



EP75:

Vodou & Good Juju for the Magical Soul

With Najah Lightfoot

Colette:

Hi there, and welcome to Inside the Wooniverse, a podcast brought to you from the corner of Fringe and Main. I'm your host, Colette Baron-Reid, and with us today is multi award-winning author, witch, and dog lover, Najah Lightfoot. Woo-hoo! Najah is an active member of the Denver Pagan community and the author of the bestselling book that is so awesome, oh my God, which is why she's here, it's called Good Juju: Mojos, Rites & Practices for The Magical Soul, and her most recent book, Powerful Juju: Goddesses, Music & Magic for Comfort, Guidance, and Projection. I mean, I'm serious, it is jam-packed with incredible information for everyone, especially for those of us living at the corner of Fringe and Main. Anyway, welcome to the Wooniverse, Najah.

Najah:

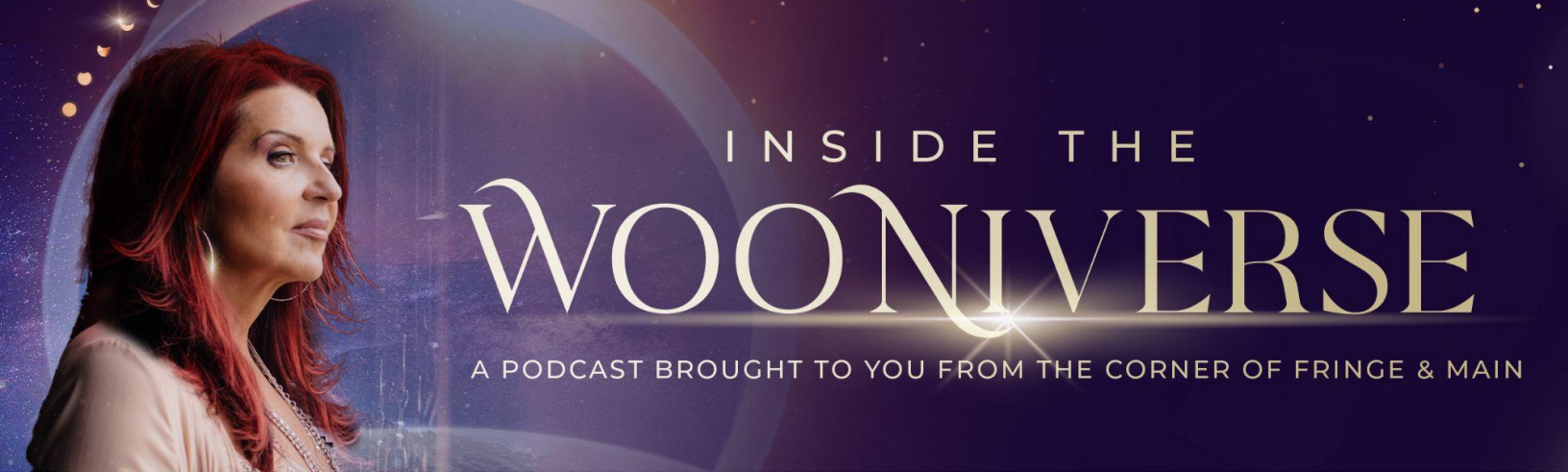
Thank you. Thank you, Colette. I'm so happy to be here. Thank you for inviting me and thank you to all your listeners. This is just a great, great time.

Colette:

Oh my God, I'm telling you, I've been dying to get you on the show. I've loved your books and your videos. I mean, you're hilarious and you're so interesting. So I can hardly wait to introduce you to everybody. I know everybody here is going to love you. So let's start at the beginning. This is the way I do it with all my guests. I want to know little Najah. All right? What was your childhood like and when did you start sensing invisible energies?

Najah:

Well, I was born in Cleveland, Ohio. So I lived in Ohio till I was four. And I've just always been a person, and as a child who was deeply attuned to nature, loved trees and butterflies, and always had to be outside, and just always had that sense that there was something else going on just innately inside myself. And then, I have no shame about my age, I was born in 1960. So I'm a child of the '60s. And when I was little, my family moved to LA, we moved to Southern Cal.



Colette:

Wow.

Najah:

So I grew up in the '70s in LA, and I loved being in Los Angeles, in LA, in the '70s. I mean, all the music was about magic, there was Hollywood, there was everything, Do You Believe in Magic, and the beach. I wish I had my original choker from when I was a little kid. And so it was just always surrounding me. And being in Southern Cal in the '70s, it just kind of fueled who I was. And I loved all the TV shows. I was a huge Dark Shadows fan, and a fan of Bewitched.

Colette:

Oh my God, me too. Woo-hoo!

Najah:

Yeah, I watched all that stuff. So that just kind of fueled all the stuff that was going on in me innately, a kid.

Colette:

I love that. Yeah, and by the way, I'm older than you, so I was born in 1958. So yay us!

Najah:

Yes!

Colette:

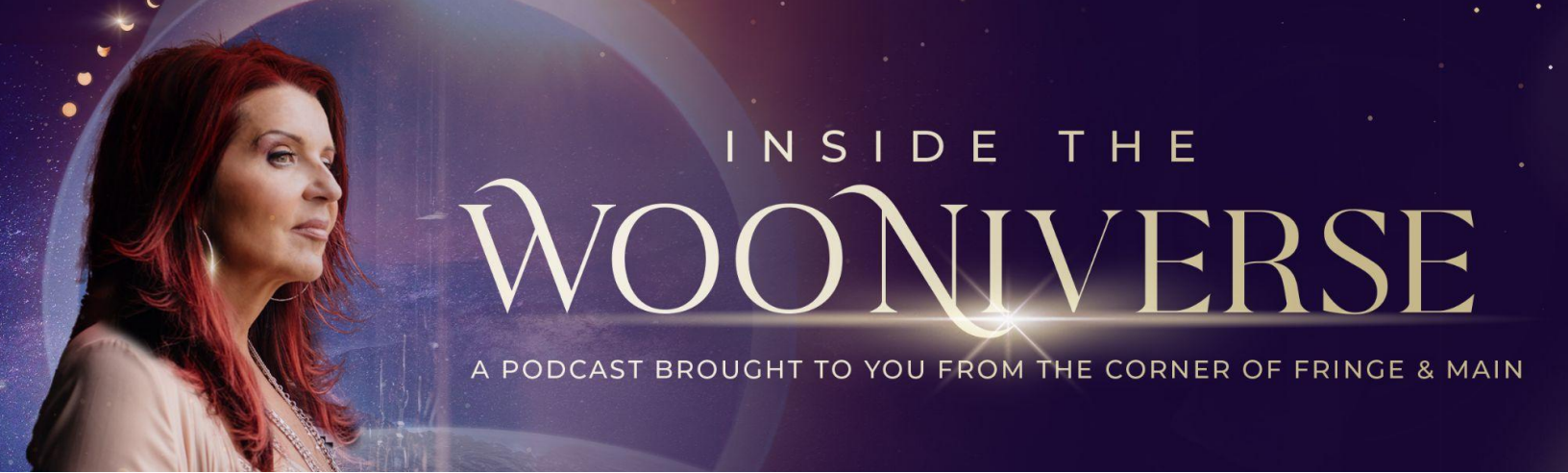
Good vintage, girl, good vintage.

Najah:

Yay! Yes, that's right, that's right.

Colette:

I love it. So one of the things that I found really interesting in your books was about your sense of being a witch, but also the introduction to Vodou. So when were you introduced to Vodou?



And can you tell us a bit about what that was like for you and your personal experience with it? Because I think it's really fascinating.

Najah:

Oh, sure. I love talking about it. So I will tell you, I've been on the path for a long, long time. When I started out, coming through the Western European practices and studying that and things like that. And then I started studying hoodoo, which is African American folk magic, which is a folk magic practice. And then, being the witchy goddess/person/woman that I am, I was always looking for icons that look like me, women of color who are magical, who are powerful. And through all of that stuff, I was led to the divine Marie Laveau. And Marie Laveau as a spiritual woman who, she was so powerful, I was just drawn to her.

Now, granted, I'm talking like being on this walk, being on this path for over 20 years. This isn't something that just happened to me right away.

Colette:
Right.

Najah:

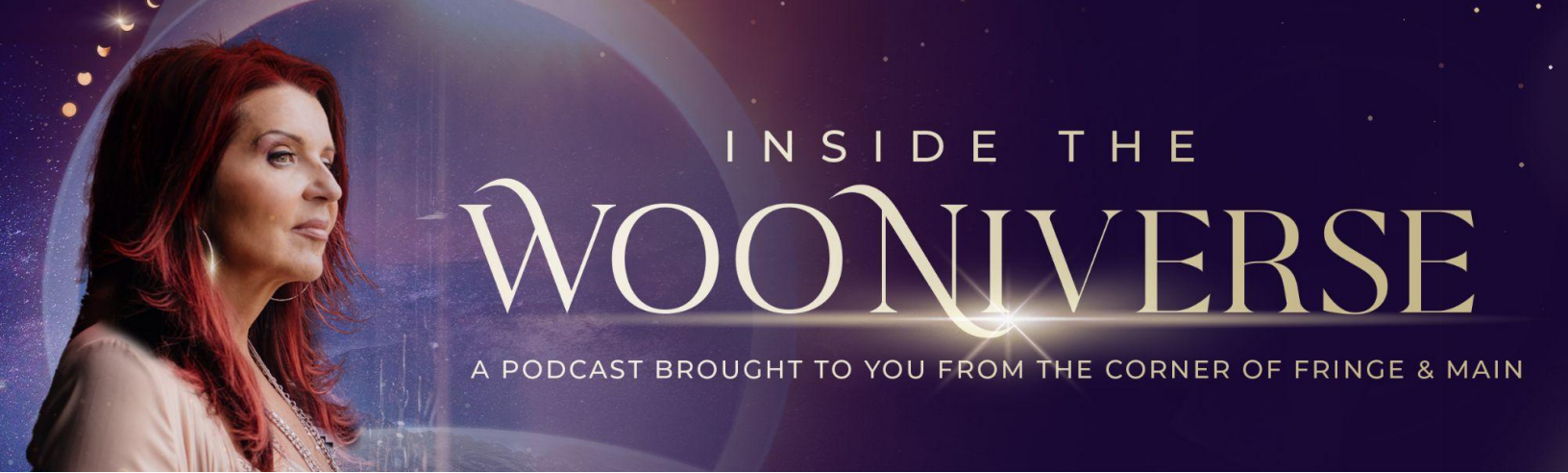
And I always tell people, you got to take your time. Things will come. You have to figure out is that right for you? And so, during this travel and being so, just so touched by Marie Laveau, my husband and I, we would travel to New Orleans quite a bit.

Colette:
Oh, wow.

Najah:

And... Have you been to New Orleans?

Colette:
I have. I have.



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Najah:

Yes. No, you get to New Orleans and, oh...

Colette:

You got the magic there, yep.

Najah:

... Quite the magic. And one thing led to another through going to through New Orleans, and in my practices, and really wanting to align with a powerful, magical, spiritual presence of a woman who was a woman of color or a Black woman. And so that's how I ended up falling under the wonderful guidance and spiritual guidance of Marie Laveau. And through that, it was a very gingerly, just little steps at a time that I ended up finding my way into the religion of Vodou. So Vodou is a religion. It's a religious practice. It's a religion just like other organized religions, and there are people, women and men, who are trained to initiate people and bring people into that properly. It's just like if you decided to join a church or an organized religion, you would talk to the pastor or the minister or the rabbi, whoever was in that capacity to do that for you, if that's something you desired.

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

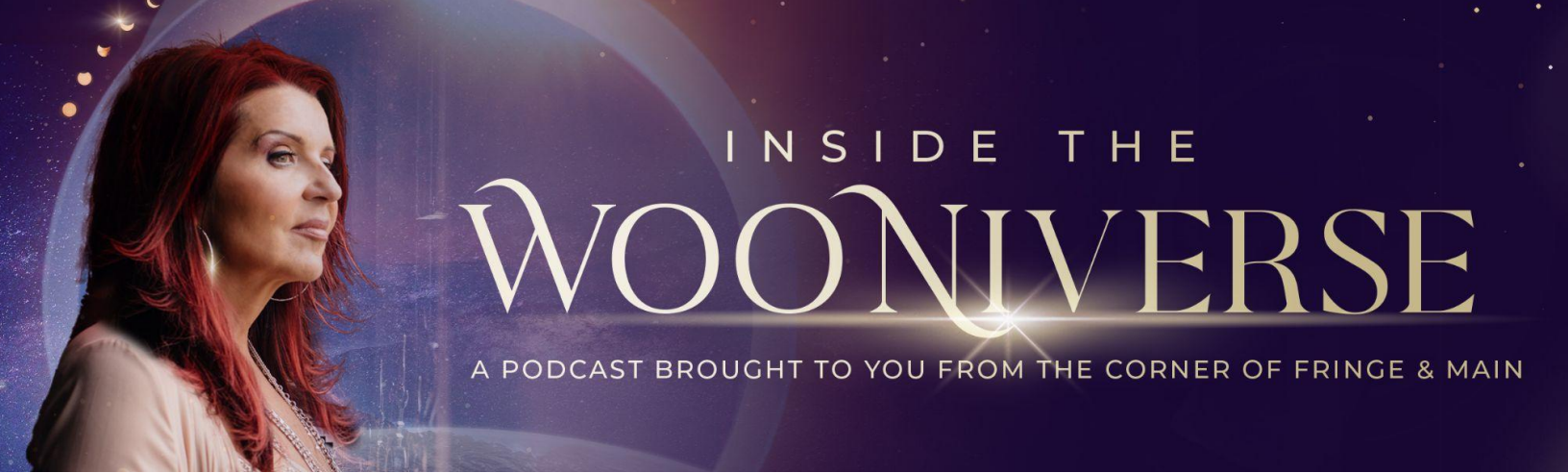
And so that's what happened to me. That's how I ended up being initiated into it.

Colette:

So tell me a little bit about that. I know that there's some preconceptions, and I'd love you to dispel those myths, because I know you do that in your books, and I would just love you to talk about that and really give us an understanding about what this is and what this isn't.

Najah:

Right. So I'm still learning myself as I go along because it's so vast. Vodou is such a vast religion from the African traditional religions and the diaspora from enslaved people, who were taken against their will and then spread out all over the world into different countries but carried



their religious practices with them. And Vodou is one of those religious practices that had to be hidden because people were like, "What the hell is this? What's going on?"

Colette:
Right.

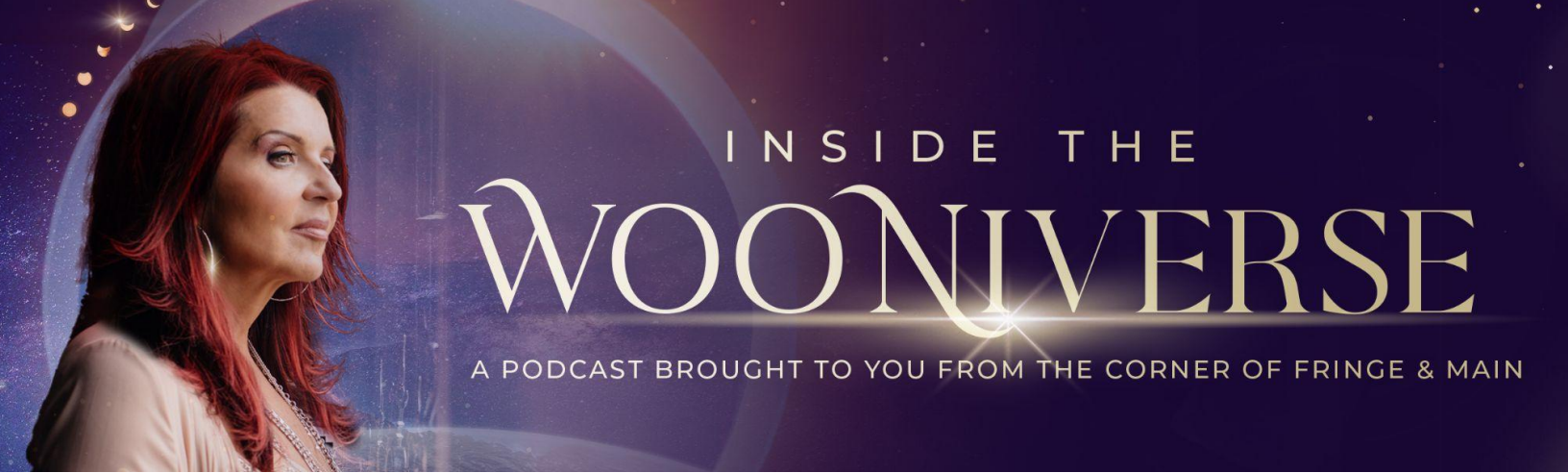
Najah:
But mainly, for me, it's about honoring your ancestors, those who have gone before you. There are deities in Vodou that are known as the lwa, and they are kind of like the intermediaries between human beings and the higher power that exist in the universe.

Colette:
Right.

Najah:
And so there are different lwa. And a lot of Vodou practices, which was really interesting for me, is syncretic with Catholicism, because they do a lot of things with saints.

Colette:
Oh, interesting.

Najah:
So people who have that background in Catholicism and petitioning saints for different things... Which, I did not. I didn't have anything. I didn't know anything about working with saints. But so, they kind of overlap, but that was also because of protection. A different saint... There's so many saints in the Catholic religion, and so those kind of mesh. And that's also, you find that in other African traditional religions, where they might have several deities that they may petition for help, and so they are called by their names. In Vodou, it's the lwa. And so those saints are honored throughout different days and different ceremonies and holidays and stuff throughout the year.



Colette:

Beautiful. So would you say that ritual and the sacred... It sounds to me like there's a sacred relationship between you as the practitioner... Would you call it a practitioner of the religion or your...

Najah:

Yes, I would, or an initiator of Vodou.

Colette:

Initiator. Oh, uh-huh. That you would develop these relationships, is that correct, with the lwa?

Najah:

Yeah. Yeah, and it would develop over time, just like people develop relationships with their gods and goddesses, or their angels, or their messengers, or however their higher power expresses for them. And it's something that takes a lifetime, maybe several lifetimes. You may find one that calls to you, it was Marie Laveau who called to me, and then there's other goddesses. I call her goddess, but that's also from my background as a practicing witch, someone who's deeply attuned to the divine feminine. And so you kind of find your way. And if I lived in New Orleans... People often think I live in New Orleans. I do not. I live in Denver.

Colette:

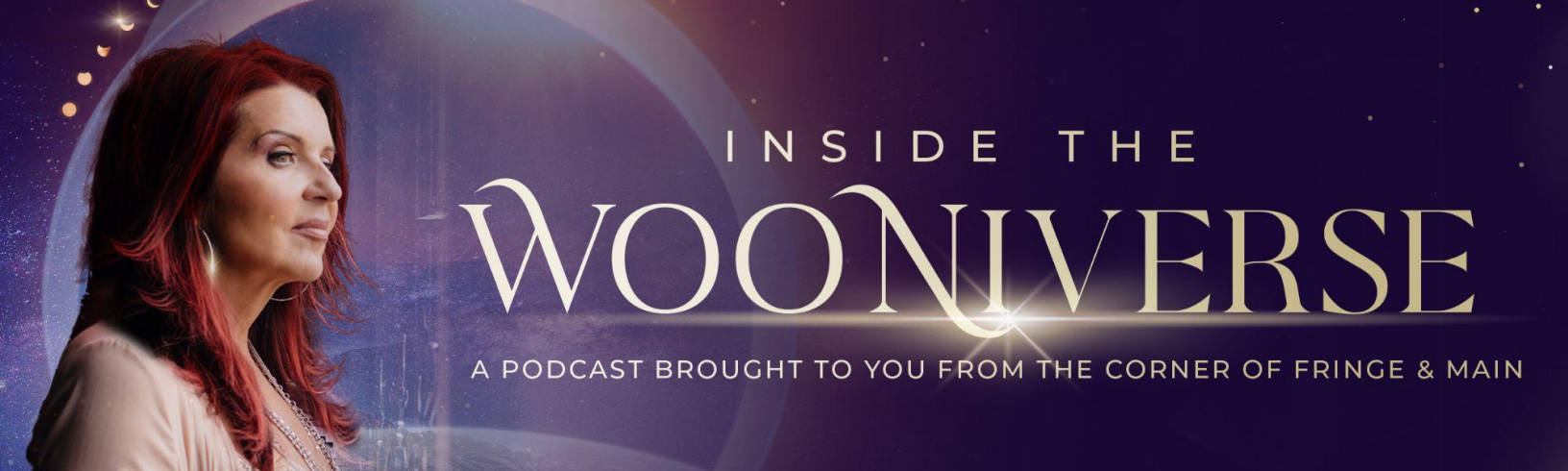
I love it.

Najah:

But when I get down there, it's really great to be able to go to ceremony and honor the lwa. And one of the big things that, in October, everybody seems to have some type of sacred celebration.

Colette:

Sure.



Najah:

So there's Fet Gede, where we honor the ancestors, and that's a wonderful Vodou ceremony, but that corresponds to All Saints' Day and All Hallows' Eve, so everybody's got something going on. But yeah, it's very old. It's very ancient. And one of the things that I really love about being in a Vodou ceremony is the drumming.

Colette:

Aha.

Najah:

The drums are just fantastic. So if anybody, any of your listeners, have been in ceremony, I came up through a drum circle. That's how I first got started here in Denver. And to have the drums surround you when they're all going at the same time, it's transcendent.

Colette:

Wow.

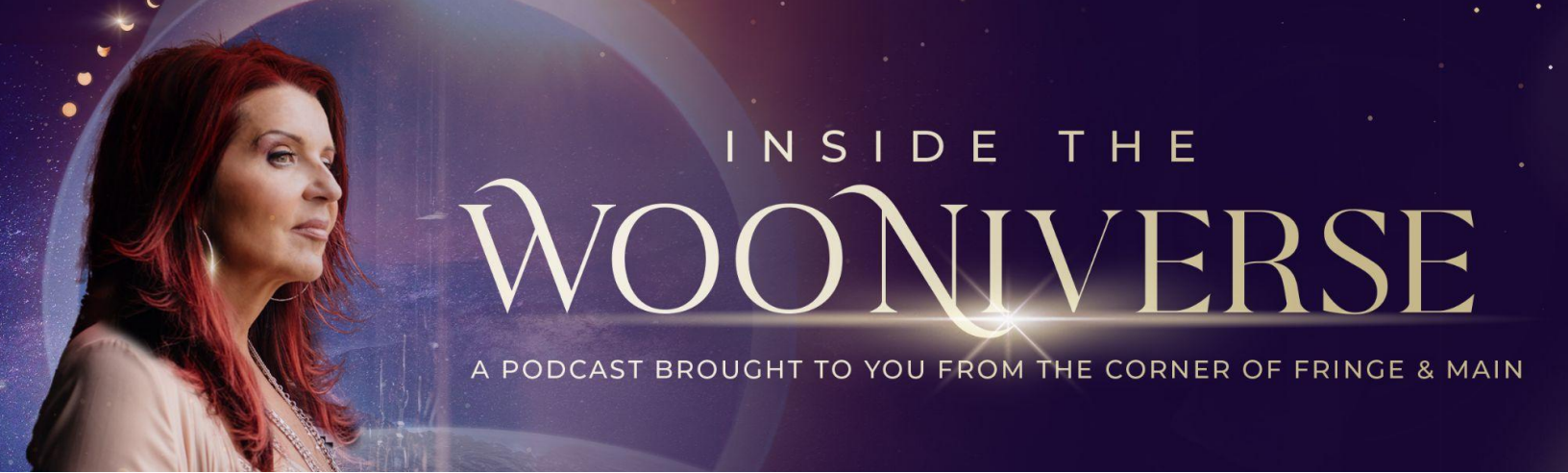
Najah: And that's the music, the rhythm. It's very integral to Vodou and the ceremonies.

Colette:

Oh, that's beautiful. Let's go back to the concept of ancestors and spirits because, from my understanding and from reading your books, there is a really big correlation between this particular religion and either ancestor worship, petitioning the ancestors, working with spirits. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

Najah:

Yeah. Well, there are always those who have gone before us, and it's our way to honor those who go before us, whether they were in your lives personally or if you had a spiritual connection to them. So I have a process where I pour water to my ancestors who have gone before me, and I do that every day. And it's very comforting to actually say the names of those who have passed on, who are personal to me.



Colette:

Wow.

Najah:

Then, also, especially now in this day of social media, and we grew up with people who are important, if somebody passed away, I might add them to my prayers and just pour a little water for them, because just recognizing the importance and the significance that they had in my life. Also, sometimes, when there are horrible things that happen, and we're all very sensitive, empathic people, I might feel something for those who were crossed over, and I may add them in my prayers just for a day or two, and pour a little water just to say, "Hey, we wish you well on your journey, just thinking about you." And so, we always remember those who have gone before us. And that's not only central in Vodou, but that happens in Western European magical traditions. I think it's central to one's spirituality and one's spiritual practice to realize that there were those who came before them.

Colette:

Why water, and how do you pour the water? Is it poured in a goblet for them, or is it-

Najah:

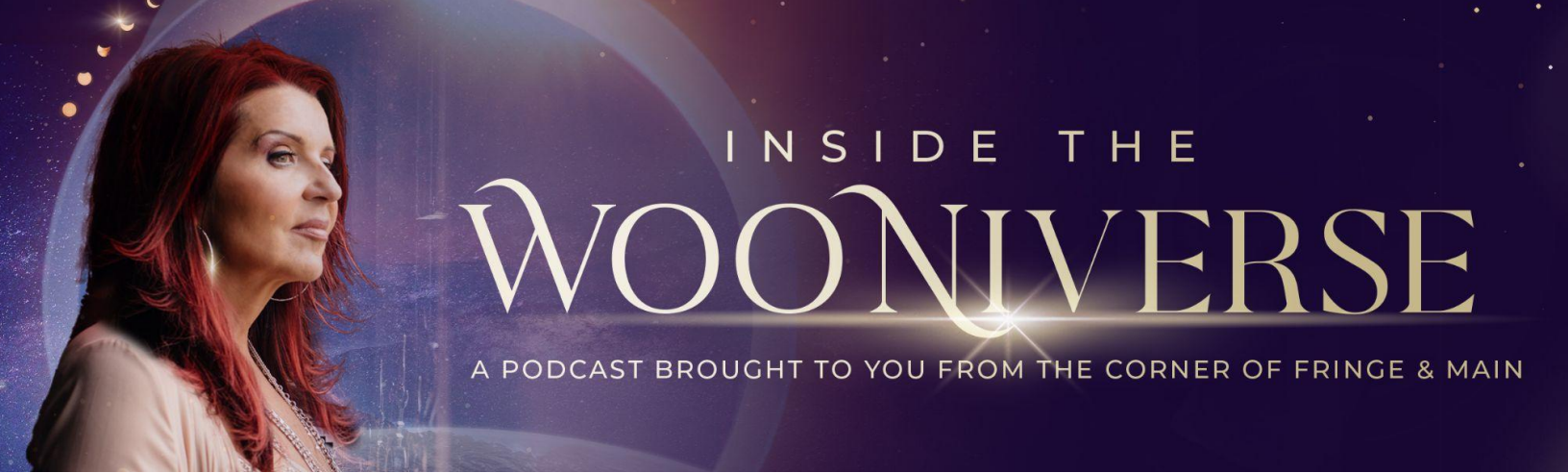
Yeah, I pour water in a cup and I say some words like, "To those who have gone before me," and I pour water to them. But I also in this practice, I do this, it's... I'm a very disciplined person, and so I'm very focused about my practices, and so I pour water to my ancestors before I take a drink of water myself in the morning.

Colette:

Okay.

Najah:

Because it's, "From water we all come. Unto water we all must return," and then I pour water to them, and then I take a sip myself and thank the water, the element of water, for giving me life. And so that's something I do every day.



Colette:

Okay.

Najah:

So I like to tell people, it's not just, oh, once a year or this month, no, this is a daily practice of reverence for me.

Colette:

Yeah, well, when you say a daily practice of reverence, so let's say somebody hears those words, I mean, you don't even have to practice Vodou to practice a daily practice of reverence. I think that's something that's lacking. Just as you were talking, thinking about, what would it be like for me in a morning to first pour water to my ancestors, to my parents, who have crossed over, to the people who have walked before me? My great-grandmother from Mongolia, for example, I think about her a lot lately.

So it's like, "Okay, so if I did that, would I not change my whole perspective on the day?" It's because you're in reverence now. You're saying, "I am not alone, and I am the one carrying the torch forward." Again, I know it's a water ceremony, but I just thought about that. I thought that would really be... I'm actually going to think about coming up with something that made sense to me, because it is something that, yeah, I've thought about a lot of.

Najah:

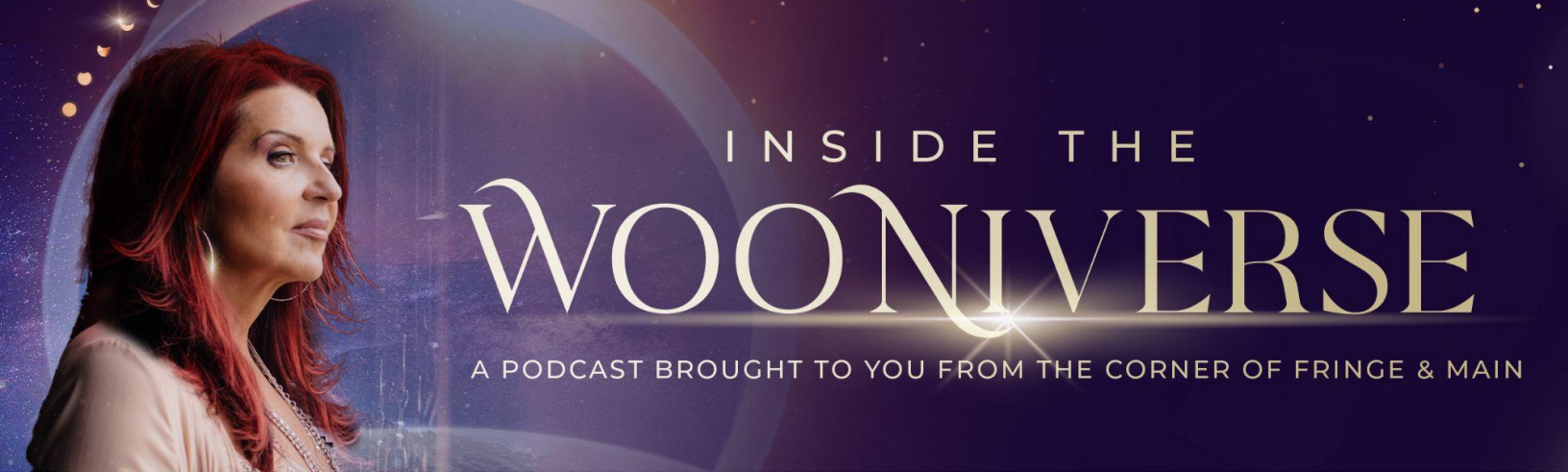
Aw.

Colette:

I mean, a lot of us are thinking about our ancestral history, etc. And especially in the past few years, it's been like, "Well, where do you come from? What are your ancestral traditions," etc. And I think it's a beautiful thing that you just shared, really beautiful.

Najah:

Aw. Thank you. I'm so touched by that, Colette. That's a wonderful thing. It's simple. I like to do stuff you don't need a lot of things that are complicated. Take some water, and say their names, and pour some water to them, and then take a drink yourself.



Colette:

Yeah, that's beautiful. That's really beautiful. So let's talk about... Because you identify as a witch. That is really your thing, your thang.

Najah:

Absolutely.

Colette:

So where do these two intersect, these two philosophies? Well, actually, one is an actual religion. And, is being a witch also a religion? How would you describe that?

Najah:

Well, I describe being a practicing witch as my spirituality.

Colette:

Right, okay.

Najah:

So that's part of my spiritual reclaiming of that word.

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

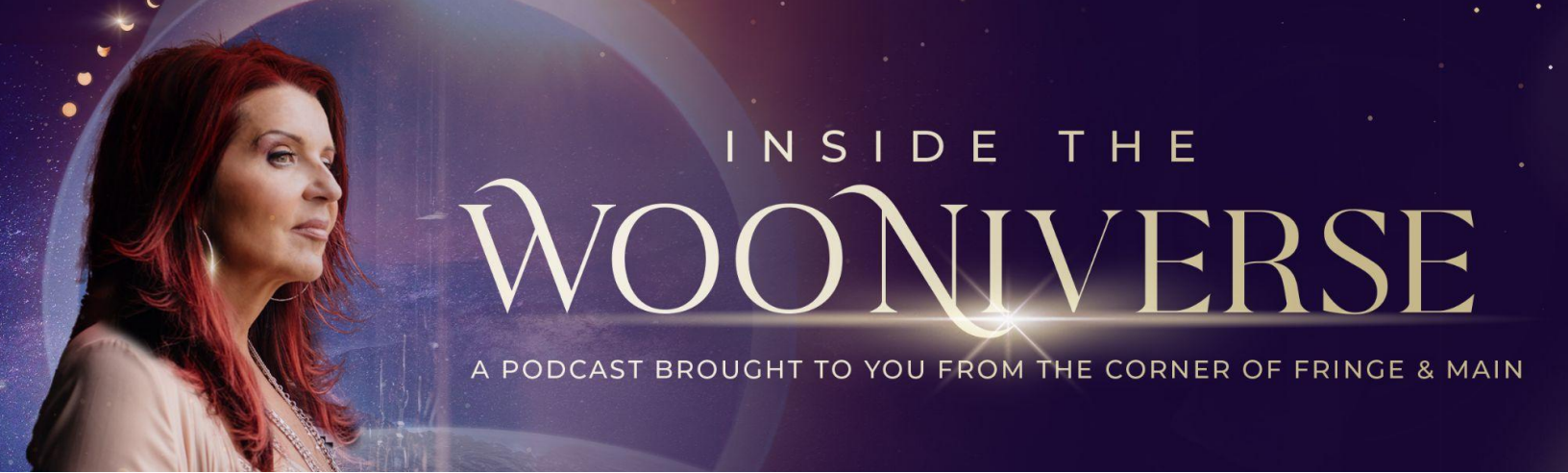
And so, everything I do falls under the word "practicing witch" for me.

Colette:

I love it.

Najah:

That might not be true for other people. There's a lot of people who are not comfortable with that. I happen to be comfortable. I like to reclaim that as a powerful word.



Colette:

Yeah, no, I love that. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Najah:

And so I'm always looking up at the sky. I'm very attuned to, I know when the new moon is, the full moon is, the seasons. And most witches that I know were very in sync with nature.

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

And so, my Vodou practice, that's just another part of my spirituality.

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

I add that to my whole bag of spiritual practices.

Colette:

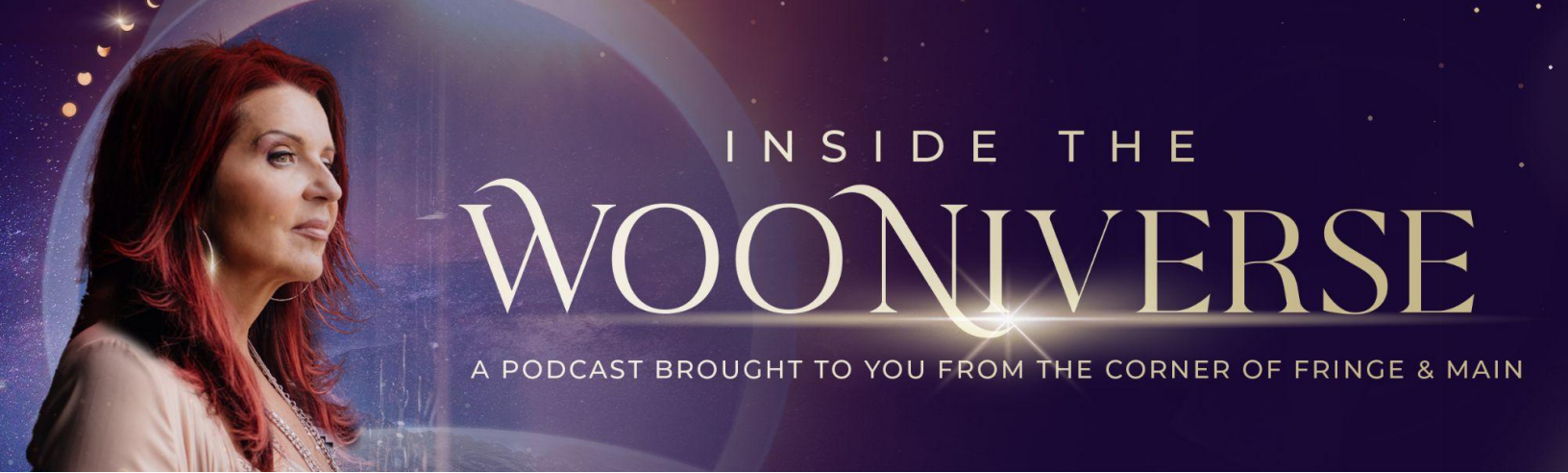
Right.

Najah:

Which I think is good, because I'm a lifelong learner, I love studying, I take in what works for me, I let go what does it.

Colette:

Yeah. Me too.



Najah:

And growing up, like we said, during the magical time of music, in my book I have a playlist for all the goddesses, it's just all real witchy to me. So to me, they all work seamlessly together. I don't feel like I have to choose from one or let go of another.

Colette:

Right. They intersect because they come together like you're weaving. You're weaving your own tapestry when these beautiful threads come together. I love that. I think that a lot of people need to feel less rigid about these choices so that they can be more flexible about, "Yes, I am a witch, and I'm also really attracted to this. I feel drawn to this. I feel called to this," and then, even in your case, you were initiated into Vodou religion. Where else do you draw your magical inspiration from?

Najah:

Well, like I said, I live in Colorado, and every morning I get up and I have a spiritual practice. So I'm not only pouring water to my ancestors, but I'm calling the directions every morning. I face the East and the South and the West and the North, then the above, and then the below, and then the within. I say prayers for my family, for my friends. And I've done that for so long that that's just part of who I am.

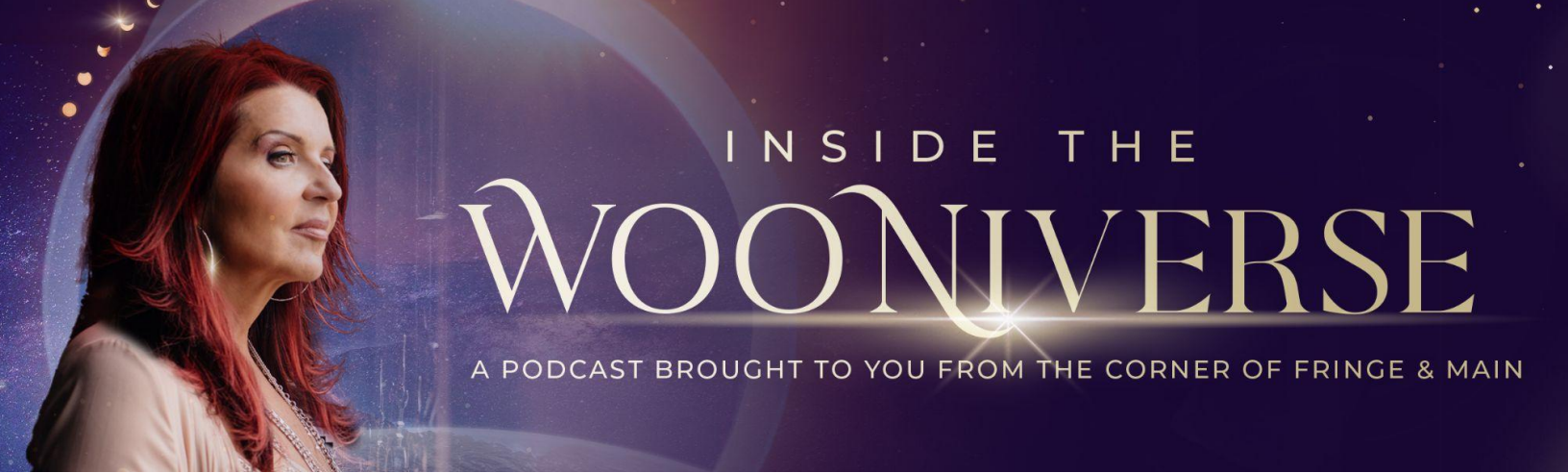
And I recently just came back from traveling. And when I travel, I take out my handy iPhone and I look at my compass so I know which way is East.

Colette:

Right. Right on.

Najah:

I get up, I do my thing. And so I try to always connect with the land where I am through that practice. I open my window. I was just in Baltimore, and there was this big, huge tree out there, and I was like, "Oh, look at this beautiful tree." So instantly I was connected to the tree, and I had a little water. And so I just find that practicing is my inspiration.



Colette:
Right.

Najah:
And no matter what, that just stays with me, and so I'm able to just go deeply within to my own spiritual self. And because I've been doing this as a daily practice, which I always encourage people to do, find that one thing that makes you feel magical and connected, and do that on a daily basis, and it just grows from there. So you can be inspired from anything. You just work at it. It takes time and effort.

Colette:
I love that. And I do love that it is a discipline. It is about getting up and doing that one practice. And it's really cool. So now, I want to talk about your books, because you wrote two fabulous books, *Good Juju* and *Powerful Juju*, both providing readers with tools to help them better express their spirituality and build up a magical practice. So I want you to define the word "juju".

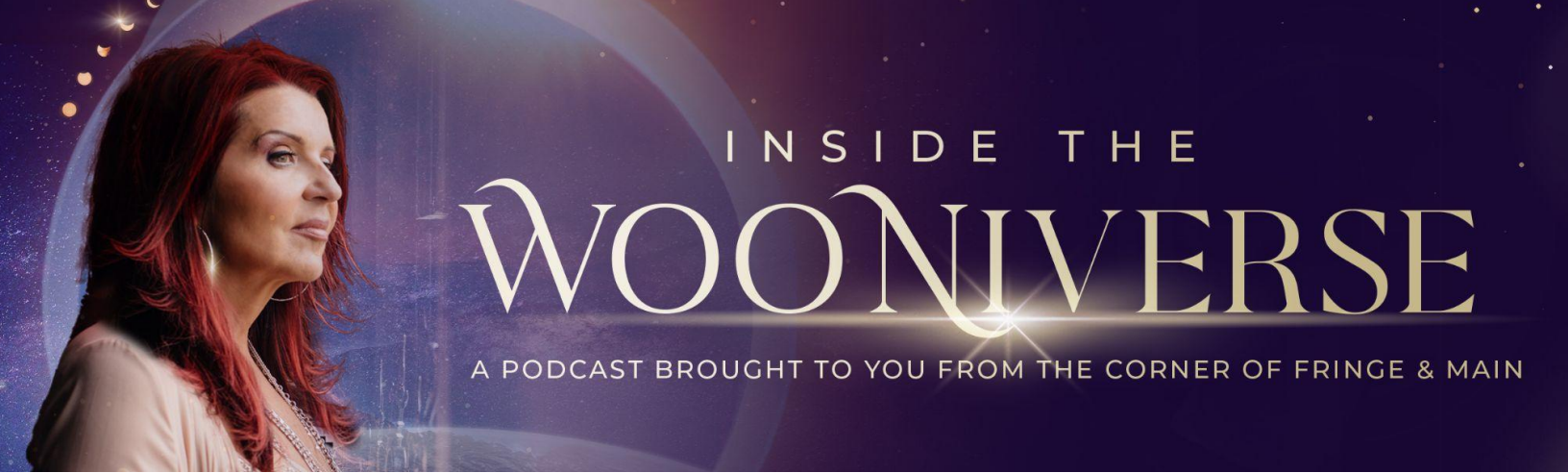
Najah:
Okay, so juju, to me, is like a colloquialism. Everybody knows what juju is. It's a magical word. I don't really have to tell you what juju is. When I say juju, people know what I'm talking about.

Colette:
Right.

Najah:
For me, it was just like, "Oh yeah, good juju." I mean, that's like the best, right?

Colette:
Right?

Najah:
Let's get some good juju going here. When I was researching the book, I did find out there are some musical instruments that would be called juju. I do have some juju beads that someone gifted me a long time, and they make this wonderful sound.



Colette:

Aha.

Najah:

In fact, my dog likes to go over and shake them. So I have juju beads, I have a juju belt that people gifted me over the years. But to me, it just encapsulates that magical presence, and how do I tap into it and use it and keep the good juju flowing? Because everybody knows, and I won't say it, everybody knows, oh, that's that other juju. And I'm like, "Well, okay, if there's that, I'll say, anti-juju..."

Colette:

Right. There has to be... Right. Yeah, yeah.

Najah:

"... There's got to be good juju." And so, I just thought people would just recognize that, feel that in themselves, because it's such a magical word, like mojo.

Colette:

I agree.

Najah:

Everybody knows what a mojo is. They think they do.

Colette:

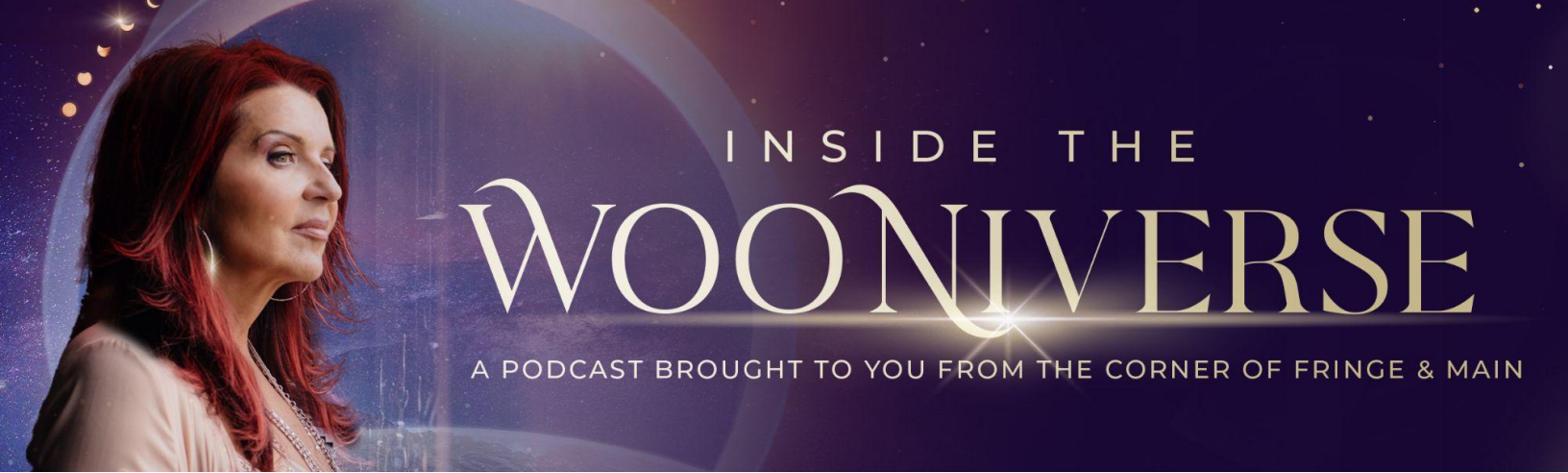
Right.

Najah:

Most people do anyway. But lots of folks don't realize a mojo is an actual tangible item. It's a-

Colette:

Oh, really?



Najah:

Oh, yeah, it's a tangible item. It's like, you could say, a talisman or a charm, made out of flannel, that people would put magical things in it that have been blessed, like herbs and papers, and bless it, and they would actually carry it with them on their person.

Colette:

Really?

Najah:

So when you say... Oh, yeah. When you say, "I lost my mojo," that would be like serious.

Colette:

Oh, I... Right, I lost my lucky charm. I lost my-

Najah:

I lost my lucky charm.

Colette:

Ah.

Najah:

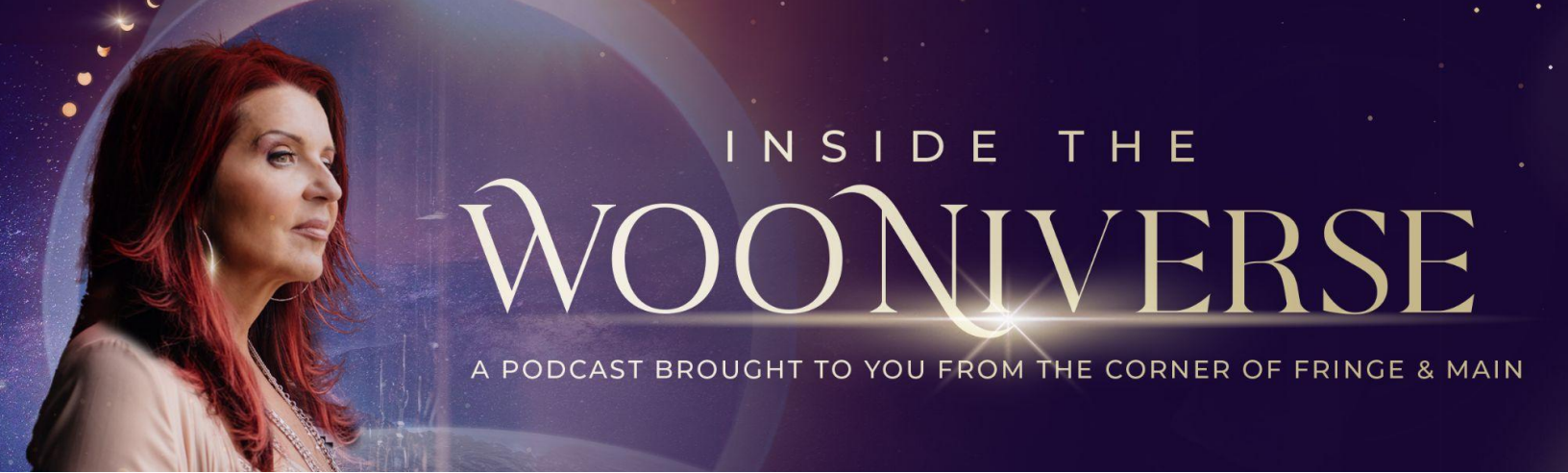
And Austin Powers brought it into popular culture, but it really is a real thing. A mojo is a real item.

Colette:

Wow. That's very interesting. I know people use words without even knowing what they mean, or they misuse the words. That's so interesting.

Najah:

Yeah, it's always cool to find out the history of stuff like that.



Colette:

I love words, and I'm a total nerd. And I'm a lifelong learner, too, so this is why I'm asking you all these questions. Okay, so this may be, again, obvious, but the difference between good and powerful.

Najah:

Oh, okay.

Colette:

Right?

Najah:

Oh, I love that. That's a great question.

Colette:

Yeah, let's dive into this one.

Najah:

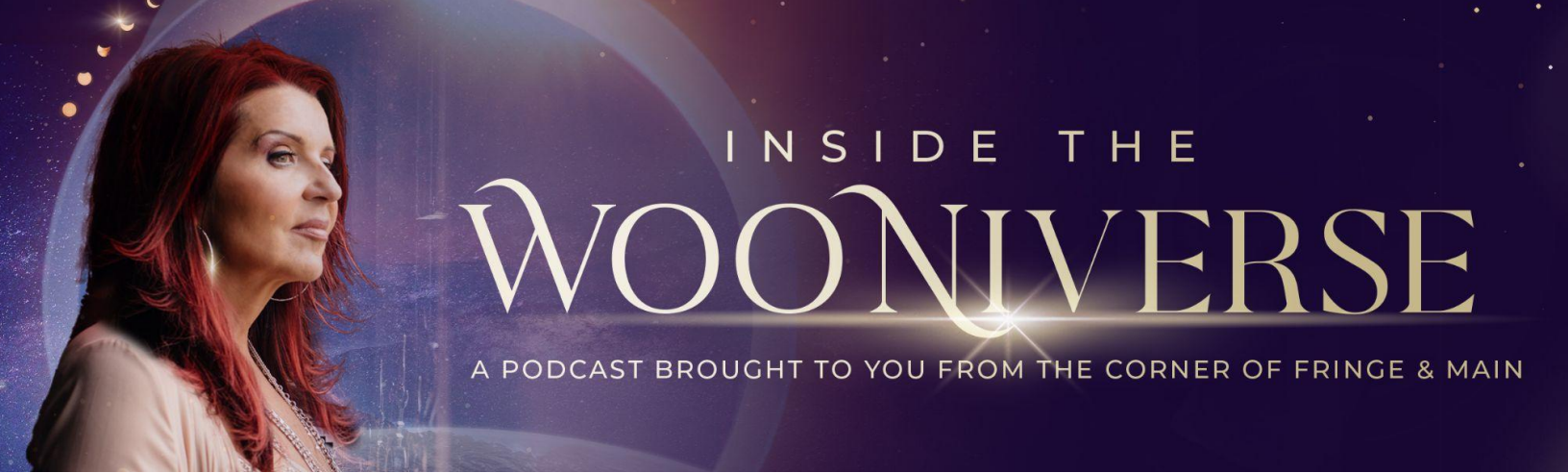
Thank you. So in the first book, Good Juju, I tried to help people who maybe wanted to step into the magical realm and actually start doing practical magical things, like working with candles or doing affirmations, or I call them spells, and actually using things to help them feel better, help them move forward, and gently step into the world of magic, and take their time with it, and know that that's okay.

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

So that, Good Juju, was kind of like, "Let's just ease it down. Let's just take a moment. It's okay. It's all right. There's everything. You just move at your own pace." So then, while I was writing Good Juju, a couple of things, people... Which was so great, and I really appreciate everybody who's supported me and my books. But people wanted to touch with me more personally. And so, I'm always listening to music. I just love music.



Colette:

Yep, me too.

Najah:

And so I write to music, and music's very inspiring to me. And then I started thinking about how music and how these iconic women, who were either real women or mythological, how they could help you with certain things in your life, because they had helped me. So I always try to write for my own authentic experiences.

And so, Powerful Juju is now like, "Let's get focused. Let's really dive down into some of this stuff that we as human beings have happened to us, because not everything is always light and happy." Wonderful things come down, and it's nice to be able to like, "How do I rise up right through this situation?"

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

And that's what Powerful Juju is for.

Colette:

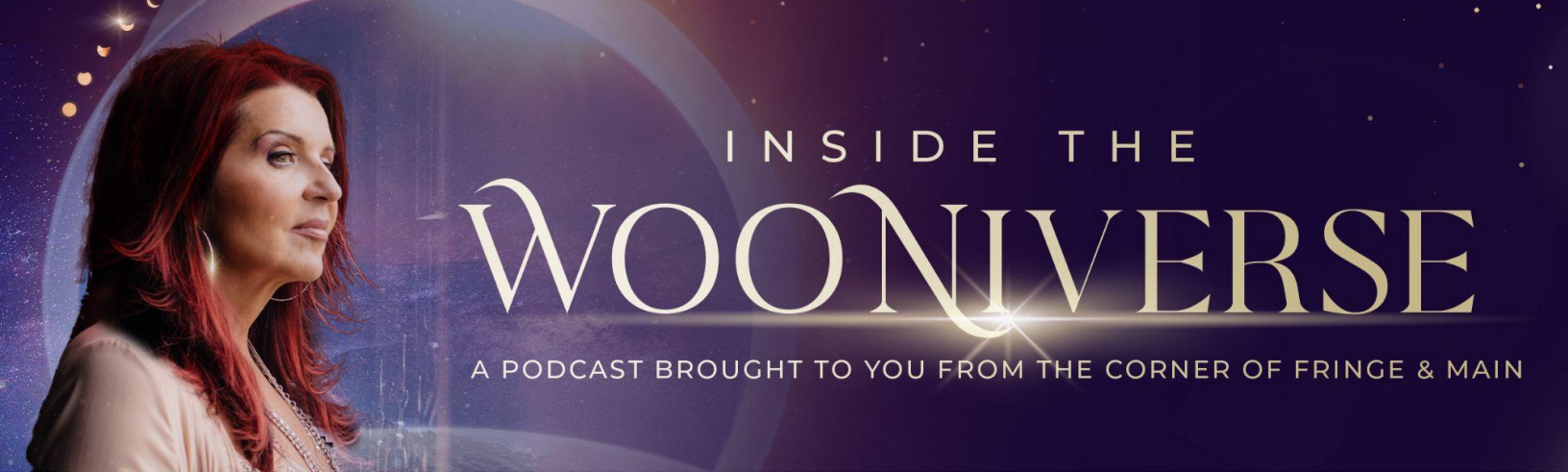
Okay, so what are some of the different ways to actually work with... And really, juju is energy, really, when you think about it, right? But it's a specific type of energy. It's magical energy. It's an energy that is generative, or it can change things. I mean, it has different shapes and sizes, the way it moves and morphs. So what are some of the ways today that people could actually work with it? And would you say that people have their own juju?

Najah:

Oh, yeah, absolutely.

Colette:

Right? Yeah.



Najah:

You have to run everything through yourself and your experiences. But I'm a huge candle person. I was recently asked like, "Define your practice in three words." And I was like, "Okay, candles and incense..."

Colette:

And candles. And candles.

Najah:

"... And the timing of the moon, that would be my three things."

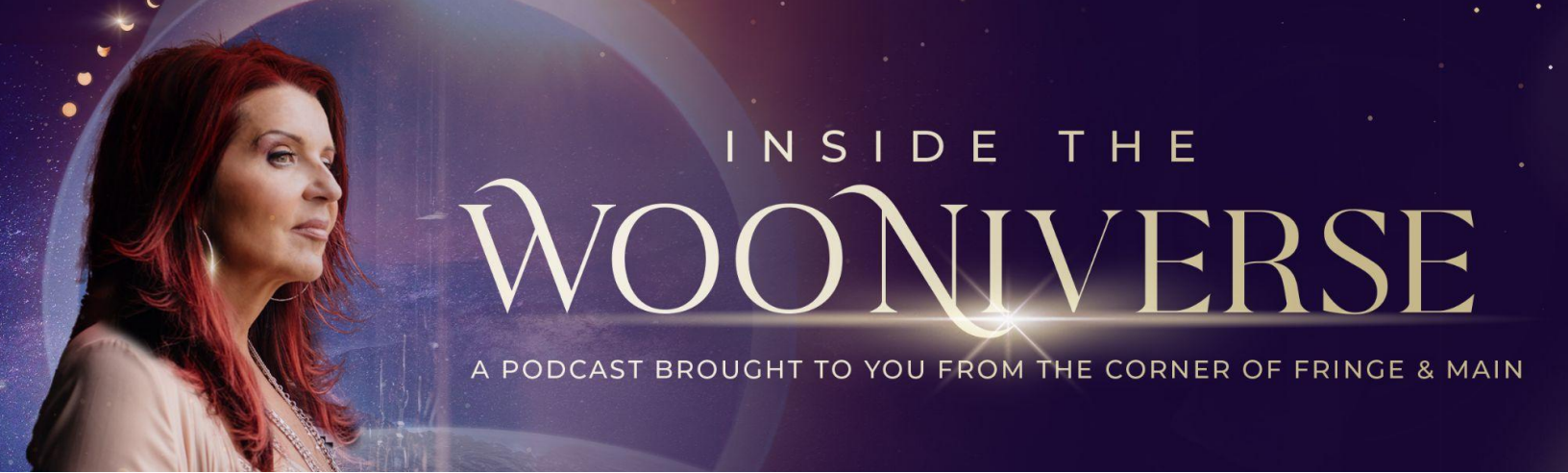
Colette:

Okay.

Najah:

What is the moon in, what phase is the moon in? We know that when the moon is waxing, going from new to full, that's the time of increase, so if you were trying to increase things in your life. And the new moon is a new beginning, so you would have new things you could do then. You could light a candle. A white candle serves as the go-to for all kinds of things. So you could light a white candle, you could ask for help increasing something in your life, for a new beginning. You could let that candle burn. You could light it once a day or every day. And then on the full moon, maybe you could add some more candles in a circle around it, or you might go outside during the full moon and really tap into that energy. And that would be a way of working your own personal juju, however that called to you. If you wanted to get all dressed up, you could, if you wanted to take a nice bath during the full moon and light your candle. So that's a really good way.

And then during the waning moon, which we're in now, that's the time to let go. So you might decide that, now, this is the time you want to let go. So you might be getting up during the morning and saying, "Okay, now I want to let go of some stuff." You might get a different color candle, what you're drawn to, and light that candle every day until the moon disappears out of the sky, or you might just do it once. Not everybody...



Colette:
Right.

Najah:
It takes a long time to be lighting candles every day.

Colette:
I don't know, it sounds pretty good.

Najah:
Burn your favorite incense. I love scent. Some people have allergies, so you have to find what works to you. You could add stones to that. So it's really about tapping into, I like to help people like, "Use what's around you."

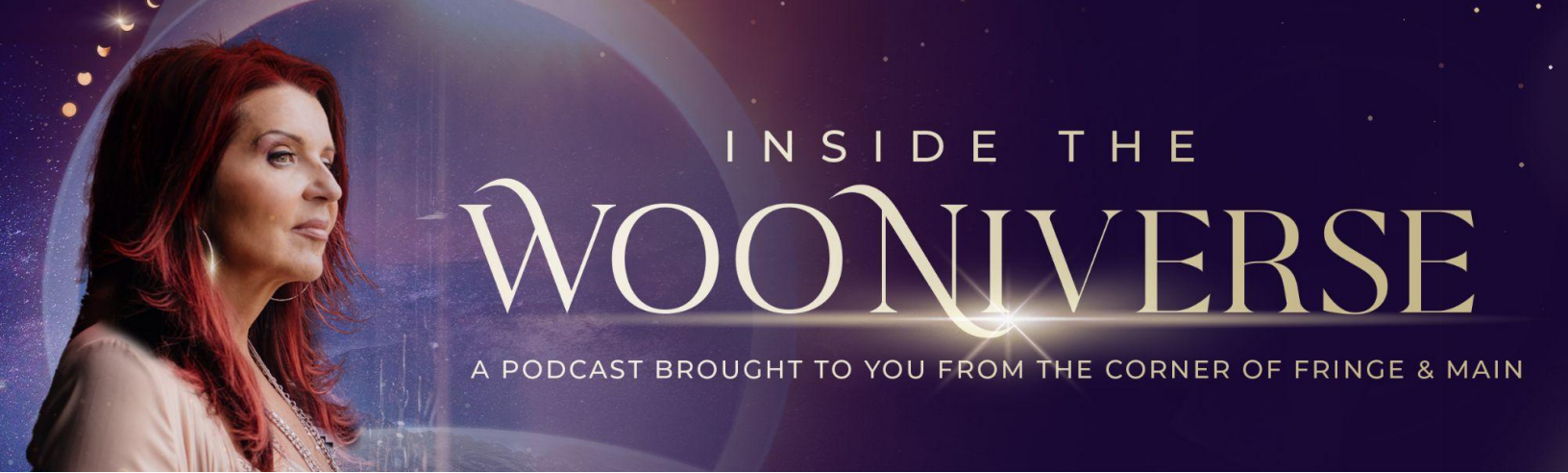
Colette:
Right.

Najah:
You don't really have to go out and buy all this stuff right away. I mean, who doesn't love to shop? But it's really about developing it in such a way where you could do it anywhere.

Colette:
Right, so this is about ritual and symbolism, too, right? So this a symbolic gesture of honoring this.

Najah:
That's right, that's right. Yes.

Colette:
That's so interesting. We're going to take a little pause; more with Najah when we come back. Don't go anywhere.



Okay, we are back. Najah, let's pick up on what we were talking about just before the break. Okay, let's talk about the candles. Let's go deeper into the candle conversation since that's your favorite thing. So you mentioned that a white candle typically is something that you can always go to, but tell me the significance of the candle, what you can do with the candle, and why you would do it.

Najah:

Well, a candle represents your eternal flame and the flame of the universe.

Colette:

Okay.

Najah:

It represents the power of fire and fire of creation. So whenever I light a candle, I always say, "Blessed be element of fire," because we work with the elements, elements of water, of air, of earth. And so when you light that candle, you are lighting the flame of your magic, your spiritual practice. And then according to some traditions, there are always different meanings for everything, but white symbolizes like pure or the all candle.

Colette:

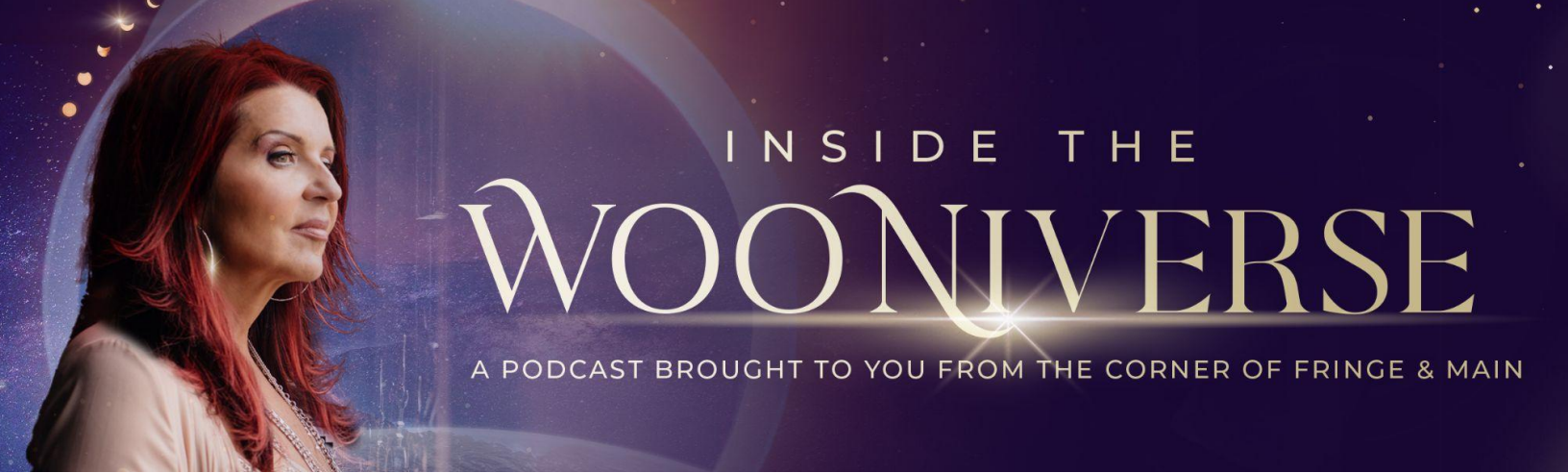
Right.

Najah:

Pretty much everybody can find a white candle. Green, I use green for prosperity because that's like things growing. We're in springtime now. Everything's regenerating, it's renewing. Pink could be for love, love for yourself. I saw the card you pulled this morning, so you might light a pink candle for love. You might light a red candle for passion, for really deep, passionate love. Yellow, for me, I use yellow when I'm doing safe travel prayers, and safe travel work.

Colette:

Oh, interesting. Okay.



Najah:

In Good Juju, I actually tell people how to make a safe travel mojo, which is the color of yellow. So I might add a yellow candle to that work when I've made the mojo and pass that through the flame of a yellow candle. So black, people might use that for banishing things that they no longer want to be around, or sometimes black can also symbolize the power of going into the unknown. So there's my book, there's several places people can look to find how the colors of candles work for them. So that's just the tip of it right there.

Colette:

Oh, that's interesting. I saw somebody once take a pen and draw something on the candle. Do you ever do that? Do you-

Najah:

Oh, yeah, absolutely. That's called inscribing a candle. So you can write words in the wax, you could put your name on there, you can put symbols on there. I'm a huge glitter fan. I know that some people go, "Ugh. No! Not the glitter!"

Colette:

Yeah, me too. Me too. Girl, you should see.

Najah:

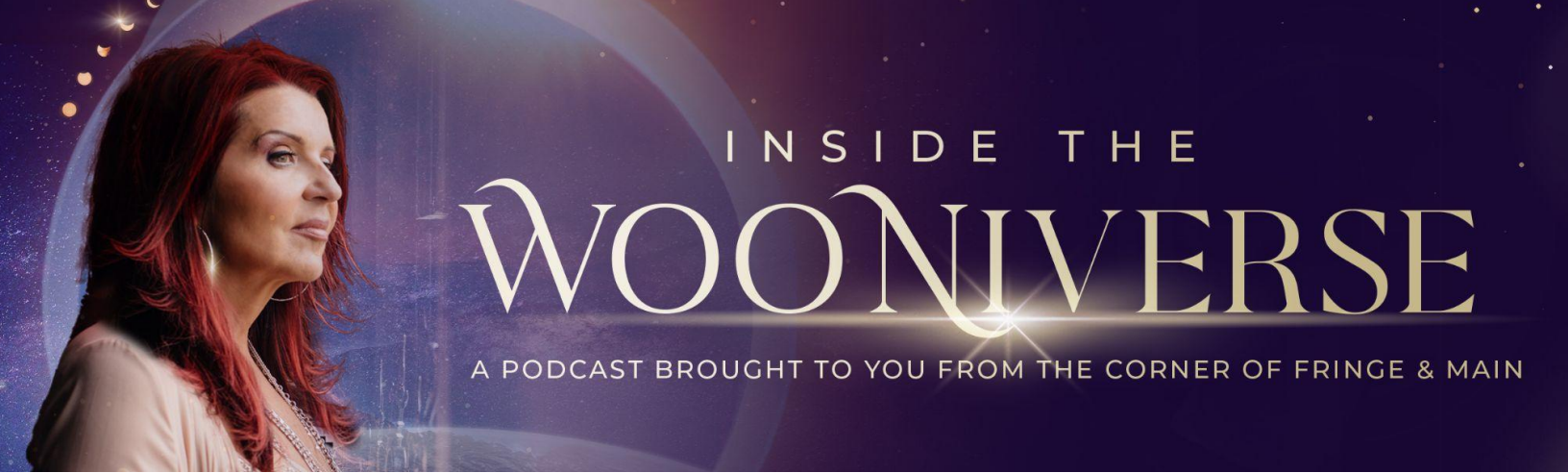
But I like to sprinkle my candles with glitter. Some people sprinkle their candles with herbs. That's actually called, in the term of hoodoo, that's called dressing and fixing, or dressing and fixing a candle, when you actually roll it in something.

Colette:

Oh.

Najah:

And then we normally knock three times on the candle, and then tap it three times to ground it, ground that magic into the candle, and before you light it.



Colette:

You have so many stories, so I want to hear some of your favorite stories about when you worked with juju, and you worked with your candle magic, and you actually saw something manifest as a result of it.

Najah:

Oh, well, okay. I have a prosperity altar that's full of candles, okay?

Colette:

Okay.

Najah:

And I've seen altars that could take up an entire room, could fill an entire studio, with things that covered every single wall, or people may have altars that's just a little niche in their home, or you might put your altar in a shoebox, just put all your stuff in there, and carry it around.

Colette:

Wow. Yeah.

Najah:

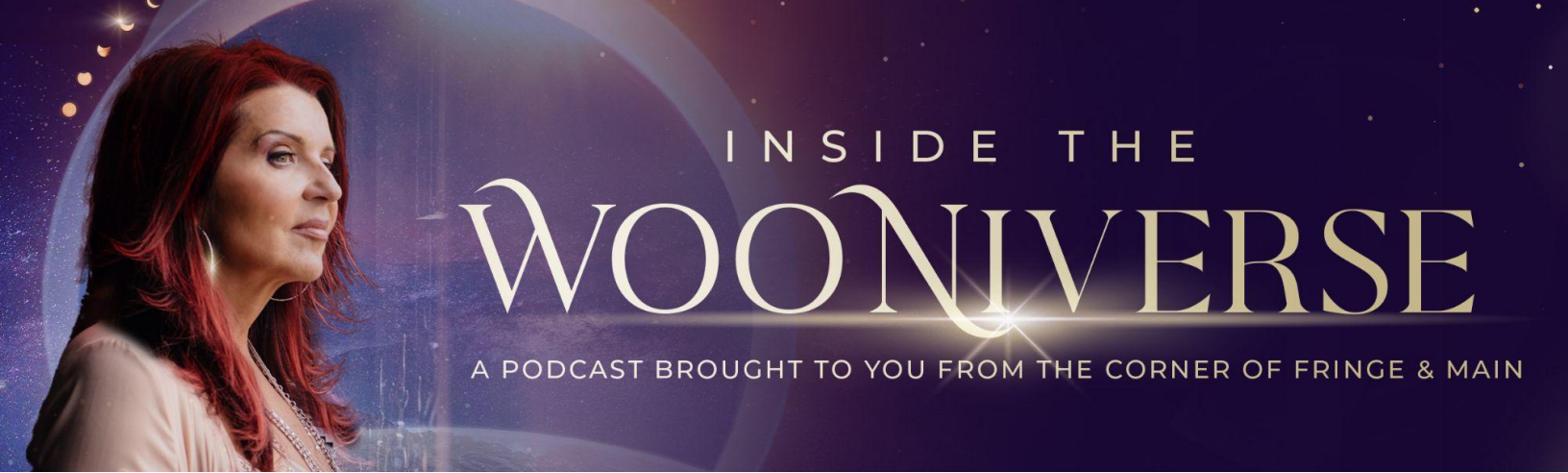
Because I always like to watch out for the people who it might not be safe for them to be practicing their spirituality, their magical practices, and nothing is worse than having a naysayer looking at what you're doing. And so I always want to be respectful to the people who are like, if that's not safe for you, if your family or friends... Don't tell them about it, and certainly don't do it where somebody can come by and kind of poo-poo on your woo-woo.

Colette:

I have T-shirts that said, "Don't poo-poo the woo-woo."

Najah:

Really?



Colette:

Yes. That was one of my-

Najah:

That's great.

Colette:

That was one of my taglines for OraclePalooza, don't poo-poo the woo-woo.

Najah:

That's great. That's fantastic.

Colette:

Yeah, you don't want to have anybody come by and poo-poo on your woo-woo.

Najah:

No, you don't want to... No poo-poo on your woo-woo. No, you don't want that. So one time, I was working my prosperity altar, which I do on a regular basis, with all my green candles and all the things I've collected. And I owed a bill, and the amount was large, and I was very concerned about it.

Colette:

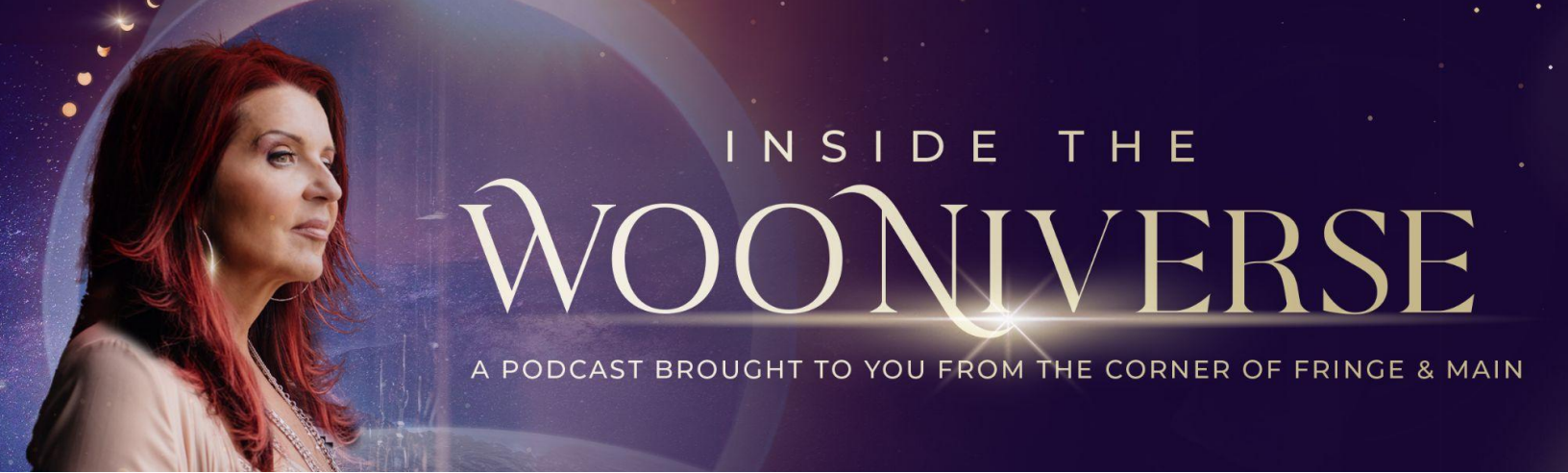
Okay. Okay.

Najah:

So as I was working my prosperity altar, just asking for help, this bill was looming large in my mind. And then, all the sudden, it was wiped out. They had said, "Okay, you no longer owe this debt."

Colette:

Wow.



Najah:

I was like, "Yes!" That's what I talk about tangible outcomes. Of course, if we were all Hollywood, we'd all be rich and there'd be no suffering.

Colette:

Right, exactly. Exactly.

Najah:

This is stuff that you're like, "Oh gosh, that's such a relief."

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

That's real stuff that I can say, "Oh, that actually worked." When I was traveling in London and I lost my safe travel mojo, and it was very stressful.

Colette:

Wow.

Najah:

I lost my backpack.

Colette:

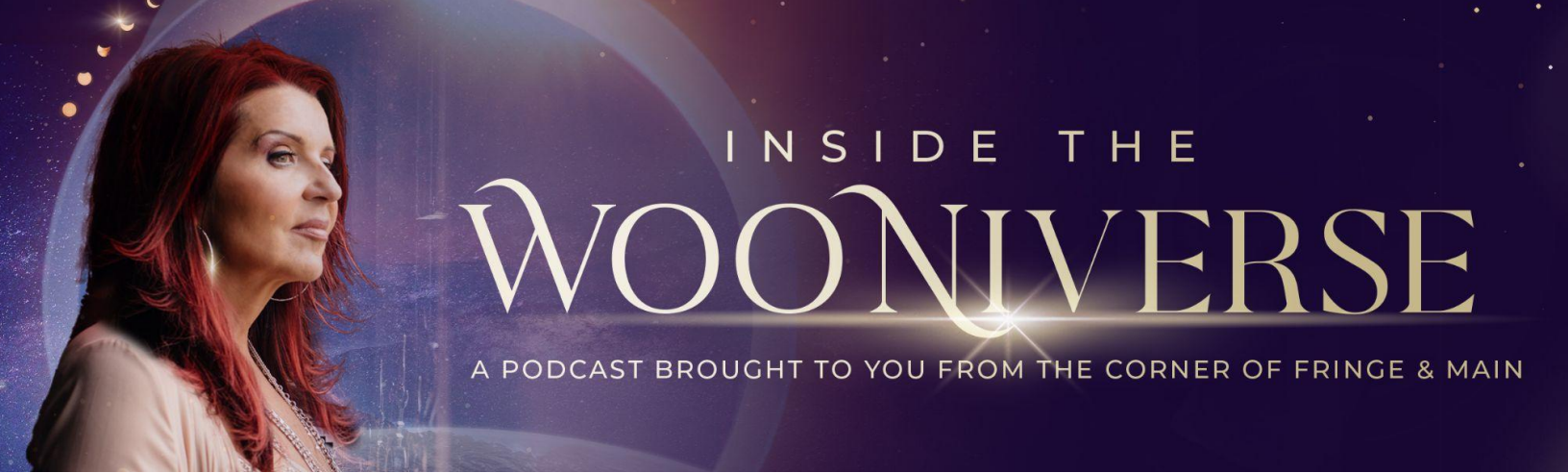
Oh.

Najah:

I was in London with my husband. We were trying to get to our Airbnb, and I was just really, really done. And I think everybody comes to that point like, "Is this stuff really real?"

Colette:

Right.



Najah:

I had spent all this time working on my safe travel mojo, and I was really sad. And I didn't know how to get ahold of the cab. And I was like, "Okay, my safe travel mojo," and all this stuff, and I had that with me, but in my backpack was everything I need to travel with.

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

And I tell you what, a half hour later, the London cabby knocked on the door, and he brought my backpack back to me with all my stuff, and I literally just cried.

Colette:

Really? No kidding.

Najah:

I said, "Thank you so much." And he said, "Just tell people that's what London cabbies do." And my safe travel mojo returned all my things to me, and I was just, "Okay," what else do I need to tell you?

Colette:

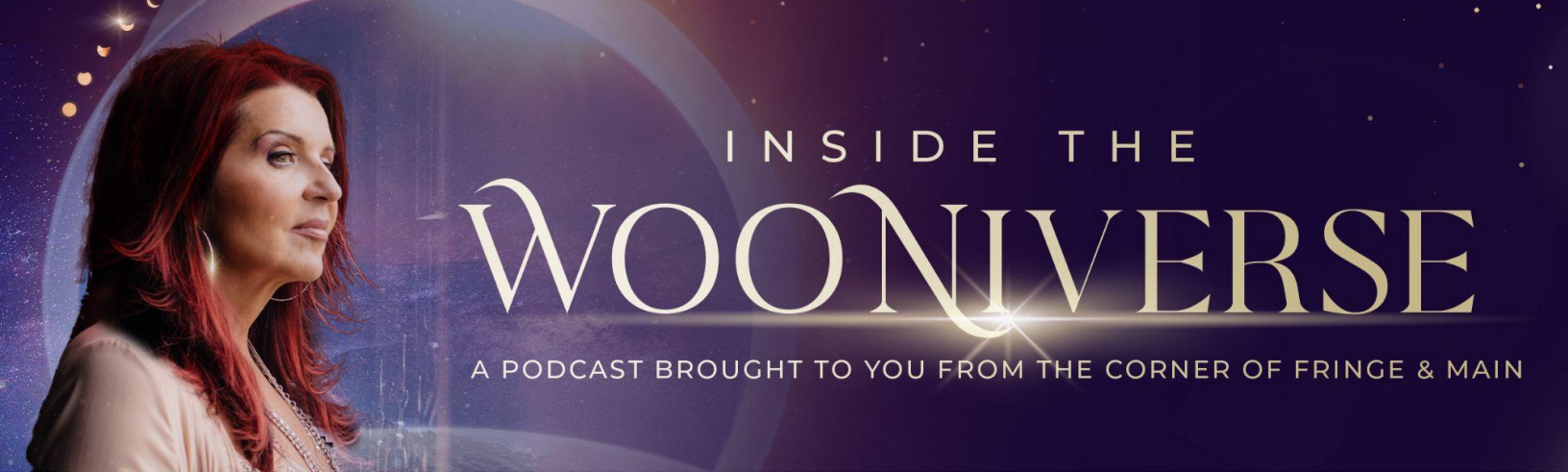
Wow. Right. Right, right. Oh, that's a great story too. So when you talk about powerful juju, are there any healing practices, for example? And now I know that these are anecdotal stories that you have, that we're not saying that you can go out and wriggle your nose like Bewitched and make things happen.

Najah:

Oh, yeah, right.

Colette:

Yeah, but has there been any other really outrageous stories that when you've seen something work, when you know that there's a correlation between the magical practice and the outcome. It doesn't have to be a healing outcome, it could be something else.



Najah:

Well, I mean, it was pretty interesting. When I was writing the chapter on Frida Kahlo, who I just adore, I attributed to her the words of pain and suffering, because we know through her life she suffered tremendously.

Colette:

Oh. Me too. Yeah.

Najah:

And then, for her music, I had Keep Looking by Sade, which is like, "Keep looking, keep going," and everything. And I was writing that book during the pandemic, okay?

Colette:

Okay.

Najah:

That was really, really hard. And when I got to the chapter on Frida Kahlo, I had fallen and hurt my knee. I had actually tripped over my shoe, and I fell on the floor so hard that they thought I had busted my kneecap.

Colette:

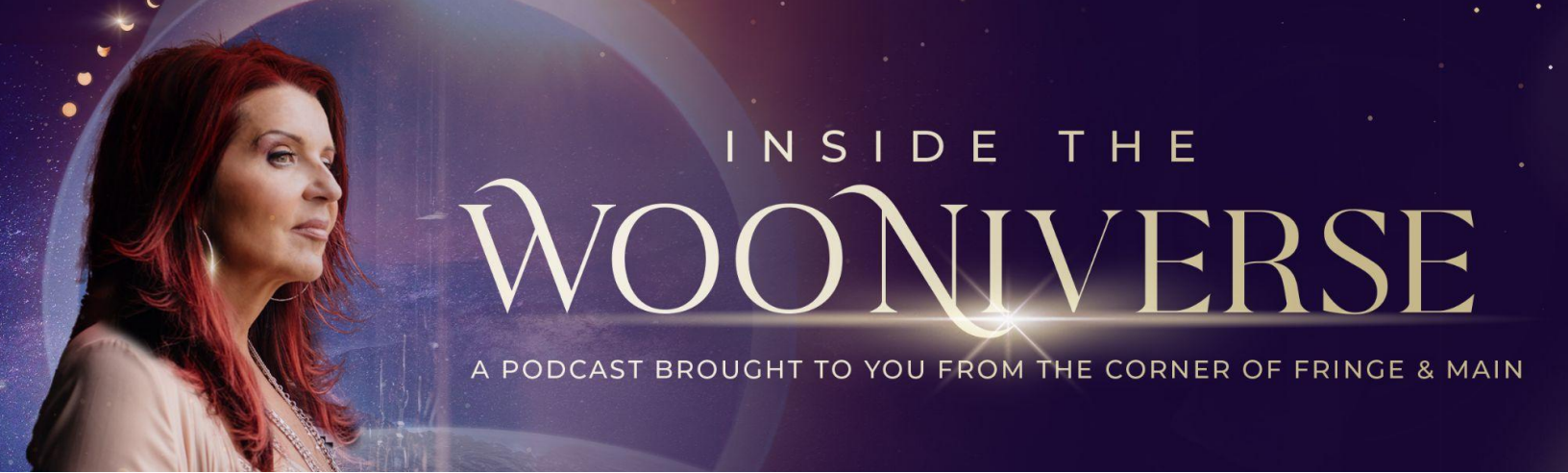
Oh, wow.

Najah:

Oh, that was so... Oh my gosh, that was so painful. Thankfully, I didn't bust my kneecap, which, I'm glad, but I bruised it, which actually is-

Colette:

That gets painful.



Najah:

.. Very painful. And so that took a year to heal up. And so while I was writing my book, and I'm crying through Frida Kahlo and the pain and the suffering, and I've got the candles burning, and I'm trying to write, I was healing. The music was healing me, thinking about her life and her life story, and powerful women who have had to overcome so many of their own sufferings. In my book, I write about Nina Simone and Nancy Wilson, the great jazz singer, and I just felt like they were helping me. And that was powerful juju, because I was really in a lot of pain, and I was trying to turn out my book at the same time.

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

And now, I'm fine. It's great.

Colette:

Let's talk about those 12 goddesses, that you call them goddesses, whether mythological or real. Each chapter, each introduction, you include a song. You probably have your favorite affinities, or do you have an affinity to all 12 of them? So which ones really stand out for you today?

Najah:

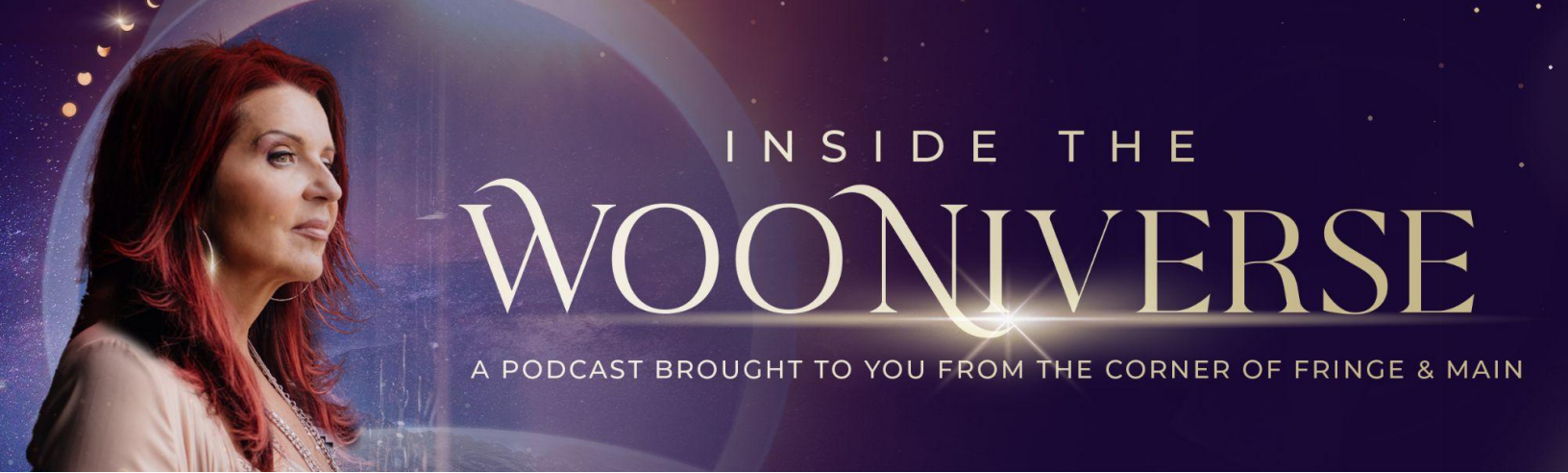
Well, I do have an affinity for all of them. They're all so wonderful. I have little things, icons, from them all around me all the time. And I don't really like to just say, "Oh, well, she's my favorite," because... You know what I mean?

Colette:

No, no, I get it.

Najah:

But all of them just really, really call to me. They each have their own special, wonderful purpose. And so I don't really choose. In fact, I say their names, all 12 of them, every day, so that I recognize all of them every day.



Colette:
Okay.

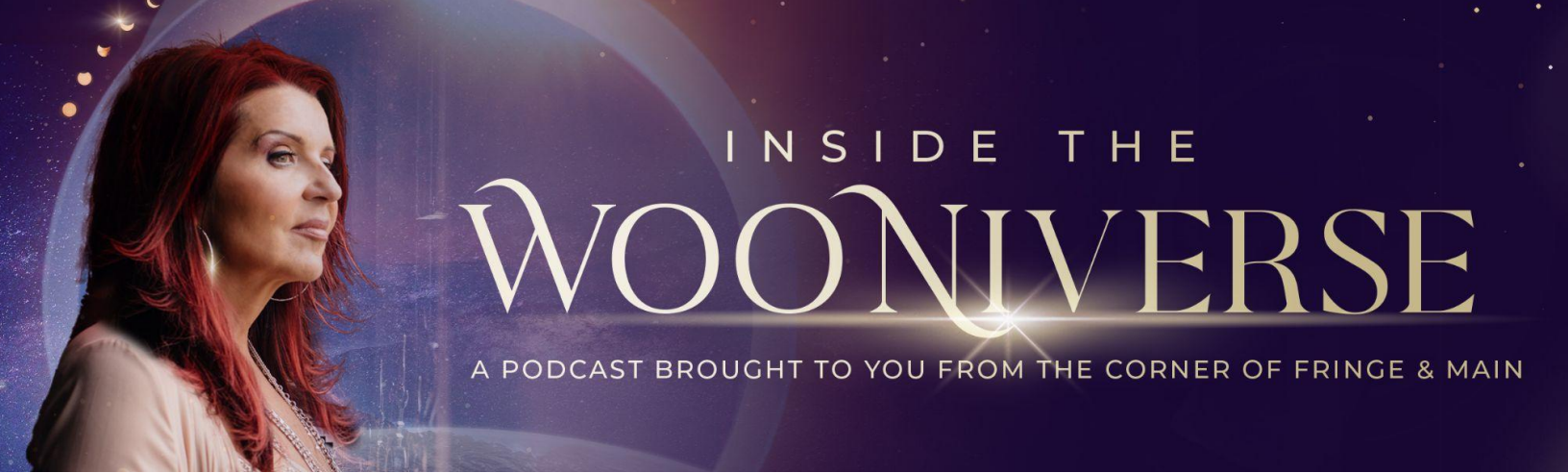
Najah:
Because this morning, maybe I needed the courage of Liliith. Well, maybe later I need Nancy Wilson to soothe me. Maybe later I need some prosperity magic with goddess Abundantia. Maybe I need the fortune to be able the mediumship of Cybele. Who knows?

Colette:
Right.

Najah:
It could all... Because you know how life is, Colette, the day is a whole cycle. So it just depends on where I am and what I need to work with that day. Maybe there's been some hard stuff come down, and I need to go wail in the graveyard, so I'm talking to the divine Marie Laveau and Maman Brigitte. So it just depends. And they're all so powerful, and they're great to just find your connection with them.

Colette:
And that's one of the reasons why we had you on the show, because this is such a timely book. This is a book written for our times now. So, do you think this is one of the reasons why people turn to magical practices during times of hardship? Because. Isn't that when it really comes together, when people gather around this subject even? What do you think?

Najah:
Well, absolutely. I think people also... It feels good to do something with your hands to try to affect positive change in your life; so much is out of your control. But when you're using magical practices for powerful change, to affect powerful outcomes in your life, to try to help yourself or your friends or your family, it feels good. It feels like you're taking some kind of action. Now, I never go, "Oh, yeah, I can do this, and this is going to be the outcome, and that's how it's going to happen." Absolutely not. I remain humble. I always run everything through my higher power. None of us do this work alone, and I think that's something people should really attune



themselves to when they practice magic. You should be in conversation with your higher power or using divination, which you're so wonderful at, your oracle cards, and things like that. Run all that through and take your time with it.

But people want to do something, and magic is something that you can do. And everybody has some kind of folk magic, some kind of aunt or grandma or the lady who lived down the block or their uncle who was doing something. I don't care who you are. But sometimes we get so disconnected from like, "There was somebody. Didn't Uncle George used to go out in the morning and throw some stuff out there for the chickens?" Or, "Oh, yeah, Aunt Jolene, she always carried her lucky quarter." Well, why?

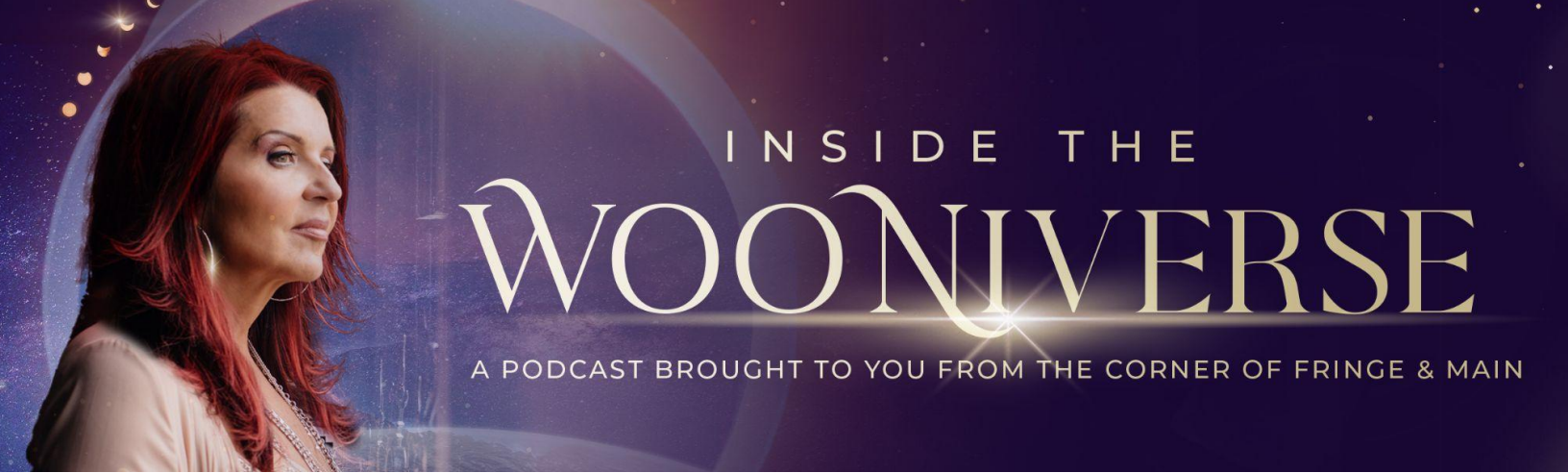
Colette:
Right.

Najah:
Because it was helpful and it made her feel good. And, "Oh, yeah, that's right. We did have that thing, huh?" Yeah.

Colette:
And when you feel good, and when you feel like there is some kind of divine connection between the action that you're doing, even like, I was really struck by, that morning practice of pouring water for your ancestors and getting yourself in a state of reverence, that you become a broadcaster of that frequency. So you automatically engage the laws of frequency and magnetism. Wouldn't you say that's true? I mean, really, you become that, right?

Najah:
Oh, yeah.

Colette:
You're saying, "I am powerful, but thy will be done through me," but you're just doing it in a way that you call magic, or your specific religious construct is Vodou. But at the end of the day, we're just trying to affect decent change for ourselves and our loved ones to live better lives, right?



Najah:

Well, absolutely. And I never take the sunrise for granted. I never take the stars for granted. And I also think one thing that's great about magic is that it's like your childlike awe and wonder of the universe. Who doesn't want to play? Who didn't like potions?

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

And spells? And when you tap into your childlike wonder, you're tapping into something powerful. And that's also fun about magic. I write for the Llewellyn, Spell-A-Day. I've written for those, and one of my spells was on bubbles. Like, what? Bubbles is so great. So I'm up in the morning doing my magical practice, saying thank you for the sun, the moon, the stars, and pouring water. And then I'm like, "I think I'll blow bubbles."

Colette:

Right.

Najah:

I mean, that's like the element of air manifested. I can watch these beautiful bubbles float away and-

Colette:

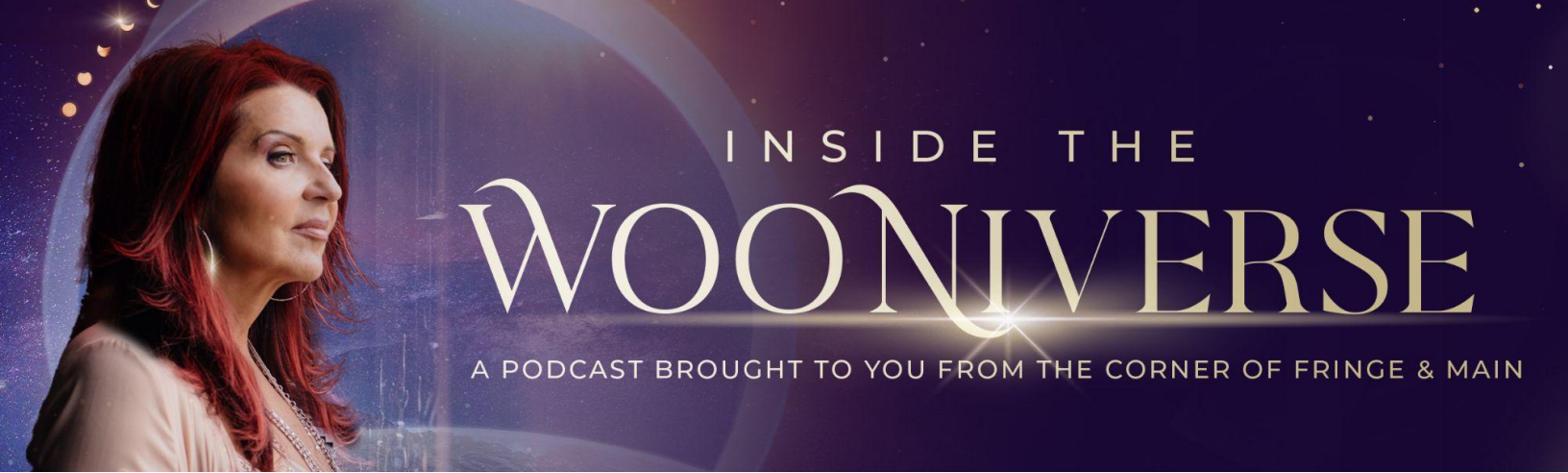
I love bubbles.

Najah:

I love bubbles. And I can say, "Oh, I send these bubbles out to all my friends and readers, and I hope they have a magical day," and then I put the bubbles away. I might not do that tomorrow, but that day I did, and it was great.

Colette:

I know, and you can get the ones for little kids, where you dip it in and you blow them.



Najah:

Oh. Yeah, I have that.

Colette:

Those are my favorites. I know, my friend Althea, who's this incredible healer in Santa Fe, actually introduced me to the bubbles, right? So I was like, "What are you doing?" And she's just like, "I'm blowing blessings. I'm bringing joy." And I'm telling you, I did it, and I'm like, "I feel amazing," right? It's so true.

What a great conversation. Listen, let's pull an oracle card together and see what spirit, what our higher powers want us to conclude our conversation with, and see.

Najah:

Okay. Oh, how exciting. Okay.

Colette:

All right, you tell me when to stop shuffling.

Najah:

Okay.

Colette:

Say when.

Najah:

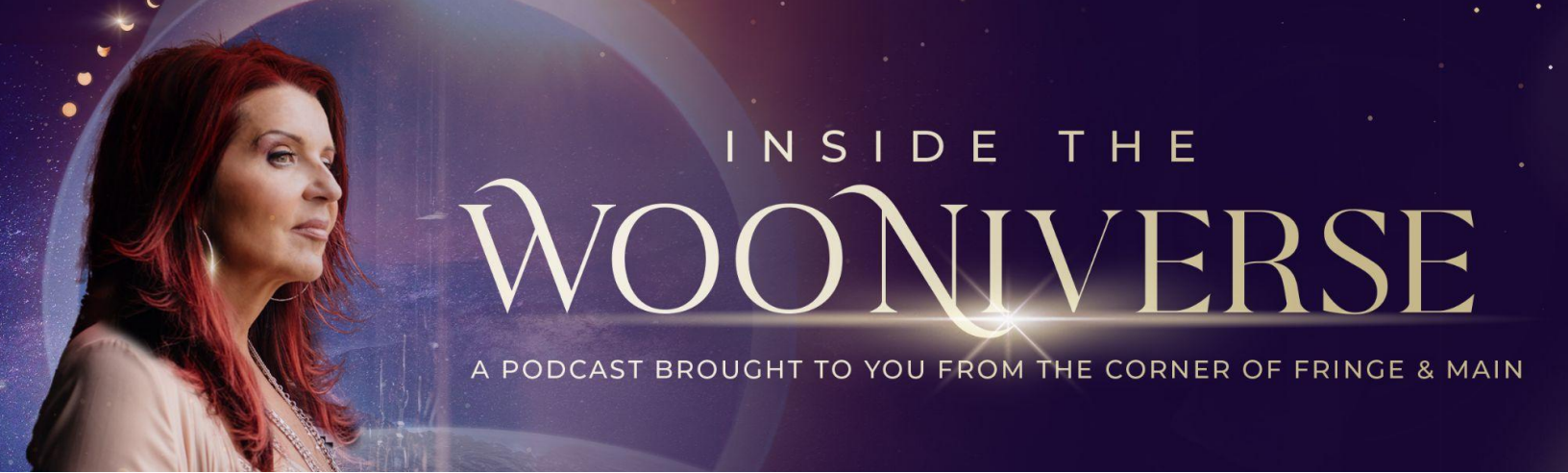
When.

Colette:

Top, middle, or bottom?

Najah:

Bottom.



Colette:

Okay, Let's see. When you are neither here nor there. This is perfect for us right now. So this is about being in the in-between. So I'm going to read it out loud...

Najah:

Ah.

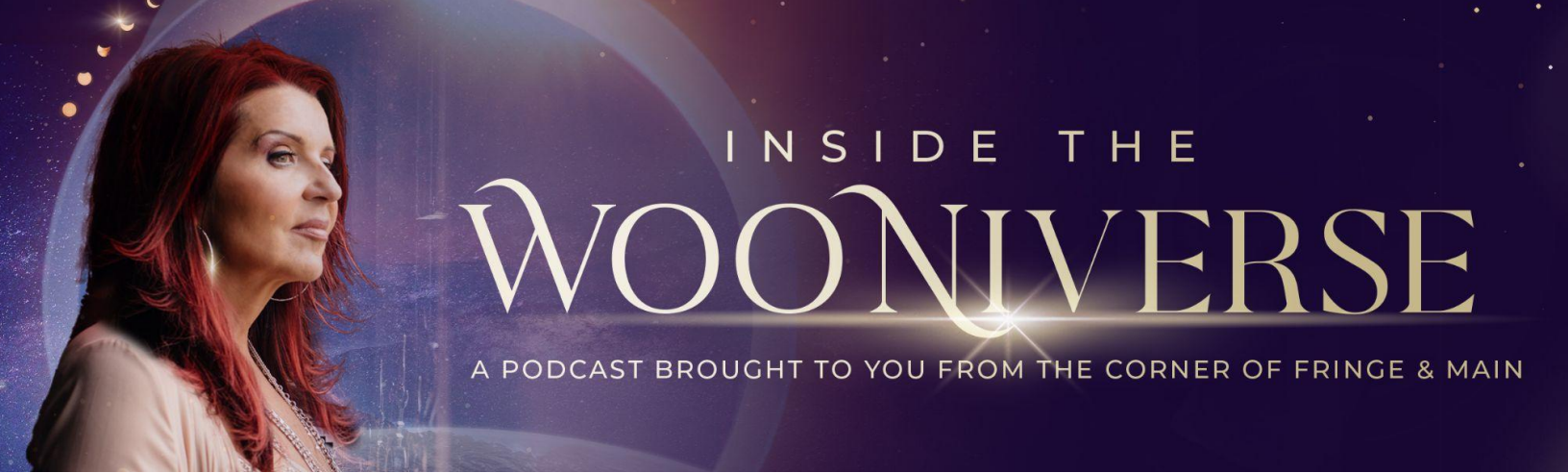
Colette:

Mm-hmm. So I'm going to read this, and then we're going to talk about it. So this is about the period of time between what was and what you were moving forward toward, not quite there yet, being present for every step of the journey. Are you feeling a little lost because your goals and intentions seem so far away? You know cannot live your old life anymore. So with one foot still in the past and one reaching for the future, you discover you're in an in-between world. This place still has its flavors of your past, but it's also brightly colored by the glittering sparkling dreams for your future. You're just not there yet.

This is a wondrous place to explore, for this is where you get to reconsider your past, choosing to see it as sacred and beautiful and not something to discard or run away from. If you can bless with bubbles. I didn't say that. That's not in here, but I just said that. If you can bless all that has brought you here right now, you'll see your time between worlds will not be long at all.

Is there anything at all you need to release in this liminal space? Do you need to cut any cords to old thinking? Are any of your old stories or unfinished business niggling at you? Now is the perfect time to consider an inventory to ensure you're not bringing any old baggage forward on this journey with you.

Most important, you must see how far you've come. You are an extraordinary being of light, blessed by the universe, here on purpose. Trust your dreams and desires are sacred. They matter. And in the perfect form, they will arise to greet you on the other side of the in-between. Where you may sometimes feel you're neither here nor there, bring yourself to this moment and make effective use of it. Bless your life. You have nothing to lose on this adventure. What say you, Najah?



Najah:

Oh, I think that's wonderful. So I just came back from Baltimore. I was traveling. I was at a wonderful conference in Baltimore, the Sacred Space/Between the Worlds Conference.

Colette:

No way.

Najah:

That's literally the title of it.

Colette:

Was that what it was called? Are you serious?

Najah:

Yeah.

Colette:

Oh, that's wild. The Sac-

Najah:

100%.

Colette:

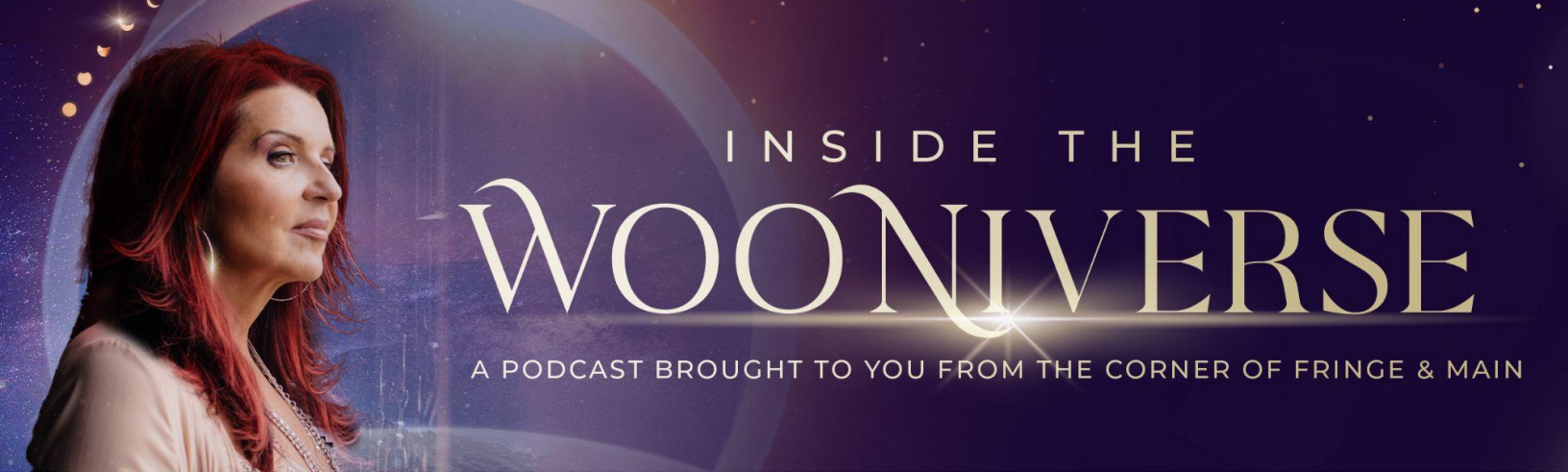
Wow.

Najah:

Yeah. So I just got back from that. So I was between the world. I was speaking there. Now, I'm here with you. Now, it's kind of time to kind of let down a little bit and be in the moment. And, yeah, that's what I'm doing. So, I mean, it's just perfect.

Colette:

This is wild.



Najah:

It's sacred. It's in the past. You can't go back to it, but we need to move forward. So yeah, that's what I'm doing.

Colette:

Well, that is pretty great. I also think, too, that all of us are in this in between phase right now, and people are, "Are we there yet?" And we're not, and it's okay.

Najah:

Are we there-

Colette:

Right?

Najah:

Are we there yet?

Colette:

Are we there yet?

Najah:

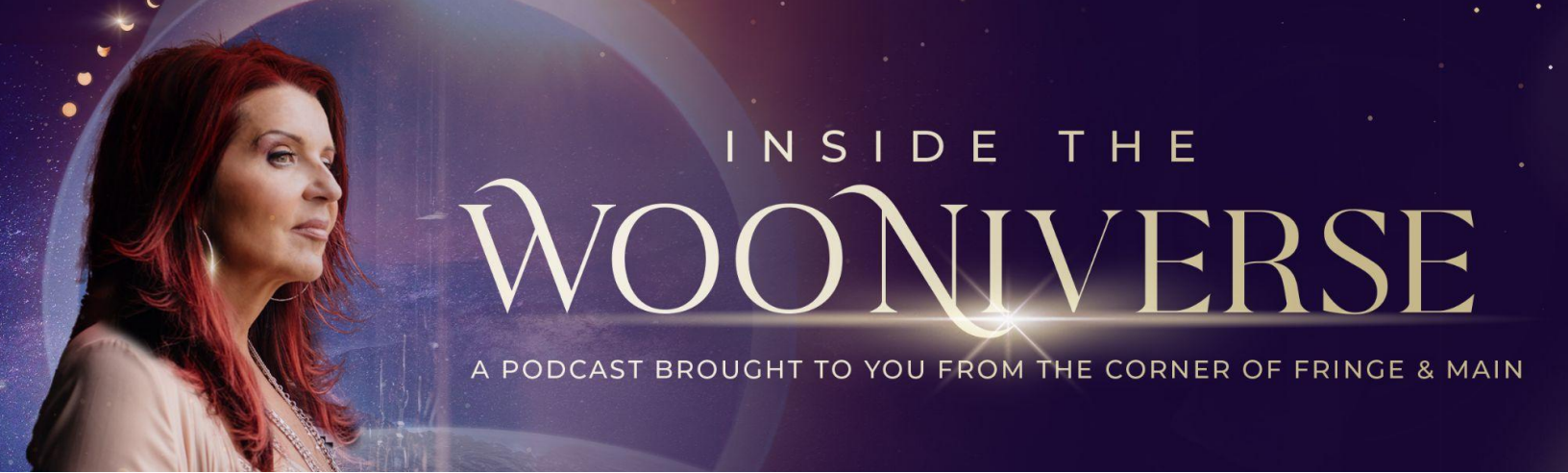
Right, right.

Colette:

We're here now, and everything is a process of becoming, and I think you really generously explained that in both of your books.

We're going to take a little break now, and when we come back, we're going to switch gears and enter into another dimension of the Wooniverse, the Tea Time After Party, so please stay with us. We'll be right back.

Well, thanks for joining us today, and welcome back. With us today is Najah Lightfoot. Okay, we're going to switch gears now and travel into another dimension of the Wooniverse called the



Tea Time After Party, a place where we kick up the fun. And joining us now is my executive producer, Connie Diletti. Are you ready, Najah and Connie?

Najah:
I'm ready.

Connie:
Woo! Ready.

Colette:
All right, Connie, you go first.

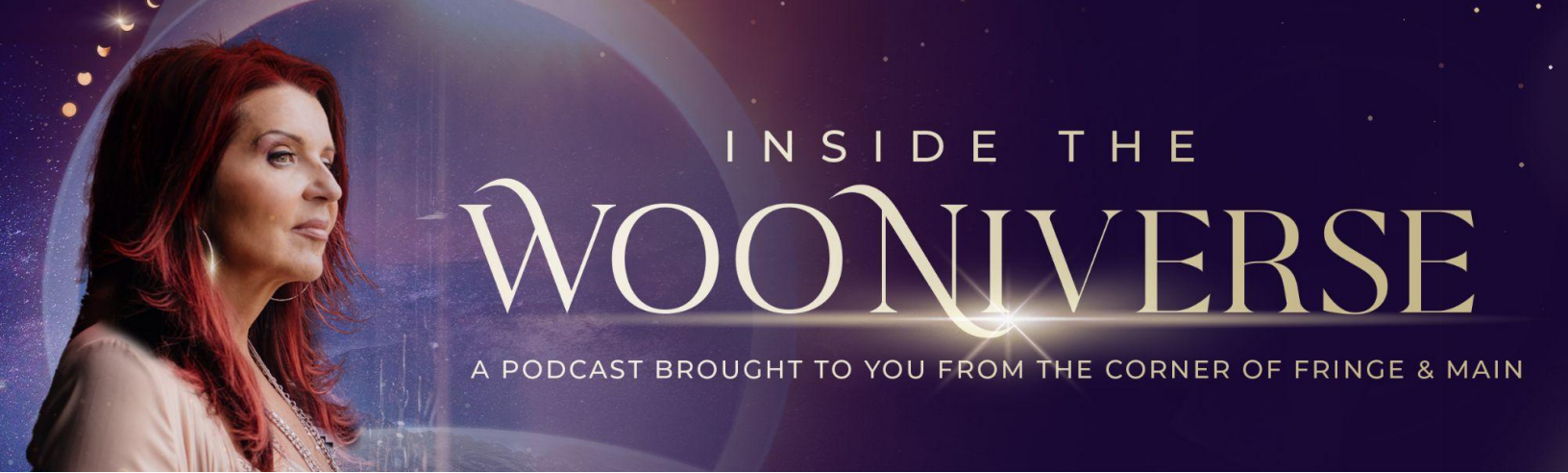
Connie:
Okay. So, Najah, if you could trade lives with one person for a day, who would you choose and why?

Najah:
Okay, I would have to choose the fictional character Tia Dalma from Pirates of Caribbean, where she carries around the dirt. And she was actually Calypso, and she was in love with Davy Jones. And her hair, because I have these long locks and everything, and everything that she had in her hair. And then, they were all going to see her, and they were all holding candles in the [inaudible 00:43:50]. See, I told you I grew up in Southern Cal, so I was a Disneyland kid.

Connie:
Yeah, right? Okay.

Colette:
Oh, my God.

Najah:
So I actually went to the Pirates of the Caribbean exhibit. And when they made that movie, they got it so right.



Connie:
Love that movie.

Colette:
Oh, amazing.

Najah:
And so, I want to be Tia Dalma for a day.

Colette:
That's beautiful. Okay. What is something you can do better than anyone else you know?

Najah:
I can save butterflies.

Colette:
Oh.

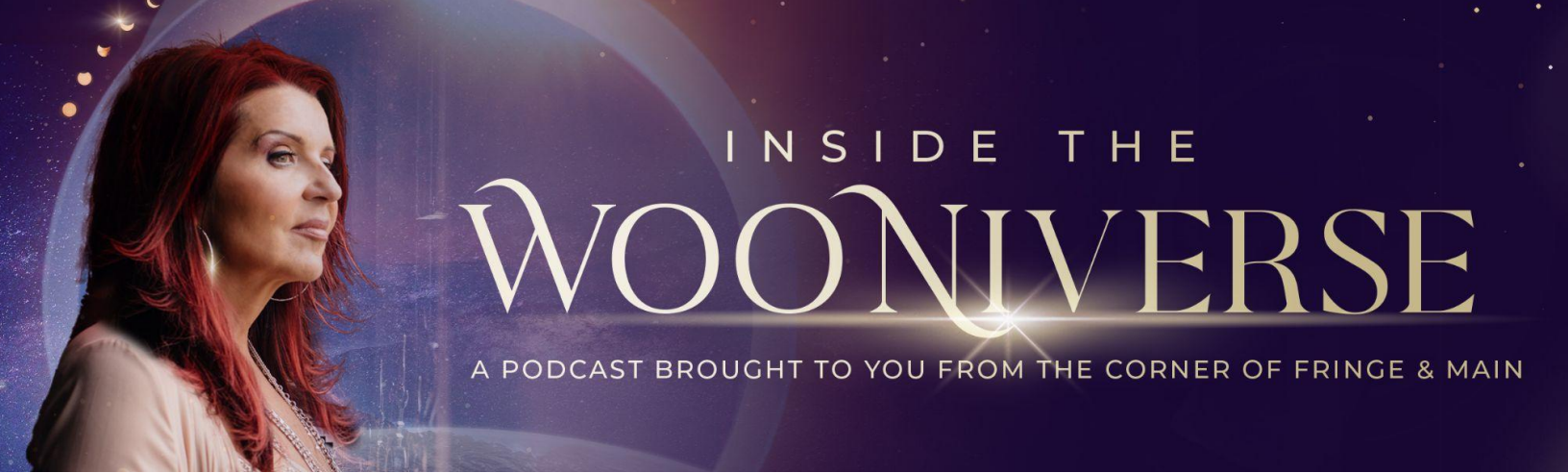
Connie:
Whoa.

Colette:
Tell us.

Najah:
So, I have had a couple of butterflies land on my porch, and their wings were broken, and they allow me to trim their wings so that they can fly.

Connie:
Wow.

Colette:
Aw.



Najah:
And then they take off.

Connie:
How?

Najah:
Yeah, big, yellow tail butterflies.

Colette:
Wow.

Najah:
I can actually approach them and trim off the broken part, and then they'll fly away.
Colette: Wow. That's pretty amazing. That's amazing.

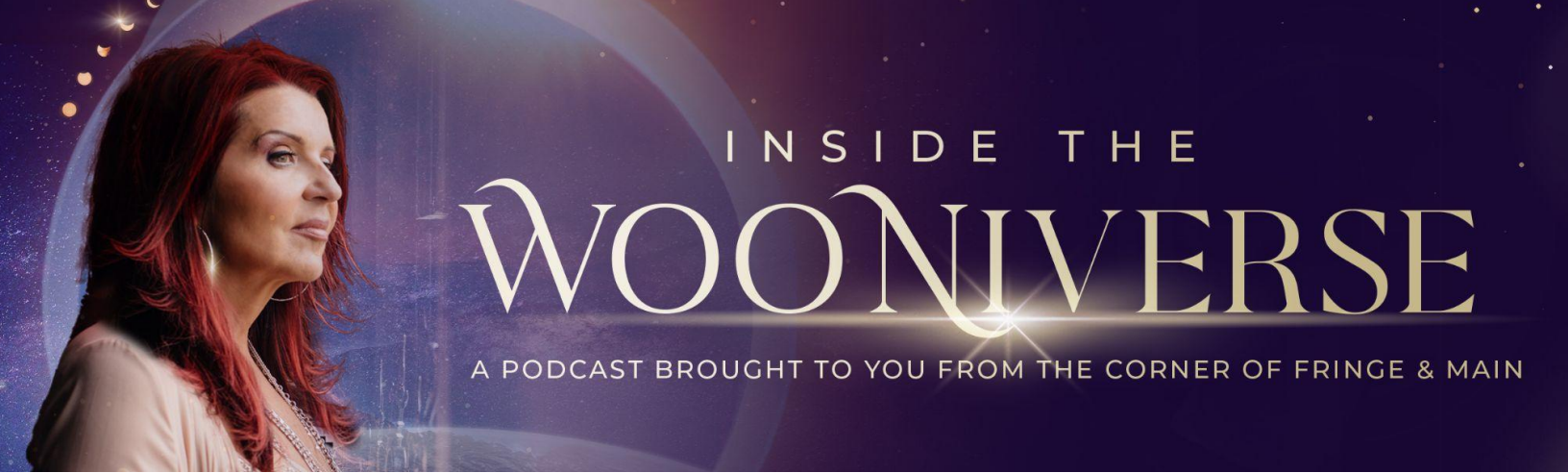
Connie:
How did you know how to do that though? Are you a butterfly aficionado? Did you-

Najah:
I love butterflies and creatures of air. So I'm a Gemini, so the air is my element.

Connie:
Okay.

Najah:
I've been drawn to butterflies since... They're magical to me. And yeah, they let me trim their wings, and then they can take off.

Connie:
So if you could be any supernatural creature, what type of creature would you like to be?



Najah:

Well, I would probably like to be something that embodies the spirit of my dolls that I love. So she probably hasn't been seen yet, but she exists in the in-between time.

Connie:

Okay.

Colette:

Okay.

Connie:

More in between.

Colette:

I love it. So is she a doll spirit?

Najah:

Yeah, I would be a doll spirit. Absolutely.

Colette:

That's very interesting, very interesting.

Connie:

Wow. Okay.

Colette:

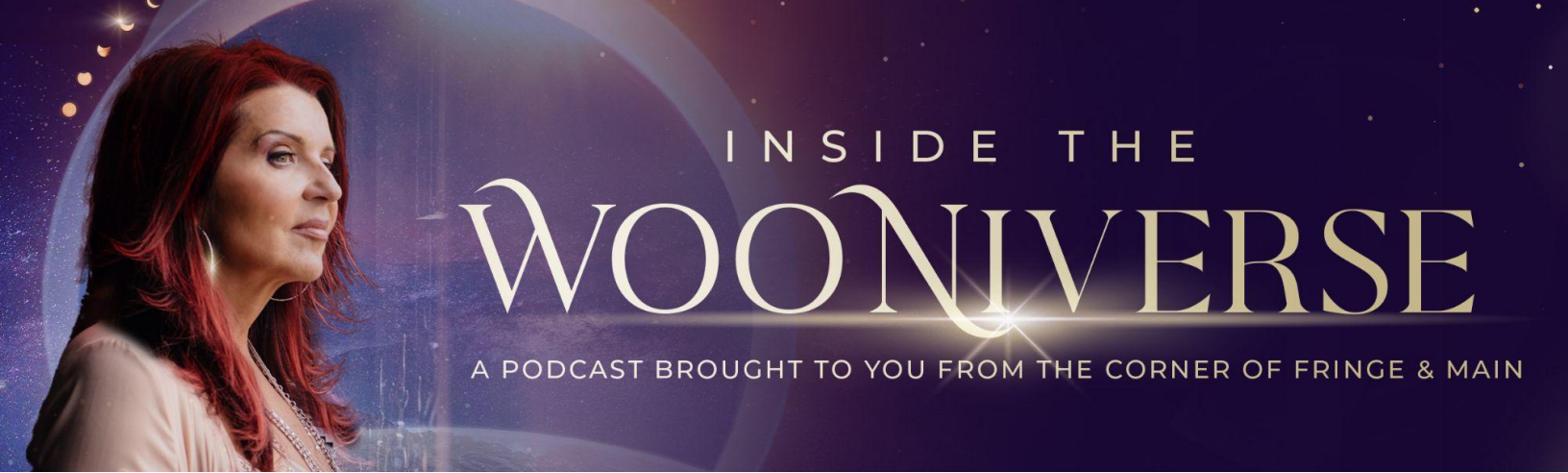
If you could live inside of a TV show or a movie, which one would you pick?

Najah:

Live inside a TV show or a movie... Gosh, I love so many.

Colette:

Now, you already did Pirates of the Caribbean.



Najah:

Okay, so one of my favorite movies that I want to live in is *Midnight in Paris*, where it's all they talk about. He's trying to write a book and he's stuck in Paris, but then he goes and he meets all the authors who were exciting and stuff like that. I love that film because they see *Shakespeare and Company* in that movie. Which, *Shakespeare and Company* was the old bookstore in Paris. It's still there, and they actually let artists live there while they write and everything, so I would love to be...

Colette:

Wow.

Najah:

Because in that film, they actually have a little tiny clip of Josephine Baker dancing.

Colette:

Oh, I did not....

Najah:

It was during the time of Ernest Hemingway and Josephine Baker.

Colette:

I didn't know that.

Najah:

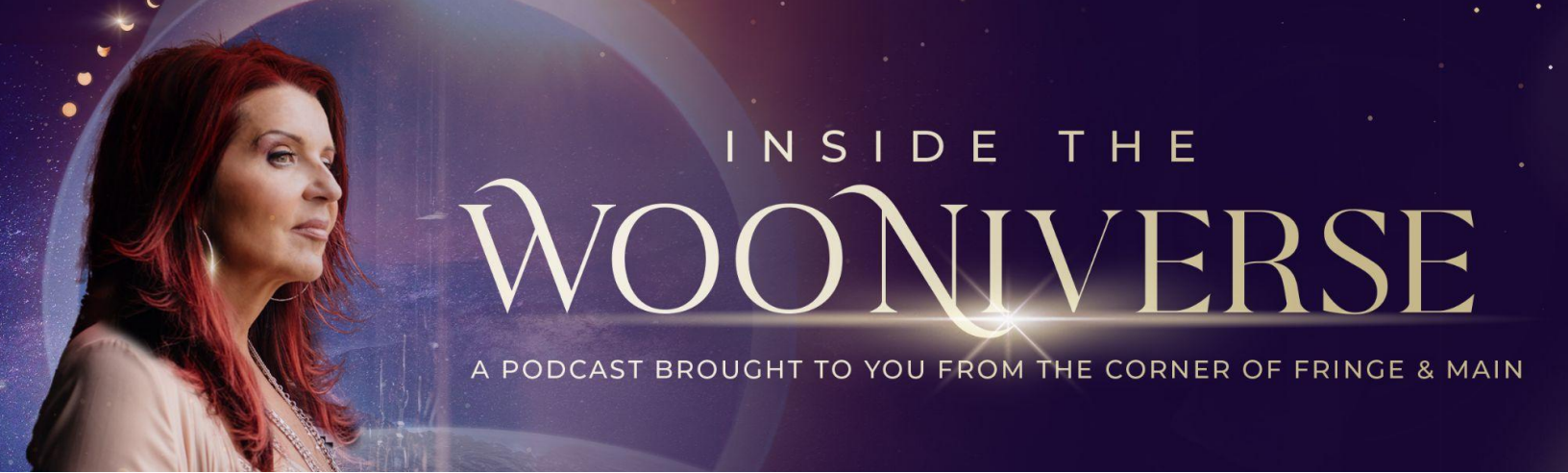
So I would've loved to have been in that film, and be in the bar when Josephine Baker walks in and she's dancing. I have a huge thing for Josephine Baker.

Colette:

Love it.

Connie:

I love that too. What is your favorite smell and why?



Najah:

Oh, man. Well, I love incense. I love the smell of incense. So I was just thinking about that this morning, how, when I'm sitting at my altar, depending, I might pick a different incense for the day. And so depending on that smell, it transports me, and immediately I'm into spiritual space. And today, I was burning some copal incense.

Colette:

Oh, I love copal. I love the smell of copal.

Najah:

Oh, do you?

Colette:

Yep. I like camphoric smells, like eucalyptus, copal.

Najah:

Me too.

Colette:

That's my favorite kind of smell.

Najah:

And cedarwood.

Connie:

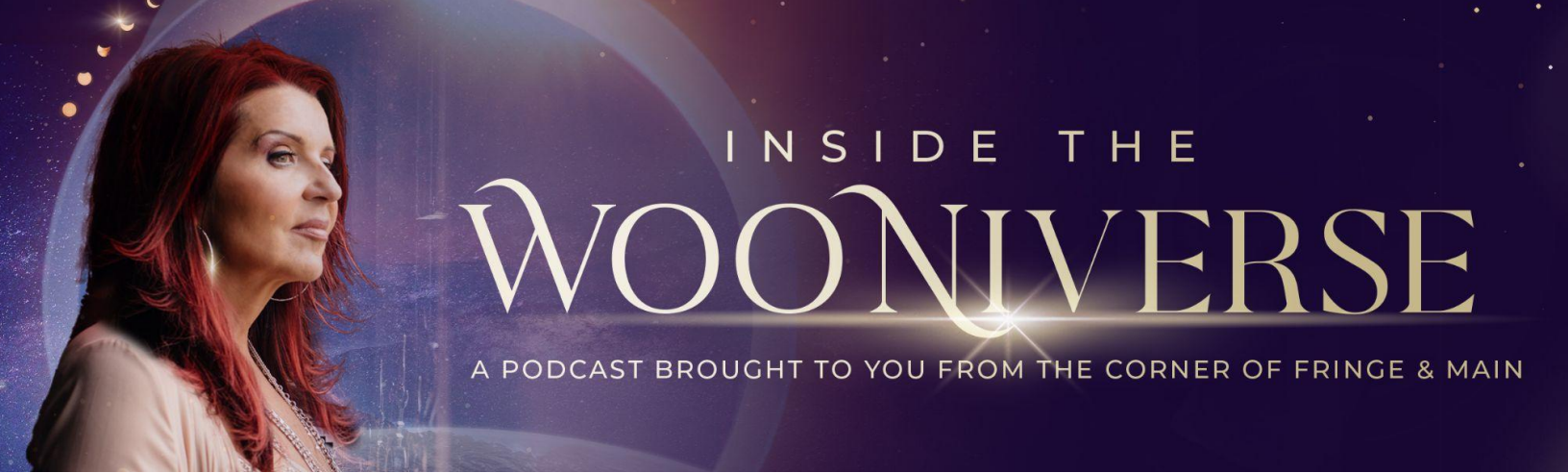
What'd it smell like?

Najah:

Oh, I love that.

Colette:

Spicy.



Najah:
Woodsy. Yeah, woody, earthy smells.

Colette:
Yep. I love that.

Najah:
I can't get enough of it.

Colette:
Me too. That smell, I love it.

Connie:
Colette?

Colette:
Yes. So I'm going to ask this last question. If you could plant a listening device in any room in the world, where would you plant it?

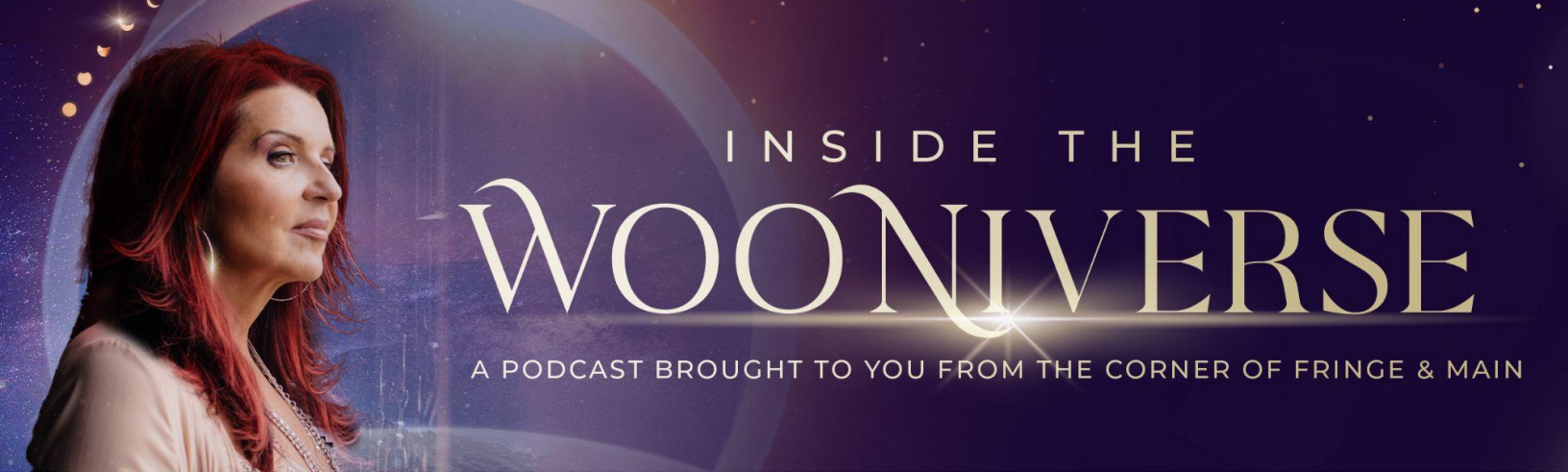
Najah:
I'd plant it in the White House.

Colette:
Okay.

Najah:
In the Oval Office.

Colette:
Would you really?

Connie:
Okay.



Najah:

I want to really hear what's going on in there. I want firsthand knowledge of what's happening in this room.

Colette:

Oh my goodness, I love that.

Najah:

Yeah. That's where I'd plant it.

Colette:

That'd be so cool. I think we probably all want to have some kind of listening device in these rooms of power. Anyway, thank you so much for joining us today. To learn more about Najah and all of her offerings, you can visit her at craftandconjure.com. And as always, you will find a transcript of this episode, quotes, all the links, and so much more on our show notes page, so go to itwpodcast.com or click the link in this episode's description.

You've been such a joy, and thank you so much for sharing with us today, Najah. And we are going to make sure that people know about your books.

Najah:

Thank you.

Colette:

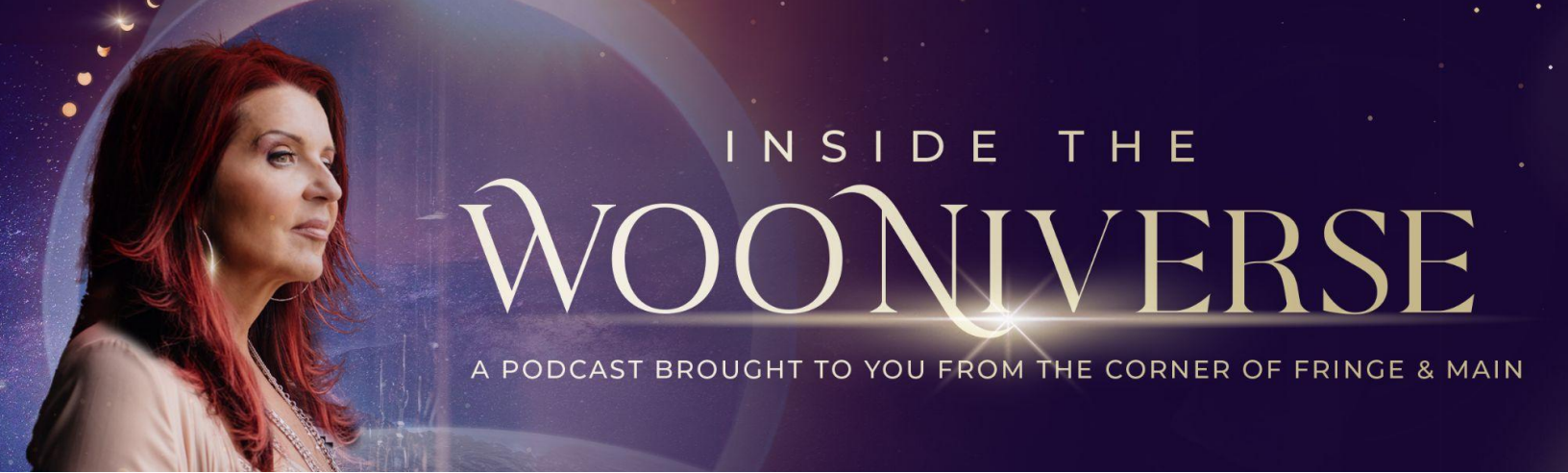
And you've just been fabulous.

Najah:

Oh, thank you guys so much for having me. It's been wonderful. And bless you all. I wish you all wonderful, good, and powerful juju.

Colette:

We'll take it.



Najah:

So please stay and be well.

Colette:

So what did we learn today? Well, what a great bubbly guest. I loved having her on the show. I think what really struck me was the conversation about being between worlds, about entering into that time of reverence and connection, and knowing that there's this other place, this other dimension of consciousness, that we can go to. Especially when she spoke about honoring her ancestors in the morning with pouring some water for them, which I was really struck by and really moved by. So I do think that reverence for those who came before us and creating a daily practice, that is a discipline to stay connected to the in-between, to that world of magic, is something we could all do, especially when our connection to nature has been so severed. So thanks for listening. Until next time, I'm Colette Baron-Reid. Be well.