

Focusing on Holistic Healing for the Pet to Create Better Wellness for the Entire Family

A Special Interview With Karen Rosenfeld

By Dr. Karen Shaw Becker

Dr. Karen Becker:

I'm Dr. Karen Becker. And today, Tamara has nominated Karen Rosenfeld for a Game Changer Award. And Karen is joining us now to tell us more about the great work she's doing with dogs and cats around the world. So, Karen, congratulations on your Game Changer award. And welcome. Thanks for taking some time to talk with me today.

Karen Rosenfeld:

Thank you so much, Dr. Becker. It's a really, a very big pleasure to be here. Thanks very much.

Dr. Karen Becker:

If you'll back up and walk our listeners and readers through how you became so passionate about animals and then turned your passion into helping others who have dogs and cats that they need help with. There has to be an amazing story behind your work.

Karen Rosenfeld:

Yeah, it's a bit of a long journey back. I didn't grow up with animals, and so I didn't really have any particular connection to dogs or cats or any other animals when I was growing up. But one day in my 20s, I was out working in the yard and, I don't know, a woman was walking by with her German Shepherd Collie mix, and I just felt, for some reason, really compelled to go up and see that woman and ask her if I could greet her dog, which I did. And I don't know why. I normally wouldn't do that. Then I met this dog, and he was just, you could just feel what a special soul he was. There was just something very beautiful about him. He was pretty, but there was something else. And I got to meet him, and then they went on their way and I walked back and continued to do what I was doing in the yard, and something clicked in my head.

And over the next few days, it just wouldn't leave me. And I guess I realized I was really missing something in life, something very big, to share your life with another being that could bring so much within just those few moments of time. And then within about two months, I was living with my first dog and she was a German Shepherd Malamute, and she became my doggy soulmate. We did everything together, we understood each other, and she was just amazing. We'd go hiking in the mountains together and she was just this amazing soul. I was very, very lucky with my first dog, and that's what started it. And I had myself always tried to live a healthy life and very natural, and I didn't like conventional medications and I didn't understand why for her, the health care and the food, pet food industry, pushed so much things that didn't make sense, that I wouldn't want to put in my body.

And I didn't understand why I would do that to her. And at the time, there wasn't really anything out there on how to naturally feed your dog and care for them. And so I had to create that for her, using my instinct and what I did for myself. And that really started the journey to where I am

today. Eventually when she passed away – I won't cry. It's been many years, but still, she was very special. I ended up with a pack of 11 rescued dogs. They ranged in size from 4 pounds to 80 pounds, from little Pomeranian to Chihuahuas to German Shepherds and Pit Bull mix. And everybody needed to get along, and they all came from situations where they experienced abuse and severe neglect. They had health issues, behavioral issues, and everybody needed to get along. And I was a single mom with my kid and I needed things to work. So, I just never thought about it, just pulled things together and made things work and made sure they had long, long, healthy lives. And that's how it all started.

Dr. Karen Becker:

And would you say that your natural intuition to keep yourself healthy, of course, and then that extends to your family, two- and four-legged, would you say that, I don't want to say neighbors and friends, but people in your community started realizing that you have this deep commitment and passion for the animals and-

Karen Rosenfeld:

Amazingly, no.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Okay.

Karen Rosenfeld:

[crosstalk 00:04:47] just thought, "crazy dog lady." No, there was no acceptance at all, like that. I truly was alone in what I was doing. I'd actually walk my pack of dogs together, all 11, from the littlest to the largest, and people would cross the street because they'd see German Shepherd, Boxer, Pit Bull, and it wouldn't register with them that I was walking them with a Pomeranian, an 8-pound Chihuahua. People just – no, there was nothing like that. And healthcare and the way that I brought them up, doing a natural diet, and people didn't get it. No, they just didn't.

Dr. Karen Becker:

But some people had to get it, because at some point you started getting questions. At some point, people are like, "Hey-"

Karen Rosenfeld:

I did.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah. At some-

Karen Rosenfeld:

I would say you're 100% right, in that sense. I started getting questions. It was really more the internet that brought that. Because I guess they did mean – people in the community started, "Well, my dogs behaved like this," and, "My dogs are experiencing this health issue." It's how it started, but it wasn't an explosion of it.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah. Yeah.

Karen Rosenfeld:

It was a slow growth until it really picked up. And when I got on the internet, I created my first website, and that's where the connections came, more with when I got that first website up. It wasn't really local in the community at all. It was getting that website up and then first, of course getting people in the region and then worldwide.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah. And at least for-

Karen Rosenfeld:

[crosstalk 00:06:53] that part was a happier [inaudible 00:06:55] right away.

Dr. Karen Becker:

I know. And I think that oftentimes with common-sense approaches, I think is what I'm going to call it, when common-sense approaches to anything aren't necessarily – you're met oftentimes with a lot of-

Karen Rosenfeld:

Fear.

Dr. Karen Becker:

-antagonism and fear and confusion and aggression. But yet in every – same thing, when I applied to open an animal hospital, I called it a proactive animal hospital, and the Illinois Veterinary Medical Association was like, "There's no such thing, and you're going to go broke." And I said, "Well, no, I'm just going to build my practice one client at a time." And they said, "Oh, we'll see how that goes." Well, I did just build one relationship at a time, but over several years, it grew quickly, I think, partly because common sense medicine does resonate with a sector of humanity. And those are my people. I think those are also your people.

Karen Rosenfeld:

Those are my people.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah. So, people in your community were like, "You know what? There is this woman with the 11 dogs and she's got valuable insights that could help me." So you started cultivating relationships one at a time. And right now, Karen, would you say that you probably work with way more people outside of your area?

Karen Rosenfeld:

I work with very few people in my area. My largest client base is in U.S., and I love my American clients, and I love the American market because of anywhere in the world, the access to the best choices, the broadest choices, the biggest spectrum, is the U.S., right?

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah.

Karen Rosenfeld:

I find my American clients are, really, just so open-minded and it's – so, yes, U.S. is my largest base. UK. I have clients, of course, everywhere, in India and North America, South America, Europe and, yeah. Canada, not my largest base.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah. Yep. I get that. I get that. I get that. But here's in one way, what you have lived, having – I'm licensed in Canada for medicine, and you are correct, there's a massive difference in resources and tools available to my U.S. clients versus my Canadian clients. It's like literally two different worlds. But out of you having to get, I'm going to say really creative, because of your limited resources, living in Canada, you are able to help other people in other parts of the world, also with limited resources, still effectively help their dog. And that's such a beautiful and important gift. Really important.

Karen Rosenfeld:

And I think you nailed it. It's that creativity. You have to be so creative. And Canada, the resources access to, say all the herbs, and you're just going to go, "It's good." It's not anything near the U.S. But then, yeah, when you're working with somebody in India or Costa Rica or wherever it is, Trinidad [and Tobago] or somewhere in the European Union, the smaller countries, it's a lot to source things. And over the years, of course, I have a huge base of resources, but I get so excited like a kid in a candy shop when I find a new resource or something to help expand that. It's like a kid in a candy shop. Sounds stupid, but-

Dr. Karen Becker:

No, I get it. I get it. And what a beautiful gift you're offering your international clients out of your own experience, which is wonderful. Karen, what do you love most about the work that you're doing?

Karen Rosenfeld:

I think it's probably very much similar to you. To sit back and look at – because everything I do is conventional medication-free, I really need to sit back and look at the depth of details about the dog's background and current situation, because the devil's in the detail and the fix is in the detail. And to really get into that and find out all the layers that have – and I get to work with healthy dogs too, which is wonderful, but to look at all the layers of whether the dog is healthy or experiencing issues, and let's see what's going to possibly cause trouble in the future and what's led up to massive problems, and pull that apart so that I can then take everything out and rebuild and create something that's life-changing for that individual animal. Whether it's to maintain their healthy state or deal with complex and complicated issues, and to make that life-changing,

comprehensive thing. And often it's life-changing for the dog's or cat's humans, too, because it gives them so much insight into how they look after themselves, too.

Dr. Karen Becker:

You really are doing whole-family unit healing and support. And you're starting maybe with a four-legged creature, but by working with the animal in the home, you're improving the health of the home, over and over. And that has to be very fulfilling for you, as well.

Karen Rosenfeld:

I don't get to think about that aspect of it very much, but I think the way I think about it is that when I'm focused on that individual situation, I put my heart and soul into it. It means so much to me in that way. And the other part, I guess, we don't have a lot of time often to stop and think about, I guess, how it relates back to us.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah.

Karen Rosenfeld:

This gives me, I guess, that opportunity, in a way. It's not something I have much time to think about.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah. Yep. I totally understand.

Karen Rosenfeld:

I think we just aren't kind to ourselves, that way.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yes. Yes. Do you find yourself – well, first of all, for people that are hearing this and say, "I live, not in the U.S., and I am having problems finding resources or support or anyone that can help me." If people wanted to learn more, Karen, or to find out more about resources that you could offer, how would they do that?

Karen Rosenfeld:

My website. If you go to my website, it really – I'm a detailed person because I want people to understand what it is that they will be doing when they work with me. My website provides a very detailed view of what are my natural holistic wellness services. And there's a good page about me that gives an insight into my philosophy of care for my client animals. And of course, there's the behavior side is in there, too. So, it really gives you a good insight.

And then of course, my blog site. There's a lot of articles on there for natural health care, diet, nutrition, personal care choices, and there's a lot of DIY stuff, a lot of recipes, so that people can really see, they can do self-help and they can also get a really good idea of what it is that I'm

about, and what it is that I do for my client dogs. No matter where you're located, it doesn't matter to me. That's what I will do.

Dr. Karen Becker:

And for our podcast listeners right now who are not watching this on video, Karen's website is OttawaValleyDogWhisperer.ca. And Karen, are your blogs also on that website, or there's a different website?

Karen Rosenfeld:

Yeah. So, I have the website, which is an entity on its own, and then I have the blog site, which is another site. And the blog site is OttawaValleyDogWhispererBlogSite.com.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Okay. Wonderful.

Karen Rosenfeld:

And of course, the social media, the Facebook and the Pinterest.

Dr. Karen Becker:

And is that all of your-

Karen Rosenfeld:

[crosstalk 00:15:38] my Twitter account. I'm bad with my Twitter account. I just use it mostly for awareness or petitions out there for animals and environment and stuff. So that one is not for everybody, but my Facebook and my Pinterest, I post my articles on there, that are for people to self-help with their animals.

Dr. Karen Becker:

That's beautiful. Karen, if you could share one thing with the world, if there's one thing you would want the world to know, what would it be?

Karen Rosenfeld:

Just to allow yourself to move forward with the best for your dog and cat. Be open-minded, because when we're not, it stops us from evolving to where we need to go to be able to do better for our animals and ourselves. And it's that open-mindedness that really starts the journey and allows you to go where you need to go to make things better for your animals and yourself. And I think that's the biggest thing, because it's the little key that turns the cogs and allows you to move in those diverse places where you can collect all that and find yourself and myself and people like us. And it's just so important. And when you don't have that, you shut that window down and you can only go sideways.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah. Really brilliant, profound and just pragmatic advice, in that by remaining open, by just allowing the door to crack, gives you other options. And just being open to opening a door or

window, in terms of perspective, ideas, thoughts, different directions, different modalities. When we are close-minded, we have very few resources and options. And when we are able to expand our mind, we can expand our ability to evolve and change. And that gives us more tools. But that's really sage advice, especially for people that are overcome, I think, with fear. And that's our primary reaction when we have sick anything in our lives that we love desperately, is fear. And fear can sometimes pull that door closed and lock it, but remaining open is such an important thing for our ability to make the best decisions as guardians. And you help people with that process, which is really beautiful.

Karen Rosenfeld:

Yeah. And it's just something I love to do. And it's a fascinating thing. And I do a lot of research. I'm always researching because it's like, again, that kid in the candy store, always searching for, "What else can I do to expand the palette for the individual?" Because every single dog and cat is an individual and their situations are unique and the family situation is unique.

Dr. Karen Becker:

Well, we are so thankful, Karen. We're so thankful that your chance bumping in to probably a little angel with wings, literally unlocked this – I'm going to call it a career – unlocked this passion in you that has afforded you the opportunity to be able to help so many other passionate pet parents around the world, be better and more knowledgeable at their jobs. And what a lovely gift that you're giving the world. I'm also-

Karen Rosenfeld:

And-

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yes.

Karen Rosenfeld:

And I got to meet someone who I really appreciate meeting, and it was a lot of fun. And that doggy led to that, too. So, it's crazy, right?

Dr. Karen Becker:

Yeah. It's wonderful. And I'm so thankful that one of your clients, Tamara, took the time to nominate you, and afforded us the ability to learn more about the great work that you're doing. Karen, thank you for spending a bit of time this morning talking with us, and congratulations on your Game Changer award. You are changing things around the world and we're so thankful that you are in the community doing it.

Karen Rosenfeld:

I really appreciate it, Dr. Becker. Thank you.