

Firefly

Wiccan Advancement

*Hold my hand and we can ride away on a firefly,
Hold me tight as we lose our breath in the sky,
The brisk movement of the buzzing wings suddenly ceases,
And somewhere on the way down, we find our breath once more,
Shivering, shaking, our adrenaline in full roar,
And I compare your eyes to the light of the radiant sphere,
The firefly sputters slightly, for I am only dreaming,
This enchanted ride is only a memory of how I once knew of you gleaming.
Now we are dancing deep in a forest meadow,
The fireflies are all around us as they glow,
You twirl me around and catch me as I tilt back,
And as we fall to the ground, we are right on track,
The bright celestial sphere hangs above your head,
As you cradle me, the fireflies all fall dead,
Because I am just dreaming,
In the meadow, more than the moon, the light in your eyes is streaming,
Flowing around me as you ponder,
Molding with mine as the secrets of the world you do fondle,
The fireflies begin buzzing in a wink,
And I long once more to hear what you think,*

Firefly:

Wiccan Advancement

Iris Firemoon

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Second Edition

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SECOND EDITION

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*This book is dedicated to my brother,
who magickally brought a baby boy into the world.*

*To Bridget and Saria,
who suggested that I write this book,*

*To my mom,
because she is fierce like the Goddess.*

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The ladies of the Coven of the Spiral Moon.

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PREFACE

Many years have gone by since I began to collect information for this book. Though seemingly a textbook, this is part of a never-ending story of my life. I wonder what I will come to think of it down the road. I wonder if it will aid you on your journey. I hope that it does.

I wrote this book as an introduction to extensive study of Wicca. I have been teaching for four years now and had many students. The way that each person learns or understands these concepts is different. It can be challenging to understand how these topics fit together, because when we teach Wicca, we teach a framework for a lifestyle or a mindset.

I have never been one to like long prefaces. I do believe that I have probably only attempted to read four such writings in my life. I have only completely read one preface in my entire life. So, I leave you with these words: *And ye harm none, do what thou wilt.*

Blessed Be.

Iris Firemoon

INTRODUCTION
TO WICCA AND MAGICK





AN ECHO IN THE WOODS

The earth. She vibrates as the universe dances in spirals within itself. The moon reflects the energy of the sun as it circles around the earth, held in rotation around the pulsating sphere. There is a single driving force behind these things, just as we somehow feel inherently connected with them. Religion itself is a way for humans to answer many of the questions these relationships conjure. Why am I here? How did the universe appear? Why is there life on earth? What is the purpose of this life? What is this connection that I feel? Each religion or system of spirituality attempts to answer these questions. Although their answers may be vastly different from one another, there will be many basic fundamentals that all religions touch on, even indirectly.

A mentor cannot give you the answers that they have discovered, for that is part of the individual path we all must take. Some people choose to reject most religious teachings on the basis that religion is the opiate of the masses. Others choose to invest their lives in blind faith. The focus of this book is awareness. Each person must find his or her own answers. Question everything in an attempt to discover the truth for yourself. Do not accept the answers that are given to you. You must collect all the knowledge that you can, chew it, mix it, and mold it, so that you understand the truth.

Wicca is one of many neopagan religions. "Neopaganism" and "Neo-Wicca" are two terms that are interchanged with Paganism and Wicca to signify that these religions or belief systems are new traditions based off of ancient beliefs and practices. The way we practice them today is new, but the basis for them was utilized thousands of years ago. The word pagan means "country dweller." In the conversion to Christianity, it was the cities and larger towns that made the change first. Those villagers on the outskirts of communities, and farther in the country, were less influenced at first by the Church. Hence, the term "pagan" came to refer to those who were not Christian.

In this book, I will use the terms "pagan" and "Wiccan" freely, but these terms are not interchangeable. Paganism is an earth-based belief system, while Wicca is a religion under the pagan umbrella. All Wiccans are pagans, but not all pagans are Wiccans.

There was a time when humans lived according to the cycles of the sun and the moon. Knowing the time of year was very important for hunters and gatherers, because the animals sought for food would migrate at specific times of the year in search for food. Knowing the growing season of the plants and berries eaten to supplement their diets was also vital. These people moved with the abundance of food and in accordance with the seasons. As communities were built and the villagers began to grow their own food and

raise livestock, the planting and harvesting calendar became vital to their survival. The farmers of today still live by the planting and harvesting seasons. Although society has developed with the seasons becoming just an afterthought, we cannot stamp out the fact that our food can only grow at a certain time of the year, and that same food can only be best harvested shortly after. Even in a digital age, we cannot change the cycles of nature.

With the sun being recognized as a significant part of the cycle of life, the moon was seen in a similar light. Although the moon does not affect the earth in the way the magnificent sun does, it still influences us on a grand scale. The glowing celestial sphere that hovers so near affects the oceans and the lakes, creating rising and falling tides as it revolves around our planet. It reflects the light of the sun, thus illuminating our darkened nights.

Paganism recognizes the importance of the cycles of the sun and the moon. As a part of seeking to better our awareness of the universe, we celebrate these cycles. We seek to attune ourselves with them, to live with them, as our ancestors once did.

In recent history, pagan practices were kept underground for quite some time, as a result of many anti-witchcraft measures the Church was undertaking. The concept of Wicca and other pagan systems just openly resurfaced in the last fifty to one hundred years. I will not dive into much of the history of Wicca and Paganism, for their roots are deep and spread across thousands of years and many civilizations.

Wicca is many things and no one person can completely define it. Through the process of learning, one encounters many different paths and traditions. Unless planning to study a specific tradition, most tend to take in many things and decide what fits best with their personal beliefs. Eclectic Wicca is just that: an amalgamation of spiritual concepts that fit within the Wiccan paradigm. We will explore a basic Wiccan paradigm. It is up to you to decide what other concepts you feel complete your puzzle of truth.

Wicca is a very personal religion, in which the main focus is inner knowledge and our connection with the divine. There is one deity, but within it lies many different types of energy. Many traditions embrace both the male and the female aspect of the deity, for balance is a key point in almost everything. An aspect is merely a face, a representation, or a specific type of energy, but this does not alter the main idea. We will explore teachings that focus on both the male and female aspects of the deity (some traditions, such as Dianic Wicca, may only focus on the female aspect). This deity is the divine, cosmic energy of the universe that runs through us all. The stars, moons, and planets were all created from this same cosmic energy, and because this includes earth, everything created on earth holds the deity within them. In other words, we are all made up of star stuff. Many western religions separate themselves from the deity, at times requiring a member of the clergy to communicate to the deity for them. In Wicca, it is believed that the deity is within and that all paths lead to the divine, so it is not wise to think ill or wrong of other religions. It is just simply their path and not ours, for we all have our own paths we must travel.

When it comes to the gods, Wiccans have varying beliefs. Many would agree that we honor aspects of the deities from all religions and all time periods. To some, these deities are living beings that exist in reality. Others see these beings as aspects of the God and Goddess representing specific qualities that we may need to focus upon or embrace at times. However, it is my belief that these separate gods and goddesses do not physically exist. Each individual

deity is, after all, just a face, and it changes nothing about the true nature of the deity. For example, if each aspect is seen as a point of view, imagine how different mothers and fathers think. When it came to picking out a movie, my dad would always go for the action movie. My mom, on the other hand, would opt for something uplifting, possibly with a moral. Now, if you were to look at how the Greek goddess Demeter (goddess of the fertility and harvest) and Hades (ruler of the Underworld) each decorated their bedrooms, you would find drastically different tastes. Each of these deities has a different point of view, a different energy about them. Please do not ask me to clean Hades's room. I do not do well with charred remains. Ew.

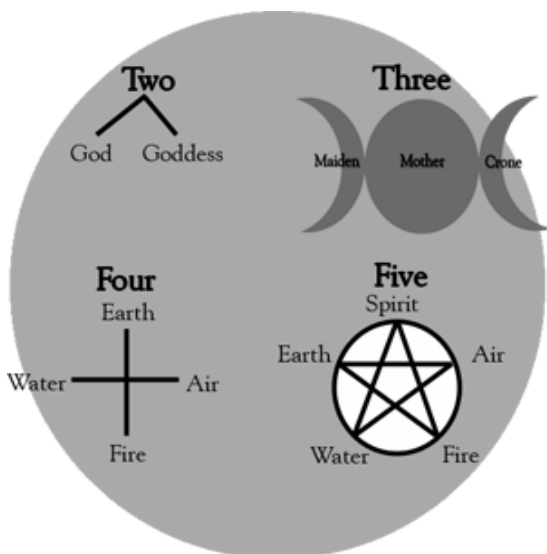
I have spent most of my professional life working at a television station. When I want someone to run camera, I will find a camera operator. I will not go to the top news anchor of the 5 p.m. newscast and ask him to run camera for a show. Let us assume for a moment that he said yes. Having little to no experience with a camera, we could imagine that in a diva-worthy talent fit, if he even figured out how to zoom, tilt, and pan the contraption, the shot would still be horrendous. This same principle applies to aspects of the deity. If I would like a little boost in my sexual confidence, I am going to imagine that I am the goddess Aphrodite, and not the triple-faced crone, Hecate.

The more we "cut apart" the divine, the more we understand it, although the further away we may be from the whole picture. If we cut the deity into two parts, we visualize the God and the Goddess. This duality is seen in many forms: light/dark powers, full/new moon, night/day, good/evil, yin/yang, and alpha/omega are just some examples. When the deity is cut into three parts, we expose the secrets of the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone (the Triple Goddess), which represents phases of the moon, and rites of passage. If the deity is cut into four parts, we see the four elements (earth, fire, air, and water), with spirit being the glue that connects them. When we add in the spirit, we get five parts of the deity, hence the five-pointed star (pentagram). Through understanding the relationship between the God and the Goddess, as well as through the other ways, we segment the divine cosmic energies of the universe and we can better comprehend how to utilize this energy. However, as with the five elements, we may understand very well how these parts relate, but we end up with more pieces of the puzzle to put together in the quest of becoming one with the divine. As you explore different topics and ideas, you will gain more experience with the different analyses of the deity and how they help us understand the intricacies about the world around us, as well as ourselves.

Mother Nature is the Mother Goddess, Gaia, Earth. We hold reverence for the earth and seek to protect her from all that contaminates her. When I say "reverence," I do not mean that we worship nature. *Webster's Dictionary* defines reverence as "a feeling of deep respect, love, and awe." She is the living, breathing womb of the Mother. Wiccans seek to align themselves with the cycles of the earth and the moon in order to become more aware of their surroundings.

Wicca is a religion of initiation. These initiations are rite of passages in life and they are not to be taken lightly. They do not have to occur under the study of a coven, and many solitary witches choose to take themselves through these initiatory rite of passage. First, a neophyte (student) declares his/her intent to study Wicca in a ritual called a dedication. One makes a promise to seek out knowledge while on this path, to keep an open mind, and to become

more aware of the earth, the universe, and the self. A student can be dedicated to studying with a specific coven, or just study in general.



THE DEITY

After some time of studying, a neophyte may be initiated. A solitary witch may choose to initiate himself or herself prior to this year and a day, or when the neophyte feels ready to take knowledge and understanding to a new level.

If one is studying with a coven, this circle may require a year and a day or more of study prior to initiation. A year and a day insures that the dedication and relationships built have been tested through all four seasons. A coven also uses this time to get to know each neophyte on a more personal level. When a circle invites someone to join them, it is allowing new people with possibly different patterns of energy to enter its sacred place. The balance of energy may be thrown off by newcomers who do not mesh well with the existing framework of the coven. A year and a day of study allows a group to feel out and find out more about each prospective member.

An initiate is an official member of a coven and takes on additional responsibilities within the group. These members are called priests and priestesses and may begin mentoring, teaching, organizing rituals, and other coven duties. When it comes to initiates, there are several different types of degree systems. Some covens have only one degree. Other covens have two, three, four, and five different levels a student can work to achieve. The decision to encompass more or less degrees is dependant upon the needs and preferences of each circle.

There are varying beliefs on what happens after we die. Some Wiccans believe that no part of the body, mind, or spirit go on after death. Others believe that the matter that makes up the body returns to the earth, to

be incorporated into other life. A common belief in Wicca is that we go to the Summerland to rest and review before being reincarnated.

The Great Work is working toward unity with the deity through the pursuit of knowledge. The principle of karma is embraced, remembering that whatever we expel outward will ultimately come back to us. It is believed that the necessary knowledge, awareness, and understanding to unite with the divine cannot be obtained within a single lifetime. It is believed that we traverse through several lifetimes to fully understand all of the lessons necessary to unite with the divine. We move along with the Wheel of Life, for it is ever turning, and what goes down, must come up in this cycle. We move through life holding the trials and tough times as lessons that we must learn to move on. The lessons that we do not learn keep repeating themselves in our lives. Have you ever noticed when the same poor situations keep happening to you repeatedly? Becoming aware of the patterns of your life can help you adjust, learn, and move on. Awareness is the key.

The law of the conservation of mass-energy states that neither matter nor energy can be created or destroyed; they can only change forms.

It takes an incredible amount of energy to run our bodies. This concentration of energy is viewed by some as our spirit or soul. When we die, there is nothing holding this energy to our bodies. If the amusement park closes down, the people will not stick around in the dark; similarly, the energy in our bodies is not going to stay put if there is nothing to do. So, it is free to leave the body. It does not contain a personality or mental power. It merely just is. However, just as our bodies do not disappear, this energy cannot disappear either. It seeks out to find other work, or to join with other energies that also are out of work. The energy that is expelled is not conscious energy. It may help breed new life, or find other uses for itself. Energy has a tendency to flow from higher concentrations to lower concentrations.

This is the heart of my understanding of reincarnation. It is the cycle that our energy moves through, the ebb and flow of existence. I have a hard time believing that we are consciously tossed from one life to another. However, I do understand that the energy that I embody has had many universal experiences. That is the beauty of Wicca. It is the search for the truth to each of us. I have a tendency to take my spiritual understanding and couple it with what we have physically seen as little human beings in this vast soup bowl of a universe.

I explain ghosts and spirits of the dead very simply. Many of us know of an old woman who has lived in her house for years upon years. This woman got up at the same time every day, fed her cat, made breakfast, watched the morning news at the same breakfast table, and did the same household chores. Over the years of this similar routine, the old lady's energy was slowly deposited in the places that she frequented most. After she dies, the energy of her body has collected in her house over time. If a new inhabitant sees her ghost or feels her presence, it is a result of these built up energy deposits. Most of the ghost stories we hear are of people who lived in places for long periods of time. The places and times their ghosts are seen are nearly always the same. Hallways, or the deceased's favorite study, are good places to start.



THE SECRET OF THE SPIRAL

It is no secret that Wiccans use magick, and it is a subject of great interest for those curious. In this chapter, you will find the basis for magickal theory. This book builds upon the necessary foundation needed to better embrace a practical use of magick. "Magick" has a "k" on the end of it to distinguish real magick from birthday party magicians or parlor "magic." If you ask twelve different Wiccans what magick is, you will get twelve different answers depending on how long they have been studying and their individual perceptions of the universe. This does not say that beginners are unaware of what magick is, however the more one knows, the more possibilities open up. Magick runs through all of us. It is the cosmic energy that is within everything.

You, your cat, the couch you may be sitting on, your house, the earth, the moon, and countless other physical objects are made up of matter. This matter is an amalgamation of compounds that are a specific bunch of chemical elements. Each of these 188 elements fall on our periodic table, and are made up of atoms. When we dissect these atoms, we will find protons, neutrons, and electrons that contain subatomic particles. Finally, these particles (that require a very expensive microscope to see) are made up of vibrating strings. Yes, I said strings (and not like string cheese). Strings are so small that they cannot be seen by even the strongest microscope, but they are there, at the root of everything. The difference in these strings is in what is termed the pitch that they vibrate. Stars are inherently bunches of tiny strings, too. Well, they are big, fiery balls of gasses, which are compounded elements. If I came face to face with a humungous, glowing, fireball, I would rather say that it can be whatever it wants to be.

Now I suppose that you are wondering what all this has to do with magick. Yeesh, it *is* magick, silly. These vibrations are the cosmic energy of the universe. We are made up of star stuff. This connects us with everything else in the universe. I mentioned before that spirit is that connecting force of the four elements. Magick is the connecting force of the universe. Without magick, there would be chaos.

The use of magick and similar practices is called "Witchcraft." Not all witches are Wiccans, but all Wiccans are witches. Witches can be of any religion, or they do not have to have a religion at all. Because we are all connected to the cosmic energies of the universe, the power of magick comes from within. In essence, magick can be defined as using the will to "stir up the energy a little bit" for a specific purpose. Magick has been compared to the concept of praying, but this is a false statement. Praying is passive, in which practitioners ask an outside consciousness to make changes for them. Utilizing

magick is an active task, requiring practitioners to use their connection to the universe to make changes for themselves.

Magick is not confined to casting spells. Spells are used to help direct the energy to a specific purpose and are good for beginners to utilize. The better one gets at using magick, the less one will have to rely on spell work. Some witches are so masterful that they do not have to do anything but use their own willpower. The will of a witch is very important. However, spell work can aid the focus of even the most skilled witch. Spells are also not just some ancient secrets that were discovered by humanity thousands of years ago. You can create your own spells for your specific purpose. These spells use a combination of symbols, numbers, and objects (rocks, herbs, crystals, etc.) associated with the specific purpose. Even though spells are essentially easy to concoct, Wicca does not use them much. All of the magick that you need is within you.

On a very important note about magick in most cases: magick should not intentionally be used to harm others. Spells which interfere with a person's choice and free will, are considered, for our purposes, out of bounds. A good number of love spells fall into this category, because they attempt to make someone control the feelings of another person. Casting a love spell to help you find love is different than willing for a specific person to love you. It does not give the other person the choice to have those feelings or to act upon them. Magick that is done with the intent to harm others is also not permitted. If it is your desire to use magick to manipulate or harm others, then put this book down at once. You will have no help from me. It is in your best interest to not associate yourself with those who find joy in harming others. What a person does to others, that person does to you and to himself or herself as well.

Meditation

There are several ways to begin your study of magick. I suggest starting with meditation.

Your mind consists of three different parts: the Talking Self, the Younger Self, and the Divine Self. The Talking Self is your consciousness or the part of you that is awake and thinking all of the time when you are not sleeping. The Younger Self is also called the Dream Self or the unconscious. It is that part of you that takes over when your Talking Self has gone to sleep. It is called the "Young Self," because children are often very present in their creative and dream awareness. The Divine Self is the part of you that is directly connected to the creative life force of the universe, or those vibrating string-things.

These three parts of your conscious communicate linearly. In other words, they can only directly communicate in the order in which they exist:

Talking Self - Young Self - Divine Self

The Talking Self can only communicate directly with the Young Self, the Divine Self can only communicate directly with the Young Self, and the Young Self can communicate directly with both the Talking Self and the Divine Self.

Imagine that two of your best friends are mad at each other. You are the Young Self, one friend is the Talking Self, and the other is the Divine Self. These two friends refuse to talk to each other, and will only relay messages

through you, the Young Self. We can suppose that this is because the Talking Self will not shut up long enough to hear what the Divine Self is saying. And the Divine Self is way too high and mighty to deal with the cluttered and scatter-brained Talking Self. So, to get messages through, you have to wait until your friend, the Talking Self, is asleep in order to relay subliminal messages through dreams.

Thank goodness there is another way. Meditation comes in handy, because it is the practice of quieting the Talking Self so you can hear what the Young Self is telling you that the Divine Self is saying. You know, the Talking Self just goes on and on all day, sometimes preventing you from concentrating, from listening, and from sleeping. Do you see what I am getting at? If you can just get that yapper to shut up for even ten minutes a day, can you imagine how much more you will hear?

Start by setting aside ten minutes a day to meditate. Go to a quiet place where you will not be disturbed and wear comfortable clothes. You may put on a little soft, appropriate music, but I suggest starting out by meditating without any music. You may want to sit on a chair to keep your back straight. I prefer to sit on the floor with my legs crossed. Breathe slowly and deeply, making sure to breathe from your diaphragm. As you inhale, your stomach should expand. As you exhale, your stomach should flatten, pushing all of the air out and deflating like a balloon. Clear your mind of any thoughts from the Talking Self. You will be able to distinguish them from thoughts from your Young Self. Allow your Young Self to talk to you. Let any pictures, thoughts, or feelings come into your mind. Keep a meditation journal and record anything that floats to your mind during the meditation. Meditation is the best way to begin to realize our connection with the divine.

Your first few tries might not heed any results, but do not be discouraged. This is normal and it is only through practice will you be able to fully quiet your Talking Self to take in what the Young Self is saying.

The Young Self knows the things that are troubling you. Your dreams serve many functions. You normally have anywhere from five to seven dreams a night, even if you do not remember all of them. The first dreams that you have will be a review of the day's activities. When you get into a deep sleep, you rarely dream, but it is these dreams right before and right after this state that are significant. Dreams that are significant occur when the Younger Self feeds us important information in our sleep. For example, if you dream about dying, it may be a result of something amiss with your body and it is communicating your need to see a doctor.

Start a dream journal. Keep a pen and a journal or a pad in a spot by your bed that is easy to reach. If you wake up and remember a dream, quickly jot down the key points, even if you fall back asleep again right afterward. Identifying repeating elements in your dreams can help pick out those things that your unconscious is trying to tell you. You may want to buy a book that deciphers dreams, but I suggest against it. Although some of the interpretations might seem good, your Young Self is communicating in a symbolic language that only you know. You need to look at your dreams and see what they mean to you.

Weaving the Web

By developing our awareness of our connection with the divine, we increase our ability to call upon this connection to aid magickal workings. Magick is the movement of energy to produce a desired result. To use magick, we must take some amount of energy and move it. No matter the type of magickal task we wish to complete, it requires energy.

Our first step is to understand where this energy comes from and how to identify it. Your body takes in anywhere from 1500 to 3000 calories per day. It breaks down the carriers of this potential energy and processes them, putting the stored energy into a form that it can easily utilize. This is similar to my fascination with vegetable concoctions. I cannot eat celery on its own (one of these days, it will seriously kill me, I fear), so I drop a few sticks in a lump of other vegetables I love in the blender, and presto! I can easily obtain all of the goodness of celery without choking. Maybe.

This energy (in my case, celery) then goes to fuel the rest of the body. It is running throughout your body right now. Close your eyes. Attempt to locate your body's energy. It is in your chest, in your head, in your legs, as well as in your abdomen. It is tingling, moving, electric. Feel it running through you. If you cannot do so right now, do not worry. It will come with time. Repeat this exercise several times a day until you feel the energy your body contains. Meditating for even ten minutes per day will also increase your awareness of your body and mind.

After you have made a mental connection with your energy, it is best then to gather it in a central place. Pull the energy from your toes, your legs, your abdomen, your arms, your chest, and your heart into a single point. Many times, I have used my seeing eye, which is the point on my head just above the nasal cavity, to act as the focal point for my body's force. However, as I have learned to move greater amounts of energy, I have needed a larger centrality. I currently gather everything into my chest, around the sternum.

Visualization is a key skill required in magick. It involves *seeing and feeling* the desired result to *produce* the desired result. If I want to collect my energy into my chest, I have to feel and see the energy moving. By visualizing this action, I am telling my body what to do. Although you speak English, your body does not understand it. Only your brain understands. You could think all day about how you want your energy to move, but you will find little happens. You must close your eyes, reach down within yourself, and scoop the running current on your own. Feel it being pulled into your central place. Now, you can move it collectively outward from this focal point.

One thing to remember is that when pulling energy into a central place, you do not want to leave yourself fatigued. Do not call upon every last scrap that your body has to offer. You still need energy in your feeties and your toes to walk about, just as your brain and heart still need fuel. When you get a package from your Great Aunt Gertie in Buffalo, you tend to tear into it, dumping all of the packaging peanuts onto the floor. These little peanuts represent our body's energy. As you clean them up, you scoop up a bunch with both arms, skimming the top of the large pile, and leaving plenty behind. If you try to pick up every single last peanut on the first scoop, your arms will bust open, and peanuts will fly everywhere. When you attempt to collect your

energy, you want to scoop up as much as possible from what is available, but know that you left enough behind, so that your body does not begin to fatigue or bust.

Larger acts of magick require us to move larger amounts of energy. There are two other places to access larger quantities of energy. The earth itself has vast amounts of energy. Our home, the earth, is very much like ourselves. It takes in energy from the sun, processes it, and moves it all about. Underneath the surface, there is so much going on. Tectonic plates move and shift, magma flows bubble, water flows about, and fossil resources are being made. Closer to home, the earth is replenishing the minerals that are used from the soil, helping trees and other plants to grow, providing heat for its inhabitants, and performing a plethora of tasks we cannot see on the surface.

When I am in need of more energy than my body can spare, I look to Mother Earth. Making use of this energy also requires us to be able to identify or feel it. Besides meditation, the best way to get to know the earth as a lady is by spending time with her. Sit or walk outside on a regular basis. Breathe in the fresh air. Feel the wind brushing past your skin. Take note of the vibrations under your feet. Become aware of the plants and the animals that we share this home with. What does the earth say to you?

Another good place from which to draw upon energy is our connection with the divine, cosmic energies of the universe. In much of the same way that we identify the energy within us, we must find that spark that connects us with the vast, pulsating universe. This task is not as easy as the first two, perhaps because we cannot see the universe from our place on earth. We are merely one microscopic part of a grand, vibrating system. Universal awareness is best achieved through meditation. By subduing your consciousness, it is possible to sense that connection. With practice, you can draw upon the connective energy of the universe at will.

Once you can feel the energy pulsating through the earth, or your connection with the magickal force that runs throughout everything in the universe, it is then possible to use it. You must then pull the energy into yourself via a focal point. I still use the point in my chest just above my breastbone. When using energy from the earth, I visualize that this energy is being pulled through my feet and legs and into my body, much as if I were a tree with deep roots which pulls nourishment from the earth. Calling upon cosmic energies, I reach out with my mind, establish the connection, and pull the energy in.

Now that you have collected the energy, you can direct it in the fashion that you desire. It is not always necessary to use magick. You have gone how many years without it? However, as with any learned skill, practice is necessary to perfect the art. Once or twice per day, move all of your energy to the focal point, and expel it back through your body, clearing your mind. This will help you refine calling and directing energy. Once you can move the energy in your body, you may then progress to pulling energy from outside sources. Repeat the same exercise. Pull in energy from the earth and then expel it through your body in an effort to clear your mind and renew your vigor.

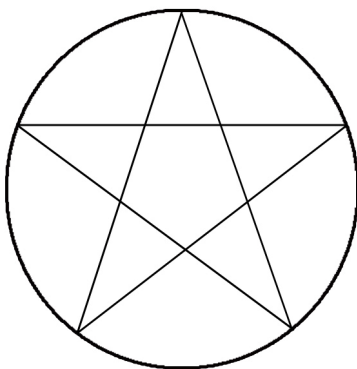
It is very difficult to pull in energy from the earth and the rest of the universe and hold it in without after effects. When we utilize energy from these sources, there can be a little extra oomph left over. However, it is necessary to return this excess energy to the earth. This process allows us to ground

ourselves. An ungrounded person can leave him/herself open to energy "hangovers." It can make your head hurt and possibly make you dizzy.



STANDARD SYMBOLS

You've seen them. Some of them lurk around with their meanings hidden. It is obvious what others stand for. Some Wiccan symbols are found in everyday life, but do not hold Wiccan meaning for other people. What makes them a symbol is the feelings or the memories that they invoke from within us. They serve as tools, reminders, as advertisements, and personal statements. The symbols presented here are far from the only symbols of Wicca, and new ones are created by covens and witches alike.



The Pentagram/Pentacle: This symbol is the most widely known symbol in Wicca. However, this symbol is also a general pagan glyph. The Pentagram is a five-pointed star, and the pentacle is that five-pointed star circumscribed inside of a circle. It stands for the five elements called upon to aid workings of magick (Air, Fire, Earth, Water, Spirit). Do not confuse it with the inverted pentagram, which has the top point of the star pointed downward.



The Spiral: The spiral stands for the spiral of life. It is the circular motion that everything makes and the cycles that everything goes through. It is the spiral of the universe. It is the spiral dance of the Great Mother Goddess as She created the Universe.



The Moon: The moon represents many things. It can symbolize the Goddess, specifically moon goddesses (for instance, Isis, Diana, or Hecate). There are also gods associated with the moon (for example, the Norse god, Odin). The moon represents emotion, feeling, intuition, and dreams. It is an important symbol to many earth religions, because of its close relationship to the earth. The tides are one major example of the way the moon affects us.



Triple Moon: The triple moon symbolizes the three aspects of the Goddess: Maiden, Mother, and Crone, as well as the three phases of the moon: waxing crescent, the full moon, and waning crescent.



7 Circuit












11 Circuit

The Labyrinth: The labyrinth is an ancient symbol that combines the imagery of the circle and the spiral into a winding but purposeful path. The labyrinth represents a journey to our own center and back again out into the world. Labyrinths have long been used as meditation and mind working tools. A labyrinth is a means with which we can have a direct experience. We can walk it, whether in the physical or with our minds. It symbolizes life's journey and creates a sacred space and place. Walking a labyrinth takes us on a trip to that which is within.

Labyrinths and mazes have often been confused. A labyrinth is not a maze, because it has only one path. It is unicursal. The way in is the way out. There are no dead ends. The path leads you on a spiraling circle path to the center and out again.

A labyrinth involves intuition, creativity, and imagery. With a maze, many choices must be made and an active mind is needed to find the center. The only choice with a labyrinth is whether or not to enter; therefore, a more passive, receptive frame of mind is needed. The choice is whether or not to walk a spiritual path, for once we take the first step, we cannot go back. Once we know, we cannot go back to not knowing.

Color and number associations vary slightly depending on the intuition and interpretation of the practitioner. These associations are often used in spell work and tarot/oracle reading.

PLANETARY SYMBOLS	
Mercury	
Venus	
Earth	
Mars	
Jupiter	
Saturn	
Uranus	
Neptune	
Pluto	

ELEMENTAL SYMBOLS	
Earth	
Air	
Fire	
Water	

COLOR ASSOCIATIONS	
Amber	Witch symbol, developing Craft skills, empowerment
Black	Protection, night, the universe, truth, binding for spell work, adding or removing of negativity or hexes
Dark Blue	Elemental Water, water, impulse, dreams, protection, change, meditation
Light Blue	Psychic awareness, intuition, opportunity, understanding, patience, tranquility, health
Brown	Earthly riches, animal health, stability, house/home, material objects
Gold	The God, the sun, solar energy, power, achievement, physical strength, success, healing energies
Gray	Astral travel, visions, veiling, neutralizing
Green	Elemental Earth, nature magick, luck, fertility, balance, courage, work, prosperity, agriculture, abundance
Orange	Strength, healing, vitality, adaptability, luck, encouragement, dominance, justice, career goals, legal matters
Pink	Honor, morality, friendships, emotional love, social ability, good will, caring, healing emotions, peace, affection, nurturing, romance, partnership
Purple	Spirit, power, spiritual development, intuition, ambition, healing, wisdom, progress, spirit communications, protection, occultism
Red	Elemental Fire, strength, courage, power, energy, health, vigor, enthusiasm, passion, sexuality, survival, Moon blood
Silver	The Goddess, lunar magick, meditation, psychic development, astral energies
White	Full moon magick, purity, peace, truth, meditation, serenity, justice, protection
Yellow	Elemental Air, divination, clairvoyance, mental abilities, intellect, memory, learning, changes, creativity, self-promotion, communication

NUMERICAL ASSOCIATIONS			
1	Sun	Fire	Ambition, courage, developing the self, the All, beginning and ending, wholeness and unity
2	Moon	Water	Emotion, harmony, cooperation, sensitivity, personality, truth, blessing, duality, balance
3	Jupiter	Fire	Creativity, joy, health, opportunity, career, triple goddess, the three phases of the moon
4	Uranus	Air	Will, discipline, construction, divination, knowledge, foundation, strength, the four elements
5	Mercury	Air	The group, freedom, expansion, communication, fulfillment, the pentagram
6	Venus	Earth	Love, wisdom, the voice, responsibility, social ability, allure, decisions
7	Neptune	Water	Higher learning, spirituality, quietness, subconscious, intuition, mysticism, change
8	Saturn	Earth	Divine law, authority, materialism, spiritualism, self-discipline
9	Mars	Fire	Service, aggression, energy, immortality, binding, indestructibility



THE GODDESS AND THE GOD

The Goddess and the God represent the duality of the energy in the universe. Although nothing would be complete without both aspects, some forms of Wicca place more emphasis on the Goddess, because She is the giver of life, the womb, and the earth itself.

Monotheism is the belief in one deity.

Polytheism is the belief in many deities.

Animism is the belief that all things have a consciousness and are helped to grow by the non-physical worlds.

Pantheism is the belief that god is everywhere and that all gods and goddesses are aspects of one deity.

Wicca often is Pantheistic. In that belief:

All Goddesses are one Goddess.
All Gods are one God.
The God and Goddess are one.

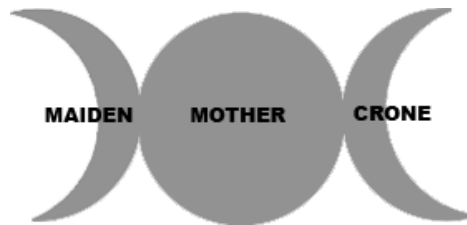
The Goddess

The Goddess is the giver of life, but knowledgeable of death. She represents the womb of the mother, nature, the earth, and a plethora of other things. The Goddess is very dynamic and receptive, as opposed to active and energetic. Symbols of the goddess include the triple moon, the chalice/goblet, and the cauldron. She is the ruler of the waxing half of the year, from Yule (December 21st) to Midsummer (June 21st).

The Goddess has three general aspects: the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone. These aspects are in correspondence with the three phases of a woman's life, as well as the three phases of the moon. The Maiden is the waxing crescent moon, which is the moon at the beginning of its life cycle. The

Mother is the full moon, the ripe, fertile lady. The Crone is the waning crescent moon, the moon in its final stages of the cycle.

The moon is full for three days, and these days can also be broken down to fit into this pattern. The full moon is a very powerful time, because during those three days, the moon is reflecting back the most amount of the sun's light as possible. The first day of the full moon represents Maiden energies, the second day is Mother energies, and the third day is Crone energies.



The color that best represents the Goddess is silver. The moon appears silver or gray. A pool of water reflecting the light of the moon is silver. Mirrors also have reflective properties and they tend to be silver as well. Silver is a cool, calm, and receptive tone. It balances well with gold, which is the color most associated with the Sun God.

Here are a few goddesses from various traditions: Cerridwen, Isis, Astarte, Diana, Hecate, Demeter, Kali, Innana, Aphrodite, Persephone, Gaea, Hera, Artemis, Iris, and Athena.

The God

The God is the father figure. He is the Horned One, the consort of the Goddess, and her equal. He represents linear energies and is very active and energetic. Symbols of the God include the sun, harvest, death, incense, wand, and the athame. He is the ruler of the waning half of the year, from Midsummer (June 21st) to Yule (December 21st).

The color gold best represents the God, because the sun is bright and warm. Gold is also the color of the fields waiting to be harvested. It is a color of stability, power, and wealth.

Gods from various traditions include Pan, Zeus, Odin, the Green Man, and the Horned One.

The universe is a give and take, an ebb and flow of energies. Wicca is a system that recognizes the oneness, the wholeness, of the universe and in the divine cosmic energies that are present in everything. However, we separate the deity into the God and the Goddess to better understand the

balance that exists within the vast reaches of the universe, as well as here on earth.

Birth and death, yin and yang, good and evil, black and white, new and old, light and dark...our reality is made up of countless dualities. Though each of these dualities expresses two absolute extremities, many times in real life, the actual dualities are a mixture of the two. At the beginning of life, you are born. However, birth is not one end of the extremity. It is not purely the beginning of life. It is also the end of something. Reincarnation is the process of experiencing many lifetimes to gain the necessary knowledge to become one with the divine. When we are born, we lose much of our knowledge of prior experiences. This is a death or ending of some sort. So, in reality, birth is never truly one side of the extremity. Birth is both living and dying in some sense. It is a mixture of the two.

We work with the God and the Goddess to understand how the cosmic energies in the universe are mixed, how they move, and how they affect us. We also utilize their symbology to better direct our energy or the energy of the earth and the universe.



THE REDE AND THE CHARGE

The Wiccan Rede is a moral guide to which Wiccans hold themselves accountable. Similar to an earlier writing by Aleister Crowley, "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law," was transmuted to read, "And ye harm none, do what thou wilt," and is now the most commonly accepted version of the Wiccan Law. It was adopted because it represents some of the most fundamental Wiccan principles, having made its way into the following poem.

The Law is about self-accountability, self-responsibility, and above all, self-awareness. It speaks of the need to be more aware of the fact that what we do affects other people and living things. Wicca does not restrict us to a set of defined guidelines. We are of our own command, but the underlying principle is that what we do should not hurt others.

A frequently overlooked principle of the Rede is that harming none includes not harming ourselves. Even knowing this, many Wiccans do not take an active part in keeping themselves from harm. We may not inflict intentional physical pain upon ourselves, but we would do better to take care of our bodies. Once the body is exhausted beyond its means, the spark of life cannot continue.

The Wiccan Rede

And ye harm none, do what thou wilt.

The Wiccan Rede

Extended Version 1

Bide in the Wiccan Law ye must,
In perfect love and perfect trust.
Eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfill:
An ye harm none, do what ye will.
Ever mind the Rule of Three:
What ye send out, comes back to thee.
Follow this with mind and heart,
And merry ye meet, and merry ye part.
(*Author unknown*)

The Wiccan Rede

Extended Version 2

Bide ye the Wiccan laws ye must, in perfect love and perfect trust.
Ye must live and let live, fairly take and fairly give.
Cast the circle thrice about, to keep unwelcome spirits out.
To bind the spell well every time, let the spell be spake in rhyme.
Soft of eye and light of touch, speak ye little and listen much.
Deosil¹ goes by waxing moon, chanting out the Wiccan rune.
Widdershins² go by waning moon, chanting out the baneful tune.
When the Lady's moon is new, kiss the hand to Her times two.
When the moon rides at Her peak, then the heart's desire seek.
Heed the North wind's mighty gale, lock the door and trim the sail.
When the wind comes from the South, love will kiss thee on the mouth.
When the moor wind blows from the West, departed spirits have no rest.
When the wind blows from the East, expect the new and set the feast.
Nine woods in the cauldron go, burn them quick and burn them slow.
Elder be the Lady's tree, burn it not or cursed ye'll be.
When the Wheel begins to turn, let the Beltane fires burn.
When the Wheel has turned to Yule, light the log and the Horned One rules.
Heed ye flower, bush and tree, by the Lady blessed be.
Where the rippling waters go, cast a stone, the truth to know.
When ye have and hold a need, hearken not to other's greed.
With a fool no seasons spend, or be counted as his friend.
Merry meet and merry part, bright the cheeks and warm the heart.
Mind the Threefold Law ye should, three times bad and three times good.
When misfortune is now, wear the blue star on thy brow.
True in love ye must ever be, lest they love be false to thee.
These eight words the Wiccan Rede fulfill: "An harm ye none, do what thou will."

The Charge of the Goddess is a common writing of power. The goal of the Charge is to become more in touch with the feminine aspect of the divine. The Charge of the God follows.

The Charge of the Goddess

Listen to the words of the Great Mother, she who was of old also called among mortals Artemis, Astarte, Athene, Dione, Melusine, Aphrodite, Kali Ma, Cerridwen, Isis, Arianrhod, Brigid, and by many other names:

"Whenever you have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be when the Moon is full, then shall ye assemble in some secret place and call

¹ Deosil refers to clockwise.

² Widdershins refers to counterclockwise.

upon the spirit of me who is Queen of all the Witches. There shall ye assemble, ye who are fain to learn all sorcery yet have not won its deepest secrets; to these I will teach things that are as yet unknown. And ye shall be free from slavery, and as a token that ye be truly free, ye shall be naked in your rites. Dance, sing, feast, make music and love, all in My praise. For Mine is the ecstasy of the spirit and Mine is also joy on earth. My law is love unto all beings.

"Keep pure your highest ideals; strive ever toward them, let naught turn you aside, for Mine is the secret door which opens upon the door of youth. And Mine is the cup of the Wine of Life and Cauldron of Cerridwen, which is the Holy Grail of immortality. I am the gracious Goddess, who gives the gift of joy unto the hearts of men and women. Upon Earth I give knowledge of the spirit eternal and beyond death I give peace, freedom, and reunion with those who have gone before. Nor do I demand sacrifice, for behold, I am the Mother of all things, and My love is poured out upon the Earth."

"Hear ye the words of the Star Goddess, She in the dust of whose feet are the hosts of heaven, whose body encircles the universe:

"I am the beauty of the green Earth and the white Moon among the stars and the mysteries of the waters. I call unto thy soul, arise and come unto Me, for I am the soul of nature who gives life to the universe. From Me all things proceed and to Me all must return. And before My face, beloved of gods and humans, let thine innermost divine self be enfolded in the rapture of the Infinite.

"Let my worship be within the heart that rejoices, for all acts of love and pleasure are My rituals. Therefore let there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, honor and humility, mirth and reverence within you. And thou who thinkest to seek Me, know that seeking and yearning shall avail thee not, unless thou knowest the Mystery: if that which thou seekest, thou findest not within thee, thou shalt never find it without. For, behold, I have been with thee from the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the end of desire."

(Doreen Valiente)

The Charge of the God

Listen to the words of the Great Father, who of old was called Osiris, Adonis, Zeus, Thor, Pan, Cernunnos, Herne, Lugh, and by many other names:

"My Law is Harmony with all things. Mine is the secret that opens the gates of life and mine is the dish of salt of the earth that is the body of Cernunnos that is the eternal circle of rebirth. I give the knowledge of life everlasting, and beyond death I give the promise of regeneration and renewal. I am the sacrifice, the father of all things, and my protection blankets the earth."

"Hear the words of the dancing God, the music of whose laughter stirs the winds, whose voice calls the seasons:

"I who am the Lord of the Hunt and the Power of the Light, sun among the clouds and the secret of the flame, I call upon your bodies to arise and come unto me. For I am the flesh of the earth and all its beings. Through me all things must die and with me are reborn. Let my worship be in the body that sings, for behold all acts of willing sacrifice are my rituals. Let there be desire and fear, anger and weakness, joy and peace, awe and longing within you. For these too are part of the mysteries found within yourself, within me, all beginnings have endings, and all endings have beginnings."

(Janet and Stewart Farrar)



WORK, DEATH, AND REINCARNATION

A religion is a belief system that serves many functions. On a societal level, it sets up a moral code that permeates governmental and social attitudes and behaviors. On a personal level, it gives people a sense of belonging and a means to be held accountable for their thoughts and actions.

Religion also explains the unexplainable. It attempts to answer questions that humans have otherwise been unable to satisfy. Unlike some of our prehistoric predecessors, humans think with grandeur and have the ability to adapt quickly, even to large change. We have left the answering of most of our queries largely up to science. However, there are several questions that are still left without remedy.

- How was the universe formed?
- How was the earth formed?
- Exactly how old is the earth?
- Why are humans the only species on the planet to evolve to such an intelligent state?
- Is earth the only planet in the universe that carries life with similar intelligence to our own?
- How much longer will the earth exist?
- What happens when we die?

These topics are larger than life, and some even larger than human existence itself. Science, along with most religions, has theories about many of these questions. Many religious ideas are fables or stories told to pass along morals and culture. Some of them are actual theories. Many contradict each other and others are similar in explanation. The one question that will directly affect every single person on this planet in his or her lifetimes is the question of what happens when we die.

What happens when we die?

We are confronted with death from the moment we are born. It is inevitable and looming. Death permeates our media. Infomercials ask for money to aid starving children in Africa. The local news reports on the latest shooting downtown. National headlines remember fallen heroes and deceased

stars. In school, years are spent studying the history of the world and what our ancestors accomplished. Our family tells of relatives who have breathed their last breath, and we may even be present for the passing of relatives that we know and are close to. Most tasks in life come with at least a small risk of fatal injury. However, most religions teach that death is not the end of the journey. Humans that are alive have not been able to scientifically test the theories of what lies beyond the realm of the living. So, the explanation of the voyage into the shadows is left to religion.

Human existence has so many dimensions that the average consciousness of a person in an everyday setting will find it impossible to fully grasp. The purpose of life is to become one with the divine cosmic energies of the universe. But first, that energy that makes up you—your soul, your spirit—needs a lot of work. Earth is the body shop of the universe. You will encounter seemingly endless challenges throughout life. Some will be easy, others will be difficult, and many you will face over and over again. The principle behind these trials is to learn from them. What you face and the things that you learn from are the mechanics of stellar reality.

Oh, but do not think for one second that, at death, the challenges will cease and oneness with the divine is bestowed upon the weary traveler. Oh, no. A number of our lessons cannot be realized within one lifetime. There are so many lessons and so much work to be done that it has to be spread throughout a number of life spans. A spirit will traverse as many lifetimes as it takes to complete the necessary work and to learn the needed lessons to refine itself to the level that it will blend perfectly with the rest of the divine cosmic energies of the universe. The journey of progressing through challenges to reunite with the divine is called the Great Work.

The key to consciously understanding the work that needs to be done lies with self-awareness. First, when presented with obstacles, take an objective view of them. Look at complications as necessary challenges. Then, ask yourself what you are meant to learn from this particular experience. Pay close attention to situations that keep repeating themselves in your life. Recurrences often indicate that you are having trouble learning the life lesson. For example, a kid who is bullied and wonders why it keeps happening to him might have trouble coming to the conclusion that he needs to stand up for himself. Without putting fear aside and putting up a fight, that same boy is more likely to let people take advantage of him later in life. Realizing that he is often put in a situation where he is being stepped on by other people may instigate the necessary reaction out of him. By doing the necessary work, in this case, not letting other people take advantage of him, he has learned a valuable lesson about life.

Even though humans live in collective places, each and every person has a different life path. We take on our challenges in different orders and have different ways of completing them. It is impossible to teach another person all of the lessons that he or she will encounter. However, we can attempt to point a person in the right direction. Each person has to come to the realization of the secrets of life and what the universe holds for us on his or her own.

During the intermediary times between lives, Wiccan folklore tells that we go to a place called the Summerland. I have heard it described as a large valley where we dance and sing until we make the transition to the next life. It is in the Summerland that we remember all of the lessons that we have learned throughout all of our lives. Birth is not only the beginning of life, but it is also a death of sorts. When we are born, everything that we have accumulated sinks

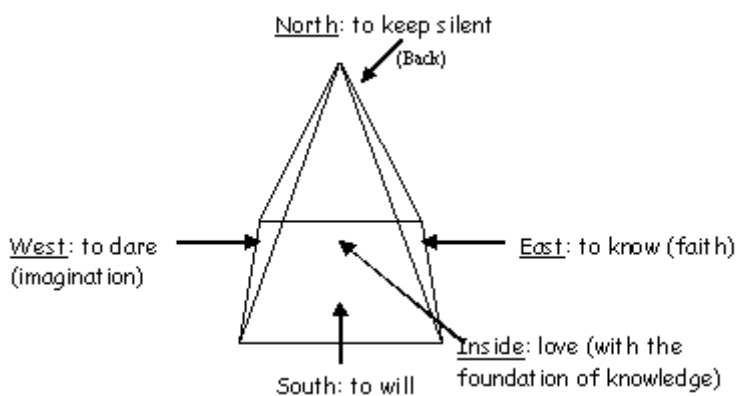
back into the deep unconscious of our spirit, as well as our conscious knowledge of the universe, and we start anew.

Not all Wiccans believe in reincarnation. Some believe that after we die, our bodies are buried and provide food and nourishment to other living organisms.

There are those who do not feel that our existence goes on after our bodies cease to go on.



THE WITCH'S PYRAMID



The Witch's Pyramid is based on four pillars that represent qualities a witch should seek to expand the self. These qualities build upon each other. Just as with the pyramid, if one part was missing, the whole structure would break apart. The more we know, the more we are challenged to be silent. The more we dare to imagine, the more we can know.

To Know

To Know corresponds with the element of Air and represents the witch's reason, intellect, wisdom, and other more mystical understandings. A witch should be in constant pursuit of knowledge. It does not matter whether this knowledge comes from teachers, books, or experience. The mere fact that you are reading this book suggests that you are embarking on adventures as a result of your desire to know. You have embarked on a quest for inner truth. There was no disclaimer at the beginning of this book stating that this is only the beginning, but it is. After we get the knowledge, we refine it by organizing, remembering, analyzing, reasoning, imagining, connecting, and engaging in all of the other activities involved in processing information.

Knowledge is power in witchcraft. The more you understand about yourself, as well as the world and the universe around you, the better you will

be able to interact with it. We pull experiences from many different points in our lives. A cooking class may have taught you skills to whip up fantastic simple feast cookies. Your interest in crafts or woodworking may help you to better craft your own tools. I have used my writing ability to not only design rituals, but to write this book as well.

Working in covens also allows us to better utilize our knowledge. In a given group, someone could work with wood, someone else could sew, others can cook, draw, and work with clay. One member may be an expert tarot reader, and one has taken intense interest in astrology, and another works well with runes. All of the various talents present in a coven can come together and enhance the experience for everyone.

To Will

To Will corresponds with the element of Fire and represents the witch's will, discipline, and skills in the arts of magick and life. This pillar can be split into two categories: the mundane and the magickal. A witch is true to his/her commitments and promises. The will ensures the strength to make those commitments and keep them. Not only do we make promises to other people, but we make promises to ourselves. We need to make goals and attain them. A witch is a fierce creature.

The will is also called upon when we wish to see a spell or act of magick through. It takes a great deal of will to call upon the magick that lies within us and to direct it for our desired result. We also must remain as focused as possible, not only within our specific purpose, but on our path. When we lose focus, we lose sight of the path. The magick slips away. We must maintain a certain level of concentration, discipline, and drive, as well as an enthusiasm for the journey in the first place.

To Dare

To Dare corresponds with the element of Water and represents the witch's emotions, heart, and courage. This pillar encompasses the act of facing fears and becoming a resilient being. Dare to seek the truth. Dare to dance with the Goddess. Dare to learn. Dare to test out new knowledge. Dare to keep the secrets of the past. Dare to share the understanding of the future. Within this realm, we are daring to look inside ourselves for the child that has not yet been hidden. Taking a look within is necessary in order to eradicate the skeletons in the closet.

It takes a lot of courage to realize life is not going in the direction that you wish it to take you, and then to step onto the correct path. So many fish travel in schools within an ocean current. They just float along and do not worry about which way they are drifting. If a single fish decides that it is in the wrong current, pulling away could prove disastrous, but it leaves the group anyway. It may not know the waters it currently swims in, or even if there is another path nearby. All it knows is that it seeks home and it is headed in the wrong direction. So, it swims to find the right current.

To Keep Silent

To Keep Silent corresponds with the element of Earth and represents the silence within. With the earth, we ground. We find a center place in which to hit the pause button. There is a loud roar coming from a waterfall in a lovely glade. This waterfall is your thoughts rushing about your head. If we turn this waterfall off for just a moment, there is not silence. On the other hand, we hear life. The breeze, the animals, the insects, the plants, the trees, and the vibrations of the earth are just some of the things audible now. What are they saying? Turn the waterfall back on and we hear none of this.

To Love

To Love corresponds with the Spirit, which is the force that connects all things together. It fills the void in the center of the pyramid. It makes the pyramid whole. There are many different kinds of love and it takes many different forms. The most important type of love is love for yourself. Without loving yourself, you will not dare to dream or challenge yourself to know. Without knowing who you truly are, you cannot truly love yourself. These are the keys to awareness of yourself and of the universe.

My coven and I sat down to discuss the Witch's Pyramid and we came up with several specific qualities a witch should possess in addition to the pyramid. We also felt that there are many qualities that distinguish a witch from a priestess or priest of the Craft.

Additional Qualities of a Witch	Additional Qualities of a Priestess or Priest
Wisdom	Leadership
Understanding	Approachability
Patience	Ability to Instigate Change
Persistence	Ability to Teach
Perseverance	Extensive Knowledge
Personal Respect	Resourcefulness
Confidence	Lack of Bias
Reverence for All Life	Listening
Balance	Embodies the Image of the God/Goddess
Self-Accountability	Awareness of the Whole
Self-Awareness (subjective)	(objective)



THE WHEEL OF THE YEAR

The Wheel of the Year refers to the pagan calendar year. It follows the cycle of the sun as the earth revolves around it in 365 days. It mirrors the cycle of life as the seasons turn, always coming and going, forever ebbing and flowing. It begins on October 31st and encompasses four minor and four major sabbats. It tells the story of the Goddess and God, their cycle of love, lust, death, and rebirth. Samhain, Imbolc, Beltane, and Lughnassadh are major sabbats. Yule, Ostara, Midsummer, and Mabon are minor sabbats, because they mark seasonal changes.

Wiccans seek awareness of not only themselves, but of the earth. One of the best ways to become more aware of the earth is to pay attention to her cycles. Watching the seasons turn and taking part in celebrating the changes the land undergoes undeniably helps us become more familiar with the change going on in our own lives as well.

Samhain

October 31st is known as Samhain (Sow-in) or Halloween. This marks the time when the God descends into the Underworld. The veil between the worlds is the thinnest. It is the end of the harvest and the harvest of the flesh.

Yule

Near December 21st is Yule, the shortest day and the longest night, and the day when the Goddess gives birth to the God. This marks the rebirth of the sun. From this point on, the days will grow longer and the return of spring is anticipated.

Imbolc

February 2nd occurs as days get longer and the Goddess awakens from her rest. The growing light fertilizes the earth, sprouting seeds. The young God is growing into adolescence, and his sexual desires are rousing.

Ostara

Near March 21st is the day of Ostara, or the Spring/Vernal Equinox. It is the time when day and night are equal. It marks the first day of true spring, for as the God matures, the Goddess covers the earth with fertility.

Beltane

April 30th is known as Beltane or May Day. The God has matured and the God and the Goddess fall in love. They express their passions as they unite.

From this union, she is impregnated with the young God. The land explodes with life.

Midsummer

June 21st or Summer Solstice is the most fertile time. It marks the first day of summer and is the longest day of the year. It is a turning point, for from this point on, the days will grow shorter.

Lughnassadh

August 1st marks the beginning of the harvest, Lughnassadh, the harvest of grains. The days continue to get shorter, and the God is losing his strength. As the child grows within Her, the Goddess sees the old God dying.

Mabon

September 21st heralds the Autumnal Equinox and marks the next harvest and the anticipation of winter begins. It is the second harvest and the harvest of fruits. The days grow even shorter, and the God grows weaker yet. He will return to the underworld at Samhain.

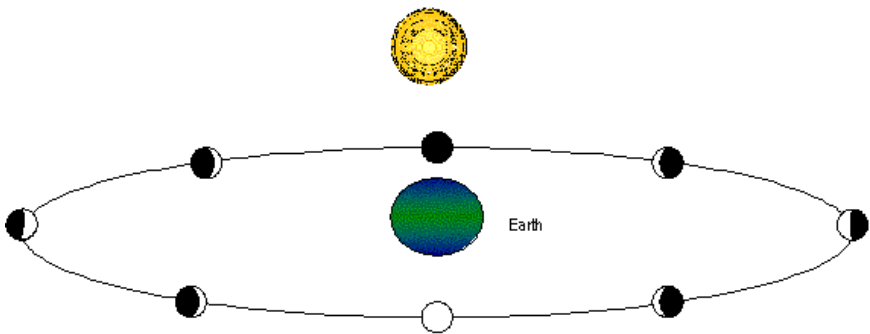


THE LUNAR CYCLE

Even though it is much smaller than both the earth and the sun, the moon has some profound effects on us. The tides are caused by the gravitational pull of the moon on the oceans. Astrologically, the energy absorbed and remitted by the moon affects our personalities, relationships, and our daily lives.

The moon is a symbol of the Goddess. It also represents the dream world, intuition, and emotions. A woman's moon time (menstrual cycle) is on a similar cycle as the moon, hence the name. Also, the number thirteen gained importance, because the moon has thirteen cycles to every year. Most lunar celebrations are done on a full moon. These full moon celebrations are called esbats. These days celebrate the cycle of the Goddess, the cycle of the woman.

The moon goes through several phases in one cycle. A cycle consists of twenty-eight days and is the time from when the moon is new, goes to full, and then returns to a new moon once again. A New Moon is the first moon phase where the unilluminated side of the moon is facing earth (the moon is in between the Earth and the sun). The new moon is the symbol of the Dark Goddess and her powers. Some dark deities include Cerridwen, Diana, Kali, Hades, Pluto, and Shiva. The Full Moon is when the earth is in between the sun and the moon. The reason why we only see one side of the moon is because it rotates at the same speed that it revolves around the earth. This phase of the moon represents the Mother Goddess.



There are three days to the phases of the new and the full moons. Each of these days is broken up as well to fit in with the Maiden-Mother-Crone model. The first day of a new/full moon is the Maiden day, the second is the Mother day, and the third is the Crone day.



Maiden

Waxing Crescent

First day of phase



Mother

Full Moon

Second day of phase



Crone

Waning Crescent

Third day of phase

Crescent and quarter moons occur when the moon is not directly in front of or behind of Earth. When the moon is in the beginning of its cycle, moving from new towards the full, the light is seen on the right hand side of the moon. This half of the cycle is called waxing. When the light is on the left hand side of the moon, returning from full to new again, the moon is said to be waning. A waxing crescent symbolizes the Maiden Goddess aspect and a waning crescent symbolizes the Crone.

It is important to become aware of the lunar cycle as the days and months roll on. Awareness of the universe is the key. Seek to align with the cycle of the earth and the heavens.

FULL MOONS

Many different groups named the full moons and used them to keep track of the months. Native Americans, who lived in the area that is now the northern and eastern United States, kept track of the seasons by giving distinctive names to the recurring full moons. Each full moon name was applied to the entire month in which it occurred. The following names, and some variations, were used by the Algonquin tribes from New England to Lake Superior.

JANUARY: Wolf Moon (Old Moon, Ice Moon)

FEBRUARY: Snow Moon (Hunger Moon)

MARCH: Worm Moon (Crow Moon, Crust Moon, Sugar Moon, Sap Moon)

APRIL: Pink Moon (Sprouting Grass Moon, Egg Moon, Fish Moon, Seed Moon)

MAY: Flower Moon (Corn Planting Moon, Milk Moon)

JUNE: Strawberry Moon (Rose Moon, Hot Moon)

JULY: Buck Moon (Thunder Moon, Hay Moon)

AUGUST: Sturgeon Moon (Red Moon, Green Corn Moon)

SEPTEMBER: Harvest Moon (Corn Moon, Barley Moon, Wine Moon)

OCTOBER: Hunter's Moon (Travel Moon, Dying Grass Moon)

NOVEMBER: Beaver Moon (Frost Moon)

DECEMBER: Cold Moon (Long Nights Moon)

The Harvest Moon is always the full moon closest to the Autumnal Equinox. If the Harvest Moon occurs in October, the September full moon is usually called the Corn Moon. Around the time of the Harvest and Hunter's Moons, the moon rises later, and thus sets later. The setting sun still gives off enough light to carry over workers until the moon is bright in the sky. This gives harvesters about thirty extra minutes of moonlight by which to work by. Or, in the time of the hunters, this would give them extra time to hunt in preparation for winter.

Modern practice is to name a full moon a "blue moon" if it is the second of two full moons to occur in the same calendar month. The original meaning of blue moon was the third full moon in a season when there were four full moons in that season.

One rite that is mentioned many times in connection with a group esbat, but is rarely explained, is the rite of Drawing Down the Moon. Drawing Down the Moon is a rite in which a priestess becomes a human vessel to be possessed by the Goddess for the purpose of passing along wisdom or energies. During this process, we bypass the physical body, the talking mind, and open up our direct connection with the deity. Unlike how we typically go about business by using our connection with the divine, Drawing Down the Moon allows the Goddess to speak or act through the priestess. It is not advised to attempt to call the Goddess into oneself while performing a solitary ritual. During this rite, the priestess is in a different state of awareness, and may not realize what is happening around her. For example, if a candle gets knocked over, she may not recognize the danger.



THE ELEMENTS

"Elements" in pagan philosophy are various manifestations of specific types of energies. Just as we broke the deity down into the God and the Goddess, we can further break these divine cosmic energies down into four parts. Almost everything can be associated with one or more of the four elements: Earth, Air, Fire, and Water.

The spirits, energies, or guardians of these four different elements may be called forth during ritual to protect us and aid us in magick. The elements are representations of parts of our world, as well as parts of ourselves. Without the elements, we would cease to feel emotions, to think, and to even exist.

Understanding what the elements are, remembering what they represent, and comprehending how they relate to us may be difficult at first. Studying and practicing ritual on a regular basis is the most effective way to master these relationships.

Earth

Earth is the element of stability, protection, fertility, soil, rocks, crystals, fruits, flowers, and the harvest. We look to the earth to ground us and to feed us. It is element of our bodies and everything that we do, make, and use. With the negative aspects of this energy is materialism, or placing an extreme focus on physical things. Materialism leads to the loss of focus in other areas of life, hindering advancement spiritually.

Direction	North
Colors	green, brown, black
Deities	Gaia, Demeter, Eriu
Symbol	Pentacle

Fire

Fire is the element of passion, human energy, the sun, strength, health, and enthusiasm. It represents candles, summer, noon, the lion, and the dragon. It is the driving force that moves the earth. It is the sexual energy that creates life. Fire is also in many ways associated with spirit and the breath of life. Negative aspects include anger, hate, selfishness, and the need of power.

Direction	South
Colors	red, orange, bright golden yellow
Deities	Brigit, Pele, Hestia, Lugh, Set
Symbol	Wand

Air

Air is the breath of the goddess. It is communication, knowledge, understanding, and invisibility. Air embodies with the parts of ourselves that we cannot see: the mind, vision, dreams, and thoughts. It is the direction of dawn, the sunrise, and the element of Spring, birds, dragonflies, butterflies, incense, feathers, and the athame. Negative aspects of this element include bigotry, and too much of the self (such as being overly self-assured, self-pity, etc.).

Direction	East
Colors	yellow, pink, white
Deities	Iris, Hermes, Nut
Symbol	Sword

Water

Water is the symbol of our emotions and feelings, as well as our dreams and intuitions. It is linked with the moon, autumn, oceans, rivers, clouds, rain, storms, the gray twilight, water animals, seashells, and water-smoothed stones. Negative aspects of water are depression and infatuation.

Direction	West
Colors	blue, sea green, blue-green, gray
Deities	Aphrodite, Poseidon
Symbol	Chalice

Spirit

Spirit is considered to be the fifth element, although is it different in many respects. It is the glue that holds all of the other elements together. It is that divine cosmic energy, a flowing force within everything. Without spirit, the elements themselves would not be connected and there would be chaos. It is that which is in between.

Colors	purple, white, grey
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Four Rooms

Our existence is divided up into four areas, or four rooms, if you will. Imagine that you live in a big house with four rooms. Your house includes: 1) a large, green kitchen with a small garden off of the side; 2) a bright yellow living room with a large, private balcony, 3) a luxurious, blue bathroom with a Jacuzzi tub; and 4) a cozy, red bedroom with a fireplace (do not forget the king-sized bed). Each of the four elements corresponds with one of these rooms, and each of these rooms corresponds with a part of you.

Element	EARTH	AIR	WATER	FIRE
<i>Room</i>	<i>Physical</i>	<i>Mental</i>	<i>Emotional</i>	<i>Spiritual</i>
Example	a large, green kitchen with a small garden off of the side	a bright yellow living room with a large, private balcony	a luxurious, blue bathroom with a Jacuzzi tub	a cozy, red bedroom with a fireplace

As our quest continues to learn more about ourselves, taking a look at each of our four rooms at regular intervals may help us identify patterns in our lives. Through including a four rooms account in our spiritual journal, or keeping a separate journal altogether, we can better decipher our hopes, fears, goals, strengths, weaknesses, and events in the past that we are holding onto. As we identify these instances in our lives, we can make better use of them, or make the move to discard them.

Each and every one of us has the image of a person in their heads that they would like to emanate. This person does not necessarily exist in real life, however it is the person that we aspire to be. One of the goals of Wicca is to look down inside ourselves and use our will to make the necessary changes we need to make to have a better quality of life. By consistently completing a four rooms assessment, you are able to not only identify these changes that need to

be made, but hold yourself accountable for them, as well as to monitor your progress.

So, take out a piece of notebook paper, or open up an empty word processing document on your computer, and let us get started. I will write down my four rooms along with you, but your entries can contain more or less detail than mine.

Physical

The physical room includes all of that which is tangible, but possibly not visible. Examine the status of your body, internally and externally, including how you feel about this part of you. You may be as general or as specific as necessary. Also, if applicable, include information about characteristics that you would like to change and how you would better serve yourself to change them. The goal is to become more aware of what is going on in that huge mass of organ systems you call home.

.....
• **Physical:** I have been feeling awesome lately. I have been
• walking 30 – 45 minutes before work, drinking a protein shake for
• breakfast, taking my vitamin, and working out more than normal.
• We stopped eating junk, and I started cooking good foods again. I
• have been getting enough sleep, as well. I used to work overnight
• and taking care of the house left me with four hours of sleep per
• night.
•
•

Mental

The mental room takes a look at the inner workings of your mind. Explore your thoughts, stress, achievements, and how you generally feel mentally. Again, look at what exists, what you would like to change, and how you would go about changing it.

.....
• **Mental:** Getting to work on time lately has left me a little
• stressed. I try to cook lunch and dinner for my (now ex) boyfriend
• and I all at the same time, because I am not home when he needs
• dinner. I have tried some new recipes lately, so even if I am
• eating lunch on the way to work, it tastes really good. Taking
• walks and reading more has put my mind at ease.
•
•

Emotional

The emotional room is not just how your emotions are playing out at the moment. This area includes your dreams, fears, intuition, relationships, and general emotional status, as well as any zones you would like to adjust and how you should go about adjusting them.

.....
• **Emotional:** What can I say? I am in love and the whole world •
• knows it. We recently adopted a cat, so our house has been in •
• upset. Our schedules are so different and irregular that she has •
• had a tough time dealing with us. She is so cute. I have been •
• worried about my family back home. My brother is always getting •
• himself into something. •
.....

Spiritual

The spiritual room is an account of the status of our individual journeys. This entry touches on our connection with the divine, the earth, our magickal relationships, our studies, as well as how we feel we need to redecorate this room.

.....
• **Spiritual:** Right now, life is fabulous. I am diligently working on •
• this book. Though my progress is not as astronomical as I would •
• like, it is still incredible to say the least. Even though I wrote some •
• of this material years ago, every time I revisit it, I always make •
• new connections and discover new knowledge that was hidden •
• under the ones and zeros that my information is encoded in. While •
• transferring brainwaves to binary digits, many pieces are lost or •
• scrambled. I would like to set aside more time to concentrate and •
• clear my mind; however, there will be a time for that. When I took •
• a new job, I threw everything into chaos. •
.....

When one of the rooms needs a little work, it is up to you to fix it. Life cannot be like "While You Were Out," in which a designer spends network funds to redo a room in your house while they lure you away on a vacation. However, our rooms differ little from those in a real house. When the paint is chipped, the furniture is rotten, and the carpet is in need off a good cleaning, there is no calling the landlord on this job. You just have to put on those overalls and get to work. When one of your four rooms needs a little work, sometimes all it takes is a little motivation, concentration, and T.L.C.



MAGICK EXERCISES

In short, magick is using your will in order to move energy with the intent of instigating change. On this path, the only tool you will need is your mind. However, you will need to build your concentration and willpower to use your ability to inflict change on the world around you. This chapter is a mixture of principles and practices that will get you well on your way.

To be able to effectively use magick, you will need to work at developing your skill for months and years. The mind is a complex and wondrous creation. It is said that we only use ten percent of our brains. Use the following exercises to broaden your understanding and open pathways to the secrets of life. As you work with magick, remember to stand strong. The will of a witch is as tough as iron.

This chapter will take you through a personal journey, and magick will teach you to become aware of how your thoughts, feelings, and actions make impressions upon everything around you. Seek to improve the quality of your life and of those around you. Empower yourself to make the necessary changes to become who you want to be. Each day brings a new dawn, and with that the sun infuses us with its energy. Use the energy that you put out into the world to leave positive footprints wherever you step.

This section contains twenty exercises to increase your ability to focus, sense, and control your energy, as well as increase the strength of your will. As you work through these exercises, you may not see results right away. That is perfectly acceptable. Developing the ability to work with energy takes time. It is not something that we consciously do every day. What is not acceptable is to give up. Witches do not give up. They press on. Some principles will come easy to you, and others may not. Life presents us with challenges, and we need to meet them head on.

What I do not touch on in this chapter is actually working magick as life moves on day to day. Anything is possible with magick. There are times when the effects of your magick are obvious. And, there will be times when you are reminded that magick is a mysterious gift. There was a time when I had to walk home from class, and the downpour was imminent. It had been a beautiful summer day when I left my room, so I was without my umbrella. With my will, I used magick to push the rain back up into the clouds. I visualized that I could not be touched by water. Could I really use magick to stay dry when the world around me was drenched? All I know is that it was raining, but I only felt one or two drops. I was completely dry when I got back home. The ground was not. Mysterious.

The first principle of learning how to use magick is the ability to clear and focus the mind. In order to obtain the desired result, you must first clear out all of the clutter in your way. When you speak to someone, you would not

do so while hundreds of other people were talking to the same person. You would wait until everyone had stopped talking before directing a question. This other person is your will and the hundreds of other talking people are the hundreds of other activities going on in your brain. Tell them all to shut up and get out so that the attention of your will is focused on what you have to say.

Acts of unintentional magick occur when your brain immediately and intensely focuses on a desired result. I am a very clumsy lady, and I constantly knock things over, bump into objects, and drop stuff. When I was younger, my behavior was much worse. An empty glass was sitting in front of me on my desk as I was taking care of some homework. Turning a page, I bumped the glass, knocking it over. At that moment, I freaked out, wanting to catch the glass. Of course, being nearly on its side, my reflexes were a little late. But, the desire to stop the glass was so great, and I had all at once intensely wanted the glass to stay upright, that it paused. Tilted, almost on its side, the glass stopped falling and teetered back to center. There was no way I could explain what had happened, except for the fact that I so clearly and so intensely willed the glass to come back.

The exercises to develop your magickal ability in this chapter are progressive. You should begin with the first exercise, and when you are comfortable, move on to the next one unless otherwise noted. The purpose of these exercises is to clear your mind and increase your focus, which leads into strengthening your will power.

Exercise One

In your chosen meditative position, relax. Take a few breaths from your diaphragm. Inhale. Expand your stomach. Exhale. Push all of the air out. Inhale. Exhale. Clear your mind. Envision a great black space. There is nothing. If thoughts and images try to creep back in, solidify the barriers of this black space. They cannot come into the nothingness. Blackness. Your mind, clear as nothing, is expanding into the emptiness that surrounds you. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale. Follow your breath.

Exercise Two

You are standing next to the ocean on a sunny day. A warm breeze pushes you slightly towards the water. You walk into the water. It is warm and your feet sink in the soft sand. You keep walking until the water is up to your knees. The waves lap at your legs, licking, pulling. You continue to walk into the water until it covers your head. You find that you can breathe easily under the surface. Inhale. Exhale. Inhale. Exhale. Hundreds of fish are swimming around you, each going about its business. They are shimmering in the sun. These fish represent your thoughts. You swim, going deeper and deeper. The fish disappear little by little. It is colder and darker here. You keep swimming. It gets darker until it is black. You can see nothing. All of your thoughts are gone. It is black.

Exercise Three

Before you begin to meditate, choose an object on which to focus and place it in front of you. Look at this object. Put all of your attention on it. Clear your mind of all thoughts. If you are having trouble keeping a clear mind, use one of the previous exercises first. Gaze at the object intensely, not letting other thoughts penetrate your mind. Hold this state of focus as long as possible.

Exercise Four

Clear your mind using exercise one or two. With your eyes closed, visualize one stationary object without looking at it. Keep your focus on this object. Do not allow other thoughts to enter your mind. If they do creep in, imagine your object glowing brighter and brighter, blocking out all images and thought forms. Hold this image for a few moments.

Energy vibrates through all things. We are forever connected to the earth and the heavens by the cosmic energy that runs through everything. Each day, after you eat, your body converts calories into energy that can be used for various work assignments around the body. Humans typically house more energy than the body puts to work at one time. Tapping into your stream of energy is where we will start. If you attempt to move on before you are able to induce clarity and focus in your mind, you will be less successful.

The energy we seek to put towards magick in our bodies is tingling, flowing, and sensational. You must first be able to identify it. Then, you must learn how to collect it into a central place within your body. By moving your energy into a focal point, you increase the amount of oomph that you put behind an action. Think of a showerhead. The bigger the head, the more area the water flows from, the softer the water falls. The pipes are putting out the same amount of water no matter what size head you have. The smaller the showerhead, the harder and faster the water falls. There is more power to the smaller shower head. So, we gather energy into a central place to put more power behind our workings. Once the energy is collected, it can then be moved outward to perform the will.

Exercise Five

Close your eyes and clear your mind. Sink deep down into your mind. Float your consciousness down your spine, through your chest, and into your heart. Follow the rhythmic beating for a few moments. Become aware of your breath. Long and deep. Breathe in. Breathe out. Breathe in. Breathe out. Feel

the air as it fills up your lungs. Follow the breath into your veins. You move with the rushing blood. You are tingling, warm, fiery. Your whole body is vibrating with movement. You can feel the energy running through you. This is your energy, your life force, your connection to the divine cosmic energies of the universe.

Repeat this exercise, focusing on moving with your energy longer each time.

Exercise Six

Feel the tingling energy running through you. Scoop up the extra energy that you feel running around, leaving enough so that your body can still function properly. Imagine that the vibrations that are your energy are moving up your legs, up your torso, up your arms to a central place in your body. Gather it up into a ball in that central place (whether your third eye, chest, or other comfortable place). Hold the energy static for a few moments. Release it and let it settle evenly through your body. If you feel like there is more energy present than you need, let some trickle past your feet and into the ground.

Scientific theory tells us that the universe, as we know it, originated from a single point in space and time. It has thus expanded outward from this original point. From the stars, to the planets, and to all nebulae, everything is inherently made up from the same material. Galaxy to galaxy, we are all connected, all made of star stuff. The remnants of the first celestial swirlings lie within us.

The connection we have with all things is derived from divine cosmic energies of the universe. Magick is the process of taking this connection we have to these cosmic energies and putting it to use. We move energy to prompt change. Living in the modern world, we understand financial exchange. The universe operates with energy being the monetary equivalent. Raw, vibrant energy.

To use magick, the first thing that we must do is to open the connection. It always exists, but we must adapt to working with it. It is quite similar to learning how to walk or ride a bike. Humans do not just wake up one day and understand all of the secrets to the universe. Utilizing this connection takes time, patience, and practice. However, it is possible to wake up one day and realize that there is a connection. It is all the same as waking up one day and coming to the conclusion that you want a bike.

Exercise Seven

Sit in a chair with your feet firmly on the ground. Let your feet sink into the floor. You are a great tree in the forest, and your feet are the roots of your life. They sink into the ground, deeper, and deeper. They soak up the mineral and energy from the earth, pulling and feeding. Pull a sufficient amount

of energy into your body and gather it into a ball as if it were your own. Hold it for a few seconds and then let it wash over your body, balancing your energy, and then return it to the earth.

Continue with the previous exercises, but work on pulling in a little more and a little more energy from the earth, returning it, and balancing your energy.

Exercise Eight

Close your eyes and open up your astral awareness. Bypass your conscious and allow your unconscious to open the connection with the divine to your waking self. If need be, envision the cosmos, the vibrating energy that exists in the stars, the planets, nebulas, in all of the space between. See it in your mind, imagine it above you. Visualize the connection between you and the cosmos as a string, tube, or floating channel. Pull the vibrations down the connection and into your central place. Hold it for a few moments. Then, let it wash over you once again, balancing your energy, and flowing into the earth.

A witch's will is a key element in the success of magickal practice. You can have complete clarity and focus, but if you do not will something to happen, you cannot perform acts of magick. If you were sitting in front of your television, the cable network would be the divine cosmic energy of the universe. The television is your mind, and the remote control is your will. You can hold the remote, but if you do not push any buttons, you cannot change the channel. When working with magick, you may have a strong will, but if you do not put it into action, you cannot enact change.

So far, we have worked on clearing the mind, sensing the energy within ourselves, and connecting with the universe. The following exercises are intended to develop your control over your energy and your connection with the cosmos. As these exercises continue to build upon one another, do not push aside what you have been working on up until now. Remember to clear your mind, keep focused, and feel the vibrations running through you and the universe.

Exercise Nine

Gather your energy into a central place. Pull it into a ball, move the ball down your torso, down the front of your legs, around your feet and into the floor, then up the back of your legs, around your bottom, up your back, over top your head, and back to center. Repeat. Return excess to earth when finished.

Exercise Ten

Gather your energy into a central place. Imagine your energy in a ball. Move it out of your body and into your hands. Feel it vibrating, feel it pulsing, feel it moving. Using your mind to control the energy, move it with your hands forward, back, and side to side.

Exercise Eleven

Gather your energy into a central place. Imagine your energy in a ball. Move it out of your body. Without using your hands to guide the ball, move it back and forth, as well as side to side. Keep the ball intact, and work to keep your focus on the vibrating sphere.

Exercise Twelve

Become aware of the vibrations of the earth around you. Tap into the flow of energy from the earth and pull it into your central place. Change the energy into heat. Visualize it washing over your body, warming you. Feel the heat trickle across your skin. Warm yourself from the inside out.

Exercise Thirteen

Think of something that brings you extreme happiness. Find that one happy thought. Tap into your connection with the divine cosmic energy of the universe. Take a deep breath. Stream energy into your central place. Mix that energy with your thought of happiness. Give it life. The vision of happiness is made manifest by the energy of the cosmos. As it washes over you, it invigorates your mind, giving you peace. Give a long exhale or sigh and relax.

When you are finished working on your exercises for the day, the vibrations within yourself, the world, and the cosmos do not fade away. Every moment of each day, we are flowing on a celestial sheet of energy. Insects, flowers, trees, soil, air, animals, other people, moons, and stars; the universe is constantly singing. When you become aware of the connection, you open your ears to the chorus of voices all around.

The more we are aware of the vibrations, the more we shift to become in tune with the cycles of life. As this awareness develops, we can understand how our thoughts, feelings, and actions affect our lives and all that we are connected with.

Exercise Fourteen

As you walk from place to place, whether indoors or outdoors, sink your awareness into the world around you. Sense the energy vibrating in the earth, the trees, the people, the buildings, and so on. Feel the movement. Over time, strive to feel the differences in the vibrations of your various surroundings. A tree is different than a building, which is different than a person. Ask yourself: How do they feel different? How is the energy of a tree different from a building? From the earth? From a person?

Exercise Fifteen

Energy flows from people. Choose three or four people that you interact with on a regular basis. While you are with them, focus on the energy that they give off and study how each one differs from the others. Do they give off pulsating energy, or a calm vibe? In other words, what is the frequency? What words would you use to describe them? Light/heavy, bright/dull, happy/sad, projective/receptive, etc.

Exercise Sixteen

Continue to observe those same three to four people that you observed in exercise 15. Now, move your focus to how they react and how their energy changes as various different people come and go. Also, pay attention to how they react to different situations.

Exercise Seventeen

After you understand how the energy given off by the people around you changes in relation to the people and the situations they encounter, take a step back and look at yourself. Spend some time evaluating how your energy changes as the people and situations around you change.

We are responsible for everything that we think, feel, and do. Know yourself and how you react to your surroundings. It is through this awareness of the self that we can make the greatest changes in our lives.

Exercise Eighteen

This final exercise in awareness is intended to develop your ability to hold energy. Imagine a circle no bigger than the fingernail on your thumb. Draw that circle out in your mind. Make the edge solid. The circle is empty, so fill it with your energy. Hold the energy in that circle for thirty seconds. After your time is up, let the energy wash over you and flow evenly around your body.

When you have become proficient at holding the energy in that small circle for thirty seconds, increase your time to one minute. Continue to increase the length of time that you hold the energy in that circle until you reach five minutes.

Once you are able to hold energy in that circle for five minutes, increase the size of your circle. Choose an item slightly bigger than your thumbnail, draw that size circle in your mind, and pull energy into the circle. Begin again with holding the energy for thirty seconds, and slowly work your way up to five minutes.

As the time length and amount of energy that you gather and hold begins to grow, it becomes evermore important to consciously let go of the energy, and feel it wash over your body. If you find yourself pulling more energy into your circle than you need in your body, let the excess flow into the earth.

Magick is the practice of moving energy in order to enact change. Though inherently simple, the real ability comes in being able to control enough energy to make change. This control depends completely on the strength of your will. The practices in this chapter are meant to increase your focus, the might of your will, and your control over the energy that runs through you and the universe. Although great personal growth and skill can be reached with these exercises, they are only the first steps. We have only scratched the surface.

Many things can be accomplished through magick. Wiccans seek to impress positive changes upon the world and themselves. Becoming the person that you wish to be, and manifesting the characteristics that you want to embody, are the key elements in dark magick. Magick as we typically refer to it is the change we enact upon the world in which we live. As you look into a mirror, you see what lies on the outside of you, as well as your surroundings. Gazing past your exterior, you dive into your psyche. Discovering what resides on the other side of the mirror and finding what is on the flipside of you is dark magick.

Dark magick vastly differs from black magick. Work that is deemed "black" is called so, because its intentions are awry. This kind of magick is intended to harm, control another's will, or seek personal gain at the expense of someone else. Wicca does not even flirt with black magick, and the religion forbids it at the expense of one's karma. That which we put out into the universe will come back. Put out negative energy, and that's what you will get back.

Magick plays a big part in spell work. Sure, you can put all of the pieces together, collect all of the elements to craft a first-class spell. But, just as the four elements stand, order cannot be achieved without the connective power of spirit. Spirit is the glue, the cosmic force that gives everything life. By weaving your spells with energy, you give them the life they need to succeed. While concocting spells, let positive energy flow into them. Let your will be done.

Exercise Nineteen

Visualization is a great tool to tune spells to your desired result. As you prepare your spell, no matter what medium you utilize, imagine your desired result. Imagine that what you want to happen is actually happening. For example, if creating a packet for safe travels, visualize your journey. Let the scene play out in your mind as you arrive at your destination unscathed. Make this moment significant in your head. Give it weight. Focused on this moment, let the positive energy flow from you and into the materials that you are using to cast the spell.

Magick is used for much more than spell work. We can use it to heal the body, mind, heart, and spirit. We can open new doors and improve the quality of our lives. We can use magick to gain information about ourselves and the happenings of the universe. We can share positive energy with others, giving them strength when they need it. The only limits to what you can do with magick are your ability to control energy and the strength of your will. So, work at it. Keep practicing and never give up. Only through repetition and determination can you discover your magickal potential. It will take months and years to train your mind and develop your skill, but it will allow you to embody the true spirit of a witch.

Exercise Twenty

Challenge yourself to work with these exercises for the next thirteen days. You may want to pull out a journal and jot down notes about your experiences with magick. Work with at least one exercise each day. You can even practice multiple exercises, repeating exercises as many times as necessary, until you are proficient. Work on them in order. One exercise builds on the others before it. Make sure that you feel confident about one before moving on to another. The goal is personal growth, and not to see how many you can get through.

Record your progress. At the end of the thirteen days, go back through what you have written. So much of our journey is knowing where we stand, remembering where we started, and understanding how our choices brought us from one to the other.

After the thirteen days are up, continue to practice. You will only get stronger from there.

WICCAN RITUAL





MAGICKAL TOOLS

Tools are just that: tools. They are only there to aid you in your magickal workings. They possess no more power than an apple possesses. A witch needs no tools to be a witch. There are many different types of tools, but most of them serve to direct your energy. Great rituals and magickal workings can be performed without the use of anything but the self. Our tools work with us and help us learn to use refined abilities.

I suggest that you make your own tools when possible. Making your own tools allows you to not only personalize them, but to infuse them with your energy. The process of creating magickal tools empowers them, as well as forges a very special connection. Not all of us can craft all of our own tools, so using tools made by another is almost always necessary. Tools made by others are not any less magickal. We can make them magickal by filling them with our own positive energies, and they will work just as well.

Before you use any of your magickal tools, it is necessary to first consecrate them. This process will cleanse them of any negative energy that they may have or may have absorbed. After Uncle Phil uses a bath towel during his week-long stay at your house, you would not use the towel before washing it. Ew. You would wash the towel and make it smell nice and pretty. The same applies to your magickal tools. Cleanse them of negative energy and purify them with positive energy.

Normally, it is a good idea to keep your tools in a place where they cannot soak up negative energies. Especially, keep them away from other people. In other words, do not display your favorite wand and chalice in the living room where anyone and everyone can walk by and deposit their negative energies on them, including that old high school friend of yours (who hates his life right now) that visited last week. Your magickal knife (athame), your working knife (boline), and your wand should all be kept wrapped in cloth. Black absorbs energy, and white reflects it. By wrapping them in black cloth, the energy you have instilled in them will stay. Then, wrap them in white cloth to reflect off any energy that may find its way to your tools.

The Athame

The Athame (A-thah-may) is a ritual knife that is used primarily to direct energy during a ritual. It is not used for any physical tasks (such as cutting herbs, etc.). It is normally doubled-edged and can be blunt, because it is not

used for its physical cutting ability. It can be used to cast a circle, bless, purify, invoke, and to cut or seal a doorway for emergency entrance or exit during a ritual.

The Bolline

The Bolline is also a knife, but it serves to do the practical tasks that an athame does not. It is used for cutting, carving and doing other physical tasks. It generally has a white or different color handle to distinguish its from the athame.

The Wand

The wand is not just for sorcerers and wizards, but rather, it is also one of our tools that directs energy. The wand can double for many of the magickal responsibilities of the athame (casting, blessing, purifying, invoking, and cutting a doorway). It is solely based on the preference of each witch which tool they use for what. If you have neither, pointing with your hand will work just as well.

The Broom

The media portrays witches as wrinkly, old hags who wear pointed hats and ride on broomsticks. They took the broomstick and made it a symbol of a witch, because it is indeed one. This is a tool of purification and cleansing. A broom is traditionally used to sweep the area clean of any negative energies that may be lingering. It can also be used for fertility rites.

The Book of Shadows

This is one of the most powerful tools of a witch. All of the things you have learned, things you have come across, spells you have liked, and all of the other information you have gathered on your magickal journey are stored here. This is the place to record anything you wish to remember in the future. You are reading part of my Book of Shadows (BOS) now and some new information that has not made itself into my BOS. Traditionally, a witch's BOS is a private and secret affair. Most never let anyone read what is inside. Most covens keep a circle BOS, in which rituals and other proceedings are stored, that can be shared among the group.

The Cauldron

The cauldron is the symbol of the womb, the vessel of existence. However, it is also a practical tool. Within the womb are all of the life-giving fluids. The

cauldron is used for many things. It can be used to burn incense, to brew potions, to mix herbs, to hold water, to hold fresh flowers, and so on.

The Chalice

The chalice is also known as the cup or goblet. Similar to the cauldron, it is also a symbol of water. The chalice is used for the celebration of Cakes and Ale (discussed further in Ritual Construction), for it holds the wine, ale, or juice.

The Bell

The vibrations of the bell are very powerful. Not only can they mark the end or beginning of new sections during a ritual, but they can also be used to invoke the God, Goddess, or other spirits.

The Censer

This tool is used to burn incense. It is carried around the circle to seal it. Incense is also used to create atmosphere, to cleanse, as well as to consecrate tools.



WAND MAKING

Wands are magickal tools used to direct energy, so their design should herald this basic concept. This tool is specifically used for calling the quarters, cleansing, and purification. When we make or cleanse our tools, the goal is to put as much of ourselves (i.e. our energy) into that tool, to individualize it, so that it is better suited for our needs. Tools that you make will generally be more powerful and work better for you, although no tools are needed to practice Wicca or magick effectively.

I will walk you through three simple wand designs: one of clay, one of wood, and one of a dried flower stem. The materials used to create these magickal tools are for all-purpose wands. By altering the materials, you can alter the purpose of a magickal tool. By incorporating specific herbs, stones, and/or wood, a wand can become focused on healing, strength, fertility, and so on.

Some substances will conduct energy better than others. Also, some materials will work better for you than they will for other people. When choosing any item to work with for a magickal working, make sure that the item feels right for you. Some things will not feel right. That little voice in your head telling you yes and no is not so crazy after all.

Clay Wand

The only material needed to craft a clay wand is some easy-to-work-with baking clay, which can be found at any craft store. Read the directions to determine how much of each material you will need. I have the horrible habit of buying ingredients without reading directions, then getting home to realize that I have no idea what a slow cooker is and that I cannot, for the life of me, find another recipe for Irish coffee that includes a coffee machine. Hmph. And, no. I am not scarred by the experience. Anyhow, besides clay, some additional items that you may want to incorporate into this tool are:

- Gems or Stones
- Herbs
- Flower Petals
- Three strands of your hair or a small amount of your blood
- Copper or silver wire
- Glaze

You will also need:

- A mortar and pestle, or other tool to grind herbs, if you are using them.
- A 9" x 12" glass baking dish. Glass is the best for clay, but a metal dish will work.
- A clean space on which to roll out clay.

Clay wands are strong, but adding many or large gems and stones will make the overall design weaker. If a larger stone is desired, use only one. Brandishing a larger stone to the top of the wand is a good way to increase the focus of energy through the wand. Decorating the length of the piece with smaller stones is ideal, because they are easily embedded into the clay with a greater chance that the wand will not break and that they will not fall out.

Most of the other materials will be rolled or kneaded into the clay before it takes the shape of a wand. No additional magickal matter is needed, but a few well-chosen stones or herbs will help focus or direct your energy better. The following tables contain a short list of different easily found herbs and stones.

Make sure to size your wand. For magickal workings, it is traditional that it is the length of your forearm, from the inside of your elbow to your wrist.

HERB	MAGICKAL PROPERTIES
Cinnamon	Spirituality, psychic powers, protection
Dandelion	Divination, psychic powers
Mugwort	Strength, psychic powers, protection, astral projection
Pomegranate	Divination
Sage	Wisdom and protection
Sandalwood, white	Spirituality and protection
Vervain	Purification, protection, peace
Wormwood	Psychic powers, protection, calling spirits
Yarrow	Courage, psychic powers

COLOR	MAGICKAL PROPERTIES
White	Protection, peace, purity, spirituality
Red	Lust, courage, power, the element of fire
Pink	Love, friendships
Orange	Material possessions, success
Yellow	Divination, wisdom, psychic powers, visions, the element of air
Blue	Dreams, emotions, healing, peace, the element of water
Brown	Stability, the home
Green	Fertility, money, abundance, healing, the element of earth
Purple	Psychic power, spiritual consciousness

GEM	MAGICKAL PROPERTIES
Agate	Protection
Amber	Protection
Amethyst	Courage, peace, psychic power
Bloodstone	Magickal power
Crystal, quartz	Astral projection, magickal power, protection, psychic power
Diamond	Peace, protection, spirituality
Emerald	Mental powers, protection, psychic power
Jade	Protection, wisdom
Moonstone	Divination, grounding, protection
Opal	Astral projection, magickal power
Onyx	Protection
Pearl	Protection
Peridot	Protection
Ruby	Magickal power, protection
Salt	Grounding, protection, purification
Sapphire	Peace
Tiger's Eye	Protection
Tourmaline, black	Grounding, protection

MONTH	BIRTHSTONE
January	Garnet
February	Amethyst
March	Aquamarine, Bloodstone
April	Diamond
May	Emerald
June	Pearl, Moonstone
July	Ruby
August	Peridot
September	Sapphire
October	Opal, Tourmaline
November	Yellow Topaz, Citrine
December	Turquoise, Blue Topaz

ZODIAC SIGN	GEMSTONE
Aries	Bloodstone
Taurus	Sapphire
Gemini	Agate
Cancer	Emerald
Leo	Onyx
Virgo	Carnelian
Libra	Peridot
Scorpio	Aquamarine
Sagittarius	Topaz
Capricorn	Ruby
Aquarius	Garnet
Pisces	Amethyst

NUMBER	RULING PLANET	MAGICKAL PROPERTIES
1	Sun	Ambition, courage, beginnings, rebirth, the divine
2	Moon	Emotion, harmony, balance, God/Goddess
3	Jupiter	Creativity, joy, the triple goddess, rites of passage
4	Uranus	The will, discipline, stability, construction, the elements
5	Mercury	The group, freedom, expansion, communication, the mind, the pentacle
6	Venus	Love, wisdom, responsibility
7	Neptune	Higher learning, spirituality, reflection
8	Saturn	Divine law, authority, materialism
9	Mars	Unconditional service, philanthropy
10		The number of spheres on the Qabalistic Tree of Life
13		The number of lunar cycles in a year
22		The number of paths on the Qabalistic Tree of Life, the number of Trumps in a tarot deck

1. Preheat the oven according to the instructions on the clay packaging.
2. With a mortar and pestle (or by other means), grind up the herbs and flowers as best as possible.
3. Remove the clay from the packaging and soften with hands.
4. Flatten the clay and place a small amount of the herb mixture, hair/blood, and other materials onto clay.
5. With hands, fold clay and flatten it several times. Knead it until all of the substances are mixed well.
6. Roll the clay into a ball and then continue to roll it into a long stick.
7. Verify that it does correspond with the length of your forearm from elbow to wrist.
8. Round the edges with your fingers.
9. Garnish with stones or additional clay decorations. You may fasten a larger stone to the top with wire.
10. Carefully set wand on baking dish and place in the oven for the best amount of time according to the clay directions.
11. When finished, let the clay cool to room temperature before picking it up.
12. You may choose to glaze your wand or leave it with a rough finish.
13. Consecrate the wand and get down to business!

Wooden Wand

Wooden wands are also simple to craft. We are going to take a piece of wood and bedazzle it, Wiccan style. To fashion this tool, the only required material is a stick about ¼ to ½ inch thick. Traditionally, wands are kept at a length that mirrors the length of your forearm from the inside of your elbow to your wrist.

It is easiest to take pieces of wood that have fallen to the ground, especially because, most of the time, they are already dry. However, if a suitable candidate needs to be taken from a tree, then that is just fine as well. It just may need more time to dry out. When taking wood (or other items from nature) to be used for magickal purposes, such as wands, it is good to thank the Goddess for her abundance. An offering may also be appropriate, especially if the wood taken came from a live tree.

WOOD	MAGICKAL PROPERTIES
Apple	Honor, truth
Ash	Reverence
Beech	Attaining goals
Hazel	Spiritual leadership, wisdom
Hickory	Endurance, bravery
Maple	Kinship
Oak	Spiritual awareness, spiritual consciousness
Pine	Beginnings, rebirth
Poplar	Protection, resolution
Rowan	Leaves of this tree have 13 sections, which correspondences to the 13 lunar months
Willow	Healing

Other objects that you may incorporate into this project include:

- Stones or gems
- Copper or silver wire
- Glaze

Materials that you will need to complete this project are:

- A bolline or carving knife
- Wood glue
- Sandpaper

Keep in mind the size of the stones in comparison to the thickness of the branch. Smaller stones are easier to cut divots for and are less likely to fall out. Again, brandishing your wand with a larger stone affixed to the top with copper or silver wire is a good way to increase energy focus.

1. Once you have your piece of wood, sand down any rough edges. If you are going to put a stone at the top of the wand, make sure to sand the top flat.
2. Use a knife to carve holes for stones. Use wood glue to affix smaller stones.
3. Cut a larger divot at the top of the wand for the larger stone.
4. Use wire to fasten larger stone in place. Secure with wood glue.
5. You may choose to glaze your wand or to leave it with a natural look.
6. Consecrate your new wand.

Flower Stem Wand

Flower stems are especially good with wands made for specific intentions. Although gems and herbs cannot adorn this type of wand, it can be stored in a bag mixed with magickal items. Needed for this project:

- Flower with a stem that is at least 1/8 inch thick and is as long as your forearm, from the inside of your elbow to your wrist
- An opaque bag or pouch
- Magickal items, such as herbs, stones, or flowers
- Oils

To make a flower stem wand for psychic power, in a yellow or purple bag³, mix the herbs of mugwort, dandelion, and wormwood. Toss in a crystal quartz with the blend. Oils may also be used to anoint the wand by rubbing the stem from tip to base. For psychic power, sandalwood oil is a good choice.

1. Remove all of the leaves and petals from a single flower.
2. Cut the stem to be the length of your forearm.
3. Let the stem dry out and harden. Setting it on a sunny window ledge will speed up the process.
4. Toss any herbs, stones, or other magickal items into the bag.
5. Anoint the wand with oil.
6. Include the wand in the bag.
7. Consecrate.

³ The magickal properties of colors are found on page 28.



CONSECRATING MAGICKAL TOOLS

The purpose of consecrating your tools is to banish all of the negative energy out of them and then to fill them with positive energy. It is not necessary to repeat this process every time you use your tools. In fact, the more you use your tools, the more of your energy builds up into them, and the better they work for you. Consecration is necessary when you first obtain each tool to set right the energies already present. Other times, it might be necessary to reconsecrate your tools when the energy in your tool does not feel right, many people have handled it, or you have not used it for a long time. Even though the pan that the turkey is cooked in gets washed every Thanksgiving before it is put away, it is always washed when it gets pulled out again. It has had 364 days pent up in the cupboard to collect gunk while you ate chicken and steak.

Cast a circle with at least one lit candle and some incense burning. Place the tool on the salt or pentacle. Touch it with the point of your athame and say:

I consecrate you, O (tool) of the earth, to cleanse and purify you to serve me within the sacred circle. In the names of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, you are consecrated.

Fill it with positive energy to send all of the negativity away. Use visualization to complete this task. Assign negative energy a color, such as yellow or black. Assign positive energy a color, such as white or blue. Conjure up a small amount of energy into a central place in your body. Direct this energy onto your tool and visualize it removing all of the negative color (black/yellow) out. Again, gather up another small amount of energy, except this time, visualize your tool filling with positive light (white/blue).

Sprinkle salt (Earth) on top of your tool, hold it in the incense (Air), pass it over the flame (Fire) for a moment, and after that, sprinkle a few drops of water (Water) on it. Then, hold it to the sky and say:

I charge you by the Goddess and the God. By the magick of the swirling energies of the cosmos, by the powers of the Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, so mote it be!

Store your tool or put it immediately to use.



CREATING AN ALTAR

An altar is a very special creation of an intensely personal nature. Not only does it hold most of the tools you use during ritual, but it also embodies expressions of reverence towards the Goddess and the God. Altars do not have to be highly decorated. This is a place of symbols, flowers, leaves, candles, and other similar items.

On the next page is a sample altar set up. What your altar looks like and what you wish to include on it are up to you. Traditionally, the Goddess and her symbols are placed on the left, and the God and his symbols are placed on the right. The elements associated with them are placed below them (Goddess-water/earth, God-air/fire). Shared tools can be placed in the center. This system is not consistent in order to create a balance between the tools. They are all magickal, though the energy you harness through them essentially comes from you.

I have placed the wand (Fire) and the athame (Air) on separate sides of the altar, even though both of these tools are associated with masculine energy. Placing both the wand and the athame on the God half of the altar would leave a large space on the Goddess half. These tools complement each other, so the opposing side is acceptable. Also, the bowl of water (Water) and the bowl of salt (Earth) are placed on different sides, even though they are both feminine tools. The water, censer, and salt are all used for sealing the sacred circle, so I made this decision to place the salt on the masculine half of the altar.

Altar tool placement is not a life-or-death subject. However, when you move into a new house and you drag all of your stuff along, it may take a while to figure out where everything goes. I promise that the wrath of Zeus will not rain down upon you if you do not follow any sort of layout. However, duck and cover if you see any lightning bolts.

The main altar is normally set up facing the East, because this is the direction from which the sun rises. It does not matter which of the cardinal directions your main altar faces. It can face North, South, or West as well. What is important is that you have a purpose for the altar facing that direction. I lived in Ohio for many years, and the lake was north of us, which was an important part of the area. The sun sets in the West. Currently, I live in Virginia. The Appalachian Mountains are west of me. It does not matter as long as you know why it is important.

Traditionally, four additional altars are also set up, one at each of the four quarters (directions - North, South, East, and West). These altars correspond with the four elements (North-Earth, South-Fire, East-Air, and West-Water). Each of the elemental altars is smaller than the main altar and is



decorated with symbols of each element. At first, you might prefer only placing a single candle on each of the quarter altars (North-green, South-red, East-yellow, and West-blue). If it is necessary, to conserve space, you may combine the East altar with the main altar.

My personal altar is not more than 8 by 14 inches on the top. It is a small cedar chest and I hold all the tools that I am currently using inside of it. Yes, the top is crowded, but I do not need anything intricate. I have moved around a bit and never had any space in my room for anything glorious. Your altar can be a shelf, a space on your dresser, or a candid chair. You do not have to leave it out all of the time. I pack mine away when I am done. If you have the space and would like a more permanent altar, have at it.



MAGICKAL CLOTHING

There are many different thoughts on the subject of clothing, so I will review some of mine. The purpose of special ritual clothing is to aid your mind into taking you to a place between worlds. When we wear work clothes, we are in a work mode. When we are in pajamas, we are in a sleepy mode. The same applies to ritual clothing.

Special clothing for ritual is not required, but one should be comfortable. As a result of the intense magickal nature of ritual, it is suggested that you put aside certain clothing just for ritual. This guards you from the unseen things that may be brought into the sacred space by clothing that you wear in the mundane world. Also, having clothing set aside creates a special environment for your mind. The more you only wear one set of clothing for ritual, the more your mind will slip into ritual mode when you put those clothes on.

A cloak is a coat-like cape that can be hooded. This is used to keep warm, to add effect, and to meditate in. The good ones are handmade and slightly expensive, but patterns are available to make your own or have one made for you.

I have participated in rituals that have included a kilt and sash, dresses, pants, skirts, and "gothic" clothing found at specialty stores. Items are easily picked up at festivals, shops, online, and by mail order. Many people make their own pieces of clothing. One of the men I have practiced with had a yellow shirt embroidered with a pentagram and the name of our coven. So, be creative!

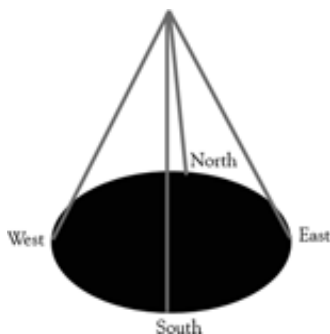
Some Wiccans practice "skyclad" or nude in their rites. It is thought by some that clothing can inhibit the flow of energy to and from the body. It can also foster closeness in groups, or in one's relationship to deity. It is also an expression of freedom in a religion that used to be underground. If it gets in the way, go without, right? Some are not so inclined to work skyclad, and that is perfectly fine. Some solitary practitioners practice skyclad, as well as do some covens. If you know it will be a concern for you, you should verify if they work nude or clothed before you work with a group. Typically, most public rituals will not give the option of working skyclad, but some festivals do.



THE SACRED CIRCLE

The physical circle used for ritual is sacred space. When you create a sacred circle, you are creating a door in between the worlds. It is a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious, between the everyday and the metaphysical. The place between worlds is a place without time.

A circle is used to gather and focus larger amounts of energy. The energy raised in a circle is referred to as the cone of power. The word "cone" is used, because energy is raised in a circle, but *focused* through one point as it leaves the circle on its mission. The cone of power can be raised through song, dance, chanting, drumming, and various other means. This energy is used in spell work, sabbat observance, and other magickal workings.



Casting A Circle

A circle is "cast" around sacred space not only to forge the bridge between worlds, but to protect the space and those who occupy it. Many religious buildings have their own temples or areas of sacred space. These areas are protected by walls and other physical barriers. By casting a circle, we physically build up these protective walls, establishing a sacred place in which do our workings.

The steps to casting a circle include cleansing and purifying the sacred space and actually casting the circle...or drawing/visualizing the circle. When you draw your circle out, everyone in the group should be imagining their connection with the divine cosmic energies of the universe growing stronger,

more immediate, and more tangible than usually felt. Everyone should also visualize the protective barriers in the circle flying up and the magickal bricks being laid. The circle is then sealed with salt and water, the mystical cement of our work. Remember, energy does not understand English. It responds to will.

Calling the quarters and invoking the deity are not actually a part of the casting of the circle. However, these steps are performed immediately before or after most castings as preparing sacred space for magickal work or inviting deity and/or spirits into a prepared space. I have included them in these steps, because any they strengthen the walls we build up during ritual. After we have opened the door to the otherworld, we invite in our friends, filling the circle with energy from the body, mind, heart, and soul.

There are many, many ways to create sacred space and cast a circle. The steps to cast a circle depend on your preferences or those of the coven that you are working with. Steps can be added, deleted, and rearranged to arrive at the desired conclusion. The following outline is merely one way of casting a circle. Each of these steps will be outlined in detail as you read on.

1. Cleanse/purify the area by sweeping with a broom and/or using a cleansing herb, such as sage.
2. Set up the altar.
3. Light the candles and incense.
4. Consecrate the water.
5. Bless the salt.
6. Cast a circle by drawing the boundary of the circle with athame/wand, or visualize the boundaries of the circle.
7. Seal the boundaries by sprinkling salt and water, and carrying incense and flame around the circle.
9. Call the Quarters.
10. Invoke the Deity.



THE ESSENCE OF CLEANSING AND PURIFYING

Although there are many different types and categories of energy, cleansing and purifying deal with the duality of energy. Cleansing involves disbanding or getting rid of any negative or unwanted energy. Purifying is filling something with positive energy. There are many ways to look at cleansing and purifying, but they all involve returning the energies of an object to a positive state of balance. It is possible to cleanse and purify oneself, another person, a space, or an object. When we cleanse, it is important to purify afterwards, because we are not only filling something with positive light, but we are filling it so that more negative energies cannot easily seep in. In this way, purifying is a means of protection.

When working with other people, it is proper to ask their permission to perform magick on them before you begin. Even if you feel that the person would be better off after you have had your way with him or her, not everyone would agree. Imagine that you were a dentist walking through the mall. You would not stop a random shopper and proceed to clean his/her teeth. The same principle applies to magickal workings. However, a paramedic on the scene of an accident will perform the necessary tasks to revitalize an injured person. It is your responsibility to know in what situations using magick on other people is acceptable without prior consent and deal with any consequences that come after the fact.

The Self

Cleansing and purifying for the self is necessary, because being full of negativity inhibits our ability to perform. Imagine how you feel when you are very angry, sad, or frustrated. These negative infestations do not allow us to focus on many aspects of life. Our attitude, our level of energy, the quality of our sleep, as well as rituals, meditation, and divination suffer when we are full of negativity. Even though it is part of ritual to cleanse and purify before commencing the working rite, this natural process is not written into all aspects of life. There are no cleansing pods in the office to clear our minds after work. A showdown with your husband/wife does not come ready with a relaxing bath. It is up to you to disband this build up of negativity.

Cleansing and purifying the self is essentially easy. The most basic way of doing this is visualization. There are lots of different visualizations, but I will walk you through one that can be done anywhere. Close your eyes. If you have

not yet grasped how to push out the negative and pull in the positive, work with colors. Associate negative with a color, such as black or yellow, and associate positive with a color, such as white or blue. Imagine the negative color gas, in our case it will be black gas, seeping away from you. Exhale black. Once you have gotten out all of the black that you can get out, imagine a white gas filling you until you cannot hold anymore. When you breathe in, imagine that color flowing into your body. Feel every breath as light as a feather and as joyous and warm as you need to fill your body with positive energies. You may take as many breaths as you feel are necessary. To intensify your work with cleansing, as you visualize the black gas, associate a bad feeling with it. As you visualize the white gas, associate a good feeling with it.

Prior to ritual, you can also take a ritual cleansing bath to help bring yourself back into balance. It is important to try to bring little or no negative energy into the circle.

Another Person

The cleansing of others is usually performed during ritual. There may be other times when you sense negativity that you want to get rid of coming from another person. If this is the case, cleanse the space around that person, so that they have a harder time affecting their environment. There are also instances when people may request to be cleansed. However, before you order a sign and set up a cleansing shop in your house, you may not only want to consult your spouse, but make sure that you understand how to work with energy. Remember that negative energy does not just disappear into thin air. When you remove negativity from someone, you need to be aware of where it is going, or it might build up in your house.

During ritual, sage or another herb with similar cleansing and purifying properties is used along with visualization. This practice is called smudging. Burn a stick of sage and waft the fumes towards the person being cleansed. They should be standing with their arms and legs spread, so that they are not closing off any areas of their body. You want the fumes to reach all parts of the body. To increase the affect of the sage, visualize the negative going away and positive taking its place. As you are wafting, imagine that the sage is cleansing the person of negative energies. At the same time, the other person should be imagining that they are being purified with positive energies. The practice of associating colors with negative and positive energies also works with other people and spaces.

A Space

Even if you are balanced, the energies in your home, work, or other environments may store unseen negativity. Are you ever happy in the morning, but get really depressed when you go to work, and do not know why? When space has been used a lot, negative feelings can be dumped or deposited without anyone noticing. If other people's "vibes" can affect us, then the "vibes" of places can affect us as well. Energy is energy, no matter where it is. This build up continues to affect those who use the space. Also, if you recently

acquired new environments, such as a home or an office, the person/people there before may have left something behind. You want to start off fresh.

Cleansing a space is similar to cleansing someone for a ritual. The simplest way to do this involves lots of visualization and the wafting of sage. While it may not take that much sage to cleanse your space, it will sure make it smell good.

Walk around the room with burning sage and imagine the negative energy disbanding, as well as imagine the space filling with positive light. In places that are personal to you, you may want to infuse it with specifically your positive energy. This is not always necessary, because if you spend a lot of time in the space, your energy will accumulate anyway. I also suggest making herb/sage bundles (little pieces of cloth filled with different herbs and sometimes tied with a bow to hold) and placing them in out of the way places (like in a drawer or in your jacket pocket). These bundles help encourage continuing positivity. They also smell good, which makes us feel good. I am not big on aromatherapy, though I cannot help accept to get giggly when I smell sage.

An Object

Cleansing and purifying can be performed on everyday objects, but it is normally reserved for magickal tools and supplies. Typically, when you cleanse a space, this is enough for the mundane objects in the room. New items as well as old tools you have used may need cleansing before you can do a spell for your brother's girlfriend's lawyer's dog sitter's hairdresser. This includes wands, ritual knives, candles, and almost anything else that you could think to use. Anything you call a "tool" is simply that. It is a tool. It is something that is used to direct energy. Its current, the powerhouse, is you. Even if you are cleansed, there may be some left behind pieces of its past that can interfere with your direction, message, or intent.



CENTERING, GROUNDING, AND MEDITATING

In essence, centering, grounding, and meditating are extremely simple concepts to understand, but complicated to master. It takes dedication and practice to be able to meditate, yet the outcome is one of the most important concepts that one should grasp. The work is worth the effort.

Centering is the process of pulling your awareness to one's "center". Each person's center will differ somewhat. Some people feel more comfortable pulling their awareness into the third eye. Others use the crown of the head, throat, or heart center. Centering involves relaxing the body and mind. When your awareness is pulled to the center, you shut out the buzzing of the world around you, and look to inner workings. Pulling your focus inward and to a central place allows you to better connect and pull upon the divine cosmic energy of the universe.

Grounding holds two different purposes, but one basic idea. It is the process of giving energy back to the earth to obtain a state of balance. This energy can be excess from a spell or magickal working. It also can be the result of erratic energy, such as nervousness or negativity. We ground before ritual or meditation to bring ourselves back to center, as well as after ritual to return leftovers. Grounding before ritual or mediation is done to relax and calm yourself. If you try to meditate all worked up with the flux of energies from work, kids, school, or some of the many daily tasks that we take on, then it will be difficult to concentrate. The result of this type of grounding is the increased ability to focus.

Grounding is great at other times, too. You can ground at work, because you are stressed and having trouble concentrating. Grounding is also good when you are extremely hyper and cannot sit still. Many times during the writing of this book, my thoughts have wandered about the room. I daydream about my romantic getaways, think about what I need to do for the rest of the day, make a shopping list in my head, and analyze how much time I have left before I have to be off to work. As I am sitting at my computer, slightly out of focus, I draw energy from the earth and return it in an effort to balance the variable concentration.

Grounding after a ritual is necessary to return the energy that you or your circle has raised, but not used, during the course of the event. Even if you do not do any spell work, there will always be some energy raised. Balance needs to be restored. Carrying more energy than your body can handle will cause an overload. If you have ever been in an instance where there is so much activity for an extended period of time and gotten a headache or nauseous, this

is a similar feeling. Could you imagine walking around for the rest of the day charged up from ritual? Yikes.

There are several ways to ground yourself, but the concept is still the same. You have to envision the overflow of energy moving through you, towards the earth, and into it. You can place your hands on the floor or stretch your hands towards the ground, take a deep breath, and visualize the excess flow making its way to the ground. Or, visualize the extra charge moving through your legs and your feet into the earth. Meditation can also be used as a means of grounding energy. Grounding is possible in any number of ways, and like most principles in magick, you can make up the way that is best for you as long as you adhere to the concept. Grounding is moving energy from you to something else (preferably the earth) in order to restore a balance.

Meditation

Meditation is quite different from grounding, for it is attuning your conscious with the universe (God and Goddess). I will separate mediation into two different categories (for it is a human end to classify everything we come into contact with), but I will address this in a moment.

It is first necessary to acquire a desirable position. A good position for beginners is to sit in a chair with a straight back; your hands should be resting on your knees, eyes closed, and chin level with the floor. Make sure your feet are flat on the floor. If you so desire, it is possible to support your lower back with a cushion or a pillow. This position is suggested so that you are able to keep a straight back as well as keep you from falling asleep. Other positions include sitting on the floor or a cushion with your legs crossed, lying with your back on the floor, or maintaining various yoga positions. What is important is that you are comfortable and able to breathe freely.

Loose and comfortable clothing is preferred. Also, make sure that you are out of the reach of any distractions, such as the phone, noise, other people, and so on. You may even want to turn the ringer off on your phone. Complementary music can also be added after you practice a few times in silence. If you do add music, make sure that it is soft and slow. Many people have made albums of just meditation music.

The first type of meditation involves clearing your mind of all of your thoughts and images. Allow things to come to you. Ponder these images and thoughts that flow into your mind. Play with them and explore them. I suggest that you start with this kind of meditation. The art of clearing your mind is key to the awareness of the self and the world around you.

Pay attention to your breathing. Breathe slowly and deeply. Your shoulders should be relaxed and back, allowing your ribcage to expand as you breathe through your diaphragm. The diaphragm is a muscle just below the ribcage. To be sure that you are relying on it to breathe, your stomach should expand and fill up when you breathe in. As you let the air out, your stomach collapses and deflates like a balloon. It is ideal to exhale for twice as long as you inhale to ensure that you are breathing deeply and slowly.

Our breath connects us and puts us in rhythm with the divine. The heartbeat is the drum of each and every one of us. Breathing works in conjunction with the heart. The faster you breathe, the faster the heart pumps,

and the more presto the drumbeat. The slower your heart beats, the slower you breathe, and the less excited the drumbeat.

The second type of meditation that I will discuss with you is visualization meditation. You can meditate on a question, a concept, an image, or a photo. You may use a guided or directed meditation in which your mind follows a script that is being read aloud by someone not meditating. This script is like a story that guides you into deeper places in your mind by visualizing them. It can be read aloud or prerecorded.

Meditation is a very important focus for Wicca, because one of our major pursuits is inner knowledge. We are able to find out more of what is inside ourselves by quieting that yapping contraption that is only concerned with the day-to-day running of life. I am referring to your consciousness. The core of who you are, as well as the rest of the universe, is behind a locked door. Meditation is the skeleton key that can unlock the inner reaches of your mind and the deepest secrets of the universe. Once we are able to quiet the mind and feel the connection with the magickal elements of the universe, all things are possible. However, meditation is a skill that can only be mastered through practice. No one becomes a world-renowned tennis player never having swung a racket.



BLESSING SALT AND CONSECRATING WATER

During ritual, a bowl of salt and a bowl of water are kept on the main altar. Besides consecrating tools, these elements are used to seal the circle. At the beginning of any ritual, a circle is cast by the priest or priestess drawing the boundary of the circle with a wand, athame, or hand. Then, this boundary is sealed with salt, water, incense, and flame.

When salt is blessed and water is consecrated, we are again using the practice of cleansing these materials of their negative energies and purifying them with positive ones. Tools that are charged with negative energies will not be as useful as ones that are cleansed. However, blessing and consecrating is slightly different than consecrating our tools. When we consecrate, we expose them to each of the four elements. Because salt and water are two of the four elements that we typically expose our tools to, the process varies.

The salt that you choose to use for ritual is up to you. Table salt is fine, although organic dead sea salts are sometimes seen as more mystical in nature. Whatever the salt, many store it in a container, either outside or on a windowsill, for 28 days. This exposure allows the light of the moon to penetrate this material and infuse it with its energy. Not only that, but leaving it out for 28 days allows energy from all phases of the moon to permeate it. Each phase of the moon corresponds with a part of the Goddess: Maiden, Mother, or Crone. Each of these faces or phases encompasses a different type of energy. Because salt is a material that is used throughout many different types of ritual and in many different types of magick, it is important that if we do expose it to the moon, that it is exposed to all energies equally.

Touch your athame, wand, or hand to the bowl. Say:

**I bless this salt so that it may be fit
To dwell within the sacred circle,
In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God,
I bless this salt.**

After this is done, you may choose to sprinkle some of the blessed salt into the water and mix it with your athame, wand, or hand. Then you may walk around the inner edge of the circle, sprinkling it to seal the circle.

The consecration of water is intended to cleanse it and rid it of anything impure to the point that it would prohibit the water from aiding your

workings of magick. Even though water is a clear element and seemingly very clean, it is also very receptive and reflective. The great oceans and lakes swallow up many a man every year, however, they also reflect the light of the moon and whole coastal landscapes.

Touch the blade of your athame/wand/hand to the water and say:

**I consecrate and cleanse this water
That it may be fit to dwell within the sacred circle.
In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God
I concentrate this water.**



CALLING THE QUARTERS

Calling the quarters refers to summoning the energy of the four elements to the circle. The essence of this act is to ask the guardians/spirits of each quarter to assist, guide, and/or protect you. The four quarters correspond with the **four elements** and the four cardinal directions.

Direction/Quarter	Element
East	Air
South	Fire
West	Water
North	Earth

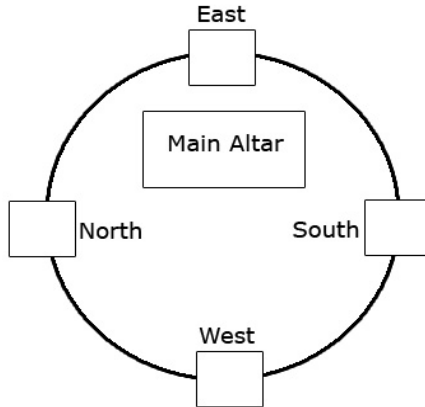
After casting a circle, begin calling the quarters at the East (in the direction the sun rises), then proceed clockwise (deosil) around to the North. Stand facing the East and raise one arm, which may be with or without a wand or athame. When something is invoked, it is called into presence. Your mother used to invoke you all of the time when she would yell out from the kitchen to your room. Although her invocations were ad-libbed (and often repeated in annoyance), many rituals include scripts of these calls. The ability to call the quarters freehand comes with practice and familiarity with the elements and their associations. Each of these invocations corresponds with its respective element. However, it may also include phrases that indicate the purpose of your ritual, specific deities, or connections to sabbats or esbats.

Hail Elementals of the East!
Powers of Air!
I call upon you to guide me and protect me!
Hail and Welcome!

Concentrate. Clear your mind. Envision all of the winds rushing into your circle, flowing around you, protecting you. Feel the breath of the Goddess dancing at your feet. The most important thing behind the call is not the tools or the gestures, but the fact that you see in your mind and feel with your body that the East winds are rushing to the circle and protecting you. Calling the

quarters is magick, because it requires calling upon the forces of cosmic energy within you and from the world around you.

As you finish each elemental call, draw a pentagram in the air with your athame, wand, or hand. Start at the bottom left corner of the star. The pentagram is an everlasting symbol of the connection between the elements.



If you have set up individual altars for the quarters or have set out candles for each of them, light the respective elemental candle now. Repeat the process for the rest of the quarters.

Calling Spirit

After the North quarter has been called, the element of Spirit is summoned to the circle. Spirit is that which connects all of the elements and is represented by the fifth point of the pentagram. Whereas the other four elements are called with a single hand held out, the incantation for Spirit is performed while facing the center of the circle and holding out both hands.

**Hail to thee, oh Great Spirit
You, who is the force that connects us all!
I call upon you to guide me and protect me!
Hail and Welcome!**

Calling Goddess and God

After calling the quarters, the Goddess and God are invoked. The calls for the Goddess and the God are traditionally specifically tailored to a purpose (the

season, the aspect of the Deity). The incantation can even be a short or elaborate poem honoring the nature of the God and Goddess. Below is an example of a Goddess invocation.

**Oh, Great Mother Earth, Gaia, Demeter,
As you awaken from your rest,
I see the earth and the renewed life you bring,
As you stir, Sweet Goddess,
I feel your breath on my cheek,
I call upon you to protect me and guide me,
Hail and Welcome!**

Dismissing

At the end of each ritual, it is necessary to dissolve the circle, to break down the barriers that you have created, as well as to release the energy that you summoned to the circle from the four quarters, Spirit, and deity. To properly release the circle, begin dismissing with the last being that was called. In our case, this would be the Goddess, continuing with the God, and then Spirit. At the North, work backwards or widdershins⁴ among the quarters. Dismiss each element, thank them and bid them farewell:

**Elementals of the East
Powers of Air
Thank you for your guidance and protection
Go if you must, stay if you will, know that you are always welcome
Hail and Farewell!**

Draw the pentagram in the air, but starting with the right corner and going backwards. Extinguish the candle.

After you have dissolved the circle, ground any excess energy. The goal is to return yourself and the area you have used for sacred space to a balance. You may even wish to meditate to do so.

Gestures

Gestures are used during various parts of ritual to direct energy. Most of the gestures we will be using will occur when we call the quarters and invoke deity. Gestures are not uniform among all traditions and vary between circles or individuals.

~Elementals are called with one hand extended outward and upward.

~Spirit is called with both hands extended upward and slightly outward.

⁴ *Counterclockwise. "Deosil" refers to clockwise.*

~The Goddess is called with both hands extended upward in a crescent moon shape. The head is tilted up.

~The God is called with arms crossed over the chest and the head bowed.



CAKES AND ALE

Who does not like cookies and wine or pumpkin bread and cider? Cakes and ale, also termed the "Simple Feast," is another dynamic part of the ritual. It signifies the body of the God (cakes) and the body of the Goddess (ale). They are offered as a reminder of the abundance we have, as well as a request to the deities that abundance remain. Profuse times ebb and flow. As we seek awareness, we must remember where this abundance originates, for not all parts of the world are rich in goods, land, and other materials. Cakes and ale can be added to any ritual, including small rituals for spells. However, it is traditional that it be incorporated into esbats, sabbats, and other major celebrations.

Any kind of bread, cookie, fruit, or vegetable will be suitable for the cakes. One time, the gals and I forgot about making something special, so I grabbed a banana and chopped it up right on the spot. Bananas and cider...mmmm...mmm...mm. Depending on the circumstances and the season, we have had Girl Scout cookies, pumpkin bread, banana nut bread, strawberries, and so on. But, my favorite ritual cake is crescent cookies. You have to try them, but do not be all healthy and attempt to make them with whole-wheat flour. Blah. I love whole-wheat foods, but really, these were nasty.

There should be a "cake" for every participant, plus one extra one as an offering or libation. A small amount of ale should also be left as an offering. Libation is an offering of food or drink made to deity. This offering can be left outside or buried.

The ale used in the ritual can be alcoholic or non-alcoholic. Cider, wine, and other fruit juices are good choices. The chosen drink is kept in the chalice until needed during the ritual. Covens and public rituals may choose to pass out individual servings of the ale, or require participants to supply their personal chalices.

During ritual, bless the cakes by placing a wand, athame, or hand on the plate and saying:

**Father God, bless these cakes
And infuse them with your love.
In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God,
Bless these cakes.**

Bless the ale by placing a wand, athame, or hand on the chalice and saying:

**Mother Goddess, bless this ale
And infuse it with your love.
In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God,
Bless this ale.**

If working with a coven, start at the altar and pass the cakes clockwise until they return. With both participants' hands on the libation plate, the person passing the cakes will say:

**(NAME OF RECIEVER), thou art (God/Goddess).
May you eat and never hunger.**

The person receiving the cakes will say:

Blessed be.

Then, pass the ale around the circle. With both participants' hands on the chalice, the person passing the ale will say:

**(NAME OF RECIEVER), thou art (God/Goddess).
May you drink and never thirst.**

The person receiving the ale will say:

Blessed be.

After the ritual has been completed, place the offering outside on the ground or bury it.

Crescent Cookies

- 1 ¼ cups of flour
- 1 cup of powdered sugar
- ½ cup of softened butter
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 cup of ground almonds
- 2 drops of almond extract

Preheat oven to 325° F and grease 1-2 cookie sheets. In a large bowl, combine flour, ½ cup of powdered sugar, almonds, and almond extract. Work in butter and egg yolk. Shape small pieces of dough into crescent moons and place on cookie sheet. Bake for 20 minutes. Let cool and roll in the remaining ½ cup of powdered sugar. (*Adapted from Cunningham's Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner*)



RITUAL CONSTRUCTION

At the beginning of your studies, though ritual may seem complicated, it will bridge together the hundreds and thousands of bits of knowledge that you have been accumulating. The purpose of ritual is to create a sacred space and commune with the divine. Rituals can be performed to celebrate a sabbat or an esbat, a rite of passage, or to put some oomph behind those spells. We can consecrate our tools during ritual, meditate, scry, raise energy, and partake in the Simple Feast. There are many different types of specific magickal activities that can be included in a ritual. The type of ritual all depends on its intent.

By casting a circle, we move ourselves "between the worlds," bringing ourselves in direct contact with the divine. These worlds are similar to the four rooms discussed earlier. In this state, there is no distinction between the Material, Formative, Creative, and Archetypal worlds. The body, mind, heart, and soul become one. We open a doorway linking this world and the otherworld and we strengthen our direct connection to the divine cosmic energies of the universe.

During ritual, many tools are used to assist in directing our energy, as well as other magickal purposes, such as the holding of water and salt. Do well to remember this: Wicca requires no tools to practice. The power and magick wielded during spells and rituals comes directly from you. Magickal tools are useful at the beginning of magickal practice. These tools help students better understand the metaphysical processes involved. As we grow in our abilities, they can intensify many aspects of magickal involvement.

Ritual is a beautiful and personal time where magick is most visible. In the 9 to 5, Monday-Friday world, we often shut off our awareness and our connectivity with the universe. Even though becoming one with the cycles of the earth and the moon are main goals for most Wiccans, ritual is a place where there are no inhibitions. You are the glowing Mother, the wise Crone, the fierce Horned God, and the contented Green Man.

There is no way that is set in stone of how to conduct your ritual. It is yours and yours alone. If you are working with a coven, this is up to the elders in the group. Any components listed here or found elsewhere can be added, omitted, or rearranged depending on the purpose and significance of the ritual. We are making some stellar spiral cookies here. If you like a few more chocolate chips and a little less sugar, Mother Nature is not going to move in on your house. For major sabbats and rites of passage, the ritual is traditionally more formal. You can write your own rituals, use rituals from books, or use

books to guide you until you are ready to write your own. It is a requirement of all of my students that they be able to write their own rituals and understand the components. However, there are many occasions where I have ad-libbed quarter calls and whole rituals, starting with nothing written, and making everything up as we go. First, it is necessary to become familiar with the process.

The following is a list of general ritual elements that may be included into a ceremony. Rites of passage, such as Wiccanings or handfastings, will have rite-specific elements that are not listed here. It is not necessary to think about whether or not jumping over the broom to signify crossing the threshold should be included in the next full moon ritual.

1. Purification of Self
2. Purification of Space
3. Setting up the Altar
4. Casting a Circle
5. Invocation of the Quarters
6. Invocation of Spirit, God and Goddess
7. Raising Energy
8. Ritual Observance/Spell Work
9. Divination
10. Cakes and Ale
11. Thanking and dismissing the Goddess, God, and Spirit
12. Thanking and dismissing the Quarters/Opening the Circle
13. Grounding

Putting It All On Paper

When constructing a ritual, it is important to remember that you are laying out guidelines. Every rite you create is a different version of the script mimicking the great Spiral Dance of existence. Because it is not required to adhere to certain guidelines while building a ceremony, it is not required that the guidelines written for each ceremony be stuck to as the performance is carried out. Flow with the moment. Magick can sweep you into a captivated, sacred moment and if you are not too stiff to notice, you can turn it into something progressive.

With that said, let us get down to it. The first thing you will want to do when writing your own ritual is to decide on the purpose for the ritual. Rituals can come from sabbats or esbats. Rituals can make spells stronger. It will also intensify, as well as focus energy, for divination. Divination is the process of using a tool to look to the divine for answers. Hey, buddy, you could just open the door and ask the gods yourself. Our ceremonies are also able to infuse our meditation with concentration, and provide us with a portal into the inner self for dark moon work. They can be celebrations of dedication, initiation, Wiccaning, handfasting, handparting, passing, remembrance, and any other rites of passage we may experience.

One thing to keep in mind is that ritual is a spiral dance, a play performed in the playhouse of our spirit. As with learning any new dance routine or script, the feelings and thoughts of the performer are focused on merely getting through the material. The most effective ritual comes when your

whole being feels the vibration that denotes your connection with the divine cosmic energies of the universe through every stage of the ceremony. Feeling that connection so intensely cannot be achieved when you are just trying to figure out what in the world this book meant by cleansing or which crème de toadstool to use for purification. Learn the steps first with practice, and then throw your heart into it more and more as you go.

There is a plethora of different events that could call for a ritual. When we set up sacred space and put ourselves in a place without time that is closer to the divine, we give ourselves the room to celebrate and to do necessary work. It is our playroom and our chemistry lab. We construct sacred space to segregate ourselves from the everyday happenings of the rest of the world. It is our personal space, for our own personal work.

After the purpose for the ritual is declared, it is a good measure to assess how many people the ritual is being written for. It is necessary to know how many players will be performing in our play. There can be a High Priestess, High Priest, one person for each of the elements, altar hands, and a slew of general participants. A ritual that will not include this many people will combine tasks between participants. It is common for a ritual to be lead by a High Priestess, a High Priest, or both. Some of the elemental responsibilities can be doubled up. No altar hands? Looks like the ceremony's leader might have to waft and sprinkle. Missing positions is no big deal. Solitary Wiccans do everything themselves.

Once a head count is made, assign each person to a given position. A solitary might say, "Hmm...High Priestess. That's me. High Priest, that's me, too. Earth? Oh, I guess that would be me as well..." However, in groups, these tasks are more divided up.

From the thirteen possible ritual elements listed above, decide which elements should be included in your ritual. The first six and the last three are included in most rituals. However, for example, it is not always necessary to purify space that may be set aside especially for ritual, or to call the God and the Goddess when you would just like to meditate. Ritual is so very versatile.

Then, write out the ritual elements to give yourself a clear picture in your head of how the play should be scripted. It will also make transitioning from one part of the ceremony to the other more natural.

Next, script each part of the ritual individually. As you write and participate in more rituals, some parts of the script become second nature, such as purifying the self or calling the quarters, and these parts do not need to be written out as often. When I started writing and performing rituals, it was a lot easier for my sisters and I when all of the little details were written out. We focused less on what to say, and more on intensifying our connection with the divine, as well as with each other.

Finally, read your completed ritual out loud to make sure that it flows.

EXAMPLE RITUAL

1. Purification of Self

Smudge by burning sage and wafting it from head to toe. At the same time, visualize the negative energies seeping out and positive energies flooding in.

2. Purification of Space

Use a broom to sweep negative energies out of the area set aside for sacred space. Visualize the negative energies leaving that area. Waft sage around the room and visualize positive energies filling the space.

3. Setting up the Altar



Above is a basic altar set up. Add or omit items as needed.

Light any candles that you are not using to invoke. To bless the salt, touch the athame, wand, or hand to the bowl. As you visualize all of the negative energy leaving the salt, and positive energy filling it, say:

**I bless this salt so that it may be fit
To dwell within the sacred circle.
In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God,
I bless this salt.**

Consecrate the water by again visualizing all of the negative energy leaving, and positive energy filling it. Touch the blade of your athame/wand/hand to the water and say:

**I consecrate and cleanse this water
That it may be fit to dwell within the sacred circle
In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God
I consecrate this water.**

4. Casting a Circle

Pointing a wand, athame, or hand, start at the east and walk clockwise around the circle three times. With the movement, imagine your tool or hand drawing a circle around the sacred space. Define the sacred space in your mind. Trace the same line and sprinkle salt around the circle. Repeat with water, as well as wafting incense.

5. Invocation of the Quarters

EAST: Pointing a wand, athame, or hand to the East, visualize the protection of the elementals of Air filling and surrounding the circle.

**Hail Elementals of the East!
Powers of Air!
I call upon you to guide me and protect me!
Hail and Welcome!**

SOUTH: Pointing a wand, athame, or hand to the South, visualize the protection of the elementals of Fire filling and surrounding the circle.

**Hail Elementals of the South!
Powers of Fire!
I call upon you to guide me and protect me!
Hail and Welcome!**

WEST: Pointing a wand, athame, or hand to the West, visualize the protection of the elementals of Water filling and surrounding the circle.

**Hail Elementals of the West!
Powers of Water!
I call upon you to guide me and protect me!
Hail and Welcome!**

NORTH: Pointing a wand, athame, or hand to the North, visualize the protection of the elementals of Earth filling and surrounding the circle.

**Hail Elementals of the North!
Powers of Earth!
I call upon you to guide me and protect me!
Hail and Welcome!**

6. Invocation of Spirit, God and Goddess

SPIRIT: With arms outstretched to the sky in a 'V', envision the divine cosmic energies of the universe filling the circle.

**Hail to thee, oh Great Spirit
You, who is the force that connects us all!
I call upon you to guide me and protect me!
Hail and Welcome!**

GODDESS: Move into the Goddess pose with arms reached out to the sky in a crescent moon.

**Oh, Great Mother Earth, Gaia, Demeter,
As the wind blows, Sweet Goddess,
I feel your breath on my cheek,
I call upon you to protect me and guide me,
Hail and Welcome!**

GOD: Cross arms across chest and bow head.

**Oh, Horned One,
The leaves rustle as you prance through the forest,
I feel the vibrations of your dancing feet,
I call upon you to protect me and guide me,
Hail and Welcome!**

7. Raising Energy

Start out chanting slowly. Quicken the pace until you cannot go any faster and your heart is racing.

**AIR I AM
FIRE I AM
WATER, EARTH, AND SPIRIT I AM**

8. Ritual Observance/Spell Work

Candle Spell: Anoint a candle with an oil of your choice, preferably one that indicates the desired intentions of the spell. Work the oil from base to tip, all the while thinking of a wish or a desired goal. When sufficiently charged, light the candle and let it burn completely, until it goes out on its own. The smoke from the flame will carry the wish up to the heavens.

9. Meditation or Divination

Meditate on the image of the Goddess.

10. Cakes and Ale

Bless the cakes by placing a wand, athame, or hand on the plate and saying:

**Mother Goddess and Father God, bless these cakes
And infuse them with your love.**

**In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God,
Bless these cakes.**

Bless the ale by placing a wand, athame, or hand on the chalice and saying:

**Mother Goddess and Father God, bless this ale
And infuse it with your love.
In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God,
Bless this ale.**

11. Thanking and Dismissing the Goddess, God, and Spirit

God: With arms crossed across chest:

**Oh, Horned One, thank you for your protection and guidance.
Go if you must, stay if you will,
Know that you are always welcome.
Hail and Farewell!**

Goddess: With arms raised in a crescent moon:

**Oh, Abundant Mother, thank you for your protection and guidance.
Go if you must, stay if you will,
Know that you are always welcome.
Hail and Farewell!**

Spirit: With arms raised in a 'V':

**Oh, Great Spirit, thank you for your protection and guidance.
Go if you must, stay if you will,
Know that you are always welcome.
Hail and Farewell!**

12. Thanking and Dismissing the Quarters/Opening the Circle

North: With a wand, athame, or hand raised to the North:

**Elementals of the North,
Powers of Earth,
Thank you for your protection and guidance.
Go if you must, stay if you will, know that you are always welcome.
Hail and Farewell!**

West: With a wand, athame, or hand raised to the West:

**Elementals of the West,
Powers of Water,
Thank you for your protection and guidance.
Go if you must, stay if you will, know that you are always welcome.
Hail and Farewell!**

South: With a wand, athame, or hand raised to the South:

**Elementals of the South,
Powers of Fire,
Thank you for your protection and guidance.
Go if you must, stay if you will, know that you are always welcome.
Hail and Farewell!!**

East: With a wand, athame, or hand raised to the East:

**Elementals of the East,
Powers of Air,
Thank you for your protection and guidance.
Go if you must, stay if you will, know that you are always welcome.
Hail and Farewell!!**

13. Grounding

With both feet planted firmly, visualize the excess energy not expelled in the ritual seeping into the ground. Take your body back to a state of balance.



RITUAL OBSERVANCE

Many times, rituals are sparked by the desire to celebrate the cycle of life. Sabbats, esbats, and rites of passage are all times when it is good to kick off the shoes and have some fun. Observing a sabbat is like telling a story of the Goddess and the God in their cycle over the course of the year. This cycle is the cycle of the sun, or the Wheel of the Year. An esbat honors the lunar cycle as the moon circles the earth. A rite of passage takes many different forms. It can be a dedication, an initiation, a coming of age, handfasting, or the beginning of the Sage stage of life.

You can write your own stories or ritual observances. You may even just want to read a poem in honor. There are many published works, but if you write your own rituals that you hold sacred, you empower them with your own creative force.

Sabbats highlight the spiral dance of the God and the Goddess that circle around and around every year. The year begins on October 31st with Samhain (Sow-in) or Halloween. This marks the time when the God descends into the Underworld. Fall has come and winter is close to setting in. The countryside is barren and looking bleaker as the leaves crunch on the ground and the air takes a greater chill. Samhain is a celebration of those who have passed before us. It is at this time that the veil between the worlds is the thinnest. Many believe that with the worlds so close, our ancestors can come and dance with us on this night. The dinner table is set for a dumb supper, often held at midnight. An extra place is set and left for those ancestors that may visit. As dinner guests fill their plates, an offering is left on the empty place setting. After the meal, the offering is given to the earth as libation. The last harvest has passed and the food that has been collected has to last the winter. No matter if the cold times are harsh or mild, the return of the sun is always anticipated.

The seasons change to winter at the cross-quarter of Yule near December 21st, give or take a day. It is the shortest day and the longest night of the year. From this point on, the days will grow longer and the return of spring is anticipated. The Goddess gives birth to the God that she was impregnated with at Beltane. Although winter times are only beginning, Yule is a celebration of the rebirth and homecoming of the sun. The Wheel of the Year turns, and the winter will always come, but everyone knows that the spring will always cycle around.

Imbolc is February 2nd, what mainstream society knows as Groundhog's Day. It occurs as days get longer and the Goddess awakens from her rest. It becomes evident that the spring will return. The weather becomes

warmer and the snow is melting. The increasing light fertilizes the earth, sprouting seeds.

March 21st, give or take a day, is the day of Ostara, or the cross-quarter of the Spring/Vernal Equinox. It is the time when day and night are equal and marks the first day of true spring. The days will now be longer than the nights as summer approaches. Nearly all of the signs of winter have gone. Warm breezes creep in, along with sunny days and spring rain. Animals wake up from their winter slumbers and explore the new land exposed by the sun. As the Goddess covers the earth with fertility, the God matures and courts her. The young God is growing into adolescence, and his sexual desires are rousing.

April 30th is known as Beltane or May Day. The God has matured and the God and the Goddess fall in love. They express their passions as they unite. Their proliferation is evident from the explosion of fertility seen across the land. Baby bunnies romp around the forests, taught by their parents the lessons of life. Insects buzz about, providing the soundtrack for the season. From this union, the Goddess is impregnated with the Sun-child. As the frost subsides, the seeds are sown and will grow to be harvested in the fall. As a traditional symbol of the procreation of the God and the Goddess, many ribbons are hung on a tall maypole that is danced around by men and women. Once upon a time, girls who had come of age would race in the forest at dusk, hide in the tall grass, and wait for the boys to come find them. As the sun went down, fires were lit and kept roaring until sunrise.

June 21st is Midsummer or Summer Solstice. This is the most fertile time. Midsummer marks the first day of summer and is also the longest day of the year. It is a turning point; from now on, the days grow shorter, indicating that winter will eventually roll in. However, the focus should not only be on preparing for what is to come, but celebrating the eruption of abundance. The baby begins to take form within the womb of the Great Mother.

August 1st marks the beginning of the harvest, Lughnassadh (*LOO-nah-sah*). The days continue to get shorter, and the God is losing his strength. As the child grows within her, the Goddess sees the old God dying. The crops that were planted after Ostara are gathered up to prepare for the crisp frost to cover the fruitful lands.

September 21st heralds the cross-quarter of the Autumnal Equinox and marks the middle of the harvest. It is the first day of fall, which is apparent as the trees lose their leaves to preserve their food for the snowy times. As humans harvest, the animals gather their food supply for the winter. The anticipation of winter begins as the days grow even shorter, and the God grows weaker yet. He will return to the underworld at Samhain.



RAISING ENERGY

Raising energy is essential to performing magick. Magick is the process of moving energy to obtain a desired result. The more we raise, the more powerful the magick we can work. Each of us already embodies energy, but many of our workings need much more than we already have inside us. So, we have to gather some from other places.

The key to raising energy is realizing that whether you are pulling energy from yourself, the earth, or the universal pot, that it comes from within. It radiates from within. You may call upon energy from the earth or the universe, but nonetheless, it must come from inside of you. You are connected to the divine cosmic energies of the universe, the earth, the stars, and every one and thing on the planet. This connection is inside of you; in that part of you that never speaks, and at times you forget that it is even there. I am talking about your Divine Self, your spirit.

One of the easiest and most effective tools in raising energy is visualization. Before you can get all hocus-pocus on us, let us first work on pulling together the energy inside our bodies. To conjure up only the energy that you have presently, close your eyes and imagine that all the energy within you is white and tingling light. You have excess energy in your legs, in your abdomen, in your arms, your head, and your chest. Take hold of that light and move it to a central place with your mind. Be mindful not to pull all of the energy away from those parts of your body. You are only looking to take the excess. You can choose any place you wish, whether your sternum, third eye, chest, or some other location. From there, it is possible to expel it outward in a more efficient manor. The ability to visualize your energy may take time, so a novice may want to at least attempt such a feat once a day.

We will move on to external sources of energy, seeing as how I cannot visually monitor your progress. I suppose if we were in a witch school and you could not do the exercise, I could smack your brow with a ruler from across the classroom. Well, maybe not. I have never been spiteful.

Anyhow, pulling energy from the earth or from the universe, it is still important to utilize the visualization technique. Imagine the energy that you wish to summon as a stream of light. Now, pull this stream toward you. Feel it flowing to you. If you are seeking energy from the earth, imagine the stream is flowing from the ground, through your feet, up your legs, and upward. If it is energy from the universe, imagine that you are pulling this stream toward you from the stars. It is stellar, glowing, and ever-present.

Besides pulling energy like a string, other ways of raising energy include dancing, singing, playing music (recorded or live), chanting, drumming, and meditating. Most of the activities done to raise energy involve activities that get your heart rate up and get you excited.

Here are a few chants or songs to get you started. These are not of my creation, but some of my favorites that I've picked up along the years.

Air I am
Air I am,
Fire I am,
Water, Earth, and Spirit I am.

We All Come from the Goddess
We all come from the Goddess
And to her we shall return
Like a drop of rain
Flowing to the ocean

We all come from the Sun God
And to him we shall return
Like a spark of flame
Soaring to the heavens

Hoof and horn, hoof and horn
All that dies shall be reborn
Corn and grain, Corn and grain
All that falls shall rise again

Fur and Feathers
Fur and feathers and scales and skin
Different without but the same within
Many of body but one the soul
By all the creatures are the gods made whole.

By the Earth
By the earth that is Her body
By the air that is Her breath
By the fire that is Her bright spirit
By the living waters of Her womb

May the peace of the Goddess
Be forever in your hearts
The circle is open but unbroken
Merry meet and merry part



SPELL WORK

Spells are some of the most simple and most complicated parts of magick. Wicca does not engross itself in spell work to the point where it ignores other forms of magick. Spells are puzzles. They should be well thought and planned beforehand, and may take some time to put together. We must also remember that spells are tools, just like ritual. They can only help us achieve our goals, but not guarantee them, for we must find the solution on our own.

Keep in mind that raising energy relates to spell work. The more energy we put into it, the more we are likely to get out of it. Also, the more magick that you work, the more energy it will take from you, regardless of how much you put into it. In other words, the universe is your powerhouse, and you are the powerhouse for your magick.

I cannot stress this enough, but **magick should never be used to intentionally harm without cause, and magick should also not be used to manipulate anyone against their will.** Put this book down right now, if that is your intention.

The following process was designed to make a beginner more familiar with creating and casting spells. To become more successful at spell work, it is important to write the spells that you cast. This routine will not only make you better at spells, but it will increase your knowledge of magick in general. So, I recommend that you follow these steps, create yourself some small spells, and get as much experience as possible. Also, spells are not the best forms of magick for all situations, although this discretion will be obtained as you further your magickal studies.

1. First, decide why you want to cast a spell.

What is your purpose? Your spell will be more complicated depending on how specific your intent is. For example, there is a big difference between wanting good luck and wanting to win the lottery jackpot. Hence, the spell for winning the lotto jackpot will have many more elements to it than the good luck spell.

2. Write out your intent.

Be as specific as your intent really is. Someone could do a spell to win the lotto jackpot, but then get mad when they do not win the next day or week. The full intent was not expressed in the spell. Write out who, what, where, when, why, and how. Be as detailed as you can.

Who: Me

What: The Ohio Lottery Jackpot

Where: With my ticket purchased at Piggy's Market

When: July 26, 2003

Why: To help with my financial instability

How: All of the numbers pulled in the lottery should match the numbers on my ticket.

Now, do you see how complicated one simple spell can be? I once spoke about cutting apart deity to understand it better. The smaller the pieces of something, the better we can analyze them. When we started this spell, the intent looked so simple. In reality, there were many parts hidden inside of us that we could not see at first. Writing out these six things allows us to break apart our intent.

3. Decide what kind of spell you want to do.

There are lots of different types of spells. Most spells do not need to be done during a ritual. However, the more specific your intent, the more in depth your spell should be, so you may want to cast a spell, call the quarters, and invoke deity, depending on how much energy you want to put into your spell.

Candle: Infuse a candle with your intent by anointing it (by rubbing oil on it from base to tip), lighting it, and allowing it to burn down. As it burns out, the smoke will take your intent to the heavens.

Meditation: Meditate on your intent. Play the scene over and over in your head. Feel it really happening. Will it to happen. What would happen? How would you react? What would be the result?

Packet: A small envelope that contains many elements of your spell. For example, the jackpot spell may include items such as the corner of the lotto ticket, an Ohio lottery magnet, a little calendar with the date circled on it, etc.

Concoction: These are various items, such as teas, other drinks, foods, incense, and other edible and non-edible things that you create in accordance with your desired intent.

Talisman: This is a trinket that you purchase or make to signify your intent. It may be a pendant, a pin, or even just a stone or herb bundle that you carry with you.

For my example spell, I will use a packet and use a ritual.

4. Coordinate all of the parts.

There are two different categories that all of your parts fit into. There are those parts to the spell that you collect that are specific to your intent. These are things like the corner of the lotto ticket, the Ohio Lottery magnet, and the calendar with the date circled on it. These things tell the specific characteristics of the spell. The second category of parts has to do with things that tell the mood of the spell. These are the candles, incense, numbers, clothes, cloth, stones, herbs, and so on that you use during the spell. These mood parts add specific magickal energies to your spell, rather than lay out all of the details.

Specific Parts: When we gather the things for the first category, we will use something specific to each part. We will want to include something in the spell that represents each of the things listed in our six specific parts. Let us go back to our six specifics:

Who: Me

What: The Ohio Lottery Jackpot

Where: With my ticket purchased at Piggy's Market

When: July 26, 2003

Why: To help with my financial instability

How: All of the numbers pulled in the lottery should match the numbers on my ticket.

Who: To represent me, I might want to take a lock of my hair. I could also take various other dead parts of the body (fingernails, etc.), but it all depends on what I choose. Some women even choose to use menstrual blood, because it is a powerful part of the body.

What: To signify the Ohio Lottery, I may include an Ohio Lottery magnet. For the jackpot, I would possibly write the amount of the jackpot down on a piece of paper or find the word "jackpot" in a magazine and cut it out.

Where: I would find something that had the store logo on it. I could also write out the location or find an advertisement. Be careful with the advertisement. You would just want to cut out the name and possibly the location of the place. You do not want to mix up any extra information in the spell.

When: I would use a small calendar and circle the date. Make sure that the year and month are on the calendar.

Why: I could possibly include a bill or a receipt in the spell to convey my purpose of financial stability.

How: I would include a corner of the ticket in the spell. I could also write out the numbers or cut them out of a magazine.

Mood Parts: After we have figured out all of the specific parts to the spell, we then need to figure out the parts that convey the mood. To start out with all of the simple things, we will burn incense, light a candle, have a lucky stone, have fresh herbs/flowers available, and wear ritual robes. All of these things need to be coordinated with our purpose. Most everything that we can use has a

magickal association. It is your job to research the types of things that you want and find out exactly what you need to create the best possible spell. These associations may be found in various publications. Some can be found on pages of this book. It is no way a complete list. I know that most every Wicca book that I have purchased has had at least a little section on the magickal properties of herbs, gems, woods, or numbers, and so on. Scott Cunningham authored some excellent collections of the magickal properties of herbs, stones, and incense/oils.

For example, we want to burn incense. Well, which incense is the best for luck or money? Vervain, Jasmine, and Ginger are just a few. If we wanted, we could burn one of the herbs by itself, we could pick up incense already made, or we could create a combination of several herbs. We could also find some oils that are good for luck or money and burn them in addition or instead.

We want to burn a candle for the spell. Besides getting an oil with luck/money magickal properties, candle colors also have specific properties. Green is the color of luck, abundance, or money, so we would want a green candle.

We wanted a stone for our intent. We can either use a rune associated with luck/money (Fehu – wealth, possession, nourishment, abundance, divination, prophecy) or find a stone with similar magickal properties. I have chosen the Cat's Eye, because it is associated with wealth, beauty, gambling, protection, and abundance.

We wanted fresh herbs or flowers on the altar. I would probably just use jasmine to make things simple.

I also would want to wear something green. Because I am making a packet, I would want to use green fabric.

5. Do the Spell.

This is the easy part. Figuring everything else out was the complicated stuff. So, here is my spell:

(Wearing a green scarf and ritual clothes, fresh jasmine on altar)

1. Cast a circle and call the quarters/deity.
2. Light the incense (Vervain/Jasmine/Ginger mix).
3. Anoint the candle with Cedarwood oil while repeating the intent 3 times. Light the candle.
4. Pick up each piece that is going to go into the packet and repeat the intent as each is placed on the green cloth (hair, magnet, business location, calendar, bill, lotto ticket corner, any more herbs, Cat's Eye). Tie the packet with green ribbon or string by making a knot three times. Say "By the power of three, so mote it be."
5. Close the circle and keep the packet close until after the lottery drawing.

Just a note: I do not condone the use of magick for excessive material gain. My example spell was just something for fun, because many witches are asked if they could cast a spell so that someone would win the lottery. However, at the same time, there are so many people wishing that they could win the exact same lottery, that the amount of energy needed to spell a certain person as the winner would be tremendous.

Spell Worksheet

1. What is your intent?

2. Write out the specifics of your intent.

Who?

What?

Where?

When?

Why?

How?

3. Decide what kind of spell you want to do.

Ritual: yes no (circle one)

What type of spell?

4. What will all of your parts be?

Specific parts:

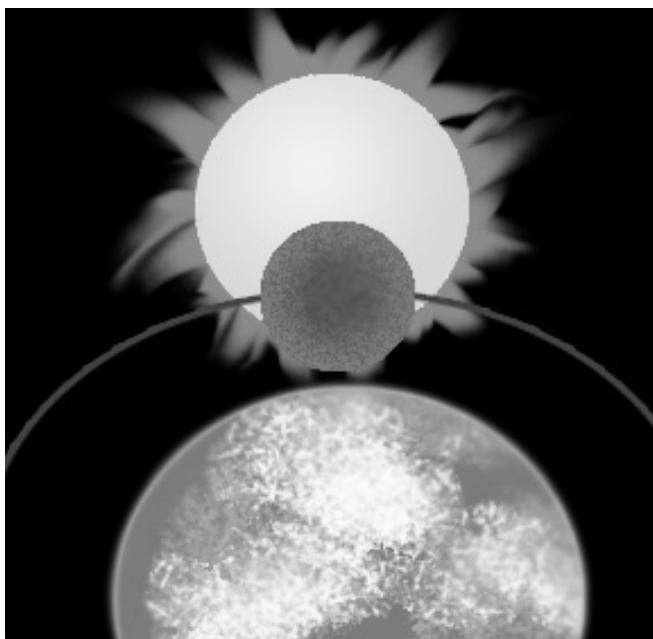
Mood Parts:

5. Write out the spell.



DARK MOON WORK

The dark moon is the point in the cycle of the moon in which the light reflected by the moon is not visible. This time is referred to as the “new moon.” As with all celestial bodies in the gravitational pull of our sun, half of the moon is always in the light, while half of it is always in the dark. Physically, the orbit of the moon places the grey sphere in between the sun and the earth during the new moon. It reflects light toward the sun, leaving the dark half facing the earth.



The new moon heralds a time of inner reflection. Much of our journey is committed to the understanding of the universe and the world around us. It is here that we find the Lord and Lady of the Shadow. Dark moon work refers to reflecting on the inner workings of the mind, as well as the goals, dreams, and desires that lie within.

The moon is a mirror, reflecting the light of the sun. Many times, we are forced to look into the mirror and face what reality we have created for ourselves. At the new moon, we are behind the mirror and have ventured into the deepest corridors of the mind. It is the strongest time to gear magickal work toward traveling the maze of passageways that make up the psyche.

The waters ebb and flow. The tide comes and goes. As the moon peaks full, it will always revolve around and show us its shadow. Even as spring comes, the leaves will eventually fall and winter will pillage the land again. Creatures are born and others die. The waning half of the circle of life is the dark half.

With fairytales of bad witches, spiders, and hexes, it is easy to come to the conclusion that dark forces are evil. Although disappointing to the average Hollywood director, dark magick does not refer to black magick. While dark magick refers to the balance of natural cycles of life, black magick is done at the cost of life and liberty. Black magick is any magickal working that has the intent to harm, manipulate, or force others against their will. Black magick has no place in Wicca and those who claim otherwise are imposters.

The Crone takes the foreground in the dark realms. She is the old woman, wise beyond her years. She has many lessons to teach.

Hidden in the shadow of the moon is a silent moment. Death is a peace reached at the end of life. The Triple Goddess is seen in the phases of the moon and represents the cycles of life. However, as the light fades and as inevitable death comes, there is an instance of stillness. As a witch, it is important to understand the power of silence. The more capable we are of becoming taciturn, the stronger our will becomes. The silence will reveal so much that cannot be understood otherwise.

It is in this moment that dark moon work is best spent. Meditation is a powerful tool to walk on the inner paths of the mind. The labyrinth represents the path to the internal layers of the psyche.

Mazes are not like labyrinths in that mazes have dead ends and include many points where the traveler is required to make choices. Labyrinths have only a beginning and an end. There are no alternative routes or dead ends. Although the conscious may be intertwined in a maze, the subconscious takes the form of a labyrinth.

Labyrinth Meditation

Create a quiet space where you will not be disturbed. Using a seven or eleven circuit labyrinth, find the entrance point located at the bottom. In your mind, trace the path to the center. If possible, do not use your finger to outline the pathway. Repeat if desired.



7 Circuit



11 Circuit



TAKING A MAGICKAL NAME

Taking a magickal name has been a common practice among pagans for ages. During the Burning Times, covens would meet in secret. The members would wear masks and only know each other by their magickal names, so that if one was caught, that person could not even be tortured to reveal the identities of the other coven members.

Not only priestesses and priests have magickal names, but most pagans choose to adopt a magickal name for one main reason: it separates their everyday lives from their magickal lives. In this day and age, it is very difficult to live every moment in a magickal mindset. When it is time for ritual, magick, or anything else mystical, visualizing ourselves as our magickal selves helps put us in the right frame of mind. Along with the concept of setting specific clothes aside for ritual, magickal names help deepen our mindset.

If you choose to take a magickal name, there are times when you may feel like you are two people. There have been many times that I have felt like two people living two different lives, because there is so much separation between the magickal and everyday parts of me. Unfortunate as it may seem, it allows me to be more in tune with my magickal self when I need to be.

In the first chapter, I spoke about dividing the divine into its separate parts in order to better understand it. The more we divide things (cut them into pieces), the more we understand them, but the farther we are from being one with the divine. Once we stratify everything, once we cut everything into so many pieces that we see exactly what everything is, the more we become aware of and the better we can put everything back into a whole. It is like a puzzle, where it may be partially put together, but the one putting it together (you) cannot understand how the pieces fit together or why they are there to begin with. As a result, you cannot finish the puzzle, because you are not aware of what is really going on.

Traditionally, a ritual accompanies the taking of a magickal name, because it marks a transition into a new mindset. It is a minor rite of passage. The purpose of this ritual is to present yourself to the elements and to the God and the Goddess with this new name.

Choosing a magickal name is very easy for some, and very difficult for others. If you find yourself having trouble, do not fret. There are many ways to find a name. However, there are times when the right name must find you. I found mine very easily, but I have heard a few stories that made me think that finding a suitable magickal name is the same as finding that good-looking,

single doctor with an island and a boat. Or that unmarried top model that loves football and beer. You know a few, right?

To start your search, here are a few ideas to explore:

- Meditate on finding a name, allowing different options to come forth.
- Use numerology.
- Choose to adopt the name of a deity that calls to you.
 - You may just like the deity's name.
 - You may feel a connection to the deity.
 - You may choose a deity who embodies qualities that you have.
 - You may choose a deity who embodies qualities that you would like to have.
- Use baby name books to browse through ideas.
- Make up your own name.
- Choose a name from a different language.
- Search on the Internet for name origins. If you go to www.google.com and search for "Celtic names," "Japanese names," etc., you will find lists of sites that have the names and possibly their meanings.
- Find a name that you like and then change it to fit you.
- The names of animals, plants, rocks, and other earthy things are often used to formulate names.

What is important is that you can envision you as a person with that name. If you do not bond with the name, you may grow into it, but I suggest finding something that you connect with. How often do you get to choose your own name? If you cannot decide, do not force it. It will come in time.

I will share my whole name process. When I began study, I was searching for a name. At the time, the small study group that I had formed had two patron deities: Isis and Odin. I used numerology to determine my birth number. From this, I took our goddess and changed the name around, replacing the first 's' with an 'r'. The number that corresponded with this name matched my birth number. I will explain this process later. I was thus Iris.

As I was working towards initiation, I found that I was growing rapidly as a person. I felt that I was more than just Iris, so I pulled out a book of baby names (which I purchased for the purpose of character names for stories). The names Rheanna and Kali both called to me. Rheanna means "magickal maiden" and Kali means "Dark Goddess." To compromise for the fact that they were almost opposite, yet I felt that I needed both names, not wanting to give up Iris, I became Iris Rheanna Kali.

As I started formulating classes, I felt a change again. I knew that I was more than the priestess that I once was. I am a teacher, a mentor, and a friend. I looked on Irish name sites, but nothing called to me. Then, I was looking through my baby name book and I came across Quinn, which means "teacher" or "advisor" and I thus became Quinnirisa.

So, you see, I have been through many transformations, and so has my name. Do not feel tied to one name or one purpose. What is important is that you IDENTIFY with your name, no matter how many times it morphs.

The Numerology of Names

Numerology is a system that looks for patterns in numbers. There are many types of numerological systems, but we will not dive into these complicated devices. The essence of the numerology of names is to find your birth number and then to choose a name that has a number that matches your birth number. You may also choose a name that embodies characteristics of the number that it is associated with.

To find your birth number, add all of the numbers in your date of birth. Keep re-adding the numbers until you are left with only one digit. My birthday is August 27, 1982.

$$8-27-1982 = 8 + 2 + 7 + 1 + 9 + 8 + 2 = 37$$

$$3 + 7 = 10$$

$$1 + 0 = 1$$

My birth number is 1.

Here are some characteristics of the numbers:

- 1 – ambition, courage (ruled by Sun)
- 2 – emotion, harmony, cooperation (ruled by Moon)
- 3 – creativity, joy (ruled by Jupiter)
- 4 – will, discipline, construction (ruled by Uranus)
- 5 – the group, freedom, expansion, communication (ruled by Mercury)
- 6 – love, wisdom, responsibility (ruled by Venus)
- 7 – higher learning, spirituality, quietness (ruled by Neptune)
- 8 – divine law, authority, materialism (ruled by Saturn)
- 9 – unconditional service, philanthropy (ruled by Mars)

When you look for a name, convert the letters in the name to the following numerical associations, and then add them together until you get only one digit. This is the number that corresponds with that name.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r
s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z	

$$\text{Iris} = 9 + 9 + 9 + 1 = 28$$

$$2 + 8 = 10$$

$$1 + 0 = 1$$

DIVINATION





DIVINATION

The art of divination is a broad generalization for many different practices. Divination is the communication with the divine through various media. Here is a short, but far from all-inclusive list. As you go down the page, what you will notice is that divination seeks information. It could be an answer to a question, information about a concept or issue, "fortune-telling," or general knowledge about the future. Some forms of divination require mastering a skill, and others do not.

Many divination techniques rely heavily on intuition to interpret them. You have to let go of the physical world and all of its limitations. When you use divination, open your mind and connect with the cosmic energies that lie deep inside of you. Divination is just a tool, for the real magick is inside of you. It is just another way to focus your energy and become aware of what it is you seek.

Cartomancy

Cartomancy is the art of seeking knowledge through a set of cards. Tarot is the most popular form, but there are others, such as the Goddess Oracle and the Faery Oracle. My grandmother used to use regular playing cards, and I have discovered that this technique is quite popular.

Astrology

Astrology is the art of seeking knowledge by studying the relationships of the planets, moon, and sun.

Runes

Runic divination seeks knowledge through symbols inscribed on stones, wood chips, or other small pieces of material. There is a set standard of specific runes and their meanings, but you can also make up your own symbols.

Radiesthesia

Radiesthesia refers to any divination technique that uses a pendulum or divining rod (a forked stick). The ouija board and some types of scrying can fall under this heading.

Dowsing

Dowsing is a method used to find water or precious minerals, as well as answers to questions, by using a divining rod or a pendulum.

Numerology

Numerology is the art of using numbers, dates, times, and numerological interpretations of letters to predict information.

Palmistry

Palmistry is the art of using the lines and structures of the hand to gain information.

Tasseography

Tasseography is the art of reading tea leaves.

Sciomancy

Sciomancy is divination using a spirit guide. Channeling is an example of this type of divination.

Clairvoyance

Clairvoyance literally means "clear seeing." It is regarded as Extra Sensory Perception (ESP) or having a "sixth sense."

Precognition

Precognition is the ability to know or sense future events.

Scrying

Scrying is any method of divination that uses mirrors, bowls of water, crystals, ink, flames, or other media to induce visions.



ASTROLOGY

The practice of astrology came about around 1800 B.C.E., when the Babylonians ruled Mesopotamia. These people, much like ourselves, would study the heavens for some omen that might affect the kingdom. Over time, the Babylonians compiled lists and observed the reoccurring cycles of the planets. They were eventually able to predict where the planets would be at a given time. From this omen astrology, 30 degree signs were developed, though personal astrology had not been explored. The Chinese went on to assign a degree sign to every year. The Egyptians developed astrology as we now know it by creating horoscopes. Around 1 C.E. the Greeks dipped into the astrological pool, and somewhere in the same vicinity, Hindu astrology developed as well.

Astrology is the study of the relationships between planets and how these relationships affect us. Despite popular belief, it has little to do with observing stars, although this is where the astrological signs originated from. Each celestial body, no matter how large or small, gives off energy. Though most of these bodies are millions of miles away, they are extensively large and powerful. Take a moment to ponder just how much energy the earth gives off. The earth is a living, breathing being that has been thriving day after day for millions of years. This planet, like many others, even has a gravitational pull strong enough to hold another body in its orbit (the moon). Also, the moon has so much energy, it able to pull on the oceans and lakes of the earth, creating tides.

Each planet gives off a specific energy that influences us in different ways. The sun, so hot and bright, is responsible for giving off energy that affects our self-expression, vitality, and joyfulness. On the other hand, Saturn, which is limited by its rings of dust and debris, gives off energies that affect our stability, restriction, and control. Depending on their physical position to one another in the sky, these energies positively and negatively interact in relationships called aspects.

Astrology is not a "fortune telling" medium by any means. It is a metaphysical science that describes events on both physical and psychological levels. It is the sociology of the cosmos.

Natal Astrology

Natal astrology studies how a person's personality develops and is affected by the energies of the planets at the time of birth. This type of

astrology is effective, because it focuses on the moment when celestial energies first had the most influence on us. When we are conceived and grow in our mother's womb, we are protected. We are shielded from all of the diseases, ailments, and energy of the outside world. We are only subjected to that which our mother, our vessel, subjects us to (including genetics). At the moment we are born, we are thrust out of this protective womb and into a world unknown to us. We are filled with breath and life, grabbing onto whatever is given to us. It is at this moment, freed from the placenta that we are suddenly subject to the celestial/planetary energies of the place and time. These energies dance with us, they become a part of us, and they shape the way that we grow to understand the world.

Another common usage of astrology is the forecasting and analyzing of major and minor life events. By taking an objective look at the influences currently playing on our lives, we cannot only understand what is influencing us, but work toward preparing for it as well. Just because you have already popped out of your mother and have grown up does not mean that you have been unaffected by the universe this whole time. These planets and other major bodies continue to put out energy, they continue to harmonize and conflict with each other, and they continue to influence you.

Celestial energies are part of our nature, much like the genetics that our mother and father pass on to us. By studying astrology and the effect these celestial energies have on a person, we can piece together a good portion of the puzzle of the human psyche. However, our growth is also determined by how we are nurtured, or brought up by our environment. Our personalities and the course of our lives are ever affected by our families, communities, education, and other conditions that come about after we are genetically programmed and touched by the stars. Only by mixing these two ingredients (nature and nurture) can a whole personality be formed.

An astrological sign is a symbol of one of twelve major personality types, or twelve types of energy. Early astrologers grouped people into twelve different personality groups based on how they were influenced by the cosmos. These signs were named after familiar constellations in the sky. Astrology looks at not only how the planets, sun, and moon relate, but specifically how they relate to the earth and us. The earth revolves around the sun and the night sky changes as it moves, making us closer and farther to certain planets. The closer we are to a planet, the more affect it will have on us. The earth, moon, and the other planets travel in their respective cycles around the sun. They travel in and out of signs constantly. The moon changes signs every few days, while Pluto's irregular orbit can move it back and forth between two signs in a couple of months, or hold it in one sign for ten to twenty years. The earth changes signs twelve times per year, once per month, usually around the 20th to the 23rd.

A personality is not made up of one sign or set of characteristics, but a mixture of many. This is why astrology has been seen as a riffraff game. On the contrary, it is a very focused and personal science. Each person has three major signs influencing him/her. The Sun Sign is the sign that the sun was in at the moment of birth. The Rising Sign is the sign that was rising in the horizon at the moment of birth. The Moon Sign is the sign that the moon was in at the moment of birth.

Along with the sun, moon, and the horizon, the different planets also have various influences on personality. These differences depend on which section of the sky the planets fall at the time of birth. Each planet has its own

set of characteristics. We are looking at not only the sun and moon, but Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto as well. The sun and the moon, although not exactly planets, but celestial bodies, have the most effect on us: The moon, because it is the closest celestial and the sun because it is the star of our solar system, a big ball of exploding gas that gives off lots and lots of energy.

The sky is divided into twelve sections, or *houses*. Each house represents a part of life. Depending on which house a planet falls in, that planet influences that section of life. Twelve houses and nine planets make for many different situations and outcomes. Although the sky is fixed, the earth and the planets move about this celestial game board.

For an example of the complexity of one person's birth horoscope, my birthday is August 27, 1982, and I was born at 7:21 a.m. (EDT), in Amherst, Ohio (41°N). At this time and on this day, the sun was in Virgo, the moon was in Sagittarius, and the sign that was rising on the horizon was Virgo. Because Aug. 27th is so close to Leo (which goes until the 22nd of August), I am influenced in a way by this sign as well. Then, the nine planets fall into one of twelve houses, which vary in some section of my life. The *aspects* or relationships these planets have (depending on where they are located in relation to one another) also influences various personality characteristics.

So you see, there are so many things to think about when using astrology. When most people think about astrology, they usually only consider a person's Sun Sign, and many of these characteristics are not always true to a person, because we are all so unique and individual. We will talk later about what exactly all of these signs, houses, planets, aspects, and characteristics are and how they influence people.

The Planets

Until another revolutionary discovery, the solar system consists of the Sun, Moon, Earth, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto⁵. They move in such a reliable pattern that we can predict where they will be at any moment in time. Each planet/body moves at a different rate of speed and in a different orbit. There are so many position combinations that another person will not have your same horoscope for 4,320,000 years.











There are several smaller bodies, such as moons of other planets and some major asteroids that regularly pass through our solar system. It is up to you if you decide to incorporate these celestial bodies into how you look at an astrological profile. We will just work with the planets and the sun and moon.

Each planet and sign has what is called a *glyph*, or a symbol, to represent it. These symbols often pop up in mainstream culture, so many of them may be familiar. Planets serve to influence one part of our personality. Just like each sign, the eight other planets are attributed certain characteristics inferred by thousands of years of our ancestors studying the sky.

⁵ In 2006, Pluto was demoted to a dwarf planet. It is still included in the study of astrology, because this classification does not change the affects that it has on us and the rest of the solar system.

Each sign is ruled by a planet, with the exception of Mercury and Venus, which rule two signs. The ruling planet influences the characteristics of a sign with its own characteristics. Besides ruling a sign, each planet has a sign that it works especially well with, said to be in exalt. It also has a sign that it does not work especially well with, said to be in fall.








When a child is born and exposed to this initial burst of celestial energy, the position of each of the planets has an effect on the personality of that child. Each of these spheres resides in one of the twelve astrological signs, as well as fall into one of the twelve houses that the sky is divided into. The Sun, Moon, and Rising Signs affect major personality characteristics, whereas the position of the planets at birth affect minor characteristics.

Sun	Moon	Mercury	Venus	Mars
				
Self-expression Vitality Joyfulness Generosity Self-esteem	Instinct Intuition Emotion Vacillation Responsive	Intellect Communication Consensus Reason Versatility	Love Physical energy Harmony Gentility	Initiative Aggression Decisiveness
Jupiter	Saturn	Uranus	Neptune	Pluto
				
Expansion Extravagance Justice Optimism	Stability Restriction Limitation Control	Change Eccentricity Independence Originality Disruption Shock	Cloudiness Unreality Idealism Imagination Carelessness	Elimination Eruptive Change Secretiveness Sexuality

Planet	Sign Rules Over	Sign of Exalt	Sign of Fall
Sun	Leo	Aries	Libra
Moon	Cancer	Taurus	Scorpio
Mercury	Virgo/Gemini	Virgo	Pisces
Venus	Taurus/Libra	Pisces	Virgo
Mars	Aries	Capricorn	Cancer
Jupiter	Sagittarius	Cancer	Capricorn
Saturn	Capricorn	Libra	Aries
Uranus	Aquarius	Scorpio	Taurus
Neptune	Pisces	Leo	Aquarius
Pluto	Scorpio	Virgo	Pisces

Sun Sign

A Sun Sign is one of the twelve astrological signs that the Sun was in at the moment a person is born. The Sun Sign depicts the external characteristics. Finding your Sun Sign is as easy as knowing the day of your birth.

Sun Signs		
Aries		March 21 to April 20
Taurus		April 21 to May 21
Gemini		May 22 to June 21
Cancer		June 22 to July 22
Leo		July 23 to August 23
Virgo		August 24 to September 22
Libra		September 23 to October 23
Scorpio		October 24 to November 22
Sagittarius		November 23 to December 21
Capricorn		December 22 to January 20
Aquarius		January 21 to February 18
Pisces		February 19 to March 20

Depending on the source, the dates change one way or another by a day.

When dividing the signs into two groups, they become masculine or feminine, and this refers to a sign's duality. A masculine sign is direct and energetic. They are outward directed and strong through action. A feminine sign is receptive and magnetic. They are self-contained and strong through inner reserves.

Masculine	Feminine
Direct Energetic	Receptive Magnetic
Aries Gemini Leo Libra Sagittarius Aquarius	Taurus Cancer Virgo Scorpio Capricorn Pisces

A sign's triplicity refers to its association with one of the four elements (Earth, Air, Fire, Water). This association breaks them into four groups of three signs each. Earth signs are practical and stable. Air signs are intellectual and communicative. Fire signs are active and enthusiastic. Water signs are emotional and intuitive.

Earth	Air	Fire	Water
Practical Stable	Intellectual Communicative	Active Enthusiastic	Emotional Intuitive
Taurus Virgo Capricorn	Gemini Libra Aquarius	Aries Leo Sagittarius	Cancer Scorpio Pisces

A sign's quadplicity refers to its interaction with the outside world. There are three different categories with four signs each. Cardinal signs are enterprising and outgoing. They are initiators. Fixed signs are resistant to change. They are perfectors and finishers, rather than originators. Mutable signs are flexible, versatile, and adaptable. They are able to adjust to differing circumstances.

Cardinal	Fixed	Mutable
Enterprising Outgoing Initiating	Resistant to change Perfecting Finishing	Flexible Versatile Adaptable
Aries Cancer Libra Capricorn	Taurus Leo Scorpio Aquarius	Gemini Virgo Sagittarius Pisces

Key words describing each Sun Sign:

Aries: (the Ram) assertive, forthright, selfish, and urgent.

Taurus: (the Bull) possessive, permanent, warm, and reliable.

Gemini: (the Twins) adaptable, communicative, restless, and versatile.

Cancer: (the Crab) melancholy, protective, sensitive, and loving.

Leo: (the Lion) creative, impressive, powerful, self-centered, and dictatorial.

Virgo: (the Virgin) analytical, critical, hardworking, fastidious, introverted, and modest.

Libra: (the Scales) balanced, resentful, sympathetic, and charming.

Scorpio: (the Scorpion) intense, jealous, passionate, magnetic, and unstable.

Sagittarius: (the Archer) easygoing, philosophical, and searching.

Capricorn: (the Goat) ambitious, calculating, material, hardworking, and prudent.

Aquarius: (the Water Bearer) distant, eccentric, humane, and independent.

Pisces: (the Fish) ambitious, deceitful, and impressionable.

Rising Sign

A Rising Sign is one of twelve possible astrological signs that was rising on the eastern horizon at the moment a person was born. It is also called the Ascendant and tends to reflect a person's outward demeanor. It greatly determines how the outside world perceives a person and is generally the first impression that one makes on other people. The Ascendant is called the sign of the Self; self-awareness, self-confidence, self-interest, and the like all fall under this sign. In many ways, a Rising Sign is indicative of one's goals, objectives, and creative abilities.

Finding a Rising Sign to the exact degree requires some mathematical calculations. There are many programs and websites that will do the computations for you. Many tables have been created to make this process easier, although when fine calculations are necessary, the tables can produce misleading results. If you have a basic astrology book, it should have a table in the back. Graphs are not as reliable, because their figures are estimated, and are often a little off on cusps, as well as the hours before and after a sign changes. Regardless, the time and place of birth will be needed.

Keywords of Rising Signs:

Aries: assertive, energetic, and selfish.

Taurus: patient, possessive, and self-indulgent.

Gemini: communicative, versatile, and restless.

Cancer: emotional, protective, and loving.

Leo: generous, bossy, and creative.

Virgo: analytical, modest, and quick-thinking.

Libra: easygoing, charming, and gullible.

Scorpio: passionate, intense, and jealous.

Sagittarius: optimistic, intellectual, and philosophical.

Capricorn: practical, disciplined, and calculating.

Aquarius: humane, distant, and unpredictable.

Pisces: imaginative, vague, and sensitive.

Moon Sign

A Moon Sign is the sign that the moon was in at the moment a person was born. The moon is representative of a person's inner feelings, emotions, and desires. The moon is also indicative of a person's dreams, memory, past, and the part that enjoys the little simplicities of life. It is the inner psyche. The Moon Sign reveals to us the tendency of a person's emotions, as well as how they are likely to react to their environment and people around them. As with Rising Signs, Moon Sign tables and charts are often found in the back of general astrology books, as well as on various websites.

Keywords of Moon Signs:

Aries: passionate, quick-tempered, and egocentric.

Taurus: determined, self-absorbed, and sensual.

Gemini: very versatile and self-analytical.

Cancer: self-protective, intuitive, and emotional.

Leo: enthusiastic, stubborn, and authoritative.

Virgo: quick-thinker, worrisome, and lacking self-confidence.

Libra: peacemaking, empathetic, and bringing out the best in others.

Scorpio: emotional, jealous, and enthusiastic.

Sagittarius: optimistic, restless, and loves challenge.

Capricorn: cautious, distant, and self-preserving.

Aquarius: unpredictable, distant, and stubborn.

Pisces: emotional, romantic, and becoming easily addicted.

Houses

One of the key players in the development of astrology was the Babylonians. They saw astrology much like a life map. Out of their view of things, they divided the sky into quadrants, each representing a different part or function of life. There were twelve of these quadrants, or *Houses*, passed down to us unchanged. The names of the houses vary from publication to website to person. Here is a general set of houses:

One: The House of the Self

Two: The House of Money and Possessions

Three: The House of Communication

Four: The House of the Home

Five: The House of Creativity and Sex

Six: The House of Service and of Health

Seven: The House of Partnership and Marriage

Eight: The House of Death and Regeneration

Nine: The House of Mental Exploration and Long Distance

Ten: The House of Career and Public Standing

Eleven: The House of Friends, and of Hopes and Wishes

Twelve: The House of Secrets, Sorrows, and Self-Undoing

Even though houses are groups of experiences that form a single area in life, the houses themselves can be grouped into larger categories.

HOUSES OF LIFE:

One: The House of the Self

Five: The House of Creativity and Sex

Nine: The House of Mental Exploration and Long Distances

HOUSES OF WEALTH

Two: The House of Money and Possessions

Six: The House of Service and of Health

Ten: The House of Career and Public Standing

HOUSES OF RELATIONSHIPS

Three: The House of Communication

Seven: The House of Partnership and Marriage

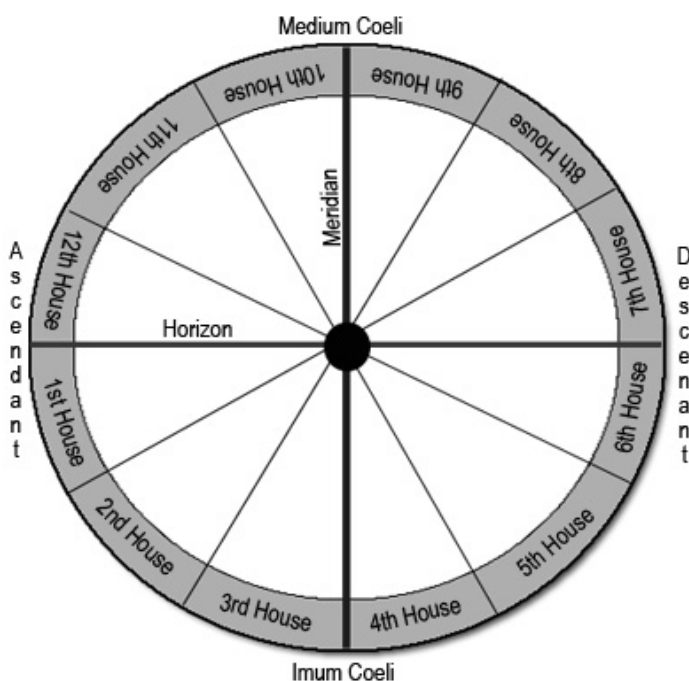
Eleven: The House of Friends, and of Hopes and Wishes

HOUSES OF ENDINGS

Four: The House of the Home

Eight: The House of Death and Regeneration

Twelve: The House of Secrets, Sorrows, and Self-Undoing



When an astrological chart is drawn up, it starts out as a big circle. This circle has 360 degrees. Each house makes up 30 degrees of the circle ($12 \times 30^\circ = 360^\circ$). The center of the circle is the earth, and when looking at a birth chart, it is at the moment the person was born. The horizontal axis is the Horizon at that frozen moment in time. The Ascendant can be found where the local horizon meets the edge of the circle, which also marks the beginning of the first house. Planets that gather near the Ascendant are rising or have just risen above the horizon. The position of the planets and the horizon on an astrological chart depict the actual position of the planets and the horizon that your poor father was probably staring at as he paced around the waiting room, looking out upon the heavens for some divine answer as your mother was giving birth to you. In opposition to the Ascendant is the Descendant, which

marks the beginning of the seventh house. Planets found hovering near this marker are setting.

The vertical axis of the astrological chart is the Meridian, which divides the sky into eastern and western halves. The Medium Coeli is marked by the place where the meridian intersects the circle. The closer planets fall to the Medium Coeli, the higher they are in the heavens at the time of birth. In opposition to the midheaven is the Imum Coeli, which lies under the horizon. Planets that gravitate near here are on the other side of the earth where they cannot be seen.



TAROT

Tarot is merely one of many methods of divination. It is a visual way to communicate with the divine. By tapping into the connection that we have with the divine cosmic energies of the universe, we are linked to the plethora of information available in the vast regions of existence.

Many bookstores now carry a variety of tarot decks. They can also be found online and in metaphysical shops. There are countless different decks available in all sizes. Every deck is illustrated with unique pictures, symbols, and has a storyline. It is imperative that you connect with any deck that you work with. Good for learning is the Rider-Waite deck. Although the illustrations are not fancy, it uses simple colors and symbols to make reading easier.

The first thing to do after getting a hold of a deck is to cleanse it. Even though it is new, it has been touched by other people and sat on a shelf somewhere until you purchased it. Burn a little sage and waft it over the cards several times and consider consecrating them, just as you would with any other magickal tool.

So, you have bought this deck of cards that contains seventy-eight pictures, names, and meanings. Most people who read the cards are not tarot masters. However, before reading tarot, a basic understanding of the cards is necessary. Put that silly book away. You know, the one that came with the cards. Good analysis comes more from intuition and less from memorization. Look at the illustrations. Ask yourself how they make you feel and what they mean to you. Shuffle through the cards. Which ones call out to you and why? What are common symbols and themes?

Do not become over reliant on the book of interpretations that came with the deck. The interpretations in this book were created by the person who authored the cards and reflects some other person's ideas and experiences. I would tell you to throw it out, but it will prove useful ONCE IN A WHILE. However, do not let it become a crutch. You are a witch. You are a magickal being. Reading the cards is in your spirit.

Many decks have a storyline. When it comes to reading the cards, the storyline is the best place to start. A deck with a storyline that is easy to remember and to relate to will make the task of understanding the cards a little less hefty.

Nonetheless, most decks tell the same story: the story of the life of the Fool. The Fool is the first card in every deck of tarot cards. He starts out his journey carefree, unaware of the adventures and challenges that lay ahead of him. Each set of cards is split into two categories, the Major Arcana and the

Minor Arcana. The Major Arcana is made up of the trump cards, or the first twenty-two face cards in the deck. The trump cards tell of the major events that the Fool will experience and the people he will meet that will greatly influence him throughout his journey. The Minor Arcana is constructed of four suits of fourteen cards each, and describe the smaller, everyday encounters that the Fool comes upon.

The Major Arcana

Many tarot deck authors have altered some of the cards to better fit their theme or individual interpretation. Nonetheless, there will generally be 78 cards in a deck, and 22 of them will almost always make up the Major Arcana. For example, some decks that are completely Pagan in origination and want to separate themselves from all Christian ideals will call the Devil card "The Horned One," or by another similar name. Regardless if an author changes the name of a card or not, it refers to the same place in the sequence and is interpreted in general as the same card.

Interpreting the cards of the Major Arcana can be done several different ways. The method used is all up to the interpreter. The Rider-Waite deck is heavily based upon the usage of signs, symbols, and colors to decipher the meanings of the cards. For example, green is associated with abundance, material gain, fertility, and stability. Red is associated with love, passion, intuition, and courage.

Each card has a general meaning based on its place in the Fool's journey. The Fool itself typically heralds the beginning of a journey or new chapter of life. It is important to remember that the cards of the Major Arcana represent significant life events. The journey that the Fool starts out on is not a trip to the grocery store or the library. It is a life-changing excursion. The Magician is classically a person that acts as a teacher or guide for the naïve Fool. Being a major part of the journey, the lessons learned with this card are usually carried with the Fool throughout the rest of his journey. However, the Magician does not have to manifest as a physical person, but can indicate a general life lesson.

The following are abbreviated basic meanings for each of the cards of the Major Arcana. These meanings are not exclusive and can be adapted or discarded depending on the reader and the person the cards are being read for. The following cards are from the Rider-Waite deck:

- 0 – The Fool** – beginning a new journey, adventure, path
- 1 – The Magician** – teacher or life lesson
- 2 – The High Priestess** – spiritual enlightenment, secrets, intuition
- 3 – The Empress** – prosperity, a birth, a new project, strong female presence
- 4 – The Emperor** – honor, achievement, wisdom, strong male presence
- 5 – The Hierophant** – seeking higher meaning, spiritual mentor
- 6 – The Lovers** – new love, choice between love and another major life aspect
- 7 – The Chariot** – conflict resulting in victory
- 8 – Strength** – courage, strength, self-discipline
- 9 – The Hermit** – solitude, withdrawal, inner-workings
- 10 – Wheel of Fortune** – change in fortune for good or bad
- 11 – Justice** – justice, balance, decision-making

- 12 – The Hanged Man** – voluntary sacrifice for the greater good
- 13 – Death** – life chapter, relationship, or event comes to an end
- 14 – Temperance** – harmony, self-control
- 15 – The Devil** – an examination of what lies in shadow
- 16 – The Tower** – conflict resulting in upheaval
- 17 – The Star** – hope for the future
- 18 – The Moon** – confusion, fickleness, uncertainty
- 19 – The Sun** – optimism, prosperity
- 20 – Judgment** – reward for past efforts
- 21 – The World** – achievement, successful conclusion, fulfillment

Every tarot card reader should use one basic tool for inferring the meanings to any card or spread. Intuition and feeling play a heavy role in reading the cards for any willing. The cards are always the same. The symbols and colors are the same as the day you pulled them crisp out of the box, save a little wear and some fading over time. They mean the same, but they do not really *mean* the same. Every spread, every turn of the deck dawns a new meaning for each card. When the cards are read for different people, their specific meanings change, because each person has a different life path, a different journey. Our life lessons may be the same, but we learn them in different ways at different times. The people that we meet and that will impact us along the way are different.

Keep the following questions in mind: How does the card make me feel? What story does it tell? What is the mood? How does it relate to the person for whom the cards are being read?

The Minor Arcana

Just as the whole deck of cards lay within the Fool, the Minor Arcana exists within the last card, the World. There are four suits within this Arcana: Pentacles, Swords, Cups, and Wands.

THE WORLD

Pentacles	Swords	Cups	Wands
Ace	Ace	Ace	Ace
2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3
4	4	4	4
5	5	5	5
6	6	6	6
7	7	7	7
8	8	8	8
9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10
Page	Page	Page	Page
Knight	Knight	Knight	Knight
Queen	Queen	Queen	Queen
King	King	King	King

The Minor Arcana consists of everyday events and influences that occur on the path of the Fool. Washing the car, stubbing a toe on the desk, and getting that cutie at the dry cleaner's number are all seemingly everyday events that can be found in the four suits. It is easier to break down the Minor Arcana into symbols and meanings. Take the meaning of the number and blend it with the meaning of the suit and the result will be the meaning of an individual card.

- 1** – The beginning, the unknown, the journey as a whole, birth, the self, the divine
- 2** – Relationships, duality, balance, everyday balance
- 3** – Rites of passage, synthesis
- 4** – Foundation, stability, direction, structure
- 5** – Spiritual needs, inspiration; change, movement (Wheel of Life/pentacle); adhesion (that which holds the foundation together); homework of life
- 6** – Repair, healing, readjustment
- 7** – Midterm/final exams; tests in life where we either go on or have to choose another way around (turning point/crossroads)
- 8** – Regeneration, progress, moving on, building an addition/second level to the foundation
- 9** – Completion, the end, climax, finale,
- 10** – The epilogue, new beginning, rebirth, hope for the future, community, collective self, going too far

Page (Earth) – Material world

Knight (Air) – Formative world, thoughts, blueprints

Queen (Water) – Creative world, the queen holds as well as reflects

King (Fire) – Archetypal world, volatile, dynamic, and the most fleeting

Swords (Air) – The realm of the mind and knowledge, communication, understanding, honor, winds of change (temporary), trust, protection, responsibility, male. Libra/Aquarius/Gemini

Wands (Fire) – The realm of love, passion, the spirit, intuition, creativity, lust, motivation, destructive/permanent change, power, courage, will, success. Aries/Leo/Sagittarius

Cups (Water) – The realm of emotions, intuition, dreams, the unconscious, the moon, mirror, cleansing, fluidity, the womb, relationships, female. Cancer/Scorpio/Pisces

Pentacles (Earth) – The realm of the earth, growth, stability, strength, progress, material things, fertility, home, consistency. Virgo/Capricorn/Taurus








For example, the King of Swords is the *fiery* part of *air*. The Page of Pentacles is the earthy part of earth.




















RUNES

From the colder lands of Northern Europe came the ancient Germanic system of runes. The twenty-four symbols that make up the runic alphabet were thought of as gifts from old Norse gods and used for divination and other magickal workings.

The Germanic futhark is the most popular system. *Futhark* is a word that means a runic system, and it was derived from the sounds of the first six letters. Varying from the Germanic futhark, other scripts vary in the number of letters that they have and the symbols that they use. Having been used as an ancient alphabet, each rune has a literal translation, as well as a divinatory meaning for divination purposes.

Glyph	Name	Letter	Literal	Divinatory
	Fehu	F	Cattle	Wealth, possession, abundance
	Uruz	U	Wild Ox	Strength, changing form, transformation, health
	Thurisaz	Th	Thorn	Signs, inspiration, new possibilities, opening doors
	Ansuz	A	Mouth	Inspiration, speech, voice of the divine, true vision, synthesis
	Raido	R	Cart Wheel	Journey, spiral dance, rationality, labyrinth, objectivity
	Kano	K	Torch	Opening, energy, creativity, transformation
	Gebo	G	Gift	Partnership, blessings, inner power

	Wunjo	W	Joy	Joy, harmony, fellowship, prosperity
	Hagalaz	H	Hail	Disruption, untamed power, strength, protection
	Nauthiz	N	Necessity	Constraint, need, resistance, self-initiated change
	Isa	I	Ice	Slowing, self-control, reflection
	Jera	J	Harvest	Plentiful harvest, peace, happiness, reward, cycle
	Eihwaz	Ei	Yew Tree	Defense, endurance, protection release,
	Perth	P	Dice Cup	Initiation, pathworking, knowledge
	Algiz	Z	Elk	Divine connection, protection, maturity
	Sowelu	S	Sun	Wholeness, self-knowledge, achieving goals, guidance, hope
	Teiwaz	T	The God Tyr	Warrior, Divine Spinner, justice, self-sacrifice, analysis, rationality
	Berkana	B	Birch Goddess	Growth, new beginnings, renewal, liberation, life changes
	Ehwaz	E	Horse	Movement, teamwork, trust, loyalty
	Mannaz	M	Mankind	The self, feminine wisdom, knowledge, awareness,

	Laguz	L	Water	Flow, life, unconscious, healing
	Inguz	Ng	The God Ing	Fertility, internal growth, sacred feminine sexuality
	Dagaz	D	Day	Dawn, breakthrough, awakening, prosperity
	Othila	O	Property	Aid in spiritual and physical journeys, abundance, the womb

Making Runes

Tools are much more magical when we create them ourselves. When we make tools, we are more able to infuse personal power and energy into them. Runes are more easily created than tarot cards. All that is being done is marking the symbols on some material. It does not matter whether clay, stone, wood, or paper is used. Here are some ideas:

- Carve runes into wood pieces.
- Burn runes into wood pieces.
- Paint runes onto wood pieces.
- Etch runes into stone pieces.
- Paint runes onto stone pieces.
- Carve runes into molded clay pieces and then bake them.
- Paint runes onto already baked clay pieces.
- Draw runes onto cardboard pieces.

Casting Runes

However runes are made, it is best to store them in a bag. Similar to tarot cards, runes are read in spreads. There are fewer runes, and depending how they were fashioned, they can be more easily identifiable. To prevent spreads from being skewed by the reader, runes are kept in bags. You just might be desperate for a positive outcome to turn up in your personal reading, but it just might not be in the stones for you. Knowing that Fehu (which has a little wax on the back) is the third stone from the left as you are pulling from the pile does not help make a true reading. That is especially true if that rune ends up in your spread. Hmmm. I wonder how that got there. Well, (smirk) must be the will of the Goddess.

One looks to the runes with a question and often seeks answers. Like most divination tools, working with runes can be compared with looking in the

mirror. The more specific the question you ask, the more specific the answer you will receive. If you want to know if you will be successful, the response will be as broad as a yes or no. Conversely, if you focus on discovering the strengths that you have that will lead you to success in a career, the answer has the capacity to be more detailed.

Spreads are typically done with three runes. Five is a good number, too, although more than that will increase your chances of an inaccurate reading. If there are only twenty-four runes and twenty of them are in your spread, then I would bet that after number twelve, there were not a whole lot of choices. For every path or question, there are a plethora of possibilities. The runes can tell of twenty-four. Using large spreads only limits the choices and clouds your understanding.

When you pull the runes from the bag, do not be a pig and pull out all three at the same time. Divination is communicating with the divine and uses a great deal of intuition and focus. Sloshing your hand about does little good. Place your hand in the sack and concentrate on the question at hand. The runes hold energy and will call to you. When you feel one pull at you, draw it out of the bag. Nonetheless, there may be times when two or more stones call to you at the same time.

When you have laid out your runes, analyze the spread. What does each rune mean? How does each rune relate to the question? How do they relate to each other? How does each stone make me feel? Much of casting is intuitive and relies on what the reader sees. Once you have a better sense of what each rune means, let go of meaning and embrace feeling. Listen to them. They are speaking. What are they saying?

As you learn, keep a journal of your work. Record each spread that you do and how you interpreted it. The key to mastering any skill is practice, practice, practice.



SCRYING

Like other forms of divination, scrying relies on our connection with the divine cosmic energies of the universe. It is an umbrella term that encompasses the use of various tools to bring forth this communication. Instead of reading cards, stones, or palms, scrying is merely the practice of quieting the mind, through focusing on a particular object, to induce visions. Scrying can be performed with a number of different items. A bowl of water, smoke, fire/candle, and a mirror are all commonly used. A special mirror can be made for scrying and instructions on how to make one follow.

Like meditation, this type of divination is best performed in an undisturbed room. The mood created by music and lighting can play a large role in aiding your focus. Music can calm you and block out smaller sounds of the outside world. The lighting of the room will specifically enhance your imagery perception. Scrying relies on prolonged visual stimulation, which can be altered by the type and amount of light in the vicinity. By adding to or limiting what is seen, visions can be more easily stirred up.

Scrying is very simple and does not take long to explain, but can take some time mastering. It requires much focus and discipline to quiet the mind long enough to achieve the desired result. Take hold of the scrying surface, prop it up, or lay it down. Now stare at it. Physically, that is all. The rest is up to your mind. The trick is to fall into your object. Become a part of it. Pull your mind's eye away from the body and the tick-tick of your brain and everyday nonsense. Look *through* the object, not at it. If looking into a mirror, trace yourself. Follow shapes. Fall deep into your eyes and beyond. Stare through it intensely, unwavering. If using incense, follow the tendrils of smoke as they spiral into the air. Become a wispy curl and rise up into the heavens. Pay attention to the different shapes that the smoke makes. If by fire, then watch the flame dance back and forth. Look through the flame into the otherworld. Dance with the red-hot body and let the smoke take you away. If staring at a pool of water, follow the moving lines of surface tension. Find your reflection and watch it as it moves with the fluid motion of the water. Become one with the ebb and flow.

Scrying sessions can last for a few minutes or a few hours. Starting out at ten-minute sittings will help build more concentration. If you never scry for more than ten minutes at a time, that is fine, too. When you first take up scrying, make sure to jot down a few notes about each session. As you progress, look back on earlier sessions.

Making a Scrying Mirror

A magickal mirror is a lunar fluid conductor. It attracts and holds energies of the moon. It acts as a focal point for scrying to induce visions.

What you will need:

- One dark picture frame with a glass insert
- One piece of cardboard or paperboard the same size as the glass insert (if the frame does not come with it)
- Black, acrylic, glossy craft paint
- Paintbrush
- Bowl to mix paint
- Mortar and pestle
- Tape
- Herbs (Mugwort, Wormwood, and Dragon's Blood)
- Pearl
- Silver
- Sea Salt
- Eggshell
- Spider web
- Three hairs from your head, or a drop of blood

Mugwort: purifies, enhances awareness, psychic powers, and induces visions.

Wormwood: purifies, banishes negative forces, and brings forth prophetic visions.

Dragon's Blood: amplifies energies, protects, and is good for divination work.

Pearl: symbolizes purity and stimulates purity in the body and mind.

Silver: summons lunar forces, highly conductive, and receptive. Silver represents a mirror into the spirit.

Sea Salt: purification, protection, and absorption of magickal energies.

Eggshell: symbolizes the Goddess, fertility, birth, and the cycle of life.

Spider web: irreplicable, the web of a spider is among the strongest substances on earth, but at the same time, it is extremely fragile. The weaving web is a symbol of the inner working of the mind.

Hair/Blood: links you magickally to the mirror.

1. Blend Mugwort, Wormwood, Dragon's Blood, pearl, silver, sea salt, and eggshell in mortar and instill them with positive energy. Use small amounts. There should be approximately one teaspoon for every quarter cup of paint. Silver and pearl are hard to crush, so have patience.
2. Open frame and save the cardboard piece, if the frame comes with one.
3. Clean glass well. Any marks or streaks will become easily visible once completed.

4. Place two pieces of tape on the front of frame with big flaps hanging over. The tape will make the mirror easier to turn over.
5. In a bowl, mix the paint and the herbs. Add blood, if applicable.
6. Paint one side of the glass and one side of the cardboard. If more paint is needed to finish the project or for touch-up spots, then plain paint can be used.
7. Lay spider webs and hair onto the painted cardboard.
8. As the paint dries, lift the glass and check for streaks or missed spots, and fill them in.
9. When both the glass and the cardboard are dry and opaque, place both of the painted sides together.
10. Put into frame. Clean the front of the glass again.
11. Consecrate the new magickal tool.

PATH





rites of passage

Leaves bud and flowers flourish as springtime renews the vigorous life once covered by the passing winter. The intensity of the sun is revealed during the peak of summer, when the land is ripe. Summer fades into the harvest of fall. The leaves turn and the land appears to die as the season approaches winter again. Our lives mirror the cycles of the earth and the moon. We are all born and we all return to the earth. However, each journey encompasses various stages of experiences and understanding. These stages of life are defined for Wiccans in specific rites of passage. Not all who choose to pursue Wicca will go through these rites in their lifetime. Examples of many of these rituals are included further on in this book. For an overview, I am including my views about how I define these rituals.

Wiccaning

A Wiccaning is experienced as an infant or small child, and is similar to a Christening. It is a ceremony in which the birth name is bestowed upon the child. Here, the little one is presented to the universe. Guidance and protection are sought from the elements. Though not necessary, Goddess parents can be named. The purpose of this role is to provide support to the parents and aid the child on his/her path, whatever path he/she chooses. A Wiccaning does not dedicate the young one to the path of the Goddess, nor is this child required to pursue this path.

Coming of Age

Coming of Age marks the time in a child's life when he/she reaches puberty. Many traditions and religions mark this period in an adolescent's life with celebration. The hormones in our bodies kick start the reproduction process. Sex among Wiccans is sacred, so when a person comes of age, we see it as a time to rejoice. The age that males and females reach puberty ranges greatly, from 9 to 18. On a side note, while sex is seen as a sacred act, Wicca does not condone sexual acts with minors.

Dedication

A Dedication ceremony can be held at any age. It marks a commitment to study the ways of the God and the Goddess. Although solitaires also dedicate, many of these ceremonies are also promises to study with a particular coven. Dedicants often study for a year and a day, as well as undertake specific subjects of study. Once this is complete and a student feels ready, an initiation may take place, though it is not required to continue on the path of the Goddess. These promises can last a specific time frame or be lifetime promises.

Initiation

An Initiation is a ritual that indicates a neophyte has completed the initial stage of training. Traditionally, this phase occurs at least a year and a day after dedication. Although one may be initiated by a coven or circle, the actual initiation may occur before or after the physical ceremony. Initiation augurs the time when a student makes the connection between all of the basic materials, as well as how these things connect to the self. He/she sees the weaving web and understands that all things spiral out from its center. Lots of covens utilize some sort of degree system, in which after completing more requirements, and reaching a new level of understanding, a higher level of coven status is attained. Initiates typically devote more time to study, as well as take on various teaching roles, which is especially emphasized in groups. The challenge of initiation is that teachers cannot make students understand what they understand. Each person has to follow the path and come to every realization on his or her own. Teachers can only point them in the right direction.

Handfasting

A Handfasting is a pagan wedding ceremony. Just as in a regular ritual, the altar is erected, the circle is cast, and the deities are called. Two or more people exchange vows and rings. They are challenged by the elements, bound by their promise, and then share in their first simple feast as a couple. As they leave the circle, they jump over the broom to symbolize lasting fertility and abundance in their new life. Depending on the marriage requirements in each state, handfastings can be legal and/or symbolic.

It is not uncommon to part take in a handfasting as a trial marriage. Some couples are united, however not legally joined, and try out the marriage. After a year and a day, if the couple sees that the marriage has been harmonious, another handfasting is preformed to reaffirm vows and legalize the union.

Handparting

A Handparting is a ritual that marks the ending of a union. Unlike a handfasting, it cannot be legally recognized as dissolving the marriage. For the government to acknowledge such a parting of two people, a legal divorce must be obtained. Being a symbolic separation, both parties do not have to be present, if one person would like one. Handparting ceremonies seek not only to commemorate the end of a significant chapter of life, but the start of a new one.

Croning or Saging

Just as the Coming of Age can be marked with ritual and ceremony, the time when a man or woman reaches the final stage of life is just as important. This signals the end of the reproduction cycle. The Sage is the old man or woman, wise beyond his or her years. The woman completes the Triple Goddess, the three phases of a woman's life.

Passing

A Passing is very similar to the funeral. It is a ritual of remembrance for those who have recently died. Nonetheless, the pagan way is not a path of grieving about death. We embrace death as a part of the never-ending cycle of life. Hence, a passing is a celebration of the life that our dear one had, as well as an observance of the life that will spring from this transition.

Around the fire, witches dance to the heartbeat of the earth. Songs of the cycle of life are sung and words are used to remember the joy of the one who has passed. Some personal effects and memorials are placed in the fire. Last messages are left in the billowing smoke as it rises to the heavens.



COVEN VS SOLITARY

Wicca does not require a group or a teacher to study. However, many Wiccans come together to practice and further themselves on their individual paths. The choice whether to seek out a group or to study on one's own is a personal choice.

A solitary practitioner has many freedoms that a coven may not allow a coven member. The rituals performed are up to the sole discretion of the individual. The time and place of studying and practicing is also very convenient. Working alone allows one to choose his/her level of commitment. Having time to celebrate only two or three major festivals a year is acceptable for some people as a solitary. Most groups require more of a regular commitment.

In either case, training moves at the pace of the individual. However, knowing what to learn and where to find the materials can prove a challenge. The Wiccan of today is very fortunate when compared to the curious mind of 1954. That year, Gerald Gardner came out with the ever-so-controversial Witchcraft Today. Before that time, those who practiced magick kept their metaphysical dealings more underground. Nowadays, anyone can connect to the Internet, type "Wicca" into a search field, and be slammed with millions of pages from several different countries. Spoiled though we are, this abundance of information can leave a newly curious person confused on where to start or where to go next.

On the other hand, seeking out a coven to join can be to the liking of a witch. A circle opens up a plethora of resources and brings out the strengths in each individual. Some members will be good at tarot, and others astrology. Some will be able to cook, while others work well with wood. Also, some members will embrace leading, writing rituals, and teaching, whereas many will find joy in showing up and participating. In a coven, there is always someone to point others in the right direction. There will be times when a neophyte looks for the street sign, and there will be times when that same person holds the street sign for other students.

Covens provide motivation. Whether it is showing up to ritual or that last push to finish lessons, there is always a network of support. Coming across a topic that is unfamiliar is not a problem. Throw out the term to the group and a few people are bound to have books to lend or know of good places to start.

A circle is similar to an adopted family. Once accepted as a member, one has just taken on a handful of brothers and/or sisters. They will love, grow, and quarrel just as family does, but that underlying bond will always be there.



IMPORTANT FIGURES

From authors and practitioners, to activists and teachers, here are some people who have furthered Wicca in small numbers. It is estimated there are a little more than a million Wiccans in the United States. This is difficult to calculate, however, because so many Wiccans are solitary practitioners.

Gerald Gardner **(1884 – 1964)**

Gardner is famous for a book printed in 1954 titled Witchcraft Today. In this controversial book, he stated that witchcraft survived all of the years after the Burning Times, and that it was still being practiced in England at that time. Gardner coined the term *Wicca* and is said to be the first person to practice this old earth religion in its modern form. It was his book that brought paganism back from its underground hiding. He eventually founded his own tradition, Gardnerian Wicca.

Aleister Crowley **(1875 – 1947)**

Initiated as a member of the Golden Dawn, Crowley's studies eventually led him to write many books. The Book of the Law included the phrase "...do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law," which was similar to "An ye harm none, do what thou wilt." The Book of Thoth led to the creation of the Thoth tarot deck. Much of his life was spent experimenting with metaphysics.

Doreen Valiente **(1922 – 1999)**

Valiente and Gardner were in the same coven for a few years. She is most well known for putting together the original Charge of the Goddess.

Raymond Buckland
(1934 -)

Besides authoring many books, Buckland brought a form of Wicca to the United States, and eventually founded his own tradition, Seax Wica.

Scott Cunningham
(1956 - 1993)

Cunningham is one of the most well known Wiccan authors. Writing more than 30 books, Wicca: A Guide for the Solitary Practitioner was his work that sold the most copies.

Starhawk
(1951 -)

Starhawk founded the Reclaiming tradition in San Francisco. She is also a pagan author and activist.

RITUALS



FULL MOON

Purification of Self: *Smudge the self or each other.*

Purification of Space: *Sweep the area with a broom and smudge.*

Cast the Circle

Officiant: *Consecrate the water, bless the salt, light the candle, and cast the circle. Seal with water, salt, and flame.*

Calling the Quarters

East: "We call to you, Spirits of the East!
You who are the guardians of the Powers of Air!
On this full moon night, show us the way.
Join us as we rejoice in the dance of the earth and the moon.
Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

South: "We call to you, Spirits of the South!
You who are the guardians of the Powers of Fire!
Warm our hearts as we look upon the moon in all her splendor.
Join us as we light candles in celebration of the spiral dance.
Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

West: "We call to you, Spirits of the West!
You who are the guardians of the Powers of Water!
Drown out our fears, for the path we travel is long and rugged.
Join us as we embrace the ebb and flow of oceans.
Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

North: "We call to you, Spirits of the North!
You who are the guardians of the Powers of Earth!
Hold us up as we gaze upon your mirror.
Join us as we look into ourselves, forever longing to unlock your secrets.
Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Spirit: "Hear our whisper, Great Spirit. It is you that holds the moon close to the earth, and beckons the earth to spin around the sun. The days and nights are yours. As we can only see one side of the moon, your touch is hidden from us as well. Seemingly invisible, we know you are with us. Spirit, Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

All: "Hail and welcome!"

Goddess: "Cerridwen, Hecate, Isis. You are known by many names, but the moon only has one face. You keep watch from the heavens as well as from earth. We long to walk in your footsteps and take hold of the mysteries within. Oh, Lovely Lady, Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

All: "Hail and welcome!"

Divination

Cakes and Ale

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless these cakes, and infuse them with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless these cakes."

The Officiant draws a pentacle above the cakes as he or she says the blessing. Pass the cakes clockwise around the circle. As each person takes a cake, both the participant passing the plate and the participant receiving the plate place their hands on the plate.

Person passing the plate: "Thou art Goddess, may you eat and never hunger."

Person receiving the plate: "Blessed be."

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless this ale, and infuse it with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless this ale."

The Officiant again draws a pentacle above the chalice as he or she says the blessing. Pass around chalice. As the cup is passed, both of the participant passing and the participant receiving place their hands on the chalice.

Person passing ale: "Thou art Goddess, may you drink and never thirst."

Person receiving ale: "Blessed be."

Close the Circle

Goddess: "Lady of the Moon, may your light never falter. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

Spirit: "Great Spirit, thank you for being the force that holds all of the pieces of the puzzle together. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

North: "Spirits of the North, Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

West: "Spirits of the West, Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

South: "Spirits of the South, Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

East: "Spirits of the East, Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

All: "Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again."

DARK MOON

Purification of Self: *Smudge each other.*

Purification of Space: *Sweep the area with a broom and smudge.*

Consecrate the Water: *Place wand/finger in water.* "I consecrate this water so that it may be fit to dwell within the sacred circle. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, I cleanse this water."

Bless the Salt: *Place wand/finger in salt.* "I bless this salt so that it may be fit to dwell within the sacred circle. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, I bless this salt."

Cast the Circle

Officiant: *Walks clockwise around the circle three times with the wand/athame. Seal circle with salt and water.* "The circle is cast. We are between the worlds."

Everyone sits in a circle.

"Please take a few moments to reflect on the self before we continue. Who are you? Why are you here? What are you looking for?"

Calling the Quarters

East: "Close your eyes and listen to the breath within. Make them deep. Make them long. It is this breath that carries blood to all parts of our bodies. It pumps our heart and makes it possible for us to live. Each breath aids our neurons to carry knowledge through us."

"Guardians of the East, those who protect the Powers of Air: From each thought to each breath, you are vital to our existence. Come to the circle as we seek to know more about ourselves."

"Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

South: "Put your hand on your heart and feel the beat. This is the drumbeat of life. Your heartbeat is the rhythm that you dance to. Whether fast or slow, it weaves you to the song of the universe.

"Guardians of the South, those who protect the Powers of Fire: You are the divine spark that jump starts life, as well as the inaudible metronome in our spiral dance. Come to the circle as we seek to hear the beat.

"Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

West: "Cross your hands over your chest and feel the warmth of your body. Blood runs through our veins, working from the inside to incubate our precious organs. It rushes to our face when we are embarrassed, and circles the vital parts of our body in order to stay alive. The water we take into our bodies keeps us well. It cleanses and nourishes more than anything else we could consume.

"Guardians of the West, those who protect the Powers of Water: It is you who held us in the womb and continues to nurture us throughout our lives. Though we walk on the solid ground, we float with you. Come to the circle as we long to flow and ebb with the waves within us.

"Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

North: "Close your eyes and reach down into yourself. Past your heart, your hands, your womb, your knees, and down into your feet. You extend past your feet into the ground. The roots of your existence grow vast. Feel the soil between your toes. But you no longer have ten toes. You have hundreds that live within the earth, feeding the grand body above.

"Guardians of the North, those who protect the Powers of Earth: In this vast universe, you give us home. You are the foundation of life as we know it. We are stable and safe with you. Come to the circle and aid us as we grow tall with your nourishment.

"Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

Spirit: "With eyes still closed, find yourself hiding within you. Feel that ball of energy that collects under your skin. Reach out from yourself and feel your connection to everything else. Feel your sisters and brothers. Feel the earth, air, and energy around you. Reach out and feel the universe.

"Great Spirit, you which is our connection to all things: You provide us with the means to know, to feel, to dare, and to keep silent. It is through you that we embrace our link to the living and our path to the divine. Come to the circle as we seek to love ourselves and the universe around us.

"Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

God and Goddess: "Lord and Lady, the sun and the moon. The world is presented to us in two halves. Right/left, black/white, male/female, right/wrong... The closer we come to know you, the more we understand how the pieces of the puzzle fit together. You are the end and the beginning, and make up everything in between. Come to the circle, for the mystery we seek to uncover is within.

"Lord and Lady, Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Light candles.

Ritual Observance: Goal Collage

Each participant will need a piece of poster board. Also, have scissors, glue, and several magazines available.

Officiant: "The Dark Moon, or new moon, is a time to look within ourselves. The work done at this type of ritual is internal. The mirror is a symbol of the moon, and since we cannot see the reflection, we turn to looking inside.

"Tonight, we will take the time to look at our paths. Reflect on how you would like to shape your life. Cut out pictures and words of magazines that emulate goals you are currently working on, as well as would like to work on. Also, take the time to look for things that symbolize who you are. Glue the pictures in a collage to keep visible during the year."

Close the Circle

God and Goddess: "Lord and Lady, we will keep you in our hearts and minds. Stay if you will, go if you must. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

Spirit: "Great Spirit, we have rejoiced with your presence this night. Stay if you will, go if you must. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

North: "Guardians of the North, those who protect the Powers of Earth! Stay if you will, go if you must. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

West: "Guardians of the West, those who protect the Powers of Water! Stay if you will, go if you must. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

South: "Guardians of the South, those who protect the Powers of Fire! Stay if you will, go if you must. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

East: "Guardians of the East, those who protect the Powers of Air! Stay if you will, go if you must. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

"Merry meet and merry part and merry meet again!"

SAMHAIN

Purification of Self: Smudge each other and the self.

Purification of Space: Sweep the area with a broom and smudge.

Cast the Circle

Officiant: *Cast circle. Consecrate the water, bless the salt, and seal the circle.*

"The ending of the year at Samhain is the Witch's New Year. This is the night when the veil is thin that divides the worlds. We welcome the spirits of those who have passed into the Summerlands to join our circle tonight."

Ritual Observance:

"Now is the time that the harvest is gathered and the fields are bare. It is the beginning and the end. This is the waning half of the year, which belongs to the God. The Sun-child has been conceived and the universe will be reborn, yet we are ushered into winter. The earth and her mysteries are exposed, as the door between the worlds opens and the dead walk with the living. Though the year wanes, our cycle of death is also the cycle of life. Blessed be."

All: "Blessed be."

Calling the Quarters

East: *ad-lib*

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

South: *ad-lib*

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

West: *ad-lib*

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

North: *ad-lib*

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Spirit: "Hail Ancient ones! Visualize the faces of those you love. See their faces in our circle. Welcome them from the Summerlands. We call to you, our family and ancestors, our guardians! We ask you to join our circle as we celebrate Samhain. Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

God: "Waning Lord, as you lose strength with the coming winter, you remind us that the Wheel of Life is only possible with death. You are the Lord of Death. On this Samhain, and throughout the year, let us remember that with change comes a new start. The end of one thing is the beginning of another. Hail and Welcome!"

Light God candle.

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Goddess: "Mother Goddess Demeter, as you mourn the descent of your daughter Persephone into the underworld to join the God Hades, we are reminded of the fragility of life. But we know that you will be reunited with your kin when winter ends. As we prepare for the Witch's New Year, we remember that with change comes hope. Just as you, Demeter, bring life into the world, within us is the power to make positive change in this world. Hail and Welcome!"

Light Goddess candle.

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Divination

Officiant: "Now is the time to reflect on the progress we have made in our life in the last year, and to meditate on what more we hope to accomplish on our magical path."

Meditation with scrying mirrors.

"So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be!"

Cakes and Ale

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless these cakes, and infuse them with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless these cakes."

The Officiant draws a pentacle above the cakes as he or she says the blessing. Pass the cakes clockwise around the circle. As each person takes a cake, both the participant passing the plate and the participant receiving the plate place their hands on the plate.

Person passing the plate: "Thou art Goddess, may you eat and never hunger."

Person receiving the plate: "Blessed be."

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless this ale, and infuse it with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless this ale."

The Officiant again draws a pentacle above the chalice as he or she says the blessing. Pass around the chalice. As the cup is passed, both the participant passing and the participant receiving place their hands on the chalice.

Person passing ale: "Thou art Goddess, may you drink and never thirst."

Person receiving ale: "Blessed be."

Close the Circle

Spirit: "Spirits of our ancestors, thank you for joining our new year celebration this Samhain. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

Goddess: "Oh Lady of Life, thank you for celebrating the new year tonight. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

God "Through the Lord of Death, the cycle of life continues. What is born must pass through life and into the ground. Yet, new life is born from that which dies. Persephone descended, yet was reborn from the seed of the pomegranate, just as the fruit is reborn from the seeds of dying fruit. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again. Blessed be!" (*Extinguish candles*)

YULE

The altar is set up with a Yule Log, which holds three candles: Spirit, God, and Goddess. A Yule Log can be made by taking a 1–4 foot log and cutting off the bottom, so that it sits on a flat part long-ways. Three to five holes are drilled in the top to hold candles. Pine and ash are good choices for this log, which is placed on the main altar.

This ritual also includes a small, witchy gift exchange. Each attendant should bring a small, wrapped gift. My group usually set a \$10-20 limit on each gift, because we tend to get carried away. Do not mark on the gift who it is from. When gifts are given, especially items intended for magickal use, we instill them with more power.

East: "Ancient Ones of the East
Elementals of Air
We call upon you to share your wisdom
And to join this circle in celebration of Yule
As we rejoice in the return of the sun
Hail Air, and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

South: "Ancient Ones of the South
Elementals of Fire
We call upon you to share your passion
And to join this circle in celebration of Yule
As we rejoice in the return of the sun
Hail Fire, and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

West: "Ancient Ones of the West
Elementals of Water
We call upon you to share your intuition
And to join this circle in celebration of Yule
As we rejoice in the return of the sun
Hail Water, and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

North: "Ancient Ones of the North
Elementals of Earth

We call upon you to share your strength
And to join this circle in celebration of Yule
As we rejoice in the return of the sun
Hail Earth, and Welcome!"

Spirit: "Yule is the longest night of the year. As I kindle this flame, remind us that though the snow is coming, and the dark nights are long and cold, we are warmed with the thoughts of our loved ones. Hail Spirit, and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

God: "I light this flame in honor of the return of the sun, and the birth of the God. The days will grow longer with each passing night, as the light returns to the land. Hail Great God, and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Goddess: "Great Goddess, though the God is dying, you carry his seed in your womb. From his death, life will renew. Yule is a time of rebirth. Great Mother, Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Sabbat Observation:

Officiant: "We come have together to celebrate the Winter Solstice. Tonight begins the waxing half of the year. The days will grow longer and the night shorter. Though winter is a beautiful and exciting time of year, we will begin to long for the spring. The Sun-child promises us warmth. The Lord of Death and the Mother of Life come together as we look to the dawn. The sun meets the horizon. It is the beginning and the end and an indication of the duality that exists within the universe. Blessed be the moon and the earth as they continue to dance around the sun, as the sun continues to dance around our cluster of stars, and the universe."

All: "Blessed be."

Officiant: "The Yule Log has long been a symbol of this time of year. It is burned to symbolize light and warmth. This log will be kept and burned next year in observance of the renewing cycle of life, death, and rebirth that we are all apart of. So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be."

Gift Exchange

All of the presents are placed under the Yule tree or in the middle of the circle. Tear or cut up paper into small pieces and number them from 1 to however many people brought gifts. Without peeking, each participant draws a number. The person who drew the number 1 picks the unmarked present that he/she desires. DO NOT UNWRAP until everyone has a present! Then, the person who

has the number 2 goes next. The person whose turn is next can "steal" a present from someone who has gone before him/her. However, the person whose present is stolen cannot steal a new gift, and must pick from the remaining presents under the tree. If the last person to pick is left with his/her own gift, then that person can steal and leave the last gift to the person he/she stole from. When all of the presents are gone, everyone opens them at the same time.

Cakes and Ale

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless these cakes, and infuse them with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless these cakes."

The Officiant draws a pentacle above the cakes as he or she says the blessing. Pass the cakes clockwise around the circle. As each person takes a cake, both the participant passing the plate, and the participant receiving the plate place their hands on the plate.

Person passing the plate: "Thou art Goddess, may you eat and never hunger."

Person receiving the plate: "Blessed be."

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless this ale, and infuse it with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless this ale."

The Officiant again draws a pentacle above the chalice as he or she says the blessing. Pass around chalice. As the cup is passed, both the participant passing and the participant receiving place their hands on the chalice.

Person passing ale: "Thou art Goddess, may you drink and never thirst."

Person receiving ale: "Blessed be."

Dismiss Goddess, God, Spirit, and Quarters

IMBOLC

Purification of Self: *Smudge self.*

Purification of Space: *Sweep the area with a broom and smudge.*

Cast the Circle: *Officiant lights a candle. "This is Imbolc, Midwinter. The days wax longer as winter loosens its grip on the world. This is the time of hope and renewal. We have come through the dark into the quickening light."*

Pass light clockwise to the next candle.

"Share the Light."

Next person passes the flame and repeats phrase.

Officiant: "The circle is cast. Gloom of winter be gone."

All: "Gloom of winter be gone."

Set candles on the altar or on the floor.

Invoking the Elements/Calling the Quarters

East: "Hail to thee, Oh Spirits of the East, Guardians of Air. Blow away the dark clouds of winter. Usher in the warmth of the changing season with your sweet breath. Whisper gently to herald the light. Be with us to celebrate the light. Spirits of the East, Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

South: "Hail to thee, Oh Spirits of the South, Guardians of Fire. Melt away the ice and snow. Warm our hearts and allow the spring passion to unfurl. Be with us to celebrate the light. Spirits of the South, Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Light candle.

West: "Hail to thee, Oh Spirits of the West, Guardians of Water. Bring your

rejuvenating waters to the land. Protect the womb of the earth. Be with us to celebrate the light. Spirits of the West, Hail and Welcome!”

All: “Hail and Welcome!”

Light candle.

North: “Hail to thee of Spirits of the North, Guardians of Earth. Beneath the frozen snow in your bosom waits the warmth of spring. How we long to see the bright flowers and animals that have laid dormant over the winter months. Be with us to celebrate the light. Spirits of the North, Hail and Welcome!”

All: “Hail and Welcome!”

Light candle.

Spirit: “Hail to thee, Oh Great Spirit. Shine your beacon and lead us out of the darkness of winter. Open our minds and show us the connection we have to the earth. Be with us to celebrate the light. Great Spirit, Hail and Welcome!”

All: “Hail and Welcome!”

Light candle.

God: “Infant Lord, son of the great mother, you bring the growing light and the hope of spring. Part the darkness with your renewed spirit. Be with us to celebrate the light. Infant Lord, Hail and Welcome!”

All: “Hail and Welcome!”

Light candle.

Goddess: “Great Lady Brigid, goddess of healing waters and crossroads, dispel the gloom of winter with your shining love. Be with us to celebrate the light. Lady Brigid, Hail and Welcome!”

All: “Hail and Welcome!”

Light candle.

Ritual Observance: “Imbolc is halfway between Winter Solstice and Spring Equinox. The time of the quickening is at hand. We can see the days grow longer as the infant Lord increases in strength. The time of the quickening occurs at the crossroads of the year. No one knows what twists and turns lie ahead in the year that has just begun to unfold. As goddess of the crossroads, Brigid will help guide your path. Brigid’s cross symbolically unites the four directions or elements with the otherworld. As the goddess of the crossroads, she is said to be able to see where someone has come from, as well as where each road might take them. Because of this, Imbolc is a time for divination, a time to discern, or perhaps, choose our path for the year ahead.”

Light fire or candle in cauldron. Write down one goal for the year.

Officiant: "As we embrace the new year, it is time to begin to move forward. As each goal burns in the cauldron, let the smoke take it up to the sky and it be written in the heavens above. So mote it be!"

All: "So mote it be!"

Put goals in the cauldron.

Divination: *Tarot cards.*

Cakes and Ale:

Officiant: *With wand over cakes.* "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless these cakes, and infuse them with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless these cakes."

Passes cakes around circle. "Thou art Goddess. May you eat and never hunger."

Repeat with ale. "Thou art Goddess. May you drink and never thirst."

Close the Circle: *Work backwards.*

Goddess: "Oh, Lady Brigid, thank you for celebrating the light with us tonight. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

God: "Oh, Great Horned One, thank you for celebrating the light with us tonight. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

Spirit: "Great Spirit, thank you for celebrating the light with us tonight. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

North: "Elementals of the North, Powers of Earth, thank you for celebrating the light with us tonight. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

West: "Elementals of the West, Powers of Water, thank you for celebrating the light with us tonight. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

South: "Elementals of the South, Powers of Fire, thank you for celebrating the light with us tonight. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

East: "Elementals of the East, Powers of Air, thank you for celebrating the light with us tonight. Go if you must. Stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish candle.

OSTARA

Before the ritual, collect fresh flowers, leaves, and fruit to put on the main altar.

Smudge

Cast a Circle

The Officiant consecrates the salt and blesses the water, cleansing it of negative energies and purifying it with positive ones. He or she lights incense. Once that task is completed, the Officiant walks around the circle and draws the boundary between worlds. Helpers may take the salt, water, and incense around the circle.

Officiant: "The circle is cast. We are between the worlds."

Call Quarters

East: "Elementals of the East

Powers of Air

We feel your winds of change

They bring the first swirlings of spring to our feet

The hours of sunlight become greater

As the days pass by

Protect us and guide us

Throughout the many adventures we will share

Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

South: "Elementals of the South

Powers of Fire

The heat of desire speeds up

As the year deepens and intensifies

The days grow warmer the longer they become

We long to frolic in the abundance of the spring

To dance among the vibrant flowers

And to feel the fever of the water splash at our feet

Protect us and guide us

As the passion of the earth around us unfolds

Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

West: "Elementals of the West
Powers of Water
We welcome the return of the sun
And bright reflections of things to come
As the season livens, may you keep us cool
Not only our bodies, but our minds and hearts as well
Protect us and guide us
As we sail away to our commandeer our dreams
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

North: "Elementals of the North
Powers of Earth
Within you lies the fertility and abundance of our future
The blossoming of flowers soon to be seen
Bring promises of happiness and stability
Rapidly the fruits of your labor will be lavish
And we can romp with all of the other creatures
That have left their winter houses
In search of the sun
Protect us and guide us
As we long to explore the secrets of the earth
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Spirit: "Oh, Great Spirit
Invisible Protector
We feel the pulse of the earth picking up
You beat the drum to which all living things dance
Quicken our hearts and our minds
As we unthaw from our winter slumbers
Protect us and guide us
As we tap our toes to the music
Wise One, Hail and Welcome! "

God: "Horned One of the Forest
Great God in the fields
Everyday that the light grows
You become stronger
We see the evidence of your return
And bask in the sunlight that you bring with you
Today marks the end of winter
Protect us and guide us
As the cycle continues we prepare for the next harvest
Oh, Horned One, Hail and Welcome!"

Goddess: "Lady of the Water
Goddess of the earth
As you begin to walk with the God

The rest of our world is awakened
Winter ends, spring begins
The seasons turn evermore
Protect us and guide us
As we long to walk in your footsteps
Great Mother, Hail and Welcome!"

Sabbat Observation

Reader: "Ostara marks the first day of spring and the end of winter. Day and night are equal. The trees will begin to wake from their winter slumber. Leaves will return and flowers will bloom. The snow melts and the rain washes away winter gloom. Those who slept away the cold days in hibernation will rise and uncover a world of new possibilities. The Greek goddess Persephone has resurfaced from the Underworld. Her mother, the Earth Goddess Demeter, rejoices in her return and the world explodes with life. However, we live in a world of dualities, and as our part of the world returns to life, the southern part of the world dives into winter. So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be."

Cakes and Ale

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless these cakes, and infuse them with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless these cakes."

The Officiant draws a pentacle above the cakes as he or she says the blessing. Pass the cakes clockwise around the circle. As each person takes a cake, both the participant passing the plate and the participant receiving the plate place their hands on the plate.

Person passing the plate: "Thou art Goddess, may you eat and never hunger."

Person receiving the plate: "Blessed be."

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless this ale, and infuse it with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless this ale."

The Officiant again draws a pentacle above the chalice as he or she says the blessing. Pass around chalice. As the cup is passed, both the participant passing and the participant receiving place their hands on the chalice.

Person passing ale: "Thou art Goddess, may you drink and never thirst."

Person receiving ale: "Blessed be."

Release Circle

To dismiss the circle, sing the following song three times:

"We all come from the Goddess
And to her we shall return
Like a drop of rain
Flowing to the ocean."

BELTANE

A May Pole will be needed for this ritual. It can be created by crafting or finding a tall, slender pole. Attach many pieces of ribbon to the top of the pole. Each piece of ribbon should almost be able to touch the ground when left hanging. The pole needs to be standing up straight by being secured or burying in the ground.

Collect fresh flowers or other items from nature to be incorporated into the altar. Casting the circle calls for a bowl of fresh rose petals. This sabbat is best celebrated outdoors.

Cleanse Sacred Space: *By using a broom and/or sage*

Cast the Circle

Consecrate the Water: *Place wand/finger in water.* "I consecrate this water so that it may be fit to dwell within the sacred circle. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, I cleanse this water."

Bless the Salt: *Place wand/finger in salt.* "I bless this salt so that it may be fit to dwell within the sacred circle. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, I bless this salt."

Bless Incense: *Place hands over incense.* "I bless this incense so that it may be fit to dwell within the sacred circle. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the father God, I bless this incense."

Cleanse Rose Petals: *Waft them with incense.* "These rose petals represent the never-ending connection between the God and the Goddess. Today we cast our circle with a usually invisible marker. Love. So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be."

One by one, sprinkle the water, salt, incense, and rose petals around the circle.

Officiant: "The circle is cast."

Invoking the God and Goddess

God and Goddess: "Fertile Lady and Maturing Lord, we call to you on this day, because we celebrate your sacred union once again."

"By the powers of Air,

Light the candle on the east altar.

"Fire,

Light the candle of the south altar.

"Water,

Light the candle on the west altar.

"Earth,

Light the candle on the north altar.

"And Spirit,

Light the spirit candle.

"We call you to come to the circle and dance the spiral dance with us. Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Light the God and Goddess candles.

Sabbat Observation:

Officiant: "Beltane, also known as May Day, is the celebration of the abundance of the earth. By now, all of the land has thawed and all of the animals and plants are active in reproduction. In our divine story, the Sun-child that was born at Yule has grown into a young man. He desires the beautiful earth Goddess, who tonight will become pregnant with his child.

"In the past, Beltane was celebrated by lighting large bonfires at dusk and keeping them burning through the night, only letting them extinguish at dawn. Girls of age would run into the tall grass and hide during the night, awaiting the boys to union with them. In some traditions today, a May King and Queen are still crowned to represent the divine union between the God and Goddess.

"Dancing around the May Pole represents the spiral dance of the God and the Goddess. The Pole is the God and the ribbons are the Goddess. As we weave them together, we reenact the sacred union and symbolize the act of sex."

The May Pole stands up straight. Each person takes at least one ribbon. Participants either walk or dance around the pole, weaving in and out of each other until the ribbon is completely woven around the pole. To raise energy, the group can play music, drum, sing, or chant. The finished pole can be kept or burned in a fire.

Cakes and Ale

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless these cakes, and infuse them with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless these cakes."

The Officiant draws a pentacle above the cakes as he or she says the blessing. Pass the cakes clockwise around the circle. As each person takes a cake, both the participant passing the plate and the participant receiving the plate place their hands on the plate.

Person passing the plate: "Thou art Goddess, may you eat and never hunger."

Person receiving the plate: "Blessed be."

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless this ale, and infuse it with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless this ale."

The Officiant again draws a pentacle above the chalice as he or she says the blessing. Pass around the chalice. As the cup is passed, both the participant passing and the participant receiving place their hands on the chalice.

Person passing ale: "Thou art Goddess, may you drink and never thirst."

Person receiving ale: "Blessed be."

Dismiss Circle

God and Goddess: "Dearest Goddess and Horned God, thank you for your presence during our celebration. Though we close the circle, our hearts go on rejoicing. Stay if you will, go if you must. Know that you are always welcome. Hail and farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

Extinguish all of the candles.

Officiant: "The circle is open, but unbroken."

All: "Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!"

MIDSUMMER

The spell for this ritual is an herb packet. Choose three or four herbs and bundle them in small pieces of fabric. Tie them closed with ribbon. These can either be made prior to or during the ritual.

Cast Circle – With wand, use visualization to draw the outer boundary of the circle.

Bless Salt, Water, and Incense – (Place wand over each and say) "Oh, Green Earth Mother, I do ask Great One of the Stars, Spinner of Fates, bless these (salt/water/incense). Dear Goddess, we honor you."

Quarter Calls – Caller raises hand in summoning position, facing the appropriate direction.

East: "Spirits of the East,
Elementals of Air,
Hawks and Faeries,
And bringers of Knowledge,
We ask you to join our Circle
As we celebrate Midsummer.
Grant us the Wisdom we need
To change our lives for the better.
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

South: "Spirits of the South,
Elementals of Fire,
Dragons and Salamanders,
And bringers of Passion,
We ask you to join our Circle
As we celebrate Midsummer.
Grant us the Will we need
To change our lives for the better.
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

West: "Spirits of the West,
Elementals of Water,

Dolphins and Mermaids,
And bringers of Emotion,
We ask you to join our Circle
As we celebrate Midsummer.
Grant us the Love we need
To change our lives for the better.
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

North: "Spirits of the North,
Elementals of Earth,
Wolves and Gnomes,
And bringers of Strength,
We ask you to join our Circle
As we celebrate Midsummer.
Grant us the Stability we need
To change our lives for the better.
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Spirit: "Hail Ancient and Mighty Ones!
Hail, Spirit!
We call to you,
Our Guardians,
Our Spirit Guides,
Our Family and Ancestors,
We call to you, bringers of Light,
We ask you to join our Circle
As we celebrate Midsummer.
Grant us the Grace we need
To change our lives for the better.
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

God: "Father of Life, Horned One, Green One, Seed Sower. We call to you! You who are the comforter, the consoler, who steadies us to face our fears, who challenges us to overcome obstacles, we call to you! Protector of the young, Initiator, you who guides our boys to manhood, we call you and welcome you to our circle tonight! Father of Life, you whose voice is the rumble of thunder and the shifting earth beneath our feet, you bring change to our lives.

"Great One, we give thanks for the power of slow and lasting change that is your blessing. Seed Sower, you who rise with the grain in the spring, we thank you for sustaining our bodies and feeding our souls. May your blessings take root and grow to abundance in our lives. Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Goddess: "Mother of All, hear our words this night for your protection and blessing. You who hold the seed in warmth and darkness till it knows to seek the sunlight. You whose winds carry the rain across the vast, arching sky, spilling it down to thirsty soil. You in whose arms we rest at the end of the day, in comfort and peace. We call you.

"We know that what happens to the smallest of us also affects the largest. Let us cherish our brethren plants and animals, for their home is our home. With your blessing, may we all grow in our capacity to love unconditionally and to nurture where there is need. Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

Sabbat Observation

Officiant: "The Summer Solstice is also known as Litha or Midsummer. It is the longest day of the year. This Sabbat marks the height of the year's waxing half. On this longest day, the Midsummer reminds us that nothing lasts forever. It is a time of letting go and making room for change and growth. The Goddess of Midsummer is the generous mother of abundance, giving life and fruitfulness to all of her children. The God is the Sun God, the ancient power of life, born at the Winter Solstice and has grown into his peak of maturity and now begins his decline."

Spell Work: Herb Packet

Each person holds his/her packet and infuses it with love, good thoughts, hopes, and dreams. When finished, toss them into the fire. The smoke will carry the wishes up to the heavens. If space for a fire is not available, bury them. As they decompose, the energy will be carried through the earth.

Cakes and Ale

Officiant: (places his or her wand over the cakes) "Oh, Powerful God of the Harvest, bless these cakes so that they may be infused with your love."

(Then places his or her wand over the ale) "Oh, Great Mother Goddess, bless this ale so that it may be infused with your love."

Pass the cakes and ale around the circle.

Dismissal/Grounding

Singing/chanting:

"By the earth that is Her body
By the air that is Her breath
By the fire that is Her bright spirit
By the living water of Her womb
May the peace of the Goddess
Be forever in your heart
The Circle is open but unbroken
Merry Meet and Merry Part."

LUGHNASSADH

Cleanse Space: *Waft sage.*

Cast Circle

Officiant: "We are here to celebrate Lughnassadh, the first harvest. It is now that the God's strength begins to decrease, and we receive the bounty of the earth that has been nurtured by the Sun throughout the summer months."

The Officiant walks along the circle with a wand/athame, drawing the boundary of the circle with his or her mind.

Calling the Quarters

EAST: "Hail to thee, Guardians of the East!
Ancient Ones of Air!
Enrich our circle with the power of the winds.
Fill us with knowledge and inspiration.
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

SOUTH: "Hail to thee, Guardians of the South!
Ancient Ones of Fire!
Enrich our circle with the strength and warmth of flame.
Allow protection and healing to burn bright.
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

WEST: "Hail to thee, Guardians of the West!
Ancient Ones of Water!
Enrich our circle with the power of the tides.
Cleanse us with courage and love.
Hail and Welcome!"

All: "Hail and Welcome!"

NORTH: "Hail to thee, Guardians, of the North!
Ancient Ones of Earth!
Enrich our circle with the strength of rock and stone.
Bring us abundance and growth.

Hail and Welcome!”

All: “Hail and Welcome!”

SPIRIT: “Oh, Great Spirit! Soul protectors and spirit guides, join our circle tonight and fill us with your wisdom. Bring us the knowledge of those who have walked their paths before us to celebrate this sacred time of year. Hail and Welcome!”

All: “Hail and Welcome!”

GOD: “We honor thee, Father God, Lugh, Lord of the Grain. Join our circle as the nights become long and the air becomes cool. As your strength declines, we look forward to your gracious return, and give thanks for your continued guidance. Hail and Welcome!”

All: “Hail and Welcome!”

GODDESS: “We honor thee Mother Goddess, Demeter, Lady of the Harvest. Join us in celebration, and bring your loving guidance with your great presence. Hail and Welcome!”

All: “Hail and Welcome!”

Ritual Observance

Officiant: “Lughnassadh, also known as Lammas, is the celebration of the first harvest. In earlier times, a good harvest meant survival in the winter months, and a bad one could very possibly mean not surviving. We are here to give thanks and to celebrate the abundance given by the God and the Goddess. It is at this time we, with the Goddess, mourn the impending death of the God as his power declines. The Sun has nurtured the earth and brought us fruit, grains, and nourishment.”

Ritual Work: *Any spells or tools consecration should be done at this time.*

Cakes and Ale

Officiant: “Lord of the Grain, bless this bread, a product of your love, so that we may eat and remember of your presence all year long.”

All: “So mote it be.”

Pass the cakes clockwise around the circle.

“Lady of the Harvest, infuse this ale with your love, so that we may feel your nurturing touch each day. So mote it be.”

All: “So mote it be.”

Pass the ale clockwise around the circle.

Dismissals

GODDESS: "We thank thee, Lady Demeter, Goddess of the Harvest. Your bounty is rejoiced and enjoyed. Your presence is always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

GOD: Lugh, God of Light, we will remember you during your time of rest, after your gift of grain, this harvest. Your presence is always welcome. Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

SPIRIT: "Great Spirit! We thank you for your knowledge and light! Go if you must, stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome! Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

NORTH: "Ancient Ones of Earth, we thank thee. Go if you must, stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome! Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

WEST: "Ancient Ones of Water, we thank thee. Go if you must, stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome! Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

SOUTH: "Ancient Ones of Fire, we thank thee. Go if you must, stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome! Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

EAST: "Ancient Ones of Air, we thank thee. Go if you must, stay if you will. Know that you are always welcome! Hail and Farewell!"

All: "Hail and Farewell!"

MABON

Use pomegranate juice as the ale. Gather fall leaves to decorate the altars.

Cleanse Space

Cast Circle

Call Quarters

Invoke Spirit, God and Goddess

Sabbat Observance

Officiant: "We stand on the Wheel of Life knowing that the journey only begins when we take our first step. We rejoice in the fall, because we will stay warm in the care of the Earth Mother throughout the changing season."

East: "The days grow shorter and we feel the cold upon us. Winter is near. So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be!"

South: "I am Hades, Lord of the Underworld.
I have claimed Persephone for my bride.
She will come with me to my palace below,
And stay with me forevermore."

West: "I am Persephone, daughter of Demeter.
Captured I may be, but I will not stay for eternity.
Someone will rescue me."

North: "I am Demeter, the Earth Mother.
I have been so sickened with grief, that I have left the world unattended.
The crops and cattle are dying. All life looks as bare as I feel inside."

East: "Fear not. New fruits are born from new seeds carried on a winter wind.
So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be!"

North: "The wrath of the Gods will be upon Hades if my daughter is not returned!"

West: "I will be safe, but I fear that I have eaten the seeds of a pomegranate in my state of hunger."

South: "So Persephone will return to the earth, but for half of the year, she will remain with me."

North: "And each time my daughter descends into the Underworld, I grow sorrowful. The land which I tend reflects the pain I feel. When she returns, my joy shows in the abundance of the land."

East: "So become the seasons. In the fall, Persephone joins Hades and Demeter makes the world bare for the winter. In the spring, she returns to her mother, and the earth flourishes. So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be!"

Cakes and Ale

Dismiss Quarters and Circle

WICCANING

Wiccaning refers to a ritual performed to formally name a child. Although most rituals are done in the privacy of the coven, this rite of passage calls for the invitation of family, friends, and others who would be looking over the education and safety of the child. Guests can bring small gifts, including magickal items and books that can be later used by the child.

Cleanse Space

Cast Circle

Call Quarters

Officiant: "Dearest friends and family, we ask the God and the Goddess to bless this child, (Name), son/daughter of (Parent's Names)."

Anoint the child with salt water.

"By the powers of earth and water, you are blessed."

Parents, child, and the Officiant approach the East altar.

"Guardians of the Element of Air: we present to you (Name), a child of the Goddess. Give him/her the necessary knowledge to thrive on the wild forest path."

Approach the South altar.

"Guardians of the Element of Fire: we present to you (Name), a child of the Goddess. Give him/her the ambition to pursue his/her wildest dreams."

Approach the West altar.

"Guardians of the Element of Water: we present to you (Name), a child of the Goddess. Teach him/her to love his or herself and the world."

Approach the North altar.

"Guardians of the Element of Earth: we present to you (Name), a child of the Goddess. Give him/her the stability to flourish like the most fertile of flowers."

Return to the main altar.

"(Name) was born a child of the Goddess. With his/her name comes the promise that we will take care of him/her and provide what is needed. Will you promise to provide (Parents' Names) with the love and support that they need?"

All: "We do."

"There are many paths to choose from. Though your chosen path is Wicca, it is not the Wiccan way to determine that path for another. (Parents' Names), you must let (Name) grow and flourish and explore any path without fear of losing your blessing. So mote it be."

Parents: "So mote it be."

Goddess Parents

Officiant: "Will the Goddess Parents please step forward."

"You are responsible for making sure that (Name) learns about his or her roots as a Wiccan. Also, if he/she should come to you, seeking to know more about other paths, it is in your charge to provide enough information so that he/she can make an informed decision. Do you accept the responsibility to provide all of the love and care needed for (Name) to be successful on this path?"

Goddess Parents: "We do."

Officiant: "By the powers of air, fire, water, and earth, let (Name) grow up with all of the love that was brought here today. So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be."

Dismissal of Circle

DEDICATION

Cleanse Space: *Sweep area with a broom.*

Cast Circle

Call Quarters

East: "Close your eyes. See the sun rising in the early morning. The bright yellow and orange rays warm you. Feel the breeze brushing against you. Whispering. Calling to you. Call to it. Ask the wind to join us. Envision the energy of the winds and the sun pouring into the circle. Contain it. Pull it in and hold it. Spirits of the East, Hail and Welcome!"

South: "Once again, close your eyes. The fire is burning bright. Feel the flames licking at you. It's pulling at you, calling you to dance. The drum beats as your feet move. Listen to the pulse. The beating of your heart. Envision the energy flowing to the circle with each beat. Pull it in. Hold it. Spirits of the South, Hail and Welcome!"

West: "With your eyes closed, envision the quiet waters of the lake. You are at peace. The liquid is cool and calm around you. It is flowing downstream. The current runs faster and faster. The magnetism of the water pulls at you. You ask it to join our circle. The water turns into flowing energy. You pull it into the circle and hold it. Keep it. Spirits of the West, Hail and Welcome!"

North: "Eyes closed, you are standing on the rich soil. You are a tree and your legs are the roots. You are reaching deeper and deeper into the earth. Growing, changing, strong. The soil feeds you. Pull the nourishment up into the circle. Ask it to join us. Draw it in and keep it. Spirits of the North, Hail and Welcome!"

Spirit: "The sky is black and you can see every star in the sky. They shine and sparkle with overwhelming power. Everything and everyone is connected by the divine cosmic energies of the universe. Imagine these energies are a visible white sheet. You are a part of this tangible plane. It is the glitter and the glue. It is the stars and the earth. The sun and the moon. Call out to it. Pull it in. Oh, Great Spirit, Hail and Welcome!"

God: "FOR LADIES: Visualize your lover. You and he are in the forest. The trees are your shelter. He is the Horned God. He calls out to you. You answer the call and ask him to join us. FOR MEN: Visualize your lover. You are walking through the forest with the Goddess. You smell her earthy scent, and try to keep from sweeping her up in your arms. You can hold back no more, and call

out to the Horned God to guide you. FOR ALL: Oh, Great One, Hail and Welcome!"

Goddess: "FOR LADIES: You and the Horned God are dancing, spiraling in the heavens. FOR MEN: You are twirling in the sky with the Great Goddess. FOR ALL: The Dance is the Spiral of the universe, the Spiral of the Moon and Sun. As you dance, you become one. You are one with the Goddess and one with the God. Oh, Great Mother, Hail and Welcome!"

Charge of the Goddess

"Listen to the words of the Great Mother, She who was of old also called among mortals Artemis, Astarte, Athene, Dione, Melusine, Aphrodite, Kali Ma, Cerridwen, Isis, Arianrhod, Brigid, and by many other names:

"Whenever you have need of anything, once in the month, and better it be when the Moon is full, then shall ye assemble in some secret place and call upon the spirit of me who is Queen of all the Witches. There shall ye assemble, ye who are fain to learn all sorcery yet have not won its deepest secrets; to these I will teach things that are as yet unknown. And ye shall be free from slavery, and as a token that ye be truly free, ye shall be naked in your rites. Dance, sing, feast, make music and love, all in My praise. For Mine is the ecstasy of the spirit and Mine is also joy on earth. My law is love unto all beings.

"Keep pure your highest ideals; strive ever toward them, let naught turn you aside, for Mine is the secret door which opens upon the door of youth. And Mine is the cup of the Wine of Life and Cauldron of Cerridwen, which is the Holy Grail of immortality. I am the gracious Goddess, who gives the gift of joy unto the hearts of men and women. Upon Earth I give knowledge of the spirit eternal and beyond death I give peace, freedom, and reunion with those who have gone before. Nor do I demand sacrifice, for behold, I am the Mother of all things, and My love is poured out upon the Earth.

"Hear ye the words of the Star Goddess, She in the dust of whose feet are the hosts of heaven, whose body encircles the universe:

"I am the beauty of the green Earth and the white Moon among the stars and the mysteries of the waters. I call unto thy soul, arise and come unto Me, for I am the soul of nature who gives life to the universe. From Me all things proceed and to Me all must return. And before My face, beloved of gods and humans, let thine innermost divine self be enfolded in the rapture of the Infinite.

"Let my worship be within the heart that rejoices, for all acts of love and pleasure are My rituals. Therefore let there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, honor and humility, mirth and reverence within you. And thou who thinkest to seek Me, know that seeking and yearning shall avail thee not, unless thou knowest the Mystery: if that which thou seekest, thou findest not within thee, thou shalt never find it without. For, behold, I have been with thee from the beginning, and I am that which is attained at the end of desire."

Dedication

Officiant: "What is your intention?"

Dedicant: "I am here to dedicate myself to study with the Goddess. I understand that to each is his or her own path and I seek to embrace my own."

Officiant: "Blessed be, Sister/Brother."

Cakes and Ale

Officiant: *(Blesses the cakes by placing the wand over the cakes and says)* "Oh, Powerful God of the Harvest, bless these cakes so that they may be infused with your love."

(Officiant blesses the ale by placing the wand over the ale and saying) "Oh, Great Mother Goddess, bless this ale so that it may be infused with your love."

Release Goddess, God, Spirit, Elements

INITIATION

The Initiate candidate should not be permitted to see any part of the ritual prior to initiation. Also, you may or may not choose to share this rite of passage with other Initiates, for each experience is a personal one. He or she should be given the following information:

It is traditional to fast 1-3 days prior to initiation, if possible to do so safely. The Initiate should take a ritual bath prior to the ritual and spend 1-2 hours in solitude, meditation (wearing comfortable clothing). The Initiate candidate is not permitted to know how much time is passed. A glass for water is recommended. From time to time, another ritual participant should check on him or her and refill the water glass.

Cleanse Sacred Space

Set Up Altar

Cast Circle

Call Quarters

Officiant: "Please bring in the Initiate candidate."

The Officiant cuts a door in the circle. The Initiate candidate is blindfolded and helped to the outer edge of the circle.

The Officiant approaches the Initiate candidate with an athame raised.

Officiant: "How do you enter the circle?"

Initiate candidate: "In perfect love and perfect trust."

Officiant: "Welcome sister/brother. You may enter."

The Initiate candidate is anointed. The Officiant helps the initiate candidate to the main altar and closes the door.

"(Initiate candidate), you have come to the circle in order to express your desire to walk the path of the Goddess. If this is your wish, please say so at this time."

Initiate candidate: "It is my wish."

Officiant: "Very well." *He or she leads the initiate candidate to the East altar.*

East: "Halt. Who seeks to walk this path?"

Initiate candidate: "It is I, (*Initiate candidate*)."

East places a hand on the Initiate candidate's head.

East: "By the Powers of Air, I grant you safe passage. Blessed be."

The Officiant leads the initiate candidate to the South altar.

South: "Halt. Who seeks to walk this path?"

Initiate candidate: "It is I, (*Initiate candidate*)."

South places a hand on the Initiate candidate's heart.

South: "By the Powers of Fire, I grant you safe passage. Blessed be."

The Officiant leads the initiate candidate to the West altar.

West: "Halt. Who seeks to walk this path?"

Initiate candidate: "It is I, (*Initiate candidate*)."

West places a hand on the Initiate candidate's womb/stomach.

West: "By the Powers of Water, I grant you safe passage. Blessed be."

The Officiant leads the initiate candidate to the North altar.

North: "Halt. Who seeks to walk this path?"

Initiate candidate: "It is I, (*Initiate candidate*)."

North takes the Initiate candidate's hand.

North: "By the Powers of earth, I grant you safe passage. Blessed be."

The Officiant leads the Initiate candidate back to the main altar. He or she then removes the blindfold.

Officiant: "(*Initiate candidate*), you have faced the challenges set before you. By air, fire, water, and earth, I welcome you to our circle. So mote it be."

All: "So mote it be."

Cakes and Ale

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless these cakes, and infuse

them with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless these cakes."

The Officiant draws a pentacle above the cakes as he or she says the blessing. Pass around cakes. As each person takes a cake, both of the participant passing the plate, and the participant receiving the plate place their hands on the plate.

Person passing the plate: "Thou art Goddess, may you eat and never hunger."

Person receiving the plate: "Blessed be."

Officiant: "Mother Goddess and Father God, bless this ale, and infuse it with your love. In the name of the Mother Goddess and the Father God, bless this ale."

The Officiant again draws a pentacle above the chalice as he or she says the blessing. Pass around chalice. As the cup is passed, both of the participant passing and the participant receiving place their hands on the chalice.

Person passing ale: "Thou art Goddess, may you drink and never thirst."

Person receiving ale: "Blessed be."

Dismissal of Quarters and Closing of Circle

HANDBASTING

Clearing of Sacred Space

Casting of the Circle: *The bride, groom⁶, and handfasting party cast the circle prior to the guests arriving.*

Guests Arrive

The handfasting party proceeds to the circle.

Officiant: "We are here today on this glorious day to witness the joining of (*groom*) and (*bride*). Marriage⁷ is not only a joining of two physical beings, but it is the union of two spirits, and the merger of two families.

Two are caring as they are sharing life's hopes and fears. The music of laughter outweighs sadness and tears. Marriage is togetherness. Both derive pleasure from the mere presence of each other, yet when parted no jealousies restrict, worry or smother. Marriage is freedom. Achievements mean more when they benefit two and consideration is shown with each point of view. Marriage is respect. And if togetherness, freedom, and respect are combined with a joy that words can never fully define, then marriage is love.

This is a special time of the year. It is the time of the Summer Solstice, the beginning of summer, and the longest day of the year. From the solstice on, the amount of daylight each day begins to shorten. It is the midpoint of the year, the time we begin looking on to winter. At the end of summer, the we begin the harvest in preparation for enduring the long winter months."

Binding

"We have come to this sacred circle to join these two people though the summers and the winters, in peace and in love.

Please hold left hands and right hands. (*The result is a figure 8.*)

(*Bride*), I have not the right to bind you (*groom*). Only you have this right. If it is your wish, say so at this time."

⁶ This bride/groom ceremony can be adapted for bride/bride and groom/groom pairs.

⁷ A "marriage" refers to the legal union between two people. Not all handfastings are legal unions.

Bride: "It is my wish."

Officiant: "(Groom), I have not the right to bind you to (Bride). Only you have this right. If it is your wish, say so at this time."

Groom: "It is my wish."

Officiant: "And so I tie this cord representing (groom) and (bride)'s desire to be bound together. There are three knots in the cord to represent the three phases of the Goddess: Maiden, Mother, and Crone. Please light the Candle of Unity."

Together, the bride and groom light a single white candle.

"All things turn in circles. The earth spins in a circle and turns around the sun and the sun turns around the galaxy. Time turns in circles of birth and death and rebirth yet again, and the planets also spin in this way. And, like all things, relationships move in cycles as well. Sometimes the fires will burn brightly and sometimes they will die down to coals and then spring up again into bright flames. Sometimes love is warm as the spring, and sometimes it becomes winter cold with troubles and disruption. By taking on the symbol of the circle, you make a promise to remember always that all things come around; to keep faith in spring while enduring winter, to never lose hope that the ashes will flame again, and that your love will be renewed.

"(Bride), if you would recite your vows."

The bride recites prewritten vows, and places the ring on the groom's finger.

Then, the groom recites his prewritten vows and places the ring on the bride's finger.

Officiant: "(Bride) and (groom) will now take part in the simple feast for the first time as one and share the nourishment of Mother Earth. We celebrate the simple feast as a way to feel the connection to the earth, as well as to be grateful for all of the abundance and prosperity that we are so blessed to experience."

Officiant blesses the cakes and wine, then hands the cakes to bride and groom. They place both of their hands on the plate.

Officiant: "You are both of the earth. May you eat and never hunger."

They hand the plate to the Officiant who hands the bride and groom each their chalice. They interlock arms.

Officiant: "You are both of the moon. May you drink and never thirst."

They both take a drink out of their chalices and hand them back to the Officiant.

Officiant: "In ancient times, the broom was a symbol of fertility as well as a household object. Gathered from sacred plants, it was the first thing brought into the home of a newlywed couple after bread and salt, which represented comfort and wealth. Both ancient European traditions and African traditions had newlyweds jump over the broom for luck, fortune, and fertility of family and lands. If two people from the circle would take hold of the broom."

Two people from the circle pick up the broom, holding it at each end, about 2 feet above the ground.

"Live joyfully in this world and take your happiness from each other. For you are each other's gift from the gods, and the beauty and intensity of your affections will be the gift you give back to them. Love as the earth loves the moon. As the sea loves the dance of the dolphins. As the fire loves to leap free."

Bride and Groom jump over the broom and commence exiting.

"Would you please help me in welcoming Mr. and Mrs. (Bride and Groom)."
Officiant claps as a signal that everyone should clap.

HANDPARTING

If the couple has the original binding cords used in a handfasting, bring them to the ceremony. If they are not available, use another symbol of the marriage that both parties are willing to burn. The main altar cloth is blue, to represent healing. A cauldron or a small fire is needed.

Cleanse Space

Cast Circle

Call Quarters

East: "Spirits of the East, bring forth the winds of change. Open our hearts, so that we may air out old negativity. Guardians of Air, Hail and Welcome!"

South: "Spirits of the South, use your light to show us the way in the dark. Warm our hearts and take the chill away. Guardians of Fire, Hail and Welcome!"

West: "Spirits of the West, cleanse our thoughts. Wash away the debris that is blocking the road. Guardians of Water, Hail and Welcome!"

North: "Spirits of the North, keep us stable on rocky ground. Keep us strong as the winds of change may be quick. Guardians of Earth, Hail and Welcome!"

Ceremony

Officiant: "You have been joined for however long love should last. Has the unity brought by love been lost?"

Both: "Yes."

Officiant: "I cut these cords to symbolize the bond has been broken and the two of you wish to be freed of your commitment to each other."

The Officiant cuts the binding cords. Burn them in the cauldron or fire.

"The end of a handfasting is often the beginning of new lives for both partners. Even destructive forces, such as hurricanes, tornadoes, and fires bring in a time of renewal and rebuilding. May you both say your goodbyes and welcome the dawn of a new day."

Dismiss the Circle

PASSING

~Use black cloth to cover any altars used.

~All of the participants should also dress in black.

~Set up a small fire in the center of the circle, or use a fireplace if indoors.

~Articles that belonged to the person who has passed are collected, such as magickal tools, a book of shadows, magickal journal, or other items that can be burned. That is, what materials are not distributed throughout the circle are burned. If items are not distributed, and or not burned, then they can be donated.

~Each person should write something to say during the ritual. This can be a recollection of a memory that he or she has about the deceased, a general poem describing death, or something that he or she wants to say to the deceased. If someone does not want to say aloud what he or she has written, that person can throw it in the fire.

Cleanse, cast the circle, and call quarters in the traditional way of a celebration.

Officiant: "We gather here in this moment to celebrate the life of our loved one who has passed. Death is not a time to mourn and forget. This is a celebration of the life that (Name) lived and to remember our time with him/her. Death is a part of the cycle of life. (Name) could not have lived if other life had not died. From (Name)'s passing, other life will blossom and go on. We live in a universe of dualities. Such is the cycle of life.

"We now take these articles that belong to (Name) and put them in the fire. May they return to you, brother/sister."

Place articles in the fire.

"Each person can now take the time to speak to remember (Name). For those of you who do not want to say your thoughts aloud, you can take a moment and then throw your thoughts into the fire to be carried to the heavens."

Closing the Circle

Officiant: "(Name), you were our friend and brother/sister. Know that wherever your path takes you, we love you. We keep you in our hearts and minds."

Dismiss the Circle

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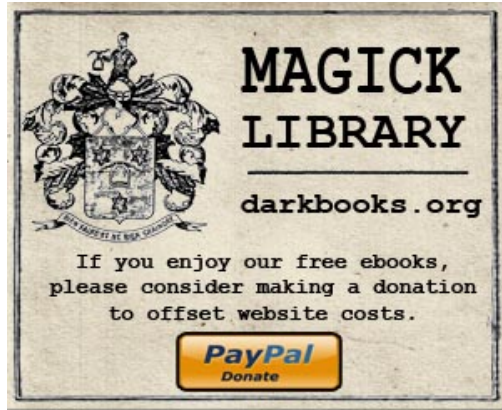
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Iris Firemoon has been involved with metaphysical studies since 1998. She is a transient being that moves from time to time, exploring the realms of the human mind. Along with the Coven of the Spiral Moon, she founded The Firefly Academy of Wicca and Witchcraft, an online school for the progressive study of Wicca and Witchcraft.

Tingle, jingle, jangle, pop
I dance until the rhythm stops
I sing until the music wanes
Forever skipping among life's banes
Tingle jingle, jangle, rock
I listen as the clock goes tick and tock
Humming always my joyful tale
Moving along with stormy gale
Tingle, jingle, jangle, ring
It is with my Lady that I sing
She makes the oceans look like jade
And weaves the magick I have made
Tingle, jingle, jangle, pop.



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