**Ritual/ introduction dokusan (personal interview)**

It is not a coincidence that zen brims with ritual. Like all rivers run to the sea, all rituals in zen lead to one end: increasing our awareness and concentration, enabling us more and more to think what we want to think, feel what we want to feel and become one with who we are and what we want to do. (p147)

In what way exactly can an age-old ritual contribute to learning to think what you want to think? (p147)

* Rituals connect. (p147)
* Rituals are perfect for training our concentration. (p148)
* Rituals make difficult situations easier to handle, they smoothen transitions. (p148)
* Rituals have a clarifying, enlightening effect; they serve us as a mirror. (p148)
* Rituals are an effective and positive form of conditioning.. (p148)
* Another characteristic of rituals is that on the one hand they connect, but on the other – just because of that – they exclude. (p148)

Appropriate finetuning brings about a beautiful flowing movement…. It has the quality of fine music which harmonizes perfectly with the accompanying movements; an equally sublime and subtle manifestation of interconnection. You hear and you are being heard, everyone is equally important. (p149)

The ultimate goal of every ritual is its spontaneous performance. Spontaneously stemming from your abdomen, your centre. (p153)

Spontaneity is not the same as impulsive or thoughtless action; it is not rashly following your impulses, nor reacting blindly to stimuli. It is more matured than that. (p153)

Once we have mastered the techique so well that we are no longer preoccupied wit hit, we can meet the challenge of the moment again with the openness of a child. (p153/154)

As soon as we execute a ritual dutifully and mechanically it is as good as dead… Every time we change to intensive preparation and practice, the ritual lives, it shows vitality. (p158)

Practice: Many people have good memories of old traditions and customs around different holidays and anniversaries. When these have fallen into disuse, or have been replaced by commercial alternatives, we miss the magic of the ritual. Try to think of a ritual you would like to restore in your life.