



RITUALS

Rituals are magical and through them we can create magic.

We all have a deep longing for rituals, rooted in our animal behaviour we need rituals to connect to the depth and wisdom of our past.

Today we rarely use rituals. We have all had our fill of long boring religious rituals, with no personal connection, we often experience them as rigid, constraining, alienating or disempowering,. But as rituals have declined, so too has our connectedness, and our levels of personal security, we feel our survival is threatened. Once we honoured the earth, the seasons and what the earth provided; now we face the point where we are destroying this beautiful green and blue planet. By connecting with nature, and seeing the fruits of the seasons come around again in their cycles, gives us a cyclic understanding and a place in life. When living in cities we become separated from nature and nature's cycles; with electricity we become separated from day and night; tall buildings separate us from the moon's cycle; and imported foods separates us from nature's seasons. Warfare was also once highly ritualistic; combatants did everything to make them selves visible. To ritualise is to make one self present. Today warfare is hidden and based on surprise. Submarines hide under our seas and rockets under our ground. It's a horror with no moral constraint; the ends are thought to justify the means. In ritual the means and the ends are inseparable.

All rituals invoke power, and have transforming power. So what is a ritual; is it a ceremonial form, a repeated set of behaviours, or a religious rite?

Possible functions of a Ritual.

- Creates a contained and sacred space. This heightened energetic space can focus your awareness or reflection. It can raise, direct, strengthen and clear energy.
- Allows meaning to be invested and expressed by an individual, e.g. meditating with a candle in a particular corner of a room, or creating a specific arrangement of objects associated with the purpose of the ritual.
- Affirms and strengthens an experience.
- Creates a formal or informal space for an individual/ group/ community to have an experience, this can be either a social ritual or a collective spiritual/religious expression, e.g. Christmas can do both.
- Regulates life rhythms and events, e.g. nature's seasons, birth/marriage/death.
- Personal repeated acts can give pleasure or alleviate anxiety, e.g. our morning getting-up rituals, or rolling a cigarette ritual; this gives a sense of order or meaning to one's experience. (these can become obsessive behavioural disorders. e.g., washing, cleaning rituals)
- Can be traditional; remaining unchanged for thousands of years. There is a specific benefit of doing a ritual that taps into the lineage of thousands of others following the same precise actions, e.g. High Mass, Tantric Buddhist Pujas. Much is non-verbal, whilst communicating our ancestors' past wisdom, handed down to us, showing a profound understanding of the world we live in, and how our culture has developed and evolved. These rituals have made us who we are today.
- Can be spontaneously created in response to a particular experience, e.g. making an art object to symbolise a releasing, or a celebration of an event.

Some applications of Ritual

- Letting go of the past, or an aspect of oneself, or a relationship
- Honouring someone, something or some aspect
- Marking change/transition e.g. coming of age, menopause, divorce
- Releasing negative feelings or thought forms
- Cultivating and affirming a quality in oneself
- Expressing loss/bereavement e.g. a part of one's life, relationship, a role, body part.
- Asking for guidance
- Asking for and sending healing
- Expressing devotion, worship
- Marking endings, such as a group or client work.

Some suggestions

- Creating a sacred space or altar in one's home which contains inspirational pictures, objects, created art objects, objects from nature, or an empty space devoid of objects.
- Giveaway; where an object is given away, or visualised as being released. It may also be ceremonially destroyed (burned/buried/cast on water).
- Making a sculpture individually or as a group
- Casting a spell
- Asking for help, guidance, healing from Spiritual Beings which have meaning for the participant.
- Creating a drama to express something in a group.
- Dance
- Silence
- Mantra or chanting
- Visualisation

Be interactive

Doing a ritual is a performance; it is a performance of your freedom, so do what you enjoy doing, i.e. if you like drama be dramatic, if you like silence be silent. Your actions and energetic presence speak louder than words; the more energy and enthusiasm the more powerful the ritual. Be creative, playful and flexible. Mark out the time and space then make up your own ceremony, you can't get it wrong because it is your own heartfelt intention that counts. Whatever type or form the ritual, it is your personal energetic presence and your clear intent behind the ritual that is important. You can use any paraphernalia you want, clothes, incense, candles, presents, crystals, music, time..... You can choose any appropriate place, people or any activity. It can be as long, or as short, as it feels right. If you feel connected, it will work best for you!