

## Ceremony



What one is emerges out of what one was.

### Introduction

Ceremony is a part of everyday systematic functioning. Whether this is conscious or unconscious, ceremony exists throughout the business day. Ceremony, like ritual, has a situational context that is not an event as much as it is a frame of mind. When relating to a client, for example, the meeting becomes a ceremony based on the frame of mind created by you.



**“You can’t easily divorce the power of these rituals from their cultural context. They are not a commodity. You need to be in a frame of mind similar to that of the people who created them.”**

(Keeney as quoted in Walljasper, 2003, 52)

## Theory

Ceremony is a necessary and in fact an automatic part of corporate life. How ceremony is perceived and understood has everything to do with whether ceremony is successful or a failure.

Ceremonials “enable the individual to maintain integrity of self while changing life roles. The person is freed to act in new ways without crippling anxiety or becoming a social automaton. That is, the person discharges the new status, but the status does not become the person. This, I believe, is the central psychological meaning of the theme of death and rebirth, of constant psychic renewal, which is encountered so frequently in primitive ceremonies. It is an organic theme; what one is emerges out of what one was. There is no mechanical separation, only an organic transition, extending, characteristically, over a considerable time, often crowded with events, and never. Never traumatic, but modulated and realistic in its effects” (Stanley Diamond, 1960, Plato and the Primitive as quoted in Woodman, 1987, pp. 208-209).

## Successful Ceremony

Successful ceremony occurs when these elements of a transformational experience are incorporated:

### *Safety*

For ceremony to succeed there must be an atmosphere of safety.

### *Facilitation*

Someone must be in the role of facilitator to host the process.



### *Holding*

Someone must also “hold” the process while facilitating the direction the group energy is attempting to flow. This holding environment involves beginnings, middles, and ends — the three components of psychic and relational renewal. Each process begins, lives, dies, and faces a transition to the next phase of the process.

### *Compassion*

The care and consideration with which the process is held and facilitated is necessary for the experience to be transformative. That is to say that:

**Transformation is essentially an opportunity for those involved to experience and to become a part of new possibility.**

### *Failed Ceremony*

Failed ceremony occurs when the opportunity for growth and transformation presents itself and it is met with routine or cynicism.

### *Reflections from Several Participants*

- A monthly luncheon is an opportunity to bring people together in a real way or to remind them of their differences and separation.
- Ocean powerful and loud. Hard to breathe. Did some yoga stuff, calmed down, noticed the driftwood and how beautiful.
- Internal and external alignment.
- Ceremony of reconnecting you to essential parts of yourself.
- Practicality of balancing the inner world with the outer world. Practice brought that into balance. At some point there is no differentiation.
- Journey: go alone, leave the known world to the unknown world. You encounter all the elements. Come up against your limitations and gently move through.
- Common man comes along, non-ceremonial.



## Teaching: Themes and Guidelines<sup>1</sup>

### *How do we listen?*

- Give up expectation.
- Empty and open. (Rilke quote\_ Have Patience)
- Give our attention completely, freshly, and openly.
- Lean in softly with a willingness to be changed by what we hear, by subtle feelings of recognition and by being recognized.

### *Open to:*

- The sacred pulse of all things.
- The Universe is alive and seeking union with our consciousness.
- Allow brief illumination and allow all to move through our consciousness in these privileged and enlightened moments.
- Greet the outer world with our inner being and open to the mystery.

### *Allow*

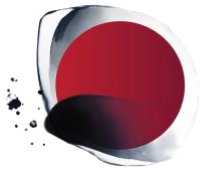
- The nature of the universal dance as it cycles us from being self-centered to being other-centered.
- Recognize that we are an integral part of an integrated whole in an ongoing process of reciprocal engagement with all that is.
- Everything inside of us and between us is a circulatory – it is an ongoing exchange of what matters.

### *Bridge*

- When we can connect to what lives at the heart of our problems and at the heart of the problems of others, and listen to those connections, we become bridges to each other, the world and to the spirit that informs everything.
- When we speak integrity, we are speaking of how we care for the tender bridge between the innermost being and the common life of all beings.
- Yet, being a human bridge- a living tool that puts things together- is not easy. Everything from erosion to fears tries to wear us down.
- This is nothing new. Birds have always flown in the face of gravity, and fish have always made their way to the bottom despite the buoyancy of the sea.

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<sup>1</sup> Inspired by Nepo, Mark (2005) and Santjes Oomen



- It is simply part of our calling: to be a bridge, to lie down and to stand up, so that living entities can join and realize that they are one.

### *Giftng*

- Give the world the best you have.
- This work is active service to that which is seeking to emerge and to inform us that we are all one and deeply and intimately connected.

### References

Nepo, Mark (2005). Exquisite risk: Daring to live an authentic life. New York: Random House

Walljasper, Jay. (July-August 2003). The luckiest man alive? Bradford Keeney travels the globe searching for the secrets of soul. Utne. pp. 45-54.

Woodman, M. (1987). From concrete to consciousness: The emergence of the feminine. In Mahdi, L.C., Foster, S. Little, M. (Eds.). (1987). Betwixt and Between: Patterns of masculine and feminine initiation. (pp. 201-222). La Salle, IL: Open Court.

### Link

See Muller for an in-depth exploration of how to bring Sabbath and Ceremony back into our lives: Muller, Wayne. (1999). *Sabbath: Finding rest, renewal, and delight in our busy lives.* New York: Bantam Books.

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*The Tim Dukes Method provides an opportunity for self-reflective individuals to cultivate the capacity to receive into consciousness hidden aspects of the self, claiming your unique gifts – ensuring that today’s brilliance successfully transitions into tomorrow’s wisdom. The Tim Dukes Method is designed and implemented by Dr. Timothy Dukes for determined creatives to ensure long-term viability — as a continuing investment in the well-being of yourself, your family, organizations, culture, society, and the Earth itself.*