

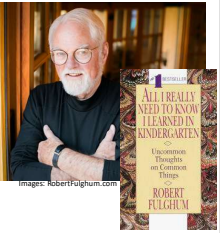
**Using Private Rituals
with Clients for
Personal Transformation
After Loss**

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“Talking with a nice lady on the phone. She has a case of the midwinter spiritual rot. And a terminal cold she's had since September 1.
'Well,' rasps she, 'you don't ever get depressed, do you?'
'Listen,' says [Fulghum], 'I get lows it takes extension ladders to get out of.'
'So what do you do?' asks she. 'I mean, what DO YOU DO?'
Nobody ever pinned me down quite like that before....” (1986, p. 110)

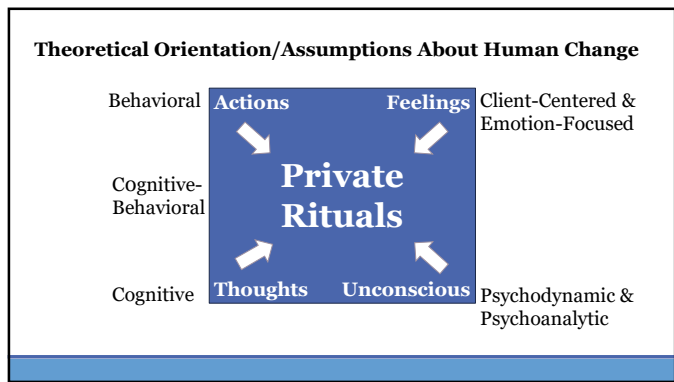


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What Do I Do Now?


How do we help our clients (and ourselves) create transformational change?

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Private Ritual?



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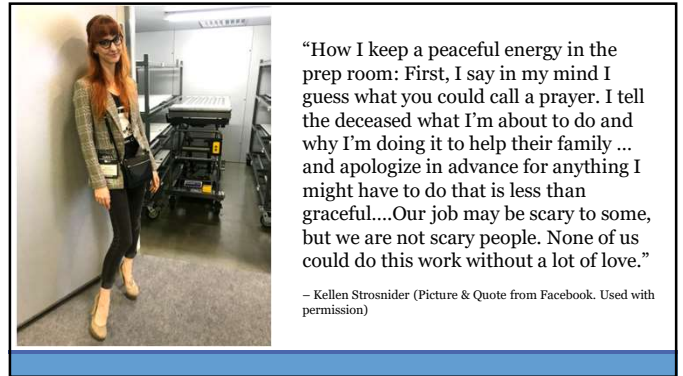


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Image from Instagram: healthyheadstones_inc

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“How I keep a peaceful energy in the prep room: First, I say in my mind I guess what you could call a prayer. I tell the deceased what I’m about to do and why I’m doing it to help their family ... and apologize in advance for anything I might have to do that is less than graceful....Our job may be scary to some, but we are not scary people. None of us could do this work without a lot of love.”

– Kellen Strosnider (Picture & Quote from Facebook. Used with permission)

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Private Rituals =
Quiet Moments
Full of Meaning

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What is a “Private Ritual”

- (def): *any meaningful, symbolic action done while alone or in a small group*
- Need only be meaningful to the individual
- Need not be formal or lengthy, but may be
- May be done once or recurring
- May or may not incorporate aspects of public, religious rituals

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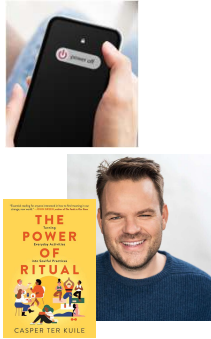
Habit vs. Ritual?

Habit = Mindless
(That’s not *inherently* a bad thing)

Ritual = Mindful

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“Since 2014, I have been observing a ‘tech sabbath’ – twenty-four hours of not using my laptop or phone from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown....
 As darkness comes, I stand in front of my window and watch the sky for a few moments. Then I light a candle, and while holding it, I sing a song I learned in childhood to enter the magical and mysterious sabbath time.” (2020, pp. 67-68)



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Quick Reflection

Using my definition, do you have any daily “habits” that are actually private rituals? **(Add to the Chat)**

Private Ritual:
any meaningful, symbolic action done while alone or in a small group

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How Can Private Rituals Help Us & Our Clients?

11 Universal Challenges
 &
 11 Universal Intentions

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Universal Challenges	Universal Intentions
1. I'm wounded	Begin Healing
2. I feel empty	Cultivate Renewal
3. I feel cut off	Find Reconciliation
4. I'm an imposter	Mark Beginnings
5. I feel stuck	Navigate Transitions
6. I'm grieving	Integrate Losses
7. I'm adrift	Seek Purpose
8. I feel alone	Bond With Your Tribe
9. I feel orphaned	Honor Legacies
10. I feel blocked	Express Creativity
11. I feel small	Transcend Oneself

Transformation: Private Rituals



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Transformation: Private Rituals

Feedback?

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How Do We Help Clients with Rituals?

- **Understand the benefits of rituals**
 - 5 Features of Rituals
 - Advantages of *private* rituals
- **Share examples of the most common types of rituals**
 - 5 Archetypal Rituals
- **Help brainstorm & plan their rituals**

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What's so great about rituals?



5 Features of Rituals
(Adapted from Rando, 1993)

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1) Give Us a Sense of Control

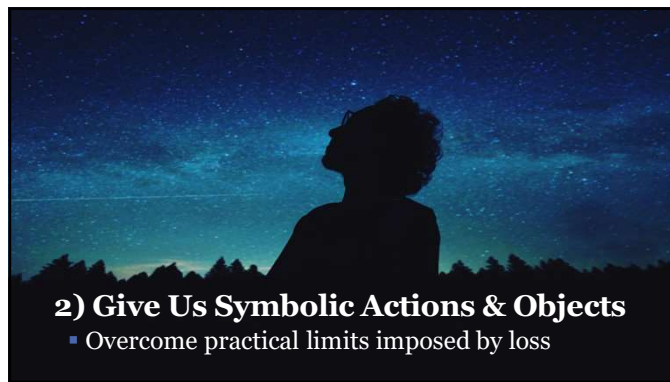
- “What do I do now?”
- Funerals & after



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2) Give Us Symbolic Actions & Objects

- Overcome practical limits imposed by loss



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3) Provide a Time- & Place-Limited Container

- Focus for a set period of time
- Birthday of Loved One



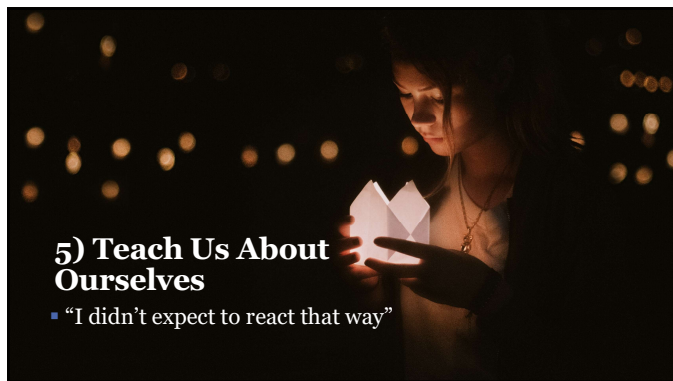
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4) Validate Our Actions

- Permission to say things that often go unsaid



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5) Teach Us About Ourselves

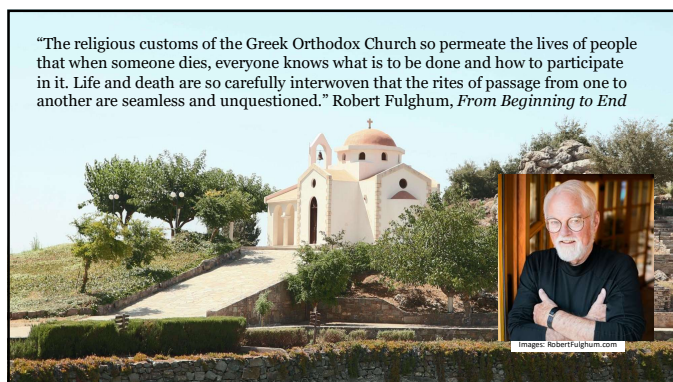
- "I didn't expect to react that way"

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<p>Advantages of private rituals</p> <p>(I'm Not Anti-Public Ritual)</p>	<p>Public rituals are challenging because we must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ coordinate a time ▪ reserve a place ▪ agree on the rituals, symbols, traditions ▪ find an officiant(s) ▪ plan the specifics ▪ make time to travel & attend ▪ cover any costs
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"The religious customs of the Greek Orthodox Church so permeate the lives of people that when someone dies, everyone knows what is to be done and how to participate in it. Life and death are so carefully interwoven that the rites of passage from one to another are seamless and unquestioned." Robert Fulghum, *From Beginning to End*



Images: robertfulghum.com

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<p>Advantages of Private Rituals for the Bereaved</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be done just for 1 person or small group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can focus on their unique needs ▪ Easier: timing, preparation, implementation ▪ Don't have to agree on meaning/symbols ▪ Gives them a sense of control ▪ No public pressure ▪ Can include "complicated" reactions & situations 	
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<p>How Do We Help Clients with Rituals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Understand the benefits of rituals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 Features of Rituals ▪ Advantages of private rituals ▪ Share examples of the most common types of rituals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5 Archetypal Rituals ▪ Help plan & process their rituals

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<p style="text-align: center;">5 Archetypal Rituals</p> <p style="text-align: center;">These rituals can take many different forms, can be seen in many cultural traditions, and can be used for all of the 11 Intentions.</p>

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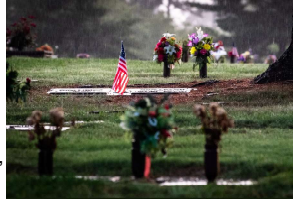
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Holy Places

“As I sat in my truck at Grandview Cemetery in Maryville, Tennessee, this morning listening to the rain and waiting for the sun to rise, I realize how bloody busy my life is. So today, I’m taking it slowly. I’m looking around me for the beauty that’s always been there. I’m stopping to smell the smells, see the sights, feel the love.”
(Facebook Post)



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Holy Places

“It’s never too late to visit your mom on Mother’s Day! 11:45 at night in a cemetery is so relaxing for some reason.”
(Facebook Post)



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Universal Intentions

Pilgrimage to...

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1) Begin Healing | - a retreat center for 5 days of silence |
| 2) Cultivate Renewal | - spring training w/your brother each year |
| 3) Find Reconciliation | - tell them you’re sorry in person |
| 4) Mark Beginnings | - visit prospective graduate programs |
| 5) Navigate Transitions | - take a <i>walkabout</i> or “gap year” |
| 6) Integrate Losses | - visit gravesite to share new realizations |
| 7) Seek Purpose | - tackle the Appalachian Trail post-divorce |
| 8) Bond With Your Tribe | - a concert or following a band |
| 9) Honor Legacies | - revisit your childhood home/town |
| 10) Express Creativity | - a writer’s retreat to start your book |
| 11) Transcend Oneself | - the <i>Camino de Santiago</i> or <i>Hajj</i> |

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Quick Reflection

Where have you gone for a pilgrimage?
(Type in the Chat)

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Archetypal Ritual #2: Linking Objects

Objects associated with memories & sense of connection

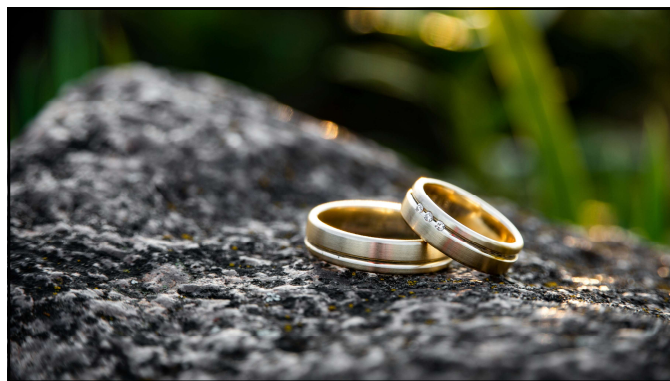


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Linking Objects

- Mementos, tokens, keepsakes, etc.
- **Caution:** Difference between objects that facilitate healthy continuing bonds versus a substitute for our deceased loved one ...
- For example, the difference between a locket *reminding* me of my mother *versus* the locket fully *replacing* my mother

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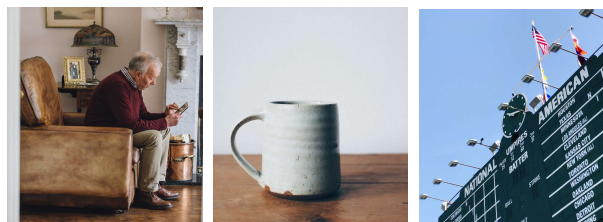


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Quick Reflection

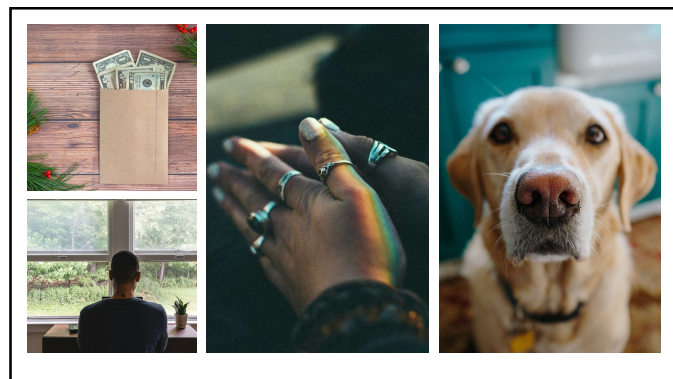
Do you have any linking objects?
(Type in the Chat)

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Archetypal Rituals #3: Daily Rituals
Don't have to be elaborate or public

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Quick Reflection

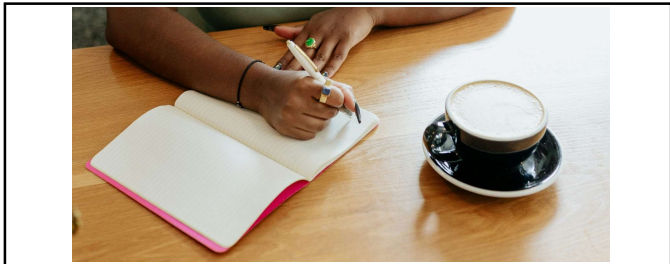
What are some daily or recurring rituals you use?
(Type in the Chat)

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Archetypal Ritual #4: Artistic Expression

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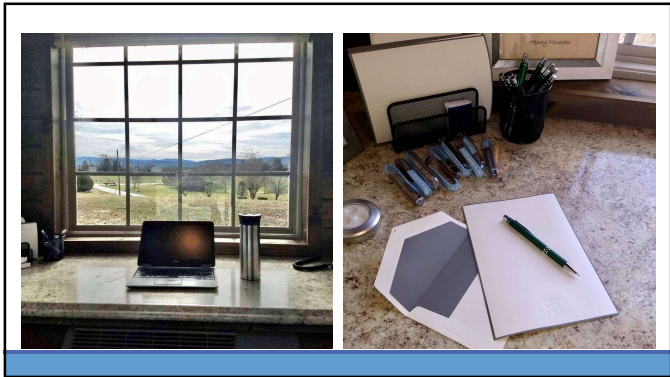


Archetypal Rituals #5: Writing

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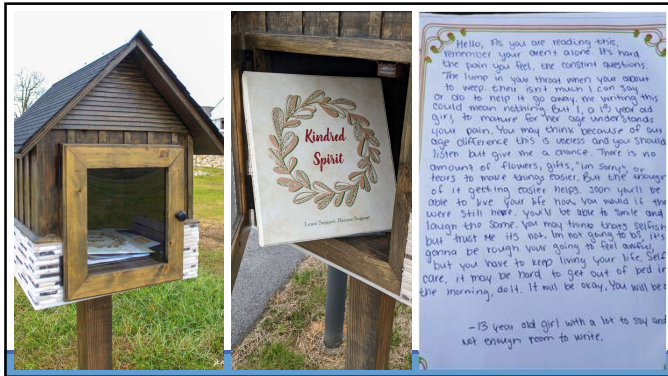
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Helping Clients Prepare & Process

- Preparing for a Ritual
 - Brainstorm ideas & trusting intuition
 - Revisit themes/concerns they've mentioned before
 - Consider which of the 11 Challenges they are facing
 - In the office vs. Outside the office?
 - Realistic Expectations/Permission
 - Ownership of their own ritual & timeline

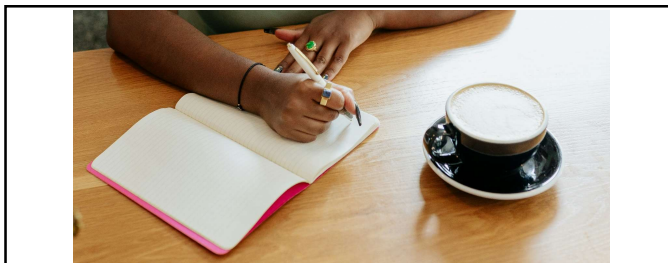
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Helping Clients Prepare & Process

- Processing the ritual
 - How'd it go? Thoughts, feelings, reactions, etc.
 - What will you take forward?
 - Recurring?
 - Other rituals?

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Archetypal Rituals #6: Repetitive Action

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Private Rituals

- We have 11 common challenges
- Private rituals help bring together thoughts, actions, feelings into meaningful, personal transformation
- Can be tailored to the needs of the individual
- 5 archetypal rituals can be used for countless needs & situations
- Our role is to help clients plan & process the experience

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Questions

Thank You

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