

A Birthday Ritual Just for You

A **birthday ritual** will quite literally transform how you view and celebrate yourself while reflecting on the past year and looking ahead to the coming year.

Have there been times when you have experienced a birthday that wasn't quite what you had in mind? Perhaps you wanted to be cherished and celebrated, but the day just sort of came up short?

What if I told you that never has to happen again! With this *birthday ritual*, you can intentionally enhance your own well-being, and connectedness so that any extra joy and love you receive on your birthday from others will simply be the icing on the cake.

WHY A BIRTHDAY RITUAL?

Because intentionally enhancing the connection back to ourselves is key to a greater sense of well-being. How? By setting time aside to reflect on the past year – all of your joys and challenges; and celebrating and loving yourself is something we don't nearly enough throughout the year. So, your birthday is the perfect time for this ritual.

Have you ever really celebrated yourself on your birthday? I know a lot of people who throw birthday parties, or head out for a meal, or have a cake, but I mean have you really celebrated *you*?

Most often what I hear are people who avoid telling anyone it's their birthday, and at the same time, they feel really sad if the people around them forget it or don't make it as memorable. But you can do this for yourself! It's time to celebrate and honour yourself – the year past and the year ahead!

Remember this is your special day. You may say that it's not special for all sorts of reasons, maybe some have to do with how you grew up. I grew up always sharing my birthday with my mother, so it never really felt special nor that the day was "my own." But I changed all that in my late 20s. You can too.

So, while this ritual is about taking time and space to reflect on the past, that past is only the past year, not your whole life, unless that's what you would prefer to do. And it's about looking forward to your year ahead.

Here are only a few intentional ways you can add more meaning, and importance to your birthday.

Share a Special Meal with Someone

My husband and I always set a breakfast, lunch, or dinner aside on each of our birthdays to share a meal and take time to talk about all of the joys, sorrows, challenges and blessings that have happened in the past year to the birthday person.

- What were the highlights from the year – good and challenging that stand out?
- What things does the birthday person still want to do in the coming year that wasn't done last year?
- What are your goals and dreams for the coming year?

The other listens, asks questions, invites more sharing. You can do this with a friend; it needn't be a spouse or partner.

Make a Photo Collage

If you happen to be alone for your birthday, or even if you are with a friend or special person, you can make an online or physical collage of photos from the past year.

This offers you a chance to review what mattered most to you, because you captured it by taking a photo. Some photos may not reflect some of your challenges but the gaps in time between photos might. Look for those too. In your collage you can fill-in those gaps with a black screen, for a death that happened in the year, or a grey screen if something that was challenging. You

can get creative with how you wish to represent those times – I encourage you not to leave them out!

Is there something in those photos that tells you something about yourself you hadn't realized and want to honour and celebrate? Your smile, your laughter, your generosity of spirit? Share your collage with one other person or on social media if you prefer.

Take this time to reflect and write down two things you'd like to carry forward into the coming year.

Have Your Astrology Chart Done (or Another Alternative Modality)

Every year I treat myself to having my Solar Return chart cast and read for me. The study of astrology is an ancient practice and is found across all cultures, and traditions.

A solar return reading can provide you with a glimpse into the year ahead while you reflect on the year past with a qualified astrologer. There are many branches of astrology so you would need to pick one that resonates with your soul.

This is an intentional way to reflect, and to see yourself as part of the larger context of the universe, while knowing that you are unique and special person because no two charts are completely identical, not even for identical twins – since each is born at slightly different times.

Create a Special Birthday Music Playlist

Is music your “thing”? If so, spend time on your birthday by honouring all of the music you love most from across the years – or just in the last year, it's up to you.

Intentionally take time to reflect on what each song means to you, why is it significant? Why are you including it on your birthday playlist?

Once it's finished, you can share the birthday playlist with others or simply enjoy listening to throughout your day.

Create a Themed Birthday Party/Event

Wherever two or more are gathered it's a party. Celebrate and honour your day by creating your own special themed get-together. Don't wait for someone else to give you this gift. Give it to yourself.

If you will be alone on your birthday, you can still do this. If you only have a pet in your life at this time, you can still do this.

Pick a "theme" of something you deeply love and enjoy – it could be based on TV show, a musical, a colour, a favourite candy, a favourite flower, etc. Be as specific as you can. Now, set a specific time in the day to enjoy your themed get-together and build towards that time.

Once you have your theme, gather any materials you may want, you may need to go and purchase a few items – or you may have them already.

When the time arrives review all of what you have gathered. If someone is with you, even your pet, explain what each item is and why it matters to you. If it's a pink scarf or a green plant, why does it matter? What does it represent to you?

Now, before your get-together is finished, share two hopes you have for the coming year ahead.

Visit a New Part of Your City or Town

Is there a part of your city or town that you've always wanted to explore but perhaps never have? Now's the time! Make it a special outing for your special day. Take a friend or partner along with you for your special day.

Discuss with that person why exploring this part of the city or town has been so important to you today on your birthday. Reflect for yourself on why visiting this place matters? How does your soul feel when you're there? What memories from the past year does it invoke, if any? What, from this place, do you want to take forward with you into the coming year?

Remember, there is no one like you in this world. Celebrate, love, and honour yourself with intentionality, importance and what is most meaningful to you.

And Have Yourself a Very Happy Birthday!!