



## 7 RITUALS FOR A MINDFUL HOLIDAY SEASON

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Let's face it. The older we get, the more potential the holidays hold for stress and anxiety. In a world that urges us to find ourselves in the bottom of a shopping bag this time of year, finding a genuine moment of peace and connection during the holidays can feel nearly impossible! But aren't peace and connection kind of the whole point? Here are 7 rituals to infuse your holiday season with self-care, mindfulness and gratitude:

Fire is very symbolic, especially during winter months. It represented life, warmth, gathering and wellness for our ancestors and still holds power for us today. As those of us in the Northern Hemisphere are tilted away from our sun this time of year, many of us experience

low energy and even depression. To bring fire back into your life, light a few candles or burn some incense. Bring the fire inside your body by making a pot of soup or brewing a pot of tea. Let the energy of fire melt away your stress by drawing yourself a hot bath. Get cozy, and thank the fire for sustaining your life this holiday season.

**FIND YOUR  
FIRE. 1**

### **2** **TRANSFORM YOUR WISH LIST.**

When a family member asks you what you want as a gift this year, get really intentional with it. What do you *really* need, if anything? If you're in a position to do so, perhaps forego material presents and instead ask for your loved ones' presence and quality time! You

could even ask for donations to your favorite charities or causes. Instead of wishing for things, make a list of your larger intentions for your life and/or the world. It could say, "I intend to gain more self-compassion this year." Share it with your close friends for them to witness you and perhaps inspire them to do the same!

Jot down 10 things you're grateful for this season. This time of year we're bombarded with advertisements for millions of products promising to change our lives.

Writing down what you're grateful for can awaken your

mind from the delusion that it needs more things to be happy. This blessings list can include physical things, like your warm, cozy socks, as well as people and experiences you're grateful for right now. Bonus points for keeping a gratitude journal by your bed and jotting down 3 things each night from your day!

## MAKE A BLESSINGS LIST. 3

### 4 CONNECT WITH TRADITIONS.

The holidays are a great time of year to connect to your ancestors. How did they mark the changing of the seasons or the end of the year? The ancient Celts, Egyptians and Romans used evergreen trees to symbolize the life-sustaining energy and resilience that persists during the winter months, as well as the promise that the sun would return. Reflect on what that means to you, and how you can create your own rituals to bring that same life force into your life. Bringing pine cones and evergreen limbs into the home is a great place to start! So is surrounding yourself with pictures of your ancestors and telling stories about those who have passed on this time of year. Ask the elders in your family questions and give them your full attention as they answer. Cooking the food of your ancestors is another lovely (and delicious!) way to honor them.

Have you felt the pressure this time of year to buy lavish gifts for friends and family members, worried that you could get stuck in an awkward situation if you don't reciprocate

someone's thoughtful gift for you? We've all been there. But the truth is, it doesn't cost a thing to give the perfect gift, so long as it comes from the heart. Giving the gift of your presence and quality time is often the greatest gift of all! You could create "Presence Presents" - coupons redeemable for a home cooked meal by you for your parents, a DIY mani-pedi with your sister, or a day-hike and picnic for your boyfriend. You could even give handmade gifts, the kind that require a lot of thought but not a lot of cash. Baked cookies, herb infused oils, knitted scarves - these are usually treasured far longer than the last-minute rush gifts! And, if you have the means, giving a donation in a loved one's honor is a beautiful gesture and act of generosity in one.

## RETHINK GIFT GIVING. 5

## 6 DITCH THE GENERIC HOLIDAY CARDS.

Opt instead to write a few intentional handwritten letters to those nearest and dearest to you. Release the anxiety of, “But I’ve always sent cards! People will be disappointed

and feel rejected if I don’t!” The number one regret of the dying is that they wish they had cared less about what other people thought. We have to let that go in order to have a truly meaningful and peaceful holiday season (not to mention life)! Plus, it feels good to put pen to paper instead of fingers to a screen for once. Use plain white paper or doll it up with some hand-drawn holly sprigs! Notice how it feels to share your love and gratitude, how much more authentic it feels to be specific rather than cookie cutter with your words. Imagine the few recipients opening your letter - how would you feel if you received such a thoughtful offering of words?

If you’re headed to a big family gathering, reflect beforehand on deep conversations you’d like to have. While it’s not always easy in large dinner table formats, getting your grandma to yourself for a few minutes of intentional chit chat can be transformative - both for your relationship

and your experience of the holidays. Perhaps you’ve never really asked your grandpa about the story of how he met your grandma. Or maybe you realized you don’t feel like you really know your Aunt - what’s on her bucket list? While it can be uncomfortable at first to be the leader in authentic conversations (especially with family), soon you will be an example to others when they realize the beautiful gift of time and attention! To really drive home the feeling of presence, every time you give someone a hug, you can say to yourself, “All we have is this precious moment.”

However you courageously choose to change your own patterns around this time of year, do so with the utmost self-compassion! Rewiring our brains for mindfulness isn’t easy work, but it can have a profound impact on your relationship with self and family, as well as your experience of the holidays. May this holiday season be filled with warmth, gratitude, and mindfulness.

For more self-care tips and tricks, check out the [Luminous Leanings blog](#) or [Instagram!](#)

## HOLD SPACE FOR MINDFUL CONVERSATION. 7