

Audio Title: Dra Rocio
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Transcript

Rebekah Borucki: Hey, friend! I heard you were looking for our spot and I'm here to help you.

So, you're going to go past the corner bodega and down the block from the fresh cuts barbershop, and there you'll find a brick row house at the intersection of Literature Place and Social Justice Blvd. That's where you will find the stoop.

Our host Amanda Lytle will be there to welcome you to the conversation. *The Book Stoop* is the place for the hottest takes on book culture, nerd culture, current events, with best-selling authors, change-makers, and risk-takers, our favorite kinds of people.

I'm Rebekah Borucki, President of Row House Publishing, and this is season two of our podcast. Thank you for listening.

Now, I'm going to let you get to Amanda.

Amanda Lytle: Thanks Bex. Hey friend. Let me be the second to welcome you to our spot, *The Book Stoop*. I feel incredibly honored to be the host of this podcast and I'm so grateful to have you here.

Today on *The Book Stoop* I'm speaking with Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza. Dra. Rocío is a Xicana/Mexicana indigenous woman. She is a Seer, initiated medicine woman in the Q'ero Inca lineage and is a Counseling Psychology PhD. She is also an unschooling mama to a 5-year-old who holds supernatural gifts.

Dra. Rocío comes from a long line of healers on both her maternal and paternal lineages and was born with psychic channeling and mediumship gifts. Dra. Rocío's work is at the intersections of decolonizing spirituality and wellness. Her work is deeply rooted in indigenous wisdom, medicine and world view and her work has had global impact to evolve the collective consciousness and understanding the need to decolonize our minds, to reclaim our spiritual sovereignty and to restore balance in our world.

In this beautiful conversation, we hear about Dra. Rocío's call to heal and do the decolonial work in the intersections of wellness and spirituality. Rocío shares with us the work that she's doing now as a medicine woman with individuals and the collective to restore harmony and balance in our world.

She talks about the wisdom in medicine that is in the DNA of women and the matriarchs as well as the importance of existing and reciprocity with Mother Nature.

Before we jump in today, I want to invite you to share *The Book Stoop* with your community. If you're loving this episode, grab a screenshot and tag us on Instagram, @rowhousepub. Every share, five-star rating and written review helps us find more listeners and climb the charts. So we're super grateful for your help.

We start our chats on *The Book Stoop* with a rather fitting question, "So what are you reading these days?"

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Thank you for asking. I actually read several books at a time but what I'm really drawn to in this moment is *Zen and the Art of Saving the Planet* by Thich Nhat Hanh. He's one of my spiritual teachers at a distance and I think he really speaks to spirituality in a way that must be engaged, that is activist especially in this time. We are all called to do work that is bringing together collective liberation, or we won't survive.

Amanda Lytle: Oh my gosh. Do I ever feel that, and also just this idea of the collective healing like you had mentioned, about how sometimes the biggest work you can do is healing yourself because that just ripples out so much.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes, absolutely and I think that so many people – you know, when we do anti-oppressive work, they sort of begin to look at things critically, which is great. But almost too critically where they reject maybe the things that are spiritually important and I really love the work of Thich Nhat Hanh because he really encourages this balance of self and collective and that it absolutely needs to begin with us first, the inner work and that it shouldn't stop there, that of course it needs to ripple out – you know, relate to action that promotes collective liberation.

Amanda Lytle: You just said something that has me so intrigued. If you could elaborate a little bit more on the rejecting of spirituality because that connection with, you know, the New Age or the nuance and rejecting spirituality, I would love to hear your perspectives on that.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes, thank you. So my work I describe as being at the intersections of decolonizing wellness and spirituality. I often say that I feel too decolonial for the spiritual world and too spiritual for the decolonial world and what I've really noticed is that when people hear the word "decolonization," they understand what colonization means in the sense of it was a taking of lands, the violent taking of lands, the violent enslavement, of people's genocide of indigenous people.

So they get that. But less so people get that it's actually also the way that we've been indoctrinated like our mind, our colonized minds and how we've been intentionally disconnected from the land and also intentionally disconnected from spirit, from our bodies and that for me is all part of the colonial project and in terms of the land and spirit, the land really helps us ground. The land really is our connection with spirit.

As indigenous people, we know that spirit is everywhere. But through colonization, we have been sort of uber focused on just our mind and our minds are beautiful and our intelligence is

important. But through the colonial project, we've been taught to exclusively focus on our mind and to deny spirituality and I feel like that is intentional because connection to the land, connection to spirit, to our bodies, these are the signals that let us know something is off.

This feels wrong, right? Like this is very popular in the world or this is the way things are done but it feels off and so all of that disconnection is intentional for me, and it has also been intentional to just focus on the mind because they control the narrative. They control the information they give us.

Amanda Lytle: This is incredible. I just wrote down the mind plus logic but also just a disconnection from the intuition because that connection with the world around us, with the energetics, with Mother Nature, that that is ultimately what helps cultivate your connection with your intuition and with that inner knowing. You're right that there is such a power externally by I guess making the disconnection happen and continuing the divide between you and that connection to Mother Earth and your own intuition. That disconnect is easier to control people, to structure systems, like all of the things.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes.

Amanda Lytle: So, yeah, I feel that.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes, absolutely. People that are disembodied, people that do not have a connection to spirit, like a direct connection to spirit are easier to control, are easier to manipulate.

Amanda Lytle: That's right. Ooh, OK. I would love to hear your perspectives on the importance of spiritual grounding when it comes to your own personal practices.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes. I feel like this is especially important for people that – and I think this is your community, people that are doing anti-oppressive work, people that truly understand that the way that things are right now need to change. So often what happens in doing that work is because we live in the Western colonial world, we don't do that in balance, and I share all of this in deep compassion.

My work is deeply rooted in indigenous wisdom, indigenous medicine. I am a medicine woman in Q'ero Inca lineage. I honor here my teachers Don Alejandro Apaza and *Marie Lucien [0:08:43] [Phonetic]*. I have an ongoing apprenticeship with them. For me my work is deeply rooted in indigenous wisdom that focuses on harmony and balance and in the Western colonial world, we are so unbalanced, and this even extends to the way we do anti-oppressive work.

It extends to the way we do decolonial work that we tend to exclusively focus on the dismantling, on decolonizing, on anti-oppression and I also say – want to share here that I did it wrong for a very long time. I did it unbalanced for a very long time. I am a former professor. I was a tenured psychology professor for 10 years and my focus was anti-oppressive work and for

a long time I was not spiritually grounded and there are so many layers, but I ended up having a health collapse.

I became disabled and living in chronic pain and part of that is because I was – I abused my body to get a PhD. Academia I say is colonial AF and so such a hostile, toxic environment, especially for women of color but also because I was doing the work, anti-oppressive work in an unbalanced way. I did not have spirituality like that it needs to go hand in hand.

Every day I was going into the classroom. I felt like I was going in to war and I know that many people doing decolonial work, that's how they feel. Like I am constantly in war. I am constantly ready to fight this system and while we need that passion, while we need that fire and we need to cultivate it, we also need to be able to learn to be strategic with it.

So what I learned was that I needed to be very discerning with my energy and so this is the invitation for folks to – when you do this work, for it to be sustainable, for it to really have an impact on yourself and others in a way that promotes harmony and balance, that we need to be very discerning with our energy.

So grounding with Mother Earth's energy, really grounding in creator, right? Like a spirit that is all, right? We need to be very rooted in that to not be taken with the destructive energy.

Amanda Lytle: Oh, OK. I have so many things that are coming up for me right now as you're speaking about this because I'm reading a book right now. It's called "Grandmothers Counsel the World" and it's about 13 indigenous grandmothers from around the world as a counsel, right?

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes.

Amanda Lytle: Yes, and so it's so beautiful. But it's so incredible how many of these grandmothers within their story are articulating their values with harmony and balance but how many have had a health collapse because they either didn't trust or were wavering in their connection with their spirituality, with their gifts, with their energetics, with Mother Earth.

I could also just so hear what you were saying about action and about how when things are so action-driven and you're not able to bring your most holistically healthy self into the work that you're doing, you're out of sync. You're out of harmony and out of balance, right? So yeah, oh my gosh, I'm loving this, Rocío. Yeah, keep going.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes. I love that you called in the energy of the grandmothers because this is exactly it. Because we've been indoctrinated in a colonial, patriarchal paradigm, we often engage and especially I say this to the women in femmes of color listening.

We engage in – not service. We engage in what I call colonial servitude. So doing the work at the exclusion of ourselves, at harm to self, right? Like sacrificing for the generation, sacrificing for the greater collective and for me this is also something that I feel was intentional, something that even started before colonization, with patriarchy, to really force women into roles of

servitude because I believe – and this is what is also rooted in the Q'ero Inca lineage. That the new earth, the better world, whatever you want to call it is going to be led by the feminine, the divine feminine.

Many indigenous prophecies speak to that it is the women, the indigenous women that are going to bring the new earth forward because there are visions that we can tap into. There is wisdom and medicine in our DNA.

So the grandmothers, the matriarchs, we deeply know our sacred responsibility to the generations before us and the generations to come and for me, this is why wellness is also important. Spirituality is a deep connection to self and the higher presence, the higher spirit creator and also our own wellness because you're absolutely right.

When we began to do the work in an unbalanced way or I'm always fighting or I'm always serving, I get sick and that my energy is unbalanced. I'm not giving my most potent medicine and I feel called to share that again for anyone here that is listening. That when we do not engage in our own wellness, we are not giving our most potent medicine. Our wisdom is diluted.

Like we end up recreating oppressive cycles, right? Like I see this in anti-oppressive work where people – our anger is righteous and valid and also I see a lot of people's anger bleeding out to others. Like a lot of shaming in the work, a lot of judgment.

All of that is energy that in the Q'ero Inca lineage is called hoocha. It's this heavy, dense energy, almost even destructive energy and from a spiritual perspective, this is why I feel it's so important to be spiritually grounded because when you enter doing decolonial work, what you're really facing is the work of violence.

Amanda Lytle: Hey friend. We are coming straight back to *The Book Stoop* after a quick break.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: You are also – and maybe this may sound a little bit out there, but I share it as a medicine woman. There are evil spirits that exist and so when we are doing anti-oppressive decolonial work, we are also opening ourselves up to those evil spirits. So we need to be spiritually-protected well in our body so that we can – we don't sort of give way to those spirits.

Like for me the evil spirit shapeshifts and it can kind of take over us and then we do start to get angry at all the people around us. We do start to shame all the people around us. You're not doing decolonial work. So – and judging other people and that destroys communities. That destroys relationships. That begins to destroy you as well. You start to get sick. You start to even feel angry all the time, annoyed all the time, right? That for me is the colonial energy, the evil spirits of the colonial paradigm, taking over our bodies, our relationships, our communities.

Amanda Lytle: That's so true too. You mentioned DNA just as like a sacred responsibility within women, within the grandmothers, that it's within our DNA to provide, to love, to heal, to grow and provide wisdom.

So what I'm thinking though is that directly related at a cellular level is that deep structure of like you've said with colonialism, with capitalism, with these structures that are all about the logic, the doing, the working, that really heavy energy, the anger, the frustration, right? The rigidity that is there. So I'm wondering about your own personal practices when it comes to staying grounded. What helps nourish you best?

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes. So I give offerings to Mother Earth. So I think this is an important – I said I invite people in to giving offerings, bringing for example flowers to the earth. If you do benefit from “nature,” Mother Earth, and you feel calm when you are out in nature, if you ground, if you do earth thing and that is helpful for you as it is for me.

I want to invite people to also bring offerings to Mother Earth because then we are not just extracting from her. We are existing in reciprocity with her and that is right relationship with our Mother Earth, that this is deeply rooted in indigenous wisdom and medicine.

Also when you give, anytime you give in sacred reciprocity with this intention of love and reverence, it gives to you spiritually as well. It fills our heart. It sort of imbues our energy with more peace, right? Like we almost get back tenfold.

So for me, that is a practice that always brings me back spending time on the land, drumming on the land. Also playing with my child is something that really grounds me because I think as adults, we do – are in our minds a lot and so playing with my child, really having that spirit of hope and possibility with them, being so in your body that you don't intellectualize things. So I would say those are my most favorite and my go-to practices.

Amanda Lytle: That's so beautiful. I also think that playing with children, it does spark that extra curiosity. It sparks the fun, the playfulness that I think – like we've mentioned about the structures and the colonialism that tries to remove us from that natural state in our own humanity. It just pulls that from us. So to explore that I think is so healing.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes, and even as you're saying that. What I'm really receiving in this moment and I'm hearing maybe people who may listen to this podcast interview like thinking of the New Age. Like this all sounds very New Agey talking about spirituality. But I really want to invite that – maybe even when I'm speaking of Mother Earth and the land, when I'm speaking of harmony and balance. I invite you into what is it that you're feeling in your body.

Are you feeling an invitation to slow down? Are you feeling an invitation to maybe be more gentle? And to really lean into that, that yes, we need the anger and the fire and the fight. But that we can't always live in that because when we live in that, it takes up all the energy that we have to maybe create, to imagine a better world, to dream in a better world.

So this is why balance in our energies is important. That almost maybe even like permission here to soften, permission here to love, that we can face the reality of the world that we are living in

and also lean into love and lean into hope and lean into possibility because it is those energies that are going to allow us to create and to join together, to be in unity, right?

For the people that are maybe listening and being critical and this sounds New Age or what about this and what about that, this is why my work is decolonial and spiritual. I am not negating the realities of the world.

We do – white folks in particular have a bigger responsibility to divest from the colonial capitalist patriarchy, to divest from whiteness, to stop hoarding wealth, right? Like all of that is true. Black indigenous people of color as well because they sometimes collude with this oppressive paradigm.

So all of that is real and those are the actions, and we cannot bypass those realities. Also we do need to lean in to love and hope and possibility. That is the harmony and balance that indigenous elders, indigenous nations have been speaking to for thousands of years and that is how we will be in unity. That is how wisdom will come, medicine will come. That is how also our communities will be able to survive.

Amanda Lytle: It's interesting that you mentioned almost like an invitation or even just hearing something and maybe having that critical feedback come through of just being like, "Ah, I don't know about this. It seems kind of New Agey," as you had mentioned. For me that was an invitation that came years ago when I mentioned something and someone else just said, "That's on you. Get curious about why you're feeling the way that you are."

There are so many times that our own reactions or responses, that internal experience is information and if you get curious about it, it's so interesting to keep diving into and asking questions as to why you feel a certain way and it will always almost – almost always come back to a really deep-rooted experience from a structure, an oppressive structure.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes, absolutely, yes.

Amanda Lytle: Yeah. So keep digging until you're understanding and really the reality is, is no one else knows your internal experience. It's really personal.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yeah, yes, personal and collective. As you're speaking of – I'm hearing like the reason why so many people reject spirituality and I want to say too mostly black indigenous people of color is because we have been indoctrinated by the colonial patriarchy to reject it.

Like this is who we are. We know that spirit is in all, but we have been indoctrinated to disconnect from it and then came New Age spirituality which for me I feel is like this is two times colonized from the colonial patriarchal paradigm and now colonized by New Age spirituality that has appropriated our indigenous practices and rather than us seeing it as like this is my ancestral medicine, black indigenous people of color reject it as New Age.

For me I see that as part of their project so that we do reject it. It's a distraction so that we don't connect to our ancestral roots because that is where we are in our power. We discover our spiritual sovereignty, right?

That is where no matter what you tell me, no matter what this world is having us believe, I know it in my gut. I also know it in my ancestral roots that this is not the truth. Even when you try to make me feel afraid, I know this in my bones that it's not the truth.

So this is also an invitation for black, indigenous people of color that all of what you think as New Age spirituality is ours, is our medicine, is our wisdom and sort of a call back home for you to begin to reach out and reclaim it.

Amanda Lytle: I am going to leave it there because that is such a beautiful soul hug of a mic drop, just as an invitation to reclaim that. When you mentioned power, that just resonates so deeply as an invitation to own it and to not reject it but to understand it and explore it. Get curious about it.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes.

Amanda Lytle: I love this. I feel so invigorated. I have one more question for you. If you had a shoutout, if you had the opportunity to give a shoutout to an account, a person, an organization, a disruptor, an activist, or a change agent, where would you point us?

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: I have two people that are coming to mind and that is the first is Courtney Napier, "courtney.has.words" on Instagram. I call her a liberatory visionary and does liberation work but also explore – is beginning to explore the spirit piece and why unity is important amongst humans. So I really want to highlight and illuminate her.

The second is the Return to the Heart Foundation that supports indigenous women that are already doing the work. So they support indigenous women in all facets of the work and really highlighting them and the work that they're doing in their community. So really supporting their foundation and wanting to bring to light their foundation for the ways that they are encouraging the women in our communities.

Amanda Lytle: These are the kinds of conversations I could have all day, honestly. There's such a – I'm so deeply aware of the color of my skin, of my own lived experience but there is something so deep within me that is so committed to my own personal healing because I see how it just reverberates everywhere around me.

Yeah. I just so deeply admire the work that you're doing and the commitment to that work because I recognize that it's not easy work to do. I know that that deep calling, it takes courage to receive. What I'm witnessing now is that it takes so much courage to receive and step into and to come home to yourself and to come back to your truth, your voice, your medicine, and I see that in you and me just – I admire it so deeply.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Thank you Amanda. I receive that. Thank you, thank you. I feel that and I receive that and like as you're speaking of, I mentioned black indigenous women of color, but this is also for the white-bodied folks to return to their ancestral roots. That's the work that I do with white folks because you all have been taught like that you don't have any and what I teach is to connect to your precolonial ancestors as I believe we are all people of the earth and there was a time that your people remember that too. There was a time that your people were in right relationship with the earth and with all nations and so that's an invitation for white folks too.

Amanda Lytle: And I so deeply receive that. That is the journey that I'm on right now and I'm deeply committed to it. So ...

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: I appreciate you. I feel your spirit and I feel your deep care for the work, and I absolutely believe we need all of us. We need white people too. We need them in right relationship, but we need them too and they need to heal from the colonial paradigm too. They need to clear those colonial imprints too to be able to show up as accomplices in the work. We won't be able to create a new earth if we do not have all of us and also in right relationship. So, yeah, that is why I work with white folks because my elder taught me that we needed all of us and, you know ...

Amanda Lytle: That's the unity, the unity and community I think that is so necessary for the collective healing.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Yes, absolutely. Yes.

Amanda Lytle: Thank you so much for your time today. This has been absolutely beautiful and thank you for your messages and your invitations for the listeners.

Dra. Rocío Rosales Meza: Thank you for having me. It has been such an honor and thank you for receiving.

Amanda Lytle: Thank you so much for being with us. Please be sure to follow us on your podcast app and leave a rating where you're able. Written reviews help us reach more listeners too. Be sure to check out the show notes for all the links and share *The Book Stoop* with your community. Talk soon.

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Transcript by Prexie Magallanes as [Trans-Expert](#) at Fiverr.com