



Someone in my discord server recently asked, "are there any queer-friendly spiritual practices that don't cause religious trauma?"

As someone with two degrees in religion, (both bachelor's and post-graduate degrees), I'd say religion is an area of great personal interest and spiritual practices have been a hyper-fixation for many years. If I summarize all I've learned, I would say:

## **Spirituality is how humans make meaning out of life.**

So whatever is meaningful to you — rock on! You can try practices on, see if you like them, and take what you like and leave the rest. You don't have to develop a great "capital R Religious" belief to have spiritual practices that positively impact your mental health and how you make meaning of the occurrences in your life.

## Practices

The next thing I asked was, "have you ever tried any sort of meditation? Either an emptying one, a visioning one, or a loving-kindness visualization?" They replied they didn't really know the difference. So I wrote down some common practices, here is a non-exhaustive list:

### **Emptiness Meditation**

Mostly inspired by Buddhism and other eastern traditions, this focuses on emptiness and stillness, often focusing on the breath and presence. Meditation apps like Headspace often teach this technique with skills like noting, body scan, focused attention, visualization, resting awareness, reflection, skillful compassion, mindful breathing, counting breaths, and loving-kindness (see more below).

### **Loving-Kindness Meditation (Metta)**

Originally from mystic Judaism but also occurring in other traditions including 12 step recovery spaces, this is about visualizing love and kindness for oneself and radiating out through social spheres until you're loving the whole world. Can be used to shift feelings towards an enemy or someone who is really challenging to be around.

### **Walking Meditation and Gathas**

You can walk around in a labyrinth, practice yoga, try ecstatic dancing like Rumi, or even associate mantras with certain actions (aka practice gathas). There are many embodied and movement-based forms of meditation. (And going in-depth on these is beyond the scope of this article).

## **Grounding Practice Meditation**

I specifically use a pagan grounding practice where I visualize growing roots into the earth and bringing up the 4 or 5 elements as nutrients into myself, then sprout branches up into the stars receiving cosmic star energy – (I'd probably be better at this if I understood astrophysics more), then I mix those in my pelvic bowl or "cauldron", and release the extra back to the earth as a blessing (or send it to someone(s) or a cause that needs a blessing). This can be done as a precursory exercise for the final one I'm mentioning today, Trance and Astral Projection.

## **Visualizing Meditation/Trance (advanced: astral projection)**

This tends to be more pagan and perhaps indigenous traditions inspired, this is about a journey in the spiritual realm, either only through visualization or by more advanced forms of astral projection (the soul going on a journey). This can be aided by psychoactive substances but they are not a prerequisite. Peyote and Shrooms are some of the many things folks may use to practice this category of meditation.

## Further Thoughts on Trance

I suppose the simplest way to answer "How does one know they're trancing?" is "was it your intention to trance"? I like to have a quiet space, sit in a position I can maintain for a while, not be cold, and use some visualization to enter. Maybe I start with a grounding practice and then one of many entering possibilities. The following are just some personal ones from my pagan spiritual practice, I don't know that there is any single "Religious" perspective on these practices, pagans are pretty independent in their beliefs:

If it is to visit some sort of guide or trusted spirit, I will do a rainbow invocation, imagining I'm in a forest or natural setting, walking along a path, and noticing flora and fauna of the colors of the rainbow, in order (ROYGBIV), at the end of the colors I'll find a door, and inside will be a space containing the beginning of the "meat" or main purpose of that particular journey (where I meet my spiritual guide, power animal, a deity I'm visiting, an ancestor, etc).

1. A place of power is another place to journey to. It is kinda like a clubhouse in the spiritual realm that you can visit time and again. It can even serve as a "home base" for the more advanced "astral projection". Think about Pokemon Legends: Arceus — you get a base camp and then you can go any direction and see different things depending on where you go! The second part of this one is the most open-ended of the ones I've listed. It's like a safari or explorer's adventure.
2. Divination-based practices are another entry into a trance. I suppose you could journey into a tarot card! Here is a very simple daily practice: pull a card and meditate on it. I've even known witches who trance into fire or running water. Meditating on the results of rune work, pendulum work, or other divination practices can also deepen the understanding of your reading.

There are many spiritual traditions that use some form or another of meditation, it is pretty neat!

## **Thanks for reading! Want more content like this?**

I used to have a whole website where I would offer guided meditation along these lines as a paid service. I've since shuttered my priestex offerings, mostly because it would take too many spoons to go recruit customers, but if anyone is genuinely interested in something like this sometime, let me know. I also am officially a Reverend and can perform weddings and funerals. I've done both pagan and Christian ceremonies for folks so far. You can contact me via email at: [gendermeowster@gmail.com](mailto:gendermeowster@gmail.com)