

Turn Your Experiences Into Wisdom: Create An End Of Year Ritual

Why Create An End Of Year Ritual?

Rituals, or any consciously created act, have been used for thousands of years to mark special occasions. Around the world, people toast with champagne to mark the end of the old year and ring in the new.

Consciously marking the end of something, and the beginning of something new, helps you let go of whatever you don't need when moving forward and to integrate what you've learned and felt — turning your life experience into the wisdom that will guide you in the future.

Use these guidelines as a starting point for creating an end of year ritual. Improvise and follow your own intuition as you like.

Set aside at least 30 minutes, or more if you can, preferably an hour.

Step 1 Gather these supplies

- Your journal, if you have one, or other writing paper and your favorite pen
- Small piece of paper, cardboard, or small piece of wood, such as a popsicle stick
- Small white taper candle
- Matches and a safe way to burn something, such as in a fireplace or fire pit (Be Safe!) Alternatively, have a bowl of water handy.
- Votive or other large, long-burning candle

Step 2 Create The Space

- Choose to perform your ritual somewhere where you can have some privacy, if possible. Make the space clean and cleared of clutter. Make this time sacred by quieting all distractions, such as the phone, kids, and TV.
- Put on some soft music, or have silence if you prefer.
- Dress comfortably, so you can relax into this special time. Perhaps do some stretching, yoga, or meditation to quiet your mind and relax your body.

Step 3 Set An Intention

- Write down a specific intention for the ritual in your journal, such as: “*I consciously choose to learn from and release the past year. I integrate and embody my new wisdom as I move forward in my life.*”
- Begin the ritual by lighting the votive or large candle and reading your intention aloud.
- You may choose to invoke a loving presence, God (however you define God), The Universe, or Nature to be present with you as you perform this ritual. Add a prayer, too, if that feels right.

Step 4 Spend Time Reflecting

Use the questions below as a starting point to prompt your reflections on the past year. This is not a time to dwell in regret or get mired in grief, but rather to gently reflect and glean the valuable life lessons from the past and move forward with clear intentions for the future. Write your answers in your journal, or on your writing paper.

- What are the major themes of the past year? In retrospect, what has the year been about, whether intentionally or not?
- What were the major lessons (hardships, challenges, surprises, and blessings) given to you this year? What did you learn about yourself, and your needs, values, and desires?
- What do you want to leave behind as the year ends? This might be a habit, reactivity, behavior, fear, or block that keeps you from being happy, creative, and content.
- What do you want to consciously draw to yourself in the new year? What qualities in yourself do you want to develop? What area of your life do you want to enliven? (relationships, health, finances, etc)

Step 5 Declare, Enact, Release, Embrace

Review your answers to the questions above and choose a word, phrase, or sentence that sums up what you’d like to let go of from the previous year. It might be something like, “*fear of intimacy*” or “*holding back my creativity.*” or “*scarcity mentality.*” Trust your own words.

Write the word, phrase, or sentence on the small piece of paper or cardboard, or the wooden stick.

Next, Choose one or two words that affirm what you want to embrace in the new year. It might be “*self compassion*” or “*boundaries*” or “*work-life balance*”. Again, trust your words are the right ones.

Using a pencil or ballpoint pen, carve the word or phrase into the side of the taper candle.

Step 6 Perform The Ritual

A ritual is a symbolic enactment of an intention. In this ritual, you’ll be symbolically releasing the past and affirming the future you want to create.

Step 1

Safely create your fire, in a fireplace or fire pit. Taking your time, declare your specific intentions for letting go of the past as you toss the piece of paper or wood with your word or phrase on it into the fire. Speak out loud, if possible, so that you can hear and believe your own words. Feel them resonate in your body. Say as much as you need to. (Alternately, toss the paper into the bowl of water and let it dissolve.)

Step 2

Take the small white taper candle with your affirmation carved in the side and light it from the fire you just burned the paper or wood in. (Alternately, use the central candle.) As you do this, declare your affirmation for the new year. Take a few minutes to sit quietly with the candle. If possible, set up this taper candle to burn down, or relight it whenever you meditate or sit quietly, to remind you of what you want to manifest in the new year.

Step 7 Clean Up

It’s important to consciously clean up when you finish your ritual. Blow out the large candle safely, and clear the area of all ritual materials.

Blessings On Your New Year From Your Spirited Life!



Annie

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