

# Ritual Title: Beach Writing

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## Ritual Category

- Separation
- Transition
- Reincorporation

## Ritual Intention

- Connection
- Control
- 
- Change

## Ritual Focus

- 
- Bereaved
- Community

- Earth
- Air
- Fire
- Water

## Creative Elements

- Art & Images
- Movement
- Music & Sounds
- Words/Silence
- Technology
- Senses Engaged

## Evaluation & Mementos

## Brief Description:

Timeframe: 30 -45 minutes

Participants: me

Objects Needed:

Sun Screen, hat, comfortable beach clothes

Preparation:

Safety Concerns:

None

Ritual Outline:

There are lots of emotions that I need to "let-go" of! There is a beach near my house where I often walk. I got the idea of writing the emotion words in the space where the waves wash in and out. In between the wave I quickly wrote the emotion and then I watched the waves erase them. Sometimes it took a few sets of waves before the word completely disappeared.

so peaceful and calm afterwards. I also think that if the wave action can make rough rocks smooth, and break-up something as hard as rocks and turn them into tiny grains of sand, then it should be able to do the same thing with all my problems and concerns.

I'm sure that I will do this again. I'd suggest that you find a secluded spot or a time of the day when there are not a lot of people around. I wouldn't want other people to see some of the words I wrote!

*NOTE: If you are willing to share, please tell me about the ritual you created. If it was helpful for you, maybe it will be helpful for someone else. (Of course I will make sure your personal information remains confidential.) tdennis@northshore.org*

# Ritual Title: A Ritual for Coming Home

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## Ritual Category

- Separation
- Transition
- Reincorporation

- Connection
- Control
- Consolidation
- Change

- Deceased
- Bereaved
- Community

## Natural Elements

- Earth
- Air
- Fire
- Water

## Creative Elements

- 
- Movement
- Music & Sounds
- Words/Silence
- Technology
- Senses Engaged

## Evaluation & Mementos

## Brief Description:

Timeframe: sometimes 20 seconds, sometimes longer

Participants: Me (and my wife)

Objects Needed:

N/A

Safety Concerns:

N/A

Ritual Outline:

I took the poster boards from the memorial service and hung them on the wall in the kitchen by the back door.

Each time I come home and before I leave, I say "Honey I'm home!" (just like I always did when she was alive.) or I say "See you later." and I look at the pictures.

I also look at the pictures sometimes when I eat dinner or stop in the kitchen for a drink. I miss her so much ... but it helps.

# Ritual Title: Gone Fishin' (Ritual to disburse dad's ashes)

## Ritual Category

- Separation
- Transition
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## Ritual Intention

- Connection
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- Change

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- Community

## Natural Elements

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## Creative Elements

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- Words/Silence
- Technology
- Senses Engaged

## Evaluation & Mementos

The weather was perfect. Not exactly a traditional service but it seemed the right way to remember him. My uncle told us that when he dies he wants to have the same thing done with his ashes.

The one thing I would do differently is bring sunscreen.

I also gave everybody one of dad's fishing lures as a keepsake.

## Brief Description:

Timeframe: 3 hours

Participants: immediate family

Objects Needed:

Biodegradable urn bought on line, and flowers for the kids.

Made arrangements with my uncle and organized everybody's schedule.

Safety Concerns:

Ritual Outline:

Dad loved to fish. When we asked him what funeral plans he would want, he always said he wanted to be "food for the fishes." My uncle (dad's brother) still lives on the farm where they grew up and there is pond on the property so we figured that was the perfect place to put his ashes.

I went on-line and bought an urn that is biodegradable and floats for a period of time before it sinks. It was a little pricey but nothing compared to the cost of a traditional urn. (Before the service I had to transfer the ashes from the plastic bag the crematory gave us into the biodegradable container which felt kind of weird.) I also bought flowers for all the grandkids.

never went fishing without a six-pack of beer,) while my uncle took the urn and rowed out to the middle of the pond and put the urn in the water.

I asked everybody to say a few words if they wanted to, and most did. My sister read a poem that she wrote. The grandkids threw the flowers into the water. We all waited and told stories and laughed, and hugged until the urn slowly went under water. It was very peaceful. Afterwards we had a meal at my uncle's house.

# Ritual Title: Good Bye House

## Ritual Category

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- Transition
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- Control
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- Change

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## Natural Elements

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- Air
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- Water

## Creative Elements

- Art & Images
- Movement
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- Words/Silence
- Technology
- Senses Engaged

## Evaluation & Mementos

## Brief Description:

Timeframe: About three hours

Participants: My sister and me

Objects Needed:

Preparation:

in the house and how we asked for a blessing for the new owners.

Safety Concerns:

None

Ritual Outline:

After the house had been cleared-out and cleaned, my sister and I spent the afternoon just the two of us walking through the house room by room, starting with the basement, then the upstairs, and finally ended up in the kitchen.

We just sat in each of the rooms and told stories and remembered things we had not thought about in years. Of course there were a lot of laughter and tears but it was a really nice way to say good bye to the house we grew-up in. I took photos and my sister carried incense (she is into that kind of stuff) to "cleanse the spirits."

The last thing we did was leave the letter I had written on the kitchen counter. We said a prayer of thanksgiving for giving us such wonderful parents and a prayer of blessing that the next family would be as happy living in that house as we were.

The photos were for me to remember. The rooms were so empty but my memories are so full. I was so grateful that my sister and I gave ourselves the gift of saying good bye to the house.

# Ritual Title: Lauching my new life

## Ritual Category

- Separation
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- Reincorporation

## Ritual Intention

- Connection
- Control
- Consolidation
- Change

## Ritual Focus

- Deceased
- Bereaved
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## Natural Elements

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## Evaluation & Mementos

## Brief Description:

Timeframe: A Saturday evening

Objects Needed:

Invitations, champagne, flowers, thank you cards, etc.

Preparation:

Reserve a table at a restaurant, order cake, send invitations.

Safety Concerns:

A designated driver

Ritual Outline:

After being a caregiver for my mom for six years I didn't know what I wanted to do. Fortunately, mom left me some money so I didn't have to go find a job right away. I had time to grieve and clear out the house slowly. The Realtor said it was a "tear-down" so fortunately I didn't have to do any work to it. I finally found a nice condo and found a job with a florist where I'm learning how to do flower arrangements. Turns out I'm pretty good at it!

I wanted to have a party to celebrate my new job and to thank my friends for being so supportive, especially while mom was so sick. So it was kind of a party to celebrate friendship, and to launch me into my new life.

I sent out invitations shaped like a boat, reserved the restaurant and asked my brother-in-law to be our designated "chauffeur." I also got a few bottles of pink champagne for the "launch." I also gave flowers to everybody as a thank you.

There were lots of toasts and laughs.

It was a bit of a self-indulgent splurge, but I know mom was looking down on us and was happy for me. She always felt so bad, as she said, I was "stuck" with her and not having a good time with my friends. But, if I could have done it all over again I wouldn't have done anything different. Love you mom!

# Ritual Title: Walking with a Question

## Ritual Category

- Separation
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## Ritual Focus

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## Creative Elements

- Art & Images
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- Senses Engaged

## Evaluation & Mementos

## Brief Description:

Timeframe: 20 minutes to 1 hour

Participants: Just me

Objects Needed:

water bottle, bug spray, hat, sun screen

Preparation:

Safety Concerns:

none

Ritual Outline:

When my dad died, I lost my most trusted advisor. I decided that one thing we often did was go for a walk in the forest preserve and talk things over. With him gone, I figured I could at least go for a walk.

When I arrived at the forest preserve I decided to start walking the path by stating an intention. "I bring to this place a question that has been on my mind. I trust that clarity

The truth is, I intentionally really didn't think much about the question, I just focused on the scenery around me, the sights, smells, the sound of the wind in the trees. I just relaxed and enjoyed the time in nature.

Whenever a thought popped into my head, I just kind of acknowledged it and imagined putting it in an invisible backpack.

At the end of the walk I just sat on a bench for a while and opened the pack. I actually came up with an answer that I think will work. I also think my dad would agree. I said a little "prayer" of thanks to the universe, to my dad, to nature.

I will definitely do this ritual again, it is one way I can feel connected to my dad-I think he was with me. The outcome was better than I could have imagined. I'm sure that I won't always find an answer but I'm sure I will be one step closer to the answer.

I also picked up a rock and brought it back and put it in my office to remember the experience.

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