



MATRESCENCE

Episode Transcript

Hey, it's Rebecca. Welcome to Returning a podcast to return to yourself and the wisdom within. I'm so glad you're here with me. Thanks for returning.

Today, I am returning with coach, author and speaker Amy Taylor-Kabbaz. I've known Amy for about a decade now and have always loved her special way of articulating big concepts with generosity and also her undeniable passion of everything she does. She has been supporting mothers for many, many years now, and she is really a beautiful bundle of smart and heart. I've really been wanting to have this very conversation with her for many years now, and so I'm really happy to be able to share it with you. We delve into all things matrescence. Just as adolescence heralds change, matrescence refers to the profound changes of motherhood. So it's not just the physical and hormonal changes, but also the deep shifts within us, within identity, values, beliefs. And whether you're a parent yourself, whether you're longing to be, or if you're just keen to explore these lost rites of passage, which I really believe are necessary to be honored in our society. This conversation really has it all. And so, yeah, regardless of whether you're a mother, a father, a parent, long to be one or just know any mother in the world, I think that this is a really important conversation. And as always at the end of this episode you'll find a guided Soul Inquiry for you to explore what our conversation brings up within you.

I know how precious your time is, so let's jump right into Sacred Space together now. In the center of your heart, imagine a beautiful flower. With your breath invited to open petal by petal, revealing a light in the middle. This light is your soul, your ancient self. Invite it to step forward now so we can really connect in with the wisdom within. And together acknowledging the keepers and custodians of the land where I am and where you are known and unknown. Beautiful. Let's begin.

Rebecca: Oh, Amy, so good to be with you. It's been a while. We've kind of seen each other through probably around about ten years, would you say?

Amy: Yes, maybe even a little less. So my son is ten next month, and from memory, I think I was either pregnant with him or he was just born when you and I worked one on one together. So it was that long ago. And then we've obviously weaved in and out of each other's lives since then.

Rebecca: Yeah, totally. And yeah, I think I think you and I spoke last when I'd just had my son. Woah. And, yeah, and I mean you've got such an amazing book as well that I just so loved listening to, which is what I do now that I'm a mom. I've always been a slow reader anyway, so I'm actually not much of a reader but a listener. Oh my gosh, it's so much easier. And yeah, I wanted to just start our conversation. For anyone who hasn't heard of matrescence, can you just begin with, like, a really simple description of that word and why discovering that word meant so much to you?

Amy: So the basic description is, matrescence is like adolescence. It is a period of massive physical and hormonal changes, of course, but also changes of our identity, our sense of self, our feelings and opinions and values about things in the world. And it is a period of time that we do not acknowledge in our culture, especially in the way that we acknowledge what motherhood is. I think we are getting better at doing postpartum care a little better with a long way to go. But what I love about the concept of matrescence is that it acknowledges that it's not that when you give birth, suddenly you know how to be a mother. And it's not at the end of the first year you suddenly know how to do this. It is this constant growth and unraveling and becoming. So that's sort of the the technical description. It was first coined by always honoring the women that have come before me. It was first coined by anthropologist Dana Raphael in the 1970s. I don't know if you had a doula present at your best. Yeah, she was the one that also coined the term doula in the seventies because she really, as an anthropologist and a huge supporter of women, looked at what was happening to birthing in America in the seventies. And saw medicalised it was becoming, how low the breastfeeding rates were becoming, how institutionalized the experience was becoming. And she recognized that two things needed to change. One was we needed somebody in the room advocating for the mother, not the baby, and supporting the process of her becoming a mother. And she said that this is a doula's role. And the other thing she recognized was that we don't understand what it takes and how it changes us to become a mother. I think that there's a process here called matrescence, and we need to look at that more. And unfortunately, it was kind of lost in the seventies. It wasn't really taken up until quite recently really by a number of amazing people around the world, but in particular, Dr. Aurelie Athan at Columbia University, who was the one who said, I think matrescence is like adolescence. It's this period of transition and growth that we have to start acknowledging differently. And so for me, after going through such a rough time with understanding who I was after my babies and even doing this work before I even knew what the word was, when I finally heard the word, it was no exaggeration it was like somebody had finally turned the light on.

Rebecca: So was it for you, like an acknowledgment of, because I think it's so complex when you are in postpartum and then, you know, you're in postpartum forever. Forever. It's like, what is postpartum really? But I think that when someone is like, so how are you? It's so comp... My response is always like, it's complex. And I don't really have anything beyond that. I mean, I could say some things, but really, it's, and so I want to ask you one question I have is from your understanding, like, how do you see matrescence as being different from, I guess, the archetype of going from maiden to mother?

Amy: I don't see it that differently. I think it modernizes it and it brings science to it that the world needs. I was doing this work without realizing I was talking about matrescence before I heard the word and nobody was really listening. It was very much in small spiritual women's groups. You know, there was no acknowledgement of it in a corporate space and even in a coaching space, even beyond, like, your beautiful women's circles. What I think matrescence has given us, because it is now considered to be a science to be studied, we're looking at psychosocial economic identity shifts, there's amazing research happening. I think it's like this word is acknowledging that thing that we used to acknowledge back in the day maiden to mother. But it's allowing us to talk about it in those spaces. Yeah.

Rebecca: Yeah. I think it also acknowledges the, like, things, like the hormonal shifts, things, like, the less... I think maiden to mother does the archetype and maybe a little bit of the responsibility, you know, in the role of what we see mother is. But yeah I don't think it acknowledges the physiological change which is also emotional and hormonal and obviously it can affect, like, so many parts of our life, whether it's, like, feeling depressed or anxious or, you know. I think the maiden into mother is more like, oh I'm, it's more of an age thing and a deepening into my, you know, power as a woman and all of that. But it's kind of vague compared to this because I don't know any mum who can kind of describe the change. And I think this is also like a question I've been really living into with that word matrescence because it's, like, woah yes there's a name for it. At least I can kind of go, here's the word. Say talking to my husband or talking to my mom or talking to someone. So you can kind of, like, put everything in a container. And at the same time, that container doesn't really change anything except for the acknowledgement from other people. And I think when we look at trauma, trauma happens when we're alone in really difficult transitions and situations. And so perhaps having that container reduces the kind of, like, the freezing of the trauma or the causing of the trauma, rather than it being, like, I'm experiencing something that could be traumatic but I'm not alone in this because the world acknowledges what I'm going through.

Amy: That's exactly what I think this word does. It allows us to go from this individualized experience of becoming a mother, struggling with many different versions of it. You know, some of us struggle around work. We love being a mum, but it's returning to work that we feel that crack, others it's our body. So many women I've coached over the years, it's been, you know, financial

identity shifts, suddenly having to ask their partner for money to get a haircut. And they've been independent for 15 years. You know, this word encompasses all of these experiences. But instead of thinking I'm a bad person, I'm a bad mom, there's something wrong with me, maybe I should just get up earlier, maybe I should just try harder, maybe I should just not share what I'm feeling. It opens this door to saying, oh my God, you too? And I remember the biggest part of this for me when I became a mum was this identity. I was so attached to this identity of being a successful woman, a journalist, a, like, an ambitious, independent woman. I wore that independent badge with such fierce attachment. And I went into motherhood, obviously not knowing anything about matrescence and honestly believed it wouldn't change me. I was excited about bringing a baby into my life, but I thought I would still be Amy Taylor-Kabbaz, you know? It was like I would add it to my résumé. It was this bonus thing, but everything else would stay the same. And then I suddenly felt so different about my work and wasn't actually sure if I wanted to do that huge career that I was, I had been obsessing about since I was a teenager. I desperately wanted to be a foreign correspondent and I was on my way and it shocked me how differently I felt about my future when my baby arrived. I know that might sound, I don't know, ignorant. It was. I had no idea it would change the way I would feel about everything else. I honestly thought I'd be at home for a year with this beautiful baby. And then I'd walk back into work and when I walked into work, I didn't feel like I wanted to be there, but I also didn't want to be at home. What I've seen with this word and this work...

Rebecca: Oh let's go to that. I think that's such an important thing to talk about because, yeah, like you, I've been someone, I've got a big soul mission will continue to and from my cosmology I do believe that the kids choose the family, the conditions and all of that. So it's like, yeah, like, you know, you don't want to, like, just be, like, oh I need to, like, be this whole other person that my child or the world wants me to be, you know? But this in-between of like, but I don't, like, for me, I do not have, I'm a massive introvert, both my husband and I are and I cannot be with my kids all day long. Like I have plenty of people in my life who I know can with their kids or, you know, but I can't be around anyone that long. It's literally not who I am. And so, but then I also don't want to be at work all the time. So how did you, tell me about how that felt for you? Like not wanting to be there, but like, did you want to be at home all the time or how did you navigate that?

Amy: Badly. Badly because I had my first baby 15 years ago. She's nearly 16.

Rebecca: Wow.

Amy: Yeah. No, I can't believe I've got nearly a 16 year old.

Rebecca: Oh my gosh.

Amy: I wasn't even on Facebook. I wasn't, there was no spaces to have any of these conversations. So when I felt that I call it in my book the inner split. It's this split between who you used to be and the mother. And it's this, like, you literally feel split in two. I don't want to leave you, but I also can't stay with you. And I looked around at the time and honestly thought that there was something wrong with me because that's how I felt. There was no spaces or places where this conversation was being having, was being held. So I struggled through nine months of maternity leave with her holding on. Thinking that when I walk back through those doors of the ABC, I'll feel like myself again. When I walked through those doors, I was like, Oh God, I don't feel good here either. It still actually 15 years later, it still brings emotion up because coming back to what you said Bec about that mother to, maiden to mother archetype, I never saw myself as a mother. I wanted to be a mum, but I never I never wanted to embrace the mother archetype. I wanted to still be me and still continue on the path that I was on. So to feel so unraveled by this experience was really, really it was incredibly hard and confronting. But I did what everybody else usually does, which is push those feelings down. Keep going, keep going, keep going. Have another baby. Keep going, keep going, keep going. And then the third pregnancy was a huge surprise. And I often say that the universe realized that I didn't get the lesson with the first two so sent me the third. It was only the third and my whole world unraveled with that pregnancy that I realized, okay, wow. Why can't I accept that I'm not the person I used to be? For me, it was. I was still so attached to that 20 year old version of myself, and I wasn't that person anymore, but I'd never given myself permission or nor did I have the tools to say, oh I think I've changed. What do I want my life to look like? And I think, again, that's what this beautiful word and this movement and these conversations allow us to do, to have is to have these conversations that says you're allowed to not know who you are anymore and you're allowed to, and you're meant to take years to find your feet again. That's what I wish I had known back then.

Rebecca: Wow. And do you feel like each birth, I assume each birth changed you in a different way but what I'm really trying to get at is did each birth change your identity again and again? Or was it that it was the same message?

Amy: No. So the beautiful thing about matrescence is that with every pregnancy, however it ends, whether it's with a baby in your arms or not. You go through, you begin another process of matrescence. You will never be the person you were again. You've changed. And again, I wish we talked about this with miscarriage and all of these secret experiences that we have in our culture, that you have entered a period of matrescence now. Whether it was you were pregnant for six weeks or 40, whether whatever happened in that experience, your identity has changed. My beautiful teacher, Dr. Aurelie Athan at Columbia University, says matrescence begins the moment you contemplate how motherhood would fit into your life.

Rebecca: Say that again.

Amy: Matrescence begins the moment you start to contemplate how motherhood might fit into your life. So that might be deciding to try to fall pregnant. I don't know about you, but I remember when I was trying to fall pregnant, it was, like, I was at work and I was secretly Googling, like, you know, ovulation calendars and whatever. It shows how it takes over.

Rebecca: It takes over. Yeah, and it's like it is you? Is it the spirit of the baby? Like, what is it? Like the portal opens. Yeah, it's all part of the conceiving. Yeah, one of my teachers and friends, Binnie Dansby, she talks about how, I remember when I was, like, going into labor, she was at my second birth. And it wasn't going as fast as the first and the first was very fast. And she was like, honey you've been in labor for, like, and it was, like, more than nine months, like, about 12 months I'm, like, oh, yeah, oh, yeah. It's so true.

Amy: It is. And also on the other side of it, there is no official end point of this experience. You know, if you ask my mom, she's like, oh I'm still going through matrescence. But I do think, and you'll love this because of your spiritual insights, from what I've seen after listening to and coaching and supporting thousands of moms, plus all the research that I've read, I do think that there's something about the first seven years that is the most potent. I mean, you can make sense of it in the way that, you know, by seven they've settled into school, hopefully. You're starting to see, okay, you know, maybe I can start thinking about myself again. But when we look at our energetic chakra development, our spiritual development, that energy between mother and child, they say, I understand for them to be out, that they say, that that first seven years we are basically sharing the energy out. Our chakras are connected. There is this very strong spiritual oneness between mother and child for the first seven years that their chakras developed in the first seven years, and then they slowly become independent. I wish that something that we talked about more that this is, like, you know, my baby's three now, I should just be myself again.

Rebecca: This is the thing and I've been thinking a lot lately, actually, because I'm just eight months postpartum with my second. But yes, still feel it with my first. He's almost four. The thing, so, you know, I tried to do all the things, like, you know, get all the support and, you know, get the village and, you know, all of the stuff that we know that doesn't exist. But what I have, well I've been really reflecting on with my second because I think with my first, like I learned a lot. I tried to get all that support, but it was COVID and, you know, it was impossible really. And yeah. But with my second, I put so much in place, but looking back now and reflecting where I am now, the thing that I've been really feeling into is, I feel like when you're pregnant and I mean that's a whole other thing and don't get me started on the way the medical institute looks at pregnant women, like, you know, they don't know how to... Yeah. Putting that aside. Generally, society, I think they respect pregnant women a lot more because they can see what the body's doing. The baby's growing, opening the doors, are you okay? And, you know, obviously there's way more that we need to embrace. You know, there's all those memes on Instagram saying it's equivalent of running a marathon per day, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. I think there's a lot more acknowledgement of that.

But postpartum, I feel that because it's so unseen, the thing that I feel like there's no acknowledgment of is the sheer life force that the mother is expelling. And I'm not just talking about breastfeeding, I'm not just talking about nursing through the night or teething or I'm not talking about the doing. I'm talking about talking about the energetic and physical and hormonal expelling that is happening. And, like, even with my husband, he's very, very hands on. And yeah, and I would say, like, very mature and respectful and, you know, like, kind of up there with what you would want. But I even struggle, and we've spoken about this, it's, like, there is, there feels like not many places to point to to go no this is why I'm feeling depleted or this is why I need this or this is why I'm feeling anxious and struggling to get back to sleep. Like it feels like in postpartum it's this thing of, like, there's something wrong with you or there's something wrong with me rather than, like, No, of course, this is literally the most normal thing in the world, and it's one of the most difficult things in the world as well.

And we'll return with Amy after this short break.

Rebecca: This is literally the most normal thing in the world, and it's one of the most difficult things in the world as well.

Amy: Yeah, I don't know if you've heard of the work of Dr. Oscar Serrallach who had done, I mean, I do think that his work will have just as big an impact on the world as the work around matrescence. He talks about postnatal depletion. He talks about the actual medical, he's a GP based in Byron Bay, who specializes in working with mothers. And he just saw that, you know, two, three years postpartum when he did a full blood work iron levels still hadn't recovered, vitamins were depleted, minerals were still not there. And he started to say, we are not acknowledging what that nine months plus postpartum, you know, maybe the first 40 days or the first six months actually does to a woman's body and how long it takes to recover. And he's saying it's years, you know, and that's when we actually know how to look after ourselves, that the level of depletion on a physical level, we don't understand. I think on top of that, if I could add, I think the other thing is we keep thinking that there's going to be this point where we will feel normal again. And I think that that's really toxic. I think it's really harmful to mothers because we keep instead of either speaking up or going and getting the help we need or just acknowledging what we're going through. We keep thinking once they start sleeping through, it'll be better. Once I get to this point, it'll be better. And we keep putting ourselves, we keep silencing ourselves. We keep thinking, oh no, I can't speak up because at this point everything will change and we get to those points and we still don't feel like ourselves. We actually now the baby's sleeping, I'm not sleeping, and I don't know why.

Rebecca: Oh yeah.

Amy: Yeah, we have to stop pretending and telling women that there's this point she will go back to the way you used to feel. Matrescence is like adolescence. Like I said, once you enter adolescence, you'll never be a child again. There is no going back. You can pull all parts of that beautiful inner child with you. You can, you know, emerge knowing who you are, including that version of yourself. But you'll never go back. I have teenagers, obviously, and I have a 13 year old at the moment, and you see her wanting to be in between these two worlds. Like one day she'll be like, I'm a teenager and I want independence and I don't want you around me. And then the next day will be, can I sleep with you Mom? And it reminds me...

Rebecca: And you're like yes, yes.

Amy: Exactly. And it's just so beautiful to look at through the lens of matrescence that that's what it feels like. You know, I want to be this version of myself. Can I please just go back to when I was younger and it was free and I had independence? No, but actually, I really love this. No but can I... That's okay. It's normal. We need to be able to say there's no point we will go back to who you used to be. That's not the way it works. But that's exciting. It's an opportunity right?

Rebecca: So we talk a little bit about, so I really hear you with the split. And my understanding is that it's like who you were, who you, like, and then, mother, where you're now, who you're becoming. Yeah, so, oh right, so it's about who you're becoming. Can we talk a little bit about that, though? Because I feel. Yeah, I think that word becoming is key, isn't it? Because it's, like, when it's, like, it could take a long time to be the becoming and you might have no clue. And like, what role does, because I remember, particularly in my first birth and I think from all mothers that I've spoken to, regardless of what the birth is or even if the baby came to term or anything, there's an initiation that happens regardless of whether the birth goes well. And I'm doing remedies for anyone who yeah. Versus it wasn't what we wanted, pregnancy. You know, at some stage there's some kind of initiation. I don't think anyone gets through it without it right? So for both of my births, my first pregnancy, very traumatic, put a lot of stuff into place, which really helped me have a very empowering birth and then postpartum I ended up in hospital I almost died, which was a kind of freak blood poisoning mastitis thing. So, you know, trauma, power, trauma, you know, and I don't know anyone who hasn't had something like that happen in a birth. With my daughter it was in postpartum. I picked up my son, he was having a tantrum on the high street. I'd done 40 days, like, proper, like, I'd saved up all my money, proper replenishment, proper everything. But I didn't know that picking up my son and also having a chronic cough while being depleted could cause prolapse. I didn't know that. I knew about prolapse, but yeah, I felt this boom drop all of a sudden and spoke to, like, all of these people around me. No one really knew anything about it. You go to the doctor and they're just, like, it's just what happens when you give birth. Just no support around it. But anyway, segway, go back to the first birth. When I gave birth to Sunny, I remember having this moment when I was crowning where I saw the cell walls of every one of my cells. I don't know how I saw them, I just saw them. And I saw the barricades around them that felt, like, ancestral

kind of trauma, really. Grief, agony just like blast open to the ends of the world. And that's what felt like actually happened to me when I became a mom. And for me, the first, like, the fourth trimester, I've found that, obviously it's so full on, but I found that a lot easier than after that because you're in the bubble, you know, when everyone is, there just, like, let's keep this baby alive, you know? It's the after bit where you're kind of, like, whoa, like, every part of my being feels like it's been smashed to smithereens.

Amy: Because it has.

Rebecca: Like, my whole being has opened to the, to be a portal for life. No wonder the ancients saw women as goddess. So, like, what role does that play of, like, our lack of reverence to the feminine, our lack of seeing woman as goddess?

Amy: Oh my gosh, what a question. How do I even begin to answer that? I mean, I think it plays into everything. In a lot of the work that I do, we talk a lot about motherhood is what feminism forgot. I am card carrying fierce feminist and forever bow at the feet of the women before me. But in our desire to finally be taken seriously and equally, the first and second wave of feminism was about us being like a man. And in that process, motherhood disappeared. You couldn't be pregnant in the workplace. If you are, then you're emotional and you're weak and we won't give you a promotion because you're obviously not going to be here next year. You can't have, you know, be too teary, you can't talk about your baby too much because obviously then you're not going to be respected. So really what I feel is that we're coming into I hope, and I do really believe this, another wave of acknowledging women and the feminine. But this time we're going to bring all parts of ourselves with us. We're not going to pretend that equality looks like everyone acts like a man. No, equality now is honor this body. I mean, there's workplaces that are not only talking about matrescence, but they're now doing menopause workshops.

Rebecca: Wow.

Amy: We're really, I hope, finally going to start acknowledging that this feminine way of being needs to be respected. But also what the female body does should not be shamed or hidden. You know, we really have to start talking about that more openly. One of the women that I interviewed for my book is the head of the Motherhood Center in New York City. And she said, if this had been happening to men, we would have whole universities dedicated to it. But actually, if you Google motherhood studies, there's about three courses in the world. Like how is it that even possible?

Rebecca: No way. What?

Amy: Truly. How is that even possible? That the thing that happens for us all to be here doesn't even have its own area of academia. It's just, it's part of the denial of the feminine. And the power

of us is that we have it's been denied. And then in our push to find our voice, which has been so important, the way we found our voice first was that we had to look and sound and act like the masculine. And so often what I have found, my own experience definitely, but a lot of the women that I've spoken to over the years is it's through matrescence and becoming a mother that that very masculine energy that we have thought we needed to carry is finally broken a little. And it's scary. I remember for me, not being as ambitious and driven and actually wanting to slow down was scary as hell because...

Rebecca: Oh so true because it's, like, especially if you've used work as a way to soothe, you know, which I think a lot of people do. Or however we busy ourselves.

Amy: That's right. And it was my definition of success, like and my identity. So again, if only we could, you know, we talk a lot in my Mama Rising training about whispering matrescence. You know, just these, it's going back to those beautiful ways that we should have been doing where we have elders, we have people who are just women who are just one or two steps ahead of us and say, you're about to change. And it's gonna be huge and it's gonna be scary, but you will let go of parts of yourself that you don't need anymore and you will find parts you didn't even know were there. It'll get scary and dark and hard but this will be the making of you. Like that's what we need to be singing.

Rebecca: Yes. And I love what you're saying about the, because it reminds me of, like, really, like, when you when you hit rock bottom, you or you're going through a period of grief and it often comes through, you know, job loss or a relationship end or death of a loved one where it's like everything is crumbling around you. And so if only one thing happened that wasn't so big, you'd kind of, like, be able to prop it up a little bit. But when everything comes down, it's, like, those ways of survival, like, you just can't do it anymore. And I wonder, you've made me think about, like, that depletion that the mother has. It's, like, I wonder if that's part of, like, I mean, I don't want moms to be depleted, but there is a biological part of it. Where is it, like, is it by design that we literally can't keep going in the masculine way anymore?

Amy: I think so. I do, I mean, I'm sure you know the work of Maureen Murdock with The Heroine's Journey, and my very simple understanding of it is that we come into the world realizing the masculine is the way to be and survive. And we go all the way in, we have wins, we, you know, see that it works to a certain extent, and then something breaks. We realize this doesn't work and we have to retreat deep into the feminine to figure things out, and then eventually we emerge balanced again. I think so many of us, it is our health that is the point that breaks. For most of the women, and including myself, it was the physical body that finally said, I can't keep doing it this way. I can't keep pretending that I'm a machine, that I'm not listening to my body, that my health doesn't matter that finally made me retreat and try and find a different way. So when you say, you know, can we do it without the depletion? I wish I could say yes. And maybe one day in the future when

we change the way we honor our bodies, yes. But for most women, this experience of depletion, while we're still trying to carry the world as mothers, is our initiation into figuring out how to do it differently.

Rebecca: Woah, that's really big.

Amy: It's why you see so many moms starting their own business.

Rebecca: Right.

Amy: Because literally they're like, I'm not going back.

Rebecca: I can't do that.

Amy: I can't do it. I was the same. I was devastated to walk away from my dream career, but my body was like, no. You literally can't do this anymore, Amy. You have to find a different way. So that's the invitation, I think.

Rebecca: And then the final thing I just wanted to touch on as well. So one thing that I think, one of the biggest things that I was unexpected or not expecting when I became a mum was the stuff that would come up to be healed within me, like, from maybe my childhood pre-verbal, like, these pre-verbal emotional things within me. And my current take on that is I think that I really remember, particularly with my son, like he's very deep and intense and he's got, like, big feelings. And so I think I was definitely, I have that within me too. And I remember my friend Binnie was there, and every time I'd walk into the room, she would say, here comes the goddess over and over again. And I would, oh at first thought that was just, like, a bit silly. Like, hahaha I'm not the goddess. Oh you're so funny. You know, that kind of thing. Like, just like being nice, you know? And then I really got what she was saying. And I saw in my son the intensity and the amount of love that he came in with, which was, like, so many, like, a thousand gallons. And I was, like, while I was open and in deep adoration of him, I also noticed that I didn't have the capacity to receive all of that love. And, you know, we know spiritually that love is beautiful, it's a massive healer, but it also brings up anything unlike it. And so, yeah, I started noticing just how much the intensity of his love actually made me really sad at the same time. And I wonder, like, I wonder how many mothers go through that and are like, why am I so sad? Like, why aren't I happier? This is what I wanted, you know? And I know also I'm not bypassing like the very real hormonal depression. Like all of that, like, that is existing all at the same time. But yeah, this specific thing that I'm talking about, what's your experience with that?

Amy: I think you've explained it beautifully. I know through motherhood, I have finally understood what unconditional love is because when I look at them they can do anything and I will love them

and forgive them. I still, 15 years into motherhood, struggle doing that for myself. I think when you see that in their eyes back at you, it brings out that feeling of, oh my God, I've never been loved like that. What does that mean? I know for me there was levels of worthiness of getting this right. I judged very deeply and still do if I'm not in a great headspace of the moments where I don't want to be a mum today. I think the, what I'm trying to say here is, the love towards a mother, when we first experience it, can feel heavy. Very heavy. Heavy with responsibility, heavy with deep worry of what am I going to do I've never felt like this before. It comes with so many layers. And again, we romanticize this idea of a mother's love. Yes, it's profound and it's beautiful, and I've never experienced anything like it. But oh my God, it is a lot to carry everyday and to then realize you don't give that to yourself. Or perhaps there's a lot of women out there who never received that from their mother. And that can also be a huge healing and a huge confrontation to I mean, gosh Bec, we could talk for hours about the complexity of this role. The complexity of this role. And, you know, and I just went into it thinking I'd have a baby and then life would get back to... We need to talk about it better and we need to acknowledge that it takes time to fall in love, to find yourself, to figure this out. And yet at the same time. Like all endings and beginnings, there's an opportunity here for us to really go back and look at ourselves and say, well, who do I want to be? And what's important here? And, you know, one of the things that I really recognized over all these years of doing this work was that, again, with the feminine in our culture, we don't follow through a woman's life to the end very well. We're obsessed with the youth, and then we kind of spend the rest of our lives trying to stay as young as possible. What I think this opens up is that we are always in a version of becoming. We are always going to be becoming the next version of ourselves and letting go of who we used to be. And that's both incredibly confronting because we don't have great role models for it, but also about frickin time.

Rebecca: Totally. Amazing. Oh okay, so, I'm going to conclude our conversation, even though we could go on with one final question. What returns you to the wisdom within?

Amy: This, again, is constantly changing. When my babies were little, a three minute Kundalini yoga meditation was my anchor. I would lock the bathroom door and I would just do a three minute chopping and then breathing and that was sort of my little plug in. Now that I've got more space and more time, it's a lot more, I'm getting very interested in exploring Mother Nature. I've always been a city girl. If you've known me for a long time, this would be quite a surprising answer. I am not a nature girl, and I'm finding myself, like, maybe I don't want to be in the city. Maybe I could live in the country. So I'm finding ways to listen to myself in nature at the moment, to bring myself back.

Rebecca: Amazing. Oh, thank you so much Amy.

Amy: Thank you. It's been such a beautiful conversation, weaving all these different ideas together. Thank you. I hope it's landed with everyone who's listened.

Rebecca: Today's Soul Inquiry prompt is - How are you being called to honor your matrescence or the matrescence for a mother in your life? And what is one baby step you can take in that direction today? Let's share a deep breath together as we close this Sacred Space. I am so grateful for you being here. If you'd like to keep returning to yourself and returning here with me, then please hit subscribe. If you love this episode, leaving a review or a five-star rating really helps others to find it too. And as always, you can find the show notes from today's episode, including Amy's book and all of her work over at rebeccacampbell.me/podcast. Thanks for returning.