

--- TRAUMA AND PSYCHOLOGY ---

**THE DRAMA OF THE GIFTED CHILD**—by Alice Miller. It's not about "gifted" children in the context you think. Fair warning: this book will fuck you up. It's the only book by Alice Miller that I've read, but every title that I've seen of hers looks incredible.

**VISUAL AIDS FOR TRAUMA THERAPY**—by Ayan Mukherjee. If you're like "wtf does a therapist even help you with" then buy this illustrated book [on Etsy!](#) (I've been in therapy for two years and there was still so much in here I hadn't heard about. It's a look behind the therapist's curtain.) Mukherjee is a therapist and illustrator who made this to help therapists educate clients about concepts from the world of trauma therapy. He has a few other guides in his Etsy shop too which focus on EMDR, attachment, and dissociation. I want them ALL.

**THE BODY KEEPS THE SCORE**—by Bessel van der Kolk. Essential reading for understanding how emotional and spiritual trauma is encoded in our viscera. This book offers hope and tangible ways to heal.

**NO BAD PARTS**—This just came out! It's about Internal Family Systems (IFS). Bessel van der Kolk blurbed it: "We all contain valuable parts that are forced into extreme roles to deal with pain and disappointment. Understanding the role they have played in our survival and being able to unburden the original traumas leads to self-compassion and inner harmony. The notion that all of our parts are welcome is truly revolutionary and opens up a path to self-acceptance and self-leadership. IFS is one of the cornerstones of effective and lasting trauma therapy."

**THE DANCE OF ANGER**—by Harriet Lerner. “Anger is neither legitimate nor illegitimate, meaningful nor pointless. Anger simply is. To ask, ‘Is my anger legitimate?’ is similar to asking ‘Do I have a right to be thirsty? I just had a glass of water fifteen minutes ago.’”

**THE DANCE OF DECEPTION**—Everything Harriet Lerner writes is so fucking good (I recommend reading this at the same time as *The Dance of Anger*). We all “do” deception, often with the intention to protect ourselves and the relationships we depend on. Whether the subject is affairs, family secrets, or the challenge of being oneself, Lerner helps us to discover, speak, and live our own truths.

**ATTACHED**—by Amir Levine and Rachel Heller. A very digestible primer to attachment theory: how our childhood attachment patterns manifest in adult relationships. No attachment style is “bad.” Noticing your patterns helps you understand your reactions, feelings, and needs.

**CODEPENDENT NO MORE**—by Melonie Beatty. Mormon families and marriages are built on codependency. “You need to be good, or else we won’t live together in heaven for eternity. My eternal happiness is dependent on your obedience.”

--- *POSTMO-ADJACENT LIT* ---

**THE MORMON PRIESTESS**—An essay from 2014 that you can still find on ye olde Feminist Mormon Housewives blog. Reading through this was a pivotal moment in my faith revolution. It details the temple’s misogyny with surgical precision. If you ever wondered “What’s the deal with temple covenants?” (a la Jerry Seinfeld) or “Why do so many Mormon women talk about the temple as a traumatic experience?”—then read this essay instead of Rosie Card’s propaganda. This essay dissects the language in temple covenants. When FMH first released it, they released one version where the

temple language was redacted, and a [password-protected version](#) that wrote everything out (the password is “MormonPriestess”).

**EROSION**—by Terry Tempest Williams. *When Women Were Birds* is a mainstay of Mormon book clubs, but I don’t think there’s a better Tempest text than *Erosion* for someone in the midst of falling apart. “We are eroding and evolving at once.”

**EDUCATED**—by Tara Westover. Truth-telling on another level. Tara’s abuse in her Mormon family was incomprehensibly extreme, but reading it and realizing how, growing up, my lens of the world was similar to hers made me want to wretch.

**CULTISH**—by Amanda Montell. Again, this book just came out and I haven’t read it, but I had to include it. It’s about the language of fanaticism—exposing the verbal elements that manufacture intense ideology, community, and us/them attitudes.

**THE DISPOSSESSED**—by Ursula K. LeGuin. “There was a wall. It did not look important. It was built of uncut rocks roughly mortared. An adult could look right over it, and even a child could climb it. Where it crossed the roadway, instead of having a gate it degenerated into mere geometry, a line, an idea of boundary. But the idea was real. It was important. For seven generations there had been nothing in the world more important than that wall.”

### --- LIBERATION ---

**MOTHERS: AN ESSAY ON LOVE AND CRUELTY**—by Jacqueline Rose. Warning: this book will change the way you see modern motherhood, and it will fuck you up. A simple argument guides this book: motherhood is the place in our culture where we lodge, or rather bury, the reality of our own conflicts. By making mothers the objects of both idealization and cruelty, they become the scapegoat for our personal and political failings. This is a groundbreaking book about something so prevalent we hardly notice.

**THE BODY IS NOT AN APOLOGY**—by Sonya Renee Taylor. Mormon bodies are controlled, policed, and shamed. Systems of oppression thrive off our inability to make peace with difference and injure the relationship we have with our own bodies.

**ALL ABOUT LOVE**—by bell hooks. This book dismantles our view of love as romance, and offers a proactive new ethic. “Love is the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth.”

**THE WILL TO CHANGE**—by bell hooks. To know love, men must be able to look at the ways that patriarchal culture keeps them from knowing themselves, from being in touch with their feelings, from loving.

**EMERGENT STRATEGY**—by adrienne marie brown. Drawing on the science fiction work of Octavia Butler, emergent strategy is a framework for resistance rooted in the miracles of nature, decentralized, collective leadership, and personal, relational, movement-wide transformation. “If we accept the scientific and science fictional premise that change is a constant condition of this universe, then it becomes important that we learn to be in right relationship with change.”

**PLEASURE ACTIVISM**—by adrienne marie brown. Explodes the myth that changing the world is just another form of work. Drawing on Black and queer feminist traditions, she challenges us to rethink the ground rules of activism, demonstrating how we can tap into our emotional and erotic desires to organize against oppression.

**THE SELECTED WORKS OF AUDRE LORDE**—by Audre Lorde, bedrock in the Black and queer feminism mentioned above. Do not miss “The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism” and “The Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power.”

**POST-COLONIAL ASTROLOGY**—by Alice Sparkly Kat. This book just came out! Too often, magic and astrology are divorced from their potency and cultural contexts: co-opted by neoliberalism or distilled beyond recognition into applications that belie their individual and collective power. By looking at the symbolic and etymological histories of the sun, moon, Saturn, Venus, Mercury, Mars, and Jupiter, we can trace and understand the politics of magic—challenging our practices, interrogating our truths, and reshaping our institutions to build better frameworks for communities of care.

**HOPE IN THE DARK**—by Rebecca Solnit. “Hope locates itself in the premises that we don’t know what will happen and that in the spaciousness of uncertainty is room to act. Hope in an embrace of the unknown and the unknowable, an alternative to the certainty of both optimists and pessimists.”

--- *SEX* ---

**MATING IN CAPTIVITY**—by Esther Perel. One of the world’s most respected voices on erotic intelligence, Perel offers a bold, provocative new take on intimacy and sex, exploring the paradoxical union of domesticity and sexual desire. I also *strongly* recommend her couples therapy podcast and the new board game she just released, both titled *Where Should We Begin?*

**ACE**—by Angela Chen. The best book on sexuality I’ve ever read. Chen deconstructed the assumptions of assumptions I didn’t even know I was making. Meticulously, queerfully researched, Chen uses asexuality as a prism to understand sex and romance vis-a-vis gender, race, disability, society, power, and more.

--- *GENERAL BRILLIANCE* ---

**BRAIDING SWEETGRASS**—by Robin Wall Kimmerer. Drawing on her life as an indigenous scientist, and as a woman, Kimmerer shows how other living beings—asters

and goldenrod, strawberries and squash, salamanders, algae, and sweetgrass—offer us gifts and lessons, even if we've forgotten how to hear their voices.

**WOMEN WHO RUN WITH WOLVES**—by Dr. Clarissa Pinkola Estés. I mean what kind of disaffected spiritual-but-not-religious Millennial would I be if I didn't have this on my list. Dr. Estés created a new lexicon for describing the female psyche. In this seminal text, she unfolds rich intercultural myths, fairy tales, and folk tales to help women reconnect with the magic and medicine of the Wild Woman archetype.

**YOU WERE BORN FOR THIS**—by Chani Nicolas. Astrology is not therapy, but it is therapeutic. Chani demonstrates how your birth chart—a snapshot of the sky at the moment you took your first breath—reveals your unique talents, challenges, and opportunities.