



# *Rising Heart*

## *Ritual & Ceremonial Officers*

### **Self-Initiation Ceremony Planning Questionnaire**

Affiliated with the International Assembly of Spiritual Healers and Earth Stewards (SHES)

To help you focus your thoughts and generate ideas for the ceremony you've requested, please answer the following questions and return this to me. The next step will then be for us to talk in person or over the phone to create the ceremony. If you would like to symbolize something in the ceremony, but you aren't sure how, we can work together on that. These questions are a starting place. Please read through all the questions for an overview before you begin writing. You can copy and paste to create more room if you need for elaborating answers, then send them via email prior to discussing your ceremony more deeply with me, or print these documents and bring to our initial meeting/ prior to your ceremony. If there is not enough room for your thoughts in the space provided, please continue on another sheet of paper. In that event, please number your responses to correspond with the question number.

**The Self-Initiation Ceremony has four components:**

- 1) Becoming your own lover, best friend, and parent/child
- 2) Connecting with and committing to your deeper purpose
- 3) Uniting all the contradictory and conflicting aspects of yourself
- 4) Harmonizing your external relationships and circumstances

Pre-ceremonial Shamanic counseling is available upon request. These sessions can not only aid you pre-ceremony, but can assist you in deeper realizations and understandings for any of the following answers:

1. How did you hear about us? What made you choose us? How did you decide upon an Initiation Ceremony?

#### **Background**

What the ceremony is about — Why

2. Describe any pertinent events or stories that led to the desire/need for this ceremony, e.g., the story and significance of the rites of passage, the story that has brought you to initiate yourself through the Self-Initiation Ceremony, the story of what has brought you to desire a name change or to have a spiritual name be given to you, the circumstances leading to this

new home, job or career (home, office blessing or ceremony of employment transition), the story of life employment and its significance (retirement ceremony), any wonderful stories about your pregnancy or the decision to have a child (baptism christening or new parent ceremony), beginning of life ceremony during birth time, or end of life passing, celebration of life or funeral, etc.

Is there anything related to your story that you would like to share or symbolize in the ceremony? If so, how?

**In consideration of the four Self-Initiation Ceremony components:**

How do you see yourself becoming your own lover, best friend, and parent/child? What is your plan, your steps to manifest this for yourself?

What does it mean to you to connect with yourself and commit to your deeper purpose? How do you see that happening for yourself?

What do you see for yourself and how do you envision uniting all the contradictory and conflicting aspects of yourself?

What do you need to do to harmonize your external relationships and circumstances so you can blossom and create a sense of wholeness?

3. Describe how you imagine your life will be different after the ceremony. What positive expectations do we want to help embody/manifest/catalyze with the ceremony? Describe the new phase you will now be, "moving into," in your life.

Is there any way this vision can be symbolized or incorporated into the ceremony; If so, how?

4. What does this life change (Self-Initiation, rites of passage, new job/career, parenthood, birth blessing, christening, house blessing, end of life or celebration of life/funeral, name change or spiritual name, etc.) mean to you? How do you feel about it?

Are there any messages, rituals, symbols, analogies, songs, poems, etc., reflecting these feelings that can be shared in the ceremony? Please list them. Who will share them?

Will you be honoring any ceremonial participants or guests with meaningful gifts? Would you like help with this? Through Shamanic divination, I can assist you in understanding specifically what the meaningful gifts, symbols, and things of importance are, specific for those you have in mind of gifting. (For a fuller description of this service, please refer to the Shamanic section at risingheart.net.

5. What do you want to accomplish or manifest with the ceremony? (Legality, self-empowerment, closure, initiation, etc.).

6. Do you have any specific goals for yourself/yourselves in your (Self-Initiation Ceremony, rites of passage, new job/career, parenting, retirement, birth or end of life ceremony, etc.)?

Is there a way to incorporate those goals into the ceremony?

### **Specifics**

When, Where, Who, How, What

#### **When**

7. When will the ceremony take place? (Date and time)

Is there any specific significance of the date and time, e.g., the season, a holiday, an anniversary, etc.? Why? Would you like that special meaning explained in the ceremony?

#### **Where**

8. Where will the ceremony take place? What type of place? What is the physical address or location? (Indoors, outdoors, sanctuary, church, home, office, country club, Bed & Breakfast/Inn, natural setting, special location, etc.) If the location has special significance, what is that? Would this be explained in the ceremony? (Ex. a couple getting married at the place they met or became engaged.) Would you like any suggestions of locations to perform your ceremony?

#### **Who**

9. Who else will be participating in the ceremony? How do you envision this to occur? Ex., do you have children or other significant people whom you would like to participate in the actual ceremony? Would you like to include vows to be exchange to any children? How might they take part?

10. If you have special people who will be participating in the ceremony, will they be acknowledged in any way in the ceremony or listed in a program?

11. Who will be invited to attend the ceremony (family, friends, one's church community or other community, etc.)?

Will the ceremony be big or small (number of expected guests)?

Will it be public or private? (Some ceremonies are by invitation only. Some, such as funerals/memorials, may be listed in a local paper as open to the public for whoever knew the deceased in any way.)

12. Are there any loved ones who are unable to attend who you would like to acknowledge in their absence? If so, how?

13. Are there any relationships you wish to heal, or anything you wish to let go of, prior to the ceremony? What is it, whom is it with and what is the significance regarding your ceremony? Would you like help with this?

14. Are you part of a community/organization that is a significant part of your life? Would you want to include something in the ceremony that is relevant or meaningful to that organization? If so, what? (E.g., at the memorial service/funeral of a member of the V.F.W., fellow V.F.W. members often share readings pertinent to that connection, take part in the eulogy, and do a 21-gun salute at the cemetery, if there is a grave-side service.)

#### **How**

15. What mood do you want to create with the words, actions and rituals, e.g., formal or informal, joyous or thoughtful and reserved, etc.?

16. Describe how you have imagined the ceremony in your mind when you think about it. Paint me a mental picture of how you would like it to be. (This may be different from the next question about the actual physical appearance of the place.)

17. What will the setting be like? If you know the layout of the ceremony location and know how you would like the area to be arranged, drawing a diagram of the layout you would like would be helpful. The following questions may clarify your ideas about this:

Will there be an altar? Will there be any ornaments or objects of significance in the setting? Any to be actively incorporated into the ceremony? If so, what and how?

Will you have special gifts for your guests?

Where and how will the guest be situated? Seated or standing? If seated, will the layout be theater style or a circle or holding hands...?

Draw your diagram here:

18. Will there be assistants to seat the guests? If so, who (include relationship to you)?

19. How will you enter and exit? Will there be a processional and recessional?

20. What will you wear? Is there any significance to your attire that you would want explained in the ceremony? Would you want to request the minister to be dressed in particular attire? What will you ask the guests to wear, e.g., a dress code: formal, informal, casual, “come as you are,” or specific colors or styles? (Examples: Black or white to a funeral — depending on the mood you want to create, blue jeans or hiking boots or golf clothes to a retirement ceremony, white attire for an ordination, etc.)

How will you communicate this dress code to those invited? (Ex, if you are printing formal invitations, you may specify that dress code there.)

21. Will there be any guests with special needs? How might those be met? (Ex, wheelchair access and good view for handicapped guests or someone to sign the ceremony for a special deaf guest.)

**What**

22. What religious or spiritual traditions do you honor, if any?

What traditions, if any, do your parents, children or other significant guests practice?

Are there any of these traditions, symbols, rituals, prayers, that you would like to include in the ceremony (whether from your spiritual/religious background or otherwise)?

23. Do you have any other specific ideas, wishes or needs for the ceremony that haven't been covered yet?
24. Would you like to include music? What? Where? When? Live or recorded music? If live, who will perform? Would you like any suggestions of musicians or DJ's to hire? If recorded, does the location have a sound system set up, or will you need to provide that?
25. Would you like to include any poetry, reading or song that is meaningful to you? What? Where? When? Who will read/sing it?
26. Do you have any talents, hobbies or special interests that you would like to integrate into the ceremony somehow? What? How? (Ex, play or sing a song you've written for the occasion, share about the attire you made for the ceremony, read a poem you wrote pertinent to the ceremony, make a special ornament or decoration for the ceremony, etc. This may be something that is actively expressed in the ceremony — song, dance, poem — or passively present in the setting — ornament, poem in the program.)

27. Below are a few examples of some traditions, rituals and symbols which may be used in your ceremony, not all are listed; ideas, options customs and traditions are endless, and all are considered. Would you like to use any of these or integrate some other custom, ritual or symbol in your ceremony? If so, how? Are there ones that are listed that you would like to use? Are there ones that are not listed that you are interested in using? (As a reminder, these can be used in a traditional or nontraditional way, ex, at a memorial service, if the deceased had a love of banana splits and Mozart, and loved to make them for his friends while listening to his/her favorite music, a banana split accompanied by Mozart communion would be a meaningful and happy remembrance for everyone.) Or, if a deceased was a musician, you might want to have friends perform their songs for remembrance. Or, if a marrying couple is immersed into the Hawaiian culture, we can have hula dancing and a ukulele band at the wedding, and incorporate traditional Hawaiian rituals such as the Butterfly Release Ceremony. We can even do work together to bring forth information of a ritual symbols or a tradition that will be unique to you as a couple or as a person, or specific for your situation or ceremony. Please let me know here if you are interested.

- \* Invoking and opening the directions and creating sacred space.
- Banners, bells or singing bowls.
- Breaking of bread, candles, candle lighting, water, wine, rose, sand, breaking of glass, communion, mother's Hawaiian lei presentation, butterfly/dove release ceremony or hand blessing, or any other symbolic ritual.
- Celtic Hand Fasting, Infinity Knot, Fisherman's knot Celtic Trinity, Jumping the Broom or branch, Native American, children in the ceremony, vow exchange with children, honoring parents or deceased loved ones/remembrance.
- Communion, flowers, meditation, or prayer.
- Group blessing token or ring exchange singing, serenading or chanting or OMing in circle holding hands.
- Casting a circle vows (traditional or your own).
- Smudging (burning incense or sage for purification) rosemary water, blessed water, essential oils, or anointing.

#### **Extras**

Reminders of details that may be appropriate for your ceremony.

28. In need of beautiful brooms? [www.broommagic.com](http://www.broommagic.com)
29. Will you be creating a printed program for the ceremony?
30. Will you be placing an announcement of the event in any local newspapers or publications?
31. Will you be creating or ordering invitations for the guests?



32. Would you like recommendations of any of my favorite people & services? Musicians, photographers, invitation creators and event notifications, venues, location, musicians, CD duplication companies for custom gifts for your guests, DJ's, events staging, exquisite body painting for brides and bridesmaids, special crafters for custom rings and gift options, Wedding Planners, Beauticians, Spa Services, Pre-Ceremonial Counseling, local patisseries and catering? Hand crafted non-alcoholic specialty health drinks? Interested in any other specialty not listed?

Rising Heart Ritual & Ceremonial Officiants

[www.eugeneofficiant.com](http://www.eugeneofficiant.com)

Rising Heart Healing LLC., 492 East 13th Ave, #208 Eugene Oregon 97401

(phone/text) 541-349-0202

For immediate, response text Minister Kenneth Cater at 503-470-0069

(fax) 541-719-4281

hello@eugeneofficiant.com