

Bristlecone Firesides Podcast, Season 2, Episode 3 Part 1: Wild Women and Wild Wisdom

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Madison:

Speaker 1: ([00:02](#))

Welcome to season two of Bristle cone, firesides casual conversation around our virtual fireside about faith, the earth, the universe, and everything. In this second season, we will be journeying into the spiritual wilds. As we explore the theme of wilderness, joining

Speaker 2: ([00:18](#))

Us around our virtual fireside will be familiar voices as well as some new guests to help us rediscover the spiritual power of wild things. We are your hosts, Abby and Madison

Speaker 1: ([00:29](#))

Bristle Ko. Fireside is recorded in the tiny carpet covered attic of the Southern Utah wilderness Alliance, who is our partner for this and future seasons for more info about SOA and the fight to protect Utah's study in red rock wilderness, visita.org. So, um, Kathryn you've been on before, but, uh, so let's start with, let's start with, uh, Amber, let's start with Amber and then we'll, we'll we'll do, uh, we'll go to Catherine. Uh, can you give us a little bit of an intro into who you are and, uh, you know, at what point in your life did you realize like the earth was something that you cared about?

Speaker 3: ([01:14](#))

Absolutely. Um, hi, thanks for having me. My name's Amber Richardson. I live in Idaho with my parents and, um, I have a podcast that I host called on sovereign wings. It's for women who are seeking healing after sexual assault or sexual trauma. And it's specifically geared for a Mormon audience. Um, I've been involved in women's issues, uh, in church, um, by involved, I mean like creating and starting conversations and advocating for about a dozen years now. Um, and this most recent project has been the most, um, demanding, but also I think gets at the heart of so much of what's going on in the church, in my faith surrounding women's issues, childhood trauma. So that in conjunction with my, um, profession, I guess, uh, as a storyteller, uh, sort of create the container in which the topic of conversation today is really relevant. Uh, the wild and architect, as it applies to the second half of your question, um, where did my interest in the earth begin?

Speaker 3: ([02:30](#))

I've been thinking about this probably more than necessary because I wanted to give a really honest answer. And the most honest answer that I can summon is that I do love the earth, but I love it most, um, behind a pain of glass, I really dislike spiders. Like, like I'd hate them. Like, they're my mortal enemy. I think you could say. And there are so many of them outside, so many spiders. And so, I don't know, uh, like when I'm having a really good mental health day, the earth feels like a safe, inviting place when I'm not having a good mental health day, staying inside is the choice for me. So I do care about the earth, but I just want everyone listening to know that it is a conceptual kind of care. It is not an experiential kind of care. Thank you for, for listening

Speaker 1: ([03:29](#))

To that. That is, that is, oh, a okay. Lot of different relationships with the earth here.

Speaker 3: ([03:36](#))

Yeah. So that's me

Speaker 1: ([03:37](#))

Awesome, Catherine.

Speaker 3: ([03:41](#))

Uh, thanks Madison. I'm happy to be back on talking to both of you and with Amber as well. Um, I grew up in salt lake and I currently live in salt lake as well, and I have a background in environmental studies and English and landscape architecture and, um, write poetry and other things as well. So I've, um, sort of been putting my background in, uh, I guess, studying archetypal images and themes with, uh, the land into, to poetic and, um, pros forms, I guess, currently. And, um, it's really, it's kind of hilarious because this last week I was bitten by a spider and I told Amber this story and she couldn't handle it. And it was pretty crazy. We don't have to go into details, but like I had like welts all over my body. I was like, just about to call the, like, go to the ER, like it was insane.

Speaker 3: ([04:55](#))

So I, I feel for Amber spiders are, yeah, it's, it's very, that whole topic of like, in theory versus like the practical, like lived experience of being in the wild. That's a whole, that's a whole thing. Um, but my, I don't know, I was thinking about this. We had a cabin in big Cottonwood growing up and I think some of my most like, uh, like sensoral like my most remembered and like beloved experiences in nature come from being up there. Um, and that was sort of like elementary school age was when I was there the most. And, but I don't remember like one specific moment it's sort, sort of just like an accumulation of, of different experiences. Um, but I do remember winning, uh, my country schools like riding competition, like a district competition, writing a

poem about mother. It was like element . So I was feeling things strongly at a young age, I guess. ,

Speaker 1: ([06:10](#))

It's funny. I actually had a, a spider story this week, too, that I, uh, saw just a, any bitty little spider above my bed. And, uh, I, I'm the kind of, I don't want to kill the spiders. I want to catch them and like move them. And so usually it's like, if I see the spider, I say like, I acknowledge it and I'm like, hi, please. Don't be here when I come back. Because if I see you next time, I'm gonna, I'm gonna have to kill you. But, and so I, instead I moved it to a plant in my room and now it's just hanging out by my plant and, uh, you know, I think is more comfortable over there anyways. So, uh, so speaking of wild that, you know, that, that we can have a lot of different experiences with these things and sometimes they bite us.

Speaker 1: ([06:50](#))

Um, so yeah, I, uh, I think Abby and I wanted to have a conversation about the wild woman archetype that when we were kind of conceptualizing see season two, um, this was definitely one that we, we wanted to, uh, to address. And Catherine, when we finished recording our episode with you on season one, I think at the end of that was when we pitched you on coming back on and doing the wild woman archetype. Um, and so it's definitely something that I, I think I'm, I'm very excited to have this, this conversation. I know Abby is too. Um, but before we jump into it, let's just do some definitions. What is an archetype and Amber or Catherine, either one of you can, can jump in.

Speaker 3: ([07:32](#))

So for many of us, the, the word archetype might bring a bell, uh, from like a high school English class, unless we have listeners who went on to study English language and literature in more depth. Um, so an archetype in that sense, it's a motif that, um, is reoccurring. Um, but in our conversation today, I think we're gonna be talking about, um, the word archetype in a second. So, and that's the young incense. So Sigma Freud had a protege pier named Carl Young, a Swiss, uh, psychoanalyst. And in his, uh, according to his worldview, an archetype is, um, an energy. It's a motif that not only appears in lit, but it lives in the collective unconscious, which is like the, the hive mind that connects humanity, um, forward and backward. And so there are these archetypes that appear in world literature, um, that first exist within our human imagination.

Speaker 3: ([08:40](#))

And these include things is like the wizard, um, the wise woman, the prince, the princess, the witch, the wild woman. Um, so hopefully that's a good overview of the archetype, I guess when, when we talk about archetypes, especially in theology, um, and you know, how they apply to us, um, you know, why is an archetype either

important or what does it do, um, as far as kind of defining us, uh, and, and, you know, when, when we're trying to apply that to ourselves, what is the significance of an archetype, you know, for our growth or transformation, and either of you are welcome to answer that, I guess I think there's, um, because it is a image or a symbol that resonates sort of on a universal level, it's, um, it's something that has a, a kind of life force. If that, if that makes sense, it's something that, um, continues to call to us to sort of evaluate where we are mentally, spiritually to sort of help us gauge, um, I guess the quality of our life and the quality of our experiences.

Speaker 3: [\(10:20\)](#)

And I see that, um, really powerfully with the wild woman archetype, as well as with other archetypes, like the tree of life, um, where you're sort of always in conversation or, um, it's a, it's a relationship. And so you're always sort of trying to figure out where you are in relation to that archetype, which is also, and I think it, it's harder in like a more individualized, uh, society that we're in now, but it's also a gauge of where you are in community, how you're able to sort of, um, relate to human and non-human, um, spirits and creation.

Speaker 1: [\(11:10\)](#)

Yeah, sorry, I can't hear myself in my headphones. Like I'm used to, which is really second me out. Um, I think some of the other definitions that are gonna be useful, uh, for the rest of this episode are gonna be patriarchy and matriarchy. So can we get just, uh, you know, a high level definition of patriarchy and patriarchy?

Speaker 3: [\(11:31\)](#)

So, um, if you break down the word patriarchy, it means rule of the five other, uh, matriarchy would mean rule of the mother, but, um, the word patriarchy has a lot of connotations associated with it that, uh, matriarchy does not. And I think that's in large part due to various feminist movements and also, um, the reality of patriarchy existing in the world. Um, so, so the rule of the father, um, can be seen in, um, not only, um, who is generally positioned at the top, um, and at the, the gate of any major or organization or institution, but it can also be seen in the principles and values that are, um, that, that guide, um, institutions, um, generally, uh, civilizations and communities that are, um, Pally oriented, also privileged and, and, um, prefer male, um, philosophies and values. And, uh, yeah, so most of human history has been patriarchal, although, um, we do know that there have been communities that have existed that have been matriarchal, um, or ma focal focused on, uh, the female perspective and, and that kinda thing. Catherine, do you have anything to add? I think that's great.

Speaker 1: [\(13:07\)](#)

Excellent. Okay. Well then let's jump into the wild woman archetype, uh, why the wild woman archetype and who is she? Who is the wild woman?

Speaker 3: (13:19)

Me just start Amber . Yeah. Um, I really like, um, Clarissa Pinkola , I mean, her whole book is essentially defining, defining that women who run with the wolves. Um, but I like the concept that she kind of puts forward at the beginning that it's sort of the, um, the self before becoming civilized or becoming sort of, um, a product of society's, um, desires or conditions or rules that you have to sort of shift and bend and, and change for. So there's a sense that there's, uh, an essence, a true essence in an individual, uh, feminine female self that, um, is wild, that sort of is an undercurrent for every woman. And that on top of that, that there's sort of more of the personality or, or selfhood or, um, cultural identifiers that, that can be layered to sort of create an individual, um, identity. And I really love the idea that it's also like the wildness. Um, isn't just about sort of like, there's not this sort of negative connotation that I think we have sometimes of being out of control or just sort of crazy, but that it's understanding that innate authentic self so that you understand and can form and create healthy boundaries, um, in every like aspect of your life as sort of my baseline, I guess, understanding of it.

Speaker 3: (15:12)

Yeah. And, um, referring back to an earlier question, how can archetypes help us? Um, the wild woman archetype is a very redemptive one in my own experience. And I can see that happening in two ways. The first is, um, there's a pretty be famous adage that you can't be what you don't see. Um, and so mining old stories and folklore, um, for archetypes can be a really helpful exercise for people, but in the context of this conversation, especially women who've been oppressed and who dealing with, um, trauma and internalized sexism, if you can find an icon or an image or an archetype, um, of a woman living, uh, beyond the balance of patriarchy. And then if you can slowly, uh, resonate with it and find yourself in that archetype, um, working with, with an arc type, like that can eventually lead to healing and growth.

Speaker 3: (16:17)

Um, secondarily I think, um, maybe this would be more of a therapeutic, um, perspective, but, uh, so Carl Young argued that, you know, the collective unconscious, all of this lives in side of us. And so something like the wild woman archetype, what is primal in women? What is undomesticated, that's something that, uh, we've been conditioned to cut off from ourselves. We've been conditioned to repress it and reject it, and that leads to dissonance within, within the being so, um, re into a grading, uh, the, the aspects of ourself that Catherine was describing that are represented by the wild woman, archetype, I think can help us relate to the earth in a more sustainable way and can also help us to heal and to feel more at peace within ourselves.

Speaker 3: (17:30)

That being said, um, do you feel like this wild woman archetype is a, a well known one? I mean, this is kind of a, a question I have, you know, that I think there are a lot of women, at least that I interact with pretty frequently that aren't aware of this archetype. And so I'm just curious, like, do you feel, I don't know what what's the presence or acceptance of this archetype when you've discussed it with other women or, um, you know, do you feel like other women that you've interacted with, um, upon first hearing that it have really resonated with this it's something that I really resonate with, but, uh, I am curious kind of, you know, what the reception has been in your circles and, and how people kind of feel about this, especially within the church.

Speaker 3: [\(18:24\)](#)

Catherine, I can start us out on that one. Yeah. Okay. So Catherine mentioned a book called, um, women who run with the wolves by Clarissa Pinkola says, uh, this book is kind of the pioneering work on this archetype. Clarissa is, uh, Hungarian and Latina, and she's a young gay analyst. Um, and within this, uh, work, she weaves together, um, world, world folklore and makes the case, uh, for the archetype. So prior to the publication of this book, um, this archetype was, um, fairly fragmented and, and not really, um, and not articulated. So recently this book I think, was published like 20 years ago or more, but recently it's been making something of a comeback. So in my experience, if you haven't read this book, you probably aren't familiar with the archetype. And I think that's because, um, the wild woman was very much disenfranchised and oppressed. And so generally, um, when people think of wildness and femininity, um, they think about, uh, something that is bad, something that is not good, that is not acceptable. Um, and I would say within the church, that's generally the, um, the first response that I run into and yeah, like you Abby, um, it isn't something that's on people's radars. That's, that's my observation too.

Speaker 3: [\(20:05\)](#)

Yeah. I, this book has been made extremely popular. I think it was Emma Watson who had it on like her book club. And so, I mean, it's sold millions and millions of copies and, um, I think it's definitely well known among women who are sort of seeking any sort of like feminist or in that path of feminist awakening or seeking to like, um, to understand themselves better or following certain on Instagram. Like it's, it's out there. It's pretty popular. Um, within Mormonism, I'm less sure. I think there are definitely groups of women who like people who follow follow groups like womb sisters or, um, other sort of groups that do. But I, I do think like Amber said that it is, uh, threatening can potentially threatening, um, for women in the church because it essentially asks them to, um, do kind of a 180 away from what, uh, culturally, at least we've been told we should be as women.

Speaker 3: [\(21:19\)](#)

And that can be sort of, uh, daunting, um, to do that, especially like, I think if you have like a group of, of women sort of a exploring things together, perhaps it's less

daunting, but, um, yeah. I don't think it's something particularly well embraced yeah. I feel like, I, I think in some ways it, it maybe is changing. Um, I, I feel that way, you know, at least in my own circle, but then other times I feel like that still, or, or still feels somewhat, um, there's a, there's a phrase she uses in her book. I think she says like overly domesticated. Um, and I think sometimes that's how it feels in the church. Um, at times to feel like, you know, you're sequestered into one, um, specific archetype in the church even. Um, and so, like you said, Catherine, kind of shifting that mindset 180 degrees, um, and, and, you know, digging deep within yourself, like she suggests, um, to, to find these less domesticated parts of our, our self, um, really does sometimes seem like a contrarian belief within the church. So, um, I'm interested, you know, obviously, and, and as we discuss this, how, um, you know, you see the marriage of the two, um, as being, COHI, obviously it's not, we're not taught that kind of to the contrary, but, but sometimes I can really feel that way within the culture of the church. And so, um, I think that will be a good thing to mm-hmm to touch on and kind of, um, hammer out within this, this discussion as well.

Speaker 3: [\(23:11\)](#)

Yeah. One of my favorite parts of her book actually is at the very beginning where, I mean, she sort of begins to frame the wild woman archetype, but then she begins by listing sort of the symptoms of a disrupt, a disrupted relationship with that Wildish portion of the psyche. And that was extremely effective for me because I could see before I could see what it was, I needed to see sort of the lack, like what, like the ramifications or the consequences, uh, and, and understand that those things that I had felt throughout my life as a woman were connected to the, um, my sort of severance from, from the wildest woman archetype. Um, so I'm gonna read a few of those if that's okay. Cause I think it helps us sort of, and I think it's really, uh, so important as LDS women that we know the root of these feelings that we experience. So she begins by saying, um, and these are all descriptions that she sort of curated, or just wrote down a, a collection of things from women that she worked with. So these are, you know, women's words describing their own feelings about this, um, this, uh, disconnect.

Speaker 3: [\(24:47\)](#)

So feeling extraordinarily dry, fatigued, frail, depressed, confused, gagged, muzzled, UN aroused, feeling frightened, halt or weak without inspiration, without animation, without soulfulness, without meaning shame, chronically fuming, volatile, stuck uncreative, compressed crazed, feeling powerless, chronically doubtful, shaky, blocked, unable to follow through giving one's creative life over to others, life sapping choices, inmates work, or friends suffering to live outside one's own unprotective of overprotective of self inert, uncertain, faltering, um, inability to pace one's self or to set limits. And there's a, there's a lot more, but I think, um, most women can resonate if we're being honest on some level with a lot of those.

Speaker 1: [\(25:52\)](#)

And tho those were qualities of disconnection from the wild woman archetype. Right.

Speaker 3: [\(25:55\)](#)

Okay. Mm-hmm yeah. Yeah. So, I mean, I think that helps sort of put into the frame that, like, I think the, the term wild, like I said before, can be a bit like, well, what is this? It can be a pretty, um, yeah, it can be a pejorative. It can also be like, well, I don't really resonate with that. Like, I don't feel like wild. I don't feel like this, whatever, but, but beginning to describe it as well that this is what actually helps you feel centered and grounded and, and, uh, known to yourself, like being able to tap into, um, that, that deep essence that no religion or culture or, or other human can give you, like being disconnected from that is the reason why everything else around you can feel so stifling or difficult. Yeah. And I, I love that clarification that you gave about, you know, the word wild, cuz I, I kind of felt that way when I first approached this, this topic, you know, and I don't, I don't feel wild.

Speaker 3: [\(27:04\)](#)

I think I told you before we kinda started the call that I was a bit of an introvert. And so to me, wild sometimes, um, kind of alludes to the idea of being extroverted or, or, you know, maybe being a bit, um, outlandish, but it, it's not that way. It very much, like you said, you know, reattaching yourself and reentering yourself in, in the kind of like strength of womanhood, um, and, and being female. So I really, yeah, it really resonated with me after I kind of got over the hurdle of, okay, what does wild actually mean in this context? What does she saying? How does she talk about it? So, yeah, I love that clarification. Thank you, Amber. Any thoughts?

Speaker 3: [\(27:56\)](#)

Um, well, my mind was my mind was wandering and I was thinking about how, um, during the second wave of feminism, there were quite a, a, a few women who were, um, criticizing the gendering of the earth as female as a mother. And interestingly, uh, oftentimes the crux of that criticism was that, um, they felt like it was confining for what, in that it, uh, pigeonholed them into a role of like being a nurturer or like a goddess of the spring time, um, not a water, a spring of water. Um, and one of the facets of the wild woman as Clarissa Pinkola ES presents her is that she is, um, not only cyclical, but, uh, chaotic like it, it's not just the goddess of the spring time and, um, a woman of flowers and blossoms and fragrances. It's a woman of death and mud and volcanoes and earthquakes and TIAL waves and whitening bolts.

Speaker 3: [\(29:09\)](#)

And, and I think that that woman, um, that, that kind of wild is specifically, uh, what we are bred to feel such contempt for, or bred to feel so uncomfortable around because there's something about her that can't be, um, controlled. There's something about her that's unpredictable, that's fearful in a, in a very sacred way, I think. Um,

and yeah. So on the other side of that conversation, I guess there might be, um, uh, a different kind of, uh, potential discomfort with connecting women to earth. And that's how I answer it, um, that, um, that, um, that sort of unpredictability or, or chaoticness, um, it's, it's in our bodies, it's in the act of birth it's. Um, and I, I think that there's something really powerful about that. So in my own journey, I've kind of come full circle for quite a long time. I was in that camp of, um, disapproving, the connection between women and earth, and I've changed my mind a pretty radical way.

Speaker 1: [\(30:30\)](#)

Uh, I definitely, I, I think, uh, you hit on something really, uh, really powerful is that the, the wild woman archetype is. And I, I hope to, I want, I think we're gonna talk about it later on in the, in the episode, but the wild woman archetype embodies like embodies beauty, embodies terror and embodies life, embodies death, beauty, and ugliness, right. There's a lot of, there's a lot encapsulated in the wild woman archetype. Um, but I think what might be helpful right now is just like you said, Amber, um, to kind of go through mythology and like mine for the arch. Um, can we, can we like pitch out or discuss what are some mythological figures so that we can actually see with our eyes in like in media and in literature and stuff that, uh, that we can see the wild woman archetype. So let's, let's throw out some that we're familiar with,

Speaker 3: [\(31:24\)](#)

Uh, Artemis that Godes, so of the hunt from Greek mythology is maybe the best, um, or, or the most accessible. Um, she is bomb. I'm actually in my childhood bedroom and the wall behind me. Um, when I was a little girl, there's nothing there for you to see now this relevant to this conversation. But when I was a little girl, I went to the library and, and I used a photocopier and I xeroxed an illustration of Artemis and I had it hanging there for like 10 years. Um, so yes, I'm a big fan. Um, other stories, I mean, um, I, I kind of consider like modern day film a mythology in it of itself. So I, there's a beautiful film that was produced by an Irish animation house a few years ago called Wolf walkers. It's on apple TV. So good. So the protagonist, one of the protagonists in that film, her name's Mave, she's a little Wolf girl.

Speaker 3: [\(32:20\)](#)

That is the wild woman. That film is so good. um, Bob yoga might be a, another one. Um, most of us Westerners are familiar with like a, a horror story about Bob yoga. Um, but if you S strip back the conditioning, she's this death goddess, this life death goddess, that's really lovely. Um, there's a mythological figure out of Norway that I really love called the Hora in, um, whatever the ancient Scandinavian Tom was that this character was created. Hora means, um, hidden and like Bobby GA, uh, the holah is a character who's been kind of defamed and disenfranchised, but at the heart of the folklore, um, is something really fascinating. She's a, she's a, an animal woman that lives in the mountains. She usually has a foxtail or a cow tale, and she calls

people into the mountains. And so over, um, several hundred years, the story turned into a cautionary tale. The Hora is a succ who specifically calls men into the mountains so that she can murder them. But, um, on a symbolic level, like, yeah, that's the wild woman. She calls us into her, into her domain so that we can experience a death of self and, uh, a rebirth. So those are some of my favorites off the top of my head. Anybody have any more that they want to add to the pot?

Speaker 3: [\(33:49\)](#)

Those are all really great. Or did I take them all? Yeah, I did.

Speaker 1: [\(33:57\)](#)

So my favorite is princess Moke. I don't know if you guys have, are familiar with the JB studio gibble films, but princess moan. Noe is the, uh, the Wolf princess. She was raised by her, her parents, um, uh, offered her a sacrifice to the Wolf gods of the, of the forest. And she was raised by these wolfs and, uh, the, the movie princess moan Noe by Zaki is probably one of his greatest works. Um, but moan NOKA like her character itself is, uh, a really powerful representation. I think, of the wild woman archetype.

Speaker 3: [\(34:33\)](#)

Yeah, that's a great one. Um, Meda brave, the, the Scottish last with the Bowan arrow. Um, what about the silky, which is a Celtic archetype? It's a woman who turns into a seal. Um,

Speaker 1: [\(34:49\)](#)

I almost wanna say Moana a little bit from the Disney's Disney's film. She's kind of in there, I know she's a little bit more of an ocean goddess kind of, uh, archetype, but I think she's at least in terms of, or maybe the, uh, who's the, the, the lava woman at the end, who is actually the, the island Teka to, yeah, the, I think, I think that representation very much to me kind of captures that duality of the wild woman. Mm-hmm

Speaker 3: [\(35:17\)](#)

Are any of you familiar with the Mor she's a, a Celtic goddess? Um, so maybe you've seen that symbol, the, like the Celtic goddess Triptic made in mother CRO mm-hmm a lot of people trace that back to the Morgan. She was, she had these three aspects, the, the buy and, uh, Maka made in mother Chrome, but they were, they were death goddesses, and they were warrior goddesses and they were associated with the seasons. Um, there's a story about Maka that is just chef's kiss. She, um, I can't remember exactly how it goes, but somehow she gets pregnant and maybe it was like rape. Maybe she didn't want to be pregnant or something. And so, or maybe she wasn't being received with empathy or given, given the resources that she needs. I can't remember, but either way, um, she ends up in this village full of men who have

rejected her and she curses them all, um, to feel the pains of labor and so all collapse and experience the pains of labor. And then she wins a foot race while she's, while she's birthing a baby. It's just good stuff. Yeah. So that's, that's the Morgan, um, fun one to research. If anyone wants to go do that later, those they're all really good.

Speaker 1: [\(36:39\)](#)

Okay. Well, now that we've kind of have an idea in our minds of at least the visual or mythological representations of the wild woman, let's like dive in, um, that, uh, you know, when I was outlining this episode and, you know, so I grew up with sisters. I grew up in a very matriarchal kind of family with powerful, powerful women in, you know, my grandparent, my grandmas, my aunts, and my sisters and my mom, all very powerful women. And so I have a lot of holy envy for kind of the wild woman art type, um, for kind of the resonant embodied symbolism that, you know, that, that women embody that, uh, kind of MI matches or mirrors the, the cycles that we see in nature. Um, I, I sense though that the weight of being a symbol, um, can be overbearing Kathryn, in your, in your poem, uh, in the, the, the book tree tree at the center, you have a poem as a mother and you write, I have never desired to be a symbol. I never asked to be the center. Can you speak to the empowering aspects of the wild woman archetype and the tension in the weight of that symbolism?

Speaker 3: [\(37:40\)](#)

yeah, I, that's a great question that I've been thinking a lot about. Um, there's sort of, I think, and it's different for every woman. I can just speak to my own experience, um, that becoming a mother sort of brought front and just right. You know, full of me, like this whole other dimension of, of being a woman that, um, was very unexpected. I, I think there's a lot about being in a patriarch society that, um, sort of mutes, like there's a, there's a lack of understanding and acknowledgement and sort of recognition and within the self as a woman, but also, um, a lack of sort of conversation about the more psychological, emotional, spiritual elements of becoming a mother. Like the very basic understanding that I received about things was very physical, sort of like these are the physical changes that are coming. Um, this is what you can expect X, Y, Z.

Speaker 3: [\(38:49\)](#)

And it wasn't even for my own mother, it was sort of like outsourced, right? Like all of this preparation. And when it came down to actually being pregnant and being embodied in that way in such a different, um, a, an incredibly different way, I, I had to just really go inside and try to connect to the divine through that new experience and understand what does this mean? Like, how does this add to my own understanding of like life and like embodied mortal life, but also, um, how women connect the, and expanding my, my concept of what is divine and having all of this come on. I mean, it was my choice to have a child, but it wasn't necessarily my choice to like all of a sudden become this figure. That was, there was an archetype that was caring the

symbol of, um, the world itself, as well as women, as women, women like being a woman.

Speaker 3: [\(40:06\)](#)

Um, but also a divine symbolism of Christ as someone who reconciles life and death of, uh, divine mother, someone who would lead the way that for her children to sort of experience a mortal existence and to be connected. I felt for the first time, like I was connected to generations as, and generations coming and the earth and heaven in ways that I could never have expected. And, um, it's a weight, it's definitely a weight. It's something that, um, is extremely heavy and difficult and sometimes very so because of the state of our world, right? It's not like I'm bringing children into a world that's, um, rejoicing and full of light and truth. And goodness, I'm bringing children into a world that, um, where people hate themselves and they hate each other and there's, uh, senseless violence spend there's, uh, a very real agenda to destroy the earth.

Speaker 3: [\(41:30\)](#)

And so, um, I can't disconnect that agenda from dis, from destroying the earth from a agenda to destroy me. And that's, you know, you can say that sort of, that anyone can feel that, right. You can feel like, well, we're destroying the earth. We have this sort of self ING because we, we literally are killing the thing that sustains us. Anyone can feel that and sense that, but as a woman, being the person who, who sort of represents life, the life, death life power, and brings souls into the world, it's nother dimension is a whole nother, um, like level and, uh, experience of that sort of disregard for life.

Speaker 3: [\(42:27\)](#)

So it's, I, I, I mean, I, I don't say this lightly, I feel like it's the closest I come to feeling any, anything like what the savior could have felt as a mortal on this earth that, um, like that tension between, um, the divine and the profane love and hatred sort of ho mingling and living within one body. And, um, you know, I know that that everyone can feel that, but being able to bring children spirits to this realm, it's a, it's a very different, um, experience. And it's one that it's, it's really hard to even sort of try to put towards because it's, it's beyond, it's just beyond language. Um, so I think, I think the thing that, and this might not necessarily flow with the rest of the conversation you're wanting to have, but I think one of the most, um, difficult things for me, just sort of in a, in a larger framework to think about is how there are so many women who can sort of come to this crux right.

Speaker 3: [\(43:56\)](#)

Of like becoming a mother, having children. Um, , it's sort of like this moment, this potential moment, this sort of very significant, almost quintessential moment of, for a woman to sort of finally wake up to her wild woman's self, right? It's like the moment where your body is your mind, like body takes over, you have to be in every moment,

especially going into labor, have actually delivering the child, all of that, that happens, um, where we've outsourced that most precious moment to Cherokee in the way that we, uh, have disengaged from what's really happening on a spiritual and psychological level. And that's one of the things that's, uh, so difficult for me just like conceptually the, um, it, I guess it's a big sign for me, right? Like it's a big red flag that patriarchy is so strong and so damaging that women, of course, we all can, there's countless opportunities for every woman to sort of reengage with that self and find it again.

Speaker 3: [\(45:11\)](#)

And , um, you know, I, I, I feel hope for that. Like, I feel like every woman has many moments in her life where that can happen, but it's such an incredibly precious and, um, sacred and holy time that it's, it's very discouraging for me sometimes to think out how that's not, that's not the experience of most women when they become a mother. Um, so kind of on a tangent there, but I it's, it's very connected to me in terms of like embracing the wild woman and embracing the symbology of that larger, um, like guess power that women have is really, it's just very concentrated and, and, uh, sharp, I guess, in that moment of becoming a mother.

Speaker 3: [\(46:12\)](#)

Thank you. Um, you have a way with words, Kathryn, anyone who listens to you or reads your writing knows that at, but I think one of the other gifts that you bring to conversations like these is that you're able to traverse into some really tender, um, deep sorrow in a way that feels, um, manageable and relatable. And so I just want to thank you for opening that door for us and for our listeners. I am not a mother. Um, but I, I think the point that you raise is really important of all of the seasons and moments in a woman's life. Um, pregnancy gestation and birth and delivery are some of the moments where, um, this connection between women and wild are most clear. And as you said, very articulate articulately already. Uh, we can also see, um, illustrated for us in that moment, how patriarchy has, uh, cut us off from our instincts and that's something worth great, anything, um, for, for me as someone who has not experienced motherhood and is, uh, honestly quite hesitant about that season of life.

Speaker 3: [\(47:36\)](#)

Um, I think that the, there are certain archetypes associated with womanhood within the culture of our shared faith, um, at, uh, perhaps, um, it seems like, uh, we're being encouraged towards embodying like the nurturer, right? So, so you embody the nurturer and maybe at first you're lotted, you receive some kind of social congratulations and acceptance, but then the further you get down that path, the more you realize how completely unsupported you actually are. Um, and the culture doesn't, doesn't wanna talk about the shadow side. It doesn't wanna talk about the hard parts. Um, it also, isn't equipped to prepare you for the spiritual and psychological changes that a company, um, becoming a nurturer, but, um, you know,

they can, the culture can, can continue living in a, in a fantasy land, uh, which maybe doesn't sound very kind, but, um, if you divorce any experience from its shadow side or its underside, then you are living in a fantasy.

Speaker 3: [\(48:46\)](#)

So, um, yeah, so, so I can see that being an experience for many women, but for me, I think I, um, the wild woman is a disenfranchised archetype. So if you want to step into it and claim it, I, I think generally speaking, the, the biggest consequence will be alienation and rejection. And I feel like that's, that's been my experience. Um, so I've, I've done a lot of work around claiming my anger and, um, specifically within the context of sexual abuse, right? Like, man, it's so important to claim your anger about that. because without your anger, you're, you've cut off a important instinct for identifying predators and, um, compromising situations and being able to, you know, fight and, uh, remove yourself from, from danger. Uh, so yeah, I've done a lot around reclaiming my anger and, uh, that's, that's unwelcome, , that's not that that doesn't make people feel safe.

Speaker 3: [\(49:54\)](#)

It it's disruptive. And yeah, so that's an unfortunate reality of this, um, personal development. Um, and as Catherine was describing, um, I, I don't wanna put words in your mouth, but maybe feeling victimized in some way, way by motherhood, that her mother wasn't the one to prepare her. And most of the preparation involved, the medical or physical, um, aspects of that transformation. I felt that same thing as, as someone trying to step into my power, um, there, there are very few roadmaps, there are very few guides and, um, you know, so I just, you have to kind of learn everything as you go. And so it's easy to feel victimized by that. I think when you're, you know, you're going for it, and you're gonna reclaim your anger and you are thinking, wow, this is such good work. I'm gonna be a healthier person now I'm gonna be more whole, and then you express your anger in an appropriate setting and you get alienated or rejected. Um, yeah, I felt very victimized by that. Um, maybe I wouldn't have, if, if I'd had a guide who could have told me to prepare for this. Um, but, uh, I didn't. So even though it's a totally normal and, um, reasonable thing to have happen within the context of patriarchy, because I didn't know about it, I think I felt blindsided. And, and that was, that was really painful. I think we'd all prefer to just be supported and, uh, hopefully there's a group of us headed that direction.

Speaker 1: [\(51:38\)](#)

Yeah, no, there's a, you said something that really resonated with me, um, in there that I wanna sit with for a second, that you said that embodying the wild woman archetype, if you choose to step into that, be prepared for alienation . Um, that I think that might be the case for embodying wildness on any level, you know, whether it's men, women like children, adults, like, it doesn't matter if you embody wildness prepare for alienation. Um, because there's something about the, especially in like the

Western American psyche that a whores wildness, whether it's our war against wolves or against, you know, against actual wilderness lands in the, in the Western United States, that we, we hate wildness on some level. And, you know, I felt that even myself that, you know, I, I feel like I embody a certain degree of wild, a wild version of Mormonism, you know, where I have definitely stepped into my, you know, my own and I'm, I am kind of alienated.

Speaker 1: ([52:37](#))

There's not a lot of people in my ward that can, that I can, you know, meet me on the same level. And so I definitely do feel kind of in alienation and an aloneness while at the same time that wildness is very like empowering and very enlivening. So I'm not saying that it's like this super dark, terrible thing that no one should ever do, but cuz it, it is very life giving. It's very sustaining. It's very fulfilling to step into wildness, but I think we need to honor the fact that there certainly is an alienation that goes along with it.

Speaker 3: ([53:06](#))

Yeah. And I think you would even take that further to, um, like the idea have a prophet or a prophets that, um, and as you know, Christ is sort of our example of in my mind, a balanced, um, embodied form of like the masculine and fem feminine harmonized that he was the, like, he, he was the one to sort of step into his wildness in a way that threatened everyone. Like almost everyone, you know, like many of his own apostle and um, made enemies of just about everyone he encountered. So, um, and you know, I, I think that's something that Amber and I at least have discussed recently is like this path ultimately leads to, um, like prophecy. Like that's, you know, like we're not, and I, and I don't wanna put words in your mouth either Amber, but I think that the, the, like, as we go down this path, we're realizing that, you know, the scriptures about your, um, children will prophesy cetera, et cetera, like this idea that like, if we are to sort of stay on the path that, um, that will get us from ALO state onward, um, it will involve this sort of removal from the loss and ideas and, uh, programming.

Speaker 3: ([54:57](#))

I wanna say that keeps us locked into ways of being, and thinking and experiencing the world that limit our capacity to see clearly the way things are. And there's that tension, I think, between what is wild and what is tame in the sense that like, there's a lot of artifice. There's a lot, lot of like Amber said the removal of the shadows, um, and bringing forth like the idea that mortality is a battle in the sense that you have to, you have to move through those shadow lands. You have to be awake. You have to be aware of what's going on, or you're not moving. You're not really alive. You're not really experiencing what's happening, like really happening in this world. Um, there, as we've seen countless times, you know, like there's groups of people who just don't wanna deal with that, they don't want the reality.

Speaker 3: (56:03)

They don't wanna hear what the prophet has to say. They don't wanna hear, what's like a true, they don't wanna see a true reflection of, of who they are and what they're representing and the programming, the ideas that they've accepted to be real and how they will literally crumble. Like they, they would rather hold tight to things that, um, will corrode and, um, break and fail. And so the wild woman or the wild man, like that wild self or wherever you identify, right? Like we're talking about a very gendered, um, sort of here, but, you know, I also believe that there's a, there's a spectrum of the wildness, um, that it is ultimately sort of, um, a removal from, from this state and from this sort of world as we've constructed it. And so there will be that tension. There will be that, um, yeah, just everything you've said, , it'll be difficult.

Speaker 3: (57:13)

I love that discussion of, of Christ as being like kind of the ultimate embodiment of the wild woman. If we can say that, uh, in the sense that he, he, he really did make people uncomfortable. I think at least like this is something I gleaned from the most recent, um, uh, conference general conference, but just that idea of kind of pushing one outside of their comfort zones. Um, and that, like, that's kind of the true nature of Christ was that his gospel was to, to love everyone. Right. Um, and that, that requires sometimes being uncomfortable, uh, in, in the system that's been set up or, or that we've set up for ourself. Right. Um, I, I think of the good Samaritan, you know, he wasn't stopping to help a neighbor with whom, uh, he knew very well or looked exactly like him spoke exactly like him.

Speaker 3: (58:17)

Right. It was, um, truly, you know, what, what should, for all intents and purposes be considered his enemy. Right. Um, and I think that's something that I keep thinking about, uh, as you're talking is that, you know, this, this wild woman archetype is pushing a boundary. Um, and it's asking us to become comfortable with things that like you've said, you know, I don't wanna be it, but that, that are uncomfortable things that are uncomfortable for us. Um, as we move forward, I keep thinking of, um, is it Maxine Hanks who, uh, you know, published, um, you know, feminists kind of, uh, theology from the church. Um, and then, uh, what as excommunicated and then later rejoined in 2012, um, and that she talked about that as being a very healing experience for her to be reaped, but that it was something she had to come back on her own and do for herself.

Speaker 3: (59:24)

Um, and I think that's, again, just kind of what the wild woman archetype is, is pushing us to do is to really be, um, cognizant of, uh, healing, like we've said already, but also like Christ's theology of, of really loving everyone, including ourselves and also pushing beyond kind of the, the construct or the confines of what we've already

set up for ourself, um, you know, within a patriarchal society, but just in society in general, that, that that's going to be required of us. Uh, um, and it's at the root of our, of our doctrine. Yeah, that's great. And the, and, you know, the push isn't necessarily gonna come from the church. Like we hear these great talks, right. And this idea of like, get outta your comfort zone, but like, this has to be self-directed . And I think that's where maybe we have hangups is that, you know, like a lot of active members wanna feel like they're doing the right thing and they're in line with the brethren and, um, they're not going outside of what is mainstream.

Speaker 3: [\(01:00:39\)](#)

Uh, I mean, we've, we've heard as much, right. That fall of the brethren, like they're not gonna lead you. Asray um, mm-hmm and I have, I have a lot of difficulty with that on many, for many reasons, but mostly that it doesn't teach us to self actualize and to take responsibility, to have our inner self, that wild self be the compass. Um, because first and I mean, we do hear that as well. Right. So there's conflicting messages, right? Like you need to be seeking Christ, et cetera, et cetera. But, um, I would love it if it was a much more direct message of you are you're responsible and accountable to, to yourself first and foremost in God. And, um, they're there for general counsel, right? They're there for support. Um, but they're, they're not gonna be next to you when you meet Christ, like making excuses for you or whatever, right.

Speaker 3: [\(01:01:44\)](#)

Like it's, um, that direct connection is at the heart of what a wild woman I think, embodies and encompasses and, and yearns for. And I think that's also why she's persecuted that, you know, just like with Christ, like that message of the kingdom is in you is not acceptable to the world to patriarchy or to any yeah, it's just not before we move on, I just wanted to chime in and say that my favorite description I've ever read of Christ comes from, uh, St. Teresa Avala. She described him as a wild brokenhearted prince of love, and I've gone through several different faith crises in my young life. And no doubt there will be more to come, but I, that particular description resonates for me in a really deep and personal way.