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Rituals *and* Routines

month one

BOOK TWO

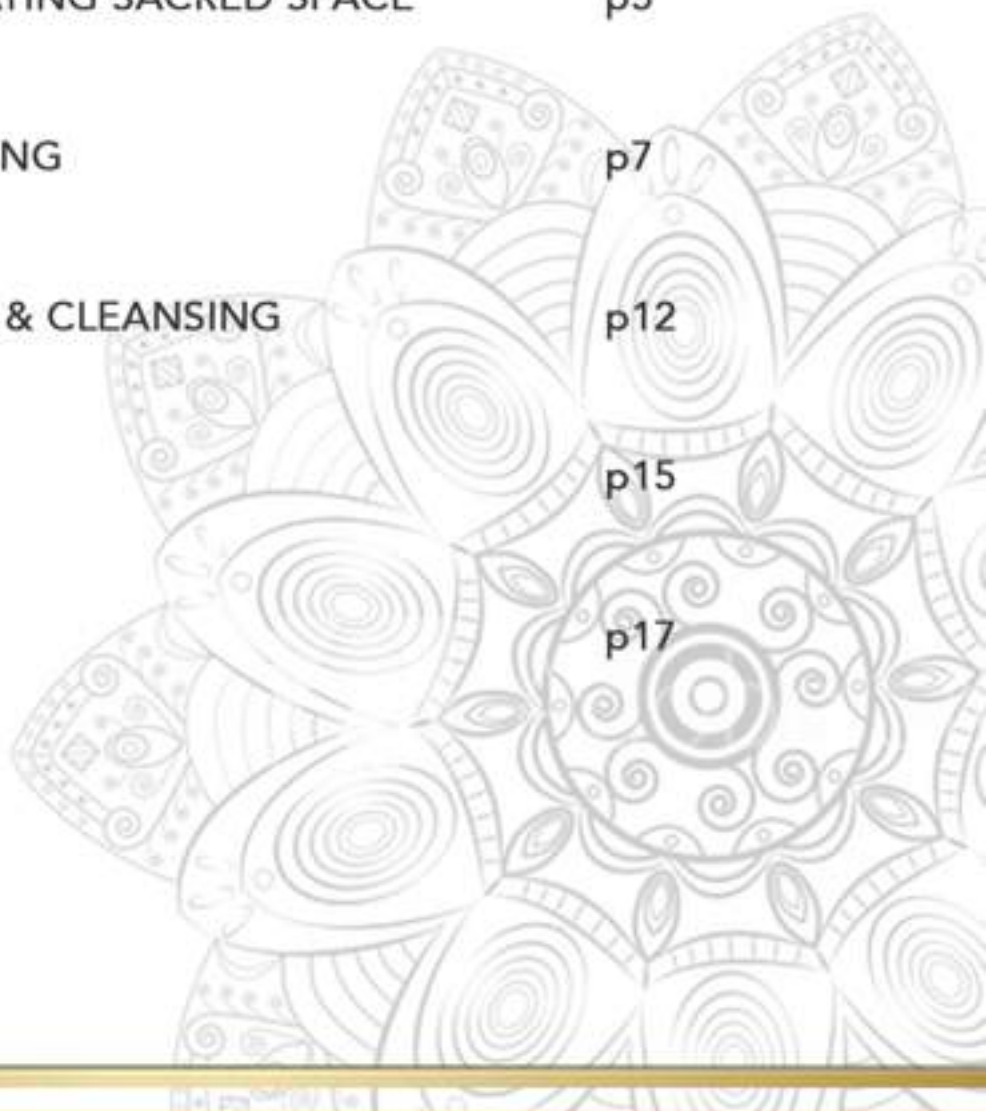
MIND.BODY.ALCHEMY
6 MONTH COURSE



Spirited Practice
MIND.BODY.ALCHEMY

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my goal for you



My goal for you is to make one or more small changes in your rituals, routines and practices each month. I'd like to support you as you do this. I'd like you to share your successes and challenges with the group so that we can help you along the way. The more you connect to the group, the more support you can receive.

Some of us struggle with receiving. If this is you, ask yourself what it would be like to receive. Are you afraid of success? Are you afraid of criticism? Maybe we'll think you're lazy...whatever it is, LET IT GO!

Don't worry about trying to get rid of bad habits first. My teacher, TKV Desik-achar, has always said that we need to replace the bad habit with a good one before we can truly let it go. So...

Dive in – into the deep end. We are here for you—I promise. We cannot help you though if you don't put yourself out there. Just saying...

Native People, religious people and people from all walks of life on our planet have been doing ritual. They may say there is a specific way to do things, and I agree sometimes. Your rituals are your own AND there is NO way to do them wrong.





intentions: the difference between rituals & routines



Intention is everything, as I've been known to say for years.

The purpose of ritual is transformation. The purpose of routine is to get stuff done.

"The rituals that once conveyed an inner reality are now merely form with respect to ritual, it must be kept alive." Joseph Campbell, *The Power of Myth*, p. 84-85

A ritual is a sequence of activities involving gestures, works, and objects, performed in a sequestered place and according to a set sequence. Some times it's connected to religion and some times it is not.

A ritual is whatever we make of it—again our INTENTION. The items, symbols, and words that we use hold the importance that we give to them. I'm not taking anything away from historically known symbology. Many times people ask, "Is this good or bad?" I answer, "Yes," depending on what beliefs you hold. A ritual is a way to turn the normal and mundane into something sacred and special.

The other aspect of ritual is our ATTENTION. Our ability to be present the entire time—from preparation to participation through cleanup. We are aware, involved and every present.

A routine is a sequence of actions regularly followed. It can be completed mindlessly and habitually like brushing your teeth or driving our usual route to the store or a job. These can be routine or ritual depending on how we do them.



We all experience changes in life. We can celebrate them by creating meaningful ritual or we can let those experiences pass without much attention or intention.

Remember, there is no wrong way to do your own ritual.

What is your intention?

A large, empty grey rectangular box intended for the user to write their intention.

getting started: creating sacred space



Any space can be sacred space. Intention is everything.

We can create sacred space in a variety of ways. It is part of my goal to have you create sacred space in your own special way. I like to designate a specific area in my home, hotel room or studio. Some people choose places in nature, which I love. We need a place though that we can attend daily. We can have sacred spaces in nature as well as sacred spaces amongst others and in our dwellings.



I have an ALTAR of some sort, which is made up of items we choose that are meaningful to us. I like to include something that represents each element: air, fire, water, earth and space. I also have a picture of my teacher, a statue of a goddess I am drawn to, my card and words for the years as well as my written intentions. This is not necessary; it is my choice. These items are significant and important to me. When I travel, I have a smaller version, which may be one item that represents my altar.



When I do my morning ritual, I go to my altar, light a candle as a way to invoke Spirit and I sit. There is fire; there is light. I also say a prayer and open with a chant. It might be an OM or something specific I am working on. There is sound; there is silence. I sit quietly after that and let Spirit steep within. I set my intention for my sitting time. And WAIT.

When wanting to gather energy or create space for a group, I might call in the directions. This program is not the vessel for those teachings, yet if it is part of your knowledge base, using the directions would be appropriate here.

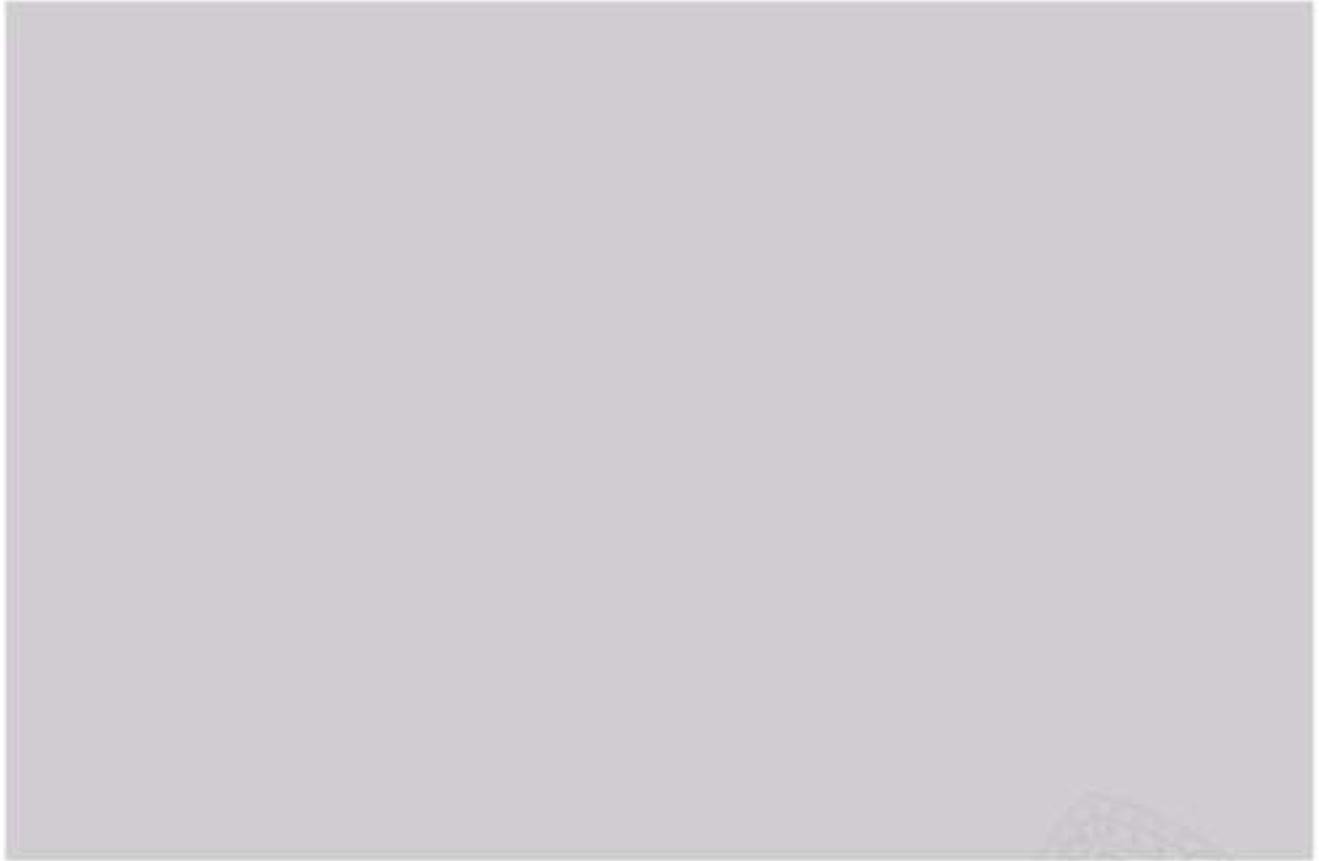
I invite you to try a variety of things, one at a time, to see which feels best for you. I have altered my rituals over time, where I am physically at and what is happening in my life.

This can be a time-consuming process or one where you make choices by your gut—pick a place, make an altar, and begin. I have an altar in my bedroom, a special meditation cushion for my sitting practice, an outdoor location for my women's moon group and numerous spaces in nature that all provide sacred space for my various needs and desires.

Some ideas: you can use items, song, movement, the elements, or simply light a candle.



What's on your altar? Where is your sacred space? Write about, share a photo or draw a picture.



preparation: grounding



Grounding is connecting to Earth and Earth energy. We need to be grounded on the physical plane in order to do our work. While I love taking flight, there's still work to be done on our planet—LOTS!

Are you grounded? Take the grounded test.



GROUNDED TEST

Do you feel distracted and ruled by your emotions?

Do you get distracted easily in your mind and in your activities?

Do you have a hard time paying attention when other people are talking and forget what they are saying?

Do people accuse you of being spacey?

Are you prone to inappropriate anger, anxiety or stress reactions?

Do you often stumble, trip or get injured accidentally?

Do you live more in the past and future than the present?

Do you feel uncomfortable in your body?

Do you have a hard time following directions especially if they are multi-step?

Do you feel like you are out of your body, floating and spacey?

Do you have difficulty differentiating dreams from reality?

The more you answer yes to these questions, the more you need to add grounding practices into your life and into your rituals. I don't remain in these states for a long time. It's a fluid thing—moving from one state to another. Where do you most often reside?



GO TO: A GROUNDING MEDITATION.

You can use rocks, colors, scents, sound, movement, symbols, pictures, clothing, food, plants and specific rituals to ground yourself. Think about what helps you to feel connected to the planet and to people. What helps you to be present?



Being barefoot, walking through sand, dirt, and grass help me to feel grounded. I was speaking to a large group one day dressed in a dress and wearing heels. I was disconnected and nervous. The next day while speaking to the same group, I wore comfortable clothing and no shoes because I was leading a movement practice. I was so much more in my body and able to guide the group.

I do well wearing blacks, reds, oranges and deeper shades of colors—purple instead of lavender. Think of the colors of the rainbow—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet. They are the colors that correspond to the chakras (energy centers in the body). The lower chakras are our connection to Earth. Red, orange, black, brown, yellow and green are going to be more grounding than the other colors for most of us.

Using my deep voice when I speak or chant and nature scents bergamot, lavender and cinnamon are all very grounding for me. I say for me because each one of us is different. When I sing in a higher pitch, it takes me more out of my body and into the ethereal.

It's important to get to know yourself—your likes, your needs, and what keeps you grounded.

For stones, I prefer hematite, onyx, and black tourmaline for grounding. As we continue in the course, you will have an opportunity to learn more. I encourage you to experiment on your own and notice how different stones feel when you wear them or see them.

If you're feeling unsure, we can look at ways to connect and listen to your intuition. You can also consider using some divination tool like a pendulum, muscle testing or pulling cards. We will get to these things in this course. And yes, you can always ask for help from the group and from me. That's why we're doing this together.





GROUNDING PRACTICES

DATE _____

daily

weekly

monthly





WHAT WORKS FOR YOU?

Scent _____

Movement _____

Color _____

Ritual _____

Stone _____

Symbol _____

Plant _____

Sound _____

Element _____

Food _____

Mantra _____

Nature _____

next steps: smudging & cleansing



Cleansing means many things in our world. We can cleanse our homes, our bodies, our thoughts, our energy and the list continues. We can use ritual and routine to do any of these things.

Specifically though I am talking about smudging as a way to cleanse our environments and our energy fields. Traditionally, burning white sage and fanning the smoke around the body has been used. Sage and smoke do not suit everyone. You can use rose water or a special water you create through your ceremony using actual plants, essential oils or flower essences. Remember, we set the intention and create our implements, supplies and rituals.

MY FAVORITE LAVENDER WATER

Harvest Lavender towards the end of the season. I prefer to use the flowers, stems and leaves. Some choose to use only the flower. Place them in fresh water, cover and steep over low heat for at least an hour. Strain and pour into a spray bottle. Make and use as needed. As long as nothing gets into the bottle or water, it will keep indefinitely.



You can create a spray with water and essential oils or buy something that attracts you.

You can also cleanse your stones, things that people gift you and things you gift to others. It depends on if you want to keep you energy connected to it. The same way we might wash dishes or clothing after use, when we want to cleanse the air, energy, or ceremonial implements, we can spray, smudge, wash or set them in the sun or moonlight.

Again, Intention is everything. That something gets cleansed is an intention and it's more than that as well. Maybe someone was ill in our space, research tells us that smudging an area with sage can clear bacteria from the air as well. It not just woo woo energy. Try it and see how you and your space feel.

Items used for smudging and cleansing:

Burning Sage, Cedar, Palo Santo (holy wood), Copal, Incense, Sweet Grass, and other plants and herbs.

Traditional Essential Oils or essences:

Rose, Lavender, Citrus, Peppermint, and Oregano although you can use any that call to you.



To cleanse rooms, we go to each corner starting in the East and moving South to West and ending in the North. We remember the sky and earth and all the space in between. I like to cleanse a room after I teach a class or do energy work on someone as well as after guests, illness or when I need an energy shift. You can use a spray or burn a substance and spread it.



Traditionally white sage was burned in an abalone shell. Put small stones or sand in the bottom to avoid the shell getting too hot to hold. Light the sage and gently blow it out. Use a feather or hand to fan the sage to keep it lit and spread the smoke around. After the sage is lit, run your hands through it first and then scoop the smoke from the ground up and over your head. Don't forget to go under your arms and feet and back body. It's much easier to smudge someone else.

As with everything we are talking about, it can be a rote routine or a sacred ritual.

WATCH SMUDGING VIDEO

My Experience with Smudging:





sample rituals

Notice the simplicity and the complexity. Ritual does not have to be elaborate to be effective.



Creating Sacred Space

Light a candle



Letting Go Of Old Habits Ritual

Tools:

White Candle

Clear Quartz Crystal

Matches

A bowl of spring water

Paper and Pen

Create sacred space:

Ask God, Spirit, your Angels to come forth and to surround you in white light

The Ritual:

Light the candle

Place the quartz in the spring water

Make a list of the habits you want to let go of

Say:

"By the power of earth, fire, water and air,
Out with the old and in with the new.
Blessing, oh, Spirit, for all that I do.
Let go of the past and all that is bad,
Empower me with grace and all that is glad."

Rip, soak or burn list.

Blow out candle.

Rinse hands with water and take out quartz. Carry it as a symbol of what you want to call into your life.



Eating Ritual

Intention: to eat mindfully

Sit quietly at your dinner table and look at your prepared meal. Smell it. Take it all in. Close your eyes and give thanks to all, plant, animal and human, that went into growing, gathering, raising, transporting, purchasing and preparing the meal. Open your eyes and slowly eat enjoying each and every bit.



Trataka Meditation

Intention: to become filled with light

Tools:

Candle

Match

Comfortable Seat

Create Sacred Space:

Light the candle. Look at the flame and close your eyes trying to hold the picture of the flame in your mind's eye. You may keep your eyes open the entire time or open and close them throughout. Do this for 5 minutes at first. If you are prone to migraines, do not stare directly at the flame.

As you go through this process, think how you are becoming filled or one with the light and what that means to you.

When you are complete, blow out the candle and journal about ideas that came into your mind or what you say and how you felt.



your rituals

Describe your rituals below—the space, the tools, the sequence of the ritual including what you will say and do.



Morning

Evening

Cleansing & Smudging

Manifesting

Letting Go

Other

Keep going. It takes time to develop and continue to practice ritual.