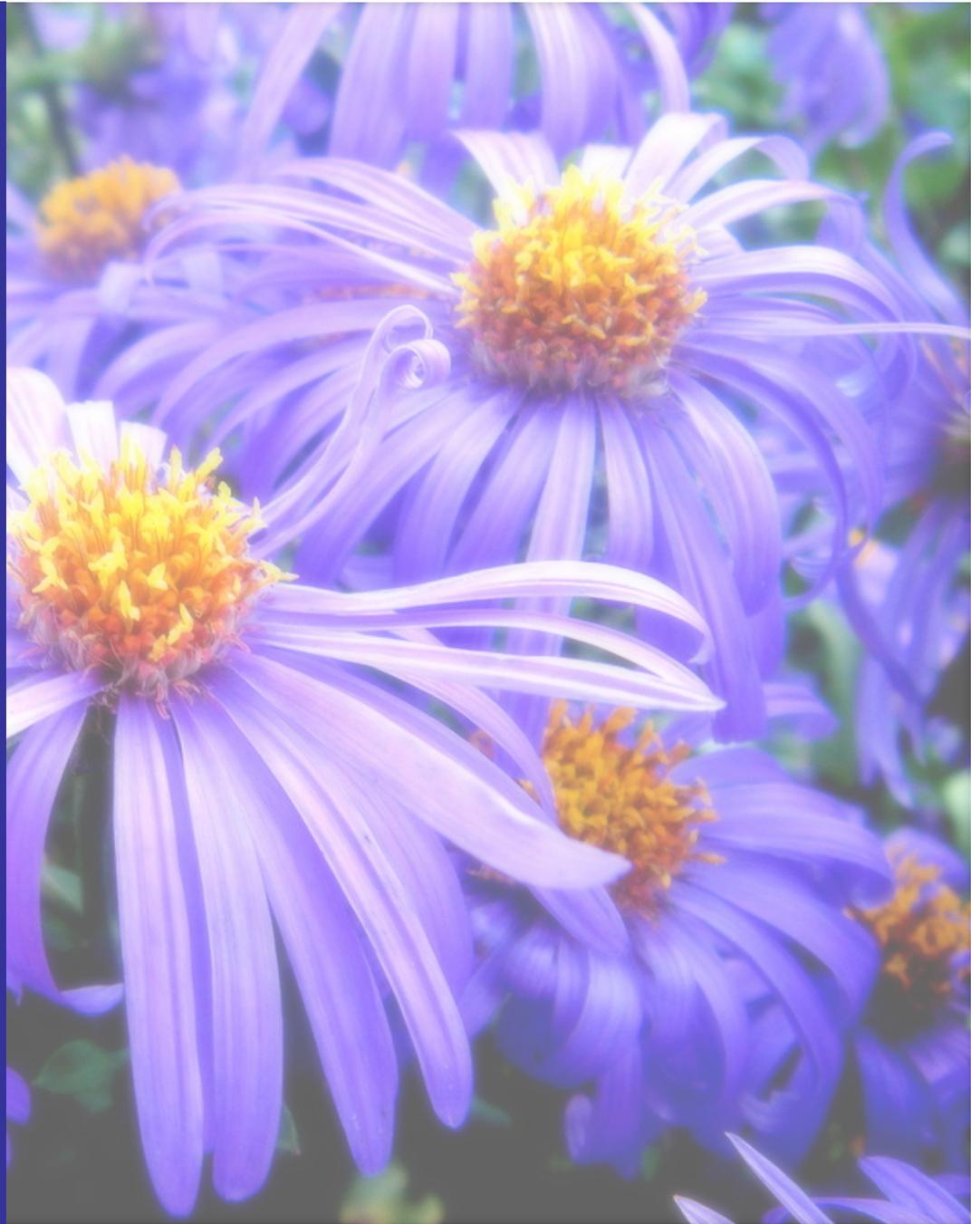


*On  
Starting an  
Altar  
Practice...*

*A Blossom Letter  
By Dr Amy Palko*



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*Hello there, Blossom...*

*I wanted to share my altar creation practice - a practice that is very close to my heart.*

*Altars have been something that I have been personally creating and recreating for a number of years now. In fact, if I'm honest, I don't remember a time when I didn't have an altar of some sort in my bedroom.*

*And with that admission, it's probably best to clarify exactly what I mean by 'altar'...*

*I'm aware that, for some, the word 'altar' summons ideas of religion or some kind of organized spirituality. That it refers to the area at the front of a church or temple where the*

#### **Quick Altar Tips**

**Designate a space for your altar where it can be seen on a daily basis. Hiding it away in a guest bedroom that you never go in will not help you to connect to this practice. Also, choose a space where it can sit undisturbed - you don't want to have to keep moving it around your home.**

priest, pastor, or minister preaches from. Either that or it refers to a place where devotees make their sacrifices, say their prayers etc.

That is not how I will be using the word.

For me, the word 'altar' is synonymous with 'sacred space': an area that I have chosen somewhere in my home that is specifically designated for my spiritual expression. A place where I can light my candles, say my affirmations, display my dreamboard and gather objects, images, cards, quotes etc. that have resonated with me for some reason or another.

So, what I want to invite you to do over the coming months is create a space where you can gather and arrange these objects, images etc. as a way of keeping your spiritual journey present -

#### Quick Altar Tips

If you choose not to practice altar gathering and creation in rhythm with the moon, choose another schedule that works for you, e.g. every first and third weekend of the month.

kind of like a physical reminder in our everyday space of what we've chosen to focus on.

Now, there are a few objects that remain constant on my altar:

- A plant (normally my orchid or bonsai tree)
- A mirror
- Family photos
- Candles
- My full moon dreamboard

For the dreamboard, I participate every month in Jamie Ridler's online dreamboard circle, and I would recommend that you give this practice a go to see if it works for you. I, personally, have found it to be incredibly effective and a beautiful way of connecting to my soul's messages and

**Quick Altar Tips**  
Try creating altars for specific purposes, for example a romance altar or a money altar. To see an example of this, check out my exclusive altar tour (video) - details at the end of this letter!

desires. Jamie is currently offering full moon dreamboard telecircles, and you may want to try this to give you a little extra guidance as you establish this powerful practice.

You can find out more at her website:  
<http://jamieridlerstudios.ca>

Other objects find their way onto my altar dependent upon whether or not I feel they belong there that month. I have a collection of crystals, and so I usually choose a couple to place on the altar. I also have a range of oracle cards, ornaments, goddess images, carvings, sculptures etc. which all make an appearance.

However, I also add objects that I find in nature or which I'm drawn to over a specific lunar cycle. So, for example, I often have

#### Quick Altar Tips

Trust your intuition. If it's telling you to put that penny you found on the street on your altar, do it!

feathers that I've found, or pebbles that I've pocketed. Sometimes, I'll pick up an inspirational postcard at a local café, or a poem from the poetry library, and I'll add it to the altar too. Little gifts will also feature; for example, if one of my children picks a flower for me, or a beautiful leaf, then that will be added too.

What I also do is, if a specific word keeps reappearing in various different mediums and settings, then I'll write it on a piece of paper and make sure it features in one way or another. Often, I'll include this word on my dreamboard, so I'll have a reminder of that word to ensure I stay alert to its lessons.

The way that I see this cycle of altar gathering, creation, gathering & recreation working is that

#### Quick Altar Tips

Treat yourself to a really beautiful set of oracle cards like Colette Baron Reid's Wisdom of the Hidden Realms cards, Brian Froud's The Faeries Oracle or Doreen Virtue's Message From Your Angels cards. Choose a card for each recreation of your altar.

as of the new moon, you begin to collect items that you are drawn to for whatever reason. Don't try and analyse what you are choosing. In the words of Mary Oliver 'let the soft animal of your body love what it loves', and don't question it too closely. Go with what feels right.

Then, on the full moon, take some time to remove the items from the altar that you feel need to be removed, and then start the process of arranging the items you've collected since the new moon in their place. Not everything that you've chosen will make it into the sacred space - that's perfectly all right. In fact, that's just the way it should be. Once again, go with the flow and don't over-analyse your choices; you can journal about the process later, but for the moment just let yourself choose and trust your intuition.

**Quick Altar Tips**  
Your altar is a beautiful place to enjoy a guided visualization. Why not include this in your regular altar practice!

Once it's all finished, and it looks just how you feel in your heart it should, you may want to take some time sitting in your space and allowing yourself just to be there in that space, in that moment. Light your candles, and sit in the silence. Notice how it makes you feel. What effect does it have on your body, on your breath, on your state of mind? Are you drawn to a few elements in particular?

And as the moon wanes you may wish to use this time to reflect on the gathering and creation process in your journal (scroll down for some journal prompts to help you out!), before the next new moon arrives, and you start the process all over again.

#### Quick Altar Tips

If you have candles on your altar, which you probably do, then please please please always remember never to leave naked flames unattended. Snuff them out before you leave your sacred space.

You may want to take a photograph to create a record for yourself as a reminder of your altar's various incarnations. If you feel moved to share your photos, I would love it if you added them to my Facebook page! Find me at:

[www.facebook.com/timetoblossom](http://www.facebook.com/timetoblossom)

*Sending you much love*

*Amy*

*xx*

*PS. I made this exclusive video tour of my current altar especially for you -*

<http://vimeo.com/28308236>

*[Password: bloombymoon]*

*PPS. If you have any questions at all about altars, moons, goddesses etc. please do get in touch with me at [amy@amypalko.com](mailto:amy@amypalko.com)*

Here are 9 prompts for you to revisit each full moon...

Can I discern a theme in the items that I gathered for inclusion in my altar?

Was I surprised by anything that I chose and why do I think that was?

*What did I choose to remove from my altar and why?*

*What did I choose to keep on my altar and why?*

*What did I expect to include on my altar, but didn't? Why do I think that was?*

*Do I feel that there's anything missing from my altar?*

*If I were to name this cycle's altar, what name would I give it?*

*How do I feel sitting in my sacred space, and how does this differ from last cycle's altar?*

*What is my altar's message to me for this cycle?*

*And the day came when the risk to remain tight  
in a bud was more painful than the risk it took  
to blossom. ~ Anais Nin*

*If you feel it's your time to blossom join Bloom by Moon to receive  
regular course material that invites you to center back in yourself by  
journeying through the lunar cycles.*

*For more details, check out <http://www.amypalko.com/sanctuary/>*