

The Ritual of Magic for Transformation

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Intention: To offer a ritual experience to support personal and collective transformation.

Themes: Ritual. Alchemy. Magic. Transformation

Philosophy: As facilitators, we are all collectively committed to the path of transformations. How, why and in which way we transform is unique to each of us. What is common to us all is the alchemic change / shift necessary for this transformation to happen.

History: Alchemy is a philosophical and protoscientific tradition. Its aim is to purify, mature, and perfect certain objects, in this case, ourselves. We explored the integral framework to craft a brief experience that will serve this desired outcome.

Alchemy is an ancient practice shrouded in mystery, and secrecy. Some call it magic. Its practitioners mainly sought to turn lead into gold, a quest that has captured the imaginations of people for thousands of years. However, the goals of alchemy went far beyond simply creating some golden nuggets. In its origins and in its essence, alchemy is spiritual. The search for the alchemical gold is the search for wisdom, light, perfection, and enlightenment - where spirit and matter are one whole unity.

We, IF facilitators, the seekers, change makers, magicians, transformational beings are all alchemists. We are humans who study the science and art of transformation.

Our Experience: To offer our collective cohort a ritual that will support the path of transformation. Since it is almost impossible for us to know where each of us are on this path, we will guide the group on an inward journey through meditation and creative expression and an outward journey of ceremony and tradition.

Our focus is two fold:

- 1) an individual experience that serves each of us uniquely
- 2) a collective ritual practice honouring tradition / the sacred.

We will hold the container for the sake of coherence and safety and then offer the freedom for each member to differentiate and use what is important and unique for them in their transformation at this moment in time. We will guide the direction, encourage play, offer freedom to choose, and suggest / invite the risk of letting go whilst being seen fully in the process.

To transform we take in...and we let out. We breathe in and we breathe out. We create space for new perspectives and ways of being in the world. Our experience will open to that which might be holding us back; what could be standing in the way; what might be seen as shackles to our growth; what we believe when added to “the fire” will alchemically transform into that which will further serve our purpose.

The Ceremony

Step One: Elemental Lucky Dip.

(The alchemical journey begins)

Participants are introduced to the first step of the ritual. They are welcomed into the room and asked to remain in silence. There are four candles positioned in 4 different positions in the room - the candles are green, yellow, red, and blue. They represent the elements earth, air, fire, and water. There is also a central white candle, representing space. As each person enters, we ask them to close their eyes and take one square from the lucky dip bag and then proceed to the center of the room to sit around the central white candle. Opening words are offered by a facilitator to set the intention for the experience, and simple walk through the different steps of the 30 minute ritual, so that everyone knows what to expect - and is not left guessing or feeling that they have to hold their own process.

Step Two: Guided Meditation

Participants will be guided through an embodied meditation that will draw upon the breath, body and the four elements of earth, air, fire and water.

- Name the intention of the guided meditation
(personal ritual / releasing / letting go of that which no longer serves / creating space for more of what we want in our lives)
- Connect with the sacred, with the breath:
Breathe In - Welcoming in / Breathe out - Releasing
- Connect with the body (body scan)
- We bring awareness to the particular element they have chosen. We invite participants to trust their relationship with this element, noticing where it is alive in them in this moment.
- Perhaps the element you have chosen may help you surface what you want to release - or you may already know?

(Elemental ideas to draw upon for guided meditation)

Earth - our connection to the ground, abundance, fertility - constantly transforming; honouring nature's changes. Putting down strong roots from which our dreams grow into reality.

(Are you grounded in the earth or stuck in the mud?)

Water - our connection to subconscious, purification, psychic powers, healing, insight. The anointing of tears, the rinsing of energies off our hands
(What is bubbling up from deep within?)

Fire - our connection to creation, destruction, transformation, will, determination, the divine fire within.

(Do you need to put a fire under something or are you close to burn out?).

Air - our connection to breath, communication, the power of the mind, new beginnings. Air carries a message - what cobwebs needs to be cleared away to make space for the new?

(Are you grounded in reality or being blown around?)

- How does this elements show up in your life? Why has it chosen you, and you, it? You may experience excess or deficiency of that element - which may have to do with letting go or turning towards?
- What is most alive for you in this moment that is calling to release? What is speaking the loudest?

We sit with this question for a few minutes, then slowly move towards transitioning out of the meditation, while asking people to return to the body.

Step Three: Creative Expression

Facilitators will guide participants in employing their own preferred forms of reflection and creative expression for each person to draw, write, or otherwise express in regard to what they wish to release back to the universe.

Small pieces of paper will be given to each participant that they will imbue, in whatever way they find meaningful, with what it is they wish to release.

Facilitators will then request that participants move to the candle that represents the element that they selected as they entered the experience.

Step Three: WITNESS - Alchemic Transformation with FIRE

As guided by facilitators within each element, each person (in full view of each other within their element) will then be instructed to light his or her small paper on fire and watch it vanish. They may, if they feel called, share, express, verbally acknowledge to the group what they are releasing, or how they are feeling during the releasing of their chosen word/idea/thought/ belief etc.

Step Four: Welcoming in, holding space and closing

Facilitator will lead a closing circle. We note that by creating this releasing, simply by peeling away the layer of attachment, we can truly move though to the next stage of development. And by releasing this, we will also note that there may be feelings of grief, fear, confusion or bliss, joy, excitement etc.

Whatever the feelings are, baring witnesses and being seen is possibly the most powerful part of any healing or transformation process. Herein lies the magic.

We end by opening a space to welcome what wants to arise, what our divine wisdom suggests we bring into our individual world and collective life.

In silence we will sit, with this individual and collective experience, and be invited to select a card if that will help in sourcing our own divine wisdom for stepping back into the collective.

Integral Facilitation Skills Designed into our Facilitated Experience

In designing the experience, we included facilitator skills from all four quadrants. In the upper left quadrant we explored our own individual intentions in regard to what we were drawn to create as an experience. While we started with a serendipitous acronym, MAJKL (magical), created by our Pod's first initials, let go into not knowing where this focus might lead us, and trusted ourselves and each other to play with what bubbled up. We exhibited both fear and courage in surfacing what felt important to each of us at any moment, then let that go once expressed, in service of being aware of how our own shadows influenced our perceptions and thoughts. We were somewhat aware of our influence and biases, and sought to allow space for holding these while co-creating our experience. We also designed space for arising awareness in the last step of the experience, in which we sit with and let soak in our individual and collective experience.

In the upper right quadrants of behaviors and skills, we sought to embody presence, created both for ourselves and designed to evoke this in attendees. A brief segment of active listening and witnessing during the experience was intended to be a crucial element in maintaining the potential for transformation. We knew that providing focus direction and time keeping would be essential for such a short time frame.

In the lower left quadrant of understanding groups, the design aimed to maintain an environment of safety, openness, and rapport to be able to surface a larger intimacy with reality. In the process we aimed to surface an awareness of some of the constructs we hold and may want to reconstruct or release. By witnessing each other in this, we hoped to enable a space of surrender, by holding ourselves and each other in a self-transforming consciousness.

In the lower right quadrant, our design entailed several shifts in group energetics: being in a larger space in the beginning and end of the experience, and breaking up into smaller groups in the middle, for greater intimacy while also addressing time-keeping considerations. Vision and goal setting were built into the earlier steps within our facilitation experience, with a coherence exercise of meditation. The use of writing/drawing and of fire were also intended to cause shifts in the flow of

energetics in the middle and end of our designed experience.