



**THE SPECTRUM
OF HEALTH**
— P O D C A S T —

Podcast Session #14

Family Constellations and Your Health

With Dr. Marie Rodriguez

Dr. Marie Rodriguez talks with Dr. Schaffner about the role that our ancestors' experiences play in our current physical and emotional health. She also talks about how Family Constellation Work can be used to help create harmony within your mind and body – this is definitely something you'll want to learn more about. In the end, Dr. Rodriguez leads the listeners in a guided meditation.

To learn more about Dr. Rodriguez,
please visit <https://drmarierodriguez.com>

00:06 **Dr. Christine Schaffner:** Welcome to the Spectrum of Health podcast. I'm Dr. Christine Schaffner, and today, I'm speaking with Dr. Marie Rodriguez about family constellation work. Marie is a dear friend, a naturopathic physician and an energy healer. She graduated from Bastyr University in 2002, and her journey into naturopathic medicine has been an evolution from the scientific to the spiritual. You can read more about Marie and her journey on her website, drmarierodriguez.com, and I really hope you enjoy our conversation today about energy healing and family constellation work. If you've been struggling with a chronic illness, we hope that we pique your curiosity in this being a modality to explore in getting the next level of transformation for your health. Welcome, Marie, I'm so excited to interview you today.

01:01 **Dr. Marie Rodriguez:** Thank you, I'm excited to be speaking with you today.

01:05 DS: I just want all of our listeners to know that you and I have known each other for years now, and you've become part of my family, but you've been so influential on my journey to becoming a naturopathic doctor and, really, some of the protocols and some kinds of remedies I've been drawn to through your own work. When I was taking my break from naturopathic school and was living in DC, and taking the MCAT, and trying to figure out my direction in life, I met you, and you empowered me to really fix my hormones, and I was just in awe with some really profound combinations of techniques, especially craniosacral therapy, and drainage remedies, and gemmotherapies, that you were able to use to get me back on track very quickly, and that experience really shaped me during that time when I was in indecision. You were helping guide me back to naturopathic school.

02:07 DS: So I think of you all the time, and how important you have been, not only for my body and my health, but also, you've helped a lot of my family members and all the people who still I love, who live in DC, and we have a lot of connection between growing up in Virginia and going to UVA and finding our ways to Bastyr. So this is really fun to connect with you in this way today.

02:32 DR: Oh, thank you. Well, it's good that we're not on video because you're making me tear up.

[chuckle]

02:37 DS: Oh.

02:38 DR: It's an honor to hear all these wonderful things, because I'm just so impressed by all of the important, powerful work that you're doing right now. You're just a huge inspiration, and the population that you work with just really needs what you're bringing. So I'm just really happy to have our synergy and our collaboration.

02:55 DS: Thank you! Now that I have been practicing, I obviously see a lot of people who have chronic illness. One of the big pieces of our work is working on the emotional, mental, intuitive and spiritual planes, and you've developed a lot of unique tools to support people on that level. It's been really fun for me to be able to refer patients to you so that they can get this type of work, and so that's going to be a big goal of ours today, to explain more about ancestral healing and constellation work and what that all means. But before we dive in, you're a naturopathic doctor, and while you still practice medicine,

your journey has led you to work more in the realm of shamanic healing, and energy work, and constellation work, so I'd love for you to just share with us how your journey evolved.

03:53 DR: My journey really has been from the scientific to the spiritual. In undergrad, I was like, of all things, if you can believe it, I was a chemistry major, and I was pre-med, and decided I wanted to do naturopathic medicine after doing many, many hours of volunteer work in hospitals. I just got disillusioned with how Western medicine treats patients, and when I found out about naturopathic medicine, it really resonated with me, and I chugged through. I began with the four-year track and then ended up spreading it out a little bit more because, as you know, it's a pretty grueling experience.

04:33 DR: I also took a year off during that time and, in practice, a few years in, when I was creating my own private practice, I found it really challenging on my physicality. I've been doing the different protocols and a lot of the naturopathic treatments, and I felt like something was missing, I'd had a really powerful experience with energy healing early on. I felt an anxiety and a depression lift for several weeks, and so it just really got me curious and I dove headfirst into craniosacral therapy, and one of my teachers also practiced shamanic healing, and I had some really powerful experiences with her. And it really just lifted a huge layer of anxiety off of me. I just continued to study energy healing alongside having my practice.

05:28 DR: I went through years of insomnia with private practice, and I was working with practitioner after practitioner and nothing really seemed to work. I think I had almost seven years of insomnia, and what I realized through my own energy healing pursuit is that I was just taking on other people's energies

and I really needed to find ways to clear myself and strengthen my boundaries, and the more modalities I incorporated for myself, the more I became interested and passionate about bringing these concepts to my patients. And so in my practice, I do adhere to the naturopathic principles, but I use the lens of energy healing, shamanic healing, and family constellation work as my main therapeutic modalities. I love to work collaboratively with other naturopathic physicians.

06:20 DR: And so that was kind of a big transition over the past few years. I've really shifted more from the traditional naturopathic paradigm with a lot of the detail-oriented labs, etcetera, to more of this mind-body-spirit paradigm, and it really, really suits me now, and it's certainly a work in progress and it's always changing as I'm learning new things. I'm really interested in, for my personal health, and also, for those of my patients, how we are really complex, multi-dimensional beings. And so we can put somebody on a really fabulous protocol, but if, at that energetic level, there are blocks in place, then that protocol is only going to reach a certain level. To have a really powerful impact, we want to look at what are some of those energy blockages, and our family system, our ancestry, is a really important piece to address, and that can be done in a variety of different ways. Today, I think we're going to talk mainly about the constellation method.

07:21 DS: Of course, when you have a personal experience and personal story, it makes you just understand and embody this work on such a profound level, and I know that you've combined a lot of healing modalities, and you're always studying, and you've really made your own unique method in doing that. Not many people know about family constellation work and what that means and how, really, our bodies and our DNA, basically, are impacted by

the lineage of our ancestors. I would love for you to share what family constellation work is and what the role of ancestral healing is when we're looking at our health?

08:16 DR: Constellation work is actually the creation of a German psychotherapist named Bert Hellinger, and he combined a system of therapy called family reconstruction therapy, by a therapist named Virginia Satir, along with what he experienced as a missionary in Africa. He experienced Zulu tribal conflict resolution, and so you synthesise those two modalities into family constellation work. The work can be done as a group process, it can be done one-on-one, and it can also be done remotely. And I think that the field just continues to develop over time. I find it to be a really powerful adjunct to some of the other modalities that I use.

09:12 DR: One of the most important concepts is that we are part of a larger soul of our family, so we have our own individual energy field as human beings. However, we're also connected to a much larger and potent energy field that contains all of those who have gone before us, and so the work of family constellations works within that framework, and there are certain principles that align and influence this work. It's different from any other modality that I've experienced, and it's really powerful, and it's very informative, and I can talk a little bit more later about what it's like to step in and do the work, either as a client or as a representative.

10:05 DS: Absolutely. This is what's been really fun about both of our journeys. I obviously still work very closely with Dr. Klinghardt, and family constellation has been a big part of his healing system, and he is close with Bert Hellinger, and that's the lens through which I've seen this work really be

impactful in patients' journeys. One thing that I want to continue to reiterate, is that it's like you can have everything, a perfect protocol, be doing everything right with your diet, really taking care of your physical body, but sometimes there are these blocks or these plateaus that people reach, and when people really are able to, and open to looking at these other levels, this is where we probably both see in our practice this next level transformation and shifting happening.

11:00 DS: I just want people to know that this is absolutely an important tool, especially if you're suffering from a chronic illness or you've been really struggling with your health and tried a lot of things--if you haven't explored this, I absolutely recommend it. This is a great overview of constellation work. Would you dive a little deeper into some of the concepts of constellation work and bring this to life for our audience?

11:29 DR: Sure. We do constellation work on behalf of a patient who isn't well, in body, mind, or spirit. However, the way I like to view it is that we're actually healing that patient's ancestral line. We all have ancestors who have passed on in a state of not being well, and that information stays in this group energy or the family soul. So that's kind of the first concept of family constellation work, is this idea of the family soul.

12:01 DR: And ultimately, our goal is to be free, autonomous, sovereign beings, carrying the gifts and the love from our lineage, carrying that as support. However, what happens when we have ancestors who have passed on, and they have unresolved issues, trauma, etcetera, is that that information stays within the family soul, and that actually affects us. There's epigenetic research that shows traumas from past lineages create changes

within the DNA, not the genome structure or the sequence, but creates an expression different from how they were originally expressed. So there is a link--ancestral trauma gets transmitted via these epigenetic processes to future generations.

12:51 DR: So by freeing up our ancestry from trauma, we can actually, over the course of time, I believe, change the structure of our DNA. When our ancestors pass on, they no longer have free will, and so that burden, not only does it stay in the family field or the family soul, but there's certain descendants that may line up with that potential. I'll talk a little bit about entanglements later, but there's this idea that there's this information within the family soul that we can carry within us, within our DNA, within our bodies. That influences our health, it can influence our relationships, and it's running in the background, and we don't really even know that it's there.

13:38 DR: A big concept of this group energy field is that all members have a right to belong, and all members have a right to be witnessed or seen, and so if there's an individual who's gone ignored or has been shunned by the family out of shame or whatever, that individual's life pattern wants to be healed, and so it'll repeat in future generations, it's kind of like this idea of repetition compulsion in psychology, we will choose the same partner until we break out of that pattern. The next thing I want to talk about is this idea of the knowing field, which I think of as a universal energy field. When we step into constellation work, we're stepping into this big information field. There was a biologist by the name of Rupert Sheldrake, who talked about collective memories within a species, so how a member of a species can learn a new behavior and then, rapidly, many other members of that same species are able to learn that behavior instantaneously.

14:57 DR: It's this idea that there are traits and patterns that get held within a collective field and the term "knowing field" has been coined to describe the field present within family constellation work. So that's a really big concept as to how this can actually create such big changes. I also think that this energy field is what shamanic healing practitioners are able to tap into when they do the journey and they go and they gather information for their client. That's the second really important concept, and the last I touched on already. It's this idea of entanglement, that when we have an ancestor who has been unwell or who has suffered, and it's gone unresolved, we may, unbeknownst to us, carry some of that information. So, in spite of eating an impeccable diet, being on a fantastic treatment protocol, seeing an awesome therapist, saying all your mantras, meditating, forest bathing, doing everything, you can find that you're not progressing, you're not advancing. And so I think that there's these forces at play, these entanglements with ancestors who need to heal, who need to be seen and they can actually block people's progress.

16:20 DR: For me as a healer, I'm currently working on that now, because the things that I'm really interested in in my healing path are at odds with my lineage. I have a really strong Catholic lineage on both sides of my family, and so a lot of the things that I'm really interested in, those on my mother's side, and father's side, would think, "Oh, that's pagan and witchery."

16:43 DR: And that's actually been blocking some of my perception abilities, of seeing, hearing, etcetera. So what I'm currently working on is actually going back and working with healed ancestors who can support me in my work, and it's a process. Over time, having those ancestral lines also heal. It's too much for one individual in this lifetime to heal the whole ancestry. But you

do what you can, and take steps forward to begin to bring the gifts, because there are a lot of gifts available to us, but sometimes the suffering and the trauma that we carry in our DNA can be in the way. So it speaks near and dear to me in my current healing process right now. Any questions about any of those? I know I was just babbling on for a little while.

17:41 DS: No, that's great. I think you put a great framework together and we can break this down so people understand it more. How this comes up in my practice is that obviously, people do all this work, but they're still carrying these feelings that they don't have a context or framework to understand. As we talk about this more, we can bring this to life on how bringing awareness and healing not only gives people more peace and healing in their lineage and in their own body, but that they just feel better as a result. And so, let's just bring this to life. I refer patients for this work to you all the time. How, when a patient comes to you for constellation work, do you break this down? How does this process look?

18:37 DR: Yes, I'll talk a little bit first about the group process, even though I'm not currently doing a lot of that right now, I have done that in the past, and I want to do more of that in the future. Because that will really explain it a little bit more clearly, and then I can talk about the individual work. So in a group process you would have a facilitator and a client and then a group, you know, 10 to 30 people, however big the group is going to be, and the client comes in and has a piece of work they want to do, and it can be around relationship with their mother, it can be around health, it could even be around a business matter. So it doesn't just have to be health or family related. I'll have a conversation with my client, and I like to start out really simply, so I'll kind of use a common one that I've been doing recently. People who want to be able

to step more fully into their career. They have something to bring to the world, but they just feel blocked.

19:45 DR: So, I would have the client select their goal. And so what I'm saying is, they would be finding a member of the audience who would step into the center of the circle. So if you want to just envision a group process, it's... Everybody's seated in a big circle. They would choose one person to represent their goal, they would choose one person to represent them and then they would choose a third person to represent an obstacle. And so what happens is, when you kind of step in to the field as a representative you begin to feel certain emotions, certain bodily sensations and a certain picture begins to get painted. And the first time I stepped into a constellation, I was like, "I don't really see how this is going to work," or I felt like the participants who were acting as representatives may have been play-acting.

20:46 DR: I stepped in as, I think, a sister of somebody and...immediately my body temperature rose, my heart started racing, my throat got really tight and I was kind of trembling and I just felt a whole lot of anger surge up spontaneously. I knew that wasn't me, because I hadn't been angry before stepping into the constellation. And it turned out that this member of this family, they were fighting, I don't think they were speaking at that time. So that was my take, I'm thought, this really works. When you step in and you represent somebody or something, you really begin to take on those characteristics. And so I, as a facilitator, will just observe the dynamics and see what happens. Now, with constellation work, there's two different approaches, and Bert Hellinger's approach is more constructive, and so, they will make movements and statements for the representatives. The way I work, it's called "phenomenological."

21:48 DR: I'll spend more time just really observing. Because sometimes a conflict can begin to create its own resolution. And so, in observing the dynamic between, say, the client, the obstacle, and the goal, more representatives might come in, maybe that obstacle becomes the client's mother or the client's father. And then, okay, there's an emotion there with the father and what the father is carrying is blocking the client's progress, because it's something unresolved from his ancestry. So then other representatives might step in behind the father. I always start out simple, but then it can grow over time. I'll also bring in some healing aspects as well. So essentially, the first part of the constellation is observing, maybe bringing in more representatives...Just really sensing what story wants to evolve, what portrait wants to be painted.

22:47 DR: And then the second half is, I will sense what healing statements may need to be made with the client and the obstacle. A big thing that I see is children carrying on the burdens of their parents. This is very, very common. A child who's been parentified or a child who's been enmeshed with a mother or a father. And a really common healing statement is, "You're my mother, I'm your daughter, you are big, I am little." Because with constellation work, the ultimate goal is to support the flow of love within a family system. What really helps to support that is that the family system has an order. The father or the mother or the oldest child, the second child, the youngest child, so everybody has their place within the system. It's when that gets jumbled, like a child is actually in the mother role, the father is actually in a child role, that the energy, that the love can't spread fluidly through the family. So that's kind of what happens in person. Do you have any way I can expand upon that to make that clearer?

24:03 DS: No, I think that's great. I think that if people are still trying to understand this, I recommend trying this and having a personal experience, because this can sound very theoretical, or very kind of intangible, but it is so impactful when you actually get in this group with the intentional energy, and with a facilitator who obviously understands how to navigate the complexity of what comes up--you can't deny your experience and what's happening. I just wanted to put that out there. Even people who are nervous about participating, "Oh, I'm not going to feel anything, I'm not going to experience anything," they get a little bit nervous if they can really participate. It's amazing how many people do have bodily sensations or thoughts or feelings or experiences even though they're doubtful about their ability to do that.

25:06 DR: I had a really interesting experience. It just popped into my head, so I'll share it. My first constellation weekend, I was participating and they had us break out into small groups to do a constellation with our parents. The instructions were to place your mother and place your father and then place a representative for the earth. Just as a background, my father was considering back surgery for chronic back pain and I was like, "Dad, I think that's a really bad idea. I really think you need to do physical therapy," and other conversations about what he should do instead, right? He was not taking any of my advice, of course. Then in the constellation, I placed my mother, I placed my father and I placed the earth and in the constellation the woman who represented my mother literally had her arms wrapped around, she was at his back, and she had her arms kind of wrapped around his neck and she was hanging on him.

26:00 DR: And so, what evolved during that constellation was a series of movements to have them standing next to each other. I think that there was probably about a half a foot of space between them and then having the representative, the earth behind them. And my dad's back pain just mysteriously vanished. And I know, I didn't tell him in advance that I was going to do a constellation because it's just not within his belief system, but that showed me, "Okay, this really does work." It doesn't always work that clearly and that quickly. And that wasn't really something that I had been asking for, but it's what showed up in the field and clearly on the soul level, it reorganized how my parents' souls related to each other. So that was enough to kind of shift the sensation...his back pain went away, he didn't have to have surgery. He'll periodically have some milder versions of back pain, but to me I realized, "Okay, I needed to study family constellation work."

27:07 DS: There wasn't a placebo effect because he wasn't believing in it. And that's what we all want and strive for, that by healing these levels, especially when people have these chronic symptoms, the physical body shifts in response to this work. And I've seen that as well.

27:33 DR: I described the group process, but it can also be done individually one-on-one. In person I'll use different little objects. I'll sometimes have people bring stones or shells or little figurines and we'll do that on a table together. They'll choose an object to represent the issue or the relative, etcetera, and it can be really powerful. I like doing it that way because they have objects that have meaning to them and then they take them home. I can also work with them to feel the patterns in their body, and sometimes I'll do a guided meditation as part of that process. It's really different from the group experience where somebody else is stepping in on your behalf because

you're the client, it is actually just sensing more with each of the different representatives that we're putting into the constellation. That can also be done also with video over Skype or Zoom.

28:37 DR: And then sometimes if I have a client on the table I do craniosacral therapy and shamanic healing and I'll just get the sense of this is a family constellation piece. Since they're lying on the table and I don't have any objects, what I'll do is I'll say, "Okay, let's, imagine if your mother's in the room, where would she be? And if you were to see the face of a clock, like is she at noon, 12 o'clock, 1 o'clock, 2 o'clock?" And then kind of where is she facing. And then walk them through some statements to make to her mother. It's really interesting, because I can actually feel on the body the shifts that happen, the blockages that begin to dissolve and release. A lot of times people become really emotional and have a crying release and they always say, "That just came out of nowhere. Does this happen to everybody?" I'm thinking, "Yes and yes." That's usually a really good sign. It's a hard thing to describe without experiencing it because it's such a unique modality.

29:43 DS: You're definitely bringing this to light for people. And of course our goal is to pique everyone's curiosity so they can reach out to people like you and learn more and have a personal experience. One thing I think that could bring this to life as well is the work with the genogram. I know Dr. Klinghardt has people write a genogram if they want to engage in this work, just to get the road map of their ancestry. It's not always critical if a person is going to work with someone like you, but can you explain what a genogram is? If people really want to start doing some self-study of their ancestry, how could they put that together?

30:31 DR: I love working with a genogram for people who know a little bit beyond their birth parents and or even their adoptive parents. And that brings up something kind of interesting, which is, a lot of us in United States have amnesia, cultural amnesia because we're descendants of immigrants. So people who've fled seeking a better life, leaving war, leaving poverty. And so we have a big blank spot which I think affects us on a health level. I think that that means we have our roots, we don't have these deep ancestral roots to support us like those who live in the same land that their ancestors lived. So doing a genogram can actually begin to open up the family field, and it's basically just like a written version of the family tree, so the male will be represented by a square and the female by a circle and then you'll start with your mother and your father connected by a line, connected by a horizontal line and then vertical lines coming down will be the children in the order.

31:34 DR: I can usually ask people "Are there any really significant features about your mother or your father?" Just like what really stands out like, "Okay, my father was an alcoholic, my mother was really, really sick before she had me. She had three miscarriages," things like that. It's in my experience of practice that people have a real spotty memory or consciousness of their ancestry, but I'll just say, "Okay, do you know of anything that people have talked about?" "Oh, yeah, they immigrated from Ireland and he was an amputee," or alcoholism is a really big one that I see that comes up through family constellation work, but I really see the genogram as a great way to start and it begins to open up the family field, and as I'm kind of filling it out with somebody, it will really start to speak to me. Like I could tell, "Okay, here's where the work wants to start," right? And so, we'll begin there. And other times it happens in layers, like you begin to tap in and you have to progress little by little because... I don't think there's any one of us who

doesn't have ancestors who've had a lot of trauma and they've figured out how to survive that trauma. I think what historically has been done is to really slow everything down and hold and freeze.

33:08 DR: When you go in and you start to unlock this work, it has to be that kind of artfully and gracefully with a lot of consciousness, because the way our ancestors chose to survive, it worked for them. It doesn't necessarily work for us because--we don't have our vitality and yet you want to be doing it in a way that kind of honors them because if you don't, I feel like sometimes that things can get locked down a little bit further, you know? One of my constellation teachers said sometimes we might not have the right to do this work. You know, if you start a constellation and there's just no movement or nothing's moving, it's not the right time. It's almost like that's still a little bit too active, and she calls it, that phenomenon of preserving the status quo. It's like keeping the status quo is safe and we know it's safe. And so that happens in a small percentage of cases, and so we'll just do little pieces over the course of time.

34:10 DR: It is artful and it can be complex, but when you do little pieces over time, the picture gets brighter and fuller, and then there can be other little things that people do on their own in between sessions to connect with their ancestors, for example to maybe do a little bit of research, to begin to have conversations with some family members. Things will just start to open up in the family field. People will get calls from relatives that they haven't spoken to in years because that energy is not as locked and it's just starting to open up.

34:51 DS: Yes, and I've seen that. I've gotten this sort of comment, that people will, all of a sudden, find that there will be these bridges of

communication that have been maybe not as open in real life, experiences like a phone call from out of the blue. I think this is a great exercise if people are interested in starting to think about this. Many times I bring this up, and people are like, "Oh, I can't think of anything," and then they go through and they start filling out the genogram and investigating and there are these themes and things, alcoholism is big. Adoption can definitely be a theme, this theme of not understanding or knowing the biological ancestry and all the trauma that can happen with adoption, even though it's obviously a beautiful thing to have adoptive parents. I think miscarriages and abortions come up a lot too.

36:02 DR: It comes up a lot.

36:02 DS: Yes. So it's this idea of grieving and bringing awareness to souls that didn't come through in this lifetime, and they still need to be acknowledged and honored. Do you see that a lot too, Marie?

36:21 DR: Yes. You know, anyone who's not been acknowledged, anyone who people might not even know. Sometimes I'll say I have a feeling that there's somebody here, we don't know their story, but we just want to create space for them. And you're exactly right. So, a miscarriage or a pregnancy termination, that can be held within the subsequent pregnancy, right?

36:45 DS: Yes.

36:47 DS: Along these lines too, with Dr. Klinghardt and his work, it seems to be that with our patient population one of the susceptibilities for people who

tend to be chronically ill is this whole concept of the vanishing twin--does that ever come up in your work? Can you just describe what that is?

37:11 DR: The vanishing twin can happen in a couple of different ways. It can be that when a mother gets pregnant, she originally gets pregnant with two and then one survives, and so there is like the sense of bereavement or loss that the surviving baby can carry. I think that in women, a lot of our emotions are held in our wounds, in our uterus, and I think that intergenerationally, we can carry loss there. And so that can be felt by the newborn kind of like on a more primitive level, which could also happen if the mother had a miscarriage or there was a long history of miscarriages in a family, right? A lot of times there's a long history of miscarriages and they're never talked about, and so it's almost like what gets denied or what gets pushed aside kind of grows, you know, and that has a bigger impact or a bigger momentum and that can, I think, impact a newborn.

38:30 DR: There's so much mystery to this, but I think that conception and gestation are really big, potent times when a lot of these energetic relationships and energetic pathways are forming. Ideally, the incoming soul would get to have a choice. I want to take this good from the X chromosome from my mom and this good from the X chromosome from my dad. But it doesn't really work that way. So you end up kind of marinating in this sea of information. I think that it affects us, it impacts us a lot more than we give credence. And I think there's just so much more information that's going to be coming out in the future about it. So it says a lot for conscious conception, two parents choosing and being aware of what their patterns are, and what they want to bring to the little one.

39:28 DS: Absolutely. I think from an empowering perspective, if anyone out there is struggling with fertility or bringing life through them, looking at this piece, I think, can absolutely be a supportive modality. And another aspect of this is that when we use a bio-feedback technique called autonomic response testing, we can communicate with the body, and see where there are blockages and where we need to explore. One of the things we see in our work of doing ART is that we find the timing of when these feelings that are unresolved entered our bodies, and it is amazing that there's a lot that happens in the womb from conception to birth. This is a time, with me being pregnant myself right now, when I'm trying to have awareness around this-- definitely, we take on the emotions of our mothers. And then from a deeper level, what has been the lineage that is passed down that is actually held in our womb and all of that. I think we probably sound esoteric to some people, but it definitely is. I see this a lot on a personal level when I work with patients and I know there's absolutely truth in all of this.

41:01 DR: Something else that's interesting is that the first born child will often carry more of the ancestral "baggage" than the second child. So in the system of family constellation work, with the first born, there's a certain level of respect or honoring that's involved because they've kind of stepped in...I'm a first born and kind of the shock absorber. So those born after have a little bit less of a burden. It doesn't always have to happen that way, but that's what I see a lot in my practice--the first born takes the hit in utero, for these patterns, gets the transmission, so to speak. I see that as pretty interesting, but a lot can certainly be done consciously during pregnancy and even after delivery. I had a client who's also a friend for who, in her family line, there were a series of accidents that happened to toddlers. She fell on her head,

her dad fell on his head, and then her little one fell out of the carriage down the stairs, it's terrible.

42:15 DR: So we did a piece of work with she and her daughter, we had picked two stuffed animals and we said, "This stuffed animal I want you to give back to mommy and this stuffed animal I want you to give back to daddy. We want to take it from you, because it is all the stuff that's for us. This is the heavy, yucky, monstery stuff that we don't want little Karina to have. This is not for you, this is for us because we're the parents, we're bigger, you're our daughter and so we need to take all of our stuff back." And so they did--she gave them each a stuffed animal back and then of course her husband, a skeptic, said, "Well, let me test this." And he tried to give it back to her. [laughter] She was like, "No. No! I don't want to take that back." It was another way to help free her up from having more of these accidents.

43:05 DS: That's a great story. The first born is the brave soul, right? Not only taking on all the lineage, but we also see this on a physical level, taking on the toxicity of the mom. And so the first born definitely has a lot to work through, but there's so many tools to, as you just shared, not have to repeat patterns.

43:29 DR: Right. And there are so many levels, there's never going to be a dull moment with everything that's out there in terms of healing and personal growth and development.

43:38 DS: Absolutely. So before we close, Marie, do you want to offer us a guided meditation? I think this is a really great way that we can connect with

this energy. So please if you're driving or multitasking, take a moment to get quiet...find a quiet moment or space, and I'll let Marie lead us.

44:06 DR: Great. We'll have a brief guided meditation, so find yourself seated comfortably, taking some graceful, easy breaths, in through your nose and out through your mouth. And just inviting all of your energy to be present with you, if you've been busy or have been in the car, or at work. Imagine that your heart could be like a magnet and just command all of you that's been out there in the world to come back, back to you, back to your body, back to your energy field. And just slowly begin to imagine a place in nature where you feel safe and comfortable, relaxed--maybe it's a forest, maybe it's by the beach.

45:06 DR: Become aware of the healing elements of nature, the temperature, the wind, the sensation of earth beneath your feet. Throughout the ages, the element of fire has been used for healing, for purification, for transmutation, for empowerment.

45:41 DR: So if you want to, just imagine a beautiful bonfire, safe and glowing, warm, nourishing, and you're seated in front of it, or standing in front of it and if you wish...you don't have to, but if you wish, you may invite members of your family, to be seated or to stand around the fire. Children, significant others, spouses, parents, whoever feels appropriate, they might just show up--and then as you breathe, just breathe in gratitude into the fire for its warmth, for its healing properties, and also knowing that you can let go with the exhalation, you can just let go of tension, of stress.

46:45 DR: Imagine that you could receive energy from the earth, up through the soles of your feet. As you feel that warm glow of the fire, that earth energy slowly moves up your whole body, grounding you, earthing you, centering you. It's relaxing your nervous system, your shoulders, your upper back, your jaw. Imagine that your legs could be roots of a tree so that from your navel down, you're really centered in the earth, really grounded and rooted and you have this beautiful fire in front of you.

47:45 DR: Next I want to invite a really huge circle of wise and loving and healed ancestors behind us. So those ancestors, they may be many, many, many, many, many generations back. These are ancestors who are healed and who can heal us, and who can also heal those who've come before us that need healing, so they may be really giant, more like angelic beings-- imagine a really large ring of healed ancestors all around us, all around the fire. We can just receive their support. And they begin to send their healing light and their healing energy into our crown, and into our heart, into our pelvis.

48:52 DR: Whatever is not supportive, we can just exhale into that healing fire. So just taking several deep breaths, imagining this beautiful ring of support of healed ancestors encircling us, filling us with their love, with their wisdom, with their healing energy. Just receive, and then with the exhalation just let go into that fire of transformation. Breathing in again, feeling their warm, loving light fill us from head to toe, nourishing us, enlightening us at the cellular level, bringing in a lot of light, a lot of power.

50:20 DR: Feeling that light in our heart and then just really acknowledging the support, the strong hold for whatever we have going on in the real world

with family, with work, that we can honor these ancestors. Take a breath and maybe just invite the ancestors who could use some healing. We have this powerful ring of support and this powerful healing fire. There's ancestors on either family line, biological or adoptive, mother or father, that could benefit from the healing fire that they may show up and receive healing at this moment.

51:42 DR: And just continuing to breathe, just let go of any anxiety or worry or fear or grief and just continuing to receive, receive light, receive support. Maybe you want to visualize putting your hands close to the fire and taking in some of that healing warmth into different parts of your body that may need healing, into your head, into your heart, just enlivening different parts of your body that could use healing.

52:34 DR: Then just take a couple more deep breaths. We're thanking our ancestors, thanking our healed ancestors. Offering gratitude to that fire. Taking another deep breath and then just coming back slowly, as we're ready, more enlivened, more empowered, clearer, making any movements you'd like and then just slowly come back and open your eyes. Know that that's a visualization you can do when you're wanting support and wanting some transformation, know that these healed ancestors are present. It's with our intention that we can connect. Hopefully that was a little bit healing and clearing for the rest of your day.

53:54 DS: Thank you, Marie, that was lovely. That's a beautiful visualization, and I think that's a great way to close our conversation about this really important work. We hope that for all of you who are listening, this has really piqued your curiosity. If this is a whole new concept for you, there are a lot of

resources available to explore this information. Marie, how can people find out more about you and your constellation work?

54:26 DR: My website is www.drmarierodriguez.com. People can reach me via my website, I work one-on-one over the phone, and I have practices in the Bay Area and in Washington DC. So, we can find a way that works best for anyone. I offer a free 15-minute discovery call if people just want to meet me over the phone initially and I can answer any of their questions.

54:58 DS: Great. Well, you have a beautiful website and it's really fun that you're able to support people not only virtually, but also in California and DC. I really appreciate your time and you sharing all your wisdom with us today.

55:15 DR: You're so welcome, and thank you so much for this opportunity. It's been really fun.

55:24 DS: Thank you for listening to the Spectrum of Health podcast. I hope you enjoyed my conversation today with Dr. Marie Rodriguez. You can find more information about her in our show notes, and I hope that we piqued your curiosity about family constellation work. Thank you.