

The Purpose of an Altar

The purpose of an altar in your home can be as simple as reminding you to take time for serenity each day.



If you didn't grow up with an altar in your home, having one now may seem like an exotic and unattainable idea. Yet having an altar does not have to be complicated or difficult, nor does it need to be based on a religion or a set of ideas that don't seem to relate to you. An altar can be a simple, personal expression of what you want to focus on right now. You do not have to build anything or take up a lot of space. You do not have to buy anything new or follow a complex set of instructions to create your altar. All you have to do is have a general understanding of what an altar is and the willingness to allow yourself access to this wonderful, ancient tool of transformation.

At its most essential, an altar is simply a raised structure that serves as a resting place for meaningful objects. It focuses the eye and provides a place for contemplation and, if so desired, ritual. All of these elements can be quite simple. One idea for a simple altar is a pot with a bulb planted in it, set on a box. This altar to

growth can act as a reminder to you that all living things bloom in their time. A simple ritual might be to write down dreams you would like to see come to fruition on scraps of paper. You might place these scraps of paper in the box, or under the flower-pot, or in an envelope you prop against the pot. As the flower grows, so will your dreams.

If you look around your home, you may find that you have already created altar-like arrangements without even really thinking about it; this is something we humans do quite naturally. A candle, a decorative box, and a vase of flowers are just a few of the common household objects that lend themselves naturally to the creation of an altar. Simply add intention and intuition, and you have created your first altar. Remember that it isn't necessarily about the objects you place at the altar--it is the time you spend with it daily, taking the time to be with it for your sacred time.

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Hurricane Tip:

Put pieces of sod in a kiddie pool and put it in your garage. You have a safe place for your dogs to potty during the storm.

Never let dogs off leash into the yard during the storm, as dogs get easily spooked during hurricanes and may take off, scaling even a large fence. (And frequently, fences and gates are knocked open/over during hurricanes.)



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Seeking Musicians to Take a Seat with Explosive Band

Having recently dropped in from Flushing, Michigan, the band Loose Sphincter burst on the scene after two musicians - tired of farting around in shitty jobs - decided to get off their respective asses and make a big splash in the local music scene. Taking aim against the windbags of the music establishment, Loose Sphincter bombards your senses with a potent blend of Creole and Rap (a.k.a., "Crap").

Discounting rumors that Loose Sphincter is "full of hot air" and will soon find themselves in the sewer, drummer Dingleberry Dave McFartson poo-pooes the idea. "We're not going to have our judgment clouded by criticism and watch our dreams go down the toilet." Fumes bassist Fred Odorbottom, "We refuse to put a toilet lid on our dreams!" Bristling at reports that

Loose Sphincter stinks up any stage they land on, Fred sniffs, "The bottom line is, you can ask any band that's played on the same bill as us and they'll tell you, Loose Sphincter is a tough act to follow."

The group came about because of Fred and Dave's desire to break wind with tradition and form a band that would truly take things to the extremity. "If I had looked to the bowels of the earth," Odorbottom emits, "I couldn't have nosed out a better-suited partner than Dingleberry Dave. When I first got whiff of his talent," Odorbottom explodes, "I quite literally had to hold on to the seat of my pants!"

Asked to discuss the origins of their material, chief songwriter Dingleberry pulls up a stool and unloads,

"I was raised on classical music, and tend to think of sections of songs as movements. To me, songwriting is a game of craps, and though I sometimes become constipated with writer's block, I'm soon full of the malodorous melodies that characterize our musical discharge."

Loose Sphincter's newest single from the album, "Drop-cut, "Make a Stink," features such tail-wagging tunes as the high-octane "Racing Stripes and Bacon Strips," as well as the insistent funk of "Brick Outhouse."

Showing a vulnerable side to the ladies, Mr. Odorbottom's soulful scat singing on the romantic "Makin' Whoopee Cushion" is sure to stir the bowels of your soul. And dig the Van Halen-esque "brown sound" their former lead guitarist brings to the heady "Stink Wrinkle." Fartabulous.

Meanwhile, social awareness is aptly expressed through the haunting World War One lament, "Gas Mask," while cover songs include Lynard Skynards' breathtaking "Ooh That Smell" and the Phil Spector teen anthem, "Dat Do-Do Runs Runs."

Loose Sphincter's first single from the album, "Drop-cut, "Make a Stink," features such tail-wagging tunes as the top of the proverbial shit-heap. The band also has many tunes in the can for their next highly-anticipated release.

Dumped by their lead guitarist ("a real ass-hole," according to Dingleberry Dave), Loose Sphincter is currently auditioning a replacement. If you feel the urge, contact the group to arrange an audition to show off some of your runs.

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