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Choreography of the Spirit: A High Holiday Activity for Couples

At Honeymoon Israel, we are in many businesses: the Israel tour business, the nurturing Jewish community business, and the innovation business. But most importantly, we are in the business of love. Our greatest joy is nurturing couples' relationships through Jewish wisdom. We are thrilled to present this specially-curated High Holiday guide for couples in hope that it brings you blessings of continually-deepening closeness, trust, and appreciation for your most important partnership.

May this new year be a year that opens the doors of your hearts to each other in new and special ways!

-Team Honeymoon Israel



Mystically speaking....

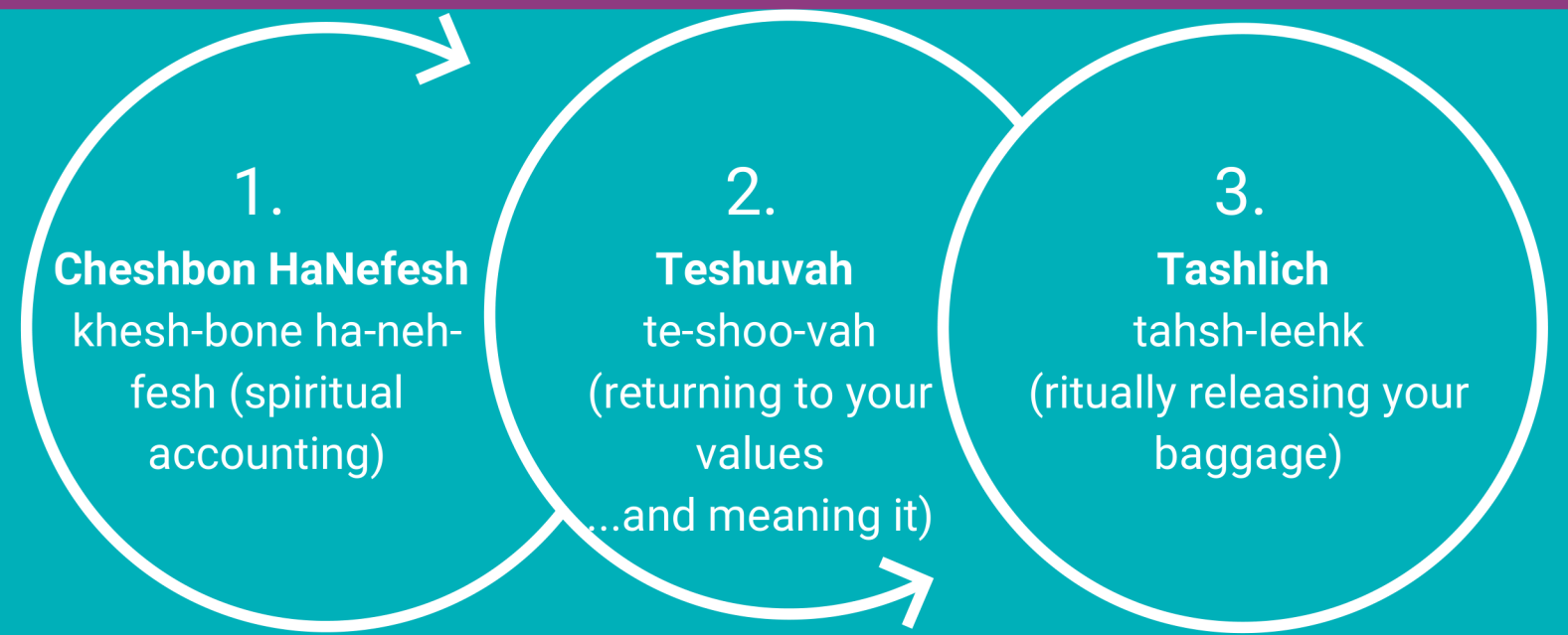
the Jewish High Holiday season brings with it a special opportunity to look inward. We use this time to account for all that has not served us, and for the ways in which we've messed up spiritually and practically.

Our entire tradition rests on the fact that human beings are complex and that we *all inevitably screw things up*. You are in excellent company if you had some missteps this year. For these reasons, the High Holiday season is a prime moment in the Jewish calendar year for couples in particular to take a step back, do a little reflection, and do a little spiritual damage control.

Luckily, Judaism has some choreography to support us in connecting and reconnecting with our beloveds. This ancient 3-step choreography doesn't have to be saved until the High Holiday season, and it's useful for friendships and non-romantic relationships as well!

The three steps

for Jewish relationship-healing are:



Everything you need to do this 3-step choreography of the spirit:



Something to write with &
something to write on



Bread crumbs, sticks,
leaves, or other organic
material



A body of water (or, if that isn't
accessible to you, a running faucet
or bucket of water in the back yard)

Pre-Ritual Conversation Guide for HMI Cohort Gatherings

(but also, you can do this on your own or
together with your partner)

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What is your connection to the concept of "ritual?"

What rituals are most important to you?
(Could be anything from your morning cup of coffee
to decorating a Christmas tree or lighting a
menorah)

Jewish tradition can be understood as:

a practical path to self-actualization, to the development of our character and the capacity to act more consistently in accordance with our highest selves.

The High Holiday season is considered an auspicious moment for the practice of *Cheshbon HaNefesh* (literally, an accounting of the soul).

Basically, it's a balance sheet of your spiritual highs and lows from the past year that will position you to manifest an even richer new year.

Sounds intimidating? It's actually pretty straightforward:

STEP 1: *CHESHBON HANEFESH*



Take a moment to reflect on your relationship with your partner over the last year. Use the prompts below as a jumping off point. You don't need to answer them all.

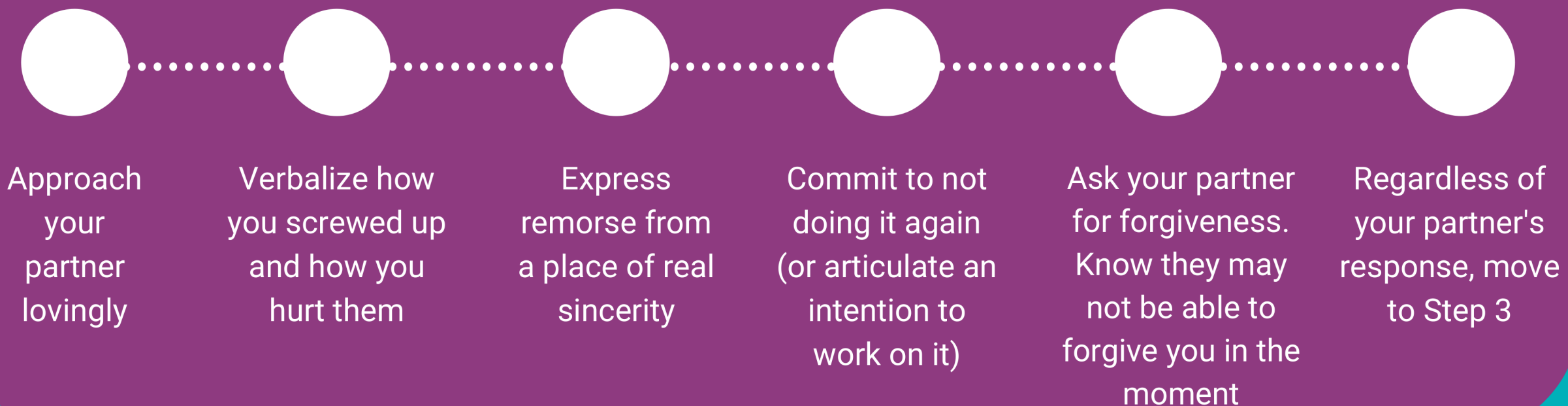
- In what ways did you grow closer to or farther apart from your partner last year?
- Were you as honest as you could have been with them?
- What, if anything, made it hard for you to show up for your partner in the way they needed you?
- What's one mistake you made last year with your partner you wish you could go back in time and fix?

In Hebrew, the act of repentance is called *teshuvah*, a Hebrew word translated as “returning.” Teshuvah is a specific practice of “returning” to your highest self and to the values that you care most about. Practically, teshuvah is done through accounting for your mistakes and apologizing directly in a specific and sincere way (diagrammed below) to the people you’ve hurt.

By taking active responsibility for our (inevitable) screw-ups, we elevate our relationships and come closer to ourselves and to the sacred people we love.

STEP 2: *TESHUVAH*

Choose one or two elements from your *Cheshbon HaNefesh* contemplation that you feel ready to ask your partner for forgiveness for in this moment. If it's a particularly sensitive topic, we recommend ensuring you have enough time, space, and privacy for a potentially deep conversation. If you are doing this as a part of an organized HMI group event, we recommend saving the heavier stuff for when you are at home. If you would like, start with something small and accessible.





Tashlich is an ancient Jewish ritual commonly practiced during the 10 days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It's designed to help us "cast off" our spiritual baggage from the previous year, so that we can enter the new year with a clean, metaphysical slate.

Tashlich involves going to a body of water and meditating on anything you want to release from your past year.

In this specific scenario, you will "release" the mistake you just apologized to your partner for. After, symbolically transfer your "baggage" onto a stone, leaf, or something else that's environmentally friendly and throw it into the water, thereby releasing yourself of all of its weight.

STEP 3: *TASHLICH*



Follow the steps below for a self-guided ritual or [click here](#) to listen to a 10-minute guided *tashlich* audio track recorded by one of our very favorite Honeymoon Israel educators, Deanna Neil.

● Hold your *tashlich* object (breadcrumbs, stones, leaves, sticks etc.) in your hands.

Approach the water. Look at the object in your hands.

Say aloud, even if you are whispering it, the mistake you made with your partner. Verbalize as honestly as possible how you hurt your partner and how you feel about it.

Set an intention to do better this year. Really mean it.

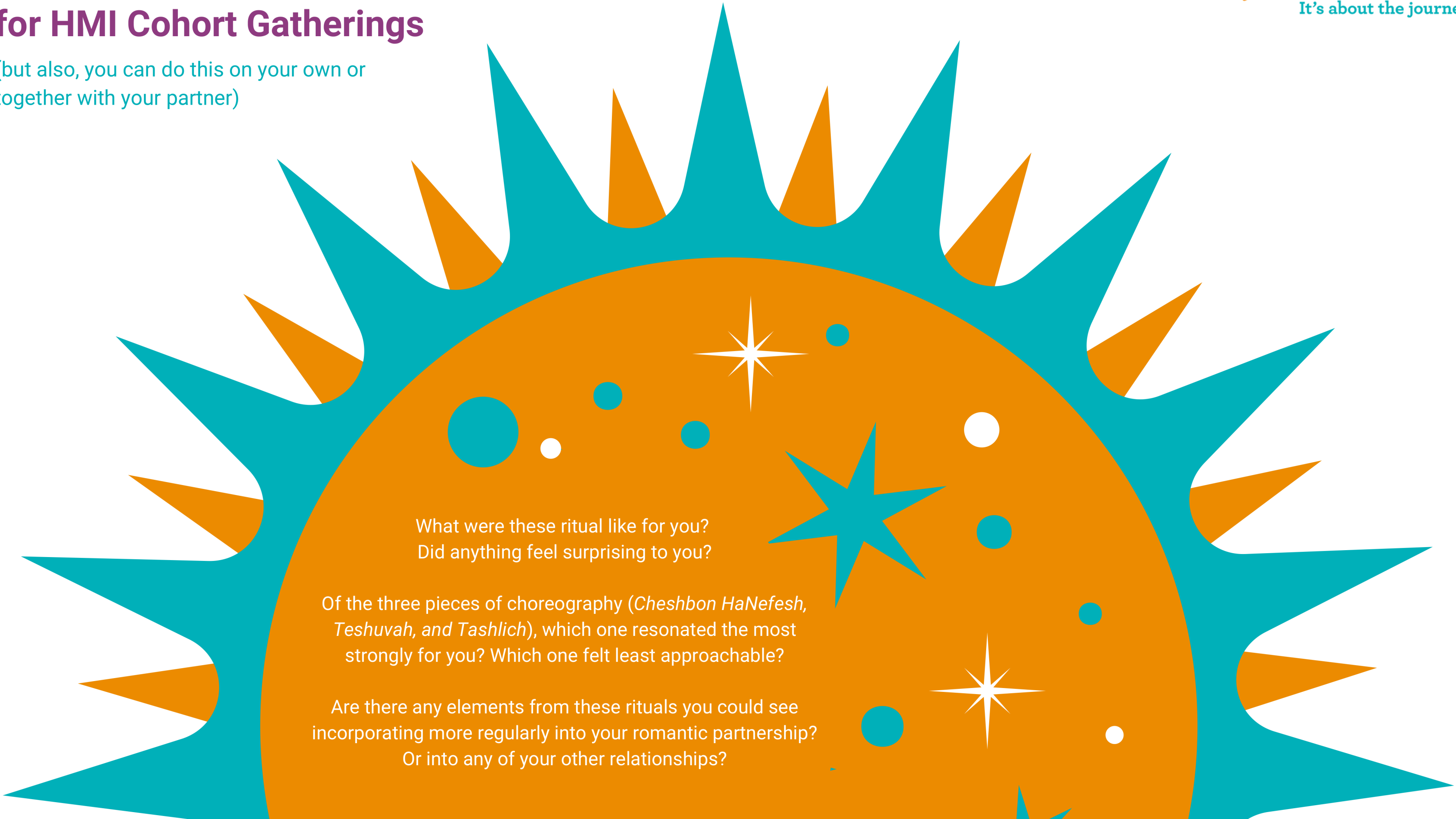
When you are ready, and *only* when you are ready, cast the object into the water.

Take a deep breath and watch your object as it is carried away by the water. Return to this moment throughout the year as a reminder of your intentionality and commitment.

Post-Ritual Conversation Guide for HMI Cohort Gatherings

(but also, you can do this on your own or
together with your partner)

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What were these rituals like for you?
Did anything feel surprising to you?

Of the three pieces of choreography (*Cheshbon HaNefesh*,
Teshuvah, and *Tashlich*), which one resonated the most
strongly for you? Which one felt least approachable?

Are there any elements from these rituals you could see
incorporating more regularly into your romantic partnership?
Or into any of your other relationships?