

Casper ter Kuile, *The Power of Ritual: Turning Everyday Activities into Soulful Practices* (New York: HarperCollins, 2020). xiv + 205 pages. Hardcover. \$26.99

In *The Power of Ritual*, author Casper ter Kuile, a former Harvard Divinity School fellow, podcast co-host, and co-creator of the Sacred Design Lab, takes traditional practices and shows how he and others have “composted” them for contemporary life. He takes a bird’s-eye view of ancient traditional practices, diagrams them, and rewords them to make them more accessible to the uninitiated.

Ter Kuile highlights the necessity of intention, attention, and repetition and posits that it’s the combination of all three ingredients that transforms a habit into a spiritual practice or ritual. Our presence to all three ushers us into a greater Presence where the habit becomes a ritual, and hopefully the habit is not the only thing that is transformed—we are too (25).

This book is useful for any spiritual leader, educator, director, or counselor who could use language and ideas for students, clients, and patients who do not already have a religious or spiritual community or practices and who are longing for a way to see and live their life below the surface. It is well researched and pulls from many different traditions. It reads like a “how-to” or DIYWO (Do It Yourself With Others) book, and my copy is well dog-eared and underlined.

Although it is mentioned, I missed more emphasis on larger communal purpose. I still think we need people who take responsibility to ring the bell for large groups, to call us together and back to our deepest selves again and again. What are the rituals and the multiple layers of connection *for*? Who are our communities *for* in addition to ourselves and our like-minded communities? I hope that “[w]hen we can sink below the blur of habit, we can be present to that portion of our experience where we find deepest meaning” and that we will find ourselves increasingly making decisions to share power, resources, and love in ways that promote abundant life for all people (28). I think ter Kuile does too (25).

I was moved to tears reading another book a few months later called *How We Show Up: Reclaiming Family, Friendship, and Community* by Mia Birdsong (her website describes the book as “an invitation to community and models for connection”). If it’s ideas for everyday creative rituals that you want and need for yourself or others based on the framework of ancient human traditions, yes, check out ter Kuile’s book. If it is models for life-sus-

taining and flourishing connection based on mutual dependence inspired by Black folks and queer folks and the overlap, I highly recommend Birdsong's book.

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