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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 Juliet Diaz. Juliet is a Bruja, seer, and spiritual activist. She's an Indigenous Taino Cubana from a long line of curanderos or healers and Brujas on both sides of her parents' lineages. She believes magic lives within us all and feels passionately about inspiring others to step into their truth and waking to their remembrance. Juliet has devoted her life to helping people come back to their Divine Self and liberate themselves from the oppressor within.

In this conversation, Juliet shares the back story to her third and most recent book *The Altar Within*. Juliet tells us about her perspectives on decolonizing and dismantling the spiritual and wellness industry.

We hear about a near-death experience and her lessons in waking up. We hear about the things that were unmasked and revealed during this time and how her book was truly a gift of channeled messages.

Before we jump in, 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?”

**Juliet Diaz:** I’m reading *The Great Cosmic Mother* and *The Red Deal*. It’s an indigenous action to save our earth.

**Amanda Lytle:** What have some of your biggest takeaways been so far?

**Juliet Diaz:** *The Red Deal* so far, I am really interested in this because this is – I’m indigenous and for me protecting and saving this earth is a big deal to me. I’ve been an activist for many, many years. I am now 40. So I have to find new ways of doing my activism that just doesn’t involve going into the streets and doing conferences because it does get tiring after a while especially at my age and with all the responsibilities that I have.

So it’s a really good read. It does have a lot of ways that you can get involved. It really does inspire and kind of activates your imagination as to how you can better live your life and tune with the earth.

**Amanda Lytle:** That’s so beautiful. The actionable steps I feel like are such a great tool to provide in the spoken and written word.

**Juliet Diaz:** Yes, I agree.

**Amanda Lytle:** And then you’re talking about all of these responsibilities that you have. So I have an idea of what has been keeping you busy. But if you would like to share, I would love that.

**Juliet Diaz:** OK. So let’s see. I have a book coming out, *The Altar Within*. Extremely important book of my life. My third most important one. The whole title is a radical devotional guide to liberate the divine self. It is published by Row House, which I am super honored and excited to be a part of. This book is decolonizing and dismantling the spiritual and wellness industry and practices and anything that you really see circulating around social media for that matter.

**Amanda Lytle:** Super needed and super powerful. So for anyone listening who has never heard of how spirituality has really taken a shift and how it can be super damaging, can you share your perspectives on that?

**Juliet Diaz:** Yeah. So I am a very opinionated person. I have a lot of components. I speak up about anything and everything and I think that’s what a lot of my community appreciates, right? You have to normalize real life. You have to normalize what the spiritual community and wellness industry have been doing to marginalized communities, especially just in general black and brown indigenous people of color.

They are painting this picture of perfection alignment, painting this picture of positive vibes only, good vibes only. It's really toxic. It's really harmful. It's spiritually bypassing. It's what it is.

So when you spiritually bypass, what you're doing is you're disconnecting from your true emotions, from your true self and you're skipping on the importance of healing, right? You have to go through the emotions in order for you to face them, get to know them, find a route, and then heal through them.

**Amanda Lytle:** The disconnecting from true emotions, can I ever feel that. That's a big one. I believe wholeheartedly that the ability to feel and truly experience emotions is one of the most beautiful and genuine things about the human experience.

**Juliet Diaz:** It truly is and bigger issue at hand also is the way it's separating us from community where now even the manifestation circle of people – I love manifesting. I'm actually really great at manifesting. But I've seen a lot of toxic things. Like, you know, you have to be vibrating at a high frequency to – in order for you to manifest, in order for you to bring in your desires, in order for you to match what it is that you want, you know.

Like they say, if you want to be a millionaire, you have to embody and act like a millionaire, spend like a millionaire, which is freaking crazy to me and so much nonsense. I've known hundreds of people who have reached out to me in the past years of how they've lost so much money because of this notion or theory that this is how you have to function in life in order for you to embody the person that you want to become, when in fact it's not. It's not at all how you have to respond to what it is that you want to do in the future.

If anything, you need to be more present in who you are right now so you can acknowledge the changes you need to make in order for you to become that person in the future.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah, great point. I'm curious about your own personal practices when it comes to manifesting and maybe this is a word that someone listening hasn't heard. So can you put manifesting into your own words?

**Juliet Diaz:** Yeah. So manifesting is just a New Age way of saying spell crafting or setting intentions. You know, I've been doing spell work since I was very young. For me, manifesting comes actually really easy and it's not easy to do if you don't really connect with how it is that you work and how you function.

So I've noticed when I was younger, I could manifest easily, right? And then for a short period of time – well, not a short period of time. For a few years, I noticed that that manifesting went away and that is when I started to follow these trends and these practices where they were saying, you know, you have to vibrate higher. You have to ignore all these things going in your head that are negative and not positive vibing.

I noticed that that affected my magic and it made me really curious as to why that would be and it just comes around back to you have to create this intimate relationship with yourself and in doing so, you're creating an intimate relationship with your own intuition and magic and your power.

There is where you figure out how what you desire and what you bring into your life actually works, how it works and how it doesn't work. I do use a lot of candle magic. I'm very careful with trying to manifest vocally because as you know or as I believe, words are powerful, and they do manifest or bring that energy into your life or into your presence.

So I try to keep my manifestation practices into my candle services for myself and I do them for other people as well.

**Amanda Lytle:** I love this. This is so beautiful. When you were just talking about words, that made me think about how, yeah, words are so powerful and both negatively and positively, you know, that once spoken, I mean that you're essentially kind of welcoming or "manifesting" the good and the bad.

**Juliet Diaz:** Yeah. It's also a mindset trick, right? And it's not just that, you know, if you think something bad or you have bad emotions, people are afraid that that's what they're going to attract into their life when that is not the case.

If you do not address those negative emotions, those hard-to-face emotions, they're going to stay in you, right? So that becomes a manifestation within itself because it's inside you. You're holding on to it and you're lingering this energy through your journey. So it's never going to go away whereas if you faced your emotions and really work through them, you're taking them out of your body. So you're clearing that energy and those emotions out of your body and making more room for more of that light and love that people are wanting to feel.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yes! Yes, I feel that too and when you're talking about just that internal manifestation, just even thinking about how this disease within the body essentially can, yeah, create harm internally.

**Juliet Diaz:** It could create harm. It could create monsters. It could create sickness, everything. It really does because it is a part of who you are, right? We're not just spiritual beings. We're not just human beings. We're both together, right?

So we forget about all the – well, the multiple bodies that we have, we forget about the emotional, the mental, the physical, the spiritual. We're all of that and we're too busy trying to perfect one or the other or give light to one more than the other when they're all as important and they're all sacred because they're all a part of you.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah, that's so true. It's like honoring the duality and actually allowing things to just kind of live within.

**Juliet Diaz:** Yeah, there's a reason why there's light and darkness. There's a reason why there's day and night. There's a reason why there's good and bad. One does not function without the other. You wouldn't know one without the other. So it's not a matter of balancing it either because that would drive you crazy or alignment. It's a matter of getting to know them enough and intimately enough that it supports you. It supports your well-being, and it supports your magical practices and your spiritual practice in your journey in this life.

**Amanda Lytle:** Oh, I love this Juliet. OK. I want to know all about your book. Tell me about the back story. I know that it's your third. But I want to know primarily about *The Altar Within* as it's coming out in 2022.

**Juliet Diaz:** Yeah. So I am well-known in the magical world and communities and spiritual as well and I've written books before, *Witchery: Embrace the Witch Within* and *Plant Witchery*. So what I've noticed though, there's – especially with 2020. They've really happened in 2020 where I noticed this huge separation with the spiritual and wellness industry or – I keep calling it industry because it is what it is but on social media and on anywhere that you see communities of spiritual and wellness people.

They were really making others who are going through tough times, right? During 2020. I mean I don't know anyone who did not go through a tough time that year, but they were making it seem that we were going through tough times mentally, emotionally but – and physically as well because we weren't vibrating high. We weren't good vibes. We weren't in tune with our higher selves. I saw a lot of this rotating around social media and it really did make me sick to my stomach. I'm like I cannot believe this is what it has turned to be, where now you're telling people they're not good enough or they're not spiritual or they're not good enough healers because they're going through hardships, which is madness.

What I've realized is that with practicing this – like in *love only [0:12:26] [Phonetic]*, spiritual bypassing. People have disconnected from the real world. So now when tragedy hits, when hardships hit, they're also bypassing that. They're seeing it like, oh, it's not affecting me because I'm not believing in it and it's really toxic and harmful.

I actually had a near-death experience right at the end of 2020 in December. I died and I came back to this world, and I share my experience in the beginning of the book of what happened. I was actually meditating when this happened and through that experience, through what I was going through in my death which to me was like years and my husband just says no, it wasn't that long when I came back. It's like all these lessons that I have been learning since I was a child through my great-grandmother and my ancestors, they all woke within me.

The realization of how toxic the real world has been to not just me but to many other people, especially in the spiritual communities, it just fazed me. I just saw all of it of how toxic it was, of how I actually was a problem too because I was actually a part of it.

So when I woke up – and I call it waking up and remembering because it's what happened. I came back, a rebirth, whatever you want to call it, and I wanted to share this intense message that

I had lingering through my entire body. I mean I took off eight months from social media from the world really.

I just disconnected myself from everything and everyone, went back to sticking to nature, sticking to the basics, practicing mindfulness, practicing healing and all of the practices that I went through are teachings that I learned while I was in death, and I brought it into the book.

So in the book you have everything from decolonizing spirituality, practicing self-compassion, self-mindfulness, self-acceptance. Building a real healthy relationship with the self. Discovering self-love, discovering self-patience. There's so much in here and it ultimately leads you to self-liberation.

The power of this book is that I don't just touch on these things. I really do address the hardships of going through these things. For instance self-love, right? It's so easy to tell someone, you know, "Love yourself. Here are self-love tips."

I actually go through the boundaries you may experience and hardships to get to self-love and to how to – and steps to get there. So there's work to be done and this book is literally that work to get you from point A to point B and to help you on the rest of your journey in this earth.

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

**Amanda Lytle:** The steps to support I feel like is such a powerful tool to provide because there are so many different ways and places that we reach out to seek support and I think that doing it in a written or maybe one day audio format as well is such a safe space because you can go and come back to it.

**Juliet Diaz:** Yes.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah, and then addressing the hardships and challenges is such another thing too because a reader or a listener would feel so witnessed and so seen and left alone, which again over the last two years more than ever, we are losing connection and needing it now more than ever.

**Juliet Diaz:** We are and we're all really being called back to our home which is ourselves, right? We're feeling that callback to who are we. Like those questions. Who am I? What am I supposed to be doing? What am I actually doing here? How am I wasting or spending my time on this earth, right? Because the real fear of losing a loved one or many of us did lose loved ones in 2020 and a lot of us did fear our own lives also.

A lot of this came out, right? We had these deep within us, but we kept ignoring it and now when faced with reality and real life, these questions come back out, right? And it's just like a gentle nudge from spirit reminding you that hey, you know, there's more to life than this rat race, than this hustle, than, you know, waking up and spending every single day the same way every day

without even looking at your reflection and saying, “Hi. How are you? How are you feeling?” you know.

We ignore the most important person in our life which is ourselves. So for me, it’s; really, really sacred this book. I’m actually going to go through – I’m going through a rotation meaning I start from the beginning to end. I already did it twice and I’m going to do it again now that we’re heading into the new year. It has helped me so much.

Each and every time that I go through the entire book, just reminding me, helping me, supporting me and it’s – all it really does, it turns you, yourself into your full support system and also helping you acknowledge that you don’t have to do it alone, that you can reach out to community. You can create these little pods of people you trust so that you can get through the hardships because we have to acknowledge not all of us are privileged enough or capable to get through the day because we are suffering with different things like mental illness for instance.

**Amanda Lytle:** Oh my goodness. I could go anywhere with this conversation. This is fantastic. Thank you.

**Juliet Diaz:** It is, right?

**Amanda Lytle:** Yeah.

**Juliet Diaz:** It’s a lot packed but that’s why it’s called a devotional, right? Because you go from like the beginning of the devotional through the end. My son was like, “This is what a mini bible should look like.” I’m like just because – you know, how – not the bible itself but there’s a lot of devotionals out there that are for faith and religious purposes. Well, it’s kind of one for like spiritual and healing purposes and it really does – I mean there’s a little bit of everything in there and it really deeply touches on each subject.

**Amanda Lytle:** Uh-huh. And I also find it so fascinating that even though this is your work and you’ve written this and I’m sure that there are so many downloads in the process, but that you’re able to use your own work as a tool and as a reminder.

**Juliet Diaz:** Yes.

**Amanda Lytle:** Wow.

**Juliet Diaz:** That’s why I’m so excited about this one because this one I don’t take credit for it. I literally birthed this out of my death. Like and I don’t even know what other way to say this. This was all downloaded or imbued within me and in those months that I took off because honestly, I talk about it in the book too of how – it was like losing my mind. I came back and I’m like, “Holy crap! I just died,” you know, and here I am, and I felt empty. I felt lost. I felt like I did not want to be anything or connect to anything that I was before or what I was doing.

It was really tragic losing the old self, but it was really beautiful getting to start over or knowing that I can start over, and I can rebuild myself and I can become someone else, and a lot of people don't know that. People feel like what they're doing now, who they are now, how they're suffering or what they're going through or what they've built themselves to be, especially if you're a presence or a business. They're afraid to let go of that and reinvent themselves and the truth is you can reinvent yourself any freaking time you want.

It's your decision. It's your life. You have that power, and I took that, and I ran with it, and I reinvented myself. I decluttered my mind, my spirit, my physical life from all the things that weren't supporting me.

It wasn't easy but it was really enlightening to see how I kept adding on to my life so that I could hide what was really happening within myself.

**Amanda Lytle:** I love that you just said that because one of my questions is going to be, you know, "What was something that you uncovered or unmasked in the process?"

**Juliet Diaz:** Holy shit. Like I – oh, sorry, I don't know if I could curse but it was ugly. It was ugly what I uncovered. First I want to acknowledge that I was really – a really good person and I was really a person who really cared for everyone else. I did a lot of activism. I shared a lot with my work and my words.

But I wasn't taking care of myself. I started to hide myself in my work. I started to hide the fact that I could not trust myself. Anyone else could trust me but I could not trust myself to stick with for instance a routine or a nutritious routine for what I ate, right? Because I found out I had insulin resistance.

I couldn't trust myself enough to believe that I could save myself or protect myself and uncovering that was really disturbing that I could not say to myself, "I trust you to handle this for you. I trust you for my life." I couldn't trust myself. I was always self-sabotaging. I was always hiding my health problems from my self or ignoring them, right?

To a certain extent here and there, I would eat healthy. I would exercise. I would meditate. I would do the things, but it had to be consistent, right? Why couldn't I be consistent with myself? And when I uncovered that and I went through this journey, I just realized that I never built a relationship with myself. I didn't know who the fuck I was.

I didn't know who I was. So how do I have a relationship with myself? How do I love myself if I didn't know who I was? So that was the biggest uncovering or unveiling of my process was looking at myself or who I was, being honest and this is something that we cover in the book. It is self-honesty, which is really brutal, but it has to happen. Self-forgiveness and then moving on to creating and building an intimate, honest, trustworthy relationship with myself.

**Amanda Lytle:** Oh, this is so good! Wow! OK. Now I'm curious about your steps forward because the level of compassion that you would have to have for yourself in the process, it would



have to be huge in order to take those actionable steps forward and I'm wondering about what moving forward from – like you said it was ugly and it was super confronting. So ...

**Juliet Diaz:** Yes.

**Amanda Lytle:** ... how are you able to sit in that?

**Juliet Diaz:** So I actually start – the book starts the sixth devotional actually. Let's go to number six. Number six is self-compassion, mindfulness, and self-acceptance. That is the devotional that happens before you do all the work.

So what I also did, I do my research, right? Of course all writers have to, and I looked at how the spiritual world is and how they tell you to heal and the processes and the journeys that you have to go through because it's not all messed up, right? It's just not inclusive to everyone. It's forgetting a lot of us and the way that they do it is they want you to do the inner child work first, the shadow work first and all of this.

But you're not taught self-compassion. You're not taught self-mindfulness or self-acceptance or self-forgiveness. So I cover this before we actually go into the deeper work in the book. In the book I express to practice this at least a few weeks before you move on to the next steps or when you feel you're ready to move on because those things are vital in actually facing what's inside you and healing and moving through them.

**Amanda Lytle:** I cannot wait to get my hands on this book Juliet, honestly.

**Juliet Diaz:** I'm actually really excited to start it over. I'm like – and this is my third time. Every – and the beautiful part is every time I go through it, something else comes through, right? Another realization ignites within me, and it just really inspires me. I'm really proud of this book especially that it's able to inspire me, the writer. But again it was a message channeled through me and I can't take all the credit honestly.

**Amanda Lytle:** I'm curious now about the title because the title is so beautiful. But I can imagine that so many different things would have come through. So what settled you on *The Altar Within*?

**Juliet Diaz:** I didn't want to write a title that said “awakening” or “wake up” or, you know, or anything about healing because it wouldn't touch on the work itself for this book. So *The Altar Within* just speaks on where the work is happening.

Treating yourself as an altar, worshipping yourself, which we talk about in this book as well. We talk about self-worship. Not replacing your gods, religions, or goddesses. It's adding you into the mix, right? For not allowing you to forget that you need to worship the ground you walk on because you're sacred and magical and powerful and super important in this entire web we weave.

So *The Altar Within* speaks on those things, all of it, the work that we have to do internally, introspection and really acknowledging that that is where we need to do the work before doing anything else.

Doing inner work is what changes the outer environment of your life and everything else that's connected to it.

**Amanda Lytle:** This is fantastic. Huge congratulations.

**Juliet Diaz:** Thank you.

**Amanda Lytle:** Yes. Super, super exciting. I also wanted to ask you about something that I had seen on – I don't know if it was a website or whether it was just your Instagram and it said that you were a spiritual baddie BFF. Can you explain that?

**Juliet Diaz:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I address the readers as spiritual baddies and I'm their BFF in this book and the reason I call myself the spiritual baddie BFF is because I want the readers to feel like I am their best friend. I am not your spiritual teacher. I am not your guru. I am not your mother. I am not your therapist. I am your best friend helping you realize the power you have to heal, to push through your hardships, to manifest the best life you have and to liberate yourself from this racist capital society, right?

So to liberate yourself from the oppressor within you and finally move through because I know there are so many people who have tried, who are trying to be better versions of themselves and that really frustrates me a little bit, that phrase "better version of yourself".

You already are a better version of yourself. I mean every single day. Your survival. You survived today, right? From all the years past. So you already are this powerful person. We have to start changing our language the way that we see ourselves, the way that we look into the future and stop saying, "I'm going to wait until I lose weight. I'm going to wait until I'm a better version of myself."

You already are perfect the way you are, right? And what you need to do is acknowledge and see that and be OK with not being OK and be OK with who you are right now and stop pausing your life for tomorrow or for next week or for next year. So deliberation that comes with doing this work is really key and really powerful.

**Amanda Lytle:** What is the most beautiful tool that you have pulled? If you could pick one, what is the most beautiful tool, download, something that you've written about that you would like to leave the listeners with?

**Juliet Diaz:** Actually yeah, I wrote about this in the book. It's like one of my favorite quotes. I'm actually going to look for it because I don't want to not say it exactly the way it came to me.

I can't find it in here. OK. So the thing that came back to me, the – when I woke up, right? I heard a message and in the message or this beautiful ancient language – I don't even know what language it was. I don't know how I understood it but I – it's like I felt it in my soul, and I understood exactly what it said. It wasn't said through words. It was just like this understanding, this knowing and it said that if you don't take care of yourself mentally, physically, spiritually, you are directly disrespecting sacredness in your spirit. You're just disrespecting God. You're disrespecting the universe. You're disrespecting all that is magical and that's divine because you are part of that. You are that.

So when we don't see ourselves as that important, as that sacred, we're disrespecting it, if that makes sense, right? It's written really well on the book in a quote. But that was my most important takeaway from the book, from my experience was that I need to treat myself with the same respect I would treat my faith, my divine self, my spirit or whoever you believe in, your god, right? You're worthy of that and it's really important for you to see that you embody all those beautiful things.

**Amanda Lytle:** So, so special. OK. I could talk to you for so long about this. I just have one more question for you and that has to do with a shoutout for an account, a person, an organization, disruptor, activist or change agent.

**Juliet Diaz:** So I actually talk about her in my book. Her name is Dr. Rosales Meza. She does decolonial work. She decolonizes spirituality as well. She does deeper work into it. This is her whole life's work. You can find her on Instagram. It's D-R dot R-O-S-AL-E-S, M-E-Z-A and I suggest everyone follow her. She does so much work on decolonizing your mind, your practices and she does a lot of work for non-PLC as well.

So you don't have to be indigenous. You don't have to be a person of color. She even does work for all of them. She has a little bit of everything and it's a huge piece of how we can move forward and start reclaiming our power and our innate right to be connected to this earth and to ourselves.

**Amanda Lytle:** I will link that for sure. That's fantastic, Juliet. Thank you so much for your time and for being a guest on *The Book Stoop*.

**Juliet Diaz:** Oh, thank you. It was amazing. I'm super excited to be here by the way.

**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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