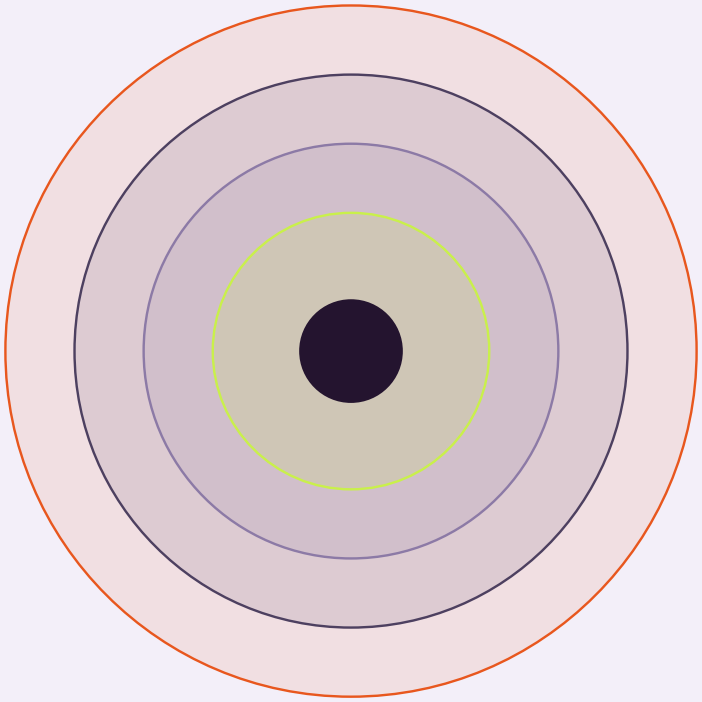
NOVEMBER 6, 2026



Season of the Witch: A Psychiatrist's Case for Magic

A reading of the book by Ellen Vora (2026)

1. ACTION BOOK

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ABOUT THIS EDITION

This is HourLife's reading of Season of the Witch: A Psychiatrist's Case for Magic, in our own words. It is not a substitute for the book.

BEFORE YOU START 01

The book in a minute

Ellen Vora is a board-certified psychiatrist, acupuncturist and yoga teacher, and the author of The Anatomy of Anxiety. In Season of the Witch she argues that modern culture rewards rational, measurable knowing and trains women to distrust intuition, the body and a sense of mystery. She came to this view after the sudden death of her mother, when the healing she needed came from the very ways of knowing her medical training had taught her to dismiss. The book is built around five practices: embodiment, presence, valuing the yin, openness to mystery, and serving the collective. She uses the witch as a figure for a woman who has reclaimed those ways of knowing, as a way to live more fully in reality rather than escape it. Her own story runs alongside patients' stories and a critique of how medicine and culture handle grief, motherhood and menopause.

Below are the 9 ideas HourLife readers vote up most, each in our words with a note on what it asks of you, and then the steps that put them to work.

WHAT READERS KEEP

The takeaways

1 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Intelligence is wider than reasoning, and the book names five practices for getting the rest of it back.

Vora organises the book around embodiment, presence, valuing the yin, openness to mystery and serving the collective. Each one restores a way of knowing that a busy, measured life tends to crowd out. She means them as practices you return to, not a checklist you finish.

2 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

In this book, the witch is not a costume or an escape. She is a woman who trusts every way she knows things.

Vora reclaims the word for intuitive, embodied and mystical knowing, the kinds of knowing she says the culture tends to shame. She is clear that this is a deeper way of living in the real world, not a retreat from it. Readers expecting spells will find a book about self-trust instead.

3 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

A culture that only trusts what it can measure teaches people to overrule what they feel.

Vora's central diagnosis is a bias toward the rational and the quantified, which she argues falls hardest on women. The cost shows up as disconnection: from the body, from other people, and from the quiet signals that help with everyday decisions.

4 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Sometimes the help you need comes from the ways of knowing you were trained to dismiss.

The book grew out of Vora's own grief. Her mother died suddenly while Vora was pregnant, and she describes finding that the healing she needed came from intuitive, embodied ways of knowing her training had taught her to set aside. That turn is the spine of the book.

5 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Your body often knows before your mind has an argument for it.

Embodiment is the first practice. Vora argues that listening closely to the body tells you more than formulas, macros or the scores on a wearable. The point is not to reject data but to stop letting it outrank what you can feel.

6 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

You cannot hear yourself while the feed is talking.

Presence means being in the room you are actually in. Vora is critical of constant news and constant input, which keep attention somewhere else. Intuition is quiet, so it needs some silence to be heard.

7 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Rest that produces nothing is not wasted. It is the other half of a life.

Valuing the yin borrows from Chinese medicine, which Vora practises as an acupuncturist: the receptive, slow and cyclical side of things. She treats life thresholds such as the months after birth and menopause as transitions to be supported, not only problems to treat. That is her view; postpartum depression and other conditions are real and treatable, so anyone struggling should talk to a clinician.

8 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Not everything that matters will explain itself, and you can live well alongside that.

Openness to mystery asks you to stop forcing every experience into a tidy explanation. The later chapters turn to grief and the sense of connection some people keep with those who have died. Vora writes about her own losses here, and readers note that this part is the most personal.

9 HOURLIFE TAKEAWAY

Reclaimed intuition is meant to be shared, not hoarded.

The fifth practice is serving the collective. Vora argues that the holistic, collaborative way of knowing she describes is something the wider culture needs now. Self-trust ends up pointing outward, toward community and care for others.

PUT IT TO WORK

Your action book

Do the setup steps once, then keep the habits going. The setup changes your week; the habits keep it changed after the first good one.

The download puts this whole reading and a printable action book in one PDF: the setup checklist, then a page of real calendar days for each habit, starting on the day you choose.

SET UP ONCE

- [ ] Take a week off one tracker
- [ ] Clear the first hour of news
- [ ] Book one hour of useless rest
- [ ] Start a hunch log
- [ ] Pick one place to give your time

KEEP UP DAILY

- ◯ Ask your body before you answer
- ◯ Walk without input
- ◯ Mark your thresholds

30 days · Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Part two, after the reading, prints each of these as a page to fill in by hand.

THE LAST WORD

Before you go

Pick one step from the action book and do it today. An idea from a book starts to count once it changes what one ordinary day looks like.

PART TWO

The action book

Change the setup once, then keep it up. 5 setup actions to do once, and 3 habits to mark each day for 30 days.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026

Print it, or write on it in any PDF app.

SET UP ONCE

The setup checklist

Each of these is done once. Do one a day, and check it off when it is done.

- [ ] SETUP 1

Take a week off one tracker

Pick one number you check every day, such as a sleep score or step count, and hide it for seven days.

Each morning, rate your own energy from 1 to 5 before looking at anything.

MY VERSION DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 2

Clear the first hour of news

Move news and social apps off your home screen tonight.

Keep the first hour after waking free of headlines and feeds for the rest of the week.

MY VERSION DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 3

Book one hour of useless rest

Put one hour in your calendar this week for rest with no goal: no learning, no workout, no chores.

Treat it like a meeting you cannot move.

MY VERSION DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 4

Start a hunch log

Open a notebook or a note on your phone.

Each time you have a strong gut feeling, write it down with the date, so you can later check which ones held up.

MY VERSION DONE ON

- [ ] SETUP 5

Pick one place to give your time

Choose one local group, such as a community garden, a choir or a neighbourhood list, and go once this month.

Write the date down now.

MY VERSION DONE ON

DAILY HABIT 1 OF 3

Ask your body before you answer

When someone asks something of you, take three slow breaths before replying.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
16 ○	17 ○	18 ○	19 ○	20 ○	21 ○	22 ○
23 ○	24 ○	25 ○	26 ○	27 ○	28 ○	29 ○
30 ○						

December 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
	1 ○	2 ○	3 ○	4 ○	5 ○	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 2 OF 3

Walk without input

Take a 20-minute walk most days with no podcast, music or calls.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP

DAILY HABIT 3 OF 3

Mark your thresholds

At a turning point, such as a birthday, a move or the change of season, take ten minutes to write what you are leaving behind and what you are carrying forward.

Nov 6 - Dec 5, 2026 · 30 days · circle each day you do it

SMALLEST VERSION

CUE

WHERE

November 2026

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN
						1
2	3	4	5	6 ○	7 ○	8 ○
9 ○	10 ○	11 ○	12 ○	13 ○	14 ○	15 ○
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December 2026

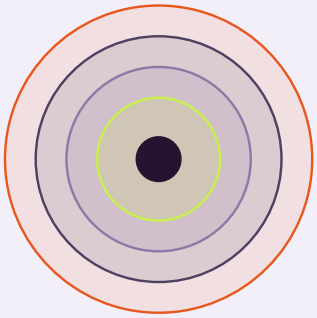
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EACH FRIDAY

WHAT HELPED

WHAT GOT IN THE WAY

ONE CHANGE TO THE SETUP



Trust your reasoning, and let your body, your rest and your wonder have a vote too.

HOURLIFE NOTE AFTER ELLEN VORA