

# **Seeking Out New Modalities to Facilitate Better Healing**

## **A Special Interview With Dr. Elaine Cebuliak**

**By Dr. Karen Shaw Becker**

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

I'm Dr. Karen Becker, and I'm very thankful that Katherine took the time to nominate a beautiful integrative veterinarian, Dr. Elaine Cebuliak, for a Game Changer award. And she's joining me here today from Australia to talk more about the amazing work she's doing with animals. So, thank you to Katherine for nominating Dr. Elaine, and thank you, Elaine, for joining me today.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

And thank you so much for inviting me. It's so nice your platform has reached people all over the world. And you are the Game Changer of holistic medicine for pets and also their people, all around the world. It's very nice to be here. Thank you.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

So beautiful. And it's this mutually synergistic relationship that we have with our integrative colleagues all doing what we do in our own space, but when we come together, we're this amazing body of professionals that are doing what we can to not only provide nontoxic resources and healing modalities for our patients, but to help bring our conventional colleagues, if needed, to provide them resources and additional information, ideas and tools in their toolboxes, if indeed they're looking for additional resources.

I think the integrative medical community is one that is capable of helping our profession with the profound amount of burnout going on. And you're doing all of those things. I know where you work. So, I'm so thankful to have the opportunity for our listeners and readers to learn more about the huge body of work that you have done and that you are doing.

So, for people who may not be familiar with all that you've done, Elaine, let's start back from what inspired you to be a veterinarian. But then also, you graduated with this set of tools that are amazing for infectious disease and triage for acute trauma, but then you probably realized that you were lacking and/or you wanted more. And then walk us through that transition to you gaining more tools.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Okay. Well, I'd say I was born into it really. My dad was a chiropractor. And we lived in Hawaii growing up. So, Hawaii, naturally, you're exposed to the elements and to a certain amount of family and caring. My dad really loved animals and he had a dog when he was quite young, and he gave me a puppy when I was about – I want to say I was about 7 in Hawaii, or something like that. I remember raising this puppy.

And then the neighborhood kids, if they found a bird with a broken wing, from about that age, would bring them to me, I guess because dad did first aid, and so I kind of learned bandages and stuff like that. So, I think I was always destined to do that. We moved when I was 15 from

Hawaii to Australia. It was like a retirement plan that my dad had thought of. University was actually free in this country at that time. So, my brother and I were going to be enrolled.

We started with the dentist. So, our first and second year, we had subjects together; physiology, anatomy, some of the anatomy anyway, biochemistry. They were all things that we did with dentists.

And so, I knew them and I knew kind of what my brother had done. And as a new grad, I was like, "There's a lot of periodontitis going on here, and we don't have a ton of training." And I became quite involved with that, and I just started studying on my own. So, I was in a central Queensland practice. That's where my husband and I ended up opening clinics. My husband's a doctor. And we were the only vet and the only doctor in that area for a while, so we had to invent everything.

So, I had to learn how to do things. Every now and again, I'm like, "Oh, it can't be that hard. It can't be brain surgery." And I'm like, "Oh yeah, I've done brain surgery." You know? You just had to do stuff. And it was mixed practice. So, we had to do large animals, had to go out and see horses and things and lots of interesting stories there.

But you know, you just fiddled. I did learn the cranial crèche repair technique using the tensor fasciae latae and making a new ligament that way. There was nobody to refer to. There were no specialists. So, you just had to figure it out. And I think that's missing a bit now because there are specialists, you have to do gold standard and I think this is part of the huge stress, too. And then the owners want the best and there's too many friggng lawyers now.

So it's like – they're so worried that they haven't got the notes written to essay standard that they've learned at Uni. They need to, the new grads need to learn shorthand, they need to just have dot points. I think they spend too long doing that. So, all the stresses that are there, "Oh, I can't do it because I'm not a specialist, so I can't even try." And then they're stuck. So, that's how it evolved. And then in the year 2000, I sat for a membership. So, it's one of the training methods in dentistry, which I passed and I continued to teach that around. And the little tricks during that were just mind-blowing. It's like, "Oh, did you know that the canine tooth of the cat, if they fracture 1 millimeter off the tip, you've got an exposed pulp and then it ends up being a Pulpal Endodontists and then it's got a Pulpitis. And that tooth needs to be treated immediately within two days for a root canal or it needs to be extracted?"

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Every second-year vet student needs to have 15 minutes with you around the world because you would've saved us – think of all the sweating-

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Yeah. Yeah.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

And anxiety and cortisol that first year out. If I would've had your wis[dom], your nuggets of knowledge. But Elaine, I really view you are a little bit of a jack of all trades. And partly because

you had to be when you were literally doing, you were the only human medical doctor and the only veterinarian in your area, you literally had to do it all. So you did. And that gave you this body, this wealth of information and this body of experience that you probably never would have fathomed. But you now have.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

You stand on the shoulders of others, though. So, with the dental stuff, I called in the local dentist, I called the orthodontic.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Makes sense.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

So, I had to do things, say for a breeding dog that they needed to just move two teeth like these ones.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Yes.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

And so, I talked to the orthodontist and said, can you help me make something? And then they were all our clients, like my husband's patients. So, we had dinner together and stuff like that. So they made a plate.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

You just figure it out.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Right.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Okay. So, here's my question about food, because you seem to be, I know that your specialty was with teeth and that's awesome. And we need way more people talking about how we can take care of our beloved's teeth better. For sure. But let's talk about food because how were you introduced then, to the nutrition part of things? How did your experience shift from when you graduated from vet school and you were taught to just feed these foods and recommend them because you have this body of information from your life experience that has caused you to be a very different veterinarian than when you graduated. So, how did that happen with food?

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Yeah. Well it never made sense to feed a packet of dried food ever, did it? Just didn't make, cause my mom was a good cook and I grew up eating Chinese.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Real food. Real food. Yeah.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

That's what I grew up eating. And my dad also, well he was into supplements. He's a chiropractor. I think they kind of do that. I remember my dad blending up a banana and putting, I think it was called tiger's milk into his blender. And he'd make this thing before he went off to work. Both my parents have passed, but they lived to be about 95. So, I just knew that a pre-packaged cereal just didn't make a lot of sense. And then our nutrition book did state that the nutrient requirement level for carbs was about 5% for dogs. And that was back in the literature back in the day in 1975, '76. So, I kind of knew that obviously kibble wasn't the way to go.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

So I have to ask, what do you love most about what you're doing? You've done a lot and you're doing a lot. When you get up in the morning, what do you love most about what you're doing now?

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

I guess I like to see people and pets get better. And quickly. It's like people bring these things in. There was a dog that had this huge cancer, old dog, 17 plus, maybe 19. Anyway, heart murmur, went to all the other vets, can't operate because he's got a bad heart, can't do surgery. I'm like, well, "I did standing cows, I did standing horses." We took lumps off with local [anesthesia]. So, it was a Saturday morning. I had two nurses. I felt it, I could get my hands underneath it, like that. And I went, "Oh, why don't you go and have coffee across the street and we'll see what we can do with that." So, acupuncture for calming, spray, lavender, nice nurse holding, calm, calm, calm. That's the other thing I teach the nurses.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Yeah.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Cause everyone, the owners and the nurses is like, it's okay. It's okay. I'm like, no, drop your shoulders less voice. Calm, slow, sexy, deep voice. And so-

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Quiet.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

You do all that, right? Yeah. And then I just got the, so I clipped it, cleaned it, got the clamps under it like that, clamped it, cut it off with a scalpel blade, got the bleeders, stapled it closed, she came back half an hour and it was gone. And she just about fell over and collapsed. And she went, "Oh my God, you're kidding. Oh my God, we got another two plus years out of that dog."

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

That is so amazing. I love everything about it. It's just so, sadly it's a lost art. You're absolutely right. It's a total, lost art. And young veterinary students don't have role models like you, sadly, to follow.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

To the cardiologist. They have to [crosstalk 00:10:39]

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Right.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Because then you need an anesthetist to be watching this case.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

That's right. That's right.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

If they die under the anesthetic and you've got to have the gold standard. And if you don't have the gold standard, the vet surgeons board could look at you and-

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Of course.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Take you down and you can lose your job and have no money. So, you may as well kill yourself. I'm like, "No, that's not right."

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Yes, yeah.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

You don't have to kill yourself. There's a lot of stuff you can do.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

And you're what? It's just beautiful that you are living a life where you're educating, you're bringing kids in, you teach other veterinarians, you're teaching your colleagues, you're teaching young veterinarians, you're doing a really good job of role-modeling a different path. And I just am, I'm very inspired. But I'm also so very thankful that you continue to put forth the teaching aspect in addition to helping pets feel better and live their best quality of life. And knitting together that relationship between family and animal and keeping that going, sustaining that. You are providing common sense, breath of fresh air, last-ditch efforts for animals that otherwise wouldn't have them. And you're letting kids see that as a possibility, which is wildly inspiring. I

love that. So out of that, Elaine, if you could share with the world one thing that you would want to share or that you've learned thus far on your journey, what would it be?

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

We're back to pain and pain prevention and flipping the lip and recognizing dental disease. I think that's a real biggie.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Good.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

And then, just helping the animals get rid of those sources of pain. Yeah.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Checking teeth and check in on pain.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Yeah. Yeah. That's right.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

That's good.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

[inaudible 00:12:36]

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

I love that Katherine took the time to nominate you. She said a lot of amazing things about you, but she said that you are the most compassionate human working tirelessly to do things in other parts of the world to make the world a better place for other cultures in other countries. But you are also working tirelessly, locally, in terms of herbal treatments, nutritional device, massage, laser, acupuncture, your treatment protocols allow animals and cancer patients to have longer lives with a greater expectancy, better quality of care because of all that you know. So, she had a lot of amazing things to say about.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

That's great.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

All the work that you're doing. So, I appreciate you taking time today to share with us, in a little bit more detail, about your fascinating past, your very bright and exciting future in terms of how you are contributing powerfully and mightily to help save the world in the lane that you are capable of doing.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Well, with everybody else.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Yeah.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

I hope you inspire other people to keep this on because none of us get to live forever.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Yes.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

None of us do it by ourselves. It's always a team.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Yes.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

And I'm so grateful to my contacts in Indonesia that run with my ideas and I'm like, "You can do this guys. Come on, let's do it." So yeah. So, I can see it as a bigger picture thing. Yeah. Thank you so much for what you do. You're amazing.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Well, I thank you for spending time this morning inspiring all of us to do everything we can. Take a common-sense approach, look at the teeth.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Yeah.

**Dr. Karen Becker:**

Watch for pain and do everything we can to protect and preserve those around us. And I love the fact that you're being such a beautiful role model for all of us. Elaine, thank you so much and congratulations on your Game Changer award.

**Dr. Elaine Cebuliak:**

Thank you so much. Thank you, Katherine, for doing that. That's wonderful.