

Earth Grief and Gratitude Ritual

We consciously and unconsciously carry grief about the suffering of our earth and all our relations who crawl, fly, walk, and swim. Speaking our grief aloud brings it to the surface and provides us space to experience it directly rather than keeping it in the shadows.

Water is the medium in this ritual. It represents the boundless flowing forth of life, the endless cycling of this world, and the essential stillness at the heart of our life. It is transparent and still as though empty, it receives without judgment, and it flows freely. It sustains all forms of life.

To perform this ritual, you'll need a water vessel, a non-plastic bowl, and an offering from the natural world.

If you can, use a vessel that is aesthetically pleasing or that has a personal association to pour the water into the bowl. Don't use the water tap. Half full is fine.

The bowl is the container of all things, the shape of our world. You hold the entirety of the world when you hold the bowl.

Carrying the bowl with intention, find a place outdoors where you can sit quietly and let your energy around grief and gratitude gather.

When you feel ready, speak your grief to the water. It can receive it all. You can decide the volume and length of your speaking – follow your intuition. Be aware of the energy moving in your body. Let it flow into the water through your words and hands.

When you are ready, speak the gratitude that arises for you. It can be gratitude for your life, for the great earth, all living beings, community, ancestors, whatever feels alive for you.

When you are done, offer something from the natural world by placing it in the water. Dedicate the merit of the ritual to the well-being of the earth and to all beings past, present and future. When the time is right, take the bowl, always holding it with intention, and pour the water and offering onto the earth in a place that feels right to you. You might sing, chant, or otherwise vocalize while you do so.

If the bowl is compostable, please compost it. If it is not, then wash it by hand and put it away. Remain intentional.

You may find it helpful to journal after the ritual. Consider sharing your experience with someone who has also done the ritual. Give yourself time to let the ritual percolate through you.