

# INVOKING APHRODITE

## FOR SEXUAL HEALING

*By Jane Meredith*

Aphrodite is the ancient Greek Goddess of love and beauty and almost everything about her shouts of sexuality. In Botticelli's Birth of Venus (Aphrodite is the Greek, and Venus the Roman name for the same Goddess) we see her standing naked in a scallop shell, having been born of the sea, a fully mature Goddess. She gazes at the viewer, and one can imagine she is using her famous enticement to draw us into relationship. The shell itself is a symbol for a woman's (or a Goddess') labia, and Aphrodite was conceived by her father's castrated genitals mating with the sea. Of course, every birth is sexual in nature, but the ingredients of Aphrodite's birth seem particularly potent.

The stories about Aphrodite continue her theme of sexuality. She owned a magical girdle which could entice any mortal or god – the Trojan War was lost when she lent it to Hera (Hera and Zeus had taken opposite sides in the war) which sufficiently distracted Zeus for the Greeks to get their wooden horse through the gates of Troy. There are also stories of Aphrodite's many love affairs — scandalous, romantic and tragic — and although in later stories she is given a husband and she does have children (Eros, or Cupid is one), she is never contained by definitions of wife or mother.

The type of love Aphrodite offers is symbolised by her nakedness —

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Photo by Marcia Rayene

unbounded by social rules. There is a kind of innocence in her, denoting a strength within her vulnerability, an understanding that love is given freely and openly. She is fundamentally joyous, dealing with the difficulties



of love and relationship as part of the dance of life. One of her central teachings is that love is found within, for no matter the results of her love affairs, Aphrodite continues to offer love and beauty to the world.

When I began working with Aphrodite I was cautious. She seemed to me overly confident (brazen, rash), perhaps a little too much like the male inhabitants of Olympus, who followed their sexual

urges regardless of consequence or price (usually paid by the recipient of their attentions). I had suffered through love and through relationships fairly endlessly, and because of this I thought of Aphrodite as ruthless. I stepped only very gradually into appreciating what she offered.

When I entered into ritual with Aphrodite, I discovered almost the reverse of my fears. Rocked upon the waves of her sea I felt cradled, enfolded almost back into the womb. Travelling in path-workings back to the time of her Temples, I was filled with awe – but it was an awe tinged with dancing, laughter, joy, and release. Calling to her for guidance in love I felt bolstered, reminded of my core strength, the integrity of my love and lovingness, and the shining qualities of my inner being. I have found Aphrodite to be absolutely radiant, ruthless only at that mysterious level of utter compassion, impatient with anything but the deepest truth, and utterly light-filled.

Aphrodite can be invoked beside the ocean, by dancing or in meditation. The essential ingredient is an open heart. Aphrodite asks us to be as vulnerable as she is shown to be, naked in that painting. She offers renewal for broken hearts and wounded sexuality. If you are struggling with past abuse, trauma, lack of self-love, disconnection from your sexual or sensual self, or trying to recover from a painful relationship, Aphrodite's energy can be deeply healing. Even if your heart is trauma-free, her energy can enhance your

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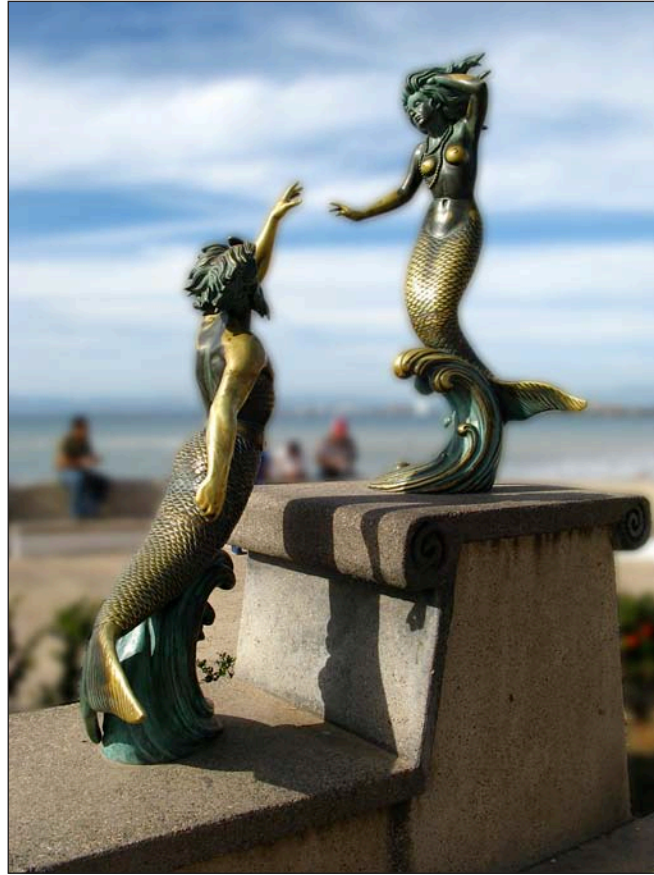
journey through the world.

To invoke Aphrodite, it's helpful to create an altar specially focused towards her. Your Aphrodite Altar might be built at the beach, from sculpted sand, seashells, and whatever else you find. You might dedicate a piece of art-work to her, or build a traditional altar with a cloth, candles, a statuette or picture of the Goddess, or create a purely etheric altar, built through dance, inner path-working or song. Creating the Altar is a way of focusing your mind, of beginning to "tune in" to the channel that Aphrodite is broadcasting on. It is also a clear statement of your intent. Building an Altar might be enough for you to do at first. Later you can come back and begin to work with the Goddess.

When you are ready to take the next step in your sexual healing, begin to call on Aphrodite. Mostly this would be done at your altar, but you might choose to do it outside in nature, or spontaneously, having previously set your intention. I have invoked Aphrodite while swimming naked in the sea, singing under the moon's light, at my altar, in my magical journal/book of spells, and dancing by myself. At different times I have asked for healing, for understanding, for the return of my joyousness, for a lover, and just to feel her presence.

There are many ways to do an invocation, but the essential thing is to come from your deepest self, with no reservations. In the moment, this might look like crying your heart out, or shouting your longing and pain to the

winds, or composing a song of worship. You might take an hour of drumming or meditation to reach this place, or even many attempts to reach deeply enough inside yourself. The focus of the invocation is the Goddess herself — by invoking her you are asking for her energy to touch your life, to feel her (either within yourself or as a separate



*"Neptune and the Nereid." Government-commissioned sculpture by Mexico City artist Carlos Espino, on the boardwalk in Puerto Vallarta.*

presence), or for some of her qualities to be transferred to you.

When you find this deep place where you feel the presence of Aphrodite, ask the Goddess for what you need. This is also when you may become aware, within yourself, of the changes required to accept what she might give. These changes might have to do with your attitudes, limitations, or habits, or structural changes to do with your lifestyle, choices, and the people you are connected to. This can be very challenging, although sometimes it is absolutely blessed, straight-forward, and like being

handed a gift you have longed for.

At this point, if you feel it is the right thing for you, you can hand yourself over to the Goddess — you might visualise her and find some way to symbolise your willingness to follow her path, to be guided by her. Sometimes I imagine myself as lying within her cupped hands; or dancing with her vast energy; or walking behind her, fitting my footsteps into hers. It might take several hours to get into this deep place. But without this inner resolution and giving-over, without a complete commitment to your own healing, the Goddess can do no more than touch your life with a hint of possibilities. For change to occur, you must be willing to move beyond the ways and situations you are familiar with.

When this happens you will feel a distinct shift within yourself — your earlier problems will look and feel completely different, as if the Goddess truly had walked with you for a step or two on your journey. After you have felt this shift it's important to take some action that symbolises your new (renewed) self — swimming naked in the ocean, dancing to Aphrodite, or writing down your insights. Enter into this activity as deeply as you can, conscious that it is the first step on your healing path. Even if you have not reached the shift-place yet, you may wish to take

this type of action, symbolising your willingness to grow and heal.

You might also have come clearly to some resolution, a deep compassion for yourself and others, or a new idea for your future direction in continuing to heal, learning a different type of relating or exploring hidden truths about yourself and your life. If it is appropriate, you can ask Aphrodite for a clear direction to follow in pursuing your healing. This may be just a feeling or thought of the next step, but

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Photo by Marcia Rayene

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sometimes a whole path will outline itself to you. If nothing comes to you as the next step, make space for the new direction when it should arrive.

Try to remain in this deepened state, connected with the Goddess until it fades naturally. Then make sure to conclude your ritual by grounding your energy (sending excess energy and emotion into the earth), and thanking Aphrodite. It's important to clearly state whether you wish to continue invoking Aphrodite and/or her qualities into your life, or you are finishing your invocation for now.

It is possible you might meet deep truths in this ritual, decide to make radical changes in your life, or pursue a course of healing on issues that have arisen. You may need to take actions in the external world, as well as work on your own feelings and understandings. Aphrodite can continue to support you

as you find counselling, a support group, or treatment specifically tailored to your needs. You also might choose to undertake several – even many – rituals invoking the Goddess as you move step by step closer to healing your heart and sexual self.



With Aphrodite (unlike some other Goddesses I've worked with) I've never felt pushed beyond my limits, plunged off the edge of the cliff, or been asked to do the impossible. She is actually the leavening, the support to enable us not only to move, but to dance — with grace — through the difficult arenas of love, sex, and connection with others. In her own limitless love she assists others to open their hearts, heal, and experience love. She lends out these qualities.

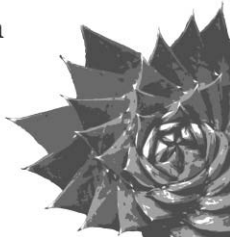
As the stories say, she lends out her magical girdle — to those who are brave enough for the adventure and willing to acknowledge their own divine Aphrodite essence.

*Jane Meredith is involved with Australian Reclaiming and will teach at BC Witchcamp this year. Her book Aphrodite's Magic: Celebrate and Heal Your Sexuality is available at bookshops and Amazon. Her CD of guided journeys, Aphrodite's Temple, is available at [www.janemeredith.com](http://www.janemeredith.com)*

*A shorter version of this article previously appeared in Injoy magazine.*

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