hmm. All these things to work.

[00:21:12] **Neil:** A lot of people, consumers, especially, who like superfoods, are looking for alternatives

[00:21:17] **Mira:** now. Mm-hmm. Yep. What does it mean to. To you to be in right relationship with this plant. Mm. Um, especially that its roots are in like indigenous communities. Yes. This is

[00:21:28] **Neil:** beautiful. The cow should be prized, especially because in the world we live in, like coconuts are so prized.

[00:21:35] **Neil:** Mm-hmm. You know, people want that coconut. Mm-hmm. Um, and it's because they realize the importance of electrolytes. You know, if we realize the importance of opening our hearts, think about that, that could change everything. Mm-hmm. So. Yes, I do believe it's important to honor and, and pay people. And in fact, if you can pay them before the cacao is even mm-hmm.

[00:21:54] **Neil:** Created, you take away survival from their perspective. Mm-hmm. It changes everything.

[00:21:58] **Mira:** Yeah. And probably the energy that they put into the actual

[00:22:01] **Neil:** and the way they package it and the way they love it. Yeah. Let, let that love in. I say always let that love in. And share as much as you can. If you can provide them resources, technology, facilities, find ways to do it.

[00:22:14] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. The, it's so interesting how it's, it always, it's the, it's not just the financial part, but it's like paying for the. Real value of the thing, right? Like if, if their work is valuable, pay them what they deserve to be paid, you know, a hundred percent instead of just trying to squeeze the highest margin and all those things.

[00:22:35] **Mira:** Right? No one, no one makes

[00:22:36] **Neil:** money that way. If you make money that way, you're not making anything and you're not right with your soul.

[00:22:40] **Mira:** Mm-hmm.

[00:22:41] **Neil:** Very basic.

[00:22:42] **Mira:** Yeah. And

[00:22:42] **Neil:** you can feel that from people if they're trying to just get something.

[00:22:46] **Mira:** Yeah. Like,

[00:22:46] **Neil:** I don't want to make this a big company and sell it. I want to keep it 'cause I love it.

[00:22:50] **Neil:** Mm-hmm. And it's amazing. Yeah.

[00:22:51] **Mira:** It's part of your dharma, it's part of what you're here to do.

[00:22:54] **Neil:** Yeah. It's gotta be. And if I can't drink that cacao, I don't want anything to do with it. I don't want to have my name on it. No. Yeah. It's gotta be the best, and that's where I'll stick with it.

[00:23:03] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. Um, I wanna get into just the creating third aisle lounge.

[00:23:08] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. And just the intentionality behind it.

[00:23:11] **Mira:** Yeah.

[00:23:11] **Mira:** Um, maybe when you, I know you started it outside of Casa de Lu and then it came into Casa de Lu. Talk to us a little bit about your intentions behind creating this whole thing. Totally.

[00:23:21] **Neil:** Yeah. So. It's a third space, but it's, it's a, it's a representation of my grandparents' apartment.

[00:23:28] **Mira:** Hmm. So

[00:23:28] **Neil:** my, my grandparents lived about three miles from where I lived.

[00:23:32] **Mira:** This is in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Minnesota, Minnesota. When I was

[00:23:34] **Neil:** born, one month after I was born, they moved from India and, and raised me.

[00:23:38] **Mira:** Oh wow. Like spent.

[00:23:39] **Neil:** You know, 16 years with me.

[00:23:41] **Mira:** Wow.

[00:23:41] **Neil:** Um, and it was awesome. And my grandpa was, you know, this amazing person.

[00:23:47] **Neil:** And, uh, his house and his apartment was this really special place because literally all walks of life, all people would come in there. Huh. And it was like, uh, a very open space. And I, and it was odd because Indian people who've kind of experienced their life were more, um, discerning, you know, but they had no judgements and it was so cool.

[00:24:09] **Neil:** And I, that was the concept that I had is a place for people to come where there's good nourishment, there's good music, there's good food, all sorts of things that create like a homey type experience away from your home.

[00:24:20] **Mira:** Yeah. It just feels like your nervous system kind of calms down as soon as you walk into the space.

[00:24:25] **Neil:** That's the intention. Yeah. And, and that's what I felt, uh, growing up. My parents kept on upgrading their houses, but. The houses kept on feeling lonelier and lonelier, and it was that apartment that everybody came to and gravitated towards. And even when I came to India, when I was just five years old, I came from, you know, the airport went into my family's place and there was like 20.

[00:24:50] **Neil:** Three of my family members in one room and I told my mom, I was like, I'm having anxiousness, like I'm having, I'm panicking. Like my room is as big as this house where it's gonna stay in. And it was in that moment. And this is at five five. And my mom and that moment, and my mom's like, this is love. Go embrace it, you know?

[00:25:10] **Neil:** And then I did and I was like, whoa, this is awesome. And I just fell in love with my family that I had never met before, and it was just powerful. I was like, okay, love is not what we think it is.

[00:25:20] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. So true. You know, whenever I take my kids back to Beirut where my parents live, and uh, they come back, you know, we go there, we visit and we come back for.

[00:25:30] **Mira:** See after the summer vacation and stuff, and they come back here, they notice such a difference. Mm-hmm. Because they've set, and this is like when they were like five, six, like super young, they'd say things like, oh, you know, everybody over there, everybody loves us.

[00:25:45] **Neil:** Mm-hmm.

[00:25:46] **Mira:** Everybody loves us. Yeah. And they feel it, right?

[00:25:48] **Mira:** Yeah. They feel like

[00:25:49] **Neil:** it's love

[00:25:50] **Mira:** ev, like all these family members, whether they know them or not, love on them, you know? Yeah. And it's a stark difference from this very like nuclear family set up. We have different here that's so stripped away from all that community, right? Mm-hmm. Um, here we're kind of in this very, uh, I don't know, just these individual lives where over there it's so much more communal and so beautiful.

[00:26:11] **Mira:** You know, I love it. Every, everybody's in everybody's business. Yeah. But, uh, there's also so much beauty to it, you know, where everybody's feeding everybody and everybody like you, you never, you can never leave hungry. Right.

[00:26:23] **Neil:** There's love in that language. Yeah. And it's a language in itself. It's a culture.

[00:26:27] **Neil:** Yeah. And I felt that, and I've learned how to discern a lot from that. Mm-hmm. Because when you try to bring it to a culture that's, um, normalized, you know, that's separation. Mm-hmm. And so much privacy. And there's a lot of trauma, I guess, too, that's mixed into it. So part of it is like finding a way to make semblance of what I thought would be the thing.

[00:26:48] **Neil:** Mm-hmm. You know? So

[00:26:49] **Mira:** when you've worked with people. With cacao, how do you help them integrate their experiences?

[00:26:56] **Neil:** Yes. So a lot of times I'll have them communicate. If we're in a group setting, I'll have them talk and, you know, they validate their experience. Just, you know, share what they've experienced and help them process a little bit.

[00:27:08] **Neil:** A lot of times we take a journal and that helps, uh, take some of their, their, uh. I call 'em like thoughts that are not feelings out,

[00:27:18] **Mira:** and

[00:27:18] **Neil:** then the feeling is gonna come out.

[00:27:20] **Mira:** Mm-hmm.

[00:27:20] **Neil:** So, um, yeah, I, I think integration is huge. The yoga is really good. Mm-hmm. You know, getting into your body and just having focus in it.

[00:27:28] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. It

[00:27:29] **Neil:** helps you process a lot. Um, taking nature walks is really good.

[00:27:33] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. Um,

[00:27:34] **Neil:** just getting your feet on the ground on the earth. Yes. Earthing. And that is. One of the most powerful, underrated tools you can do is just being on the ground.

[00:27:42] **Mira:** Well, yeah. It just pulls all the electricity in your body into the ground.

[00:27:46] **Neil:** Yeah. Right. That's it. I say integration, cacao is integration. So I say cacao, see it as integration and just having the concept of setting intentions, consuming it, feeling what you're feeling and, and just going about your day with a little bit of that mindfulness. Um, that's it, that's integration.

[00:28:05] **Mira:** So what are, what are some misconceptions that people have about either cacao or plant medicine or, you know, the, these.

[00:28:14] **Mira:** Yeah. What? Yeah, what, what? Because I think a lot of people just don't understand. Sure. You know, how they work. And

[00:28:21] **Neil:** I think one of the biggest misconceptions that I know of, based on my lens, my dad being a pharmaceutical, uh, rep, and in that industry, my, my sister being a doctor, is they, the, this thing I see and feel is that is looked at from a, um.

[00:28:38] **Neil:** A lens of black and white.

[00:28:39] **Mira:** Mm. And

[00:28:40] **Neil:** when that happens, there's no color and there's, there's no way to actually feel the nervous system. Mm-hmm. It's just, it's bypassed. And so

plant medicine isn't that way. It's not, it's not something that's black and white. And it's also about releasing the black and white.

[00:28:56] **Neil:** Mm-hmm. And so when you realize that it's a very different concept in itself. Mm-hmm. You know, I'm looking for. The unprocessed so we can process Hmm. You know, that's what, um, at least, you know, people who are holding space for doing is paying attention to that, not making it the focal point, but paying attention to

[00:29:12] **Mira:** it.

[00:29:12] **Mira:** Hmm. So if somebody had like some curiosity around trying cacao and working with it mm-hmm. Um, where would they start to start working with it? Yeah. As a, as a medicine?

[00:29:22] **Neil:** Yeah. I say buy some cacao, um, you know, get, uh, you know, your favorite types of. You know, flavors and herbs and things, and start mixing it and making it, um, and then you can, you can either, you know, pick up a book and learn how to, you know, do different types of rituals or you can follow it online.

[00:29:43] **Neil:** There's YouTube, I have a bunch of content about it. Um, but it's, you can also go to a center. There's a lot of places doing it now. Cacao ceremonies are happening in every city, basically. Um, so. Yeah, there's various ways.

[00:29:57] **Mira:** Hmm. But how is it, like, is it something that you start with like a once a week kind of ritual?

[00:30:02] **Mira:** Is it like, you know, what kind, how, how does the process go to deepen your relationship with this plant? That stuff? Yeah.

[00:30:08] **Neil:** You can, you can start every day if you want to. If you wanna replace your coffee or your morning beverage with cacao, you can definitely take a deep dive and it's not gonna hurt anything.

[00:30:16] **Neil:** Um, you may feel more and your friends might think you're a little more emotional than usual. Um, but that's okay. That's part of the process, you know, it's like, um, to feel and experience more life. And the quicker you can get into that realm, the better I say. Mm-hmm.

[00:30:32] **Mira:** Because the more you can just process and move things out, right?

[00:30:35] **Mira:** Yeah.

[00:30:35] **Neil:** Yeah, yeah. And, um, in, in the world we live in now is like. All we have left is our, our soul time. Mm-hmm. You know, anything else is wasted in being busy. Gotta you gotta release that and if the cow helps you get away from being busy, then that's, that's what I suggest you do is mm-hmm. Get into it.

[00:30:54] **Mira:** Tell me a bit more about Soul Time.

[00:30:56] **Mira:** Like, why is it so important to really. Honor and value the time we have, right?

[00:31:04] **Neil:** Yes. I call it soul time because when we are out of body, when we're functioning from a stress space, you know, we're, we're literally flying away from our soul and we're saying no to the thing we want and yes to the thing that we have to do.

[00:31:19] **Neil:** And all we're doing is putting more homework into our life. Hmm. And I think soul time is like, that's when we get to, to love more. And, and everything is loved more when we're in our soul time. So that's how I see it. Um, and drinking more cacao, you're gonna have more soul time. Um,

[00:31:39] **Mira:** in the practice of working with cacao, you talk about intention setting.

[00:31:43] **Mira:** Tell me more about intention setting. Why is that so important in working with this medicine?

[00:31:48] **Neil:** Yes, so. I love the word intention, uhuh, because it's intention. Mm-hmm. And it's like when you play a guitar, it's too much tension, doesn't sound right, too little tension doesn't sound right. It's like intention is so important because it's your voice, it's your feelings, and you're literally putting it into the cup and you're bringing it in.

[00:32:09] **Neil:** So it's kind of this thing where the right amount. Is like, that's what feeling is the right amount. Mm-hmm. When you don't feel it, you're not connected to it. Mm-hmm. And it's like force. And that's like, that's not

powerful. It doesn't have resonance. When it's in that intention is like taking that thing that's tension and making it soften.

[00:32:29] **Neil:** Mm-hmm. Because your whole being is now activating that tension and then it's inside you. And when it's inside you, it's not outside you.

[00:32:36] **Mira:** Hmm.

[00:32:37] **Neil:** That tension's not outside you. When things are outside you, that's when it's tension.

[00:32:41] **Mira:** Oh, interesting. I've never thought about it like that when it's, I love words.

[00:32:47] **Neil:** Yeah. I'm a wordy guy. So like, I think that prayers are words, and if we say the right words, we're actually praying. That's our intention.

[00:32:57] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. I love, I think it's a roomy quote. Um. The words you speak become the house you live in. Yes. My dog's name is Rumi. Oh. So it's, I love it. It's so true. It's very true.

[00:33:10] **Mira:** You know, and that's why like I actually do this little ex, I've done this little experiment with, with my kids where, and this lick is a real thing where you take an apple, you cut it in half, do you know this experiment? You take an apple, you cut it in half, and you put. Half the apple in one jar and you put half the apple in the other jar and to one jar, you speak a lot of like negative words.

[00:33:31] **Mira:** And then to the other jar you speak a lot of positive words. And within a week or two the positive, um, you know, jar apple is, is totally fine. Yeah. And the one jar with the negative words towards the apple rots

[00:33:45] **Neil:** a hundred percent.

[00:33:46] **Mira:** And it's like,

[00:33:47] **Neil:** it's so true.

[00:33:48] **Mira:** It's like that's a demonstration right there of how yeah.

[00:33:52] **Mira:** Our words affect our, oh my

[00:33:54] **Neil:** God, it's so true. Our

[00:33:55] **Mira:** bodies on a cellular level, you know? Yeah.

[00:33:57] **Neil:** Yeah. And it's, it's also like you wanna be able to vote your own victory. Mm. And it's important that we have that same internal voice that we have in this external voice.

[00:34:08] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. And how to be intentional with what you say to yourself too.

[00:34:11] **Mira:** That's right. Right? Mm-hmm. So if Cacao had a, um. Something to say to the world right now. What would, what would it say?

[00:34:21] **Neil:** I would, I think it would say slow down. Hmm. I would say slow down.

[00:34:25] **Mira:** Yeah. But there's so much in the way of that. There's so like I feel we want that, but there's so many people that are chasing these things like these.

[00:34:35] **Mira:** Yeah. But I

[00:34:35] **Neil:** feel like that chase is a distortion. Hmm. It's not real. As soon as they fall hard enough that chase is over.

[00:34:43] **Mira:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. I mean, it's true. Mm-hmm. It just takes like one. Accident to change it all. Yeah. You know, or one health Sure. Issue to change it all, for sure. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah. Thank, thank you.

[00:34:54] **Mira:** Well, thank you, Neil. Yeah. Yeah. Thank you for having me. It's awesome. Thank you. Appreciate it. If you enjoyed this conversation, please like, subscribe and share with a friend. You can connect with into healing on TikTok and Instagram for more inspirational and behind the scenes content, and visit our website into healing.com for transcripts and other goodies.

[00:35:14] **Mira:** Thank you for joining us. As a reminder into healing is for informational and entertainment purposes only, and does not constitute medical or psychological advice.