

## What is a ritual?

A ritual is an outward expression of intentional action, that can be repeated or stand-alone. It must include the aspect of setting time aside to practice that action – one that separates the ordinary from the sacred or special.

Rituals help us convey in a tangible and visible way an inner emotion – such as love or sorrow.

Rituals help us move from one state of being to another. They mark a threshold in time and space that once crossed we are never the same again because we gain insight into ourselves and others and can express emotions. We enact something on that threshold in time and space that is not a habit. Ritual in action opens us to emotions such as awe, compassion, wonder, and gratitude.

“Only when we bring intention to an action can it become a ritual.” Casper ter Kuile

Rituals add meaning, structure, and well-being to our lives.

Brainstorm these seven (7) areas of your life by filling in the boxes below with rituals that you either currently practice, or from the suggestions, ones that you would like to incorporate into your life. To make it fun use markers, crayons, special pens, or pencils.

## *National Holidays*

What holidays do you observe and write down **How do** you want to observe them? And think about what you would like to incorporate into your life in this area. E.g. New Year's, Family Day; July 1<sup>st</sup>/4<sup>th</sup>; Victoria Day, President's Day, Thanksgiving; Remembrance Day, etc.

### Your Notes:

## *Religious Holidays/Festivals*

What holidays or festivals do you observe and write down **How** do you want to observe them? And think about what you would like to incorporate into your life in this area. E.g. Easter; Passover; Eid; Diwali; Christmas; Channukah, Attend a Monthly Service, World Day of Prayer for Peace; etc.

### Your Notes:

## *Cultural Holidays/Festivals*

What holidays or festivals do you observe and write down **How** do you want to observe them? And think about what you would like to incorporate into your life in this area. E.g. Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, May Day, Jazz Festivals, Pride, Carnival, Mardi-gras, Solstices, etc.

### Your Notes:

## *Family Traditions/Get-Togethers*

What family traditions do you want to observe and write down **How** do you want to observe them? And think about what you would like to incorporate into your life from this area. E.g. Annual family reunion, honoring the passing of family members, cooking or baking once per month from a recipe handed down in your family, etc.

### Your Notes:

## *A Nature Event*

What event in nature do you want to observe and write down **How** do you want to observe them? And think about what you would like to incorporate into your life from this area. E.g. Maple Syrup Festival, Tulip Festival, Lunar Eclipse, Northern Lights trip/display, Picnic, Sailing trip, Monthly hike, Canoeing, A Daily Walk in Nature, etc.

Your Notes:

## *Social Gatherings*

What social gatherings do you want to observe and write down **How** do you want to observe them? And think about what you would like to incorporate into your life from this area. E.g. Weddings this year, Host an award show party, Weekly movie night with friends, Monthly book club meeting, Zoom cocktail hour, Monthly date night with your spouse, Weekend brunch, Attend an Opening Day (sports), etc.

Your Notes:

## *Other – Special Times in Life*

What special times or “other” milestones are coming up for you this year? How do you want to observe them? Are there ones you had not considered in your life that if you marked them / ritualized them, would add meaning to your life? Write them down. And think about what you would like to incorporate into your life from this area. E.g. A milestone birthday (30<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, etc.), A special wedding anniversary (10<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup>, 50<sup>th</sup>, etc.), High-School/College/University reunion, Menopause, A divorce, Moving from / Selling a Family Home, Observe a Sabbath Day (give up technology for one day, or something else), Daily meditation/grounding, etc.

### Your Notes:

Reflect on what you've written. Now that you have chosen the rituals that you would like to make part of your life this year in each of the seven (7) areas, put this up on your fridge, put them into your calendar (paper or digital) or put these sheets up where you can be reminded of your commitment to yourself. Once you put more rituals into your life, you will find the structure helps you cope better with life's changing times. You will see that there are times of celebration to look forward to, times of joy, as well as people, places, and things that add to strengthening your overall well-being.

*Wishing you peace, light, and love.*

*Janice*

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