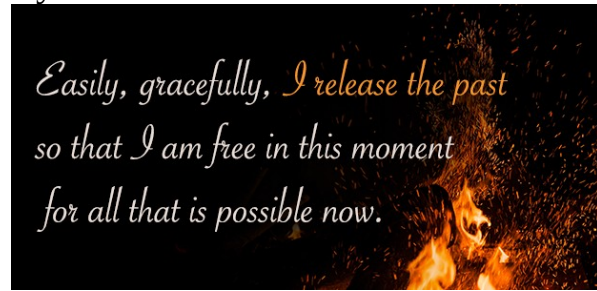


## How to Use a Burning Bowl Ritual to Release the Past

By Elizabeth G. Howard



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Anytime you want to clear out unwanted memories and conditions from your life, a burning bowl ritual offers a sacred and powerful way to release negativity.

The goal of the burning bowl ritual is to make space for new beginnings. It can be done at any place, at home alone or in a gathering with others.

Each January, Unity invites all to join in a nondenominational [burning bowl ceremony](#) as an alternative to setting resolutions for the new year. Anyone can submit a release in advance. Submissions from across the world are burned together during the livestreamed event.

### **Letting Go Gives Us Freedom**

For centuries, indigenous groups used smoke as a symbol of their thoughts and prayers rising to the Great Spirit. Engaged couples have also released the past in a burning bowl before taking their vows.

Whatever the circumstances, the purpose of the ceremony is to shift consciousness. It's about becoming still, naming what you want to release, and letting it go.

When we [let go and let God](#), we experience freedom. Letting go opens us to the power of inspiration, insight, wisdom, and love.

### **Write What You No Longer Want to Hold on To**

**How does a burning bowl ritual work?** You can start by bringing to mind what it is you need to release. Let the feelings come to you.

Then, on a piece of paper, write down your release. Letting go begins the moment you put pen to paper. It is your conscious awareness that begins the activation of the release of problems, thoughts, and things from your life.

Describe the events as much or as little as you want. It can be as simple as a name or word, or more in-depth. Let your heart open to the flow as it releases old wounds, negativity, or unhealthy thought patterns.

### **Visualize the Smoke Taking Your Thoughts**

Next you can begin the fire ceremony.

In a safe place, light a fire in a pot or bowl, or gather around a fireplace or firepit. Then drop your paper into the fire.

As you watch the paper burn, visualize your unwanted thoughts rising up in the smoke, being released from you.

Allow yourself to experience whatever you are feeling: fear, anxiety, sadness, loss, gratitude. Let the feelings lift as the fire consumes your paper.

### **Offer an Affirmation of Release**

Bring the ceremony to a close with an affirmation. As the smoke travels up, say words of letting go such as:

*Today I release what I don't want. I let go and let God do the work in this sacred experience. In this, I am healed and renewed. I open my heart to love, and I am blessed with peace, joy, and harmony.*

Once the paper has been burned and cooled, **you may choose to scatter or blow the ashes** into the wind or pour them into a body of water, away from you and your property.

### **Make a List for Tomorrow**

Once you have completed the ritual, now is a good time to consider the future. Set aside some time to journal or to [visualize what you want to take the place](#) of what has been released. What do you want to experience in life now? How do you want it to take shape?

[Write your intentions in a journal](#) or create a vision board. Put it in a safe place. Set a reminder on your calendar for next year to see how your vision has taken shape.

If you feel like it, consider [entering into a prayer for prosperity](#) with Unity Prayer Ministry for the year to come.