



Sarah Faith Gottesdiener

Creator of the beloved *Many Moons* lunar workbooks and potent, information-packed newsletters with monthly Tarotscopes and inspiring imagery through her design studio Modern Women, Sarah Faith Gottesdiener is an artist and teacher sharing her insights on Tarot, working with the moon, and embracing intuition to empower and transform your life. This fall, Sarah's latest book, *The Moon Book: Lunar Magic to Change Your Life*, will be released. We spoke with Sarah about the new book, her path as a psychic and artist, the importance of value-based business, and working with Tarot.

interview by Elizabeth Rhodes
photographer Steven Anthony Roe

When did you become introduced to Tarot and lunar magic?

Sarah Faith Gottesdiener: My mother was a Tarot reader for part of my life so Tarot cards were around, but she never officially taught me, like she never sat down with me or anything like that. I have hazy memories of decks being around and things like that. I guess my interest grew after college when I moved to Portland, Oregon and that was the first time I had ever met any real live witches. Before then, you read about it in books or there's movies about it, but I became friends with people who were psychics and Tarot readers and practicing witches. That was where I saw people doing this and practicing this. I feel very lucky to have been introduced to it by other queer people because I saw a sort of more feminist, self-empowering version of spirituality that to this day definitely still impacts my own viewpoints of spirituality, which is that you can create your own practice born out of your unique interests, your intuition, your talents, your gifts, in order to support whatever you want to do with your life or whatever you need to heal or whatever evolution you have. It was also at that same time where I picked up a deck and started using it, but it was always seen as a hobby. This was very much before "witches of Instagram" and I never really saw myself as being a Tarot reader. I guess I should say, this was never my interest, like I never thought, "Oh I'm going to make a living talking about spirituality constantly with people, being a psychic, talking about magic publicly." So it's just a strange turn of events. It's what I'm doing right now, let's just say, and I identify more as an artist and that's something I know I have to come back to. For seven years I studied Tarot and read for people while also working other jobs. I was a waitress, I worked in the design field, I'm also a graphic designer.

Did you go to school for graphic design?

SG: Yeah, I got my masters in design. And I got my undergrad in art history. So I first would do a lot of painting and video and then I changed it to design over time.

What were your first influences in music, writing, and visual art?

SG: I think I was really lucky, you know being the 90s and riot grrrl and a bunch of more alternative music coming out, noise music, being exposed to Alice Coltrane, Sun Ra, PJ Harvey and Bad Brains, going to shows and then coming out as queer and having the subculture around that was very impactful for me. On an artistic level, it was being exposed to Carrie James Marshall, Frida Kahlo, Bauhaus, Gustav Klimt, just a whole range of art and music that really still touches me and informs my practice. I believe music and art are spiritual. I believe that artists and musicians are channels. So that feels the same to me, in a way. So yeah, I feel very lucky to have been influenced. I also feel very lucky too, that I was raised Jewish and I was raised much less Catholic, and I think I was just very lucky to have been raised by parents who weren't particularly dogmatic. They wanted us to have tradition or some kind of knowledge but they weren't very... I have heard from a lot of people that they have been very harmed by religion and there's a lot of scars around religion and I just feel lucky that I didn't have that, really. It was more like I was just sort of searching for my own version of a guiding force and I ended up finding it in the occult, in metaphysics and feminist and queer spirituality.

You've been teaching and writing about the moon and lunar magic for nearly a decade. What are some of the misconceptions about you or your work that have surprised you? If I were to do an internet search of your name and I didn't know anything about you and your practice, I would see "lunar magic", "moon magic", *Many Moons* come up in the search results and I might be asking myself, "What is moon magic and what is this person talking about that's different?" How is this work different and unique?

SG: I think people think I'm going to be in a flowy dress and, "talk like this." [said with a delicate high voice] You know, I'm from the east coast and I'm Jewish and I'm intelligent. I value criticality, I value education and I value interrogation. I'm practical and I'm grounded. I think people have all kinds of misconceptions about people who are spiritual in public. Especially if they're not part of a religion. Especially if they are not a Buddhist or a Pastor. I think that anarchist kinds of religion are still really frowned upon and I'm even hesitant to use the word "religion". So I think there's that. People might think that if you're a spiritual

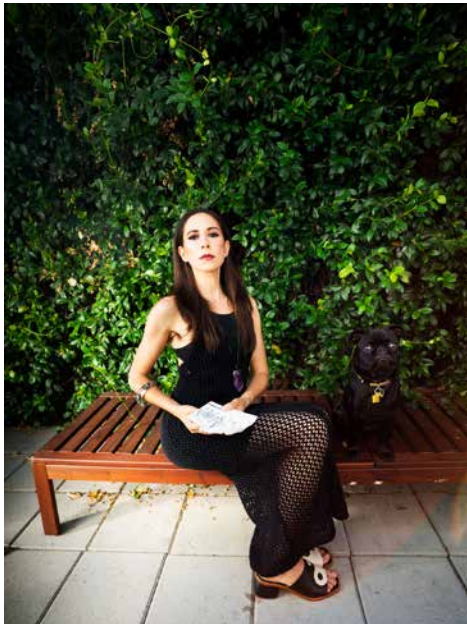
person or someone who is publicly spiritual, that I have some kind of motivation towards wanting to tell you what to do with yourself, or that I know the right way for you, and that if you sign up for my thing then everything will be taken care of and that goes along with a lot of damage that has been done with the merging of religion and capitalism and abuse and all of that. That's not at all what I'm trying to present on any level. I don't know what's best for you. I don't know what's going to work best for you. I do know that in my own life as a practitioner and as someone who has taught hundreds of people and who has sold thousands of self-published books about living in a particular way that is more lunar, that people's lives have transformed, they have healed. I'm interested in collectively creating a paradigm shift where we move away from the binary and we move away from right and wrong or bad and good or black and white, and even duality because I want to be clear: duality exists, I'm not saying duality doesn't exist, but actually we want holographic, you know? We're just so much more complex than extremes. There's all that grey area or that rainbow area in between the more intense spectrum. I think very much of life as a circle or 360 degrees, or something would also say a spiral, and the moon is our closest cosmic metaphor for that. The moon goes through its own rhythm and its own cycle every 29 or so days and we can see that. Venus does, too, it's different, but it's interesting that the two so-called feminine cosmic bodies are the only ones with cycles we can kind of see, you know?

And Venus' orbit itself is so unique in the shape that it creates and the different phases of that planet's cycle.

SG: So when I'm talking about lunar magic, I'm talking about a spiritual practice, I'm also talking about a paradigm shift, I'm also talking about a political ideology and I'm also talking about a way to approach our lives that are outside of the binary and capitalism and linear time. And so lunar magic is about working with, it's first and foremost about tapping into your energy and tapping into how you feel using the moon as a sort of metronome. Seeing how you feel when the moon is waxing, seeing how you feel when the moon is full, so on and so forth and then tuning into your energy, yourself and your own cycles. Once you know yourself more intuitively, then you can apply that knowledge to the cycles of the moon in order to create transformation, to manifest, to create things, and also just very practically. If you know that when the moon is waxing you are very tired, maybe not overload your life or your schedule or maybe understand that, "Okay I know I'm going to be very exhausted between this time and this time, I'm going to go a little easier on myself," I'm going to understand that I might need a little more rest or I might need to spread things out. For me as a witch, there is no more effective magic for me personally than magic that is lunar based in the way that I teach it, which is that you are working collaboratively with the moon through one entire cycle, around one theme, desire, goal, whatever topic. You're not just lighting a candle on the new moon and hoping it works and then doing a ceremony on the full moon. You're intentionally working through using your energy, the lunar energy that exists and co-creation from the universe and your guides or your helpers or anything else, in order to create long lasting positive change in your life.

I love that you use the word "collaboration" because I think one of the top line misconceptions whenever we see a word in front of magic, lunar magic or moon magic, is to reductively think, "Oh, it's just about the moon," or, "It's just about doing that, lighting that candle on the new moon, or doing that ritual on the full moon," but instead, you can be in collaboration with this energy that's actually always been with us. It's another way to look at something that's essentially always been there.

SG: Having a very intimate relationship with the moon, I think that we were talking earlier before you hit record about power and about giving it away, why we give it away, or why we feel motivated to give it away and I really want to encourage folks who read my work or take my classes to develop an intimate unique relationship with whatever energy you're collaborating with. Because it's for you, and again, I'm not here to say this is what you do and then this will happen. It might, because that's sort of the results that I've seen over time, but it's so much also about you exploring what this means for you and your spirituality



and your intuition and your power and your energy as it is like saying, "Oh, well the moon is in Libra, so I need to do this," but what do you think, how do you feel right now? Or what is coming up for you? Or what's your interpretation of what that is? Not in a book, on a somatic level or on an intuitive level. I think the danger that sometimes I see in popular witchcraft is that the power is in the tools or the power is in the planets and also a disrespect of, like a means to an end, like Jupiter is a means to an end or rose water is a means to an end when it's actually this living thing and magical practices can follow the way of capitalism very easily and become extractive. We have to honor the tools that we're working with and develop a relationship. The word intimacy comes up again. If you're going to be working with rosemary, you identify what it means for you, you have a relationship with the energy in the plant, you listen to it, you spend time with it, you invest in it, you engage with it, you give, you receive, you're respectful of it and you understand that it's not just, "Oh, I'm taking this because my witch book said to use this," or whatever. You engage with it in this ongoing fashion, and that is also this beautiful opportunity to explore other things and other aspects in yourself, like the world is nothing if not our relationships. Everything is in relationship to one another, and I think that magic and spirituality can be this blessed opportunity to explore certain relationships with certain things that we feel drawn to. And in doing so, gain respect for them, gain more love for them, and situate ourselves in relationship to that which attracts us.

I love that you're talking about this. It's the medicine we need right now but you're really speaking to shifting from that capitalist model of a successful business into more of a value-based business model. What have been the guiding principles to stay on course, so that you stay in alignment as a business with everything you've just said?

SG: I think that we can have non-negotiable values and I also think that capitalism

sets us up in a way that we're never going to be able to check all the boxes, you know? There's always going to be certain things. I will say that you don't make a million dollars self-publishing books; I will say that.

News flash!

SG: I know, sorry to break it to all the kids, thinking they're going to jump on a yacht after publishing workbooks about the moon for many years. So for me, I followed my intuition. I'm not a writer, I have ADHD and dyslexia and writing is actually the hardest creative outlet for me, it's the most painful. I got an intuitive message in 2014 after teaching about the moon in 2012. I had been working with the moon since around 2007. I think it's really important always for folks to take their time with something, not just take one class and then start teaching something. We need years of interrogation, especially if we're going to teach and present. So I took that time and then I started teaching and I had been teaching for several years. I did get a message, an intuitive message that was like, "Okay for three years you're going to write these guidebooks." And that was sort of it, and I was like, well, W-T-F? My business was not that before, I was not making publications.

Was it more of the graphic design work at that time?

SG: It was design, it was Tarot reading, it was teaching, it was even when I was selling through my business [which] was apparel and fine art prints. So it was never a plan to write these things but it just happened and it sort of took on a life of its own and I followed it through to the end. At the last workbook, there were six of them and they went for three years, as the last one was going out into the world, like we were mailing the last one, I was signing a contract to write a book that's coming out. So I was like, "Okay well that's the next thing." I wasn't super curious, I wasn't like, "Oh my gosh what's going to happen?" But it was interesting that it all kind of lined up and now it's two years later and I've been working for about a year and a half or so on this book. Values... There are so many things I could've done to make more money. I'm just laughing because it was like, when I first started teaching about the subject, using the moon for lunar manifestation, people looked at me like I was bonkers. There has always been a really strong lunar tradition globally for thousands of years and certainly in Pagan and Wiccan groups there is, but I teach and write in more of a nondenominational way. So there wasn't that as much, but I'm just laughing to myself because now it's like, moon this, moon that, moon moon moon moon. I just didn't sort of know what was going to happen, but I think that I followed my intuition and I sort of saw what was going to happen. I definitely turned down several book contracts before this one, in terms of values. I certainly have turned down options that are not in alignment for me ethically. Even though they might have been very good for my business and for my bank account. I have left situations that were completely out of alignment, that would have been good for me and my business. All of that is to say that I think leading a value-based business or creating a value-based business as much as leading a value-based life, is challenging and it doesn't always line up with so-called rewards and things like that. The last thing I'll just say before I close is: I was bizarrely keeping my magic separate from my business for the first three or so years of it. When I integrated it, it just took off. It was like the first *Many Moons* workbook had around twelve hundred copies made and the last one sold like twenty thousand and in between it just was like incremental. I could've expanded a whole business of operations and printed more, but I always trusted, I always chose my energy level and the energy levels of those working for me, working with me, in terms of what I was putting out. So there's this capitalist model that's like you expand, expand, grow, grow, grow.

Always do better than last year, than the last thing.

SG: Right, you gotta go this, you gotta do this, franchise, and that just wasn't interesting to me. We choose what we print based on what works for us and our energy, not what would make these amazing margins or what a venture startup would tell me to do. So there's always been that kind of thing. Even in doing that, I was met with a lot of burnout. I got burnout from doing it, I'm sort of over the healing. I'm in a much better place now but it took me a year or a year and a half,

which was also me writing this book, of recovering physically from fatigue because it was really intense to write, to channel, write, edit, design, ship, thousands and thousands of books on top of running a business, seeing clients, so on and so forth. So that's something I'm interested in exploring now is how is it really sustainable, and not "sustainable" as a buzzword, but how do we create sustainability, you know?

One of the things you mentioned about being a value-based versus profit-based business are the questions of what you align yourself with and what you want to use your voice for. Something I think you've done really well is using your voice to talk about the things that are important to you, part of 'the brand' that is you and everything that you do. You use your voice in a way that is noticeably different from a lot of brands because you speak up about current issues and cultural values that need reassessment. To me, that seems like activism integrated into that value-based business we spoke of. A lot of people are afraid to speak up and use their voice with integrity, especially if it opposes the 'powers that be' in that capitalist paradigm because it could be seen as limiting to their success, but what I'm hearing you say is when you are in alignment and you are authentically putting out what you feel called to put out there in the world, all of it is part of your business. Do you see it in that same way?

SG: I don't identify as an activist at all. I think that what we are being called upon in order to disrupt and change the paradigm; to understand how everything is connected and that everything is, in fact, political. White supremacy and all of the other forms of abuse that come with it, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, so on and so forth, that's not a world I want to live in and those aren't customers I want to have. So if someone's offended by me talking about Black Lives Matter, I don't want them as a customer. I think that goes along with what we were speaking about earlier in terms of this old guard exploitative model of capitalism, "More is better, do whatever you can to attract as many people as possible, move all the widgets," like all of these things, and I'm just not really interested in that. I think when you focus on trying to be everything to everyone you just become nothing. So I don't really see any of that as radical. I think that, there's two things I want to say. I think that we are experiencing, thank Goddess, such a change that the folks who aren't standing for something will become obsolete. Because I think more and more consumers, as we go through many, many, many different waves of economic crisis and economic recession and depression, what we invest our money into matters and as time goes on people are going to be more and more concerned with the processes "behind the curtain" so to speak. What people are getting paid, how they're making these things and that dovetails right into magic because if the rose quartz you're using was dug out by a five-year-old in Sri Lanka who's making thirty cents a day, I don't know how magical that rose quartz is. If the conditions of what our magic is or how we're being taught, if the conditions behind that are upholding hate and abuse and pain and hierarchy, that's not very magical. The essence isn't really there, so I think it's important to be as intentional as possible when you are creating a business and commit to trying to have your values align as much as possible with whatever you can do in order to make sure you can stand behind it as much as you can, understanding that there's always going to be caveats. For example, I have a book coming out. A concern is that yes, my book is going to be carried by sellers I don't align myself with. Amazon is going to carry it. That's the choice I had to make. I either had to keep control and print a limited amount or try to get this message out in a larger way that would potentially be of more service to people. And I had to make that choice, so that's what I'm getting at. I don't stand by Amazon, I don't use Amazon personally, I stopped my membership a year ago, and also my book is going to be carried there. When I was growing up in Hartford, Connecticut, the Barnes & Noble that I used to walk to, I would get an iced Starbucks coffee there and I would read occult books and LGBTQI books and that was how I got introduced. Free internet, or there was internet but not how it is now, it was still just AJ Gore's internet back in those days. That was what introduced me, so there's that. Being in places, being in a Barnes & Noble, if some queer kid is going to come across my book and see the word nonbinary and feel affirmed, then we kind of have to let go of the reins here a little bit. You know what I mean?

Yeah, and you know, full circle on this, what you're saying is really about using your voice for the things that matter to you, and it goes back to that reductive binary thinking. If we look around, it can seem like, what is activism? What is being an activist? And what I'm gathering from our discussion at this point is that activism is speaking your truth, speaking up, standing for something. If that makes you an 'activist' that might be just our current term for someone who's using their voice.

SG: Yeah, I mean, it's just semantics. I don't want to argue with you at all because I understand completely what you're saying. I think of activists as representative John Lewis, or Alexandra Ocasio-Cortez, or the founders of Black Lives Matter: Patrisse Cullors, Opal Tometi and Alicia Garza. That's who I think of. They've committed their lives and that's what they're doing. I'm not an activist. I just use my values within my business and my money and who I pay and how I pay and all of that stuff in a considered way which also is just being a witch. "What you put out" is very witchcraft 101. So if you're a witch and you have a so-called witch brand, which by the way I don't consider myself having a witch brand, we're just speaking in broad brushstrokes, and you can't tell people where you get your minerals from, you don't know who's printing your Tarot decks and you aren't in your own life working on your own healing or working to dismantle white supremacy or working to create a more just and healing equitable world for everybody, especially the most marginalized, I'm not really sure how far your witchcraft is going to get. Or I'm not really sure that you're in it or the right reasons. Maybe you don't even know that this aspect exists, but like witches say, "As above, so below." Witches say, "As inside, so externally." So if inside, if it's not emanating from source, or if you're not in alignment that value is sourced internally and then externally you're moving that energy out in the world. For me, witchcraft, magic, whatever you want to call it, it's just really about energy and what we do and what we say and how we use our tools is all a part of it. So it makes sense to me that that's what my life would try to be about. It's holistic, it's not a separate kind of thing.

I keep thinking as we're talking, would this conversation be very different if it happened a year ago? Five years ago? So much has shifted that there really seems to be a collective focus on what we're using our voice for and what we're doing out in the world.

SG: I think that what we're seeing is, we're in an Emperor year. One of the themes of the Emperor is about power: who has it, how we define it, how we use it, how we work with it, how we become empowered. We're seeing what can happen when people step into their power, when they use their voice to protect and love other people, specifically those most marginalized, and we see what happens with the so-called powers that be when that happens. What's happening in Portland [Oregon] or the other kidnappings that happened in New York and that intense and extreme response to people utilizing their power, shows how afraid the powers that be are with what is currently changing. To take it into the personal, I really believe that if white folks who cared about creating a more equitable and just world, for those who are working, gave ten percent of their money to organizations supporting Black and trans lives, brown, undocumented, queer, nonbinary, houseless, whatever marginalized or vulnerable population that you feel called to, and had conversations and normalized defunding the police which is happening... it's happening whether folks like it or not, so it's gonna happen.

Evolve or be dragged to it..

SG: Exactly. I believe that if white folks, folks who have privilege, use that privilege and if most of them are doing it, things would change for the better more quickly than we thought. A lot of my friends and I who did grow up in this 90s queer very subcultural scene, we're like, "Wow, this is happening," what we wanted to happen... You said five years ago, I've been with my partner who's trans for nine years and we sometimes are like, "What?" What a difference five years makes, at least in terms of representation. Is it enough? Of course not. But when you look back in that way, we are seeing change across the board in ways that we haven't necessarily seen at this speed and at the complexity. I think that it's just going to continue to happen so I think magic is a great tool for that because we're

talking about energy and we're talking about how we're using our energy and how we're being intentional with our energy and how powerful our energy is when it's in alignment. So it is as they say, "Oh what a time to be alive," right?

Yes. Podcasting was the way I was introduced to your work, hearing you appear as a guest on different podcasts. You're so excellent with podcasting so I wonder if you have plans to have your own podcast?

SG : I'm only in the stage of the creation process that's like, "Okay, I know what I'm doing, all right, gotta get my schedule together, yes." I want to create a podcast that is a lot more holistic. It's going to be called Moonbeaming, but it's not just about the moon. I want to be able to talk about having an ethical business. I want to have a place where I can share what I've learned about boundaries or spells or certain Tarot cards or what I wish I had known about running a business or what I wish I had known about being psychic, or misconceptions about so on and so forth. I'll have folks on here and there, people I admire to talk to about these kinds of things too. I want it to be a place where I can just share on a more intimate and vulnerable level and also teach about certain things that are happening and coming up, because we're not just one thing. We're not just a writer or a woman, we're all of these things and it used to be, at least in my experience, you really had to compartmentalize yourself and you had to pick one thing that you did. I think that as more of us are being called to step into our own power, by using our intuition, focusing on our unique gifts, our own voice, putting an emphasis on authenticity, honesty, vulnerability, that just creates more richness for how folks show up. Not just in public but how you show up to your life or how you show up to yourself, how you show up to other people. Yeah, so we'll see. I am excited. Normally when something excites me, that's good. So we'll see. Any requests?

For topics? Many! I actually have a few Tarot-specific questions for you so let's start there. The minor arcana are such a different energy from the major arcana, so that would be one request. I'm asking you this question with those in mind who may have never looked at Tarot cards, never laid them all out. You know that moment when you lay every card out and you see the entire suit and the whole story, such an awesome moment. What about the minors is different and interesting to you?

SG : I would love to hear what you have to say on this as well. I actually teach a whole class on the minors because I feel like they are, at least in the books I have read or what I have been exposed to, they are kind of flattened out and not explored as much as they could be, when really they're actually the majority of the deck. There's more of them than there are of the majors. The minors to me, believe it or not, are actually as potent as the majors and a lot of times I see them as the, "Who what where when how," of the majors. The majors can sometimes feel like a much greater force of energy. It can sometimes feel nebulous or intangible and I really see the minors as this tool to get very pragmatic and to get very practical around life learning lessons. So, for example, we did a reading, do you mind if I share one of the minors that came up?

Go for it.

SG : The Five of Cups came up, and so as we work with the cards on our own, we come up with our own interpretations and as we live with the Tarot, the Tarot then becomes this collaborator and we're in relationship with it. So for example, some of us will have cards that are kind of like, "Oh here we go again," and you sort of know in the pit of your stomach what it's about, but you kind of don't. For me, the Five of Cups was one of those cards where it's a healing lesson that I had to go through in a 360 degree way in my life and live it in order to experience it, in order to heal it. So when it comes around to me now as someone who has, for the most part, healed a specific topic around that card, which can be around grief, feeling shame, feeling alone, feeling like you're sinking into depression or disappointment, it can come around in a different way to offer us guidance and hope. The minors, throughout themselves, we have the ace to the ten, which is like its own circle if we think of it as a spiral of evolution where at the ten we're ending one cycle and we're looking to the process of ending so that we can begin the other, which is very lunar, right?

So then we have the court cards which to me are these archetypal energies that we get to swim in and be in, so let's just say you got the knight of, give me a suit.

Knight of swords.

SG : Knight of Swords. It is your task to embody and you have the opportunity to move your "air", move your intellect, move your thought patterns, move your communication and learn and experiment by doing, that's your homework. A lot of times with Tarot spreads, folks are like, "Well this is all great but what do I do?" Or you pull a card and you're like, "Well yeah I can feel that pit in my stomach," or, "Yes this has eerily explained to me what's happening right now and I can't believe that they knew I was having a fight with my friend and I'm in the Five of Wands or whatever it is." But then what do you do with that? In a lot of ways the minors can show us where you are in your evolution, what the quality of the energy of the situation you're in or the evolution, like the Seven of Wands has a tense feeling. There's tension in all the sevens actually because it's the numeral of individuation and so we are transforming but we have to sort of parse out what we're leaving behind.

Very similar to the energy of The Chariot card.

SG : Yeah, which is related, it's the seven. A lot of times the seven will show up in our lives as what we don't want. That points us to what we do. Or a distraction. It's the trickiest number I teach in the deck because it's the red herring, something will jump up and be like, "Do you really want that? You want this, it's shiny," and you're like, "Oh maybe I do want this, but no." So anyway, a very long story is to say, it is its own world as are the majors, and I didn't even talk about the elements. That's the class I teach, it's called Elemental Intuition, and it's when you look at the minors from an elemental perspective we can heal even further because we can look at, this is very witchcraft, we can look at it using the elements in generative ways and developing relationships with those aspects of a specific element or elements inside of ourselves in order to enhance our enjoyment of life.

Something I would add about the difference between the arcana is this: the majors are 'the boss'. If you see a major arcana card you know there is a quality of surrendering to the lesson or teaching of that card because this is a big thing happening, it's thematic.

SG : It's here. Whether you like it or not, here we are.

Yes, and the minors have this quality to them that almost feels like a friend that has a specific medicine for you and if you would just lean in and really drop into the energy of that card, it has medicine for you. A lot of people consider the suit of swords to be difficult and there's a lot of fear around certain cards or certain themes in the Tarot. I have found that when you can get through some of those messages in the swords cards, there's a lot of healing potential in there, but you do have to encounter it. Part of the medicine is, it's not going to taste great going down but it's going to do so much good for your overall ability to see the bigger picture, to see where you need to go from here. That is the magic of the minor arcana. Is there anything that you want to add about the fact that we call it "arcana", secrets? The fact that it's all a riddle, it's the small riddles and the big riddles.

SG : There's secrets in a couple ways. There's the secret of finding ourselves, the process of learning how to know exactly who we are or recovering or reclaiming certain aspects of self. There's the healing and the magic of the mystery of the unknown. Then there's the secret in the sense of the interpretation of the cards that are your own personal interpretation. The secret that the card has for you. Sometimes a card presents itself, and I love it especially when we aren't sure, or when we think we know. Well this is the Five of Cups for me, and then when we pay attention and we're mindful, and we decide to work with this specific friend that is an archetype, "Oh wait a minute, actually, this is another level or layer of understanding that was hidden, that was a secret," and I had to learn it and I had to engage it or in some cases I had to live through it in order to glean the lesson or the message for me. I just think about this idea of a secret as a kind of a wink from the major arcana and the minor arcana as almost a cheeky joke from the

Tarot itself because a lot of times with the archetypes you don't always know how it's going to show up for you. Or if it does show up for you in a way that isn't in correlation, what you learn or who you become as a result of that, you can't know. That's where the mystery is. Even the fact that it is a deck of playing cards, like how irreverent, right? How ridiculous that this little portable thing that anyone with forty bucks, or whatever, you can make your own and it's free, or you can just Google them online and work with the images on your screen. Completely accessible. It holds such potent rich metaphors, magic and meanings for life and in our evolution collectively. I just think it is amazing.

I'm so astrology focused and I look at the Tarot as though it's all laid under that template and I like that we sometimes refer to it as the key. Key fourteen is Temperance, in the same way that we look at signs as "keys" as well as degrees in astrology that if you were born with zero degrees of a sign versus if you were born twenty-nine degrees of a sign, they are uniquely different vibrations and there is still that terminology of a key, it's a key to open a door to look inside. If you're willing to peer inside, you're going to find something new. There's just so many layers to this. You mentioned a card that I would say is a 'hard card' for many people, the Five of Cups.

SG : The fives, in general, people tend to see as the hard cards, right? But I believe with the hard cards, there's no bad or good cards, right?

Again, reductive thinking that fits a binary.

SG : Sure. So for example, a really hard card for me is the Queen of Wands. And that's a card when most Tarot readers or people get it, they get all excited and they're like, "This is amazing! This is great!" And this is a hard card for me. So a hard card is any card, regardless of its traditional meaning, that is an activation for you, is a vulnerable spot for you, is a spot where maybe the wound is open and not scarred over, that you can work with on that particular associated theme. So for me, the Queen of Wands, the hard-card-ness of it, has to do around joy without condition, living vivaciously for no reason at all but just to kind of be that way. Being seen, having people see me, literally exposure. She loves exposure, even in the traditional Rider Waite her legs are open, she's ready for a good time in all senses of the word. Those are topics that traditionally are difficult for me. There's a discomfort in those themes. So of course that card would bring up stuff for me. "Oh am I not good enough?" Or, "I can't have this," that's why it's a hard card and it's also something to explore and integrate more so that I can heal the part of me that is resistant to that energy. Does that make sense?

Absolutely. The hard cards, it's that friend that might give you some tough love or it's encountering fear itself, which is Plutonian and Saturnian stuff when we look at the things that we've been told to be afraid of, when we can actually lift that rock up and look underneath, it's that moment of naming something that has brought fear or limitation. It's encountering that there is some shadow to befriend. I've always struggled with why we call anything a hard sign in astrology or a hard card in Tarot or difficult aspects in a birth chart or a transit. We know based on research that it's actually the people with squares, oppositions and hard aspects in their chart that tend to be the celebrities, the Bill Gates of their field or the people that get to this incredible success and it's usually because they face their shadow. There's something about their blueprint that is not convenient for them, they can't get away from their shadow so they're facing it a lot more in their life. I could go on about this, but I think the hard cards could be another request to continue diving into for your forthcoming podcast.

SG : Every card has that. Someone out there can't stand, say, The Empress. Actually, a lot of people I know are like, "Oh, I don't like that card." When we're looking at any metaphysical history, we have to look at it through an anthropological or historical lens. I've used history twice, forgive me. Just any kind of subject that is metaphysical or spiritual. Because we really have to ask ourselves what came first, the chicken or the egg? If we are creating systems to express both our life on this planet and our everyday life, our everyday existence

and some sort of cosmic evolutionary mystical magical cycle of evolution, we also have to really be clear and define what are we actually talking about when we're saying the word "evolution", or when we're saying the word "shadow"? Tarot has evolved since the 60s in a remarkable way. I mean, I could go further back, I'm not going to become a nerd. My point is, around the 60s, it became popularized, it was influenced by the work of Jung and then with all of the New Age hippie movement and white America, there became an interpersonal bent and it just became less about something out there happening to me, which I think sometimes when people read astrology they give up their power, they give up their autonomy, like, "Well, I've got something in my something house, so that just means I'm doomed." Or, "That explains why I am the way I am," which is the ultimate cop-out as far as I'm concerned. And so even now within Tarot we're asking ourselves, what are the Pentacles if we redefine what capitalism can be? You know, what are the Cups, when we prioritize healing instead of making fun of people who have pain or who are suffering as less-than? I can see a very similar conversation and dialogue happening in astrology. "Well if we're supposed to be exploring the totality of the whole, why are we separating signs so much?" Why are we saying, oh, this sign can only be good for this, or this aspect is bad, or what is the word, detriment, fall? Who even came up with that? That's what I want to know, and why did they come up with it? Who is it benefiting at that time and who are we now? And who do we want to be? And what do we need to transform in our language, how do we become trauma informed? How do we get rid of hierarchies within our studies of astrology because there's a lot of hierarchies in terms of projections? And how do certain signs or certain cards, even the "goodness"; why is the Queen of Wands supposed to be a good card? Let's value joy but there's a value of extroversion, of some kind of beauty, some kind of aesthetic, some sort of forcefulness, and I can see the same with certain signs. Like fire signs, everyone loves the fire signs, well, don't get me wrong, I love a fire sign. I don't have any feelings about any of the signs to be honest with you. I see how it just reflects old projections of masculine, feminine, who does better in capitalism? Usually fire signs and earth signs because they're in it. They just click right in... so I think it's really interesting to look at what we value and why and how that even filters into our interpretations of metaphysical topics that are meant to really open us up and expand us, and collectively unite us in positive ways so that everyone can grow and prosper. And what we do unconsciously to separate that, within Tarot, magic, religion, astrology, whatever you're going to use in a spiritual practice, right? So I think that's really fascinating and I think that the conversations around that are really changing as well. I'm just excited by it.

This ties right back to that value-based business versus the traditional capitalist model of running a business for profit. If these are tools, why have we been functioning under very restrictive templates or theories about how these energies are working together? That seems flawed from the start. We're in the beginning of this unraveling and I think that's really interesting and exciting.

SG : In spirituality and business, saying you're political or saying everything is political isn't a radical or weird thing to say because "political" is just the study of power and how that plays out. Power itself needs to be redefined. We're in an Emperor year. If folks really knew what needed to happen in order to be a heart-led collective centered leader, they would want nothing to do with it because it requires more slowness. It requires more listening. It requires a lot of emotional labor. It requires a lot of self-study. It requires humility about everything else. So when you really think about that, that we've been taught that to have power means you're better than someone else, or that you're somehow special, or the ways in which you've grabbed at that power is harmful or abusive or all of these things. Or even questioning why do you even want power? I don't want that kind of power. What's even the point of that? Redefining it on all of these different levels, why are we doing this, why are we doing this in this way, like so on and so forth. I think it's very exciting and I also see great conflict because people are trying ideologically to approach a new paradigm with an old paradigm and we're seeing extreme defensiveness, we're seeing delusion, we're seeing people who don't necessarily, or who haven't been taught certain qualities that we need to be resilient or to have

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dialogues, or even to be able to say, "I don't know." You're not allowed to say that. You're not allowed to say, "I'm not sure." Or you're not allowed to say, "I made a mistake, I was wrong, what I cited was wrong." Projections are running the show, defensiveness and also in our own lives we know that when we have an ego death, the resistance is a mountain high. The resistance, the thrashing-about, the avoidance, the denial can sometimes last for decades. So we see that collectively. We see the thrashing. We see the defensiveness. We see the wanting to double down and to clasp for what they think is the best way. We're seeing it collectively, what people go through on their own when they undergo an ego death, we're seeing it played out. You can't ignore it on a larger screen in America. So it's very clear to me.

One of the things that's interesting studying any of these faith systems or magical practices is when you start to leave the realm of the duality and start looking at the collective and in fact viewing the world through that lens of cycles, themes or archetypes. Looking at the news every day, it's rife with all these headlines and stories that when we look at them literally, it seems overwhelming. But when we can look at things through the lens of Tarot or astrology, it actually gives me comfort, it gives me a little bit more of something to recognize that everything's moving along, with or without my awareness of it. It's an opportunity to see the bigger picture. There's always more insight to be gleaned from what we see on the surface headline. The gain for us is a lot more humility and I mean that in the sense of being humbled too, knowing I may not understand all of the pieces at play but I can recognize something's happening and there is learning to be gained from it.

SG : Building upon what you said, if we can all get on the same page that if we're going beyond duality, if we're leaving behind me and me and we're moving to us and if we're leaving behind our separateness that alienates us and takes away our power. When we believe that we're different that's a total tactic of abuse: we're different, we're wrong, we're not okay. That sucks our power and understanding that we're part of a larger collective, understanding there are other people who care or there are other people who have this mental illness or who are disabled or who have a particular part of who they are, that then takes us into an empowered state because we're not just thinking of ourselves or our lack of ability or whatever that may be, but we're thinking about everyone, helping everyone. That's a real key with all of this, when you're talking about, "I'm watching this thing, I'm trying to process it," and also thinking about how this is an opportunity for all of us to insert ourselves, not just into the collective which we need to because for so many years it was happening out there, it was the news, it was happening separate sort of from us in a way. Now we're in it, we're understanding, "Actually wait a minute, I am also a part of this," in whatever way it's playing out for me personally or thematically on a larger level. So we insert ourselves in what's happening and we also then insert ourselves more fully in our own lives. There's this really interesting tension between the more we show up to ourselves in our own lives and take accountability and responsibility and we understand that we're allowed to love and we're allowed to be and we're allowed to express and we're allowed to heal, the greater the evolution of the collective will be, it's the sea change. Because humans, we mirror neurons, energy spreads very easily, we've all been privy to that, even looking at all of the protests happening. Everything is sort of speaking to one another energetically and it just takes enough people to understand that life isn't happening to you. We can be agents in our own healing or in our own learning or in our own showing up or our own ego deaths. Our own boundaries, whatever that is. I think that's a really interesting dichotomy or irony that the more we show up for ourselves and what we came here to do, that is completely unique to us, the more impact and positive influence there will be for the collective.

Which leads directly to the book that's coming out, *The Moon Book: Lunar Magic to Change Your Life*. From what I've gathered about the book, it is a guide on how to live or enrich one's life with the aid of lunar magic and gaining a deeper understanding and co-creation relationship with the moon.

SG : "Here's one way."

Here's one person's take on having a more thoughtful relationship with something that has been with you every day of your life. Do you think it's any coincidence that the book is coming out now when it seems like maybe more than ever we need to find that collaborative way of working with the world versus thinking everything's happening "to me"? One of the things that I love how you covered is all the ways that the moon is actually working with us all the time and how the moon itself is partially made up of elements that you also have inside of your body, so the separation between us and the moon is updated to be more inclusive and interrelated. Also, your explanation of the way the moon is working with the sun in collaboration further clarifies this idea of interrelatedness; it's not just the female sidekick to the masculine sun.

SG : That's right, yeah. And it's not even necessarily female and the sun isn't even necessarily male, and what's that all about anyway?

I think you set up for the reader, right from the beginning, to use this book and the information therein however you see fit. This is an invitation to shift your perception of what's been going on with this relationship. If you have not developed a relationship with the moon, here's your opportunity to do so with rituals and ideas about how to incorporate these cycles. How would you say this new book differs from the *Many Moons* workbooks?

SG : *Many Moons* was very channeled, it was very fly-by-the-seat-of-my-pants, like, "Okay I've got three months to do this," that's what it was. Let's just dig in, let's just see what's showing up and figure it out and you've got seven hours to write this thing, like each thing, and that's it. It was a very wild experience personally because every time before I was writing a workbook, I would check in with spirit, and I would say, okay, how am I going to do this? Because partially I was like, "How am I going to do this? I have three months." That's not a long time. Every time they would tell me what to do. Sometimes it would be resting, and I would say things like, "I can't rest." I would rest or I would meditate and then I would get what I needed to write. The book, personally for me, was a very long process for a lot of reasons that were outside of my control with the publishers. Just all kinds of things that are kind of boring to talk about, so I don't really want to talk about that. But it was like, "Okay, I'm not going to channel. I'm going to write, I'm going to see if I can actually write without the guide of spirit, and I'm going to sort of live my life." I don't know if you've had this experience before, but if you're working on a large project, moderately intensely, you kind of have to live the book and the book lives you and it's very bizarre, like you're in this sort of dream state where an idea you have at the grocery store solves one part of the chapter, and you're all in, and it was sort of that. As I said personally, it coincided with a lot of very difficult personal experiences. It was this interesting, for me personally, potential for healing.

***Many Moons* has so much useful information about how to integrate lunar phases into your magical practice with prompts to focus your energy with a question or a Tarot spread. It's got that dialogue element to it because you can write and it's encouraging that co-creation. This book, it's not totally separate from that, but it seems like a much more focused energy of you putting all of that in one place.**

SG : Yes, it's almost everything. I actually had a whole part about Tarot that I had to cut because the first draft was four hundred pages long which was psychotic. But it was sort of like, I'm just going to write everything I know so I had to cut a lot, whatever, 40% of it or something. I was like, okay, I'm ready to close this chapter, what do I want folks to know so that they can have a guide for good? And of course, I can even write another book. I'm like, "Should I still write a book about the moon and money?" And I probably will. I wanted someone who had either had a twenty-year relationship with lunar magic, or someone just picking up the book, to be able to find something that was different or that was helpful. So I wanted it to be read front to back but I also want it to be used as a resource and what it does that other books about the moon don't do is that every lunar phase has a chapter. The way that I work with the moon is working with the specific energy of every phase around a specific theme or goal. I have found that in my thirteen years doing this work, moderately intensely, there are these specific archetypes,

and also I have witnessed that our cycles of evolution or themes of our healing, whatever you want to call it, I don't want to use the word karma because I believe it's appropriate. But the sort of core wounds we've come here to heal that keep happening and then we have to heal them, and then, our shadow also mirrors the moon's phases of birth, new beginnings, intrigue, attraction, energy building, taking action, moving forward, some kind of harvesting or ripeness or culmination of something, and then a period of release, integration, dissemination, usually then some kind of crisis or some sort of rock bottom or some sort of hollowness or what next, and then the seeding for another world based upon where you've been begins. That is a life guide because we know that when we have a season of pain or of suffering that is acute, we then have to have a season of healing or of reckoning or of moving in a different direction. We know that when we're in a season that is a waxing moon season, when we're just like going going going and we're really working towards something and we're much more externally focused or much more physically materially focused like our body our health, we know there's some sort of culmination and then we have to rest. It's just a cyclical process, we're humans, we're animals, we mirror nature, nature mirrors the moon, the moon mirrors nature. It's just this conversation and the moon is the closest mirror. It's the closest celestial companion that we have that is this useful guide to our lives. It's very annoying and probably the way that you work with astrology, when I'm like, "Oh of course, why don't I just take my own advice," like of course I know that I'm in a whatever waning moon period, like why don't I just rest or why don't I call my therapist or whatever. It's sort of annoying that something ends and then it's a full moon and something may be ending or culminating and then you have to let it go and then you need that time. It's just energetic cycles but I think that we've become very separate from them through technology and through kinds of lives where we are a bit severed from the cycles of the earth and light and seasons and then our own seasons. The book is trying to help us remember or re-remember, recover and utilize the moon as another technology that we can really gain a lot of perspective and healing and magic from.

It seems this book is you thoughtfully creating a record that encapsulates your legacy. If you are coming to the end of a chapter or a major cycle, this book focuses on what the legacy is and co-creating the legacy, versus waiting to see how it all turns out. We often find insight when something is in the rearview mirror which implies that while we're in it, we're not aware of that there's no one at the wheel.

SG : That's the secret, we have to go through it as best we can.

This book seems to be a really perfectly timed book-end. It's like the page is turning, figuratively speaking, to whatever comes next.

SG : Yeah, humans really love that, we really love a nice wrap-up and well I mean it's funny that it happened because I had poured a lot of my time, effort and energy into these [Many Moons] workbooks, not having any idea of where it was going. It was literally me just trusting spirit and my intuition, having no larger goal. I wasn't like, "Oh yeah then it's going to become a franchise." It just felt very bizarre in that way. So it is nice to have the opportunity to have some of what I've learned about life that I know can be utilized to help people whether they want a new job or to heal their shadow or are just curious. Why do people care about this? What is some of the history there? It is nice to be able to have this final container. Even if I start my dream job of becoming a dog walker. No matter what, it's this nice thing where I've spent thirteen years of my life and lord knows how many pages trying to offer something to other people because it is true that spirituality and magic and art and music and all kinds of other things helped get me through. So I hope that others can be so-laced or benefited from this project. That was my intention. I want to remind people of how powerful they are and how blessed they are, how there's not anything wrong with them and that once they really commit and invest in themselves, they'll be able to see themselves and the world reflected back to them in very lovely ways.

I think that's a great place to end.

