



Medicine Stories Podcast

Episode 81 with Becca Piastrelli

We Belong to What We Long For:
Reclaiming Lost Lifeways in the Age of
Loneliness

November 1, 2021

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(Excerpt from today's show by Becca Piastrelli)

The act of choosing that is, I'd say, radical in the system we live in, that really asks us to, like, surrender to this way that is nothing but oppressive, you know. Like the expectations of us by this system are unrealistic. They're that of machines — truly, like that of machines.

And so to choose to belong yourself, to that which you long for, is the healing work; is the medicine, really.

(Intro music: acoustic guitar, folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[Intro]

[00:00:35]

Amber: Hey friends, welcome to the Medicine Stories podcast, where we are remembering what it is to be human upon the earth. I'm Amber Magnolia Hill. This is Episode 81, which is making me smile because that's my birth year. Today I'm sharing my interview with Becca Piastrelli.

I'm super stoked because I love her new book, and if you love this podcast, you will love this book. It's called [*Root and Ritual: Timeless Ways to Connect with Land, Lineage, Community, and the Self*](#). It's gorgeously illustrated, it is so evocative of so many of the feelings and subjects that we've touched on on this podcast.

Becca interviewed me for her podcast, called *Belonging*, a couple of years ago, that episode is titled [*On Motherhood, Grief, and the Grandmother Hypothesis*](#). I'll link to it in show notes. That was just a lovely conversation, and I am so excited to extend it here and to go so much deeper into this sense of disconnection that so many of us feel, and the longing for what we remember in our bones to be true for the human species, for any animal living upon planet earth.

Becca Piastrelli writes about her life experiences, facilitates women's gatherings — both virtually and in person — and is the host of the [Belonging](#) podcast.

She is the author of [Root and Ritual: Timeless Ways to Connect with Land, Lineage, Community, and the Self](#) — just had to reread that beautiful title. The book is separated into four sections, and there's musings on sort of taking stock of where we're at, which you will certainly find yourself and your experiences reflected in. And then there are recipes and ritual ideas and action items, again, interwoven with just gorgeous illustrations.

She teaches and speaks on the nature of belonging and runs retreats to help women reconnect with their rooted sense of self. She lives in the San Francisco Bay Area with her husband, child, two cats, and five chickens, where she gardens, cooks, mothers, and gathers with the ebb and flow of the seasons.

[0:03:17]

Amber: During this conversation — especially in the beginning, when Becca and I talk about just that longing, that sense of longing, knowing there's another way to live, knowing we've lost something in our modern life ways — I was reminded of my years in college at UC Davis, and the first year that my then-boyfriend took me to the Whole Earth Festival, which is like a thing. It's a big thing in Davis. And he was like, "You're gonna love it, you're gonna love it." And I was like, "Okay, I don't know what is this?" and I did love it.

And I remember walking away from it. It's on campus, it's on the quad. It's, you know, just booths, and then music and food, and people selling their handmade items. It's not even anything really ritual-based or land-based. But at that time in my life, I had just been totally submersed in mainstream American life; the overculture was the only thing I knew. And I remember walking away to the arboretum, which is this beautiful, like, nature preserve on the campus of UC Davis that I used to spend all my lunches at, because no one was ever there. It was crazy. Everyone was in the quad where it was so crowded and filled with people, and I would just take my food and go to the arboretum and find this piece and beauty.

But I remember walking away from the huge crowd at the Whole Earth Festival to the arboretum, sitting by the water and just crying, like sobbing, because I had glimpsed something that I wanted: There was a midwifery booth and they were people making whole foods and educating about organics and herbalism. And at the time, I had not put the ancestral connection piece into my life or many other things. But it was an introduction. It was something, and something tugged at my heart that day. I was just really reflecting on, like, wow, here I am now, almost 20 years later, and I'm so glad that people are having these conversations, and people are writing these books.

[0:05:24]

Amber: So let me tell you about the Patreon offerings to go along with this episode. There are two guided meditations provided by Becca there: an Autumn Forest meditation and a Winter Breath meditation. Y'all know I love guided meditations — they drop me right into my center and chill me out and open my inner visionary state in ways that are always unexpected. Something unexpected

always comes when I do a guided meditation. So those are there for patrons of the podcast. Thank you, I love you.

And then available to everyone, not just patrons, although it lives on patreon.com/medicinstories is a giveaway of the book. Becca will be signing and mailing out three copies of a *Root and Ritual*. So find Medicine Stories on Patreon — the link is in show notes — and you can enter to win. I will close the entry period three weeks from whatever day this episode comes out, which I'm thinking will be Samhain. I hope so if everything falls into place, certainly early November.

And finally if you're listening to this the day it comes out, I'm 95% sure our extra potent elderberry elixir will be in stock. I have to record these at least a week before they publish because I have been working with various people to get them out. So I'm not always sure on timing, but most likely, extra potent elderberry elixir will be in the shop at mythicmedicine.love. You can find it there, the link will be in the notes, there are ample resources related to this conversation in the show notes, as well.

And, again, if you like this podcast, if you have ever resonated with anything we've talked about, you're gonna love this book. I feel like this book, more than any other that I've talked about or read, reflects the heart of my work and of the Medicine Stories podcast. So Becca is truly a kindred spirit, and I'm so happy she took the time, being pregnant and postpartum — we talk about that, too — to put this book into the world.

Okay, here we go. Thanks for being here, y'all.

(Transitional Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux)

[Interview Begins]

[0:07:55]

Amber: Hey, Becca, welcome to Medicine Stories!

Becca: Thank you for having me. Happy to be here.

Amber: I'm happy to have you here! I was on your podcast over a year ago because you were still pregnant, and always wanted to follow up and have you on. And so I'm glad we're finally doing that, and that it is around this gorgeous book that you have written.

I would like to start, I really love asking this question of folks, by asking just a little bit about your childhood, and what sort of throughline do you see from who you were as a child and the work you're doing in the world now?

And I think for this conversation, too, we can really ground this in that we both — and probably most people listening — grew up in just very mainstream, modern, Western culture, not connected to our ancestors, to greater community. So yeah, keeping that in mind, too.

Becca: Yes, yeah. So I grew up in suburban Northern California.

Amber: Where?

Becca: Like two towns from where I am now: Novato, California in Marin County. Yeah, and like a new property, like suburban tract. Like the house we moved into when I was five, we moved from DC to California. I don't even remember the DC years. The house was new on the land. Like there was nothing there before. And I remember being like, "Ew, it looks so gross here. Like so new and gross and groomed." There's like some wisdom there, I think, of like this feels devastating to the natural world.

Yeah, and I often talk, now that I'm really on the plant path, about like wishing I had like a crinkly-eyed grandmother who like taught me the ways of the land, you know, who, like, still had the thick accent of our ancestors and could like, teach me how to can, and when to, you know, what part of the plant to harvest during what season, and all of that, but no. No, we had like a little garden. Mostly it was like tomatoes. That's like our thing in our family like that's what we grow: tomatoes. You know, like Roundup was sprayed because it was like annoying plants were annoying to our living areas.

And yeah, I can, like, squint my eyes and remember feeling the magic, right, of climbing the trees. And what I really remember is like getting stung by a bee and hating — H-A-T-I-N-G, hating — bees, thinking ants were gross because they got into our trash can and crawled up my arm and freaked me out, and being afraid that if I ate a plant, I would die because they're probably poisonous — mushrooms, especially: scary, scary. Then like the daycare teacher would have to give you ipecac and you throw up like that's like the dominant memory, like memories I have of growing up.

[0:10:58]

Becca: And also, I don't know if it's generational, you know, but like, I was super addicted to television. Like, we would go to the malls, and I was quite social. And yeah, so I was not... My parents would take us camping every summer; that was like our vacations, we'd go camping, right? Get in the car, I'd get carsick and throw up, and then we'd go camping and hiking, and I would just hate it. And I would just sit in the tent, writing lists of all the things I was going to do when I get home: all the movies I was gonna watch, all the Nickelodeon shows I was gonna watch, and like, I planned parties, like all these things to just get me out of this living world situation (*Becca laughs*).

And, you know, that took me on a path, like, into the city, climbing the corporate ladder, doing the whole thing, and then just really had to run to the end of that line to realize, "Oh, I'm unfulfilled. Oh, I'm actually being called back to the plants because there's this, like, ache, this existential, deep ache inside of me that I can't really fill with television and boxed mac and cheese anymore." Like there had to be another way. And then that took me back, took me back.

Amber: Yeah, exactly, exactly the same. And I think that extends to the generations above and before us as well, more or less, where, like in early childhood, we do sense that magic of nature, if we're lucky enough to even be able to spend time outdoors, really. And then by the time teenagers come along, I remember my daughter's middle school teacher saying a few years ago, like, "Little kids, you can take them on, like, trips based on nature, and they still love it. But once they hit middle school, they're only interested in, like, culture and socializing. So you can start, you know, gearing your trips towards, like, museums or concerts more." And I thought that was a cool perspective, and seems very true.

And then you write in your book, and this is true for me, as well, is that it was in your twenties when you started to just note that something was missing and like long for a return to older ways of living.

Amber: And as an herbalist, people always ask, like, "What brought you into herbalism?" And a lot of times they expect some big healing story, and a lot of people have those. But for me and for so many other people it was like: I just felt called. I just knew.

For me, it was like a rebellion against the way of life I had grown up with. I was like, "There has to be another way, another way to heal, another way to be healthy, another way to live in communion," even though I don't even think I had that word for it yet: living in communion.

[0:13:37]

Amber: So, you write that "we belong to what we long for." And I think this is exactly the heart of what we're talking about here.

Becca: Right. Our longing is pointing us to some deeper healing. I think that's a Steven Jenkinson quote there or reference in some way. Yeah, what was the calling?

I remember the callings appearing to me through like farmers markets and like, beautifully styled produce departments. (*both laugh*) You know, when you go into a grocery store, and someone's really, someone loves those fruits and vegetables in a way to really make it look like they are loved. Whereas you go into other grocery stores, and, you know, I don't know, the tomatoes don't feel alive. They feel oppressed. So there was something where, just like that, just through accessing food that I needed to go get to feed myself, called to me.

And then I would have these waking dreams, these visions of women around a table next to a fire, nourishing themselves. And it just sent me on this. I was just insatiably hungry to embody that in some way, you know? It's like, some people say, "Oh, you know, that scene in *Outlander*, where Claire's in the room and all the herbs are hanging from the ceiling, and isn't that just speaking to you in that way?" And I'm like, "Oh, yeah. Yep."

Yep. That is it, where it's like, I don't even know, cognitively, why I want that. But my body hungers for it. And then all of a sudden, I'm like, reading about midwifery, and looking up YouTube videos of like, these Lithuanian villages where they're still preserving ancestral ways, and I'm just hungry for, you know, period costume movies and TV shows and books. And all of a sudden, it's clear to me.

And it took me a long time to learn this term, “ancestral ways,” but that’s it. It just felt so much better than all the things that had got to me, that like entertained me, right, that in some way fed me. It just was like, you know, the air cracker that doesn’t really satiate your belly, versus the ancestral ways for, like, a deep bone broth that felt good and deep and lasting.

[0:16:12]

Amber: One topic that I return to, again and again, on this podcast that you write about in your introduction is that we were not built for these times, physiologically. Homo sapiens evolved in a completely different world, and 99% of our ancestors were hunter-gatherers. So living directly on the land, and having a spiritual reality is so different from the one we’re living in today. And I don’t even know if “spiritual” is the right term, because it kind of has different connotations nowadays, but in direct relationship with the land and with reverence for their ancestors and who came before them.

And I love this idea of evolutionary mismatch theory that says that we are also unwell today because our bodies are mismatched to the lifestyles we’re living. And I’m reading the book, [*A Hunter Gatherer’s Guide to the 21st Century: Evolution and the Challenges of Modern Life*](#) by Heather Hain and Brett Weinstein, and they’re really making this point so strongly, too, that, you know, if you graph the rate of change for the human being over millennia, it’s incredibly slow for thousands and thousands of years. And then in the last couple hundred years, suddenly, it’s growing exponentially. We’re, like, going vertically straight up right now. So the world is vastly different today than it was a year ago, and that’s never happened in human history before. It is fucking disorienting and hard, and everyone is struggling.

And so what we’re talking about here, and I know what we both look at in our podcasts and what the focus of your book is, is how can we, in this modern world, reclaim some of what has been lost?

Becca: Yes, this is what I think about all the time. As you and I are talking on the internet right now, so I always like to point that out, right? Like, I still feed myself primarily from a grocery store. I garden, you know, I’m a hobby gardener. And I rely on electricity and plumbing, and I’m talking to you on the internet, I make money off the internet, right? So I exist in this modern world, right? It’s hard not to. Really hard.

Amber: We all do. We do. There’s no going back.

Becca: Yes, certainly, there’s no going back. So that feels important to state. And also, it’s really hard to be in a body in this system right now. And I just think of the effect of the pandemic, right, and how there’s just like, finally, a conversation around how like this is actually too much for our nervous system — a human nervous system, this animal body that we have — to actually hold, right, and to give ourselves some space and grace around whatever our coping mechanisms have become in the last months, year and a half.

[0:19:21]

Becca: And I’m really drawn to this conversation around it being the eremocene: the age of loneliness. That has been a dominant feeling I have felt in a time when I’m more connected to all beings than ever before.

You and I could message on like ten different platforms in order to get in touch with each other — which I have no interest in doing (*both laugh*) — and yet there's a real sense of, like, a mental health crisis, a sense of loneliness, it's really, you know.

Just last week, this Facebook/Instagram whistleblower came out about the impacts on teenagers being on devices and on social media, and so that feels like crisis level. And it's all coming, my curiosity is all coming from my own experience of that, of being like, “oh, yeah, there is, I'm disconnected,” and there's so much to say about why, right?

You're talking about just like the rapid hockey stick growth of change, technology. There's the fact that so much of the living world is being, like, killed, dying off; there's a huge extinction event happening that we're living through, and then the severance of us from our ancestral ways, our ancestral lands, and from the living world, the fact that — our mutual friend, Milla Prince, was sharing this in her recent workshop about plants, *Plant Allies for the Age of Loneliness* — that this term, “nature,” being a colonial term, because it's separating it from us, and that we actually are, have always been a part of that, but we have been just, like, fully programmed to believe that it is separate from us.

All of that creates this, I believe, a crisis of unbelonging, a crisis of loneliness. It's a crisis for me and for all of us. And so how can we look back to the ways our ancestors lived and incorporate that into our lives?

I think you're doing that through plants. I think it can be done through boundaries around email and technology. I think it can be done by simply touching the earth. It's also not complicated technology, this ancestral ways. It does take intention, like real devotion, and I think that starts with the grief and acceptance of “Oh, this isn't working the way it is now.”

Amber: Right. And that is, like you said, I think one of the gifts of the pandemic is that so many more people are realizing that it's not working and realizing how unhappy and disconnected they are. And it's been so sad. Like the thing about teenagers, especially, just really gets me— the effects of social media and of the pandemic and distance on them.

[0:22:12]

Amber: So you write in your book that “It is important to allow ourselves to wander within our daydreams of another way of being.” And it is, every change starts with daydreaming and starts with the imagination, conceiving of another possibility. And that's what I see this book being. You also write, “This book is meant to help you release your own tattered threads back together”— not release — “reweave your own tattered threads back together so that you can remember where you come from, and find a deeper sense of belonging in this world, here and now.”

Your podcast is called “Belonging.” We've used the word numerous times already in this interview. Was the belonging piece come when you were able to recognize and name the isolation and loneliness you were feeling?

Becca: Yes, yes, one came with the other. And I'm realizing like my pursuit of a feeling of belonging will be lifelong. I think just history of our ancestors that have brought us to this moment in time, is complex and difficult to just — I talk about reweaving, but I don't think I'll have a complete tapestry next week (*Becca laughs*), where I'll be like, I belong. I belong in the natural world, I belong on these stolen lands, like I belong, like, oof, you know?

It's a spiral, not a straight line. It's given me words and a path to walk and a practice to be embodied, so that I can make meaning of this lifetime. I'm, you know, lucky to live.

Amber: You and I have both interviewed Toko-pa Turner, who wrote a book called *Belonging*. And I appreciate in one of your podcasts I just listened to, you remind me that she uses the word as a verb: I belong myself to my ancestors, I belong myself to the land I'm living on.

And this is a part of imagining and envisioning the possibilities and what we can change. And what is new is realizing that it's a choice. It can be a choice: to choose what we want to belong to and to start reweaving those connections

Becca: It must be a choice. I think in the act of choosing, that is, I'd say, "radical" in the system we live in that really asks us to, like, surrender to this way that is nothing but oppressive. You know, like the expectations of us by this system are unrealistic. They're that of machines. Truly, like that of machines. And so to choose to belong yourself to that which you long for is the healing work is the medicine, really.

Amber: I love that line. (*both laugh*)

[0:25:09]

Amber: So my impression from reading the book, listening to your podcast, is that you were facilitating and participating in women's circles pretty early on — like that this was a foundational part of your work and becoming who you are now.

And so I would love to hear a little more about the medicine of gathering with women, and about this question that was central to at least one of the groups you were in, which is: how am I doing, really?

Becca: Yeah, I'm finding in other interviews I'm doing for this book that this is a real, potent question and curiosity. And I think it has to do with the fact that a lot of us have not been together in the ways we were in the past over the last year and a half plus — including myself. So it's, we belong together, you know; like human beings belong together and community. That's how we survived: together.

When I talk about women's circles, in particular, the level of, like, yearning I get from other beings — no matter their age, or, you know, creed, or anything — it's just like, "I want that, I want that." And I wanted that. I'm someone who was in Girl Scouts. I was in a sorority, I was part of, like, toxic cliques. Like I've just been, I think, in a constant study of what it is to healthily gather with other women and heal so much that has been a part of our history, right.

And I have a one women's circle gather on the New Moon together for the last eight years. And the lineage we follow is that of Jean Shinoda Bolen, who wrote *Goddesses in Everywoman*, one of her famous ones. And the book she wrote about circling that I highly recommend getting — it's a small little book — is called *The Millionth Circle*. And it's really based on this idea, this belief that she believes, that once we have a million women, a million women's circles around the world that we can really heal this sense of the sisterhood wound, or the patriarchal wound of disbelief that's like on *The Bachelor*, like, we have to fight each other to basically survive.

And she has two questions. She says that, you know, like, there's so much that can be said about a ritual and a ceremony. And I think a lot of people expect gathering together to be ornate and like, "What do I do? Like, should we have, should we call in the four directions? And then should we do the thing? And then we should make the stuff?" And it's like, no, there's actually just two questions that Jean Shinoda Bolen says you need to answer.

And the first one is: how am I doing, really? Not "how was your week?" not "what's the story that you're telling?" It's like right now, tune in. Don't know? Pass. Like, how are you doing, really? And then what's most important to you right now?

And in that space, you're sitting in a circle of women, envisioning yourself answering the question, it's quite vulnerable, quite tender. But if you can be witnessed in that moment of saying what's real and true, right then — that is deep, deep medicine. And so that has been the practice that I have been a part of, and that I also, when I do lead circles — it's been a bit — I bring that in to the space, as well.

Like, whatever you are planning to say or planning to look like, let's just drop in right in this moment: How are you doing, really? It's often that simple.

Amber: I love that. I was recently invited to a women's circle — or told, "I'll invite you to the next one, the next New Moon." And my inner reaction was, "meh," you know, because of what you spoke to. I have been to them, and I've hosted them, where I felt like it needed to be this elaborate thing. Especially if it's like a "women's circle" that seems very, like, official; not just a thing like hang out with girlfriends, go get dinner, or something.

[0:29:27]

Amber: And I get very — I'm wondering if you can speak to this, because we grew up in such a disconnected way (and me too, with the Nickelodeon and the boxed processed foods my entire life) — that even though I've been on this other path for 15 - 20 years now, I still sometimes feel like awkward around ritual and ceremony, especially with others, like... are we really doing this? Like, I just, I guess, really, the only way through that is to keep participating, and keep doing it on my own and with others, but I really mourn and really grieve for the fact that I did not grow up participating in real, deeply meaningful, ritual with my community.

Becca: Oh, me too. Yeah, like the rites of passage being honored and us feeling an intuitive sense of like, trust, like, okay, we all know what to do next, and we all embrace it. So yeah, there's a total awkwardness.

Amber, I still feel that way. I still feel that way, often. Like, “what will people think of me?” is the thought, and then the next one is that “I’m weird,” which is why I love this term, “wyrd” — W-Y-R-D — because I’m just like, yeah, yep, I am embodying my destiny, my purpose (*Becca laughs*)!

Yeah, something I just remind myself is, even if it’s awkward, or even if I perceive judgement, or if I’m judging, there is a collective yearning for this ritual. And I just really think about how I’m in this for the long game, right? That if I’m privileged to be an elder in my community, that I’ll probably lose the cynicism at some point. And that’s really probably to protect me; to protect me from, you know, the catty feelings of rejection that I very much experienced; the burns, you know, like the girlfriend relationships gone wrong.

We’ve all got a story, whether we, you know, I was a perpetrator, and I was perpetrated against, that sticks with you. And then our ancestors had that, too, you know, the burning times — literally, like telling on each other so they could live kind of a thing. It’s deep.

It’s deep, the mistrust, and I think the mistrust can come out as like, “Wow, are you goth, or...?” I think also, capital R - Religion plays a huge role here. The mistrust of ritual of like “What are you trying? Are you some cult?” you know (*Becca laughs*), like, there’s so much.

I remember, I was doing a women’s circle in a forest near my old house, and some teenage guy went by on his skateboard, and he was like, “Devil worshippers!” and I was like, “No! That’s not what we’re doing! I’m just working with plants and talking about my dreams,” you know. And that hit something in me of, like, oh, that part of me was descended from ancestors who were, like, terrified of being identified as heathens, so there’s a lot there.

So I think you’re right, stick with it. And if space doesn’t resonate, ugh, don’t be there, you know, but this is important.

Amber: Yeah, I think what you said about like sticking with it and if you’re lucky enough to become an elder, but extending it even beyond that. I feel like our generation, especially, we are just doing the beginning of this reclaiming work, and we aren’t going to nail it in our lifetimes, we are not going to magically remake the world into the place that our ancestors inhabited in a way that really feels as meaningful and healing and connected as we want it to be. But we can do a lot, we can capture moments of it, and we can turn the, we can tilt the world in that direction for our descendants.

Becca: Yeah, that’s a nice reality check, honestly, particularly for those of us who have perfectionist tendencies and have a hard time with the messy middle — I’m one of them, right? Yeah, to bring some grace and understanding to the awkwardness and wobbliness of any of these things are the moments we doubt ourselves, the moments that, you know...

Like — let’s say you’re doing a Tarot/Oracle deck, and you pick the card, and then you feel like “Was that really true?” or the moment someone like tells you a dream and it feels prophetic, and then you’re like, “Is this stupid?” Like, just stay with it (*Becca laughs*), just stay with it!

And I find it’s just a relief, even here, just telling the truth. Right? Like, there’s an element, I think, of performance that can happen that takes us, like, away from the Earth, away from the ground. And I

just find such a relief in being like, “I feel a little silly, but also I feel really good.” And just telling the truth through it all will keep us at it.

Amber: Nodding vigorously. *(Amber laughs)*

[0:34:58]

Amber: So something that I really love, the book is divided into four sections. And the first is “Land: Belonging to Land.” And what I didn’t expect to jump out at me so much in that section is the writing about your home as part of the land as on top of the land, you know; you’re right there. You probably spend most of the time on the land you’re on in your home — if you’re a modern American person. So I was grateful for this idea of sitting with the soul of your home and listening to what it wants.

As a mom, and a modern consumer, I often feel super overwhelmed by my home, by the space inside by the clutter and the mess and the excess of things and, you know, kind of constantly making bags to go to the thrift store and wondering, “Where did all this shit come from? What am I doing? Why am I so bad at minimalism?” *(both laugh)*

And so just that sentence right there, “Sitting with the soul of your home and listening to what it wants,” feels like such a sweet invitation into tuning into what is actually needed, and what can I actually do? Because actually, I’m not a minimalist, and neither is my husband. We like decor, and we like cute little things everywhere, and I feel more at home in slightly messy homes than I do in bare, minimalist spaces. So I’m always trying to find that balance, and I guess that this invitation to me feels like a welcome space to further explore finding that balance.

Becca: Yeah, same, the being a maximalist. *(both laugh)*.

I’m so drawn to, like, hotels that feel minimal. They feel like spas, because it clears my mind. But my house — I mean, especially now that I am a mother, too — like, there are toys everywhere. I have bought none of them, yet they have appeared in my home. *(Amber laughs)* And I even have, like, a “no toys” rule, and yet...

Amber: — Yeah, no one listens to that. *(both laugh)*

Becca: No one cares! Oh, my gosh, and then you know, they grow like a foot a second, and so I’m constantly just cycling. Yeah, I get it. I get it.

[0:37:12]

Becca: Yeah, the soul of a home. Well, yeah, from this animist perspective that I’m really trying to bring into my cells, right, of the aliveness of all things and thinking about homes being on the earth — the earth touches this home, and I’m looking out these panes of glass behind my computer, these very old black oak trees — like, if I can remember and integrate that this space is embodying this land and has a soul, that soothes me a little bit around the sense of being like itchy, uncomfortable, having-to-fix-it kind of a thing. And, you know, this home right now wants toys on the floor. My

baby's happy with that, you know? Mason jar lids are all up and down the kitchen because she just loves them, you know? And I'm really asking myself to relax into that.

And you know what? There's, I think, some lowercase h harm done by this whole, like, fixer-upper, home magazine. I'm not really in that world, but like, I know a lot of when I talk to you, like, there's this sense of being embarrassed of your home. People come over because it doesn't look like something someone curated in, like, the Target home section, or whatever it is, right. And I love — like you — playing with my home and creating altars and lighting candles and the holidays? Like, it's on, you know, it's so fun!

My home is an altar, my home is an expression of the season, of my bio-region, and of my ancestors. It's so fun, and I, myself, have really had to look at like: who is this home for? Who am I trying to impress?

How many people, when you come over to their home, are like, "Oh my god, I'm sorry. It's so messy!" like you can see their embarrassment? I've been that person. And I just have a practice of being like, "I love it! I love your house. I love feeling you in here! I love that you have, like, food on the floor from yesterday's lunch from feeding your toddler. I love it!"

You know I have a little bit of trouble in like a hoarder situation because then it feels like a home is not loved. You know, I can feel the home like crying a little bit. I'm not around a lot of hoarders, but I've been in that experience before. So I think it's a different way of looking at instead of like, you know, a Marie Kondo, "tidy it up," kind of a thing — although, I think she knows that a home has a soul.

Did you ever watch her? I don't know how you feel about Marie Kondo, but did you ever watch her Netflix special?

Amber: Yeah, just one.

Becca: And she meditates. She sits on the floor, and she asks the home permission and thanks it. And most of the time, the people whose home it is start crying. Because they're like, "Oh, right, my poor house. How does my house feel about this?" Yeah, those are my thoughts.

Amber: Thank you, I look forward to that paradigm shift moving forward, as I deal with living in my home, which I both love and hate.

Becca: Yeah, I mean, I'm right there with you.

[0:40:36]

Amber: So in the next section of your book, which is my favorite, on lineage and ancestors, there's a whole chapter on connecting to lineage through food and folklore, which was my favorite, and is one of my favorite things to talk about and, you know, what really helps move us out of a purely intellectual space when we think about connecting with our ancestors.

And, you know, it's really easy. So many people who claim to be into ancestry, who are in the ancestry, just do genealogy and paperwork and computer research, which is amazing. It can tell you so much and be incredibly meaningful and soul satisfying. But it really does ground it when you bring these types of things in.

So I am curious what, you know, any lineage of yours that you would care to share about? Who your people are, what, who you really feel connected with, and how you have connected to them through these folk ways and, really, what we can consider the women's realms of life?

Becca: Yeah, well, I'm called to share a story that I share in the book that has to do with food. Food, something that awakens something inside of us, right? Like we all have to eat. And there's, generally, for most of us, a sense; like the sense the way food awakens senses and memory in us.

A former teacher of mine is Liz Migliorelly, Sister Spinster, and she did an ancestral potluck with us, and we all brought food of our people, whatever that meant. And like one of them, she has European ancestors, but her dad was stationed in Japan. And so she brought, like, Japanese food. She was sharing, like, that story. Like there's so many ways that food tells the story of our ancestors, like recent ancestors or far, far ancestors.

So in the book, I talk about the "Life-saving Lima Bean Soup" and this is on my father's mother's side, who immigrated from what was then Poland, what is now Germany. The movement of borders is an interesting new thing in human history, but so we're always like, are we German? Are we Polish? Very confusing, right? Who are we? But it's the land, the land she was from.

So my great grandmother was six years old when her mother immigrated her family from Poland, through New Orleans. And New Orleans was a much easier access point into the United States than Ellis Island was at that time, late 1800s. And it was also very wild place to live, quite dangerous. And I know this because I'm lucky enough to have diary entries from my great grandmother's sister.

And yeah, she even talks about Mardi Gras: like, they wanted to go out and see the parades, but there were always stabbings because people get really drunk and they'd fight. And it was just like a town of immigrants that just, like, didn't get along — like Gangs of New York style, but Gangs of New Orleans style.

Anyways, they came there to work, and they worked in a shrimp factory, and the children worked there. My six year old great grandmother, Philomena, Philomena Schleicher worked there. Just like that's the history of our land is like child labor, and they lived in factory housing.

And one night, the house burned down. House just completely burnt down. And my great grandmother's father was working in, I think, Mississippi, on railroad. So my great-great-grandmother didn't know what to do. She had, like, six children, and she was just walking the streets. She probably didn't speak the language very well, and she was so desperate. It says in the diary entry that she was going to go drown them in the ocean — or I guess in the river. And that's... I can't imagine how desperate she was, how dire the circumstances were.

So she was going to go do that, I guess, and a woman who recognized her from factory housing, who I can tell was not of Polish descent, asked her what was going on. And my great great grandmother

told her and she said, "No, come in with me. You're staying with us." And that night, she made them lima bean soup. In this diary entry of my great grandmother's sister, said that they all just like, lost their minds about how delicious this lima bean soup is. And because of that lima bean soup, my great grandmother, Philomena, had my grandmother, Virginia, who had my father Paul, who had me: Rebecca.

So that soup is a very big deal to me. My parents don't quite get it (*Becca laughs*), but this is a big deal, this soup, and what it represents. And I feel so lucky to know about it from that diary entry, and feel so grateful to the uncle who then transcribed that diary entry on, like, a word processor in 1991. So that I could read it (*Becca laughs*). Yeah, so the power of a dish to tell a story that feels important. And I'm sure everyone listening, you have a dish like that, even if it's like box funfetti cake that triggers some sort of memory, some sort of story that's important about why you're here today.

Amber: It's a story about community care, too.

Becca: Yes.

Amber: You know, it was the taste and the sensory experience and the physical nourishment of the soup, as well as your desperate like, all hope lost, great grandmother, getting hope handed to her in a bowl through this act of kindness from this woman saying, "No," like, "you can be taken care of."

Becca: Inspiring, huh?

[0:47:26]

Amber: Yeah, and I really appreciate the reminder that and the story of the Japanese food, that it doesn't actually have to be something that your, you know, ancestors for generations cooked and put on the table, because so many of us, myself included, I don't have any of that. I don't. I do not know one dish.

Or when I, like, I've asked my French-Canadian grandmother who was raised in Massachusetts, they were so poor, she's like, "We ate, like, stale bread, mostly." (*Amber laughs*) She didn't have recipes, and then both my parents were just raised on processed food.

And I do have another great grandmother's, some of her recipes, but they're all, like, margarine and shortening and vegetable oils that I don't put in my body. And so I've always kind of felt bereft and like I don't have an ancestral recipe to turn to. And so that's helpful.

Becca: And I think, you know, the history of humans across the world is one of immigration, you know? And I think that should be acknowledged. As much as I talk about the importance of returning to ancestral land and have been privileged enough to make pilgrimages to ancestral land and really connect, like, those ancestors traveled to there at some point, right?

Like, we know that the original ancestors are from one land, and then there's movement. And so I think that can be acknowledged through the food or the stories, the songs, the dance. Like, over time, due to many factors: weather, war, famine, opportunity, we've moved, and that impacts all parts of our lives.

Amber: Yeah, we've moved, and like you said earlier, borders changing is kind of a new thing, but borders are a new thing. Nation states are a relatively recent development in human history that really have no meaning besides what we put on them. And so much is lost to us about our ancestors, as far as, like, specific, concrete details. And instead we have this opportunity to look at sort of larger movements and yeah, songs and stories and visiting lands.

Where have you visited?

Becca: Hmm. I've visited Ireland and Scotland and England. Those have been, really, the lands that asked me, begged me to come, which is mostly my mother's matrilineal side, which I've done a lot of work on that ancestral side. Yeah, Scotland impacted me so much that I named my daughter — her middle name is after an island that we went to in Scotland. Yeah, it's such a beautiful practice, and it's like hard to do these days, but if it's possible. Yeah.

Amber: I know, I feel so sad. I've been telling my fifteen year old for years that when she's sixteen, we'll go to France, and I don't know if that's gonna happen.

Becca: Hard to know how that'll go. Yeah, yeah.

Amber: It reminds me of this passage from the Tao de Ching that says, like, you can go everywhere just by looking at your window — something like that. And it might sound crazy to people and seem kind of counterintuitive, but it's always stuck with me, and I think it relates to what we were just saying about how there's some things about our ancestors we'll never know. But we do have so much opportunity to connect right here and now with what we have, and what's available to us.

[0:51:12]

Amber: And one of my favorite practices has always been, what you call in the book, "living in mythic time." And you write, "In this realm of mythic time, it's a lot easier for me to access the wisdom and healing needed to connect with all those who came before me. So maybe we don't know the specifics. Maybe we are unable to travel for whatever reason, but we can use ancestral time to connect with our ancestors.

And one thing that you do in the book, aside from these, you know, beautiful sort of musings, and just like taking stock of where we're at right now is give practices. And you give this practice — it's something I've done before, but it's been a while and it really makes me want to do it again. You write, "Using ancestral time, mythic time, what stories from your lineage are ever happening? In what ways has your ancestral past repeated itself?"

Can you talk more about that? And specifically, like using that present tense?

Becca: Yeah, Amber, I really have to credit one of your blog posts first. How long ago did you write that post? Like five years ago or something?

Amber: Yeah.

Becca: I remember reading it and then just diving into as much literature as I could, because it just felt so activating, especially, because I feel like such a victim of linear time. So I really have to thank you for what you shared.

Amber: Yeah, it was like, women's wellness and linear time, something like that. Forgetting the title.,

Becca: Yeah, worth linking to in the show notes, I think, because it's really well-presented. And something, a modality that I participate in a healing modality is ancestral constellation work, which is rooted in a South African — I think Zulu tradition — of working out conflict in a community by having the whole community sit in a circle and have community members step in for different participants in the conflict, and basically, constellate with their bodies, listen to their bodies for what's happening in order to find resolution.

And so a man named Bert Hellinger who was dealing with post World War II devastation of the psyche of Germany, brought it there, and then eventually, it's brought here. And I work with a woman named Grandmother Sara Wignall, who I think we might know from Spirit Weavers. I bring this up because this idea of things ever-happening, stories that keep coming up in and throughout our ancestral lines a lot, a lot of us have, like, a pain, or a story that keeps coming, like alcohol abuse, or a trauma or a belief system. And that's been really helpful for me to work in this modality of ancestral constellation where you can invite — there's a field and you invite an ancestor that, like, a stranger represents. They know nothing about the ancestor onto the field to work through whatever's happening.

Like I participated in one last weekend where we looked at the electroshock therapy my grandmother, my maternal grandmother, received for her “depression” in the 1960s, and how that created a real electric jolt of fear that my mom has. It basically impacted the nervous system of my ancestry. So that's one example.

I've also taken a look at the drunk men, the drunk men of my both lines, and what hungry ghosts are there and how can we work to heal that to complete that story in my lines so that I don't pass it down? So in order to look at that, you have to take into account the ancestral stories that have happened in the right there. They're no longer in their bodies that happened in the linear past, but in this sense of mythic or ancestral time, they are happening now so that we can address it.

So I think for me what's helpful, not just being like, “Yes, time is a spiral, and it's ever happening,” that can be sometimes disorienting, but to see, “oh, if the purpose is to address these ancestors, so that I can find healing, so that I...” or “I can find healing from an ill, or I can find strength from them, so that I can be a better ancestor myself, so that I can move through this embodied moment.”

And you and I have children, right, so I'm just so compelled to give them a more healed experience of life so that if they have children, they can have a more healed experience of life. That's the motivation for bringing my ancestors into the ever happening moment of now.

[0:56:03]

Amber: I have a question about your grandmother. So that was your maternal grandmother, right?

Becca: Yeah.

Amber: I listened to your recent episode on how you wrote and published a book, and you tell the story — actually, why don't you just briefly tell the story of your grandmother and your mother's book writing?

Becca: Yeah, so part of me publishing a book was completing an ancestral tension of, as my mom would say, "writing the damn book." So this maternal grandmother, who I have a pretty deep relationship, post-death — Rudy, we call her, her entire life, she had a pretty tough life; a lot of trauma, wanted to be a writer, wanted to publish books so badly, wrote. My aunt recently discovered all these manuscripts, movie scripts, television, she just wrote and wrote and wrote and wrote, and was told she was bad at it by her alcoholic father. And yeah, she just lived in a time where she was really just expected to be a wife, and she was told she wasn't good at that, either. So even when I knew her in her later years, she was very obsessed with Michael Flatley of Lord of the Dance. So I have seen Lord of the Dance 100 times, and I'm obsessed.

Amber: Is she of Irish descent?

Becca: Yes, and she always said she was going to write his biography. So part of me is like, should I write his biography? (*both laugh*) Anyways, she never published a book.

And then my mother was very, her and her siblings were very frustrated with watching their mother say she was going to do something and never do it. It's very hard for them, very triggering for them to see her not fulfill this thing. She just would speak aloud, speak aloud, speak aloud.

So my mom in 1981 self-published her own book, back when she had a business teaching people about how to use computers and word processing. And so she wrote a how-to book on how to use a word processor, which she never told me about, because she's deeply ashamed and embarrassed. And so when I started sharing with her, "I'm pitching a book. I'm going to write a book. I'm going to do this," she came over one day, and she handed me this spiral bound book. And said, "I wrote a book, and I can't even look at it. Literally, I could vomit right now."

And I was just like, what is happening here? So emotionally charged. And I just, I'm so impressed. This is amazing. I put this book on my altar, and I asked her, "What's going on?" She said, "I just think I just did it to prove to my mom, I could do it. And I just feel a lot of nasty feelings around it."

And so yes, I wanted to write a book. Yes, it gets my ideas out there. Yes, it's a service, but it's also very personally, very selfishly, to really complete a cycle on my maternal line, of like — even in the acknowledgments of book I say, "we can all rest easy knowing that we have done this together. And that this desire that I felt from my grandmother, to be seen, for her words to be seen, and I think a legitimacy, right, a credibility she really desires, I also desire. There's a completion there that really sets my soul at ease, and I'm hoping my mom, as well. We'll see.

[0:59:35]

Amber: In your episode, when you say the line, something along the line of, you know, “she never published her book,” I burst out crying. And so now that I'm hearing about the electroshock therapy, too, I'm curious what you think that connection is.

And then, of course, now I'm getting the piece that her father and her husband both so, like, not kind people, and I'm also tying it into this being the 1960s when many women were being told they needed electroshock therapy, and then I'm tying that into the how here, now, 60 years later, we're still having these mental health crises, and people are still not fitting into the overall culture as we're being told to fit into it. We're just not giving them electroshock therapy. We're doing other things.

Becca: Yeah, I feel so sad. I feel so sad for her. Almost like she was not like, it was a wrong era for her vibrance. Yes, she also had three twilight births, completely out, and really fighting it, you know, where they cage the hands because the status just almost — I almost can't talk about it. It's really hard for me to feel.

Yeah, I think she was treated like an animal that needed to be caged and tamed. And, you know, the electroshock therapy came because she had just left an alcoholic, abusive man, my grandfather, and she needed help; she was devastated and needed support. And what they said was, “Go to San Francisco and get electric shock therapy.”

So she took my mom, my mom was there. And she got it, and the story in our family was like, “She's a little crazy,” you know. So think about it: her entire life being related to as unstable and like a wild animal that needed to be chained in cages. It makes me really, really, really sad. And so I have just been, she's the one I talk to in my dreams because as often is the case it skips a generation, right, that connection, and I just, I want her to know, like, that was messed up. And I'm so sorry. And I'm gonna live like, I'm gonna rewild my life as much as I can, you know, to undo that bullshit.

Yeah, it's awful. I remember I watched a twilight birth, I watched Mad Men, Betty had a twilight birth. And I was so — my mom couldn't — and I was so upset. And then I learned that my grandmother had that.

Yeah, the 1960s. Oof.

Amber: Well, there's also a very — I just rewatched madmen for the fourth time — there's also, you know, a subplot, a side character who undergoes electroshock therapy. She's a mother of two and just in this very unhappy marriage. Oh,

Becca: Oh my gosh, that's right!

Amber: Yeah.

Becca: Alexis Bledel! Alexis Bledel's character.

Amber: Yeah, Beth.

Becca: From Gilmore Girls.

[1:02:45]

Amber: Yeah, and one of the reasons that I really love that show is because it really does... there's just such an interesting, like, ennui that's developing in the American psyche during the 1960s, you know, this idea of the Pax Americana — “pax” being the Latin word for “peace.”

So basically, from the end of World War II until 9-11 — I mean, you can kind of put the dates anywhere. Some people would say it is even until now, because there hasn't been a war on American soil — we've lived in this relatively peaceful and prosperous time (obviously, different for different people) but, you know, the Boom Years: post-war, the 50s and 60s. Realism and consumerism run amok, which is also what that show is taking such a bright look at because it's about an advertising agency on Madison Avenue in the 1960s, and all these things put into place where people just wanted something new and stable and safety after the war years, and the Great Depression before that, and then the first war, which felt great for many people at the time.

But now it's leading into this sort of unraveling of American culture that we're all living through, and, you know, supply chains falling apart, and institutions completely losing the trust of the people. And I'm just... I don't know, these are just things I'm thinking about all the time and tying them into your look at disconnection and loneliness in the book.

Becca: Mm hmm. And so I think we just need to do a lot of grieving. I think our generation is the one that needs to grieve. Because I find these conversations that are ramping up really quickly about like right now supply chain is pretty, like the supply chain issues that are delayed from COVID lockdowns, and I'm talking to my publisher about like, “Thank God my books coming out in time because this holiday season, it's going to be a mess, and everyone's going to push for shopping local.” Wonderful, right?

But there's bigger issues really happening with the collapse of these systems. And I find, particularly, because I'm not a fully-resourced human, I'm never fully at capacity. I mean, I'm always at capacity and never have enough capacity. I'm a mother, you know? Like, my nervous system is always not fully nourished. To hear these very big things can often put me into a freeze state of panic. And I'm wondering, like, what are all these Gen-Z-ers on Tik Tok feeling about this? Like, how are we all functioning right now, knowing these things are happening? And everyone's coping in the ways, you know. I have family members who just won't even look at it, pretending it's not there.

So I'm just reminding myself of the ancestral practice of grief to move this, so that we can be responsive to what's coming to what's next. Because I used to just want to jump to the, “Well, what are we going to do about it?”

Amber: Mm hmm. The solution.

Becca: Yeah, I can't do that anymore. I just freeze because I'm so dang tired (*Becca laughs*). So, yeah, I just feel like we have got to wail. We have got to wail for a long time, as much as possible, to move this. Because there's a real sense of paralysis and picking up on or just, like, hyperreactivity, hypervigilance, that is not in service to what is coming.

[1:06:37]

Amber: Yeah. Speaking of motherhood, you write in the book, this is in the final section about "Connection to Self" that your body is sacred land. And when you interviewed me on your podcast, you were still pregnant, and you were really vulnerably and sweetly asking me, you know, "What's it like? What's going to happen to me? What's postpartum going to be like?"

So what has it been like? What has it been like as far as your connection with yourself and your undoubtedly, renewed and reworked, torn apart, and put back together again, in some new way relationship with the sacred land that is your body?

Becca: Whew! Do you remember I sent you a message? I was like, "You were right," and you were like, "I forget what I said. What was I right about?"*(both laugh)*. "That it's super hard."

I remember I was like, "But I gave my mother and my mother in law the first 40 days, and I have a meal train." You're like, "You're gonna do great, babe. You're gonna do great." You were so sweet and encouraging, and like, "but it's hard." I was like, "But I'm gonna make it the least hard!"

Yeah, I got walloped. I got really walloped, had a beautiful birth at home, and then didn't sleep for the next two months. And as much as my mind prepared, you know, my nervous system was really shocked. It felt like a shock. It felt like being dumped with ice water. And I couldn't find my footing; a real sense of like, I can't find my footing being washed around in like a stormy tide, like, whoa.

And when I would reach out to mamas about it, they would just say, "Yeah," which was comforting and annoying. And then the very classic texting every friend who had a baby before me and saying, "I'm so sorry, I didn't get it. I'm so just feeling deep, deep grief for the ways I didn't show up for them," and them all saying, "I know. Yeah, it's okay. Yeah, I know."

Amber: Yeah, that's really sweet of you to do that. I would love the guilt from some people. *(Amber laughs)*

Becca: I just felt like, wow, really, if anyone felt a semblance of what I'm feeling right now like, ouch.

Amber: Yeah.

Becca: So I mean, I'm thirteen, almost fourteen months postpartum now, and it's leveled quite a bit and there's no more sleep deprivation-psychosis, literally. And I'm not, I mean, I found my footing, I'll say, but I'm very aware that I am still in the, like, goo before the butterfly, whatever the metaphor is.

And it was so scary when I was told like, "It'll be some years." I was really scared because I was so attached right? So attached to my life and my ways and what I knew to be true, my body, and I fought. My labor and birth story was just similar: fighting, then surrender, fighting. Like, no, I could... And I'm fully surrendered, I'm humbled, I realize I am in a completely new lifetime. That's really how it's felt. I mean it.

I try to describe that to people like, “Oh, I've had a full-on identity crisis, and I'm in a whole new lifetime, and I'm learning the world.” I mean, I obviously can remember and have retained wisdom of my motherless or childless time. But I feel like I'm new and I'm beginning again. And it's — what an opportunity, right, to begin again?

And with my body, the sacred land of my body. Yeah, wow. Wow, just like breastfeeding and digestion, and hair loss, hair growth, exhaustion. Yeah. Oh, and then just like the cultural, Kardashian, “get your body back,” my comparison. I had to really step away from social media because Mother's Day triggered me so much because I really had the story that a lot of people just had a baby and just jump back into their lives. And jump back to

Amber: Well, Kim Kardashian didn't actually have her babies.

Becca: She had a few, but then she stopped.

Amber: I think the first and maybe the second.

Becca: Yeah, right. This bypassing of this rite of passage that is physical, too, right? It's full. It's everything. It's spiritual, it's physical, It's emotional. Yeah.

So I'm in process. It's been really interesting to launch a book and be like, “Whoa! I'm going to do all these things again, because I'm learning to belong in my body, I'm learning to remember who I am or get to know who I am now.” It's been a wild ride. And I do thank you, again, for how honest you were with Nixie in the whole process for you. I mean, it scared me, but it prepared me. So I thank you, and this is what we need to be doing, right? We need to be talking about this and not just putting a veneer over it.

[1:12:31]

Amber: That's a hard line to walk, too, between being scary and being truthful with first time, pregnant women. And Nixie just turned five, and that's big, and I can hardly remember the postpartum time, and in many ways, I still feel like I'm in it, like for sure. Most of my time, and energy is spent mothering her, and then I've got the older one as well — but of course, that's a little less intense now. And having the older one reminds me of how quickly this stage goes and how, like you're saying that people, like, it does get better.

You know, it's weird, because one of the things that has comforted me the most over years when I'm desperately searching online for like, whatever problem my child is having, or I'm having with my child, and then I'll end up in like forums, and I'll be reading other moms who were posting the same thing, and then I'll notice the date — it's like 2011, and I'm like, “Oh. Well, her kid's nine now so it's not happening for her anymore.” That's the only real comfort there is. (*Amber laughs*) I mean, you know, there can be solutions and things that can happen, and it's a comfort that's not that comforting really because you're not there yet; you're nowhere close to there yet. But it's true that it's going to change and it's going to shift, and we all we have as each other and the sharing of our stories and the reconnection to our place and our people to, I don't know, bring some sort of perspective and meaning into it.

And I loved your podcast episode. I'll link to this, too, about mothering as ancestral reverence, and that's been helpful for me, too, when I just feel so overwhelmed and sad about what used to be and what my life could have been.

Becca: Oh yeah, the grief of postpartum I was not prepared for either. Just the grief of watching my child grow, ouch. Incessant growth — ouch, ouch, ouch. Dang, I'm like, this is why people have more kids. They just want to hold a baby again. *(Becca laughs)*

Yeah, that interview with Meghan McGuire, The Forest Whisperer on Instagram, she just had her third, and she was such a like, middle-of-the-night-message angel for me. And she told me two things like one, like when you're — I think she also had a post about this — like, “when I am breastfeeding my child, I am the World Tree.” Just like bringing this in, the calling in of the ancestors, and really seeing that like this is a sacred practice to be mothering really helped me in the moments where I went into like, “This sucks, I don't have my body. It's constant,” you know. And she's like, “Oh, I am the World Tree, feeding a descendant. Wow.”

The other thing is, when I was really really struggling with sleep deprivation, we had a rough road there, talking about energy, calling in energy from other things than like caffeine and sleep, which sleep I couldn't get; was just not on the table. And caffeine wasn't really effective and didn't make me feel good and would impact my child. And talking about, like, calling in energy from like the water cascading over me in the shower, calling in energy from like the roots of the soil beneath me coming through the floorboards and into my body. Like you can call in energy from other forms to get you through this. It's not just you, alone, in the dark, which is how it felt and how it feels. And that was helpful.

There were some nights I was cynical, and I was like, “Just shut up,” *(Becca laughs)* but there were days I sat in the shower and was like, “I call the energy of the waters into my body, please help me get through this day!”

Amber: That's lovely. I need to use that because I mean, at 13 months, 14 months, you said you're kind of through it. But Nixie's still not a great sleeper. I'm still struggling with sleep deprivation. Although, this morning she slept until 7:45, which never happens, and I had an hour by myself. Also my husband is out of town for the first time since she was born without us. So I just got to be alone in the house with my tea and your book, getting into the nooks and crannies. It was amazing! But so I'm gonna, I'm going to use that. Thank you.

Amber: And for anyone who is like, how did Becca fucking write and publish a book while she was pregnant and had a little one?” you really go into the whole thing in that podcast episode that I referenced earlier, which was released early October 2021, if someone wants to go back and listen, and I'll put it in the show notes, too.

Becca: Yeah, it was hard. *(Becca laughs)* It was really hard. I would not recommend it.

Amber: Yeah. I think I started this podcast, right, with just one. Yeah. Because I've also found with both of my kids, there's something, and it might be, really, it might be breastfeeding and constant nipple stimulation. I've heard other women say that, where, even though I'm exhausted and dying and unraveling in every way and grieving everything, there's this, like, creative surge that I've

experienced when both of my girls were little that kind of gave me this weird, almost otherworldly energy to start new projects. And like I've already lost that. This podcast, I'm doing much less often than I was back then, even though I, like, had much less time back then it seems like. I don't know how to, like, gauge your track energy when it comes to motherhood.

Becca: It's yeah, it's definitely a departure from like, I don't know, I was such a cycle tracker, pre-baby, where it was like two weeks out of the month. I'm going strong. And then the next two weeks, I'm doing nothing. Like, we'll see how today goes. Yeah, not making any promises.

[1:18:48]

Amber: Okay, I'm not entirely sure when this podcast will release but very near the release date of your book, which is November 16?

Becca: Yes!

Amber: Okay. And if I do end up releasing it before, you can pre-order, and that helps you make more sales when it comes out and tells the publishing company to print more copies of the book.

Becca: Yeah, pre=orders are almost more important than regular orders. I have learned. Yes.

Amber: Yeah. Any other message to people who are definitely going to be buying the book?

Becca: Well, yeah, people ask me where they can, where to buy it: anywhere. Especially, if this comes out after the 16th anywhere, if it comes out before the 16th Amazon; that is just the deal, even the small independent booksellers look to Amazon. But really, wherever your values are, I would appreciate it, and you can go to rootandritualbook.com for extras and things like that.

Amber: And check out the Belonging podcast if you love what Becca had to share here. And you will be on lots of other podcasts right now, too, because you're promoting this book. So I'm looking forward to it. This was such a great conversation and so beautiful that I would love to keep circling back to these same topics.

Becca: Yeah. Thank you for having me, Amber.

Amber: Thank you! Thank you so much for being here, Becca.

(Exit Music: acoustic guitar folk song "Wild Eyes" by Mariee Sioux - Open Sans, Normal, Italicized - Size 10)

[Closing]

[1:20:14]

Amber: Thank you for taking these Medicine Stories in. I hope they inspire you to keep walking the mythic path of your own unfolding self. I love sharing information and will always put any relevant links in the show notes. You can find past episodes, my blog, handmade herbal medicines, and a lot more at [MythicMedicine.love](https://www.mythicmedicine.com). We've got reishi, lion's mane, elderberry, mugwort, yarrow, redwood, body oils, an amazing sleep medicine, heart medicine, earth essences, so much more. More than I can list there. [MythicMedicine.love](https://www.mythicmedicine.com).

While you're there, check out my quiz "[Which Healing Herb is your Spirit Medicine?](#)" It's fun and lighthearted, but the results are really in-depth and designed to bring you into closer alignment with both the medicine you are in need of and the medicine that you already carry that you can bring to others.

If you love this show, please consider supporting my work at [patreon.com/medicinstories](https://www.patreon.com/medicinstories). It is so worth your while. There are dozens and dozens of killer rewards there, and I've been told by many folks that it's the best Patreon out there. We've got e-books, downloadable PDFs, bonus interviews, guided meditations, giveaways, resource guides, links to online learning, and behind-the-scenes stuff and just so much more. The best of it is available at the two-dollar a month level. Thank you.

And please subscribe, in whatever app you use, just click that little subscribe button and review on iTunes. It's so helpful, and if you do that you just may be featured in a listener spotlight in the future.

The music that opens and closes the show is Mariee Sioux. It's from her beautiful song "Wild Eyes." Thank you, Mariee.

And thanks to you all. I look forward to next time!