



Rituals Matter

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Fall is here and especially for those of us who live in southern places like Florida, this means that travelers start returning and activities start picking up. This autumn, before falling into old patterns of busyness, consider incorporating some simple rituals into your daily to-dos to create spaciousness around all that is starting to vie for your attention.

Rituals are gracious routines that are meant to support and sustain us, allowing the mundane to become meaningful. They can become little islands of peacefulness throughout your day, like stepping-stones across a swirling stream.

The first and best ritual is the one you use when you first awaken. Consider purchasing a lovely alarm clock that chimes quietly rather than one that makes more startling noises. Before jumping out of bed, take a few moments to stretch your arms wide and welcome the gift of this new day. Perhaps keep a book of quotes or poems next to your bed and read one to inspire you as you start your day. Got another minute? Write an intention for the day in your journal. Or, keep a small bottle of

a favorite essential oil next to you and put a drop on your wrists, then rub them together and inhale deeply.

Think of a ritual as a *pause-able* moment—a time when you are able to reflect and replenish. Speaking of replenishing, remember that each mealtime is an opportunity for ritual, from setting a place at the table to saying grace before eating to attentively sipping coffee or tea, savoring both the aroma and the taste. Add some fresh flowers to gaze at and some lovely background music and you have incorporated all the sensual elements of sight, smell, taste, sound and touch. Each one can transport us beyond the ordinary.

There are many grand rituals like weddings and other celebrations that enrich our lives. But often rituals are nothing more than ordinary acts imbued with special meaning. A perfect example would be blowing out a candle. This simple gesture becomes a ritual when we take a deep breath, make a wish, put our hand to our heart and then gently blow out the flame, visualizing our wish spiraling upward along with the resulting trail of smoke.

Here is a suggestion for when things get a bit hectic: Keep a scented candle and matches in your desk or kitchen drawer and pull them out when things seem a bit chaotic. Light the candle and, as you watch the flame, consider what you want to happen, what the larger purpose is behind all the busyness. Then, hand on heart, set an intention and blow the candle out. To add the element of sound, you might even speak your intention aloud. Notice how you feel after doing so and then, from that perspective, choose the most effective thing you need to do next.

Don't forget at bedtime to gift yourself with a nurturing gesture that can facilitate your entry into your time of rest and renewal. Before tucking yourself in, rub your feet with scented cream and put on some cozy socks. A cup of herbal tea, a few words of gratitude written in your journal or a spoken prayer are always soothing. Finally, as you turn out the light, take a moment to seed your dreams with a specific hope or memory. Another possibility is to think about an issue for which you would like some clarity. Don't dwell on it, just ask and let it go. You may find yourself pleasantly surprised by the answer that is waiting for you in those first quiet moments of the morning. Just remember to take the time to listen for them. **V**

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Check out Minx's blog on vivemagazine.com for more coaching tips and to interact with other Vive readers.