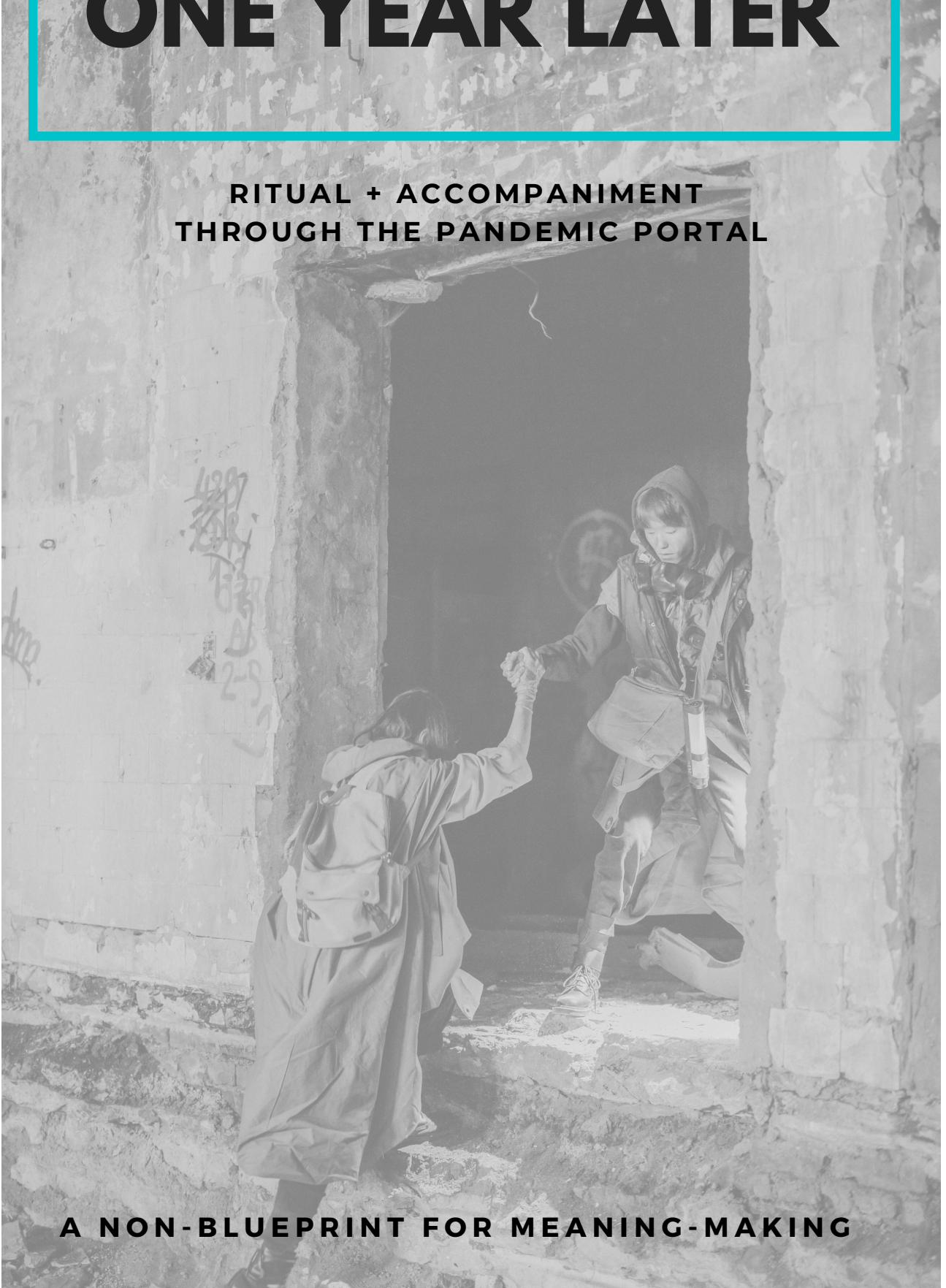


ONE YEAR LATER

RITUAL + ACCOMPANIMENT
THROUGH THE PANDEMIC PORTAL

A NON-BLUEPRINT FOR MEANING-MAKING



“Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.

...We can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world. And ready to fight for it.”

-Arundhati Roy



This is intended for anyone who is searching for ritual and reflection to mark the pandemic, with the hopes of emerging on the other side with deeper courage, compassion, and commitment. What follows is not a blueprint, but a few “ways in” to mark the moment. Use what's helpful and leave the rest; do it alone or with companions - make this time yours.

Whatever scope or duration you're working with, choose a time and space that will somehow set this moment apart. Ritual is a doorway into a different realm of possibility, best accessed by stepping outside of daily rhythms and the trance of the familiar.

This was adapted from a longer piece of writing. Find it at www.adamhorowitz.com/writing/portal.

WELCOME

AN INVITATION TO RITUAL HOLDERS OF ALL KINDS - YES, YOU!

The metaphor of the *portal* invites us to examine COVID-19 as a collective rite of passage: If we choose, we can claim COVID-19 as a collective rite of passage into a more just and loving world; a moment not just of commemoration, but of initiation—a threshold crossing for individual and collective transformation.

Unlike a traditional rite of passage, no one or group is holding this container for us, and so we are paradoxically tasked with being both initiates and guides.

But there's good news! You don't need to be ordained as clergy to decide to offer up some kind of ritual to mark one year of COVID quarantine. **Any one of us can create moments of ritual and reflection that will support in our emerging on the other side of pandemic with deeper courage, compassion, and commitment.** And it will require many of us stepping into that dual role of ritual-holder and participant, to access the medicine of this collective rite of passage.

In that spirit, we invite you to consider:

1. What ritual action might you want to create in your own life or community to mark one year of pandemic—to name the learnings from this transition time, and to cross through the portal?

2. What *forms of accompaniment and accountability* might you want to engage in the months ahead—to ensure that the transformative potential of the portal is not lost to the impending siren calls of a return to normalcy?

"Let me not miss the chance to mark the moment and to let the moment mark me.

Let me not come crawling out of the chrysalis still a caterpillar. (Or, at least not the same caterpillar.)

-Adam Horowitz

May we have the courage to mark the moment and let the moment mark us. May we have the bravery to see and to be the light on the other side. And by crossing the portal together, may we initiate one another into an expanded capacity to direct our life energy in service of our highest collective calling.

THREE ELEMENTS

MARKING ONE YEAR OF GLOBAL PANDEMIC

Here are some reflection prompts for three thematic elements that may be helpful to incorporate, however you decide to mark the moment.

Honoring Grief

- What is the grief you need to attend to?
- Where is grief living in you, and how do you want to acknowledge or be witnessed in it?

Naming What's Been Revealed and Learned

- What ruptures have been made ever-more apparent in society over the last year—and what commitments will you make to be a part of healing and repair?
- What of your own patterns, habits, and stories have you observed this year that you want to transform? What do you want to continue?
- Who or what has been a source of resilience, nourishment, or joy this year? How will you express your gratitude?
- What was it like to so thoroughly lose control this year?
- Was there any kind of strange magic present in this year? How might you cultivate that moving forward?

Crossing the Threshold

Whether alone or with a group, find an embodied way to "move through the portal" —leaving behind what needs to be shed, carrying with you the learnings and legacies that will support in the next chapter, and moving toward the higher possibility that's calling.

WAYS IN

SOME POSSIBLE MODALITIES TO TRY

Honoring Grief

- What wisdom does your culture or lineage offer around moving through grief—and how might you apply that now?
- Consider ways in which the elements can be your allies in honoring grief: burying grief in earth, letting it flow in water, transforming it in fire, letting it go in wind.
- Draw inspiration or activities from the Artist Grief Deck, “an arts-based toolkit for communal grieving in a time of social isolation.”

Naming What’s Been Revealed and Learned

- Consider journaling, making art, or writing poetry.
- Write a postcard from 20 or 50 years from now looking back at the new choices you/we made in 2021.
- Use natural elements to symbolize what you’re leaving behind and what you’re moving toward.
- Create an altar full of the “signposts” that will guide your path from here.
- Dance or embody the liminal time we're in.
- Thwart traditional modes of meaning-making entirely, exploring the strange magic, doing something unexpected.

Crossing the Threshold

- Find a way of crossing the threshold that feels authentic to you and the lineages you draw from.
- Who or what do you want to be witness to this threshold crossing? Consider other participants, but also nature, Spirit, ancestors, future ones.
- Upon crossing the threshold, having said yes to a renewal of commitment and purpose, what kind of joy and celebration is possible? Perhaps there’s song, dance, poetry writing, reflection, or praise?

ACCOUNTABILITY

FINDING GOOD COMPANY

After marking the moment through ritual, what structures might you create to integrate the truth from this liminal time, such that your way of being in the world shifts accordingly?

- **Create a practice group** - from a weekly phone call to a monthly article read
- **Continue to deepen your relationship with the non-human world** that has sustained you this year. What specific commitment can you make to help care for the land and beings that nourish you?
- **Take action to dismantle the systems**—of white supremacy, racialized capitalism, patriarchy, extractivism, etc.—that have led to such extraordinarily uneven distribution of suffering this year, and every year. If you're not already, join the efforts of grassroots organizing and mutual aid groups in your area—and follow the lead of national efforts like the Poor People's Campaign, NDN Collective, Movement For Black Lives, and the New Economy Coalition.
- **Commit to joy and community, despite it all.** As we dream of and co-create another world, radical joy and beloved community are both the means and destination.
- **Reach out!** Be in touch: If this inspires you in some way, and you end up creating some kind of ritual, reach out to hello@nunsandnones.org.



**May we have the courage to let this moment mark us.
May we have the bravery to see and to be the light on the other side.**