

Ritual as Remedy: Embodied Practices for Soul Care

Mara Branscombe

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What if life isn't just one thing after another, but a "wildly creative journey"? Vancouver spiritual coach Mara Branscombe encourages this mindset in *Ritual as Remedy*, a mystical handbook for making the sacred a part of everyday life.

The book offers a broad definition of a ritual as "anything that is done with intention": a customary action that provides a sense of rhythm and connection—such as to the four elements or the four seasons. Branscombe presents the patterns of nature as grounding forces that foster reverence and link to the ancient wisdom of past generations and Indigenous people.

In addition to "you," the text often addresses a collective "we," so as to be inviting as well as didactic. Meditation and visualization practices, described in step-by-step instructions, close each chapter. Along with journaling activities, these additions ensure that the overall feel of the book is practical rather than nebulous.

Nevertheless, openness to the supernatural is a definite prerequisite for engaging with Branscombe's ideas, which include crystal healing and drawing energy from the moon's cycles. Her self-help advice is more universal. Metaphors of flowing water enfold her tips for rediscovering creativity, and the importance of focusing on what one has power over is key: "You can never control outside forces, but you can work with your own energy field, your emotions, and your words."

A heartfelt and optimistic tone infuses the book. "Know thyself" could be a pithy summary of one of its messages: Branscombe counsels careful observation of one's self via daily check-ins. "Show up for yourself every day in one small way," she exhorts.

Mystical yet sensible, *Ritual as Remedy* demonstrates how to be a "heart and soul trailblazer" on the road toward creating a life of spiritual significance.

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