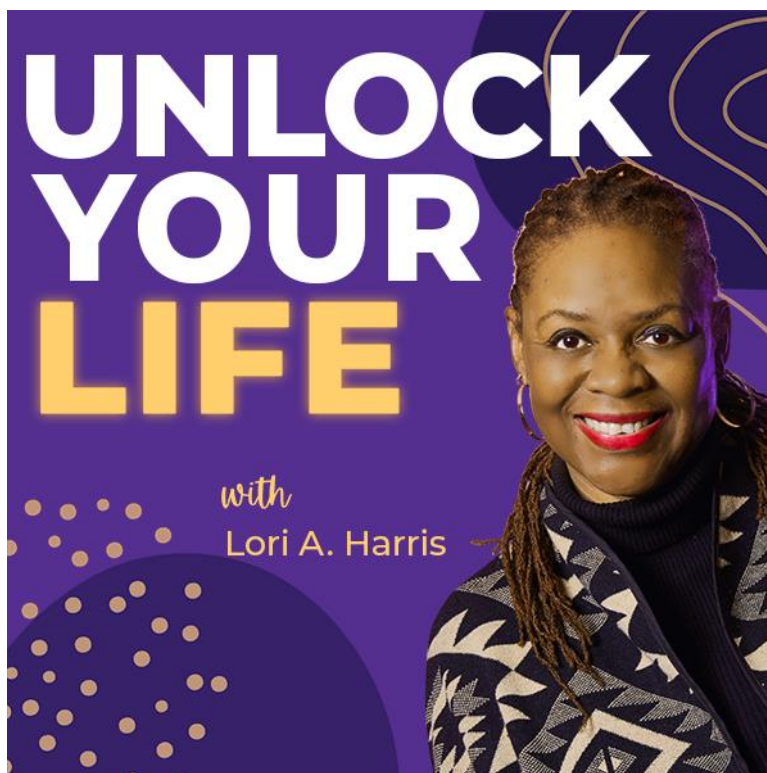


Ep #16: Creating a Sacred Space in Your Home



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Lori A. Harris

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Welcome to episode 16 of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. I'm so excited. This month we're talking about rituals, and today we're going to talk about creating an altar. A sacred space within your own home, a special place, a quiet place. Whatever is brought to the altar is altered. So let's get going.

Welcome to the *Unlock Your Life* podcast, a podcast for highly successful visionary women who want more out of life. If you feel that ache of unfulfillment in your soul, you're in the right place sis. Join life mastery consultant Lori A. Harris as she teaches you how to stop living for others and finally put yourself first. Let's dive into today's show.

So what's going on? I'm really excited because my family has been going through a little bit of a health challenge as a collective, and we've rounded the corner. There's no more excessive, really challenging treatment, and we've gotten to the other side. All the surgery is done, all the medication is done, and my family can move forward with having a life that gives us life.

So we're pretty close. When one person goes through something, we generally go through it together. We're very supportive of one another. So with this new transition, we're walking into the next phase of life with joy and Thanksgiving, and I'm very, very grateful.

So every week we talk together, and I share tips and tools and things that I've observed that I use that I think might be helpful for you. I share stories and ideas that I would love to have the impact of enhancing your life. It's always so heavy. Today I want to talk about building an altar or creating a sacred space within your home. I want to talk about it in a way that will be fun for you. You will create a space for yourself of refuge.

So I came from a very fundamentalist very kind of restrictive, conservative, religious background as a child. So I know that there are people that sometimes have apprehension about building a spiritual practice and

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wonder if it's okay. Does it mean that you're engaging in some kind of ritualistic idolatry? I don't mean that at all.

What I am hoping you will experience here is an opportunity to create a safe zone for yourself to come back to yourself. So it could even be like the immunity zone of your home. So I'm in my breathing room now. So you're not allowed to yell at me. I'm in my breathing room now. So you can only come here with loving kindness.

You can come to my breathing room and join me in my breathing room if you have a question that you're asking spirit to help you answer. But this is a place of refuge. You can create that for yourself, for your family, for your home as a way to remember to remember. It's a safe zone for you.

So let's talk about building an altar. When we are building our ritual practice, we are reminded there are lots of places in our life that rituals occur. Sometimes they're very formal, and they might happen in a church or a temple or sacred place.

These kind of rituals could be with a baby and a christening or naming your baby and presenting your baby to the community and asking them for support and guidance as you take on the sacred duty of parenting another life. So naming ceremonies are very common in African and Asian traditions. So maybe you have a ritual with a naming ceremony.

We've all gone to a wedding and participated in witnessing the joining of two spirits together to become one and something new and different and being presented to the world as such. We've been to funerals. That's a ritual as well. There are additional rituals that I'm aware of. Rituals that suggest that a male identified person is coming into manhood. Or vice versa, a young girl is going to become a woman. We have all kinds of rituals.

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When we talk about creating a safe space in our home, I want this to be all fun and all peaceful and all love. So let's create a space where love lives within your home. Let's make an altar because whatever's brought to the altar is altered and it's not the same as when it started.

So I have an altar. I have an altar in my home. It's the place where I do my daily meditation practice. It's kind of a combination of mindfulness, meditative space. I have my meditation cushion. I'm looking at it right now. I have a candle, plants, and water. So what that suggests is I have a representation of the four elements. We have earth. We have water. We have fire. I think air is kind of always there all around us. Air is what will give a candle power. When you deny it air, then it loses the fire. It loses its power. Air is always having its impact on the water as it evaporates.

Now when I do my meditative practice, I usually use some type of book for a meditative thought for inspiration. One of the books that I love to work with is *Acts of Faith* by Iyanla Vanzant. Daily meditations for people of color. Sometimes I have a card. With my card, I use a card written by Louise Hay who was a very special woman who died a few years ago who became famous for the work she did loving on people suffering from AIDS. She's the author of a very powerful and important book called *You Can Heal Your Life*.

I have a set of what she calls power cards. A deck of 64 affirmation cards to help you find and boost your inner strength. What does Louise have to say about the cards? "Affirmations are like planting seeds in the ground. It takes some time to go from a seed to a full grown plant. It is so with affirmations. It takes some time from the first declaration to the final demonstration. So be patient." That came from Louise Hay.

So another set of cards that I have was gifted to me by two of my clients, China and Ebony. These cards are called the I Am Everything affirmation card deck. It's 30 cards created by Tarisha Clark, a Black woman. She

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suggests that you read one card aloud every day for 30 days and carrying that feeling with you. Shuffle the deck, pull one card, and receive your needed message. I also have a set of cards by Danielle LaPorte called Truth Bombs. They're just statements of truth. One of my favorite ones that she's written is called love rewards the brave. I love that.

Other books that I use. One is called *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. It's the very first book that I ever purchased by Thich Nhat Hanh. I've had this book for probably 25 years. I love it. The book that I use most often is *The Book of Awakening* by Mark Nepo. So I will include links to all of these books and references in the show notes. So I encourage you to go to the show notes if you have any questions about it.

So what do we do at an altar? Well what we're working on is creating a sacred space. So we bring the four elements to the altar. You might want to have a set of beads, mala beads. Those can be used as part of your meditation practice as a way of kind of centering yourself and also it serves to mark time. So you can have your mala beads.

You can bring a journal to the altar. The journal could be a place where you can record insights and understandings that you have received at the meditation sight. You can also write a question. Take a question to the land of the solution. Get quiet and see what your intuition has to tell you. Sometimes people like to have sacred representations, little statues.

Now, I also, again, want to talk about the purpose of having a special space in your home. It's a reminder of your intention and who you want to be. It's a safe space for remembering to have a moment of quiet. When you think about having a statue of what some might call a deity, I want to invite you to a way of holding that and contemplating that. It's not worshipping an idol god, which I know there are people in my community that would have some nervousness about that. It's not that.

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It represents for me a representation of how I want to be in the world. So there's a set of pearl mala beads that if you see me, 90% of the time I'm going to have those beads around my neck. I wear them because they're pretty, but I also wear them because I want to remind myself of my intention in who I want to be.

So if you were to come to my home and see a statue that is a representation of the Buddha, I would want you to understand that I don't worship the buddha. The buddha statue is in my home to seek and aspire to be peaceful and to be a peaceful spirit. So when you are creating and building your altar, you can bring statues or small carvings that are representations of the spiritual embodiment that you aspire to hold. Or the questions that you might want to bring to your altar.

Some people have a statue of an entity called Ganesh. That's an entity that works out problems and obstacles. You might want to have Guanyin or Fortuna. These are female goddesses who represent prosperity and abundance and fruitfulness. I love that word. Fruitfulness.

This is an opportunity to have a quiet space within your home. So I have pictures of my family members. I have all of my grandparents represented on one shelf, and my mentor Jack is on that shelf with my grandparents. Then I have another shelf with photographs of my ancestors in the form of my parents who have transitioned and predated me in their transition. It's helpful to me because I love to see them on my altar. It's peaceful.

I have a Ghanaian stool, which reminds me of my heritage. I have a singing bowl that I use as a gong. A gong comes with a wooden mallet or stick. We don't strike the gong. We invite it. We invite the bell. In inviting the bell, we are marking time and saying at this moment, I've decided to give attention to this moment and to my breath.

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So I invite you to create a sacred space for yourself, and mark the time for yourself to say, “This is a brand new moment. This moment has never been seen before. This moment has never been lived before. This moment is a beautiful moment, and I relish it. I go in within myself and I notice my lungs in how they fill with air and provide energy and sustenance to every part of my body and sending this energy to all of my blood vessels.”

Having a sacred space in your home can be a fun and beautiful thing. I invite you to bring some fun to your mindfulness practice. Spirit and you love to have fun in the unique way that shows up for yourself. So I would love for you to shoot me an email. Let me see photographs of your altar. I want to see what you did, what did you come up with? What does it look like? Shoot me an email at lori@loriaharris.com.

So we've reached the end of another episode of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. This month we're talking about creating rituals and bringing attention to being the person that we want to be and bringing awareness to our daily activities. We can do it with ritual. A fun way to do that is by creating an altar. When we make an altar, we are going to do what resonates for us. It's going to become sacred because we treat it as though it's sacred.

One way to approach it is to come to your altar, identify a space that's going to be an altar, and have representation of the four elements. Fire, earth, wind, and water. Water can be actual water or maybe you have a seashell from a special trip. Then you want to continue with having perhaps a text that helps you to remember how you want to show up in the world. I provided some suggestions for sacred texts that you can have.

When I say sacred texts, it can be things that are contemporary that have been written recently by authors that we know and love. They can also be sacred texts from your religious tradition whether that be from the Bible, the Quran. I'm going to mess this up, but I'm going to try. Bhagavad Gita. I'm

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sorry. I'm not good at pronouncing that. I struggle with that. I also use a sacred text that is analysis of Buddhist sutras that's written by Thich Nhat Hanh called *Awakening of the Heart*. It's a little bit challenging, but it's also incredibly inciteful. I'll link that in the show notes as well.

So you have your sacred texts. You're going to have your altar with your journal. So you'll have a writing instrument, pen or pencil, and perhaps some photographs. Now you could even make an altar that travels with you. I have a travel altar as well. I have a small singing bowl that I take with me and a photograph of my dad and a little piece of cloth that is a hanky that belonged to my grandmother. So your sacred practice can travel with you. I invite you to bring a little fun to your practice and make it enjoyable.

You've reached the end of another episode of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast. If you enjoyed this episode, I invite you to go to the website, rate and review the show. You can find information on how to do that at loriaharris.com/podcastlaunch. There you'll learn how to give me a rating, subscribe, and review the show. I would love it if you give me a five star rating, but any feedback you can offer to make this show valuable and helpful is always appreciated.

Well, this is it. It's your life. Make it a great one. Thanks again.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *the Unlock Your Life* podcast. If you want more information on how you can transform your life and do it quickly, visit loriaharris.com. See it on the next episode of the *Unlock Your Life* podcast.