



Episode 8: Briana Saussy
Finding Magic in Prayer
Thursday, June 20, 2019

- 00:00:00 [music] You are not moving, you are being moved.
You are not singing, you are being sung.
You are not praying, you are being prayed
Prayed at the speed of love.
- 00:01:08 Janet Conner: You are not moving, you are being moved. You are not singing, you are being sung. You are not praying... now this is a pretty astonishing thought. It takes my breath away every single time I say this prayer, and I say it every day. I'm not praying, I am being prayed. It's a whole new depth, a mystical depth, to the beauty, the wonder, the mystery of prayer.
- 00:01:38 We're being prayed, and we're being prayed at an immeasurable speed, the speed of love. I'm Janet Conner and you have arrived in speed of love timing, perfect timing, to the eighth episode, the eighth conversation in this, my brand new podcast, *Praying at the Speed of Love*. Today, we are so blessed. We are going to have a very real conversation with a very real mystical ritualist.
- 00:02:12 Briana Saussy is dedicated to the restoration and remembering of the sacred arts. And that word remember really matters because it means... it's a medical term. Your members. If you visualize yourself having an illness, an accident, whatever and coming in for medical assistance, your members [laughter] get rearranged, right, back to their original starting positions. That's a base meaning of the word remember.
- 00:02:44 So when we remember the sacred arts, there's a part of our being, a part of our soul, a part of this mystical, multi-lifetime memory that awakens. And as it awakens, we are being restored, remembered back to our original starting position which is as a soul. Briana Saussy has a wide and deep background that makes it possible for her to help us remember.
- 00:03:19 She is a student of world religions, folk magic, divination, storytelling, philosophy—it's a long list—mathematics [laughter], ancient Greek, even Sanskrit. And every single one of these sacred arts and more come together in her beautiful, beautiful, beautiful book *Making Magic*. I was very blessed to be invited to read the manuscript and write an endorsement.
- 00:03:50 Now, I'll let you in on a little writer's secret, a little dark secret. Very often when a book comes from a publisher with a request to write a blurb, writers, this writer,

and all the writers I've ever met, what we do is read the introduction, really look at the table of contents, study the overview, maybe read one chapter and that is enough to write, I hope, a really good endorsement.

- 00:04:27 And that was my intention when *Making Magic* arrived in my mailbox. But from the moment I picked it up, something deeper happened, and I not only wanted to read every word, I had to. There was like a command, "Stay in the chair." And so day after day after day, I read every single word of *Making Magic*. The more I read, the more excited I got because talk about remembering.
- 00:05:01 Briana is talking about everything I know, everything I experience walking deep in the mystic, everything I share with you, everything I teach in all of my intensives. And in a sentence, what *Making Magic* is about, what I am about, what Briana is about is the memory, the knowing, the seeing that the world is alive. Every atom, every drop of water, every snake, every frog, every mountain, every tree, every human, everything and everyone is conscious, alive, and in a conversation with us.
- 00:05:46 All we have to do, all my prayers and intensives and books are about is stopping, listening, and noticing. And when you do that, you cannot miss just how sacred everything truly is, and *Making Magic*, her beautiful book, gives us dozens and dozens of ways to do exactly that. So in this conversation with the beautiful Briana Saussy, there is something waiting for you.
- 00:06:21 Some nugget of unconditional love is hovering in the air right now. It's waiting to enter your heart and help you remember who you really are. So let us begin this conversation listening to the voice of the Tibetan bowl as she calls us to open our invisible eyes, the eyes of our soul, and open our invisible ears, the ears of our heart, that we may see and hear what wants to be seen, what wants to be heard, what wants to feed your heart right now.
- 00:07:11 [the bowl rings]
- 00:07:25 Janet Conner: She's still singing. She sounds so beautiful. What a long... she has like one note right now. She's just like one of us saying, "Ahhhhhhh." [laughter]. *Making Magic*, this fabulous book, is out this month. It's brand new right now, so we are very blessed to have one of the very first conversations with Briana about this book and her own magical, mystical, sacred life. Welcome, Briana.
- 00:07:53 Briana Saussy: Oh, and Janet, thank you so, so very much for having me and thank you for that gorgeous introduction and that blessing to start us off. It was exactly what I needed at this moment in my day [laughter].
- 00:08:10 Janet Conner: That's what we all need. That's why... well, you and I are basically teaching exactly the same thing, maybe with different forms and formats. But that little moment of ritual, that little moment of ceremony, that little

pause, that extra breath so that you can step into the sacred space and hear and see and know, this is my life and I know this is yours. So before we get into your beautiful life which is really what *Praying at the Speed of Love* is all about, do tell us about the book. This is brand new. I want everyone to know about it. What is the magic in *Making Magic*?

- 00:08:47 Briana Saussy: So this book is a book that came out of requests that I had in my community to begin teaching the folk magic traditions that I had grown up with, and they were coming from a lot of different directions in the community and kind of constellated all around the time of the presidential election in 2016, interestingly enough.
- 00:09:21 And so I taught a class and then out of that class came the seeds that became this book. And when we talk about magic, I think one of the most important things to understand is that no one is actually going to be able to define what magic is for someone else, right? Because of exactly what you said: magic is relational. The world is alive, and we are connected to it.
- 00:09:58 And what those connections look like, what those relationships look like are going to be unique and particular and different for every single person. With that said, there are certain patterns that we can use as signposts to help us come into our own magic. And three of those that I focus on throughout the book is that magic is bigger than we think. So it's a much broader category than what we normally think of.
- 00:10:36 Normally, when we think of magic, we think either of like a stage magician doing illusions, or we might think of a wizard in Harry Potter World with a magical wand. But magic, the oldest and the most ancient understandings of magic which are still very relevant today tell us that magic is much bigger, much vaster than what we normally think that it is.
- 00:11:04 And magic is also closer than we think it is. Often we think that in order to find magic we have to go off into some exotic land, or we have to leave our regular everyday life. Or we have to completely do a 180 with our job and our family and everything else, and that's absolutely not true.
- 00:11:32 I mean, sometimes maybe, right? Maybe that is what you in particular need to do, but magic is in the everyday, right? It's not away from the everyday, so it's a lot closer than we think it is. And then the final signpost that I find really helpful to remember—I love how you emphasize that word—is that magic is simpler than we think. So another idea we have about magic is that it has to be really elaborate, that everything has to be fancy and ornate and complicated.
- 00:12:07 And some of the most magical acts that I have experienced have been absolutely the height of simplicity. So magic is bigger than we think, closer than we think, simpler than we think, and magic is relational. So you have to dive into your

relationship with the world and with the numinous to discover what magic is for you because not me, not anyone can tell you. It's something that you have to discover for yourself.

- 00:12:43 Janet Conner: I'm sitting here nodding going, "Yeah, yeah, [laughter] yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." I have had, in the past, people ask me to define the word soul because prior to *Prayer Artist* all of my work was centered around this word soul. I was teaching courses called *Your Soul Wants Five Things*. The first book, *Writing Down Your Soul*; the second book, *Soul Vows*; the third, *Find Your Soul's Purpose* and so on and so on and so on.
- 00:13:13 So I mean, soul is like the center. If you thought of Janet, you thought of the word soul. So I would get these emails saying, "Well, how do you define soul?" and I'd write back, "Well, [laughter] I do have concepts around this mysterious, mystical, magnificent word. I do. But I cannot define it for you." And people would be very annoyed [laughter].
- 00:13:47 Briana Saussy: Mm-hmm. Yeah, yeah.
- 00:13:50 Janet Conner: But this is why I think, Briana, and this is one of the things that's so gorgeous about your book. I have been feeling for several years that the time period of spiritual self-help is over because in spiritual self-help, there's the piece of it, part of it, the expectation that the reader is going to receive step one, step two, step three, do this and then you'll get that.
- 00:14:16 If you do A, B, and C, then X, Y, and Z are going to happen. Tell me what I need to do, what I need to think. And I can't. I won't. What I can do is show you how to open yourself: rituals and ceremonies, deep soul writing, ways that you can cross that threshold between worlds. But it's never, it never has been... well, I don't know what to call it, but self-help.
- 00:14:47 I feel like we've dropped, and your book absolutely drops us into what I call the mystic. Now, this is the place where from... it's the creative source from which everything comes and to everything will return. And it's alive right now. This is why I'm so excited about your book. You make it so clear that the sacred, the creative force of the world, whatever languaging you want to put around that is in this table, in this computer, in this microphone, in the storm that's building outside, in the wind, in the trees, in my relationship with my son. It's in everything.
- 00:15:26 And for you to have condensed... I love this. Magic is big, close, simple, and relational. Big, close, simple, and that is exactly what your book does [laughter]. That's it.
- 00:15:43 Briana Saussy: Thank you.

- 00:15:45 Janet Conner: And you do it with stories. I so love the way you open the book with a version of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* that's different. Why stories?
- 00:15:57 Briana Saussy: So that's such a good question. So for me, story has always been both a very healing thing. When I was born, I had a cleft palate, and I was a failure to thrive baby which basically means that my mother and father were told by a team of medical doctors that I wouldn't make it through the week. And of course, my mother and my father, being my mother and father, were like, "Whatever!"
- 00:16:34 And so [laughter] they brought me home and ignored various bits of medical advice, and I had two surgeries before I was four years old to repair my cleft palate. And so through that time, through my earliest years, I was literally being sewn back together. For those of you who don't know, some of your listeners might not, a cleft palate is basically where the soft palate at the roof of your mouth is missing.
- 00:17:06 And sometimes there's also a cleft lip. Sometimes it's just the palate. And so I had a very good doctor, and he was an older doctor who had actually been one of the people who created the modern day technique they use to repair cleft palates, repaired mine. And so I was literally being sewn back together in these very early years of my life, and I had... oh yes, what were you going to say?
- 00:17:38 Janet Conner: Briana. That is... I'm sitting here giggling because I wasn't planning on talking about the word remember. I actually have this little script. Maybe [laughter] the listeners know from my previous show that I do, I do plan this thing, but then things happen, things come through me. And I just found myself right now—why—needing to say that remember is a medical term which is something I learned when Mark Nepo was on my show a couple of years ago.
- 00:18:13 But I had no way of knowing, Briana, that you were sewn. And your palate, the top of your mouth, this is how we are able, as a baby, to suck and therefore to thrive and to eat, but it is essential to talking. And here we are talking [laughter]. So your magician physician, the magician physician showed up and remembered you back—
- 00:18:39 Briana Saussy: He did.
- 00:18:39 Janet Conner: —so that you could teach us to remember what magic really is. You can't make this stuff up.
- 00:18:45 Briana Saussy: You can't. You can't. No, it's absolutely... when you were talking about remembering I was chuckling because I was thinking about this. And I had not planned to talk about this story, but it bears a relation on the question. So as a little girl, all of this is happening, and I was quite anxious about

it all. And my family, I have a big family, South Texas family, and they're full of characters and they told me stories.

- 00:19:20 And so in the hospital, I got stories, and on the way to the hospital because we went to Houston—I live in San Antonio, but we went to Houston which is a three hour drive—I received stories. And so I was fed stories, and so from my very earliest years, I have associated stories not only with healing but also with being sewn back together, right?
- 00:19:47 Sewing broken things back together. And then as I got older and I learned more about storytelling traditions and oral traditions, I saw, "Hey, this is not just something that I experience. Learning through stories and healing through stories and remembering and reweaving ourselves through stories, this is something that happens all over the world."
- 00:20:19 And I also noticed that as I learned various magical things, it was never presented as, "Okay. We're going to do some magic now." It was usually presented through a story, and then some piece of the story was taken and the invitation was made, would you like to try that? "And the moon guided them home." What happens if you talk to the moon?
- 00:20:50 Maybe you want to make an offering to the moon, right? So they're also vehicles for teaching in the most traditional way, and so for me, that's the power of story. That's why I love story, and I've incorporated stories and storytelling in every single thing that I do. So they're in my book, but they're also in all of my teaching.
- 00:21:19 I find them... I'm a classicist. I studied classics in school, and you talk a lot about primary source material. And when we talk about things like prayer and the sacred arts and magic, I think stories are our primary source materials.
- 00:21:34 Janet Conner: Right. If we visualize ourselves millennia ago, even just a few centuries ago, the only entertainment was to sit together in a circle and hear stories. All religions came down to us as stories, but in our world we're so... although we, okay, we still love movies, right?
- 00:22:02 Everybody runs to the movies. That's a story. Novels are stories. Your book is story after story after story. Stories are sacred. I think that's what I'm taking from you. Stories are sacred. You were so blessed to move into that family. Your soul chose this beautiful family because, okay, my mother read me child stories at night.
- 00:22:31 But I guarantee that if it said something at the end of the story about, "And the moon guided them home," she didn't then say, "Janet. Would you like to talk to the moon [laughter]? Why don't you go to the window?" You were so blessed to be surrounded by people who naturally resonated with the story isn't there to sit on the page. The story is there to enter this little girl's heart and teach her about the magical nature of the world.

- 00:23:05 Briana Saussy: It's true. It's absolutely true, very much so.
- 00:23:10 Janet Conner: And this show, which is unlike any podcast out there, is about your story. It's about everybody's story: their prayer stories. So I'm always reading with that in mind. What might it be like to ask this particular author about her prayer story? Well, you just gave it all away in the acknowledgment [laughter], right? And I, I don't know if my listeners are like this, but I read books backwards.
- 00:23:40 I want to read the bibliography first because what books light you on fire and then I'll find other things I want to read and then the acknowledgments. Well, lo and behold, in your acknowledgments, you say thank you to your nana, nana—
- 00:23:55 Briana Saussy: Nana. Mm-hmm.
- 00:23:55 Janet Conner: —for teaching you the power of prayer. Well, we want to know, Briana, what did your nana teach you, [laughter] and how has your prayer story evolved?
- 00:24:07 Briana Saussy: So my nana is now 85 years old, and she is still in remarkably good health. We are very blessed to have her with us still. I actually have a picture from two years ago on Mother's Day of her landing a jump shot with my six-year-old—he was six at the time—playing basketball. So she is spry.
- 00:24:34 And she is a devout Baptist. So half the way that I describe my family is half are devout Baptists, half are devout Catholics, all of them are magical. I think magic is like the one thing they agree on even if they don't know it. So she is from the devout Baptist-side of the family and comes from a lineage of Baptist preachers. And so she gets up every morning and has her bible and prayer time.
- 00:25:05 And she gets up at, usually, it's around 4 or 5AM and, basically, what she is doing is she is having contemplative prayer. And her philosophy on prayer is that prayer is a time that you set aside to acknowledge and express gratitude for what has been given and to speak out the needs that are on your heart.
- 00:25:35 And I mean, she can pray paint off of walls. Like the woman... if I have a situation or if I have a friend with a situation and prayer is required, I call on my nana because her prayers are so strong and her faith is so strong. And although her path is not my path, I learned the power of devotion to a spiritual act, specifically to the act of prayer, at her knee.
- 00:26:10 And I really learned what it meant to set aside time, and send love and support, and focus your mind on others, and focus your mind on what has been given and what has been received, and really allow those things to saturate your mind and your heart and your body.

- 00:26:35 And the kind of effect that that has, not just in the moment but as you go through your day, so that prayer stops being something that you do and it starts being something that you are. That you live your life as a prayer.
- 00:26:58 Janet Conner: Well, you've just [laughter]... I'm on fire over here. And of course, that's my theme song. You're not praying, you're being prayed. And this is my task right now as a *Prayer Artist*. I was awakened a year ago and heard in my left ear, "*Prayer Artist*." Oh boy. Okay. Nobody calls themselves a *Prayer Artist*. What in the world does this mean?
- 00:27:20 And pretty quickly it became clear to me that I've got to redefine prayer because if you open the dictionary, Briana, ugh. The definition of prayer is you're supplicating an external, judgmental, male god. They don't even have to say male. It's just taken for granted.
- 00:27:37 Briana Saussy: We know it, right?
- 00:27:38 Janet Conner: Right. I mean, like, "Oh, could God be anything else?" And then it's in a formula. It's in this really tight, tiny little box, and I grew up Catholic in that box. You say the *Glory Be*, the *Hail Mary*, the *Our Father* on your knees, in a rosary. And I know now that that's a very beautiful prayer, but as a kid it was just, "Okay. Let's say grace as fast as we can so we can eat. Let's say the rosary as fast as we can so we can go upstairs and do our homework."
- 00:28:06 So I've got to redefine prayer. Now, ha ha, I'm sitting here going, "Oh yeah. Oh. You're sure you don't want to call on some saintly person to do this? What are you asking me to do, to redefine prayer?" But I dove into it and I know I'm not finished, but one of my definitions of prayer is that they're love songs. This is this intimate—and I sense your nana felt it—this intimate relationship with the divine. Not shut up and obey but love songs.
- 00:28:41 So of course, I'm eagle-eyed to anything in your book about prayer. On page 132 here's what you say, and it just set my heart on fire: "Prayer is not only magical, but also a deeply erotic act." Now, I promise you Sister Mary Margaret never said that prayer was an erotic act, but that is how I'm experiencing it now.
- 00:29:09 This is this ecstatic, your whole body opens... well, ecstasy is the only word that I can come up with. You go on and say, quote, "If you cannot pray, you cannot remember," there's that word again. "If you cannot pray you cannot remember yourself back to your magic." I promise you. My parents and Sister Mary Margaret and Father O'Rourke never said anything like this [laughter].
- 00:29:39 And finally, you write: "Praying itself is an act done with the intention to enter into relationship with the extraordinary." So I'm sitting in my chair reading the manuscript—it was just in paper form then—and just shouting with joy and amen. So how are you redefining prayer, Briana?

- 00:30:04 Briana Saussy: Well, I think you and I are very much on the same page about this. So my nana taught me, she taught me the power of it. And then it was a part of my personal practice, but I didn't talk about it a lot with my students or in my community. And then about seven years ago, the number one question I was asked that year—it might have been like 2011, 2012, so maybe a little bit more than seven years ago—was how do I pray?
- 00:30:40 And I thought, "This is such an interesting question." And I mean, it was coming, again, it was like I got it every week, and I thought, "This is weird. This is an odd question," because I'm my nana's granddaughter and I'm like what do you mean how do you pray? How do you not pray, right? Like I mean, how do you go through life not praying? And then I thought about it and I thought exactly... I had a very similar experience, Janet, to what you described thinking, "Well, how have... what have many of us been taught about prayer?"
- 00:31:17 And it's exactly what you said, right? It's like this supplication, "I'm not worthy," on my knees, crawling over broken glass to a deity that is so far above me and removed from the everyday concerns of my life. And what I really need to pray for is a new job, but God doesn't care about the fact that I don't have a new job. So what is that? What does that get me?
- 00:31:46 And I also realized that everybody thought prayer was either something you said by rote like a *Hail Mary* or an *Our Father*, or that prayer was something that had to be spoken aloud. And so I mean, and this was just like a... it was such a moment for me of sort of seeing the world that I live in and then the world that we're all in.
- 00:32:17 And how sometimes they're really disconnected because I understood prayer as planting seeds and holding my newborn baby to my breast and making love with my husband and going out with girlfriends for margaritas and dancing to really good salsa music and clapping my hands at the end of an amazing performance by our symphony and rolling around on the floor with my dog and having a really good cup of coffee in the morning as I'm looking out at the stars.
- 00:32:55 And so prayer, because I had grown up with this understanding, we have always said in my home, "Our work is to be blessed and to be a blessing in turn." So, right, I had this idea of my life as a prayer, and then I realized but a lot of these things that I understand to be prayers and acts of praying are not seen that way by most of the world.
- 00:33:31 And so I started talking about that, and specifically when it comes to magic, people seek me out. Magic is transformative, of course. When we seek out magic and we seek out ritual, we're usually seeking to transform something into something else. It's not a coincidence that it's related to alchemy.

- 00:33:58 And so people would come to me wanting magic, and I would say, "Well, are you blessing yourself or your family? What prayers are you working with?" And they'd look at me like I had two heads, and so I included a chapter in my book called "Praying Down Hard." It's very the way that my people do it. We pray down hard for things.
- 00:34:29 And we pray hard for hardships that are experienced by our family members, by people that we know. That's another thing about prayer is that we often think of it as this light and always beautiful and lovely and holy thing, and prayer, as I say it, prayer is not afraid to get its feet dirty, right? The angels that I work with are angels that will get down in the mud with you in your struggles, whatever they happen to be. However high, however low, it doesn't matter.
- 00:35:04 And so that has become sort of one of the surprising things that I talk about when I talk about magic is the role that prayer plays in living a magical life and finding the magic within our lives.
- 00:35:29 Janet Conner: I'm writing frantically as you're talking because it's all so beautiful and it's all... I mean, I am remembering myself back into being by listening to you. So let's do it.
- 00:35:45 Briana Saussy: Let's do it!
- 00:35:46 Janet Conner: Let's do it! Can we pray together?
- 00:35:49 Briana Saussy: Yes. Let's pray together. Absolutely. So this is a prayer that I use, and actually, it's in the book. So every ritual opens up with this exercise. And it is a prayer, and it's a specific kind of prayer. So in my tradition, this is what's called a banishing. So the intention with this prayer—and it's something that I find incredibly useful, and I think everybody finds it useful—is to identify something that we're carrying that we don't need to keep carrying.
- 00:36:35 We can drop it. Maybe we drop it for an hour. Maybe we drop it for the rest of the day. A lot of times for me, it's something distressing that I saw in the news and there is an acknowledgment, "Okay, that this happened," and also, "I can't carry this with me and do the best work that I'm here to do." So this is a prayer that does not have words, instead it relies on your breath.
- 00:37:03 And one of the traditions that I have been taught in is the currendera tradition. It's basically indigenous folk healing that comes to us from Mexico and then came into the Southwestern United States and blended with Catholicism in various ways. And in currendera, one of the most sacred tools that we have is our breath.
- 00:37:32 So this is a prayer that we actually breathe instead of saying. So if everyone will just take a moment to center yourself in whatever way you do that and allow, if you're able to, allow your feet to rest on the ground. And if you aren't able to, just

acknowledge the connection that you have with the ground and the way that our earth supports you.

00:38:19 And as you're ready, breathe in a deep breath, allowing it to move from the soles of your feet all the way up to the crown of your head. Experience that breath spiraling up from your feet all the way up to your head. And as you take in a breath and you take in another breath, I want you to remember that when we breathe in fully, when we really allow ourselves to breathe deeply and fully, we are saying yes to life and to the act of living.

00:39:13 And we are also saying yes to allowing ourselves to be fully nourished. So take in that breath from the soles of your feet all the way up to the crown of your head, and then as you release that breath, release it fully and completely. Feel the little muscles in-between your ribs contracting.

00:39:44 When we release our breath completely, we affirm our ability to say no. We can let go of this. We can release this and make space for something else. And so on your next exhalation, as you release your breath fully and completely, invite yourself to release one thing that you want to put down.

00:40:21 Maybe you want to put it down for the duration of this podcast. Maybe you want to put it down for the rest of the day or until Friday or for the next month or maybe forever. And it can be big or it can small. It can be the boyfriend that didn't call back or the child that you're in a fight with or the grief that you feel over the argument that you had with a work colleague.

00:40:54 It can be the embarrassment of wearing the wrong outfit to the party, or it can be the concern that you have that you're not going to make rent. Whatever it is, set it down. You may very well pick it back up again, but you can set it down for a little while.

00:41:15 And then just breathe in one more time and as you do so, bless yourself with whatever words or emotions or feelings come to mind. Bless your physical body. Bless your soul and your spirit, your intellect, your emotional life. Bless all of the parts of yourself.

00:41:49 And you can... the nice thing about this particular prayer—in the book we refer to it as the "Easy Breath Relax and Release"—you can do this anywhere. So I'm a big fan of prayers that can be taken on the road, so to speak, and this one, you can do this anywhere. Nobody will know what you're doing. You'll know. Nobody else will know, and I really love that about this particular prayer.

00:42:17 Janet Conner: Briana, it's such a sweet condensation of a teaching that I first heard from Matthew Fox that we are called to live the mystic's yes, but to get to the mystic's yes, you have to be an expert at the spiritual warrior's no. Now, I've been pondering that and weaving that into everything that I do. You just condensed it into breathe in yes, breathe out no [laughter].

- 00:42:47 Briana Saussy: Mmm [laughter].
- 00:42:48 Janet Conner: I got to tell Matthew Fox about this. He's going to love it. Breathe in yes, breathe out no. Breathe in the mystic's yes. This is who I really am. This is what I'm remembering. Breathe out the spiritual warrior's no. I don't need to carry my feelings about what I read in the paper 10 minutes ago [laughter].
- 00:43:07 Briana Saussy: I mean, seriously, right?
- 00:43:08 Janet Conner: This is so helpful! This is a daily political newspaper reading breathe. So you might call it the easy breathe. I'm going to call it the newspaper breathe. Breathe in yes and breathe out no. And eventually, if we did this, if a lot of people did it, maybe the whole world could put down all the ways we hurt one another. Maybe we could put down all the ways we abuse our precious Mother Earth. Okay. Breathe in yes. This is so fabulous.
- 00:43:43 Briana Saussy: I have a short story to share about this. So a couple of years ago, because it speaks to exactly what you said. I didn't know Matthew Fox had said that, but I love that. I think it's so apt. And I was leading a retreat in Santa Fe, so I had a group of fabulous people. And we did this prayer every time we got together. So you know how usually these all day things run.
- 00:44:12 You get together. You do work. You take a break. You get together. You do work. You take a break. You go to lunch and you come back. And so every time we came back into our circle, we did this. So the first day, everybody was really jamming on it, and on the second day, we had a pilgrimage to a sacred site. And one of the participants didn't show up, and we were like, "Where is she? What's happening?"
- 00:44:39 I hadn't heard anything so I was sure that she was okay. She came back the next day and she said, "You know," she said, "I was really tired, and my body was really tired," and she said, "And before doing this breathing prayer and banishing, I would never have given myself permission to just rest, to just not participate in part of the activity and let my body rest."
- 00:45:15 And she said, "But I've been practicing it, right, I did it all day the first day," and she said, "And so I was able to let myself rest." And so it was so wonderful to hear that because this tiny, tiny—really all we're doing is paying attention to what we do all the time, breathe in, breathe out—this tiny thing had given her the ability to say no and to set a boundary and to really hear her body saying, "I'm tired. I need to rest."
- 00:45:52 And she not only heard it, but she honored it. And I call my community Soulful Seekers, and I feel like so many of my Soulful Seekers, they help. They're helpers. We're all helpers. We show up, and we're here to assist and support and

help. And often the person that gets the shaft is the individual, right? We don't take care of ourselves.

00:46:17 And so when she did that, I was like, "This is success! This is what success looks like to me," so I wanted to share that because I felt like it spoke to this notion of being able to say no so that we can say yes.

00:46:34 Janet Conner: That was the point he made so emphatically. You can't say yes because it's so easy as you're exploring your spiritual life to want to dive into the big yes. But until you kind of clean house [laughter]... I mean, if you can't even listen to your body saying, "You know, we need a nap, dear," right, then how can you open your arms to take in the goddess and transform the world? No. What you need to do right now is take a nap. Pretty powerful breath you taught us, Briana.

00:47:04 Briana Saussy: [laughter] Thank you.

00:47:06 Janet Conner: So the book *Making Magic* is filled with beautiful stories and rituals and ceremonies just like that, and I do want all the listeners to get *Making Magic*. And I do want to give a little shout out to Sounds True for how beautifully they designed it. You know, a lot of books are just words on the page, chapter one, chapter two. Somebody put real thought into the shadow drawings. It's beautifully done.

00:47:39 Briana Saussy: Thank you so much. They are amazing. I love them.

00:47:44 Janet Conner: You're in very, very good hands. It's a beautiful book, and there's that little joyful extra piece that, as a person holds it, the colors, the design, the flap, the decaled edges. I mean, it's all part of the story, and it makes *Making Magic* even more compelling and beautiful. But although everybody's going to get the book, in the meantime, they can click on Prayer Bag #8 and get a gift from you. I feel like an MC at a crazy game show. What's [laughter] behind Prayer Bag #8?

00:48:24 Briana Saussy: Yes. Okay. So I was really delighted to donate two yummy things to the Prayer Bag. The first is a really meaty, chunky excerpt from my book, so, yes, I would love you to order and pre-order my book and share *Making Magic* with the world because I think our world needs more magic.

00:48:50 But you might just want to take a test drive before you do that, or you may have a friend that you would like to introduce to the book and not necessarily ask them to buy it or buy it for them. So there is a really lovely, long excerpt from the book, and it is also beautifully designed. My design team at Sounds True and my artist, Cassandra Oswald who did the cover art for the book, they are just, they're amazing.

- 00:49:22 And they have done such a good job to make everything really visually beautiful, so this also is visually beautiful. You can print it out and dive in and just get a taste of what *Making Magic* is all about. And then the second gift is actually the *Making Magic Journal*, and so in the book *Making Magic*, there are rituals in every chapter. And part of how I was taught ritual and ceremony is that we always enter into that space thinking about certain things.
- 00:49:58 We have prompts. We have questions that we are holding, not only in our minds but also in our hearts. So the *Making Magic Journal* flows with the book. It goes hand in hand with the book, and every time there is a prompt or a question in the book, there's a space in the *Making Magic Journal* to write down your responses. Now, this is a PDF, so you can download it and you can print it out. It's gorgeous, so you can absolutely print it out.
- 00:50:30 But you can also... it has what's called typable boxes, so you can actually type your answers directly into the document on your tablet, on your desktop, on your laptop. So for those who love their tech gadgets and may take those with them everywhere they go, this is responsive in both electronic and hard copy form. And it also has some blessings.
- 00:50:58 It has some other suggestions like if you want to try your hand at divination, there's a place where you can start to record some of your experiences doing that. So there's a lot of goodies tucked inside that *Making Magic Journal*, and that is available for all of you as well.
- 00:51:16 Janet Conner: It's an incredible gift, and it's no accident that you're here because you are so speaking to the choir. My first book *Writing Down Your Soul* is all about a very deep, deep—I don't even use the word journaling—we're dropping into the theta brainwave state and really accessing divine mind but in writing. So I can guarantee all the listeners are already soul writers and to get a free journal is like, "Well. Okay. All in [laughter]," right?
- 00:51:50 So it's about the magnificent access to our magical, mystical world and a place to write about what you are noticing and experiencing and feeling and hearing. Perfect gift, Briana, for *Praying at the Speed of Love*. So all of that, listeners, is at janetconner.com/8. This is the eighth episode. If you forget that it's number eight, just come to janetconner.com and click on the podcast, and you'll see Briana's picture.
- 00:52:27 But on this Show Notes page, you can not only click on the Prayer Bag and get these gifts, you can learn more about Briana, get a link to order her book, get a transcript. We covered a lot of ground, and Maureen Carter blesses us by transcribing it. And people are telling me they download the transcript for every single show. And then I've been taking notes so there'll be a few fun ideas in the Prayer Action Blue Box.

- 00:52:58 But then there's a community, a community. Click on the Facebook group and come and share your stories of breathing in yes and out no. So Briana, where are you going next? Where is your magical, mystical life taking you? What are you curious about?
- 00:53:16 Briana Saussy: Well, I am always curious about uncovering the sacred arts which includes magic, and it includes prayer and includes alchemy and dream work. And I'm really fascinated in how these things are related and in the bodies of knowing that have been lost and fragmented that would have passed down this knowledge coherently.
- 00:53:50 And instead, we're finding our way back. We are remembering it piece by piece, and so as I said when we talked about stories, for me, stories are a huge part of that. So every year, I have a year-long course that I teach on magic and the sacred arts, and my next big thing is looking at what stories I want to add to that and what new areas I want to dive into.
- 00:54:20 I'm also, among the other things I do, I'm an astrologer, and so I'm also paying a lot of attention to the stars these days and to some of the outer planet shifts that we have happening and looking at that. And especially looking at the way that it shows up in our little kid's life because I'm a mom. I have an 8-year-old and an 11-month-old, so I look at my boys and look at what's happening in the sky and how it's affecting them, or how it shows up in their lives. And I've been learning a ton from that. So that's been a really exciting area of inquiry for me.
- 00:54:57 Janet Conner: And talk about a story. I mean, the dance that's going on that we have been so oblivious to because in many of our spiritual traditions, in mine, nobody ever... in fact astrology, numerology, these were all, I don't know, weird and divination. And you can't do that. You can't do that. You can't do that. It's evil. Instead, I too am turning into... I'm not an astrologer, but I'm so interested. And I'm finding that astrology fits in and augments everything we're doing in every one of the prayer intensives.
- 00:55:32 And one of the astrologers I follow, Michael Lennox, describes it as a story. You've got the story of the personal planets, the story of the outer planets. So Jupiter is talking to you. Chiron—woah, nelly—is talking to you. And to begin to hear these... these are probably the original... this is maybe the original, original, original, original, the beginning of story.
- 00:56:00 We can imagine our ancestral mothers looking up and beginning to see this story dancing out in the sky. Oh, Briana. What a magnificent conversation. Thank you so much for writing this book *Making Magic* and coming to be with us on *Praying at the Speed of Love*.
- 00:56:22 Briana Saussy: Oh, thank you so much, Janet, for having me. It has been a pleasure and an honor and a privilege. I deeply appreciate it.

00:56:30 Janet Conner: Well, here's how I can say thank you. This is just a small piece of one of my original prayers. It's called "The Romance." Yeah, this is why I think prayer is an erotic act. Here's just a little piece of it.

00:56:45 Are you there?
Are you real?
Do you hear me?

A voice answered,
Yes, Beloved.
Is there something you want to say?
And in that moment
That sacred, ordinary, sitting-in-my-chair moment
The round door between worlds opened
And love walked through.

We've been meeting on that threshold ever since
Each day a revelation, a comfort, a query, a sigh.

This is what I want to tell you:
The romance is real.

00:57:32 Briana Saussy: Mmm-mm.

00:57:35 Timothy Frantzich's Voice: This conversation in the mystic with *Prayer Artist* Janet Conner has been rated L.

00:57:45 [music] You are not moving, you are being moved.
You are not singing, you are being sung.
You are not praying, you are being prayed
Prayed at the speed of love.