



SHOWNOTES Episode 1

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Serving Practical Magic DIY

On the menu today

- Introduction to the Podcast
- Ritual: Drink Your Words

You're listening to Ritual Recipes, a podcast serving practical magic to nourish your inner life. Here in my cosmic kitchen, I'll share rituals you can DIY to help you acknowledge achievements, celebrate events, deepen your connection to the world and to those around you and bring a sense of inner peace.

I'm your host, Zita Christian. I've been creating and performing rituals for large groups, families, couples, and individuals for more than 20 years.

I love rituals. They reveal the invisible dimension of life. In that dimension is where you can connect with the deepest part of yourself and with the energy some call the Universe, the Divine, the Force, God, Mother Nature. I see that as the realm of all things "spiritual." It's in that spiritual realm where we can find meaning to who we are, what we do, and why we're here. Ritual opens the door to that dimension. Are you ready to enter? Good. Gather 'round.

What is a ritual? For me, ritual as a **visible act** performed with **invisible intent**. If you've ever made a wish and blown out the candles on a birthday cake, you've performed a ritual.

There are rituals for many purposes. Some are designed to attract, some to release, some to acknowledge, to celebrate, and some to mourn. Some rituals are simple, for what I call the the daily "moments" of life. Some are more substantial, for those joyful milestones like weddings, baby blessings, and moving to a new home. Rituals can support us through all kinds of loss too, especially the overwhelming grief that comes with death. On this podcast, I'll share a variety of rituals, a few stories on how they came to be, and some feedback from men and women who participated in the rituals with me, or did the rituals in private.

When I'm creating a ritual, I draw inspiration from many sources:

- mythology, fairy tales, cultural symbols, history
- sky lore, astrology, lunar and seasonal cycles
- flowers, trees, herbs, spices
- Tarot and oracle cards
- Crystals and colors and spiritual rays
- creatures of the visible and invisible world
- and language itself, because there is power in the spoken word.

Back in the 1600s, the poet John Dryden said, "Words are but pictures of our thoughts." His quote inspired a simple ritual I created called "Drink Your Words." I've done this ritual in various forms for several years. It's a good way to begin each day and to begin any important activity. It's especially powerful at the beginning a new year. In a new relationship, this simple ritual can prove playful and revealing. In an established relationship, it can strengthen and affirm the love shared by two people.

A little background first. Every December at the Winter Solstice, I choose three words for the coming year. Every single day in the new year, I do something to energize those words. My goal is to absorb their essence, to draw their strength into my marrow, so deeply that every bone feels the power of the words.

I don't choose my words lightly! It takes weeks for me to decide. Once I have my words, I write them on a piece of paper and tape it to my computer monitor.

Key to this ritual is that my words don't have to make sense to anyone but me. Last year, one of my words was CAN. I used it to reframe what felt like an endless list of chores. I have to scrub the floor became I can scrub the floor. I have to carry the laundry upstairs became I can carry the laundry upstairs. I have to weed the garden became I can weed the garden. Hear the difference? Having just turned 70, being physically able to do these things is more important than ever.

This year, 2018, I have an astrological configuration that suggests I will end the year either exhausted or depressed. Exhausted because I gave every ounce of effort to accomplish a **big** dream, or depressed because I didn't. For 2018, I considered the word EXHAUSTED because of the connotation I have for the word. For about two weeks, I drank "exhausted" as one of my words. You can guess what happened. I felt exhausted! Not my intent at all! So I changed "exhausted" to ENERGIZED. That one's working for me.

The Inspiration

For DRINK YOUR WORDS, I drew inspiration from three sources. I started in ancient Greece, with Hippocrates, the Father of Medicine. He said, "All disease begins in the gut." So, I wondered. Can healing also begin in the gut?

I found additional inspiration from the late Masaru Emoto. He was the Japanese author and researcher who gained fame for his work on the effect of human consciousness on the molecular structure of water. He demonstrated the difference in the formation of crystals of frozen water. The crystals that came from water that had first been “spoken to” with words of love and kindness were well formed and symmetrical. The crystals formed from water that had been “spoken to” with anger and hate were warped and distorted.

The last bit of inspiration comes from my own belief that what we see and hear, what we smell, taste and touch affects our view of the world and how we interact with those in it. Therein lies the power of art – a topic for another time.

On to the ritual.



The Gathering Stage

Let’s assume it’s December and you want to select 3 words for the coming year. If you’re like me, it could take weeks to narrow down your choices. Those 3 words are important. You’ll live with them for a long time. They’ll become part of your self-identity. So we begin with the gathering stage.

Get 7 bottles of water and line them up on your kitchen counter. Now get 7 Post-It notes. On each note, write one word.

Affix one Post-It note to each bottle of water. Arrange the bottles so you can see the words. You can see a photos of my first batch of words for this year on the website: RitualRecipes.net

Over the next few days, look at the words as you pass through the kitchen. Don’t drink the water yet. If one of the words feels particularly strong, move that bottle to the middle of the line-up. Give it a few more days. If a new word calls to you, add it to one of the bottles. There are no hard and fast rules. You have two words on one bottle. There are also no rules about parts of speech. Mix those nouns and verbs! It’s like mixing metals in your jewelry.

Of course, eventually you do need to pick three words. When you look at all the possible words this time, see if you notice a pattern? Does a theme emerge? Your choice of words might suggest taking a risk, making amends, exerting effort, focusing

on a dream, increasing something, decreasing something, caring for someone, or caring for yourself.

Select 3 Words

Once you have your 3 words, you're ready to do the ritual.

Remember earlier I said that a ritual is a **visible act** performed with **invisible intent**. The **invisible intent** is that by drinking the three bottles of water you will ingest the power of the words you've chosen.

The **visible act** is that you **drink the water!** Don't guzzle! Just sip over the course of the day. As you do, envision the energy of the word. Is it the fiery red of the word WILLPOWER? Is it the earthy green of the word MANIFEST? The watery calm blue of PATIENCE? Or, the airy white of INSPIRATION? Close your eyes. Imagine the energy as a stream of light illuminating every cell. Of course, you chose the association of color, or shape, or sound, whatever lets you picture the energy of the word.

If you keep a journal, write a few lines about how it feels to ingest the word. If you don't keep a journal, just say the word out loud. Again. And again. I used to be a certified handwriting analyst and I can assure you there is a definite connection between your brain and the movement of your hand. I suspect the same can be said for the connection between your brain and the sound of your voice. Adding these visible acts to the ritual helps affirm your invisible intent.

Whatever words you choose, just know that if you work with them, they can quench your spiritual thirst. They can help you tap into the best part of yourself and what you have to give to the world.

On every Full Moon this year, I plan to write my three words on three bottles and let them sit overnight on the kitchen counter. The moon rises outside my kitchen window. In the morning, those three bottles will be charged with the energy of the moon. I can already taste the magic!

Ritual with Children

There are other ways to use this ritual. Do you have children at home? Grandchildren who are visiting? Imagine DRINK YOUR WORDS as part of their morning routine. If I were doing this ritual with my grandson, Logan, when he was in kindergarten, I might suggest he choose the words: Try / Listen / Share

Logan is a teenager now, perfectly capable of choosing his own words. I told him about the ritual and asked what words he would choose. He said: VITALITY (because he faced a health challenge last year) / THOUGHT (because he knows the decisions he makes now will have lasting affects) / and EXPLORATION (because he sees a wide world of opportunities on the horizon). On the Full Moon of every month – when light on

an inner issue is at its brightest – Logan and I will reflect on what each of us has learned that month from our choice of words. A side note: If you've ever wanted to do an intergenerational project, this ritual can open the door.

Dating Ritual

You can also use this ritual to develop or deepen an intimate relationship. Used for this purpose, I'd modify the ritual to use two words, one for each person. Here's a possible scenario: A few months ago, you met someone. You've been seeing each other regularly. Things are going well, really well. More than once, you've pictured this person in your long-range view of the future. Now imagine the two of you are having dinner at a restaurant. You explain the DRINK YOUR WORDS ritual and set a pad of Post-It Notes on the table.

You talk about the qualities that each of you finds important in an intimate relationship. From officiating more than 100 weddings, I know these words are high on the list for most couples: Fidelity / Family / Security / Respect / Humor / Honesty / Support / Share / Listen

"Listen" is a big word. Your **invisible intent** of this ritual is that each of you **truly listens to the other** and recognizes what each of you needs in a relationship.

The **visible act** happens when each of you takes a Post-It Note, writes down one of the words you heard, shows the word, affixes the note to a glass of wine, a bottle of beer, a cup of coffee... and drinks. In the movie Avatar, the two lead characters say to each other, "I see you." This ritual is similar. It says, "I hear you." And, "I want to be what you need."

With an eye to the future, do this ritual several times during your first year of dating. Keep the Post-It Notes. Add a little notation about where you were and when. Put the notes in a scrapbook.

If marriage is in your future, and you want to write personal vows for your wedding ceremony, the words you shared in the DRINK YOUR WORDS ritual can inspire your VOWS.

I'm friends with many of my couples on Facebook and appreciate seeing their photos on Instagram. I see them working together to accomplish goals of travel and education, buying a house, having a baby. This past weekend, one of my couples, Justin and Lauren Haug, came over for Sunday dinner. (Yes, I keep in touch with my couples!)

I told them about the DRINK YOUR WORDS ritual and asked them to imagine they'd each written a word on a Post-It note and affixed it to their glass. Then they drank. I didn't ask what words they had chosen; that's private. I do know they talked about the ritual on their ride home. Each found value.

Justin told me he could see the ritual as something couples could do every night before going to sleep. Instead of drinking water as the visible act, they would, instead, say their words to each other. I love his idea! Remember, using this ritual to deepen a relationship says: I hear you. I know the meaning behind this word is important to you. I will do my best to embrace this word because I love you. Imagine how much better a couple might sleep if they exchanged the words: Patience / Support / Forgiveness / Humor.

Try the DRINK YOUR WORDS ritual in any of its various forms. Let me know what words you used and how it felt to imbibe their energy. If you come up with a new way to do the ritual, I'd love to hear that, too. Email me at zita@ritualrecipes.net Time permitting, I'll share your insights with the other listeners. We can learn a lot from each other. It's like sharing a recipe.



This is the first episode of Ritual Recipes. DRINK YOUR WORDS is a sample of what you'll find on the podcast. Other rituals will focus on weddings, baby blessings, memorials, seasonal celebrations, and much more. Some rituals be modern adaptations from something my Celtic ancestors might have done. Some rituals will come from my friends, my professional colleagues, my teachers, and my own experiences and observations.



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Ritual Recipes is a “side dish” of MoonRiverRituals.com where I've worked since 2012 as a certified Life-Cycle Celebrant to officiate more than 100 weddings, bless babies, perform vow renewals, conduct funerals and memorial services, and create seasonal rituals for private circles and public gatherings.

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I believe in the power of ritual. If you do too – or if you just want to know a little more about rituals – please join me for the next episode. I'll put the coffee on.

Coming on Episode 2
Seasonal rituals for mid-winter

- A simple ritual with root vegetables
- A seasonal ritual inspired by the Celtic Goddess Brigid and the festival of Imbolc