

Creating Workplace Rituals

Discussion Guide



We're happy to be here with you! We're bringing to the day our deep interest in transformation and drive to connect folks' personal sense of meaning and change with that of their communities.

Each of us has our own specialized practice; twelve13 Consulting is home to some of our collaborative work.

Desireé Wilkins Finch

Desireé Wilkins-Finch was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois. As a graduate of The Ohio State University, she earned a BA in Liberal Arts and Sciences. She firmly believes that we have all been given the task of caring for each other; we should open our hands to our brothers and sisters, those in need, and the poor.

As a firm believer in the collectivism of faith and community, Desireé has spent 20 years as an organizer spreading a message of hope, action, and transformation. This set of beliefs led Desireé to pursue a MA in Leadership with an emphasis in Marriage and Family Therapy from Seattle University.

Desireé is the owner and principal consultant for RiseLWP (leadership with purpose), a consulting firm committed to helping clients achieve their mission and deepen their impact by offering organizational development solutions with an equity framework. Desireé is dedicated to helping communities transform as they access their strength, converting it into power, and taking action. Her coaching centers on how leaders drive values, values drive behaviors, and behaviors drive a community. Only then are communities strengthened to take action, which is power.

Desiree' also teaches as a clinician and community partner at University of WA and University of Puget Sound, a Board member of Symphony Tacoma and Communities for a Healthy Bay. She is also listed on Puget Sound Business Journals 40 under 40 for 2021, an alum of Leadership Tomorrow Class of 20 and ALF class of 27. In her spare time, she is a flautist and enjoys spending time with her family and traveling with her son.

Jen Self

Jen Self, PhD LICSW (they/them) is the CEO/Founder of [Brick 13](#), a Critical Equity Educational Consulting and Coaching LLC. They are also a part-time Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of Washington School of Social Work, and have coached, educated, and developed leaders across industries, from non-profits to government to corporate.

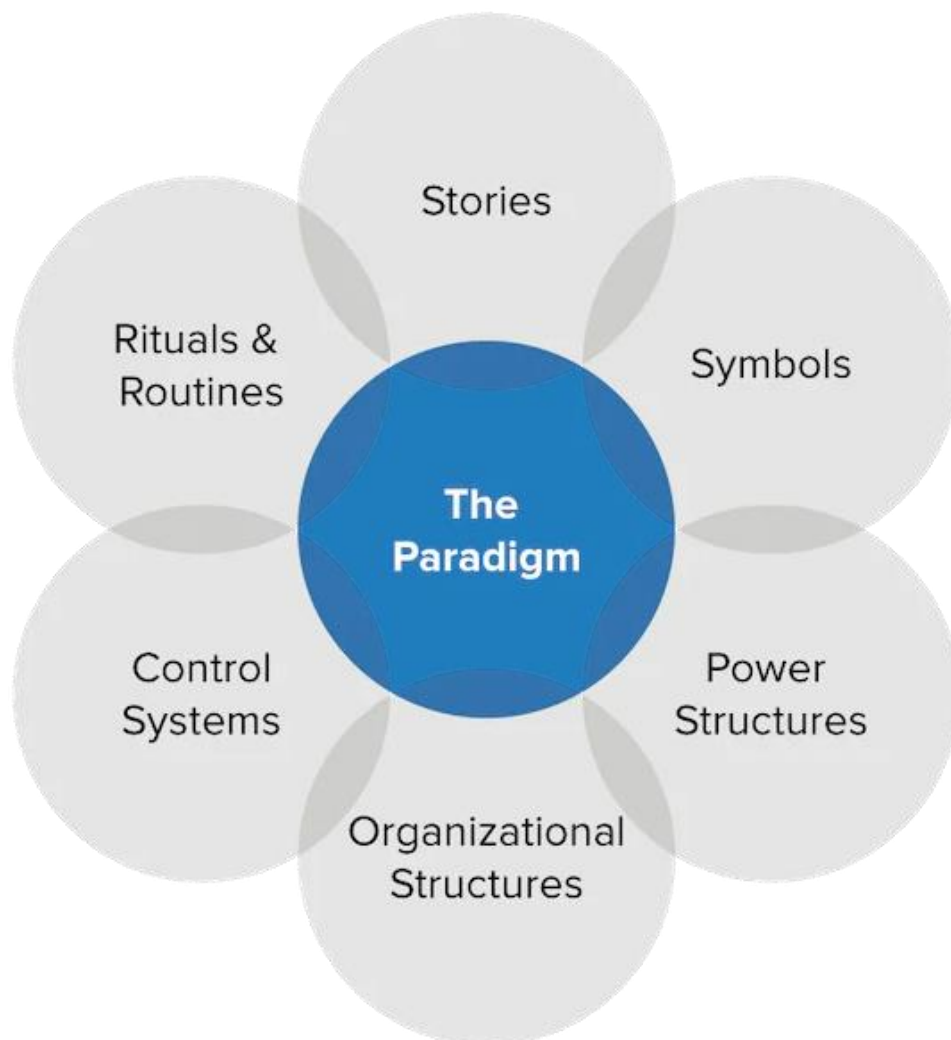
Jen credits their early experiences as a gender outlaw and time playing Pac-12 basketball for Cal as the impetuses for their life's dedication to intersectional racial and gender justice. Dr. Self is a visionary, an outcast, an innovator, a community builder, a chameleon, a connector of ideas and people, a musical theater nerd, a continual learner, a co-host of the podcast [All the Things-PNW](#) (Spotify), a creator, a parent, a pro-femme space advocate, a partner, a survivor of many things, always a radical truth-teller, and even on a good day, continually shaking off the teachings of White supremacy.

Liz Cruz

Liz Cruz (they/them or she/her) is the Founder & Principal of [Liz Cruz Consulting](#). Prior to leading their practice, Liz spent over 10 years in the corporate space (retail and technology) as a coach, leadership development program leader, and organizational effectiveness consultant. You'll find Liz coaching individuals and teams, facilitating, nerding out about emotional intelligence, or ruminating on wholehearted leadership over a cup of (decaf) coffee. Liz enjoys working with a diverse mix of clients; a special area of focus is Queer (LGBTQI+) leadership development.

Liz's approach is informed by their deeply held belief that each of us is inherently brilliant, and that the best solutions to our leadership challenges are found in our deep knowledge of ourselves. They are an eternal optimist, a queer leadership fanatic, a frequent teller of not-that-funny jokes, a lifelong artist (current love: watercolor), relentlessly curious, a deep empath, and despite all outward appearances, definitely an introvert.

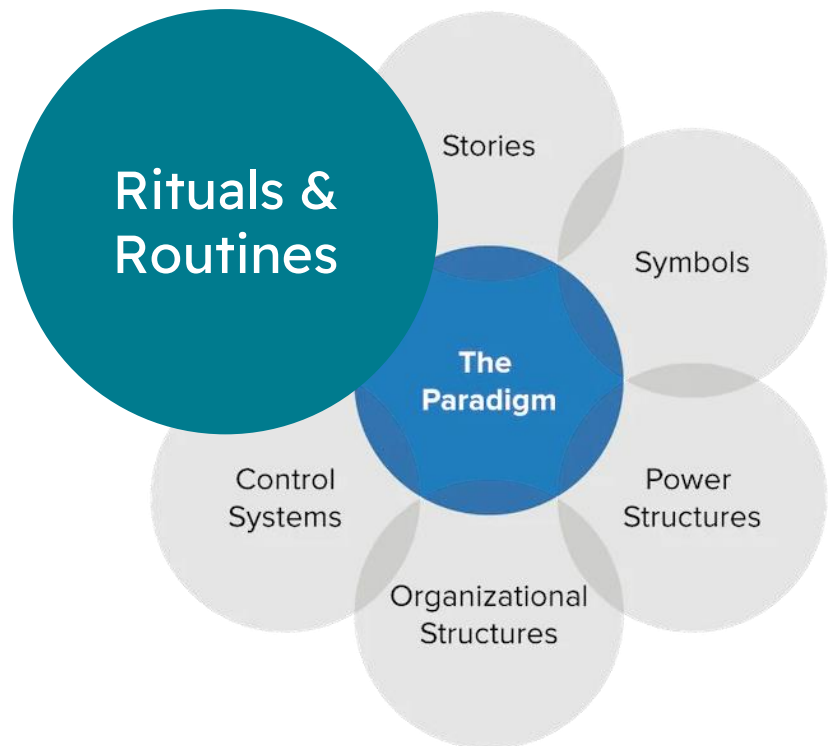
The **Cultural Web** identifies six interrelated elements that help to make up what Johnson and Scholes call the "paradigm" - the pattern or model - of the work environment. By analyzing the factors in each, you can begin to see the bigger picture of your culture: what is working, what isn't working, and what needs to be changed. The six elements are:



Reference: <https://www.mindtools.com/a8im94b/the-cultural-web>

The daily behavior and actions of people that signal acceptable behavior.

This determines what is expected to happen in given situations, and what is valued by management.

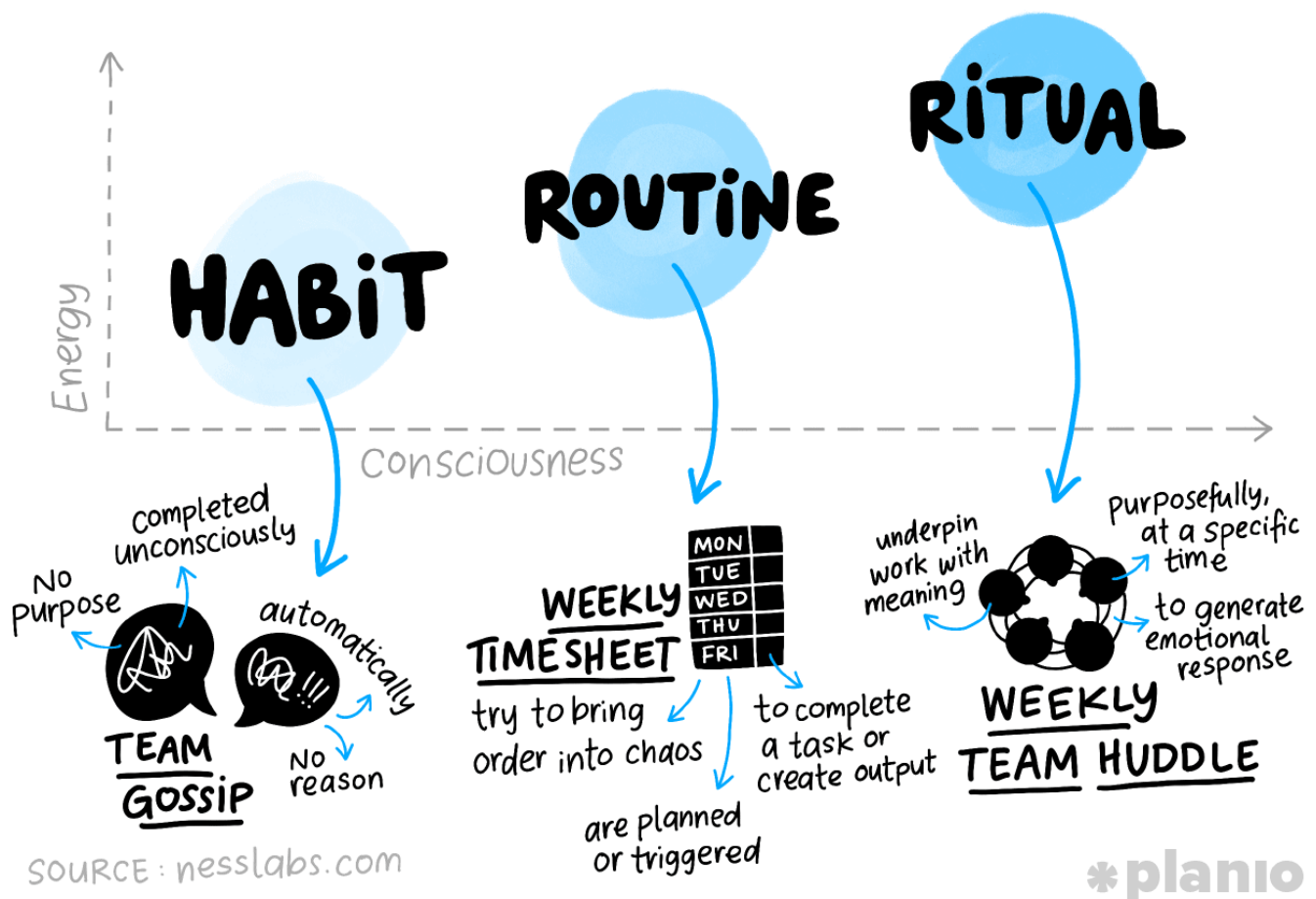


- What do customers expect when they walk in?
- What do employees expect?
- What would be immediately obvious if changed?
- What behavior do these routines encourage?
- When a new problem is encountered, what rules do people apply when they solve it?
- What core beliefs do these rituals reflect?

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What is a ritual?

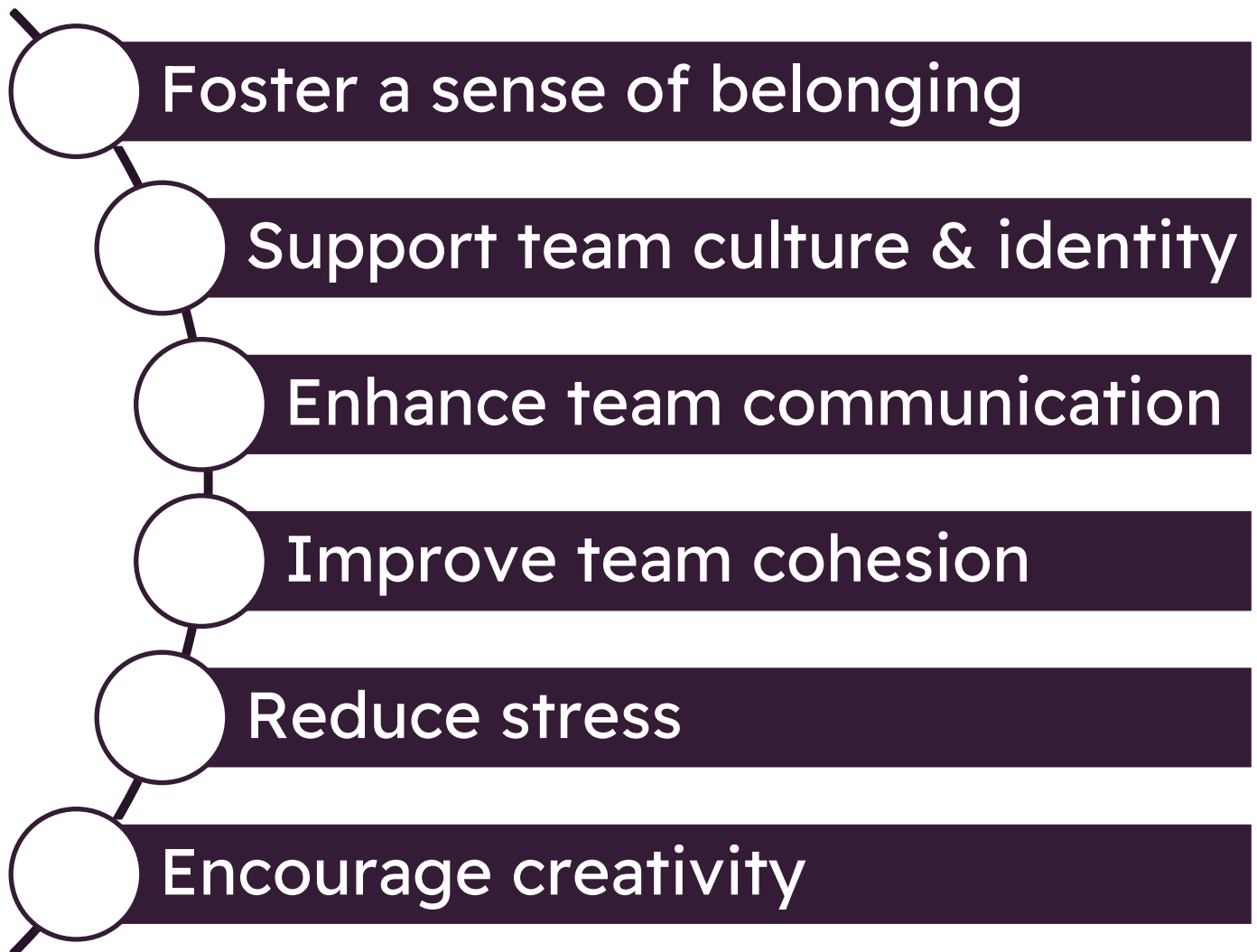
Rituals are “actions that a person or a group does repeatedly, following a similar pattern or script, in which they’ve imbued symbolism and meaning”.¹



¹Kursat Ozenc and Glenn Fajardo in “Rituals for Virtual Meetings: Creative Ways to Engage People and Strengthen Relationships” cited in <https://www.mediaprofile.com/2021/02/10/the-role-of-workplace-rituals/>

Graphic: <https://plan.io/blog/team-rituals/>

Rituals...





The science behind why rituals work

Given rituals strike at an emotional level, it's no surprise that there's a lot of psychological research into why they're so effective.

Here are three reasons rituals work in both day-to-day and professional life.

1. They help relieve stress and anxiety

At times, the workplace can be a stressful place to hang out. Whether it's pressure to hit targets, nerves before a big meeting, or feelings of anxiety when around others, rituals have proven to reduce stress levels in a wide range of scenarios.

For example, in a study by Harvard Business School, performers were found to have a reduced heart rate, experience less anxiety, and perform better after completing a pre-show ritual.

2. They increase confidence

On the flip side, rituals also help people feel more confident in themselves and their abilities. Given rituals are deeply emotional, they're shown to help give people a lift when they need it most.

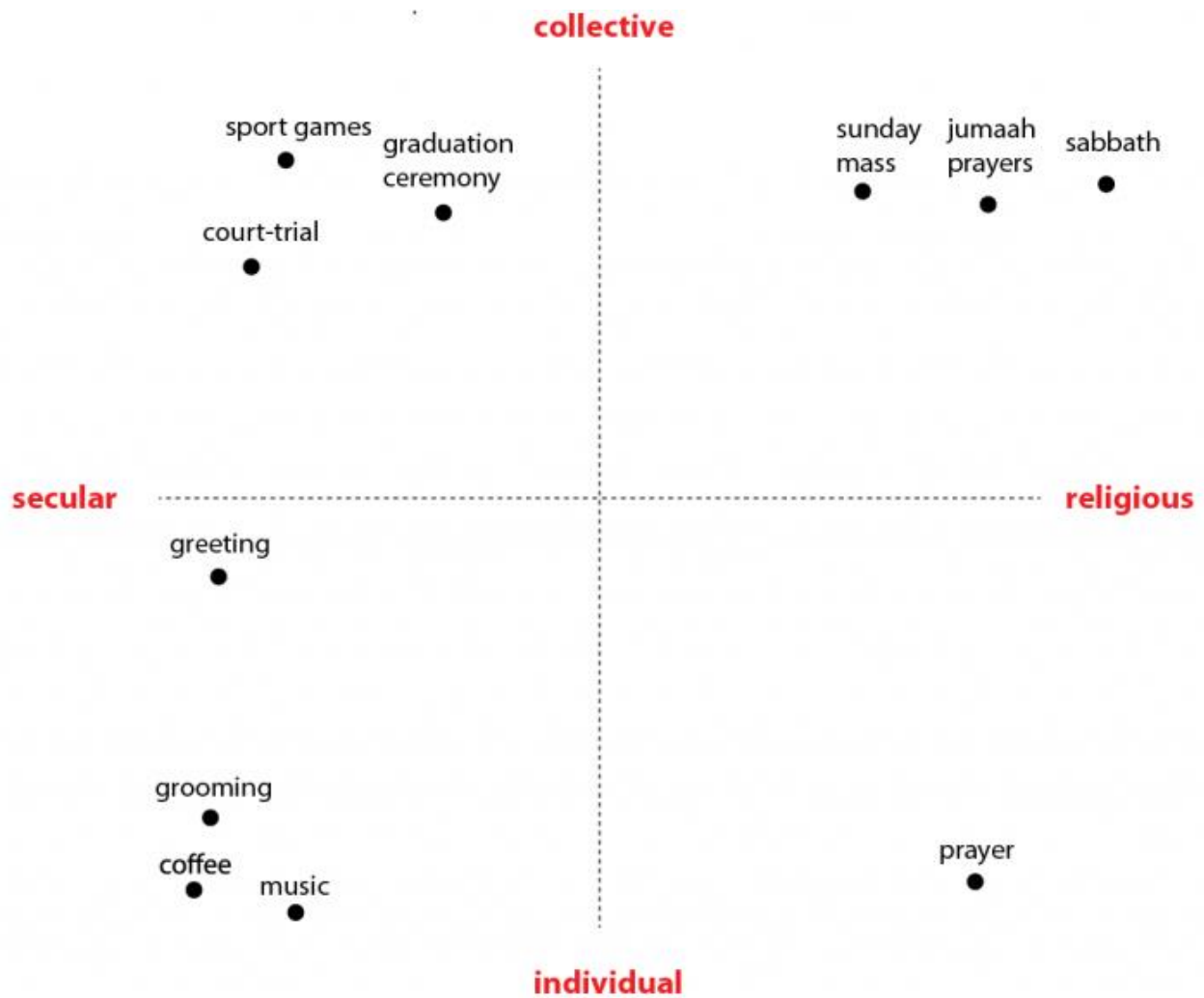
Many studies have observed this in the world of sports, where pre-match rituals improve emotional stability and confidence in athletes.

3. They create a shared experience

If you participate in rituals as a team, it helps boost qualities such as trust, togetherness, and respect through a shared experience. This is especially true in stressful environments, such as a post-growth startup or a project team, where high-intensity, meaningful work builds stronger bonds.

Reference: <https://plan.io/blog/team-rituals/>

Types of rituals



Reference: <https://www.ritualdesignlab.org/about-ritual-design/>

Build rituals to accelerate cultural transformation



Reference: <https://www.fearlessculture.design/blog-posts/why-you-need-team-rituals-and-when-to-use-them>