

[Celebrate Your Life: Infuse it with Joy and Spirit](#)

Celebrating the many transitions in your life, from difficult to ecstatic, weaves a thread of spirit into everything you do. It also encourages you to be in the present moment with your full, conscious attention. The act of celebrating keeps you attuned to the gifts of all aspects of life, from birth, to death, to rebirth. Your celebrations can mark not only the expected holidays, but also the mundane, the unexpected, and the challenging.

Creating personal celebrations helps you integrate change because it moves your brain from thinking about the experience to symbolically communicating with your full being and taking physical action. This stance allows your body to embrace the shift and bypasses the habitual, cyclical nature of your thoughts.

Bringing your community (work, spiritual, or family) together to celebrate is a beautiful way to mark the passing of time and to gather energy. Your ancestors probably gathered with their tribes, clans, or families at important times to share information and goods, to reconnect their hearts, and to reestablish ties. Imagine what it would be like to gather once a year to celebrate your friends and family and honor their internal and external changes: births, deaths, new insights, and growth.

Creative Intent

Creativity and intent are the two aspects of a transformational celebration. Combining your creativity with your intent is a catalyst for alchemy. Creativity invites you to dream big, to use celebration as an artful expression of your heart. Intent gives you focus on what you want to accomplish. These two guiding forces need to be balanced in your celebrations and your life.

To apply creative intent to a celebration, start by dreaming all the places you could celebrate change in your life. Look back at major life shifts and imagine how it would be if you had consciously marked them with a ceremony. Dream big, with no limitations. The question to ask is "How?" How would you celebrate cleaning your house? How would you ceremonialize ending a relationship? How could you honor menopause? Creativity comes when we look at change and explore its gifts and possibilities.

Intent then brings focus and direction to our dreaming. The questions of intent are "Why?" and "What?" Why would you celebrate cleaning your house? What is your purpose? Why honor the end of a relationship? What do you want to get out of the ceremony? Why would you mark the start of menopause? What would you like from doing it consciously? The intent gives the celebration purpose, guiding its direction and outcome.

There is no right or wrong way to celebrate. Ceremony is three-dimensional, physical art, wide open to possibility. As with all art, there are some guidelines and tools that provide a structure to work with and enhance the impact of the creation. Remember that these guidelines can be gleefully abandoned as spirit moves you.

Steps to Create a Celebration or Ritual

After you explore your creativity through sacred brainstorming and get clear on your intent, there are five steps to create a spectacular celebration: contain, release, invite, deepen, and open. These work whether the ritual is for you alone or for any size group.

1. Contain

The first step to ritual is to move out of your daily world into a world of magic and possibility. Create a sense of the sacred by lighting incense or candles, picking smells or colors that support your intent, and/or building an altar. Use pictures, statues, natural objects, or crafts to create a place for meditation, reflection, or inspiration. Your altar can be for used as a general anchor or for a specific intent.

For a general altar you may use your favorite deity or guide, an object for each element in the four corners, candles, crystals, found and natural objects, or a bowl of water with flowers. If you want to build an altar for a specific purpose, ask yourself, "What will reflect the specific thing I am working on back to me?" For an abundance altar, you may use money from around the world, overflowing fruit baskets, and pictures of what you want to manifest. For an altar to release a relationship you could use pictures, writings, and a candle with the intent to release the person. For an altar to dedicate yourself to your spiritual path, try a picture of an open road, a beautiful inspirational nature scene, or your favorite superhero (to remind you of your power to move past obstacles).

Once you have set up sacred space, you can call in any guides, deities, power animals, ancestors, or teachers. Many traditions call in the four elements (air, fire, water, earth), which are the foundation of life. The elements also represent a part of our being, and hold a direction (east, south,

west, north). By calling in guides and helpers and/or the four elements, you amplify the energy of your actions.

2. Release

To create space for new things in your life, you must first release the old. It is vital that you let go of what no longer serves you, and doing so with gratitude and love encourages the release to happen gracefully. Doing release work makes the obstacle conscious, which then gives you the ability to move it out.

Questions to ask:

- What can you release to bring more space into your life?
- What emotion, pattern, agreement, or fear is keeping you stuck?
- What are you willing to let go of?

Creative ideas:

- Write down the fear or emotion you want to release and burn the paper (fire), bury it (earth), tie it in a tree (air), or wash the ink off (water).
- Dance, tone, chant, or speak out the pattern, emotion, or fear.

3. Invite

Now that there is space, what do you want to invite into your being? Inviting in the new allows the universe to align with your desires and support you fully.

Questions to ask:

- What do you want more of in your life?
- How can you open to bring this in?
- What emotion, new agreement, or perspective do you want to experience?

Creative ideas:

- Write down the feeling state you want to bring in and burn the paper to bring more energy (fire), bury it to ask for grounding (earth), or tie it in a tree to fly (air).
- Dance, tone, chant, or speak the pattern, emotion, or state you want to create. - Hold the emotion or pattern consciously and anchor it in your body.
- Visualize or meditate to ask for guidance and open to the new.

4. Deepen

Leave space for stillness and integration to absorb the effect of your release and calling in. Meditate, write, create artwork, eye gaze with a partner, or sit silently.

5. Open

Just as you consciously created a container for your celebration, you also want to consciously open your container and bring what you learned back into the world. Make sure you open your circle by thanking and letting go of anything you called in at the beginning of your ceremony. State your intent again, and then feast or do something nourishing for yourself. Many ceremonies and celebrations end with good food and communing.

Example:

Now that you have the guidelines, let's see how it works with a specific example. For a celebration to clean your house, your creative brainstorm may bring you the following ideas: play loud music and dance through the house, call your friends and pick a day to clean your home at the same time and then go out to lunch to celebrate, spend fifteen minutes every day loving your home and belongings by putting things in their proper place.

When you look at your intent, it may be anything from: "Make sure I can find my keys and important items each day," to "Use my housecleaning as a symbol of clearing away my fears and mental clutter."

Suppose you decide to pick a time each month to clean, and you invite your best friend to join you, with the intent to use the cleaning to clear your own mental clutter. Here is how you could use the five steps of ritual:

1. Contain

Light a candle in each room to remind you of your intent for clarity. Call in the energies of your grandmother, who was a fabulous housekeeper, and your spiritual teacher. (You may have pictures of them both in a specific place in your house during the cleaning.)

2. Release

Go through your house dusting and cleaning all the rooms, stating an affirmation to yourself, i.e., "As I clear this dust and clutter I clear my mind."

3. Invite

Go through your house again with a scented spray, bells, or flowers. Say out loud in each room, "I invite harmony and joy into this space."

4. Deepen

Sit in your favorite room and send blessings to your space. Let the silence quiet you.

5. Open

Blow out all the candles, and thank your grandmother and teacher for their support. Call your friend and make your date for lunch.

Celebrations bring joy and play into all the nooks and crannies of your life journey. Instead of waiting for the "big moment" in the future, celebrate each day, from the simple tasks to the challenges, from the mundane to the sacred.

About the Author

Heather Ash Amara weaves powerful practices of shamanic traditions to help people reach their potential. She apprenticed and taught extensively with Miguel Ruiz, author of *The Four Agreements*. She wrote *Four Elements of Change* and *Toltec Tarot*. She co-authored *Spiritual Integrity* and runs [Spiritual Integrity Coaching](#) with Raven Smith. Get more [great ideas](#) from Heather Ash.

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