

Audio Title: Julianna Rose 420 Tarot and the Toolbox for Magic Making, Creativity and Spirituality

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Transcript

Rebekah Borucki: Hello, neighbor! Welcome to our third season of *The Book Stoop*.

And if you are new here, let me help you get to where you're going.

So, you're gonna go past the corner of 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 our 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 people.

And I'm Rebekah Borucki, President of Row House Publishing. Now, come on in and meet 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 Julianna Rose. Julianna Rose is an illustrator and magic tool maker. They have studied world building, time traveling, and tarot at the Cecilia Weston Spiritual Academy. They have created artwork for children's books, ad agencies, grocery stores, and apparel.

Julianna enjoys smoking weed and snacking, gardening, pulling tarot cards, having deep conversations, hiking, swimming, and magic making. They are mixed race, Korean and white, and currently live in the desert with their partner and dog, Shimmy.

In the conversation today, Julianna tells us all about their relationship to cannabis and how it started and has evolved. We hear about the perspective shifts on plants as medicine and how it has become part of a tool kit for creativity.

Julianna shares their excitement about the 420 Tarot deck and how they've worked through creative blocks, weaving through spirituality and creativity. They offer a caveat for white people and people of color with white privilege when using the deck, and personal suggestions for starting a meditative ritual and relationship with cannabis.

Julianna and I are not experts and content discussed in this podcast should not be taken as professional or medical advice.

Before we jump in, I want to invite you to share *The Book Stoop* with your community. If you are loving this episode, grab a screenshot and tag us on Instagram @rowhousepub. Every share, 5-star rating, and written review helps us find more listeners and climb the charts. So we are 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?

Julianna Rose: I have been listening to – actually, I just finished listening to *This Poisoned Heart* series by, I wrote it down, Kalynn Bayron, I believe. It's so – oh, YA, I've been super into YA lately and this teenager. She has like magic powers where plants respond to her and will grow, and she is immune to poisonous plants and stuff so she can make poisonous stuff. Highly recommended. Very good.

Amanda Lytle: OK. Isn't it neat how you can just completely escape into another realm, another world when you're reading something like that because it's so far away from reality? But what I did pick what you've just said is about plants and ultimately these plants have the ability to establish relationships because I know that you have a pretty special relationship to a specific plant and I'd love to dive into this today, even with cannabis. So let's just jump in right there because I know that there's a lot of excitement built up with your 420 Tarot deck.

Julianna Rose: Thank you. First off, that was an excellent segue. Just to give you some props there. Let me see. Cannabis, yeah. What am I going to say about this?

Amanda Lytle: Well, maybe just start with how cannabis and you started your relationship.

Julianna Rose: I started young. I was 14 when I first started smoking weed but I would have to say I probably wasn't consciously using or working with cannabis until I was probably like early 30s where I started to realize also in part because I was therapy at that time that cannabis really helped me when I had depressive episodes because I do have depression. And it was the only thing as I was circling the drain where depression can take you. Sometimes it was the only thing that was like keeping my head above water.

So from that point, my relationship with cannabis shifted from something that's like, "Let's go get high, let's go get fucked up," to like, this is a tool, a magic tool for me creating a better life honestly for myself. So then when I started with tarot because cannabis had already been integrated really into my everyday life consciously, it was just a natural pairing from the start.

Amanda Lytle: So question as well with just the paradigm shift, do you remember what it was or what had happened when you were able to identify cannabis as a tool? Did something really shift for you?

Julianna Rose: I think it was like I would be having these arguments with my partner and they would happen and then I would just find my mind would do that swirl and with the same terrible stories rolling around in my head, rolling around in my head, and I started to realize like, oh, and then if I smoke some weed or an edible kicks in, that story stops and just giving yourself that option, that break from these thoughts that will terrorize you really, it was really eye-opening to me.

Amanda Lytle: I'm also curious about your relationship with tarot because ultimately, the next step I want to go into right now with you is the merge, the relationship between 420 and tarot and how that has come into your own realm. But maybe just back up and tell me about tarot in your life.

Julianna Rose: Yeah. Tarot was something also I didn't come to until I had a shitty job, and I was an asshole and I got fired from it. I would have fired me. And when I started working for myself, I realized because I had been on all these toxic work environments, I had no idea how to trust myself. I was completely turned around. I didn't know what I wanted. I didn't know how to get anything.

And luckily because I was in therapy at the time, I realized this is an issue and I need to figure out how to get – center myself again. Find myself again. And I wish I could remember what led to what but one day, I just bought a tarot deck off of Etsy and started asking – smoking weed, asking the cards questions, and then Googling the answers and looking at Bidy Tarot, teaching myself and starting to realize stuff that I thought, my opinions, some actually made some sense. It was like the cards were reflecting back to me that I did have a clue really.

Amanda Lytle: Is that self-inquiry? I love that you called it a tool as well because that tool for self-inquiry and intuition as well. It's kind of like using them as a prompt or as a tool to really dig a little bit deeper and get curious. And I kind definitely understand how the cannabis would help you with the self-inquiry and exploration of that.

OK. So now, with your own creative process, tell me about 420 Tarot, your own creation here?

Julianna Rose: Oh, man! I'm excited about it. I'm excited about it. It was created just for myself, just really for me to see can I do this? Can I take on a project like this? I had been so creatively blocked for so many years and that kind of creative blockage is painful, and then also being in these toxic work environments that creatively traumatize me to be honest.

Taking on this project of 420 Tarot where I didn't have any sort of timeline for myself, no expectations except for I was going to enjoy myself when I sat down to draw the cards and that was it. That was – and I was going to finish. It didn't matter when. But those were my two expectations and I stuck to it. I had a great time smoking weed, listening to stories, listening to podcasts, and drawing each one of these cards.

Amanda Lytle: I love how pre-recording you had mentioned that there is this trifecta between cannabis, spirituality, and creativity. And I can now hear that that's really how this process had unfolded for you.

So can I just open-endedly just throw out the idea of the linkage between cannabis, spirituality, and creativity for you to just share some perspectives?

Julianna Rose: Yeah. For me, spirituality and creativity feel like the same thing. And I think that they are for a lot of people, maybe everyone, honestly. But that cannabis was really what helped me tie the two together and realized like I get into these spaces the same way. Actually, and I come out of those spaces the same way. And these spaces are most, I don't know if effective is the right word, but I benefit the most when I go into these spaces having a good time.

Amanda Lytle: So what helps aside from cannabis and just feeling super regulated with your nervous system? What else ensures a good time?

Julianna Rose: Well, for those who are like maybe new to combining cannabis and spirituality or something or creativity, I do always recommend like doing something that you really like that's not in any of those spaces, maybe it's like listening to music or go take a walk while you imbibe with cannabis, and it's like you bring that energy, that magic that has stewed and brewed in you, to your spiritual practice, to your creative practice, and you're going to see it difference.

Amanda Lytle: Understanding that we are in no way, shape, or form promoting this usage or that we have any sort of medical background for advice, I'd love for you to share your own opinion or your own perspectives on someone who is really interested in exploring and combining cannabis with spirituality and creativity and how a really gentle practice could form or start.

Julianna Rose: First, I would say like have some sort of relationship with cannabis. Explore what that is. Do you like edibles? Do you like to vape? What stains are not making you feel good? Doing a little bit of journaling around that. I'm in a book club actually run by Tammy Pettigrew. She is The Cannabis Cutie on Instagram. It's a good book club. But she always recommends journaling your own cannabis experiences because we are all different. We literally are all different. So at least be dabbling there.

And then when you are ready to bring that into your spiritual or creative practices, I would experiment. I would really find out what method of consumption, which blends. You mix stuff up. I would take an edible. I hit my vape. I do – and then I drink Cann drink, whatever those things are and figure out what knobs they turn up or turn down in you.

Like my blend for going to the tarot card is different than when I'm like going on a meditative journey.

Amanda Lytle: OK. That's really interesting. Something sparked this question in me to wonder what some of your biggest breakthroughs have been like the holy shit moments where you're just like, "Oh my gosh! This is super transformative."

Julianna Rose: I don't know if I can name like a moment but if I just look back at how different my life is today from when I – the day I started drawing 420 Tarot, it is completely different. This deck and the magic in it has transformed my life socially, way cooler friends, creatively freed me up in a way that I didn't expect especially having been blocked for so long. Oh my God! What a fucking relief that I know how to take care of my creativity now. Yeah.

Actually, can I say something about the magic of the deck?

Amanda Lytle: Yes, please.

Julianna Rose: So I just want to make it clear in case I don't – clear expectations help everybody. The magic of the deck is accessible to everyone but there is a caveat for white people and people of color with white privilege like myself included where because this idea of creating your dream life, creating a life where you can do – you're spending your time doing what you want, that's what 420 Tarot is about.

But it's also like wrapped up in a lot of privilege to be able to have that kind of life. And so, the caveat for white people and people with white privilege is you must be doing something daily to improve the lives and fight for the joy and liberation of black and brown people. If you are not doing that and you want to pick this deck and full cards, you're going to be cursed. The magic is protected by a curse. It's real. It just – I need to make the warning clear.

Amanda Lytle: I cannot stop smiling. Oh, and I have so much gratitude and appreciation for you with that. And now, I have another question because recognizing that even in your share there, being bi-racial with Korean and white, I'm really curious about how as you've named that in the process of enjoying this 420 deck by using the magic within the deck, by calling on the magic from the deck, as a give back., as a way to extend your privilege, to use your privilege to uplift those around you, the black and brown community, in what ways do you do this?

Julianna Rose: Number one, I try to be an extra good friend to my black and brown friends. Donate money. There are a lot of good causes to donate money to, of course. I think being a cannabis consumer, you need to be supporting black and brown cannabis dispensaries, own dispensaries, as well as products even if it's out of your way, even if it's not the most convenient. That needs to be happening.

Yeah. If you are a white and have or have white privilege and you are not doing that actively in cannabis, like for sure you're cursed. Just go. And just thinking about how to make – making everyone's dream life equitable, within rich of everyone, supporting black and blown artists, even following them on Instagram, sharing their work, purchasing their work, crediting their work, providing opportunities for people to have time to create.

Yeah, now I'm like just – now, I'm just lecturing what other people should do.

Amanda Lytle: Right. But I really like that one.

Julianna Rose: Yeah. A really great organization's project, Edison in the Bay Area, they provide stipends for black and black trans and queer therapists in the Bay Area, giving them time to rest like given them money. Give them money.

Amanda Lytle: Yes.

Julianna Rose: People who need the rest the most getting the rest. Another thing, white people and people with white privilege is to hassle your friends who are also white and have white privilege. People will not do anything sometimes unless someone is constantly riding their ass.

And so, if you don't want to be cursed by the deck, ride your friends, your white friends, friends with white privilege. If you are white, do not hassle your friends of color who have privilege, white privilege. Leave them alone. Just focus on your white friends. But I feel like you're responsible for your demographic basically. Make sure that they are also supporting black and brown cannabis businesses and entrepreneurs. Make sure they are donating money. Make sure that they are doing anything, everything you do too.

Amanda Lytle: I love everything that you have just said so much. I'm just like keep going! So, so good. And yeah, ride your friends' asses. I love it. Everything that you just said is just – and especially when I start to think about the intersections with which The Book Stoop rise under from Row House, looking at intersections of social justice and wellness. There's so much that you've just shared that amplifies all of that. So thank you.

Julianna Rose: Thank you.

Amanda Lytle: And then back to the inspiration thing. There were so much that I was curious about your inspiration. Starting to look at the work that you're doing, the creative process that goes into it, the spirituality that you sit with and that you sit in exploring cannabis, what keeps you inspired and what gives you the most inspiration?

Julianna Rose: Yeah, that's interesting. I feel like in some ways, it's more about not killing your creativity fire or getting blocked rather than getting inspiration, if that makes sense. So that looks like being very conscious about what kind of content you are consuming. You're not just listening to garbage all the time or even like background noise

I think that it helps to be a little more conscious of stuff like that. Moving your body, journaling, it's like keeping those daily – doing those daily things to make sure everything is moving, right? Because then I don't know, I just feel like inspiration is fucking anywhere then. You're available for it anywhere. Of course, there are like ways I think you can sit down.

Yeah, actually, yeah, so this is what I do. Trying to live my life, keeping everything in flow, I like to smoke a lot of weed, and then I like to go on meditative journeys with the 420 Tarot fairy gnomes and they give me so many good ideas. Oh my God! Every single time. I could even close my eyes and journey with them for 3 minutes and know that something valuable is going to come out of that. So I don't know if that was helpful.

Amanda Lytle: Yeah, very helpful. Do you have like a ritual or like a meditative process that you sink into when you start exploring with cannabis?

Julianna Rose: Yes. So actually, I think this is – yeah, I'm glad we are talking about this, important for everybody to come up with something like this. When you close your eyes to go on your journeys after smoking a lot of weed, how you get into the journey and how you come out, you need to figure out what that looks like for you. So mine actually just recently shifted. But before what it looked like for me is, when I closed my eyes, I would shrink myself down to the size of a mouse and I would run over to the 420 Tarot deck. In there, I would see my – one of my 420 Tarot fairy gnomes. We would say hi, little greeting, and then they would open a trap door for me somewhere in the 420 Tarot box and I would climb through it. And that's how I would enter the journey.

And then every time when I was like finished with the journey, I would go back out the same way. Go back out through the trap door, say goodbye, thank you. Run back over to my – where I was sitting before and my mouse size body becomes full size again.

Amanda Lytle: I love the visual that even just you explaining that and sharing that, thank you, with us was – I can totally see that. Can I ask, I have an idea of where you're going with just even the shrinking in size, is that more metaphorical or is that more of like that spiritual practice of like an ego, an ego shrinking?

Julianna Rose: I mean honestly, I don't know. It's just like what I – what happens. Like thinking about it, I think it helped me maybe connect to my body actually like thinking about my body shrinking grounded me maybe a little bit. But yeah, and I think don't overthink it. Don't think like, "I need to have this represented. I need to make sure ..." close your eyes, see where you go, and maybe try going to that spot again your next time. And always come back out the way you came in.

Amanda Lytle: I love that you've also named that you don't because I think for myself, my patterning has just always kept me in such a logical brain and it's not that it's blocking necessarily the creativity because thank goodness, I have such an innate sense of curiosity where I just play with that and I feel like that really helps me navigate tough times because I sit with all of the questions, how does that feel, why does it feel that way, what would make you feel better, well, what if this happen? Yeah, so I can really, really appreciate you naming that you don't have to have an answer for everything and not everything has to be assigned for something else.

Julianna Rose: Yeah. Yeah. If it feels easy and natural for you, that's like answer enough. That shows you the way enough.

Amanda Lytle: What do you see for your own relationship with cannabis moving forward?

Julianna Rose: Oh my God! I want to make magical cannabis products. I want to have potions. I want to have pixie dust. Well, actually, it will be fairy gnome dust. Cannabis is truly such a magical potent plant and really figuring out those rituals, what kinds, all of that that brings – enhances your magical powers, I want to make that. I want to make that.

Well, I want to have someone else make it but I'm like there helping configure everything.

Amanda Lytle: OK. This has been so good and I have one more question for you, which is the typical wrap-up. But before we hit that, there's something I really need to ask you, which is to have you share one of your biggest collaboration dreams.

Julianna Rose: Oh my God! I'm so glad you ask. [Laughs] Adidas. Adidas. I have loved you since I was a small child. I love 420 Tarot and Adidas collaboration. I can see it. I've been painting it. It's in – you can see it throughout 420 Tarot, social posts. I've actually made some of the clothes. I mean you know, it's – since the beginning, the flower kind of looks like a cannabis leaf. It's baked in already. Let's have some fun with it.

Amanda Lytle: So explain or describe perhaps for anyone listening, describe the shirt that you have on now.

Julianna Rose: I would say it's like maybe lavender color and the Adidas logo on top. We got some like blues and greens and I have drawn some very healthy buds growing out of it. And then along the bottom, I have, using those buds in like some canna leaves, some flowers. I have a little pattern going on around the bottom and on the bottom of the sleeves.

Amanda Lytle: So let's just talk about big picture like biggest, best, most beautiful collaboration. Would this simply be you designing a line of clothing through Adidas that has your imagery on it or go for it?

Julianna Rose: I'm creating the patterns. I'm creating – I have – just anything I draw actually becomes like real clothes. That's what – I have all these little drawings of me wearing these beautiful tracksuits, swimsuits. That's what I really want. I want outer wear and I want swim wear.

Amanda Lytle: I love this because I know that you love swimming and you love hiking so how fun would that be?

Julianna Rose: Right. Right.

Amanda Lytle: We just spoke it out loud into this world. It's going to happen. It has got to happen.

Julianna Rose: Oh my God! I can't wait to like bring it back to this moment like you said it ...

Amanda Lytle: Well, it's recorded now. It has got to happen. Oh, Julianna, this has been so fun. OK. So my last question for you today is about a shout-out. So if you had the opportunity to give a shout-out to an account, or a person, an organization, a disruptor, an activist, or a change agent, who would it be?

Julianna Rose: Well, I did – I do have two. I did mention one before, The Cannabis Cutie, Tammy Pettigrew. I'm in her Higher Learning Book Club. I learned so much about cannabis. It's just really cool. We all smoke weed and read books and talk about books together.

And then my tarot teacher, Jade T. Perry, has founded the Cecilia Weston Spiritual Academy and that's where I've done my study, where I will continue to do my study in the future. It is a rigorous, rigorous place. And I'm just so grateful for everything that Jade and the teaching team has taught me.

Amanda Lytle: OK. I must say, this has been one of the most unique conversations I have had to date on *The Book Stoop* podcast as the host and I'm so deeply appreciative for everything that you brought forward today, for everything that you've shared. I'm excited to watch this collaboration with Adidas happen one day, and even just to see your deck, to see where this goes for you. So yeah, Julianna, thank you so much for being a guest on *The Book Stoop*.

Julianna Rose: My pleasure. Thank you.

Amanda Lytle: Thank you so much for being with us. Please be sure to check out rowhousepublishing.com/podcast for full episode transcriptions and guest image descriptions and the show notes for all the links. Talk soon.

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