

WATER RITUALS

Sacred Water Collection

I have a deep connection and intimacy with water. Water and heart shaped rocks are the only “things” I collect. I will make blends of special waters, usually gathered on trips. I keep a leakproof Nalgene bottle in my backpack, adding a small amount of any water I establish energetic connection with. Instead of souvenirs, I have waters from springs sacred to Brigid in Ireland, the waterfalls of Central America, the cenotes of the Yucatan, the sacred temples of Bali, the singing wells of the Masai in Africa, the 14 rivers in radial flow from the center of Olympic National Park...you get the idea.

I use the waters in many ways. I use them in the Pouring Rituals and Self Blessings you will find below. I bring them to rituals to share with others. I learned a beautiful practice from Starhawk in the Earth Activist Training - she asked each student to bring a small amount of water from their home. We did a ritual water blending, mixing our waters together in a cauldron. To that, Starhawk added a small amount of her own “waters of the world” which she had collected from many places on earth. At the end of the course, everyone took home a bottle of the blended waters. What a beautiful memory to have on my altar!

If you have an affinity for water, I encourage you to gather a small amount when you find sacred water - use it in your rituals and daily practices!

Water Blessings

This is a simple, yet profound, water practice. I do many variations of water blessings, sometimes for myself, sometimes for others, sometimes with groups of humans all doing self-blessings at the same time. It makes a beautiful addition to a daily or cyclical practice. Maybe every full moon? Every time you bleed if you are a menstruating woman? Get creative in your use of water as an anointing or blessing medium, we can improvise water blessings for important events, or even use water to sacralize the completely mundane.

I will offer here one simple water blessing - I apologize, but I have known this one long enough that I cannot remember where it came from or who

wrote it. I also know that I have changed it over the years, so you may know another version.

With this blessing, I normally put a small amount of the water I am using on my fingertips and touch it to the body part referenced. But I have done everything from taking small sips of the water, to full immersion, to pouring warm water over parts of my body, to using falling rain to bless myself.

- Bless me Mother for I am your child (touch your forehead or 3rd eye)
- Blessed be my eyes that I might see truth and all the beauty of this world
- Blessed be my ears that I might hear the beauty and song of the animate all around me
- Blessed be my nose that I might breathe your pure essence and always be reminded I'm never more than a breath away from connection with Now
- Blessed be my lips that I might sing to you Mother
- Blessed be my shoulders that I might bear my burdens lightly
- Blessed be my breasts, that I may nourish myself and others
- Blessed be my heart that I might give and receive love
- Blessed be my temple of self I might keep strong healthy boundaries
- Blessed be my womb that I might live with creativity and passion
- Blessed be my root that I might feel safe and grounded
- Blessed be my knees that I might kneel in your service Mother
- Blessed be my feet that I might dance lightly on my chosen path
- Bless me Mother, for I am your child

Pouring Ritual

At the simplest level, this involves pouring or ladling water from one vessel (or live water source) to another.

My favorite way to practice this is to scoop water from a living lake, river or ocean - ladling or spooning it into a vessel (or a hole in the ground or over a beautiful rock). Don't let the lack of "tools" stop you. Some of my best pourings are done with only my hand as a ladle, a flowing river as my reservoir and a river rock as my receiving vessel.

With the joy and creativity of water flowing through you, I encourage you to play with this practice and make it your own.

- you can just pour or ladle water into an empty bowl - which I sometimes do as a meditation practice to cure wicked monkey mind or negative thought loops. With each ladle I pour into the receiving bowl, I feel my mind bathed in gentleness, quiet, clarity, calm. The sound of water pouring into other water is a natural sedative for me.
- I will sometimes use the pouring ritual as a component of magical workings to direct and build energy. The physical act of pouring water opens my energy flow, allows me to have greater focus on intent, and helps me find more creativity in approaching problems. The act of filling a bowl until it overflows slowly builds energy.
- You could place an object in the reservoir vessel that signifies something you are either amplifying or trying to shed.
- You could place an object in the receiving vessel that signifies something you are pouring for, offering to, or trying to cultivate.
- Try using a special water or liquid – for example, add small vial of water from a sacred place to tap water you are using to pour. Bring home a quart of water from your favorite river and use pure river water to pour. You can pour with milk, oil or wine.
- You could add meaningful scents to your water

Here is a Pouring Ritual Example: this could be modified for any piece of emotional healing work. I use this ritual in healing what I call HDHD - half dead heart disease. As survival strategy during a traumatic and violent early life, I have developed multiple parts inside me that protect me from feeling too much. Very functional, I'm grateful to them, and now I have way better circumstances and coping strategies. Working with water, the element of flow, emotions, love and healing, seemed like a good choice to me for helping to heal my heart. I developed this pouring as medicine, to help myself be able to take in (and give out) more feelings. I did this ritual daily for a whole cycle of the moon, and now I do this during my days of silence at each new moon.

I have physical tokens that represent my internal "parts". I may choose to pour with 30K, the part in me who flies high above, dis-associating from emotional events. Or the Guv, the part who keeps my range of emotions (both positive and negative) within a narrow range. Or the Lass, who grabs the heart and runs down the rabbit hole when scary shit is about to go down. If I have a lot of time, I may do three complete pours, one for each part. Or I may put all three at once into the receiving bowl and do one pour.

I begin ladling water, slowly, from the reservoir vessel into the receiving bowl (which has the token/s in it).

Sometimes I will use left brain words like "30k, it is ok to stay right here inside this body and feel the feelings. We have this excellent community around us, who love us and are non-violent, safe people. We have good communication skills now to make direct requests for what we need. With each ladle of water, feel yourself anchoring in this body, not flying high above it. Feel our heart opening and noticing it is safe to feel "

Sometimes I pour with sensory images and feelings, not "rational" left brain thoughts. I might evoke the memory of body sensations, what it's like to feel safe, loved, fully present or vulnerable. I may visualize the "store" of love growing in my heart, practicing how it feels to project love outward. Maybe holding my son's image and bathing him in mother's love as I pour water.

When the bowl is almost full, I slow down and pay careful attention. I may pretend that my heart is the receiving bowl, growing fuller, no longer half dead, but more and more alive. I feel into that moment of tension when finally, the bowl is so full it cannot contain any more. Then I allow the rush of release, as with the next ladle full, the surface tension breaks and the water overflows. I encourage my heart to get so full of love that the natural course of action is to let it overflow...then send love out to my beloveds, my community, all the others around me.

the journey of a drop of rain

This is one of the practices that builds my connection to water. I have a fairly good understanding of the hydrologic cycle, so the number of stories I can spin about the possible journey of a raindrop is high. This is a great opportunity to learn more about the hydrology of the land where you live! If it calls to you, the invitation is to play and have fun with this practice.

I do this outdoors, when I am in close connection with the ecosystem. It's a great way to fritter away a couple hours in a tent while you wait out a big rainstorm, or to welcome back the rain after long periods of dry. I also love this practice to deepen affinity with trees (or any of the greenbloods), since some large part of the water that falls as rain where I live will actually be taken up and transpired by plants or trees or become a byproduct of photosynthesis.

Sometimes, this is a quiet meditation - I will become the drop of rain and go on the journey. Percolating down into the soil and the spaces between the soil particles, making my way by gravity through the watershed to the nearest stream or river, from there journeying to the ocean before being lifted high into the sky, into forming clouds, then falling as rain again.

Sometimes, this is out loud storytelling or singing. I might do this as a story offering for a special tree or glen of beautiful ferns. Or tell a story through an improvised song while I hike on a trail. I will sing of the rain drop who falls on the soil, is absorbed and taken up by the hyphae in the mycorrhizal fungi, offered to the small hairs on the roots of a cedar tree, then pulled slowly upwards through the trunk to the surface of a beautiful green cedar spray, where it breaks down and interacts with sunlight and carbon dioxide and transforms into sugar and oxygen, which is exhaled by the tree and inhaled by me, and so that drop of rain has entered my body as a breath and is an intimate part of me now. That's a gratitude song!!

Flowing Water Forgiveness/Letting Go

Stand in a flowing river or stream. Bring your biggest grudge, anger or resentment – something that you are ready to let go of. Tell the whole story, in detail, to the water. Ask her if she would carry it to the ocean for you, to the cauldron of transformation. Ask water to flow through you, bathing you in love, filling you with the magic of flowing from source. Ask water to wash the anger away and fill your heart with forgiveness. Just try staying pissed off or resentful after an afternoon of that.