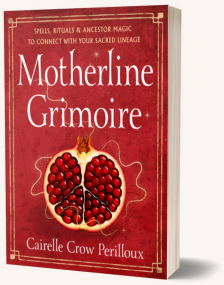
AN INTERVIEW

Tending the Motherline

A Conversation with Cairelle Perilloux



On *Motherline Grimoire: Spells, Rituals, and Ancestor Magic to Connect with Your Sacred Lineage*
(Weiser Books, December 7, 2026)

◆ What inspired you to write *Motherline Grimoire*, and why now?

This book was born out of both longing and observation. I kept meeting women, witches, seekers, genealogists, and intuitive people who knew how to honor the dead but had forgotten how to truly belong to the living lineage moving through their own bones. So much of modern spiritual work asks us to transcend the body, yet the mitochondria inside every one of our cells is an ancestral fire, literally passed from mother to child since the beginning of our species, and that is often ignored or sometimes even unknown. I wrote *Motherline Grimoire* to create a path back, not through theory alone, but through blood, memory, ritual, and reclamation. Now felt like the right moment because we are collectively starving for origin, and for belonging that is deeper than a family tree app. I wanted to help readers rediscover that lineage is not just historical, it is fuel, inheritance, and a source of power still burning beneath the skin.

◆ For readers new to the concept, what do you mean by "Motherline" and why is it spiritually significant?

The motherline is not just a poetic phrase for ancestry. It is a biological and spiritual lineage carried through mitochondrial DNA, passed exclusively from mother to child. On a scientific level, it is one of the oldest living threads on Earth. On a spiritual level, it is a sacred pathway of memory and energy that connects us directly to the first woman who sparked our lineage. When I speak of the motherline, I am pointing to the unbroken chain of women who not only birthed our bodies but also transmitted resilience, instinct, and memory through cellular fire. This lineage is more than genetics. It is an energetic inheritance that shapes intuition, emotional patterning, and even how we metabolize life, literally and spiritually. To work with the motherline is to come into conscious relationship with that inheritance and learn how to use it as a source of nourishment rather than an unconscious weight.

◆ How does mitochondrial DNA factor into the spiritual framework of the book?

Mitochondrial DNA is often treated as just another genetic marker, but I see it as a sacred relic still alive within us. Unlike the rest of our DNA, which is a blend of maternal and paternal contributions, mitochondrial DNA comes only from the mother, hers, and her mother's before her, stretching back over 150,000 years, and it is given to all of her children. In *Motherline Grimoire*, I treat this not just as science but as a ritual axis. Each haplogroup, the ancient branches of mitochondrial lineage spread across the world, is introduced as more than data. It becomes a doorway to story, archetype, and magical resonance. By understanding where our mitochondria once traveled, what climates our ancestors survived, and what migrations shaped us, we begin to anchor our magic in lived human history. This is ancestry not as distant myth but as a living ecosystem within the body, constantly generating energy, intuition, and life-force.

❖ Genealogy can feel overwhelming. How do you help readers approach it through a magical lens instead of a purely historical one?

Traditional genealogy often becomes a quest for names, dates, and documents, which can be meaningful but also emotionally flat. In this book, I invite readers to shift from collecting data to reclaiming relationship. Instead of only asking, "Who were your ancestors," I ask, "What did they carry and what of that still lives through you?" Magic enters when we stop treating genealogy as a record and begin treating it as a thread we are still weaving. I provide grounding practices that blend research techniques with spellcraft, journaling, and sensory memory work so that even a single name can become a doorway. This approach turns genealogy from a linear project into an intimate form of ancestral communion.

❖ You write about reclaiming ancestral connection as a source of power. What does that reclamation look like in daily life?

Reclaiming power through the motherline is rarely dramatic. More often, it is a quiet returning, choosing to feed yourself well because your lineage survived famine, speaking when you were taught to stay silent, or creating beauty even when your ancestors were denied softness. Daily reclamation looks like asking, "What did my mothers not have that I now can give myself?" Sometimes it is ritual, sometimes it is nourishment, sometimes it is boundaries. In this framework, every act of care becomes an offering back through the bloodline. Power is not something we acquire, it is something we remember. Our mitochondria are engines; burning, metabolizing, and turning substances into energy. When we learn to honor that process, physically and spiritually, we begin to transform not just our lineage story but how we carry it forward.

"Power is not something we acquire, it is something we remember."

❖ Did your own personal journey with ancestral research change how you practice magic or see yourself?

Absolutely! When I began tracing my maternal line through mitochondrial DNA, I expected to find facts. Instead, I found a mirror. Seeing the haplogroup migrations mapped across continents made me realize that my magic did not begin with books or training but with blood memory. It changed how I approached ritual. I no longer cast circles to call in abstract elements, I began calling in grandmothers. I stopped chasing external validation in spiritual practice and started listening for what felt familiar in my bones. Genealogy softened me in ways I did not expect, and it sharpened my purpose. I understood that my work was not to invent magic but to translate what my lineage has always known. That realization reshaped everything, including this book.

❖ There is a strong current of nourishment and life-force running through your work. Can you speak to that theme?

Mitochondria are often referred to as the powerhouses of the cell, but spiritually, they are hearth fires. They convert what we consume—food, emotion, and experience—into usable energy. That process is alchemical. In the book, I speak of nourishment not just in terms of diet or wellness, but as the act of choosing what we metabolize emotionally and spiritually. Many women, especially those disconnected from their maternal lineage, overextend, overgive, and undernourish

themselves on every level. The motherline asks us to feed the fire differently, to take in what sustains, to burn off what weighs us down, and to see each act of nourishment as ritual, not merely for the self, but for the lineage as a whole. When we feed ourselves well on every level, we feed the future daughters who will inherit our fire and in turn pass it along to their future generations.

◆ Some readers may come to this work with complicated or painful family histories. How does the book hold space for that?

Not all lineages feel safe or nurturing, and I want to acknowledge that directly. This book is not about romanticizing ancestry but about engaging with it honestly, with both reverence and discernment. You do not have to love every ancestor to honor the fact that you carry a lineage of survival. In *Motherline Grimoire*, I offer pathways for those who feel estranged from their bloodline through symbolic ancestor work, chosen lineage frameworks, and the idea that healing for one daughter can soften the road for many behind her. Honoring the motherline does not mean accepting harm. It means standing at the crossroads and choosing to become a different kind of ancestor. There is power in saying, "This ends with me," and there is tenderness in saying, "And this, I choose to carry forward."

◆ What role do tools, symbols, or ritual elements play in connecting to the motherline?

Ritual tools in this context are less about ceremony and more about resonance. Each mitochondrial lineage carries elemental signatures, plant allies, stones, and symbols rooted in the landscapes where that lineage once traveled. Working with these tools is a way of creating sensory bridges, touching what your ancestors might have touched, invoking the same minerals that formed their bones, breathing in herbs that once grew along their migration paths. These are not props for ritual. They are extensions of memory. Throughout the book, I introduce gentle practices that pair research with embodied connection. Something as simple as diffusing a specific oil or holding a stone can become a moment of lineage awakening. These tools are less about performance and more about rethreading the body to its origin story.

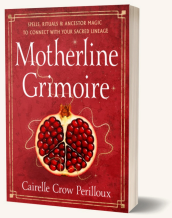
◆ What do you hope readers carry with them after closing the book, and how might they continue that journey?

More than anything, I hope readers leave with a sense of belonging that rises from within rather than something they must earn or prove. The motherline is not a theory, it is a living current moving through the body, waiting to be recognized. When a reader closes this book, I want them to feel less alone in their story and more connected to the vast, quiet strength of those who came before them. The work does not end on the final page. It continues in the small daily choices to honor the self as a living extension of the line. Returning to breath, tracing a name with intention, lighting a candle with remembrance, all of these simple acts become ongoing threads of connection. My hope is that readers begin to see their life as active lineage work, where every moment of awareness, care, and reclamation becomes an offering backward and forward through time.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Cairelle Perilloux is a multi-genre author and poet, genealogist, and registered nurse whose work explores the crossroads of myth, magic, and memories. She lives in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia, where she writes, grows flowers, and wanders the wild woods.



THE BOOK

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