

Ritual as a Tool for Meaning Making In Birth and Beyond with Day Schildkret

Actually is a podcast about re-imagining the way we approach the entirety of the birthing year Margo's goal is to combine her radical imagination with her knack, for strategizing to bolster the birth revolution and a larger global revolution of feminine consciousness. Actually is a production of the Indie Birth association and Indie Birth dot org.

No material on this podcast should be considered medical advice. Birth is not a medical event now here's your host, midwife and teacher Margo Blackstone. Today, I am talking with day shield crit, who is an award-winning author. Artist ritualist teacher and is internationally known for morning altars, which BuzzFeed calls a celebration of nature.

And. Working for over a decade with individuals, communities and organizations day is helping to heal the culture through a meaningful and creative response to change day is the author of hello, goodbye, 75 rituals for times of loss celebration and change, which just came out a few weeks ago, as well as morning, alters a seven step practice to nourish your spirit through nature, art and ritual.

You can learn more about day at morning, alters.com and day shield, cri.com. Both of which I am going to be putting in the show notes. If you're listening here on the Indie Birth dot org website. This is a really fun conversation and I'm really excited to be releasing this episode for you all to listen to.

Day's book is the book that's been missing in my opinion, around ritual across the lifespan. And of course we are so interested in how we can mark. These important milestones or thresholds as day calls them. You'll see in a minute here for women that we work with as midwives and he has some really beautiful ideas, some really approachable and just, playful and.

easy, I guess is the word I would use. Simple maybe is the better word. Simple ways to just plug into this world of ritual and start creating more meaning in your own life, or if you're a birth worker listening, creating more meaning in the

lives of your clients. Building these beautiful connections that are going to change the world.

So I hope you enjoy the conversation that I have with today.

So welcome to the podcast. They thank you. I'm so happy to be here. Yes. So happy to have you. My listeners have just heard me share a little bit like of your official bio, but maybe in your own words, could you tell us a little bit about who you are and what you're hoping to talk about with me today?

Sure. I I'm an author, I'm an artist. I'm a teacher. I'm a brother. I'm a son. I'm a lover. And I just had a new book come out last week. So the book's called hello, goodbye. The subtitles 75 rituals for of loss celebration and change. And really what I wrote is a ritual cookbook. Offering ways to mark moments of our lives, the big ones, the small ones, and to make them more meaningful.

We have a, basically a meaning crisis in our culture. Too many moments pass us by and we don't do anything to make them to mark them and make them meaningful. And so people are swimming around a little bit lost. So this book is really devoted to giving people more resources, to create more moments to mark.

The important ones in their lives. That's what I'm here to do. I'm putting this forward into the world and I'm standing on, over a decade of really helping tens of thousands of people make their lives more meaningful. I. That's really beautiful. Thank you. Yeah. I got to, look through the copy of the book before it came out a week and a half ago, and of course was intrigued by the whole thing and especially the sections on, birth and fatherhood those pieces.

But I guess before we get into that can you share a little bit more, like you said, a decade of helping people, like, how did you get into. Work of ritual and meaning making. And how far back do you want me to go? I know, right?

The six hour long podcast. I, look, I started my first real career in my life, in my twenties was as a director on and off Broadway and oh, wow. Yeah. And so I was, essentially just really drawn to telling stories and to, really theater is ritual, there's there's, it's a really powerful experience for people. Very old one and that kind of transformed into my second career, which was being the executive

director of a high. And so I worked with teenagers for 15 years. And parents really teenagers and parents and help them to bridge their connection and also really giving teenagers an opportunity to acknowledge what, what was happening to them.

The ways that they were changing. And my third career, was this amazing thing called morning altars or is this amazing thing called morning altars? Really the long story short of that is my dad died 11 years ago and I also went through a massive divorce at that time. And I was pretty heartbroken as you can imagine.

And I had my, I adopted my dad's dog and we'd go on these long walks and I would just, be so sad and, but I'd find these, all these beautiful. Objects in nature, like these beautiful leaves and barks and berries. And one day I just sat down and just started to make just like IM permanent art out of them under a tree And and it was like the first time in probably eight months that I felt lighter in my heart. And really looking back, I was like, grief can be really destabilizing. And I was literally like making order. out of nature and it was giving me some order to actually feel in my own life.

Yeah. And that thing exploded like thousands and thousands of people from all around the world started to do this practice and for different moments of their lives, especially birth. So people would have either their own birth or people in their lives would give birth. I've done this hundreds of times for friends of mine who have given birth, I've made one of these IM permanent birth alters.

And and I would send it to a new mother, a new father, and they, sometimes they like print it and hang it above the crib. And it becomes this moment of marking this very special moment with a very special offer. And so I've been doing this I'm training, currently training a hundred people around the world in five continents to, to basically bring this into kindergarten classes and memory care facilities and like prison, social workers and all over the place.

And so I'm really standing on. The shoulders of that career with this new book. And so this new book is not just, making that kind of art, but this is about offering people going through lots of different moments of change and transitions and giving them these recipes, these skill sets, so that they can cook up something to mark those moments.

And, I cannot believe this book was not written. Before I wrote it. It's shocking. Yeah. But especially with, new mothers, new fathers, new grandparents, new brothers and sisters, I wrote a chapter for each one of those in this book to help mark those moments. And I'm especially proud of the birthing mother the mother new mother and birthing parent chapter because I interviewed, I think over 40.

Mothers new mothers for that chapter. And really tried to get into, especially the, towards the end of the fourth trimester, like what is happening, like what needs to be marked at the end of that time? What do you need to reclaim? What do you need? What do you need to close? What needs to end, nine months before the baby's born.

Basically nine months after is this enormous transition and something needs to be marked at the end of that fourth trimester. And yeah, I interviewed a lot of mothers and I also interviewed a lot of birthing experts like Kimberly Ann Johnson, who wrote the fourth trimester and who's a good friend of mine.

And and I'm very proud of. What came through in this book and same thing with new fathers and, the rituals for new brothers and sisters, I'm very proud of helping people, mark those moments. Yeah. Yeah. That touches on a question. That I had come up as I was reading through those sections of the book.

Kimberly and Johnson's been on this podcast as well. Oh yeah. I followed her work for a long time and she's really doing cool things. So what came up for me as a question? Or I guess my first, first, I guess my thought I wanted to share was like, wow, this guy's like really done his research.

This feels really tuned to birth. Like this dude gets it and it's rare to see a man writing about birth honestly or talking about it. And so I guess I was curious, I don't know if you have more to share or not, but yeah. What kind of research went into it that led you to being able to write such such a grounded and I dunno from this perspective, that is pretty rare, of, yeah.

Honoring, I think I think first off, from my perspective is constantly through a meaning making lens. That is my that's my lane, that's the thing I'm in, interested in and devoted to, and being a queer man I don't know. I'm just like, ha have

most of my friends are women and most of my experiences are like deeply listening to my, to the people around me.

And I have so many people in my life who have given birth, who are pregnant right now. And operating from this lane of meaning making and also like deeply listening to. Over 40 of these people's experiences and not pretty, like some of them were deeply painful or ambiguous or, very mixed.

There was a lot of ambiguity in some of these experiences and really trying to uplift those voices and deeply listen, ask good questions and also, try and listen to what was needed. What were a lot of these people. Hungry or desperate or longing for in this process.

And and really trying to offer them ritual as a way to bring more meaning and some ground to stand on when it feels like the ground is shifting underneath us, this transition. Our culture says is like all celebration, it's all. Yay. And so many women I spoke to was just, it was like, it was ambiguous.

It was. There was beauty and pain. There was happiness and grief. There was like a lot of pride and a lot of shame or insecurity and, trying to find their way back to their lives again, or their bodies again. And ritual is a really old. Faithful and mandatory skill for being a human where we can reclaim ourselves, reclaim our lives, be witnessed in our pain and our celebrations.

And it's not just regulated to religions. Rituals, right? Predates religions. So it's really a human making skill where we can change when life changes. Yeah. Yeah. This is all really exciting. stuff to talk about. Yeah. What did you, what were some of the things that you found? When you asked that question around, like what were women longing for and what did they need?

And it doesn't have to be women specifically. It could be I think all of the pieces are really interesting. The siblings the non, all of that, but like what were some of the major missing pieces or things that were people were longing to have witnessed or marked that you felt? I think that first and foremost, like an opportunity to.

Take good care of their body and to return to their body. And to honor the work the labor, the stretching, the intensity, the wildness of the body, and to deeply

care for that and return to it. Almost like offering. Their body, the same care and attention and love that they are giving the baby, the same holding the same warmth, the same connection, and sure.

You, you could easily do look with ritual. It's a very interesting thing. There's a term that I use in the book called pivoting towards the sacred. This is an old term by an ethnographer named Arnold van, who basically says like anything could be ritualized, anything could be sanctified. For instance, in the book, you could take a bath and have a self care day and, take a yummy, like hot bath and take good care of your body.

Yeah. But in the book, I'm not just like one of the rituals is it's. I call it the care and share ritual. And this involves a bath. It involves like drawing a bath, either having a good friend, draw a bath for you, and like really create a beautiful environment in the bathroom. And that could easily be a bath just a regular bath where you like read a book or it could, you could pivot.

And that could be a meaningful, deeply meaningful bath. One that you're uplifting. The experience and making it sacred. And in this ritual, can I just share with you? Like I have, yeah. Okay. So there's three rounds in the bath and each one is punctuated by submerging your body under the water, almost like a rebirth experience.

And round one is called my body has changed. In this round, I ask my reader to acknowledge the parts of your body that have been impacted and changed from birth. And this is an opportunity to welcome and love everything your body has been through and to release any shame that says it shouldn't be, or it should be another way.

And that is punctuated by submerging the body and coming up again. And then the second round is my identity has changed. Acknowledge the parts of who you are that have changed since giving birth to the baby. This is an opportunity to welcome the new roles and responsibilities as well as to grieve the losses that come with this new identity and then submerge your whole body under the water.

And then the third and last round it's called my relationships have changed, and this says, acknowledge the ways your relationships have changed since.

Whether it's with your baby, your partner, your friends, or even yourself. This is an opportunity to reflect on and identify your changing needs within your relationships and to recommit to the relationships you value and submerge your body.

And then of course, to linger in the bath and enjoy that experience. But yeah, what this ritual does is it's an opportunity to reflect, to reorient. To acknowledge, to really be in the presence of change. Like some things have changed, we have so few opportunities to do that in our lives, especially as things get busy and fast and with a new baby, it's so rare, but it's so important as it's so important.

And as you're describing that, as I read that part in your book too, it's something that I could totally picture holding space for facilitating as a midwife. And then as I thought, we, we often do an herbal bath, an herbal sort of postpartum bath in the hours after birth. I wouldn't do this then, often we do it again.

The third day, I could totally see doing something like this with someone, at the six week visit something like that. Or at the end of fourth time. But what, what struck me was like, oh yeah the herb bath that we do is already is really lovely. And women remember that and like the smell of those.

Particular herbs will bring them back to those hours after birth and those weeks after birth. But oh yeah, like there, there are additional things that we could do to make it even more meaningful to market. And what came to me as you were sharing that too. And I think something earlier you said was like there's this craving.

That women have for ritual. Like I, I host a new moon women's circle and 90% of it is us trying to like, make shit up because we've lost. Yeah. We've lost connections, ritual. Whether it's, for one of the many reasons colonialism or, moving. From earth based search value or whatever and so I love that you have this template that people can just literally pick up and oh yeah. This makes it feel doable. Like I have a plan now instead of having gather all of the energy to try to make something up and hope it like. Feels good. Literally, this book to me.

Sure. It could sit, it could, this book could sit on your nightstand, but how I see it is that it sits on your bookshelf. It's like a cookbook. And when you're hungry,

grab the book when something changes in your life and I'm not talking it doesn't have to be monumental just like having a baby.

It could literally be. Waking up in the morning , or like it's your birthday or it's the spring Equinox or right. Like all or you moved homes or you're weaning your baby, like like these are all in the book and I want people to be empowered to learn how to cook. Rituals and sure.

I'm giving recipes, but throughout the whole book, I'm, I'm gluten free. So I see a recipe, it calls for flour, and I'm immediately gonna replace it because that doesn't fit my lifestyle, and so it's the same thing in this book, which is here is here are creative takes on new rituals.

Some of them deeply inspired by my own culture, my own tradition. And I'm basically saying, if it doesn't work for you, just change it. Rituals are passed down and traditional, but they're also re-imagined and renewed. And they need us to make them relevant to our lives. Otherwise we're carrying something that's stale and doesn't make sense for us.

So as an artist, I'm empowering other people to be creative in this book, like here's a template. Here's a, here's the start middle end. And if things don't work, just replace them, but make them relevant to you. The rituals need to sing they're alive. They need to change. They need to live inside of you.

That's the most important thing is that they're alive. The I'm a word nerd by the way. And and the etymology of ritual. I absolutely love, if you just read it face value, it means to count. Like 1, 2, 3, 4, that's the etymology of the root of the word is means to count. But my take on it is to count more like a dancer or a musician counts.

1, 2, 3 structure or 1, 2, 3, 4, and they count so that they can stay in the music. So that they don't get lost. And the thing about life is like when life changes, it's so easy to get lost. You become a mother it's so easy to lose yourself. It really is. Ritual helps us to mark these moments to count.

Sometimes they're repetitive so that we can find ourselves in the rhythm of life. So we don't lose ourself. Yeah. That's really beautiful. Thank you. Yeah, and I love, I've got my bookshelves over here. So both that are specifically on ritual,

there's some rituals here and there, especially in my like witchy magic kind of books and they often feel really maybe they're written in the eighties or maybe they're just like written in this way that isn't as approachable.

So I guess that's something that I really liked about your work here is it feels really easy to step into. And like you said, make your own And I love that you give the actual like reflection questions. Cause I feel like so often, sometimes, like you brought up like a spring Equinox, which was like, people be like light these three candles and give them to the directions or something.

It's I need a little bit more. I need a little bit more like why I on yeah. To be relevant and then I'll find my own way. Yeah. But having that, like inspiration of like even the words to say and and what to be thinking about, that's really. Really helpful and also encouraging witnessing, which I do a lot in the book, not sure you can cook a meal for yourself, but , but some of the time it's really important to make meals where you invite others to it.

And especially these big moments of life transitions like a birth or a death, sometimes there's so enormous. We just can't we can't hold it ourselves. And we need other people to witness this witness, witness us in it and to hold our hands and to acknowledge wow, you are passing through this huge moment.

And I'm with you in this there's an author by the way of a Biocom ma Lafa. He has a little bit of a take on the word witness. Have you heard of this? No, I'd love to hear it. It's he calls it witness. I love that. Yeah. Like not turning away from, but staying with the person with all of the messiness, like these moments of birth and death and all of these life transitions.

They're complicated. They're messy, they're emotional and we need to be witnessed in the full color spectrum of that, yeah. That's our humanity. Yeah. And that's something that we talk about a fair amount here at Indie Birth is, the role of midwife as witness or. With with women and, yes, we have clinical skills and that sort of thing, the bulk and the part of the job that feels the most meaningful to me is that being with women.

And, I think we, I mentioned before we hopped on, me and are both home birth midwives, but we have plenty of clients that end up transporting and not having

a home birth. And. In whatever shape the birth takes that skill and that honoring is what women come away remembering.

Yeah. So yeah, I think it's really, it's very healing. It's so healing, very healing. Yeah, so important for our communities. And so I'm really excited to, to share your work and see what ways I'm gonna incorporate that. And maybe our Indie Birth community at large will incorporate some of your really amazing rituals into their work with women.

Thank you. Yeah. I'm very excited about that. Thank you so much. So we've talked a lot about women in birth and the postpartum. It feels like what are some of those things that you. Wanted to share, about these other pieces. These other players in the birth puzzle, whether it's, father's, you wanna hear a sweet one?

Yeah. I'm, I love the coming. I love the becoming a new brother or sister that's really? Yeah. I became a brother once upon a time. Yeah. And yeah, and it was a, it was basically my first, I, it was my first I identity, I didn't really understand. I was three and a half.

Oh. And I remember my mother got me a shirt that says I'm a new big brother. Yeah. And I had all of these like little kind of things that were trying to communicate to me, like this is happening. This is an important moment. Your identity's changing, but they weren't really ritualized.

It was the eighties. And, everything was commodified in a way. You got the cute. Yeah, I got the cute teacher, got the cute photo, but as a kid, I really needed a little bit more. And so I, I created this chapter in the book called becoming a new brother or sister, and it's one of the more, I think whimsical rituals book, and it's called the magical doorway ritual.

And it's really taking it's playing with this understanding that life transitions are thresholds. And thresholds are moments that distinguish what was from what is, or what will be, and for a kid, like magic is such a, I think for adults too, of course, but like for a child, magical moments really helped to make them special.

Yeah. And and so in the ritual I'm, and I really help walk, the recipes really clear, but I help walk. Them through how to decorate a threshold, a doorway in the

house. And basically the ritual involves creating a crown for the new sibling and doing this all without them, seeing it for.

And so bringing that new brother or that new sister to the doorway and having on the other side of it, maybe some family or friends, people that love that, that child, and that can receive them on the other side of that doorway with the crown. and so there's a crossing that happens.

And maybe I could read you just like a few sentences. Yeah. I would love that. Yeah. Okay. And it's to be made into a game. Okay. So when they arrive at the magical doorway, introduce it. You can say something like, this is the magical doorway just for you right now. You are our only child. But once you pass through the door, you will become a big brother or sister.

We're so proud of you. And we know how excited the baby is to have such a special big brother or sister. So before the crossing, before they walk through, ask them how they feel about becoming an older sibling. This part is intended to give them space to identify any fear, sadness, or concern they might have.

And of course their excitement too. Give them plenty of space to answer in their own way. And after they've had a chance to express their feelings, you can name your excitement to, and what they're crossing through this passage means to you. For instance, you can. Your little brother or sister is so lucky to have you give them and then name a special quality they have or being a big brother or sister means that you're gonna have an important job to, and then name a responsibility that they will get by doing this.

You are celebrating this new role and honoring their experience. After that, ask them, are you ready to walk through this magical doorway and become a big brother or a sister? And as the child walks through to the other side, encourage the aunts or uncles, or whoever's there on the other side to sing and clap and celebrate this passage.

They can all gather around and hug or kiss the child too. And what's most important is that the other adults are on the other side, receiving them with love. And then of course, there's this crown that, that basically is a ritual object. It's a ritual object that, that says I am this. And the last part of the chapter really encourages them to wear that crown when the new baby arrives.

So that they're very clear about their role, their new role, the new person that they. Yeah, and this is like a very sweet little ritual that like whimsically takes a moment that's actually quite meaningful and lets it focus on this new brother or new sister that is taking on a new role, but most parents don't know what to do.

So I love that really. I think it's it has all the qualities of ritual in it, but it's creative. It's fun. It's beautiful. It's meaningful. It's whimsical. Yeah, that is so sweet. I'm a total pleased and made me tear up.

Aw, about it. It's so sweet. Yeah. And you just mentioned like the elements of ritual. Do you want to share with us what those are? What makes something a ritual? Sure. First and foremost rituals, can't be thought they have to be done. That's like a fundamental part of a ritual is that they have to be done.

The kind of doing in the book is something I call symbolic action. So for example, rituals are often involve something like tearing, breaking, burning, submerging, burying, twisting, tying. I can go on. Yeah. But there action symbolic actions, but in our culture, we're so often like utilitarian focused.

And so we're like, our dominant culture, we look at these things and we're like, what's the. Doesn't do anything right? but that's exactly the point of ritual is that they're not meant to do something they're meant to symbolize something they're meant to symbolize what's happening internally, externally rule.

Number one is rituals have to be done. Rule number two, rituals, need a beginning, a middle and an end. Meaning like they don't just keep going on indefinitely. They need to start. They have something happens and they conclude how that happens is dependent on the ritual, but like a going to a theater, the place starts, it happens.

And then you applaud 'cause it's over. Rituals are very similar. Rituals often have witnesses. As we talked about, others that can gather around the person or people going through this threshold. I mentioned that word a lot, by the way. This is a very important word when it comes to rituals because thresholds mean for most of us, they mean doorways, but actually the word itself is a little bit more ambiguous thresholds.

And the Mo the thing that it really refers to is the act of tining. Do you know what that means? Farm related, right? Threshing grain. Yeah. It's basically like before we had machines do it, this is how we ate is we, people would sit around and beat the grain and it would, the expression separating the wheat from the shaft, right?

Yeah. So this is, that's the act of threshing, but here's the cool thing. The whole thing is an act of separating. That's what you're doing when you're threshing. So moment threshold moments. Are discernment moments. They're separating moments. There are opportunities where we can say, I am no longer that I am.

This. That was, this is sometimes it's really hard to do that. As I told you, I interviewed like 250 people for this book. And one of the stories that's coming up right now is I wrote a whole retirement chapter. Yeah. And this one woman I interviewed, she said for two years after she retired, she kept on waking up at 5:00 AM every day panicked. She was having anxiety attacks because she felt like she was late for work or she had a project do. Yeah. Her psyche was not able to determine the difference between what was and what is. And so we need ritual to help our psyches adjust to that kind of change. That woman was in her job for 30 plus years.

She's doing the same thing every day for 30 plus years. So ritual helped her to distinguish between the life she had and the life she has. And every life transition, whether you're giving birth or your kid leaves for college, or, you retire or whatever, all of these moments, we really need more help to dis to discern the person we were from the person that we.

Yeah. And, even with having kind of a manual cookbook here that still takes so much like introspection and self-awareness and so it's really nice to have this resource so that you don't have to like, make it up. Yeah. On the spot. Totally. Yeah. That's why I did it, is I love creating rituals, but also more so I really, we're in collectively, we're in such a massive time of change right now.

Yeah. And I don't know about you, but the last two years have been so intense. Yeah. And I've gone through, there's been a lot of celebrations the last two years and a lot of loss and and we're gonna continue to all collectively go through more change. And so we need opportunities to mark what is changing so that we can

really let go of the things that need to be, let go of and really welcome the new things that change brings.

Yeah. Couldn't agree more. Yeah. Is there anything else you were hoping to share with, our audience in particular, who mostly is, made up, mostly made up of these radical mamas and yay. First off I love you radical mamas. That's number one is yes. And then, the word radical is a very interesting word.

The etymology of the word radical means roots. That's right. So really when we say radical mothers, we're talking about mothers deeply rooted, and the question is rooted in. And I think in some ways we need to root ourselves back into the earth and back our back into our communities and back into our bodies and back into the great mystery that is this life.

And the more we can root ourselves and rooting is like a, it's an invisible thing, roots, we don't see roots and they move slow and there's a lot. Trust in that. It's roots are much bigger than the actual branches that we see in the church, right? So when I hear, radical mothers, I really hear this underground movement of amazing humans who are moving slower and who are moving more collectively and who are remembering together and who are really rooting themselves back into the things that made us healthy humans for.

Centuries and that we've forgotten this these days and we have to remember together and , forgetting is human. I forget all the time. I'm sure you do too. I do. Yeah. But remembering is the place of ritual and ceremony. Do you know have you ever read the book braiding Sweetgrass by Robin Walter?

Oh yes. Yes. So for those of your listeners that don't know this book's amazing. This is an indigenous woman who works with, she basically bridges plant the indigenous plant medicines and botanical sciences. It's really a bridge book, the sacred and the science. Yeah exactly. It was like, yes.

And Robin in her book she says in one chapter, she says our elders tell us that ceremony is our way to remember. , it's a very deep sentence. It's basically says we forget that's normal, but we need mechanisms that help us remember otherwise we'll just keep for. And we'll forget who we are and where we are and when we are and all of those things.

And so they're, people's ceremonies or mechanisms that say Hey remember where you are. Remember. What you are, remember who you are and therefore their culture stays healthy and the people stay healthy. And we need those two in the west. Those of us that don't come from indigenous cultures, we need our own ways to remember sometimes yeah.

Separately and sometimes together. Yeah. Yeah. And that piece of, depending on your ancestry, like how long ritual and ceremony has been out of your lineage, and for a lot of people who are listening, I know we hear from women all the time. Like they feel like they're maybe the black sheep of their community or their family, like thinking about birth and the way that we.

About or, thinking about ritual in the way that you're talking about. And sometimes not having that direct lineage, someone to be learning these things from like this resource you've created is so amazing that it can bridge that. And then it's also making me think more about that roots imagery that you're sharing, like planting that seed without having to be directly hands on face to face teaching people, these practices.

And so many of us are. Either or without elders or without culture, lost was the word you had used earlier too. And it's true. I talk about, it's without giving away too much, but , I start the introduction of the book with a very tender and personal story. My mother has dementia.

And she's been living in a memory care facility for now two years. And there was one day about a year and a half ago where she forgot my name. Oh, wow. And it was the first, it was the first time that ever happened. And this is my mom, this is the person that birthed me into the world. This is the person that named me.

And there was this moment where she forgot and I didn't know what to do. And life just tried to carry on, like I had emails to answer and phone calls to do, and, and I just. I just was so devastated. I didn't know what to do. And so in the introduction of the book, I basically said, this is what I did.

I'm not gonna give it away. But in the second, the reason I'm bringing that story up is because the second part of the introduction basically asks this question. If it's possible for a person to lose their memory, is it possible for a culture? Wow.

And I go into the whole story of my own culture, my people who were, who had to flee Europe because they were being persecuted and basically saying, we maintained some of our rituals, but we lost so many in that passage.

And so I talk quite a bit about, what a culture's forgetfulness is. How a culture remembers, what do we do when we don't come from a culture that remembers, and really going into, and I also mentioned cultural appropriation in the book. Yeah. And so I go into a lot of these things cause they're not unrelated, they're very, when we talk about ritual, we have to talk about these things.

Yeah. Yeah. I'm glad you brought that up because I feel like that's a thing for sure. In, in the birth world, Just people grasping for kind of any, any again, meaning making that they can. Yeah. And how do we do that in a way that is yeah. How do we bring ritual into our work in a way that is respectful?

Yeah. We're like, I don't know if you've ever been a part of, other cultures rituals, but I have, and it's like attending like this amazing feast. Yeah. And sometimes some of us are so hungry that we can't help, but take from that. And so I really talk about in the book quite a bit about, how do we approach a feast like that?

Without stealing from. Yeah. And also how do we feed ourselves? How do we reclaim and redeem rituals and feed our families and feed ourselves with meaning because that our souls are hungry for it. Yeah. And those needs need to be met and very much conscious way. Yeah. Very much yeah, I'm just having these like flashes of, the women listening to this podcast and hopefully the other ones that you've been on talking about your book too, getting a copy of your book and and getting brave enough to offer this to their friends or to ask for it for themselves.

And so I guess that's my plea to listeners is. Of course get a copy of this really beautiful book and yeah, and be the, be that person in your community because, I think. Like I said I host the Newman women's circle and it came out of this need for meaning making and connecting with other women in particular.

And and when I put it out there, I was like, I'm not like a, ceremonialist like, I, I don't, I'm not like a high priest. This I'm not like, whatever, like I'm not that person. And so it was really hard and took a long time for me to get brave

enough and vulnerable enough to say Hey, I need this, someone does anyone else.

And I think we have we don't usually have all of them show up, but I think we have 35 or 40 women. And I don't very large who are like, yes, me please invite me to this. Can I ask you what is what was your need? What was my need? Yeah. What was the thing inside of you that was like, I need to have a new moon circle with other women.

Yeah. I feel like the new moon piece was tangential to the rest of it, which was just Just needing human connection in a place for, again, that witnessing and that deeper emotional and spiritual connection with other people, especially. Yeah. Especially after the last few years that being like a mind field of different perspectives and approaches and all of that.

Yeah, just to be to a place to explore too, like as a mom, I have a, how old are my kids? Almost three. almost two and a half, almost three and seven and a half. Definitely, even with like amazing community and support and being a midwife myself and being in the school of birth, like I've had amazing opportunities for meaning making and thinking through this shift into motherhood, I've interviewed all the people and, even with that, Definitely still was feeling lost.

For me, the postpartum both times I've had a baby has felt more like two and a half years long. wow. Yeah. Before I'm like, oh, like now I'm ready. I'm popping out of this yeah. Person that I am. And so it was coming on the heels of that, my son was about to turn two and I was just like, I still dunno what the fuck is going on.

And what's happening in here and who am I? And as a midwife I get to do. I guess that was a piece of it too, was I do this for other people and I didn't feel like anyone was doing it for me. Yeah. And so it was me genuinely being like, can we all just sit around and pass the stone and talk about what you know.

So it's simple and so beautiful. Yeah. And we've taken turns hosting it. And some are more elaborate than others. But yeah, the thing about. The thing about the thing you're also saying about the, because of the moon is that she moves in cycles. Yeah. And so there's that regularity, that repetition that happens.

It's not a one and done thing, you're basically saying as the moon cycles, like we need to gather together again, and that, that is so human that's. So it's so what we all need is we need these opportunities to come back together again, to come back together again, by the way, that's the, how crazy is that?

This is the root of the word artist and art. It means to come back together. To bring things back together again. Yeah. So yeah. It's very creative. It's very human to have opportunities where we, life is just like naturally scattering, and configuring and destabilizing.

Yeah. And we need these times to just return. Yeah, absolutely. Is there anything we haven't covered that you were hoping to cover today? Any insight I could talk, honestly, I could talk with you for five more hours. , I just had four thoughts that came up where I was like, this is I love talking about this, so yeah I'm happy to answer any questions I could just go on and on.

I really think. To me ritual is like mindfulness 2.0. Like I, I really think that we to be a collective Renaissance where we reclaim and redeem small and big rituals. And mark, mark these moments. By the way, during the pandemic, it was a really weird experience. I kept on reading in like mainstream newspapers, like the New York times and Harvard review and like the wall street journal, like calling for rituals.

And I was like, we must be in desperate times if news, newspapers are calling for rituals, and yeah, we are in desperate times. Yeah, absolutely. Yeah. And I just wanna thank you for being such a good host to me and doing the good work that you are doing with all of the, with all of your listeners.

We're all in cahoots together. So in Cahoot. Yeah. So I thank you for your good work and everyone listening. I really thank you for all the ways that you're rooting yourself and your family. Thank you so much for that. Remind us one more time where we can find more about you and your work and your book.

Sure. The title again, the title of the book is hello, goodbye. Pretty easy to remember. The subtitle is 75 rituals for times of loss celebration and change. And you can find me on Instagram. My tagline is morning altars, M O N I N G like morning and altars, a L T a R S. I'm on Facebook too. And my websites are either morning altars.com or my name dacr.com.

And I guarantee if you start searching. For me, you're gonna find a lot of beauty. As an artist, I put out a lot of beauty. My first book in the world was all about these altars that I make. They are so beautiful. Thank you. They're really beautiful. Thank you of. We're just like totally.

Yeah. People should definitely go look and I will add all of that to the show notes as well. Click, if they're on our website listening to this, but if you're listening in one of the podcast apps, you'll have to type those in yourself. Cool. Definitely recommend it. Thank you. Thank you so much for being here today.

And it's an honor. Maybe we. Will do a follow up episode someday. When I've had a chance to integrate some of this into my work, I'd love that a report back I would love. That sounds fantastic. Cool. Thank you so much. And that's it for the moment. Hello, goodbye. Hello, goodbye.

If you enjoyed what you heard, please hit the subscribe button and give this podcast a five star review for more enriching content and conversation. Around the primal physiological process that is pregnancy birth and beyond. Please head over to Indie Birth dot org. And if you are in the Duluth area, seeking prenatal and midwifery support, you can find Margo at Duluth midwife.com.

Thank you so much for listening until next time.