

Gathering Enough Kindling: Honoring Our Endings & Letting Go With Burning Rituals

[BY LEAHANNE WOODS](#)

I've been preparing for the next full moon, without totally planning to do so. I've been gathering all that I've been through in the past several years from the ending of my marriage, a new relationship, as well as the ending of my youth.

I made a bonfire for myself. I had a wedding dress burning ceremony to honor the girl I was when I got married: the hopes, the dreams, the things I thought I'd build. All of that I burned in a great ceremonial fire. I had gathered the kindling in my yard all weekend from a storm.

There had been several big storms within several weeks. I believe these storms happened, in part, as a tribute for uplifting all the things we needed to find, dislodge, and release. I've reached the age where I know to pay attention to the weather, as nature moves things within us showing us what we need to know about ourselves. I felt the truth – that it was time to do the deed. It was time to let go and begin to move away from grief and turn toward life again.

In the fire, I released the girl I was, and my marriage with many tears and with much honor.

I feel lighter now. I feel more space within for the things that are now to be brought into my life.

The wedding dress burning ceremony was done when the moon was

just a sliver in the waxing process.

My next big fire was the next Sunday night. I went by feel, and by the logistics of the time of the week when I had time to gather the kindling again from yet another storm. Both of these 'releasing' ceremony fires were on a Sunday night.

Sundays have always felt like holy days to me. I know this is because of my upbringing, going to church with my parents, seeing my grandparents, and the last day of freedom before returning ourselves back to the work week. I didn't plan for my burning ceremonies to be on Sunday nights. But, these Sunday nights simply felt like the right time, after a weekend of cleaning my yard, after the storms. Oh, holy Sunday, burning day.

After the storms is when I gathered enough kindling to burn the bigger logs.

By the second Sunday of picking up sticks and raking pine needles, I started to feel that gathering enough kindling coincided with gathering enough personal strength for the burning away, for the particular releasing I needed to do.

In the second big fire, on that second Sunday night before a Taurus full moon, I released a very precious recent relationship, one that taught me a lot about myself in a very intense way and in a very short amount of time.

In this second fire, I also burned away my attachment to my youth. I was brought to the realization in the precious recent relationship that I attached to my youth and I needed to let

that go. I needed to turn toward acceptance of the second half of my life where I am no more a maiden. The person I was in a relationship did not tell me I was getting older, nor to my knowledge did he even have a thought about this. It's just something that I was supposed to see in myself through this person.

We are mirrors for each other. And, we do not see what we need to see in ourselves until it's time.

Alchemically, everything in this precious and short-lived relationship was set up perfectly for me to see what I needed. And, it was definitely the time for me to see some outgrown and toxic patterns of my youth which had come up. I saw some unhealthy things within myself that had not been seen since my teenage years. They were issues in codependency and feelings of fear of rejection that I had no idea was still residing within me.

We are all on a spiral in life. I had returned to the same side of the spiral I had been on thirty years ago, as a teenager. I was not set up during that time to handle the lessons that I am able to handle now. I recognized the opportunity to face what I needed to face while this wound was reopened. I stayed with myself through the pain.

Now I am happy to say that though I'm sad, I'm stronger in myself than I've ever been. As a result, I am more full of love and compassion for myself and for all of humanity.

It took a particular kind of relationship along with where I have been recently in my life – how I was thinking, feeling, seeing, and my circumstances at the time – to bring these things up from deep within me.

There's an analogy used in Warrior Goddess training (by HeatherAsh Amara) that goes as follows, in my own words:

When we pour fresh water into us, when we do the things to

further ourselves, better ourselves etc., oftentimes we will cause debris (old oil), sediment, from the bottom to rise.

As that old oil is rising, we feel all those unpleasant feelings that we felt when we first went through those things earlier in our lives. This is because the old oil is in process of leaving, exiting by floating upwards, through us first. As it passes through, we feel all the emotions of the past.

It's astonishing that so much was hidden within without my knowledge until it is located, dislodged, and is passing through my system. We feel the most like shit, or the most intensely painful emotions before the release, while it's coming up and out through the top of our surface.

We are water, you know. We are made of water, air, earth, and fire.

I was most definitely feeling the muck of old oil rising from within me.

I felt ugly, fat, desperate.

Despite all the lessons I've learned about the importance of letting go and not grasping, I most definitely grasped. I felt very codependent and unsure of myself as I grasped.

I'm grateful that my beautiful friend who I was in a relationship with was so kind, understanding, mature, and evolved. I was lucky. I was most definitely gifted by this person's entering my life, and in the time frame also.

I was seen in my truth, as messy as it was. And I heard and

accepted my beautiful friend's truth in that the relationship was not going in a healthy direction for their truth.

I listened. I respected him.

I was so proud of myself! I broke the curse!

I did not grasp. I stopped right there.

Out of respect for my beautiful friend and for myself, accepted his truth. I honored his truth. I honored myself by staying within truth and not escaping or trying to change it as I would have as a younger woman.

In 1990, I would have chased this person in desperation to make them know how precious this relationship was, and would've had to make it known all the things I thought were missing in communication. I would have had to convince this person that there were misunderstandings that made it seem like we should part ways but that we shouldn't.

Instead, I found myself letting go, releasing, standing with myself with compassion, looking into their eyes with love, and letting them go.

Now. Today. A few weeks later...I still cry every day and I'm glad for it. I'm happy to honor our beautiful, sacred relationship by not skipping quickly past the deep, tender feelings of missing them. I'm doing what I need to do for myself by staying in my truth, and deep within my feelings.

I am making a nice ledge out of the rocks of my lifetime. On this ledge, I can see from above all that I've been through. And in all the space up here, I have all the air in the world to see into the limitlessness of who I am when I can totally let go.

I'm proud that I honor this beautiful relationship that had to end in one particular way, but will continue to grow over the years in another way. I gathered into the sacred circle of my

life another precious friend who really knows me and who will be with me as a true friend for this lifetime.

With this fire of my life, I know I will continue to burn away all the things that come up that show me that it's time to let go of. I'll be able to see more clearly and quickly what those things are. And I will not be as apprehensive about letting them go as I was before.

No more denial in order to "keep" something that is over and done. I am more clear in myself now. I have gained more self-trust. And a new fire has been lit within me to go ahead and burn away those things that I know need to be cleared away, instead of waiting for things to possibly change before I do so. I have gained a new level of self-control over my life because of all of this. And I am so grateful.

In the eight limbs of yoga, there is a concept called *aparigraha*. It means non-grasping. Yoga is for feeling the freedom we actually have inside, if only we can let go of things that we are grasping onto and realize our true inner freedom. I think I have done great yoga for myself by learning a new level in letting go in this recent time period.

When I spoke with my 82-year-old vision quest guide, she said that I've been in the West the whole time she's known me in my 3-year quest. I am now in my second year with her witnessing me. In this indigenous-based Shamanic group, the West means death and grieving. I have been comfortably lingering in death process for years now. When I look honestly, I have been mourning death for my entire life. I've felt more comfortable hiding in the shadow of death because I have feared really coming out and living my life. I've not trusted myself and have feared (just didn't see the point) building things myself for this lifetime. I saw this clearly through all of this.

I've always had the feeling that I was not going to live that long anyway, or hoped that I wouldn't. Or simply, that

ultimately I would have to resort to depending on someone else, someone more knowledgeable, more of a go-getter, someone who had instilled in them a bigger sense of trust in themselves than what I have been able to maintain so far for myself in this lifetime.

I realized that feeling less than capable was a perception I took on from my upbringing. Now that this is more clear than ever, I can go to work on dissolving this unhealthy perception of myself.

Now it's time for me to turn to the North, the direction for building our life (structure, solidity). And it's time to once again and in an all-new way, build my life.

I believe I gathered these old agreements from old ancestral beliefs that were passed to me as truth through my mother. It was through my mother's fear that I felt the sheer fear, the "truth" of these agreements. This happened from the time before my birth and has been reinforced time and time again throughout my lifetime. Today I break this agreement.

Through this fire under the Taurus full moon, I am releasing the old agreements that I am not enough to build and maintain a solid life of my own.

Photo by [Joshua Earle](#) on [Unsplash](#)

Heart Howl:

The smallest inclination of desire in your heart is where spirit is guiding us the most.

For more self-study, [The Urban Howl](#) recommends [The Mastery of Love: A Practical Guide to the Art of Relationship: A Toltec](#)

Sip a little more:

***Be In The Sun, Be Life & Become The Light Of The
World***

***Rise My Tantric Queen & Unleash Yourself Into
The Nature Of Your Dreams***

The Black River Of Trust – She Is Deeply Me

She was a forgiver.
Her heart was so large,
she didn't know how
to give up on people,
because she always believed
the good in those she loved.
It was until she was walked on
so many times, she had no choice
but to let go of those who burned
holes in her heart.



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