

PAULA MALLIS APPROACHES WELL-NESS FROM A PERSONAL PLACE. “My own healing journey brought me to this work,” she says. Growing up in North Carolina on a horse farm, the oldest of four siblings, Mallis lost one of her brothers when she was 19 years old, and eventually struggled with drugs and alcohol. But all of it—along with the birth of her daughter in 2012—became transformative moments in her life and “opportunities to grow and heal,” she says. “I began to see a woman’s journey through the eyes of birth. It became a metaphor for me.”

After studying to become a doula and receiving her masters in spiritual psychology in 2015, Mallis began hosting modern versions of ancient women’s circles in her home in Venice Beach, California. The gatherings bring women together to reflect on a topic (often timed to new or full moon cycles or astrological alignment, which can influence mood and thought patterns) and share experiences to inspire and lift each other up. It is a ritual that dates back centuries and has a long history in Native American tribes, where circles involved talking sticks and



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➤ Paula Mallis (pictured), the founder of WMN Space in Los Angeles.

← Mallis leads modern versions of ancient women’s circles, an emotional healing ritual practiced for generations by many different cultures around the world.



storytelling. Mallis’s circles became so popular that in 2017, she opened up WMN Space in Los Angeles. The airy studio, lined in bare woods and dotted with pillows for sitting, hosts circles, in addition to touch-therapy-style massages, pelvic healing treatments, and doula services. The goal, says Mallis, is meeting each woman exactly where she is. “Women often come to share their most raw, vulnerable, and real stories of their lives. They are coming in hopes of being guided and given direction back to their most authentic selves.”

Mallis admits she gets as much out of the circles as the women around her. She also practices Pilates weekly and navigates the usual mom stuff (school pick-ups, grocery store runs) while checking in with her intention. “For me, it’s not about having this picture-perfect spirituality practice. I am a human. That said, I take spirituality principles seriously. I mediate and pray regularly.” And she takes time for herself. “Being alone, being quiet, and being just still—I have worked hard to want, enjoy, and look forward to being with me.”