

# PLATICAST

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WINTER SOLSTICE 2019 RITUAL GUIDE

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# THE GIFTS OF DARKNESS: AN INVITATION FOR SELF-CARE & CONNECTION.

During the Winter Solstice we experience both the shortest day and longest night of the year. This time of extended darkness can bring about discomfort on several levels, as we instinctually push away from pain of every type. However, there are times when moving toward pain is a loving act towards healing. When we sit with our emotional discomfort, we honor our experiences and ourselves, and break the pattern of dismissing our needs (that is often developed in childhood). Holding our emotional pain in a loving manner provides a safe space to not only identify our needs but also grieve losses in order to make room for what is to be.

The Winter Solstice and it's lingering darkness provides us this opportunity to grieve what we desperately grasp onto (and which consequently holds us back), as well as facilitate a stillness we can harness to turn inwards, reflect, and connect with ourselves. This deep and dark space of Winter is not an end to life, but resting space as we transition into another beginning where our inspirations, desires, and dreams quicken in their gestation before unfurling into visions, ideas, and actions towards what we want and where we want to go. There is rest and renewal here to prepare for

the conception of our Dreams in this place of darkness.

It can be scary to trust this process, yet we can look towards the powerful rhythms of nature for reminders of the need for darkness. Daily and seasonally, periods of darkness are necessary to allow rest and rejuvenation, which is required to sustain life. Although many plants feed on the sun's energy, it is the restful break from the light that supports on-going growth, balance, vibrancy, and in many cases, resurrection. With this in mind, the Winter Solstice becomes an invitation to access the gifts that darkness brings by taking a pause, turning inward, reflecting on what is, and birthing dreams of what can be.

If you are not a glutton for pain and/or if it becomes too painful to take the conscious plunge into darkness, you may find more solace in knowing that the day after the Winter Solstice, we begin to shift into longer days and shorter nights. We gradually feel more of the sun's light and energy allowing us to move forward from our dream state. In these days after the Winter Solstice, we can be in the planning stages of manifesting our newborn dreams, and begin to take action on bringing them to light.

## THE GIFTS OF DARKNESS: AN INVITATION FOR SELF-CARE & CONNECTION. (CON'T.)

I invite you to take this opportunity to make time and space (if possible) to connect with yourself, especially if you are about to step into the rush of holiday festivities surrounded by others. Even a moment of connection in any manner (prayer, mediation, journaling, etc.) may help ground you before stepping into relationships with others.

The Winter Solstice varies annually in the Northern Hemisphere, between December 20 or 22. For the exact day/time in your area go to: <http://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/winter-solstice.html>.

Below are suggestions on ways to celebrate the Winter Solstice:

### Simple Activities:

- ◆ Make a big pot of soup rich with grounding vegetables (i.e. potatoes, carrots and other root vegetables) and warm spices. If possible, eat early.
- ◆ Drink warm liquids, ideally something sweet, spicy and grounding like chai.
- ◆ If you have a fireplace, light a fire and spend time in prayer, mediation, or silence.
- ◆ Light those special candles you have been saving (use fire-safe precautions).
- ◆ Spend time in contemplation through journaling, drawing, or other creative outlets. Process what wants to be released, or other losses and grief. Do this with kindness and support.
- ◆ Hang an evergreen wreath on your door (evergreens are a symbol of protection, prosperity, renewal, and the continuation of life).

# RITUALS.

## RELEASING CEREMONY:

This ceremony is best done outdoors. An indoor option is also offered in the instructions.

What you need:

- Indoor or outdoor fire source
  - Candles (any type and as little or as much as you want)
  - Paper
  - Pen or pencil
  - Scissors to cut paper
1. Light a fire outdoors in a grill or fire pit, or use an indoor fireplace.
  2. Clear the space by smudging, or by sound through clapping or ringing a bell 3 times.
  3. Light candles, get in a comfortable position, and settle into your body by taking a deep breath in and exhale slowly. Allow yourself to let go of the day's thoughts and worries.
  4. Ask yourself, "What do I want to release? What does not serve me?" This can include habits or patterns that get in the way of manifesting your intentions.
  5. Write down what you want to release. At the end of each item write "Be Gone!"
  6. Cut your paper so each statement is on its own piece.
  7. Read each statement (out loud or silently) and toss them, one by one, into the fire. If indoors you can use a fireplace, a shredder, scissors to cut into smaller pieces, or tear it up with your hands. Dispose as feels appropriate.
  8. Give gratitude for new beginnings and the light that is on its way.

# RITUALS.

## WELCOMING THE LIGHT CEREMONY:

What you need:

- 1 large candle
  - 8 tealight candles or similar size.
1. Clear the space by smudging sage, or by sound through clapping or ringing a bell 3 times.
  2. Place the unlit large candle in the middle of your table or ritual space.
  3. Set the unlit tealight candles near you.
  4. Turn off all the lights and spend a moment in darkness. You can use this time to reflect on your year, acknowledge any losses and/or successes, attend to lingering emotional pain, or feel into the desires, inspirations, and dreams which want to emerge.
  5. When you feel complete, take a deep breath in and out, and stretch or shake any part of your body which feel tight.
  6. Light the large candle and say thank you to the darkness and welcome the light with any phrases that seems right to you.
  7. One by one, light each tealight candle using the flame of the large candle and place each one around the large candle, creating a circle around it. You can say a phrase of gratitude or affirmation as you light each tealight candle, or simply observe and welcome the increasing light.
  8. When all candles are lit, give gratitude for new beginnings and the light that is on its way.

# RITUALS.

## INTENTION SETTING RITUAL:

This is best done after doing releasing work. You can do this days or weeks after a releasing ritual, which allows you to the space to grieve and clear out space for what is to be.

What you need:

- Paper
  - Pen or pencil
  - Scissors to cut paper
  - Small to medium jar with lid
  - Selected Herbs (Optional. See list below)
1. Clear the space by smudging sage, or by sound such as clapping or ringing a bell 3 times.
  2. Settle into your body by taking a deep breath in and exhale slowly, allowing yourself to let go of the day's thoughts and worries.
  3. Ask yourself, "What do I want to manifest in the next six months?" Don't overthink it. Let your desires speak.
  4. Write your answers down on small pieces of paper, and cut your paper so each intention is on its own piece.
  5. Place these intentions, and optional herbs in your jar, and close the lid.
  6. Hold the sealed jar in your hands and send your blessings with the phrases "I get out of the way and let these be as it is written or better. And so it is."
  7. In 6 months, open your jar to review what dreams you manifested and take note of which intentions manifested (even in small increments or in other forms), which intentions still speak to you (let them go with love), and which still need action. Identify what actions you can make to help these intentions manifest.

You can also do this ritual at every New Moon & collect manifested dreams throughout the year. At the end of the year, open your container to review what dreams you manifested.

## HERBS.

Some common herbs to consider:

Rose: Love, Healing, Protection, Courage

Rosemary: Protection, Rest

Lavender: Healing, Love, Anti-depression

Basil: Family harmony, Wealth, Courage

Mint: Strength, Healing, Prosperity

Sage: Protection, Longevity, Money

As with all rituals, feel free to improvise.