

Reader's Workshop: Exploring Rituals and Routines

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Quotes about Rituals and Routines

A **routine** is functional. There is stuff that needs to get done, and your routine is the steps that you take to do it. A **ritual** is also a series of steps – but it's a sequence of carefully edited, selected steps, with a side benefit. The side benefit might be relaxation. Feeling grounded. A spiritual connection. A sense of nourishment. A sense of purpose. Or pure enjoyment. The major difference between routine and ritual, as I see it, is the meaning you attach to the series of steps.

Amanda Cook

Classroom routines tend to be explicit and goal-driven in nature. Their adoption usually represents a deliberate choice on the part of the teacher. Rather than emerging over time, classroom routines are more likely to be designed and taught overtly. Routines are crafted to achieve specific ends in, what is generally expected to be, an efficient and workable manner. Whereas rituals and habits can be carried out without our full awareness, classroom routines tend to be well known by all participants.

Ron Ritchhart – Intellectual Character

Research shows that student achievement is improved when students are actively focused on educational goals and this is made possible by establishing appropriate rituals, routines and procedures at the beginning of the school year. When students understand and see the purpose, they accept responsibility for their learning. Students are guided to independence and view their teachers as facilitators of learning. The learning experience becomes more task-oriented and predictable and therefore leads students to learn to their highest potential.

Rituals, Routines and Procedures in a Standards-Based Classroom

Rituals help students connect with each other and, when used consistently, become routines that can help with classroom management. When students know what to expect, they have an easier time understanding what is expected of them. Rituals can provide a moment during which students are together as a community and the teacher can then work with the positive emotional state it creates.

Andrew, T. – Freedom to Fail

The word "ritual" derives from the **Latin ritualis**, "that which pertains to rite". Rituals are actions, activities, or ceremonies repeated on a regular basis that have specific meaning or significance and that reinforce a desired behavior.

The word "routine" derives from the French **routine**, "usual course of action, beaten path", from **route**, "way, path, course." Routines help learners go about the job of learning and include the procedures, processes, or patterns of action that facilitate the accomplishment of a task.

Compiled from Various sources

Creating a routine gives us a sense of security. Rituals demand attention to process as well as to affect. These two support patterns that help to structure our lives—routine and ritual, and they are not the same. Routine means habits that give form to our daily lives—brushing our teeth, changing our underwear, eating at specific times, making appointments. Routine requires discipline, and it begins very early. It sustains us as we age. Ritual connects us to our community and to society in general. Routine reinforces our sense of control over our everyday lives. We need both routine and ritual. Without routine, we are beset with decision-making over the smallest, most mundane aspects of daily life; without ritual, we deprive ourselves of connecting with other members of our tribe or social group.

R. Curtis – "Routine and Ritual: Two Pillars As We Age

I begin each day of my life with a ritual; I wake up at 5:30 A.M., put on my workout clothes, my leg warmers, my sweatshirts, and my hat. I walk outside my Manhattan home, hail a taxi, and tell the driver to take me to the Pumping Iron gym at 91st street and First Avenue, where I workout for two hours. The ritual is not the stretching and weight training I put my body through each morning at the gym; the ritual is the cab. The moment I tell the driver where to go I have completed the ritual. It's a simple act, but doing it the same way each morning habitualizes it—makes it repeatable, easy to do. It reduces the chance that I would skip it or do it differently. It is one more item in my arsenal of routines, and one less thing to think about.

T. Sharp – The Creative Habit

Authentic rituals and routines
 lead to
 committed, proficient, independent readers and writers
 while
false rituals and artificial routines
 lead to classroom mindlessness and uninspired,
 dependent readers and writers.

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Rituals and Routines that Support Readers

Conferring	Workshop Structure	Ownership of Text
Thinking Strategy Instruction	Reader's Notebooks	Stamina and Endurance

Creating a culture of thinking, in which all members develop a sense of trust and safety, is hard work
 and, like the prairie ecosystem, sometimes difficult to establish without
persistence, patience, and practice.

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Not Yet My Mother

Yesterday I found a photo
of you at seventeen,
holding a horse and smiling
not yet my mother.
The tight riding hat hid your hair
and your legs were still the long shins of a boy's.
You held the horse by the halter
your hand a fist under its huge jaw.
The blown trees were still in the background
and the sky was grained by the old film stock,
but what caught me was your face,
which was mine.
And I thought, just for a second, that you were me.
BUT then I saw the woman's jacket,
nipped at the waist, the ballooned jodhpurs,
and of course the date, scratched in the corner.
All of which told me again,
that his was you at seventeen, holding a horse and
smiling, not yet my mother,
although I was clearly already your child.

By Owen Sheers

Hardware

My father always knew the secret
name of everything--
stove bolt and wing nut,
set screw and rasp, ratchet
wrench, band saw, and ball
peen hammer. He was my
tour guide and translator
through that foreign country
with its short-tempered natives
in their crew cuts and tattoos,
who suffered my incompetence
with gruffness and disgust.
Pay attention, he would say,
and you'll learn a thing or two.

Now it's forty years later,
and I'm packing up his tools
(If you know the proper
names of things you're never
at a loss) tongue-tied, incompetent,
my hands and heart full
of doohickeys and widgets,
watchamacallits, thingamabobs.

By Ronald Wallace

A Room in the Past

It's a kitchen. Its curtains fill
with a morning light so bright
you can't see beyond its windows
into the afternoon. A kitchen
falling through time with its things
in their places, the dishes jingling
up in the cupboard, the bucket
of drinking water rippled as if
a truck had just gone past, but that truck
was thirty years. No one's at home
in this room. Its counter is wiped,
and the dishrag hangs from its nail,
a dry leaf. In housedresses of mist,
blue aprons of rain, my grandmother
moved through this life like a ghost,
and when she had finished her years,
she put them all back in their places
and wiped out the sink, turning her back
on the rest of us, forever.

By Ted Kooser