

THE WITCH'S VESSEL

APPARENTLY, I HAVE A BIG EGO.

I thought it was a backbone.

FREE EDITION | NO PURCHASE REQUIRED

SELIA CALLOWAY

CONFIDENCE, CARE & THE HUMAN BEING BEHIND THE WORK

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Selia Calloway · The Witch’s Vessel

US Letter edition. Print at actual size (100%). Free illustrated edition. No purchase required.

A WORD BEFORE WE BEGIN

Before somebody introduces me for me



There is a person here

Apparently, I have a big ego. I thought I had a backbone, a sense of humor, and a few things worth saying. We can discuss the terminology after you get comfortable.

Underneath everything I have been trying to explain, this is what I want you to understand: I am real.

I am a mother, a grandmother, a wife, a sister, and a friend. I practice magick. I teach. I provide guidance. I have people I care about, responsibilities to attend to, and days when my capacity does not match the size of my intentions.

Some days I get overwhelmed. Some days I do not want to hear from a single soul. That does not mean I stopped caring about everybody. It means I am a human being who has reached her limit for the day. Perhaps you know her. Perhaps you were her last Tuesday.

This book is free because I want to have this conversation without making a purchase the price of admission. It is personal. It is occasionally swears. It contains no application for universal approval, because I have enough paperwork.

A WORD BEFORE WE BEGIN / CONTINUED

Before somebody introduces me for me

You do not have to audition for understanding

I know a polished graphic and a shop name can make somebody seem less human. You see a presentation. I know the life behind it. There is a considerable gap between those two views, and I would like to close a little of it.

I want you to feel comfortable asking a question. I want you to know that needing guidance does not make you foolish. I also want you to remember that the person answering has a family, a finite day, and an attention span that sometimes needs to sit quietly in a corner.

There has been good commentary about my work and commentary that has hurt or frustrated me. I can take criticism. I cannot please everybody. But I do not want other people's opinions to become the only introduction I ever give you.

So this is mine. A woman who takes her magick seriously, has a smart mouth, cares about people, and refuses to pretend those things cannot coexist.

Let me have a whole personality

I can be gentle with someone who is struggling and firm with someone who is being disrespectful. I can laugh at myself and defend my work. I can need space today and be glad to talk another day.

None of those combinations is a scandal. They are what happens when a person has more than one setting. The remote is not publicly available.

I am not asking you to believe that I never get anything wrong. I am asking you to meet me with enough room in your opinion for an actual human being. I would like to extend you the same courtesy.



Pull up a chair. The smartass part is real, too.

ESSAY 01

Apparently, confidence needs a permit

I must have missed the application

There seems to be a very narrow version of confidence some people are comfortable accepting. You may believe in yourself, provided you express it quietly, attach several apologies, and make absolutely certain nobody mistakes it for satisfaction.

That sounds exhausting. It also sounds like a terrible way to run a business.

When I put my work in front of people, I am saying I believe it has value. Of course I am. Why would I offer something I have no confidence in? Why would I ask anyone to consider my work while introducing it as an embarrassing little accident I hope they will forgive?

I take what I do seriously. My magick matters to me. The care I put into my rituals matters to me. I should be able to say those things in a normal speaking voice.

The part where listening still exists

Confidence does not relieve me of the responsibility to listen. If I misunderstand someone, I need to hear the clarification. If someone raises a specific concern, I can look at it. Believing in my work does not mean every sentence I speak arrives accompanied by divine proofreading.

But listening is different from automatically agreeing. I can consider what you say and reach a different conclusion. That does not establish that I ignored you. Sometimes it means I heard you perfectly well and still disagree.

I want room to be both assured and teachable. I do not see why those qualities should have to take turns using the same chair.

You can tell me where you think I am wrong. You can ask me to explain something. You can leave



unconvinced. None of that requires me to begin by surrendering my sense of worth.

I am responsible for how I treat people. I am willing to have that conversation. I am considerably less interested in a conversation whose entire purpose is to make me sound less comfortable being myself.

The confidence permit office can keep its forms.

ESSAY 02

I was supposed to wait my turn

About those sales

I have been mocked over the number of sales I have made. The comparison seems to be that someone else has been on the platform longer, so my doing well must somehow be suspicious.

I wasn't aware there was a queue. Was I supposed to stand there holding my ritual materials until somebody announced that it was finally my turn? Was there a form? Because I do occasionally miss a form.

I take pride in people choosing my work. I care about what I offer them and how I explain it. That pride does not require me to think another practitioner is worthless. There is room for other people to do well. I do not need someone else's failure to make my work meaningful.

A number cannot tell the whole story

A sales total tells you people chose to buy. It does not tell you everything about a practitioner, the work involved, or an individual customer's experience. It also does not show free work, substantial discounts, or the occasions when the materials cost more than the payment received.

There is a human relationship behind a transaction, even a brief one. A person has a question or a concern. A practitioner has work to explain and perform. The number on the screen does not introduce either of them properly.

If someone has a specific concern about my work, I am willing to hear it. I can explain my approach. What I cannot do is turn another person's dislike of my numbers into a useful conversation about the actual work.



I would rather spend that energy helping people understand what I offer, what I do not promise, and what they can learn for themselves. That feels like a better use of everyone's time.

You are allowed to be proud of something you built. You are also allowed to keep learning how to do it better. I am keeping both options available. Neither one requires an apology for existing.

ESSAY 02 / CONTINUED

I was supposed to wait my turn

**Everybody has to start somewhere. Apparently, even witches.**

I know “Etsy witch” comes with a reputation. I understand why people can be wary. When you are trusting someone with something personal, you want more than a pretty picture and a promise. You deserve clear explanations, realistic expectations, and room to ask questions.

I am not asking you to switch off your judgment. Please bring it. Read what someone offers. Look at what they actually promise. Pay attention to how they respond when you need clarification. You can be open to magick and still have standards. I certainly do.

But give each practitioner the chance to be considered on their own conduct. If somebody disappointed you, I understand why that experience might make you cautious. You do not owe a stranger instant trust. I

only ask that you leave room to discover whether the next person handles things differently.

I have my own website, too. Building a place of your own and helping people find it takes time. Until more people find me there, Etsy remains one of the places where we can meet. I had to start somewhere. Apparently, opening a shop does not come with a village of people who already know your name. Rude, frankly.

The platform is where you found me. Getting to know my practice takes a little more than reading the address.

Ask your questions. Have your doubts. Take your time. I am willing to earn your trust through how I work and how I treat you. All I ask is that I get to introduce myself before someone else’s reputation does it for me.

ESSAY 03

Apparently, my evil plan needs an accountant

Help does not always come with a price

I do spells for people for free all the time. I give substantial discounts. Half the time, I don't even make back what I spend on materials for the elaborate rituals I perform.

If this is an elaborate scheme to make a quick buck, somebody should probably explain the “make” part to me.

The less amusing truth is that I care. I choose to give my time, reduce a price, or cover costs because helping matters to me. Those choices exist even when they never become a review or a public story. I do not need to turn a customer's private circumstances into evidence of my generosity.

People should be able to receive help without wondering whether their situation will later appear in somebody's chapter about being a good person.

There is no applause requirement

Free work does not purchase loyalty. A discount does not mean someone owes me silence if they have a concern. I can offer something sincerely without making the recipient responsible for proving my character afterward.

I am telling you about these choices because the idea that everything I do is about money leaves out a considerable part of my work. I am not telling you because I think they make me perfect. Please do not assign me sainthood. The existing responsibilities are quite sufficient.

I know what it means to care about people. I can relate to many of the grievances people bring with



them because I am living a human life, too. I do not need every detail of your situation to recognize that it matters to you.

Sometimes what someone needs from an interaction is to be treated like a person rather than an opportunity. That is how I want people to feel here.

I want that care to be recognizable in how I treat people. It does not always come with a public record, and I am comfortable leaving some good things between the people involved. Kindness does not need its own promotional department.

ESSAY 04

Free to belong. Work still takes work.

Both things can be true

This book is free. I also make room for free learning and conversation, because I want people to be able to understand my approach before money ever becomes a subject.

I also offer paid work. Elaborate rituals involve materials, preparation, time, and attention. When I discount that work or do it without charging, the costs do not vanish. I choose to cover them. That is a decision, not an announcement that the work never had value.

Caring about people does not make materials appear out of thin air. Believe me, I would have some practical uses for that arrangement.

Belonging should not be a checkout requirement

You can read, learn, and ask a question without purchasing a ritual. I do not want someone sitting outside the conversation because they assume their budget disqualifies them from entering it.

If you do choose paid work, take time to understand what is being offered. A service should fit what you are looking for and what you can reasonably spend. You do not need to demonstrate faith, loyalty, or seriousness by purchasing something you cannot afford.

I can value my work and respect your money. I can charge for a service and still maintain places where money is not the point. Those are choices I want to make together, because they reflect how I want the community to feel.

My free work is not an obligation to accept every request. My paid work is not evidence that I stopped



caring. A price tells you the cost of that particular offering; it does not contain my entire personality.

I do not want money to decide whether someone deserves a thoughtful explanation. I also do not want the explanation to imply that the work requires no effort. I can respect your circumstances without pretending mine do not exist. That is a fairer place for both of us to stand.

ESSAY 05

A sales counter cannot introduce me

There is a whole woman here

I am a mother. I am a grandmother. I am a wife, a sister, and a friend. Those relationships are part of my daily life, not decorations I add to a shop biography so that I sound more relatable.

Being a grandmother has not supplied a certificate confirming that I now know everything. A disappointing administrative oversight, frankly. What these roles do give me is a life filled with people who matter to me, along with the responsibility and emotion that come with caring about them.

I can understand grievances because I have a human life of my own. I can recognize that someone is hurting without needing to turn the conversation into a competition over whose difficulty is greater. You do not have to prove that your concern is impressive enough to deserve consideration.

Ordinary humanity is enough

You might meet me through a listing and imagine a person who is always available, always composed, and always ready to give the perfect response. The actual person sometimes needs a quiet day. She also has a family and a life that continue while a message waits to be answered.

I suspect many people know that feeling: having something to give and still needing time before you can give it well. Wanting to be there for others and also wanting the world to lower its volume for a while.

I do not need to reveal every private family story to establish that I am human. You do not need to reveal all of yours, either. We can leave each other some privacy and still offer understanding.



When I say there is a person behind this shop, that is what I mean. Someone with care to offer, limits to respect, and relationships that exist beyond the screen.

I want you to meet that person. I would also like you to remember her the next time an unanswered message starts to feel like a judgment about you. Sometimes another human being simply needs more time.

ESSAY 05 / CONTINUED

A sales counter cannot introduce me



I do not need to be famous

I do not care whether everybody remembers my name. I care that the person speaking to me feels their own name matters. That their question is being considered as a question from a person, rather than processed as another interruption in a queue.

It is possible to want your work to reach people without wanting your entire life to become public property. I want to practice, teach, care for my family,

and have parts of my day that belong to the people living them with me.

Privacy is not evidence that there is nothing real behind a business. Sometimes it is evidence that there is a great deal there worth protecting.

My husband is a computer programmer. He also creates designs for me in Photoshop. We are people putting time and skills into what you see. We still get to have a life you do not see, and I want the same freedom for you.

ESSAY 06

Criticism can pull up a chair



Give me something I can answer

I can take criticism. I do not expect to please everybody, and I would be suspicious of any business that claimed it could. People have different expectations, preferences, beliefs, and experiences. Someone choosing a different practitioner does not need to become a personal emergency.

If you have a concern, tell me what it is. Explain what you are responding to. Ask the question you actually

want answered. A specific criticism gives me something to consider, clarify, or address.

“Your wording was unclear” is a concern I can examine. “I disagree with that method” gives us a subject. “I expected something different” opens a conversation about what was described and what was understood. Those are examples of useful criticism, not quotations from particular customers.

“I don’t like your numbers” leaves rather less to work with.

ESSAY 06 / CONTINUED

Criticism can pull up a chair

Being uncomfortable is not the same as being wronged

A criticism does not have to feel pleasant to be useful. I can dislike hearing something and still consider whether it is fair. My first emotional reaction does not need to write the final response. Occasionally it can sit down and have a glass of water while the rest of me reads the sentence again.

At the same time, an insult does not become helpful feedback because someone calls it honesty. There is a difference between examining my work and making me the entertainment.

I am willing to hear an argument. I am not required to agree that ridicule has improved it.

The standard I want is straightforward: be specific, give me a fair chance to understand, and allow the possibility of an answer. I owe other people the same care when I criticize them.

Confidence is useful here. It gives me somewhere to stand while considering whether I need to change something. If every criticism required me to collapse entirely, learning would be an awfully expensive process.

Pull up a chair. Bring an actual point.

Fair does not have to mean flattering

There is a difference between asking me to explain a claim and announcing that you already know my motives. The first gives us somewhere to begin. The second asks me to defend myself inside a story you have already finished writing.

If you want to know why I do something, ask. If you think a description is unclear, tell me which part. You do not have to wrap a genuine concern in



compliments, but give it enough detail that a response is possible.

I will try to do the same when I disagree with you. That does not mean I will always sound delighted. We are having a conversation, not filming a customer-service training video in which everyone has suspiciously perfect blood pressure.

I can hear something difficult. I can also recognize when the discussion has become repetitive, insulting, or pointless, and decide to leave it there. Being open to criticism does not mean every argument gets unlimited sequels.

ESSAY 07

I answer when I have the time

A message reaches a person

I respond when I get the time. That sentence is not intended to be cold. It is intended to be honest.

I am real. I have a phone number. I have an email address. I am reachable through the contact details I make available. Reachable does not mean permanently on call. Even a damn witch gets to put her phone down.

I know a message can feel urgent to the person sending it. I also have work to perform, people in my life, and limits on how much attention I can give at once. A thoughtful response has to come from somewhere. Unfortunately, I cannot manufacture another afternoon by glaring at the calendar.

If an answer is not immediate, please leave room for the ordinary explanation that I am occupied or need time. A delay does not tell you how much your concern matters. It tells you that the person you contacted has not responded yet.

Attention is part of the work

I would rather make room to understand a question than produce a hurried sentence solely to prove I noticed a notification. I want my attention to mean something when I give it.

That is also why I do not present my practice as an instant service. You will not find a promise of one-hour bindings from me. I do not promise to squeeze my work into an hour because a countdown sounds attractive. My rituals deserve the preparation and attention they require.

If you want to understand an offering, read its description and ask a clear question when something needs explaining. Give the conversation room to



happen. Understanding is a better starting point than rushing toward the fastest possible answer.

I want that courtesy to extend to other people as well. An unanswered message is not enough information to decide that someone does not care. Give their life room to exist outside the part of it you can see.

You do not have to be constantly available to be sincere. Neither do I. We can care about one another without treating every pause as a personal rejection.

Sometimes the kindest interpretation is also the simplest: somebody is busy being a person.

ESSAY 07 / CONTINUED

I answer when I have the time



Help me understand what you need

A clear question helps. Tell me which offering or explanation you mean and what you want to understand. If you have several related questions, keeping them together makes the conversation easier to follow than sending each fragment as its own emergency broadcast.

You do not need formal language. You do not need to sound experienced. Plain words are welcome. “I don't understand this part” is a perfectly useful beginning. I would much rather know where you are confused than have you feel pressured to nod along.

I am not promising an immediate answer or unlimited access to my day. I am saying that clarity helps me give you a useful response when I have the time. I want to meet you in the actual question, rather than spend the whole exchange trying to discover which question we are having.

That is consideration in both directions.

Astonishingly, it works better than treating every notification as a summons.

A printed label is not a finished working

I often print shipping labels quickly. That does not usually mean I have performed your working or handed your item to the carrier at that moment. Preparing a label, performing the ritual, preparing the item, and actually shipping it are different steps.

A label is paperwork. It is not a ritual with a barcode. Please do not read an early label notification as confirmation that everything is already finished or moving through the mail. The carrier's acceptance or tracking updates are what show the parcel entering its journey.

Your write-up also takes the appropriate time because I actually perform the work it describes. Publishing an offering and fulfilling it are different jobs. Neither the printer nor an impatient refresh of the order page can do the second one for me.

ESSAY 08

The template does not perform the ritual

Structure is there to help you understand

I use templates that I created for different workings because I want to include the relevant information in your write-up. I keep updating that system to make the explanations clearer and easier to read.

By “template,” I mean the structure of the document: the sections I want to cover and the information I want to explain. It is a way of organizing a write-up. It is not a little machine into which I type your name before a ritual conveniently performs itself.

If that machine existed, I assume it would still find a way to jam five minutes before I needed it. Everything else does.

The practical purpose is consistency. A useful format reminds me what needs explaining and gives you a recognizable way to find it. The format is the container. The work being described still has to be performed, and its explanation still needs attention.

Familiar structure is not the whole substance

Think about the difference between a recipe's headings and the meal somebody actually cooks. “Ingredients” is a heading. It cannot chop an onion. A write-up's headings cannot carry out a working, account for what was done, or make an explanation clear simply by existing.

I want the document to help you understand the purpose of the offering, the relevant information about the work, and what you need to take away from it. I do not want to bury the useful parts underneath terminology that makes you feel you need another practitioner just to translate the first one.



Not every technical detail improves a customer's understanding. Some details belong in a deeper teaching conversation. Some belong to private practice. My job in a write-up is to make choices about what is relevant and communicate it coherently.

That is why I keep improving my system. I want the person reading to have fewer avoidable questions about what a sentence means, not more paragraphs to admire without understanding them.

ESSAY 08 / CONTINUED

The template does not perform the ritual

The pictures are another part of the presentation

My husband is a computer programmer, and he designs many things for me in Photoshop. I also use AI-assisted tools for some graphics, something I have discussed openly on my social media. Different pieces involve different methods. You are welcome to have your own preferences about those tools.

The graphics help present an offering. The write-up helps explain it. The ritual is the work I perform. I want those roles to be understood rather than blended into an assumption that a polished image somehow did the working.

I have never stolen another seller's listing. I have my own ideas and my own way of presenting them. You do not have to like the result, but please do not mistake a preference about design for knowledge of everything that happens behind it.

The shop did not begin on opening day

Some of my older listings are less polished. In the beginning, I was still figuring out the presentation and the art style. Apparently, I was supposed to arrive with a fully developed visual identity and perfect knowledge of every button. How inconsiderate of me to learn something.

I was able to put up more than 800 listings quickly because I had already done substantial work ahead of time. The preparation existed before those listings went live. The date something appears in a shop is not necessarily the date somebody began working on it.

That advance preparation is separate from carrying out the working for your order. Anyone can put an offering on a page. Fulfilling it takes the time and



attention it calls for, and that is why your write-up is not simply there the instant you purchase.

There are people, time, and effort here. The fact that I want the result to be readable does not erase any of them.

ESSAY 09

Some days, I need the world to be quiet

That is allowed

Some days I get overwhelmed. Some days I do not want to hear from a single soul. I want to say that plainly because there is a strange pressure to make every limit sound elegant before other people will accept it.

There is no elegant version required. Sometimes I have had enough interaction for the day. Sometimes I need quiet. It does not mean I dislike everybody, and it does not mean the care I gave yesterday was an act.

Perhaps you know the feeling. You can love people and still want a little space from the entire population. These facts are perfectly capable of sharing a room, preferably a quiet one.

Care has a human capacity

I am not a hardass because I have limits. I do not become unkind the moment I need to stop talking. I would rather acknowledge my capacity than keep pushing until every conversation receives the exhausted version of me.

A boundary can be a way of preserving care. It gives me room to return with attention I can actually offer. I want that understanding for the people around me as well. Nobody should have to prove that they are on the brink of collapse before they are allowed a little breathing room.

I am responsible for the way I communicate. Needing space does not make every possible response fair. But I can communicate a limit without apologizing for having a nervous system and a finite day.

The woman behind the magick is a woman. I do not step outside being human when I begin my work. The same person who teaches and provides guidance



sometimes needs to put the phone down and attend to her own life.

If you recognize yourself in that, I hope you give yourself the courtesy you would offer someone you care about. Resting your attention does not erase your kindness.

Neither does letting a message wait until you can answer it properly.

ESSAY 09 / CONTINUED

Some days, I need the world to be quiet



I do not owe you the exhausted version of myself

There is a temptation to keep answering because you do not want anyone to think badly of you. Then a simple question arrives at exactly the wrong moment and receives all the tiredness that belongs to the rest of the day. That is not the kind of exchange I want to have.

I would rather recognize that I need a pause. You are allowed to do that, too. You do not have to become

completely depleted before your wish for quiet becomes legitimate.

Being a caring person is not an agreement to abandon your own needs whenever somebody else has a notification available. I can respect what you are carrying without claiming I am always ready to carry more myself.

There will be times when the kindest thing I can do is return later. That is not a disappearing act. It is a person trying to come back with something better to offer than the last teaspoon of her patience.

ESSAY 10

Please do not wait for a billionaire spell

A promise should survive a question

Nobody can honestly guarantee that a spell will make you a billionaire. If somebody could reliably produce that result on demand, I would have a few questions about why they were not already enjoying the proceeds themselves.

I am not interested in calling another seller a scammer. I am interested in people taking a breath when a promise sounds far beyond what anyone can reasonably assure them. A tiny price and an enormous guarantee should invite questions, not replace them.

You will not find a ritual for a dollar here. You will not find me promising that your binding will be finished in an hour. That is not how I perform and present my work. A price or a speed claim alone cannot tell you what another person does; what matters is getting a clear explanation rather than mistaking an attractive offer for a dependable outcome.

Possibility leaves room for real life

I believe in my magick and in the possibilities within my practice. I do not want to embellish those possibilities into promises I cannot make. Confidence is not a reason to tell someone that their future is now guaranteed.

You have circumstances, choices, relationships, and responsibilities that continue after a ritual. Other people have choices of their own. Guidance can give you something to consider; it cannot remove the need for your judgment or replace the practical steps a situation requires.

Ask what is included. Ask what is being claimed. Read the explanation slowly enough to understand it. You are allowed to decide that an offering is not right for



you, and you should not be frightened or pressured into buying it.

I want you to understand what I do. I would rather have that honest conversation than promise a spectacular future just because spectacular futures make excellent advertising.

Hope matters. So does treating the person holding that hope with care.

ESSAY 11

I can be wrong without becoming worthless

Leave room for an actual correction

I do not want confidence that only survives while nobody asks questions. That would require a level of crowd management I have neither the time nor the interest to maintain.

I want to be able to look at a concern and ask whether there is something I need to change. If there is, the useful response is to address it. If there is a misunderstanding, the useful response is to explain. If I disagree, I can say why. Those are different possibilities, and I do not need to decide in advance that only the one most flattering to me is allowed.

I am not supplying a dramatic confession here to prove I possess the correct amount of humility. I am describing the standard I want my confidence to meet.

Accountability needs a subject

An apology should be about something. What happened? What was my part? What can I clarify or change? Those questions are useful. A vague demand that I become smaller as a person is considerably less useful.

I can own a mistake without accepting every insult attached to it. I can correct a sentence without announcing that all my work is worthless. I can learn something from a person who does not like me without giving that person authority over the rest of my life.

Likewise, doing something generous does not cancel a mistake somewhere else. Helping someone for free is not a token I can exchange for avoiding a difficult conversation. I want those choices understood, but



they are not an exemption from treating people properly.

That is the sort of confidence I respect: enough self-worth to remain standing, enough honesty to examine the facts, and enough restraint to distinguish an answer from a counterattack.

I am willing to work toward that. I do not need to sound timid to mean it.

You can keep the ceremonial self-loathing. I would rather do the useful part.

ESSAY 11 / CONTINUED

I can be wrong without becoming worthless



A correction is not a collapse

If I need to explain something more clearly, I can improve the explanation. If a process needs attention, I can look at it. Neither task requires me to announce that I have no idea what I am doing and should retire immediately into a decorative shrub.

I can take pride in my practice and still improve the way I communicate it. In fact, caring about the work gives me a reason to keep improving. I do not want confidence that is so fragile it cannot survive an edit.

The other side of this matters, too. Someone repeating an accusation does not make it more specific. Volume does not settle a disagreement. I am willing to examine what is mine to address, and I am willing to decline the rest.

I want accountability with an actual purpose: understand the concern, address what can be addressed, and decide what happens next. Endless self-punishment is a lousy substitute for doing that work.

ESSAY 12

Ask me. I was a beginner somewhere, too.

Curiosity is welcome

Ask me about practical conjuring. Ask me about spell casting. Ask what something means in a write-up. I can explain practical principles without assuming that you already know the vocabulary.

If you stick around long enough to learn, you may begin developing a practice of your own. That takes attention, questions, and a willingness to work through foundations. You do not have to arrive pretending you have already mastered the subject. That would make it rather difficult to tell me what you want to learn.

A question does not become silly because its answer is familiar to somebody else. Familiarity is what happens after learning. People occasionally forget this and begin acting as though they emerged from the womb clutching a complete grimoire. An impressive delivery, but unlikely to have been comfortable for anyone involved.

Practical knowledge and family privacy

I can discuss how a practice is approached, what a preparation is for, why a clear intention matters, and how to think carefully about an offering. My eclectic work draws on more than one influence, and I can distinguish an influence from something I have composed myself.

There are also things I will keep private, including my family's traditions. Those practices are not available simply because somebody has asked politely, paid for an offering, or decided a complete demonstration is the only acceptable proof of sincerity.



I can teach without surrendering every part of my inheritance. I can be honest while saying, “That part is private.” Openness does not mean every door in my life has to come off its hinges.

I never show my altar room. It is sacred to me. My own children have never even stepped foot inside. That is a boundary I hold even with the people closest to me. Keeping it private is part of how I care for that space.

Practitioners have different rules about what they share. Mine are clear: that room remains private. Respect for sacred space includes respecting a closed door. I can share knowledge while keeping that part of my practice to myself.

If you want more detail than a write-up contains, ask what I am able to explain. We can find the useful question without assuming you are entitled to every private answer.

ESSAY 12 / CONTINUED

Ask me. I was a beginner somewhere, too.



Learning does not require you to become me

When I speak about spirits and entities, I am describing my personal spiritual experience. I perceive presences vividly and experience interaction with them. That is part of how I understand and practice magick. You do not have to describe your own experiences the same way to speak with me thoughtfully.

I want people to understand my approach and retain their judgment. You can consider an explanation,

reflect on an experience, and decide what fits your own path. The point of guidance is not to produce a smaller copy of the person giving it.

If my practice does not suit you, another practitioner's approach may. You can seek that fit without insulting either of us. Everyone deserves room to explore this magickal world. There is wonder, curiosity, and a great deal to learn in it.

I would rather help you understand where you stand than make you afraid to take a step without my permission.

ESSAY 13

Yes, the backbone comes with teeth



Kindness is not helplessness

I want you to feel comfortable talking to me. You do not need to arrive with the right vocabulary, agree with everything I say, or worry that a reasonable question will offend me. I would much rather have an honest conversation than a room full of people afraid to speak.

I am not all bark. I do bite, and I am not afraid to bite. What that means in everyday life is fairly straightforward: I speak up, correct something untrue, and follow through on my boundaries. The backbone is functional. It did not come with the outfit.

I can be warm and still say no. I can care about someone and decide that a conversation needs to end. You are allowed those choices, too. Kindness should leave enough room for the person offering it to remain a whole person.

My family stays private

Since being on the platform, I have received some things that alarmed me. That is one reason I keep parts of my life private. I am comfortable explaining that boundary without recounting every experience behind it.

Anyone who brings underage children into hostile messages, accusations, or attempts to intimidate me will be reported and permanently blocked. Children do not belong in a disagreement between adults. That boundary is firm.

I am a witch. I am also a mother and a grandmother. Protecting my family is part of who I am, and I expect many people reading this will understand that without needing another word of explanation.

You are welcome to ask about my offerings and my approach. My private family life remains private. We can get to know each other meaningfully while leaving some things off the internet. Astonishing concept, I know.

ESSAY 13 / CONTINUED

Yes, the backbone comes with teeth

A difficult conversation can still be a good one

"I don't understand" is welcome. So is "I disagree, and here's why." If something about your experience concerns you, I want you to feel able to tell me plainly. You do not need to make it flattering before it counts.

I can listen without immediately agreeing. You can hear my explanation and still have questions. A useful conversation gives both people room to finish a thought and consider what the other person actually said.

If an exchange becomes insulting or intimidating, I can end it. That does not make every uncomfortable discussion unacceptable. Sometimes discomfort is where I discover something I need to explain better or change.

A frustrated customer deserves to be heard. Someone choosing another practitioner has every right to do so. I expect myself to remember those things even on a day when my patience has apparently left the building without submitting a leave request.

Some conversations get an ending

There are times when we have said what we can say. I can acknowledge that, hold a limit, and move on. Every disagreement does not need a sequel, a reunion special, and exclusive behind-the-scenes footage.

If you came with a sincere question, please know that these boundaries leave room for you. You do not need to earn permission to be curious, uncertain, or new at this.

I can be kind and still mean "enough." I can close a conversation without closing myself off to everyone else. I want to have energy left for my family, my



practice, and the people who come here hoping to learn.

That is the point of the backbone. It helps me keep showing up with something useful to give. The soft parts of me deserve that protection, too. So do yours.

A FINAL WORD

There is a person listening



What I hope you remember

Underneath the humor and the sharp edges, this is what I have been trying to say: I am a real person, and so are you.

I have a husband, children, grandchildren, family, and friends. I have work I care about. I have days when I want to talk and days when one more notification feels like somebody has knocked on my forehead.

You probably have those days, too. I hope you leave room for yourself to have them without deciding that every limit is a character flaw.

I want you to feel able to ask a question, admit that you do not understand something, and learn at a pace that lets it mean something. I want you to know that I can care about your concern while still needing time to answer it.

I do not need to be famous. I want the person speaking to me to feel that their name, their questions, and their circumstances matter. I would like them to remember there is a person listening.

One open invitation

If you would like to continue the conversation, visit thewitchsvessel.com. There are free resources and a free community forum. You do not have to purchase anything to read, learn, or participate. If you are reading this there already, welcome. Perhaps you will learn something useful. Perhaps you will make a few friends.

You can also explore the Wishing Well and the monthly giveaway for \$50 in store credit. Forum participation can earn points toward coupons and other rewards. If you choose to shop, every dollar spent earns points. The rewards system is being updated to include more prizes; check the current site details for participation, eligibility, and redemption information. A giveaway offers a chance to receive credit, not a promise that every participant will.

Those features are there to explore if they interest you. Your welcome does not depend on a purchase or a points balance.

A FINAL WORD / CONTINUED

There is a person listening



The next part belongs to you

I provide guidance. I perform my work. I teach. What you choose to do with that guidance and learning remains yours. I cannot promise every outcome is under your control, and I will not treat every difficulty as evidence that you failed. Life is more complicated than that.

But you do have choices about how you participate, what you learn, and what practical steps you take next. I want the work to support your judgment and give you something useful to carry into your life.

I put a great deal into my practice, and I intend to be around for a long time. Learning, explaining, occasionally swearing, and continuing to care about

the people who meet me with the same basic respect they would like to receive.

So buckle up, buttercup. There is plenty to explore.

About this free edition

Apparently, I Have a Big Ego. I Thought It Was a Backbone. By Selia Calloway. The Witch's Vessel. Expanded free edition, September 2026. These personal essays reflect the author's perspective and spiritual experiences. Atmospheric illustrations are not portraits or documentary images of the author, her family, customers, or other sellers. Website features and rewards may change; consult the site for current details.