

## ANNUAL PRAYER FLAGS



Add some colorful wind flags to your home to brighten up your spirit, observe changes in intensity and direction of the wind, spread peace, and to catch chi (energy).

Peace flags predate Buddhism in Tibet, fluttering in the wind over mountain passes and rivers in Tibet for over 2,000 years, beginning with the Bon shamans.<sup>1</sup>

Many cultures use colored flags to represent the five elements. Wind flags are symbols of victory, health, and peace.

The Lakota tie prayer flags during their Inipi ceremonies, sun dances, and vision quests.

The use of flags to carry messages to distant gods is almost as old as the wind.

While the wind communicates without words, sutras or prayers are often inscribed on flags. Symbols are useful reminders and stimulate the subconscious. One popular Tibetan flag symbol is the Wind Horse (Lungta), who rides the wind and brings stability, good fortune, and powerfully present.

Prayer symbols are often grouped together; the eight auspicious Tashi Targye (Tibetan flags) include happiness, fulfillment, purity, enlightenment teachings, meditation, wisdom, universal law, and protection from negative energy.<sup>2</sup>



In your wind practices,  
you can assemble prayer ties and flags  
for every ceremony.

One practice you can try is to exchange blessings  
with the creator by assembling prayer flags  
to hang horizontally on a string.

As you decorate your flag, be mindful and  
contemplate the wisdom of each cardinal direction.

Begin your flags in the east,  
the home of the rising sun.

You may follow the directions below or work  
with your own inner harmony;  
the important factors  
are prayer and intention.



In the Apprenticeship Program which evolves  
with Natural Cycles of Nature, we prepare  
a set of flags that will be part of our outdoor altar and  
guiding energy for the year.  
We work with 12 flags..



## Supplies Needed:

- Twelve (12) 8x8-inch squares of fabric
- Enough sturdy string to connect the twelve (12) squares  
*Available pre-hung and ready to decorate at [thepracticalshaman.com/store](http://thepracticalshaman.com/store)*
- Fabric paint markers
- Nature items, beads, pictures and other creative ideas
- Scissors or a hole punch
- Wind Spirit Cards.

*Order at the store or download a sample. Available on our blog page.*

*<https://communityoulibrary.s3-us-west-1.amazonaws.com/11-03-19-mini-cards-giveaway.pdf>*



## STEP 1: OPENING CEREMONY

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Find a comfortable place to sit, like a rock or tree stump.

Begin by tuning in to the forces of nature.

Inhale a deep breath of wind.

Feel it fill your lungs and expand into your belly.

As you exhale, remind yourself that your breath is capable of circling our planet in a matter of days.

We are all connected through our breath, the wind.

Every out Breath matters. Energy + Wind = Form



## STEP 2: PREPARE YOUR WIND SPIRIT CARDS®

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- Separate out the Cardinal Directions From Your Wind Spirit Cards®.
- Take a Wind Walk or engage in another Sacred Activity.
- Pull ONE card for the year.  
This will be your overarching Cardinal Wind.

*Do not be tempted to put back in deck for one you like better.*

## STEP 3: BE WITH YOUR NEW WIND.

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- Do some wind breaths to invite the energy of your Wind.
- I will include a video of Wind Breathing in your student area.
- Call the winds by Name: Eurus (East Wind), Notus (South Wind), Zephyrus (West Wind), and Boreas (North Wind).

Spend at least 4 hours with this new Wind before proceeding.



## STEP 4: OPEN SACRED SPACE

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- Put all your Wind Spirit Cards (*minus the 4 Cardinal Wind*) in a container,
- Shake up well..
- Prayerfully ask: "What wind would like to accompany me for ...  
*(Write these down below as you go. It can get confusing.)*

YOUR ANNUAL CARDINAL WIND CARD \_\_\_\_\_

FEBRUARY \_\_\_\_\_

MARCH \_\_\_\_\_

APRIL \_\_\_\_\_

MAY \_\_\_\_\_

JUNE \_\_\_\_\_

JULY \_\_\_\_\_

AUGUST \_\_\_\_\_

SEPTEMBER \_\_\_\_\_

OCTOBER \_\_\_\_\_

NOVEMBER \_\_\_\_\_

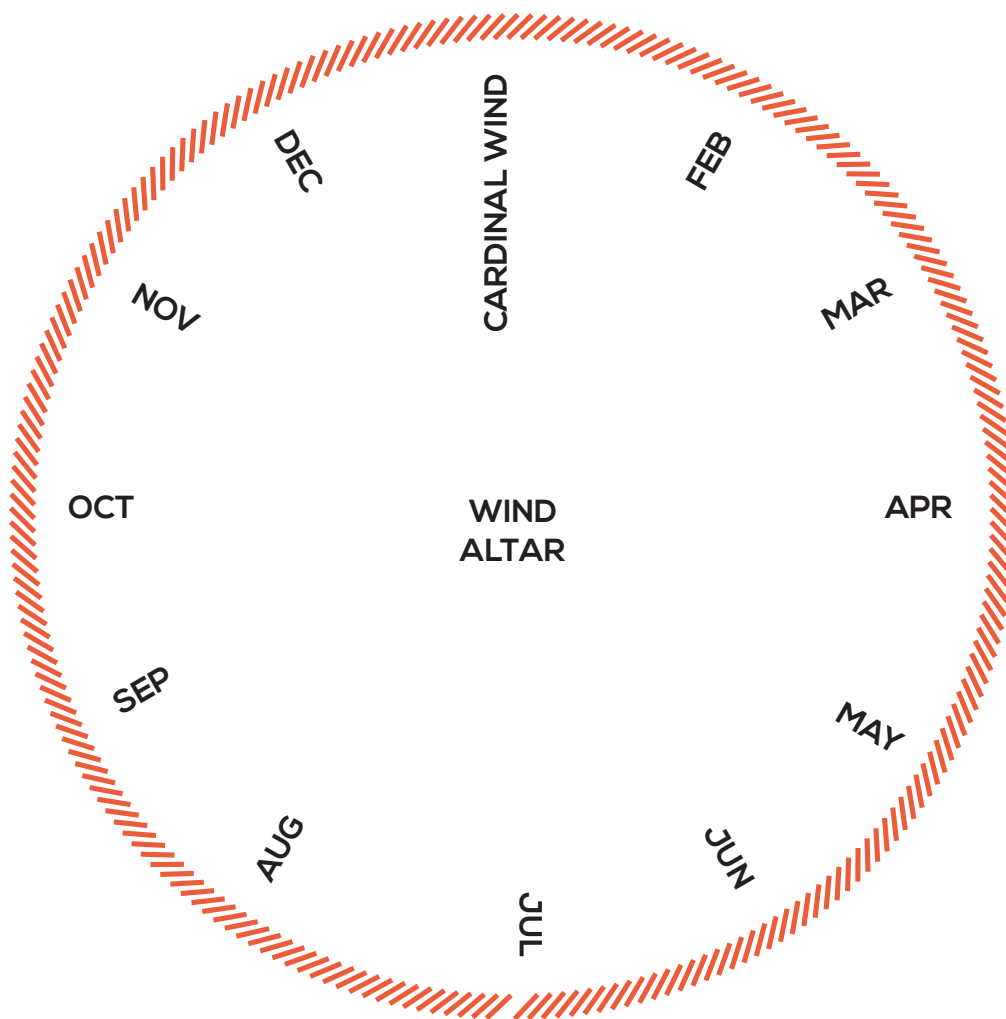
DECEMBER \_\_\_\_\_



## STEP 5: SUGGESTIONS

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- Either using a wheel (see diagram below) or not, place your Wind Spirit Cards names on the circular calendar. This will also help to see your year in advance.
- Turn your prayer flags over. Moving from right to left, attach the Wind Spirit Card to the back of each month, or write the name somewhere on the back. This was helpful for checking on my Wind Spirits once the flags were hung in the yard.



## STEP 6: CREATING THE FLAGS

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- Placing the flags upright, work with one flag at a time.
- Call to the Wind Spirit for your first flag and then
- Using your creativity and imagination, paint each flag with the fabric markers and your assembled materials. Symbols and pictures are great.
- **If you are making your own flags\*:**  
On each flag, punch a hole one inch from each of the top corners. It is easier to paint before you string through the holes, from left to right.

*\* rather than ordering the pre-hung and ready to decorate flags for sale at [thepracticalshaman.com/store](http://thepracticalshaman.com/store)*

## STEP 7: HANGING THE FLAGS:

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Once you have assembled your flags, find a suitable spot in your environment to hang them. You can craft a pole, or hang the flags from a tree. Let the wind guide you.

In all ceremonies, it is wise to say a prayer of gratitude before you begin and upon completion of your work. Invite friends to witness your ceremony. Then let the winds dance your prayers up to the heavens.

Our ancestors understood the magnificent power of air that made magic available to humans.

Your connection to nature will expand as you place your awareness on the air that moves through your life.



As you awaken, you become increasingly  
in awe of nature in all its chaotic glory.

While many external aspects of nature  
are beyond your immediate grasp,  
learning to see your complementary  
participation will aid your awakening.

At first glance you may begin to witness  
subtle movements of air,  
or even winds barreling through your life,  
and you may feel lost without a map.

The next chapters offer hope.

The basic practices of wind work,  
prayer, meditation, and wind breath  
can calm the storm.

Roots run deep  
when you find your center,  
and being grounded in your body  
is an essential first step.

