



Soulconnection.org
eBook Series

Do You Ritual?



soulconnection.org
eBook Series
info@soulconnection.org

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Introduction

SoulConnection is based on the premise that we are spiritual beings first and human beings second, however all connected. Because of this premise, it is our nature to seek ways to stay connected. When we begin move away from our natural spiritual essence, we open ourselves up to an array of maladies. Our spiritual selves, also referred to as our souls is the place where we house our creative resources, our recognition of wholeness and most important, the knowledge that we are part of something much larger than our human selves. Recognizing that, that is eternal and omnipresent makes the difference between just existing and living fully.

SoulConnection's intentions are to continue to seek ways to stay connected or reach a deeper connection to spirit/source and share this information with you. No one is ever disconnected from spirit/source, after all it's who we are, but sometimes we forget who we are and create a space for a host of problems.

This series of eBooks, (12 in all), are designed to help individuals strengthen and honor this magnificent connection and remember who they truly are. We begin this series with...

“Do You Ritual”

Rituals have been used for thousands of years by all cultures as a way to honor and strengthen connection to spirit. Our ancestors used ritual in relationship to land and harvest, welcoming the seasons, the hunt, recognizing others in the tribe, milestones and reverence. Many have moved away from ritual for several reasons, some believe they no longer have the time, others question the benefits of ritual and others believe that ritual is associated with black magic, and other such practices. Most do not realize that they ritual all the time in the form of going to church every Sunday, celebrating birthdays, bat mitzvahs, graduations, weddings, wakes and funerals, baby and bridal showers, retirement parties and many more. A relative told me that she does not believe in rituals, but when I explained what ritual was, she informed me that she lights a candle every morning upon waking, say a prayer and leaves the candle burning until she leave. For her, the candle represents the spirit of God filling here home and her day with his holy spirit (great ritual by the way).

Our intention is to familiarize you with the process and benefits of ritual and how incorporating rituals in your life will greatly strengthen your *SoulConnection*.

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Chapter 1

What Is Ritual?

My friend CJ rises each morning, lights the candle on her table, says a short prayer and prepares for work. Before she leaves, she return to the candle, ask for God to bless her day and everyone she encounters, blows out the candle and out she goes.

Another friend rises in the morning, makes a cup of tea, lights a candle, writes out her intentions for the day, expresses her deepest gratitude for all that she has and prepares for work.

My morning ritual is similar; it includes a 20-30 minute meditation and walking my dog around our neighborhood twice each morning before leaving for work. However, there are times when my 30 minute meditation becomes 10 minutes or I walk my dog around the neighborhood once instead of twice. But I make sure I take time because it's a part of me and if I miss a day of ritual, my day is thrown off.

The word Ritual means “to unite together”. Rituals are a way to connect with something higher, whether it is your higher self or higher powers. They can be simple or complex, and every religion uses them in some form or another. Yet mentioning the word ‘ritual’ too many people causes them to instantly become wary, nervous or suspicious in some way. Many people feel that ritual equates with complex ceremonies, the wearing of robes, and the chanting of difficult verses that they must learn by heart, so the whole idea feels off-putting or intimidating or even boring. However, the daily practice of personal rituals is a very individualistic thing, and can be as simple a drinking a cup of tea upon rising each morning or a simple 10 minute meditation before bed. Rituals can be as plain, creative, peaceful, or stimulating, as you feel is necessary or beneficial for their intended purpose.

Whatever your faith, background or circumstances, you’ll be able to practice a personal daily ritual, and in doing so, and by incorporating it into your positive routine of regular spiritual practice, you’ll begin to feel the benefits to yourself and your life after less than a week. For me, my morning and evening rituals provide incredible balance. The main purpose of daily ritual as one of the methods of assisting your spiritual growth is to use it to develop your connection with the Divine. At this stage you may not feel connected with the Divine realm at all, you may still be seeking, you may not have discovered who your immaterial spiritual Master is, and you may be

full of questions and confusion about the nature of the Supreme Being. If any of this is the case, then your daily ritual will help you come closer to the truth you seek, and help you to feel more centered and balanced. Perhaps you already follow a Master, or you feel love for a particular Deity, or feel very close to the Supreme Being, the Source, or the Light. If this is the case, then your daily ritual will help you to connect in a deeper and more fulfilling way, and help to develop your Divine relationship.

Daily rituals can also be used for many purposes, such a calming or invigorating yourself at the start, or end of the day. They can be used to raise your inner power, or to assist with healing, or to help you feel more positive about yourself. The list of uses is very long! The most important thing to be aware of is that the ritual is YOURS, and it's between you and the Divine, so you need to develop something that possesses individual meaning for yourself, and that serves the purpose you want it to, always bearing in mind the sacred and special nature of the procedure.

First of all, you'll need to create a private sacred space that will serve as your focal point. This will include your personal altar and it needn't be extravagant. If you have little space, you could use a small shelf or small table, or a mantelpiece, or even a portable surface such as a pretty cloth that you can fold and store away after use.

On your altar surface (which you won't use for any other purpose) you'll need to place things that are evocative for you, and will help to focus your mind, energy, and spirit, upon the process, mood, intention and aim of the ritual. Maybe you feel centered and focused by using candles and incense. Maybe you'd like to place an icon, or statuette, or symbol of your faith, Master, or Deity, onto the altar.

Next you need to think about sound. Does music help you to connect with your spirituality? What kind? Perhaps you enjoy nature sounds, or the chime of prayer bells, or hymns, or complete silence? It's important for you to think about all these things, and to experiment with them. Perhaps you'd feel more connected if you sat down in stillness, or jumped around, or danced, or sang, or chanted? Some days you may feel the need to use one method, then the next day another method. There are no hard and fast rules, as long as you've created a safe space.

Finally you need to think about what you aim to achieve. Apart from connecting with the Divine, what further purpose do you wish your ritual to serve? Take another look at the ideas given earlier in this text.

Here's an example of a friend's morning ritual that holds individual meaning for her, and helps her to gain inner strength for the challenges of each new day. The Master she follows is Jesus, so she has a picture of him on her altar, with candles, flowers, a Cross, and a glass holding fresh water. After she's got dressed and ready for work, she stands in front of her altar in silent contemplation says a prayer that she wrote herself, in which she asks Jesus to be with her through the day to give her strength and protection. Then she drinks the water in the glass to end the ritual, which for her is an act of inner purification, and then finishes by pinching out the candles.

Another example comes from a friend who feels a great connection with the moon goddesses, in particular Diana, so she practices her rituals at night, and uses them to either raise her inner power, to invigorate herself, or to relax after a stressful day. Her altar is colored in silver and blue, with candles, incense, water, symbols of the moon, and metal bells. Most of the time she uses music and dance in her rituals to release the stresses of the day.

When you combine the practice of daily ritual, with the practice of daily meditation and contemplation techniques, the rapidity of the positive transformation you will experience within yourself and your life is often completely stunning. There is often also a euphoric high of wellbeing, but this will settle down to a feeling of blissful contentment after a few weeks, and you'll begin to be carried and motivated to follow your Path in greater depth and with greater commitment

Keep in mind, "Oneness," isn't an overnight 'quick fix' program. The actual practice is up to you, and it is through your own personal spiritual experience and development that you will grow, and find your own answers, and feel connected, and fulfilled, and happy. However, your new awareness will cause you to see yourself and your life with a sharp clarity that many people find too uncomfortable or disturbing, and this also can make you turn back and return to your old ways, rather than allowing the transformation from caterpillar to butterfly to occur.

Your choice of faith Path is a very personal and individual thing. Choose the Path you love and you'll love the Path you choose. Your rituals, prayers, worship, and other spiritual practices will then be a great pleasure and a joy to you. You will gain a great deal from them in many ways, so that spirituality will become the hub of your life and your strength, rather than it being an afterthought on the periphery of your weekly schedule. Allow your ritual practice to become a framework, like a handcrafted basket, in which you can safely explore and develop your spirituality, and enjoy it!