

# The Book of Novicia, Chapter Five

## *Magickal Tools: An Overview*

First, this can't be said too often or stressed too much, the only tool you need is you. I suspect that the most powerful living Witch, whoever she or he may be, doesn't use any external tool. Nonetheless, we are compelled by the romance of our cultural images of the Magickally adept. They fascinate us. They inspire us to Magickal fancy and fantasy. You know these well.

There is the aged Sorcerer who works alone in a gray stone tower. He wears the flowing robes of a medieval scholar and talks to a raven who appears interested in the work at hand. There are tables of careless stacks of dusty, leather bound books, scrolls of parchment and a requisite skull paperweight lit by tapered candles.

Next comes the aged Witch who lives alone in a thatched roof cottage deep in the woods where fauna and flora are plentiful. She wears the garb of peasants and cares not for things of vanity. Dried herbs hang from rustic beams in the ceiling. Strange things preserve in dust-covered jars. The iron cauldron at the edge of her hearth gurgles happily with simmering enchantments while she laughs and talks to a cat.

Now, the aged Gypsy fortune teller who works alone in a tent at the edge of the carnival ground. She wears layers of colorful, ethnic clothing and talks to her divining tools with an exotic accent. She has psychic gifts that can't be earned or learned or bought. She can pierce the veil of linear time, settle all questions of pre-destiny, and read your future by cards or leaves or crystal ball.



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Last, the aged Shaman who goes alone into the desert on vision quest (also The Hermit in some cultures). He wears skins, talismans made from beads, amulets made from bone. Because he believes that spirit exists in everything in nature, he talks to rocks and trees and animals as if they are relatives. He transforms fire into sacred smoke and uses it to heal, to communicate with the dead or to see the future.

You may think these images are storybook stereotypes, but they are actually examples of Magickal archetypes. There are a few others, but these are the ones most familiar.

### ***What do these portrayals mean to you?***

For the past four months you have been diligently working at self-discovery. The process of Magickal mastery depends upon the unmasking of your true self. You have to know when you're acting, when you're lying and when you're cheating. Create glamours for work, love, political or social reasons if you wish, but don't believe "your own spin". Real Magick begins and ends with you and you alone. All else is peripheral at best.

Someone once asked me, "What is your greatest strength?" Without hesitation I answered, "My greatest strength is that I know my weaknesses." First, you will not be able to grasp the power of Magick without truly knowing yourself. Second, only an intimate acquaintance with your assets and faults will inform you as to when you should use this power. This Magickal maturity toward which we're working is one of the reasons why we don't accept anyone under the age of twenty-two to the school; because the very least requirement is actually anatomical – that the brain be fully developed and ready to get to work.

What has this to do with Magickal archetypes?

***At some point one of these caricature personas drew your interest.*** You didn't just wake up one day in a vacuum and decide you were interested in the study of Witchcraft. A variety of factors or experiences converged to bring you here. One of these was the idea of the Magician -- whether Sorcerer or Witch or Fortune Teller or Shaman -- one of these ideas grabbed you and didn't let you go.

***Let's look at what these Magicians have in common.***

1.) It is no accident that they are always portrayed as being middle-aged to elderly, well past the time when mating is a distraction. One of the messages here is that great ability requires great learning or experience.

2.) They work alone. I'm not advocating for Solitaires, but it does work for me. When groups are portrayed in our stories as occult characters, they are usually seen as practitioners of Black Arts. This is one reason why I didn't list the Coven as a cultural archetype.

3.) They use tools.

**The Sorcerer** represents scholarly, academic Magicks and original scientific inquiry – masculine energy.

**The Witch** represents sympathetic Magicks, domesticity and the independent woman – feminine energy.

**The Gypsy** represents occult seduction, divination and the supernatural – feminine energy.

**The Shaman** represents the transformative, the primitive and leadership by Magick – masculine energy.

Eclectic Witchcraft is the result of drawing something from each of these disciplines as it appeals to your own personal interest or talents. If you don't know what these are, you should start with what draws your attention. We'll come back to this after we look at categories of Magickal tools.

## Categories of Magickal Tools

- 1.) Reference and Education
- 2.) Ritual
- 3.) Divination
- 4.) Sympathetic (including Protection)
- 5.) Worship



These outlines form a critical foundation because you must know what type of Magick interests you before you can know what tools you may need. If you're going to bake a cake you don't need a colander or an egg poacher. Just so, if you want to communicate with spirits, you don't need a bag of Runes.

**1.) *Tools of Reference and Education*** could be anything from books to courses such as this. Advancing without such tools is quite impossible. Naturally I highly recommend *Seasons of the Witch* as a planning tool.

**2.) *Ritual tools*** are dramatic and showy, *but are often without Magickal value!*

Many people believe there is a mandatory list of altar items that you must collect before you can practice Witchcraft. Nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, the idea is quite silly. The question of whether or not you even have an altar should be, in the end, completely up to you. Fulfillment of a shopping list will not help you learn to call Power or manipulate events.

Here is a list of common items. (Most of the detailed definitions can be found in my *Witch's Dictionary*.) Here is the rule I would like you to use.

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If one of these items speaks to you in the sense that ...

you feel a longing in your solar plexus

you find it difficult to walk away from

your thoughts come back to it again and again as you go about your day

... then you should try to obtain it. Otherwise, consider the acquisition of this information academic and carry on. File it away for some time when your Magickal needs or level of readiness may shift. Your training is supremely flexible. What you want today, you may not need tomorrow. What holds no interest for you today may become a burning desire in a fortnight. Trust your inner guide to tell you what you should have in your collection of tools.

**Never, never, never, never, never buy any tool because someone else said you should have it.** That would be a betrayal of your inner (Supreme) priest/ess and a senseless waste of your resources.

FIRST, let's talk about **ALTARS**.

The question of whether or not you even have an altar should be, in the end, completely up to you. For those of you who are new to Witchcraft, you would have no way of knowing that such a claim would be tantamount to heresy if we were Catholic. Most Witches believe a permanent altar is mandatory. It's not. It's optional. My view on altars is, so far as I know, singular, but it's hard to argue with results.

Personally, I have a lot of different kinds of tools and props. When I cast, I basically construct a new altar every time for that specific purpose. Sometimes it's on the ground. Sometimes it's on a hearth or piece of furniture or in a bathtub. Sometimes I lay a foundation by using a piece of cloth that is chosen to facilitate the particular subject of the spell. I have a large piece of black velvet with patches of sparkles that resemble galaxies

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in space. It has seen me through many protection, reversal, banishing and destruction spells.

*Once I was supposed to help a friend work a table at a community based women's conference. At the last minute we realized we didn't have a table cover. So I grabbed the black velvet out of my Magick chest and took it. People at the conference who had no interest in what we were promoting were drawn to the table, lingered without knowing why and came back again and again. By mid-day my friend, who knows my Magickal bent, turned to me and said, "Okay. What did you do?" I began to protest innocence, but stopped mid-sentence when I realized the cloth, used most often for repelling Magicks, was completely free of all negativity and a thing that is completely free of negativity expresses perfectly positive energy. After that I realized a piece of cloth is as much a tool as anything else you would use in Magick and that anything you use in Magick is a tool.*

Back to the question or subject of altars. The only tool that would ALWAYS be represented on my altar is candle(s). Other than that, I dare say that no two altars I have set up have ever been the same.

There is a methodology behind this reasoning and it is this. Do you remember in Chapter 3 I said that, if you put something on top of your refrigerator, you will be aware of it for a few days and then it will melt into your surroundings and no longer draw your attention? That is exactly why I do not keep a permanent altar.

When I am preparing to cast, part of the preparation is deciding where and what will be included? This will be covered thoroughly in Chapter 8 on the Organization of a Spell.

**There is a level excitement in planning and creating a new "altar" that engages viscerally and boosts the power of the spell.**

It commands and demands my attention and, in that way, is multifold more powerful than could ever be making small changes to a fixture that is part of your everyday environment.



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Tools as related to the ancient elements:

### a.) **ritual wear**

1. garb designed to set a Magickal mood (cloaks, tunics, etc.)
2. clothing of a particular color, style or texture



### b.) **Air**

1. Cutting instruments
  - a. athame – ceremonial double-edged knife, often ornate
  - b. bolline – small, curved knife shaped like a crescent moon
  - c. sword
  - d. your power finger (pointer)
2. musical instruments - bells and chimes
3. pendulums



### c.) **Water**

1. chalice – a goblet or drinking cup, often ornate
2. cauldron – the Magickal receptacle
3. scrying mirrors



### d.) **Fire**

1. candles
2. incense
3. wands and staffs (although the principal element could be changed by materials, markings or intention)



### e.) **Earth**

1. altar tiles or plaques
2. herbs and/or oils (covered in more detail in Chapter 10) - also mortar and pestle
3. crystals and stones
4. besom or Witch's broom (also Air when representing flight)
5. salt – especially rock salt
6. flowers, branches or leaves



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### f.) Symbols

1. Sacred Symbols
  - a. a pentacle or pentagram. The pentagram is the five pointed star. The pentacle is the five pointed star encircled.
  - b. an ankh
  - c. an equal-sided or Maltese cross
  - d. crescent moon
  - e. etc.
2. Mystical Symbols
  - a. tarot cards
  - b. runes
  3. Other representations of people, places or things.



***In Chapter 6 on Elemental Magick and Chapter 7 on Ritual Magick we will discuss in more detail how these tools might be used.***

3.) As you see above, in addition to reading the future, **tools of Divination** can be used as Magickal props and to help you develop your intuitive skills. Here are the most common methods.

- a.) **Tarot and fortune card decks**
- b.) **Runes** – Magickal alphabet, usually on stones, developed by the Teutonic tribes for Asatru (Norse Heathenism)
- c.) **Black, scrying mirrors** (Careful. Reflective surfaces are unpredictable.)





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**d.) Pendulums** – a weight (or bob) attached to a chain or cord

**e.) Crystal ball** – if you could find one, highly doubtful, the cost would be prohibitive and it would probably be a museum piece. The things that are sold as “crystal balls” today are just glass or glass with a tiny percentage of reconstituted quartz. Buy as a decoration, but not for use as a divinatory tool.



### 4.) Tools of Sympathetic and Protection Magick.

- a.) herbs and/or oils
- b.) talismans – object charged with attraction Magick
- c.) amulet – object charged with repelling Magick
- d.) anything that might be used to represent a person, place or thing

### 5.) Tools of Worship.

- a.) representations of the gods/goddesses (more about this in Chapter 11)
- b.) representations of elementals such as dragons or faerie
- c.) offerings



### OTHER AIDS:

- 1.) **Magickal rhymes.**
- 2.) **Music.**
- 3.) **Make-up, costumes, drama.**
- 4.) **Other props.**

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**Of these, what are the staples?** What do you need right now? The only thing you should have right now is your

1. journal or Witch's Diary
2. a variety of candles
3. a smattering of herbs and oils
  - a. Dragons Blood resin chunks
  - b. White Sage smudge sticks
  - c. Jasmine oil
  - d. Lavender oil



You can add to your collection slowly as necessary.

### Here is your three-part assignment for this month.

1.) Leaving gender references aside, see if you can determine which of the Magickal archetypes mentioned at the beginning of the lesson most decidedly resonates with your personality? The answer to this question will be the clue to your Magickal core -- your area of concentration if you're a beginner, perhaps a course correction if you're not.

2.) If you have been practicing for awhile and already own some tools, see if you can determine which ones have a truly Magickal vibration and which ones serve more a decorative purpose.

If you are a beginner, use the skills you learned in Chapter Four to meditate on what, if any, other tools you might want to consider acquiring. Trust your answer. If the answer is none, that's okay. When the time is right for you, the tool you need will cross your path.

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3.) Last, I would suggest that you try various forms of divination on for size. There will probably be one that is a natural fit for you. In the next lesson, we may incorporate some work with pendulums. You can buy one or find instructions on how to make one online. If you choose to buy one, do it in person – not online. It's important that you make personal contact with it and that it feels right to you.

To test a pendulum, sit quietly for a moment. Drop the pendulum in front of you. Assign a translatable answer by deliberately swinging the pendulum either north/south or east/west and say OUT LOUD, "This is yes." Then reverse direction and say OUT LOUD, "This is no." Bring the pendulum to a complete stop and ask a question. You can be the judge as to whether or not the pendulum feels good to you. Is the weight heavy enough? Is the cord long or short enough?

Once you settle on a pendulum, begin to charge (infuse) it with your own energy. When you're feeling good or optimistic about things, pick up it and hold it in your hands for a minute or two thinking about its purpose which is truth telling. Gradually as the days and weeks go by, it will begin to absorb both good energy and intent. It will become yours and will refuse to respond correctly for anyone else.

In response to your request, **following is a list of suppliers where you can find some of the things I mention in lessons.**

### ***Unscented candles:***

[http://www.100candles.com/unscented\\_candles.htm](http://www.100candles.com/unscented_candles.htm)

[http://www.keystonecandle.com/Unscented\\_Pillars.htm](http://www.keystonecandle.com/Unscented_Pillars.htm)

[http://www.barnloftcandles.com/unscented\\_votive\\_candles.html](http://www.barnloftcandles.com/unscented_votive_candles.html)

### ***Herbs and Oils: [www.7th-house.com](http://www.7th-house.com) for all Magickal Herbs***

<http://www.somaluna.com/> (White Sage, Dragons Blood, good selection oils)

<http://www.luckymojo.com/mojocatherbs.html> (Solomons Seal)

### ***General Clothing and Ritual:***

<http://www.magicalomaha.com>

<http://www.azuregreen.com>

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These links should not be considered recommendations, but, rather, sources where you may purchase items of interest. We are not associated with these suppliers. If there is something in particular you need and cannot find, we will try to help.

As always, you are welcome to pose questions at [witch-school@sbcglobal.net](mailto:witch-school@sbcglobal.net).

### IN CONCLUSION:

***Magickal Notation:*** Don't forget your journaling. The keeping of a Witch's Diary is a big part of the process. No detail is too unimportant to record.

*Your Magickal training is a building block process. The information added after Chapter One draws from the principles presented in the previous chapters and adds to it. For example, in Chapter One you did an intensive self-analysis for the purpose of identifying what you really want from your life. You completed the exercises and assignments, but that doesn't mean you aren't still working on skills of self-discovery. You may find it beneficial to continue to add to your previous Chapter notes with related thoughts and experiences. Do it in log, or dated, style so that your journey tells a story with a timeline.*

Your Chapter One notes will be about the process of deciding why you're studying Witchcraft and approaching life changes through the Treasure Map spell.

Your Chapter Two notes will be about the process of writing a Practical Magick spell of your choosing and a corresponding Ritual Magick spell.

Your Chapter Three notes will be about identifying possible problem areas in your environment that could retard your Magickal progress and making a plan for remedy or improvement.

Your Chapter Four notes will be a record of your meditation experience including what you saw and how you felt during and after.

Your Chapter Five notes will be about defining how, at this moment, you see yourself in relation to Magickal images that have become cultural fixtures. If you are a beginner, what tools seem most intriguing and appealing. If you are not a beginner, an inventory and assessment of which tools give

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actual Magickal assistance and which are decorative or conversation pieces.

An abbreviated version of this lesson is available in audio format.

Your next lesson will be an Introduction to Elemental Magick, a topic near and dear to my own heart, perhaps my favorite part of Magick.