

A special feature from the archives of ReclaimingQuarterly.org

an advance section from our latest issue

Features from RQ 103

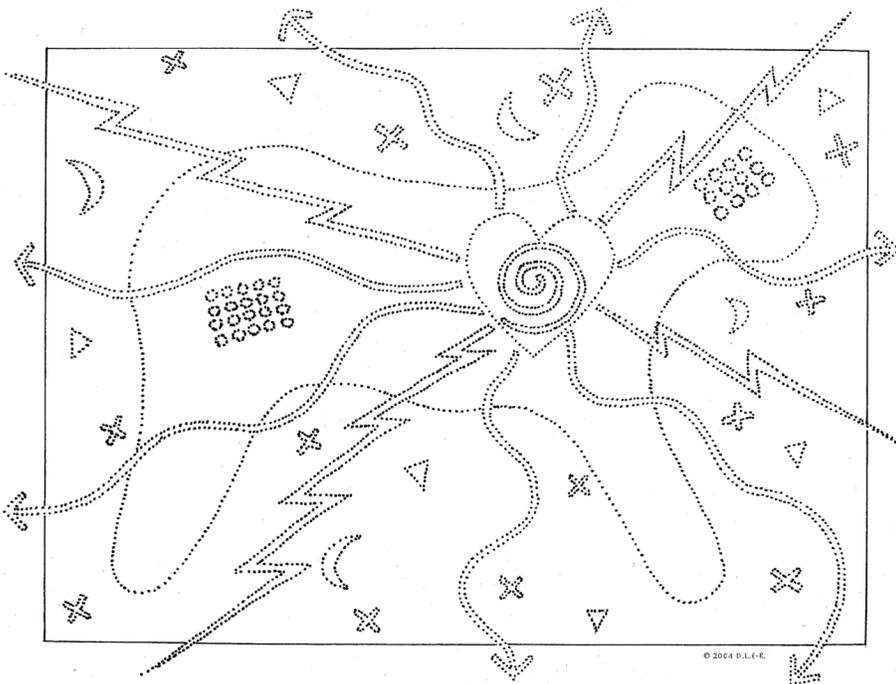
Here's an advance section from our upcoming online issue. Save-As to save to your hard drive. Pages should print easily.

The full issue will be appear in later 2014, publishing faeries permitting. This section is ready now – so why hold it back? You'll find:

- Communicating Nonviolently – articles by Meagan Malachite and John Cunningham
- Spirit Mapping – dream images from Donald L. Engstrom-Reese
- Pentacle of Pearl – ten pages of articles and interviews with a half-dozen Reclaiming teachers about this core magical practice

RQ offers this and many other features from past and present issues as free downloads – visit ReclaimingQuarterly.org

You'll find updates on our latest issue plus downloads of recent issues at ReclaimingQuarterly.org/current.html



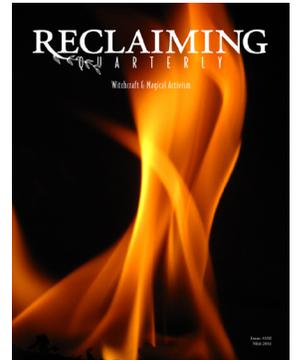
Journeying Out from the Sacred – spirit map by Donald L. Engstrom-Reese

Latest Issue Online!

The latest issue of Reclaiming Quarterly — 60+ pages of Witchcraft and Magical Activism — is now available as a free downloadable PDF file at RQ.org

Each issue of RQ brings you the latest in activism, spiritual practices, Reclaiming news, interfaith pagan humor, and much more!

Visit www.ReclaimingQuarterly.org



Reclaiming Music CDs

Chants & Music available online



Reclaiming has released four CDs of Earth-based chants and music. All four are available on our website.

Many Reclaiming musicians and teachers have also released CDs. *Witches Brew* is a good introduction to Reclaiming's musicians.

Visit www.reclaimingquarterly.org/music, or contact quarterly@reclaiming.org



Communicating Nonviolently

RQ presents four articles on Nonviolent Communication by Meagan Malachite and John Cunningham.

Nonviolent Communication is a worldwide movement started by psychologist Marshall Rosenberg. NVC aims to speak without judgement or blame, but rather to use language that arises from and evokes compassion and a deeper understanding of our shared humanity.

NVC is based on the principle that all humans share universal motivations, or needs, both for survival and for “thrive-al,” and that all our actions are attempts to attend to these needs, albeit sometimes in ineffective ways.

By focusing on needs in a challenging situation, we can find solutions to conflict that work better for everyone.

Nonviolent Communication

Fighting the Republican Terrorists

by Meagan Malachite

A few years ago I had an amazing experience. I was standing in line at the movie theatre with my partner, waiting to see *Avatar*, and the woman behind us started talking to me about politics.

It seemed we generally disagreed at first, but I did something I'd wanted to do for a long time — I used my empathy skills to try to connect with her fears and concerns.

With the tools of Nonviolent Communication (NVC) I was able to do this without indicating agreement or disagreement, simply giving her the experience of being heard. If I noticed points of agreement, I made sure to highlight those. Once I sensed openness in her, I occasionally inserted a question or perspective of my own that was somewhat challenging her ideas on how to deal with the country's problems — and I had the miraculous experience of being listened to instead of argued with! She met my respectful listening with the same.

By the time the line started moving to go into the movie, I had the sense that I had just had one of the most meaningful conversations of my life. I had dreamed of this for years, ever since I heard of NVC — using empathy to navigate political conflicts — but until that moment I hadn't really applied it.

This was partly because I tend to surround myself with friends who agree with me politically, so there was never a chance. It wasn't until a year and a half later that I would actually seek out this kind of challenging conversation.

This was when some local Tea Party activists were trying to pass Measure A in my town, which would have changed the election dates for city council members to a few weeks after finals — discouraging university students from swinging the vote towards the liberal end of the spectrum. My whole town was fired up about this: name calling was spewing from all sides, and my roommate who was working on the “No on A” campaign could vent for hours

I had the miraculous experience of being listened to instead of argued with – she met my respectful listening with the same

about the evils of the Republicans.

At the time I was partnering with Jonah, my boyfriend from paragraph one, to facilitate a group called Grounding Spirit, which was designed as a safe space for people to process their overwhelm and other feelings about the state of the world. After one particularly cathartic evening, it came to me that the best thing I could do was approach the Measure A proponents and attempt to converse with them nonviolently, to reconcile with each other's humanity even if we disagreed politically.

I went up to their booth at the next Farmer's Market and had a very pleasant interaction, despite firmly stating my intention to vote No on the measure. These people were actually quite friendly to me and I enjoyed talking with them.

One member, who was also the president of the university's Republican club, agreed to meet with me to discuss how we could make local politics more respectful and collaborative. Although nothing immediately tangible came of it, I feel that I made a very friendly acquaintance, and we continue to chat amicably with one another when we run into each other around town or on campus. I am hopeful that I can build more relationships such as this, and that this work can contribute to a peaceful revolution — one where, through dialogue, we — liberals, conservatives, anarchists, and everyone else — can admit that things are not working very well for most

people, and together find new ways of doing things.

I find myself discouraged when the same people who are opposing war with bombs and bullets abroad wage war at home with verbal attacks. I wonder how we will ever have peace if we don't find a way to respond to conflict peacefully, no matter how passionate we are about a cause.

When “fighting the Republicans” becomes as sacrosanct a mission as “fighting the terrorists,” I don't think we are really changing anything.

Meagan Malachite is a member of NorCal NVC's teaching team (norcalnvc.org) and a graduate of BayNVC's Leadership Program (baynvc.org). She blogs about Nonviolent Communication, ecopsychology, and social justice at tormentedandblessed.blogspot.com

Nonviolent Communication

Beginning a Practice in Empathy

by John Cunningham

In being human, each of us is gifted with universal human needs. An awareness of these needs grounds us in our common human experience and offers us a vocabulary to unlock a hitherto hidden dimension of human experience. It is a vocabulary that reveals and celebrates that each of us is simply in the process of becoming and doing the best we can.

From our first breath to our last, these human needs are rising: the need for meaning, understanding, connection; for safety, autonomy, integrity; the need to matter, to be seen, to be heard, as well as the profound need we have to serve life, to enrich life and to contribute to others; and, of course, the need to play. These needs come to presence in, and form a vocabulary for our becoming. They are alive within us at all times and stir us to action. As we gain literacy in reading these needs, we see with new eyes.

Our feelings are rooted in our needs and let us know how our becoming is going. They ground us in the present and, with practice, can become cognitive, a way of self-knowing. Together with needs, they form an archetype of human experience. As we practice Compassionate Communication, we discover that when seen in terms of our feelings and needs, we feel understood and connected. In that, empathy awakens.

We can choose how we listen to, and make sense of, what comes to us. If we reflect a bit, we see that our choices have quite different results. For most of us, we respond out of habit, and as onlookers to the other. Through Compassionate Communication, we have a choice to participate with them.

For example, suppose someone says to us, “Do you have any idea how thoughtless you’ve been?” What are our choices?

When I hear this comment, I can choose to respond by...

Taking it personally. I internalize the judgment, blame myself for being thoughtless, tell myself I should be more thoughtful, and begin a free fall toward shame, guilt and depression. I choose, “I’m at fault and to blame.”

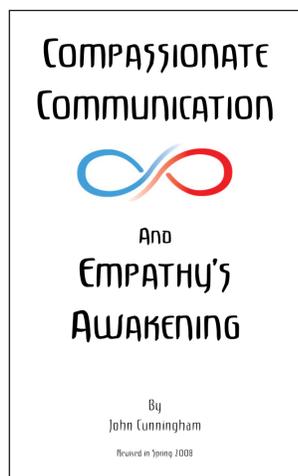
Concluding I’m under attack. I interpret what’s been said as a critical judgment and react defensively. “That’s not true. What about what you did!” I choose that the other person must be wrong and therefore to blame.

Or I have another option. I can choose to respond by...

Sensing my own feelings and needs. I can take a breath and connect to whatever might be stimulated in me when I hear what the other person is saying to me. I ask myself, “What am I feeling: frustrated, confused, scared? What am I needing: consideration, understanding, respect?” I choose to empathize with myself. This is self-empathy.

Sensing the feelings and needs of the other. I seek to sense what the person is feeling — frustrated? What the person is needing — consideration? I might guess to see if I understand them as they would like. If my guess “lands,” the person will feel understood. If not, they will say it again, or give me more information. It’s not about me guessing correctly. I can try again. I am choosing to empathize.

As we bring our intention into how we choose to participate in life’s arising, we cultivate the “inner faculty of allowing the impressions of the outer world to reach [us] only in ways [we] have chosen” (Steiner). We gain self-mastery.



The articles on this and the following page are excerpted from *Compassionate Communication and Empathy's Awakening* by John Cunningham.

This clearly-written 20-page introduction to Compassionate Communication is dedicated to the work of Marshall Rosenberg, author of *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*.

Available as a free download at: www.empathy-conexus.com



Nonviolent Communication

A Choice Before Us

A change in the way of seeing means a change in what is seen

by John Cunningham

Compassionate Communication gives us a body of organizing ideas that enable us to see and read new meaning in our encounters with others and in the dialogues we have with ourselves. It gives us greater ability to foster understanding, connection, and compassion. That is its intention, goal, and possibility.

Compassionate Communication gives us tools to move from Onlooker Consciousness to Participatory Consciousness.

See preceding page for more information on Compassionate Communication.

ONLOOKER CONSCIOUSNESS

Being Right, At Odds, and Alone

INTENT TO CORRECT — Goal is to analyze situations, find what's wrong, and correct it.

LIFE-ALIENATING — Tends to alienate us from what is alive in the moment in ourselves, in others and in the world.

HEAD — Thinking, speaking and listening from the head. Making judgments.

DEFY OR COMPLY — Reacting to external pressure. Conditioned to authority.

ALREADY BECOME — What's already become is intellectualized into discreet 'Its' and bits.

EXTRINSIC MOTIVES — Conditioned to act for reward and approval, or to avoid punishment.

POWER OVER OTHERS — Creating relationships where one person exerts power over another through fear, guilt, or shame. Solutions are imposed.

MORALISTIC JUDGMENTS — What's good/bad, right/wrong.

"JACKAL" — Packs are organized based on the "top dog," enforcing a dominator/dominated hierarchical social structure, an us/them gang or faction mentality.

PARTICIPATORY CONSCIOUSNESS

Fostering Understanding and Partnership

INTENT TO CONNECT — Goal is to create mutual understanding, enabling all needs to be met.

LIFE-SERVING — Tends to reconnect us to what is alive in the moment in ourselves, in others, and in the world.

HEART — Thinking, speaking, and listening from the heart. Sustaining connection.

CHOICE — Self-initiated activity in line with my own feelings, needs, and values.

BECOMING — Life is a process of becoming. We participate in the coming-into-being of life.

INTRINSIC MOTIVES — Creating our own meaning and purpose while honoring the choices of others.

POWER WITH OTHERS — Creating relationships where everyone's needs matter and are considered. Lasting solutions address everyone's needs.

VALUE JUDGMENTS — Based upon values and needs.

"GIRAFFE" — Has the largest heart of any land animal; its long neck suggests courage, vulnerability, and a broad view; and its saliva digests thorns into life!

Nonviolent Communication

Anger -/- Violence

by *Meagan Malachite*

Today I went to see a counselor I am currently working with, and we talked about how, in my family, people are pretty scared of anger — so much so that if I express any anger, my aunts get pretty triggered and start talking about only wanting to be around happy people.

During our discussion I remembered an insight I had a few years ago, about how for most people anger and violence are so linked that they seem almost synonymous — so much so that I have caught myself saying, “I want to slap that person,” when I was angry, even though I didn’t really want to. I had just learned (mainly from another aunt who frequently made such statements) that that is how you express anger.

But if you look at it, they don’t have to be linked. They are not the same thing.

WORKING WITH INTENSE EMOTIONS

In doing social change work, part of the journey is working with intense emotions. Anyone who has gone to a big rally of any sort will know that. There is yelling on both sides, from the protesters and counter-protesters.

(Anger is not the only feeling present for activism — there are others just as important hidden underneath the anger, such as fear and grief and pain for all those who suffer at the hands of our current economic/political systems.)

Activists who embrace nonviolence have already realized that although they are angry, they don’t want to express it in ways that perpetuate more and more pain.

We tend to think, though, that violence is only a physical act. However, most activists would agree that when a president gives an order for bombs to be dropped on civilians living near an alleged terrorist hideout, the president was being violent. He did not participate in the physical violence. His words led to it, along with the thought process that led him to think that bombing people was the best response to the situation.

Over the past seven years I have become convinced that how we think about conflict, as well as every word we utter, has a profound impact on the degree of violence we experience in our lives and in the world. That is why I am so inspired when I sit with a group of people who have committed themselves to the path of

Nonviolent Communication, for example the NorCal NVC Steering Committee, of which I am a part.

When I sit in a circle with these people, whether for empathy or business, I sometimes get this thrilling feeling that is a cousin to falling in love — the thrill of having hope for the world. This is because I have seen how we respond to conflict nonviolently, or at least try our damndest, with each other and others in our lives.

If what is true on the microcosm is also true on the macrocosm, then forming more circles of people such as this gives me hope for a miracle.

For information on Meagan Malachite’s work, see first article of this section.



SPIRIT MAPPING

CREATING A SACRED CARTOGRAPHY TO EXPLORE THE WORLDS

by Donald L. Engstrom-Reese

Recording my journeys throughout the Worlds takes many forms. I have come to most commonly use prose, poetry, images, and spirit mapping. I particularly enjoy spirit mapping.

I first started to explore spirit mapping in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I had come across photos of ancient picture maps recording shamanic trips into a variety of different realms while researching the tribal spirit arts of the northern polar circumference people. These sites were not just limited to the Arctic. There appeared to be sites with spirit maps around the world: South Africa, Siberia, the American Southwest, Japan, Australia, and Scandinavia.

The very idea that one could make a map which could help guide someone else to a site in the spirit realms that one had visited intrigued me. I began to work on a set of symbols and a mapping system to share with my communities. This project, I hoped, would give us yet one more tool to share our adventures and growing

understandings of the multiverse. Through the sharing of the explorations and escapades of many folks, those symbols have and are continuing to grow and blossom. A way to share a sacred cartography of the worlds is once again an evolving art form and is thriving in Midgard.

I am still actively practicing the arts of spirit mapping regularly. Here are a few examples of my own spirit maps.

If you are interested in those symbols and in joining us on this adventure, please go to:

www.wearewalkinginbeauty.org/Walking_in_Beauty/Spirit_Mapping_Symbols.html

You may also like an installation piece by my dear friend and art partner Philip Blackburn and myself that we called "Spirit Maps: A Learning Project," at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=_WrGvfKMyVM

I would be delighted to hear about your experiences with spirit mapping. I would also like to see your spirit maps and any symbols that are coming your way. This cartography will only

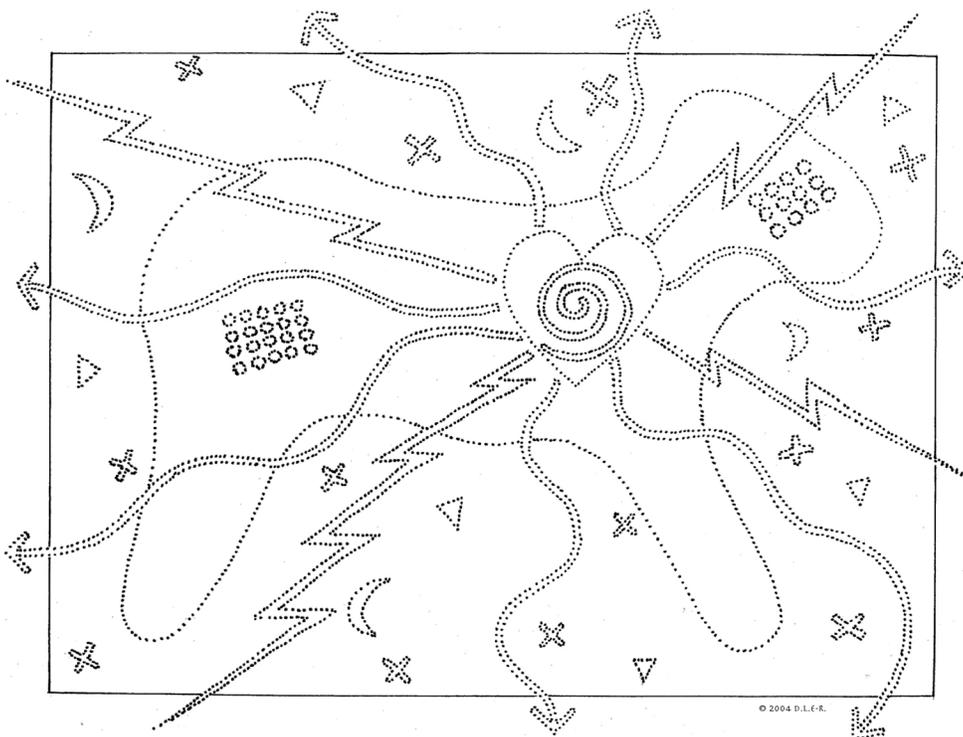
continue to thrive and flourish as we feed and tend it, tweaking it to meet our own and our communities' needs.

May we all dare to dwell in beauty, balance, and delight!

Bless the Bees!
Bless the Bears!
Bless the Cherry Trees!

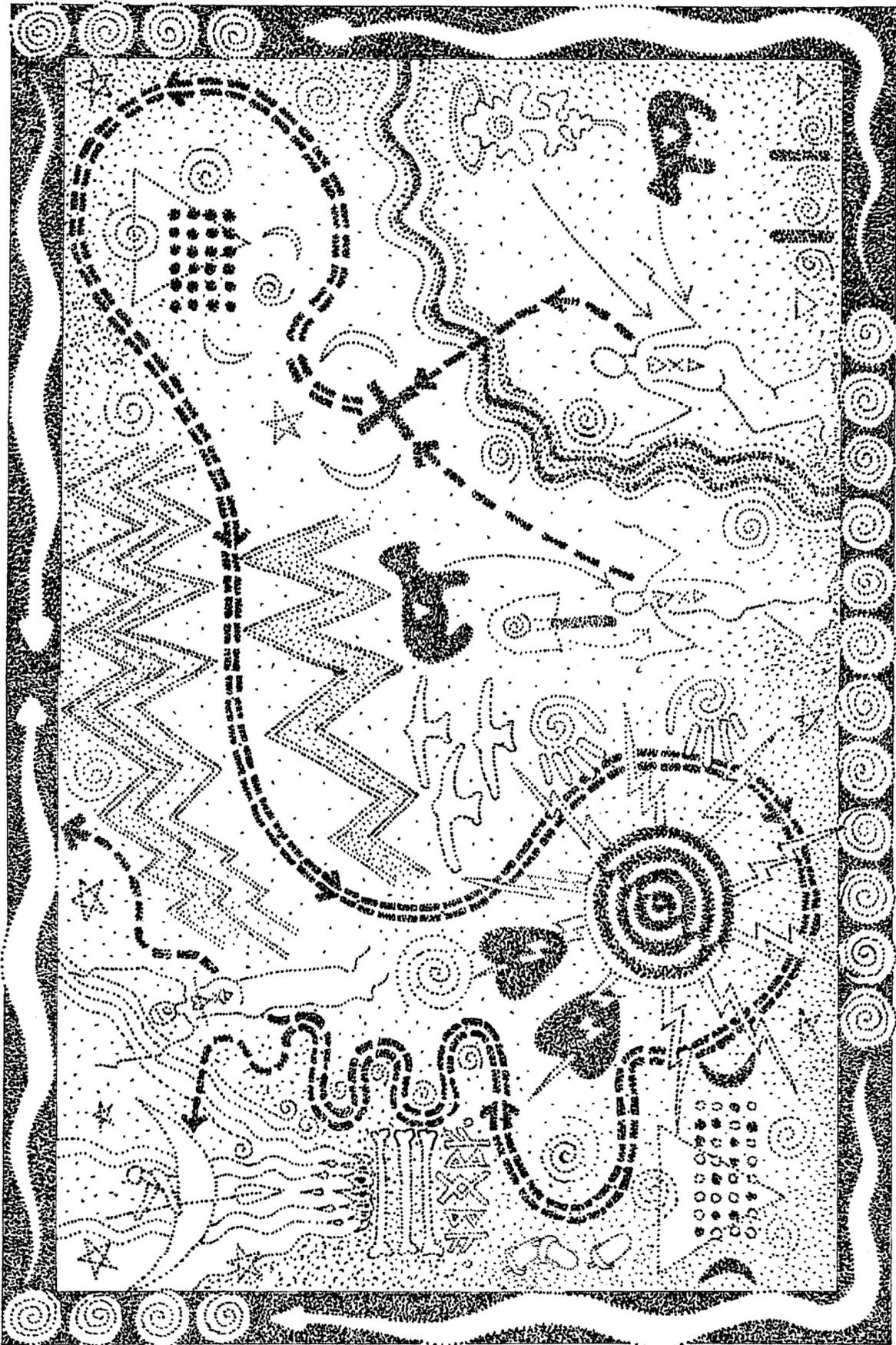
Journeying Out From the Sacred Heart of Grandmother Bear

Donald L. Engstrom-Reese actively explores a living blend of Queer Spirit, witchcraft, Heathenry, and other primal magics, hand in hand with pers husband Mark, while dwelling in their home (Hector House) rooted in the sacred lands and holy waters of the Upper Mississippi Valley.

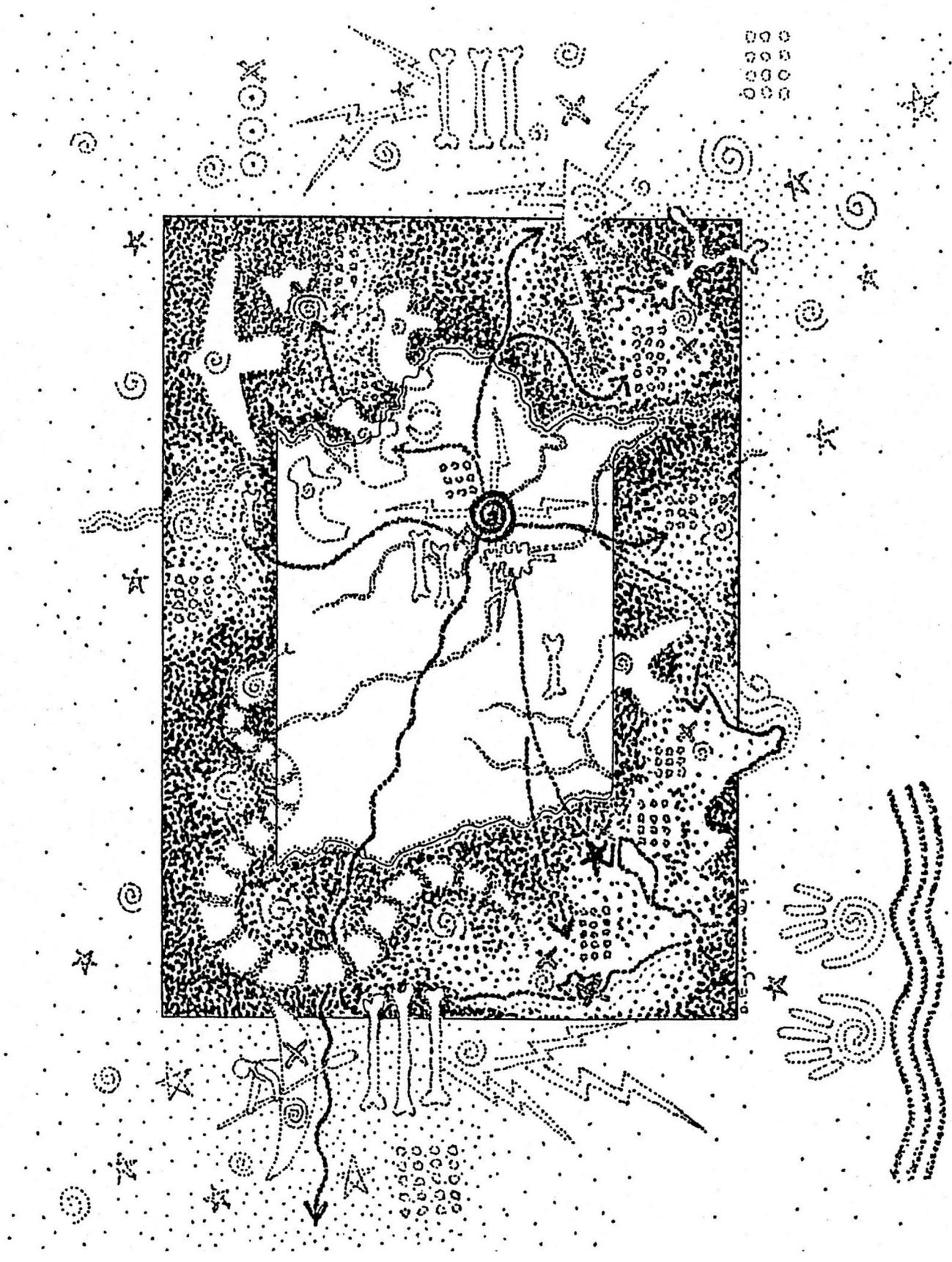


Journeying Out from the Sacred – by Donald L. Engstrom-Reese

More Spirit Map images on following two pages



Spirit Mapping: A Widow's Journey Begins – by Donald L. Engstrom-Reese (see page 34)



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Spirit Mapping: Searching for a New Home - by Donald L. Engstrom-Reese (see page)

The Pentacle of Pearl

An RQ feature coordinated by George Franklin & Abel Gomez

The Pearl Pentacle is both a tool for personal transformation and one of four Bay Area Reclaiming core classes — see below for more on core classes.

Reclaiming's Pearl Pentacle class, like the Iron Pentacle that preceded it by a few years, was adapted from Victor and Cora Anderson's work in the Feri Tradition of Witchcraft.

The five points of the Pearl Pentacle as currently taught in Reclaiming are: Love, Law, Wisdom, Liberty, and Knowledge. Some of these points have other attributes as well.

The interviews on the next several pages convey some of the mystery and magic of working the Pearl Pentacle.

What is Pentacle Work?

Pearl Pentacle classes focus on each of the points in turn, devoting a session each to Love, Law, Wisdom, Liberty, and Knowledge. The work might include discussions, meditation or trance, embodied exercises, games, dyad or small group encounters, singing and chanting, etc.

We also “run the pentacle” through our bodies. The five points correspond to the head, hands, and feet. If we stand with hands and feet outstretched so we form a star, we begin from head/Love and send a ray of energy to right foot/Law, then back to left hand/Wisdom, across to right hand/Liberty, down to left foot/Knowledge, and back to the head to complete the cycle.

Begin by grounding and centering your own energy. Then let it rise to a point just above your crown so you can feel it floating like a small ball of colored light, like an iridescent pearl. Focus on “Love.” After a short bit, let that energy drop on a breath to just above your right foot. Focus on “Law.” Then across the body to left hand/Wisdom. And so on.

When you have run 3-5 cycles and have returned again to head/Love, run the energy around the outer ring – head, left hand, left foot, right foot, right hand, head. At each point, focus on the corresponding pentacle point. End again on head/Love.

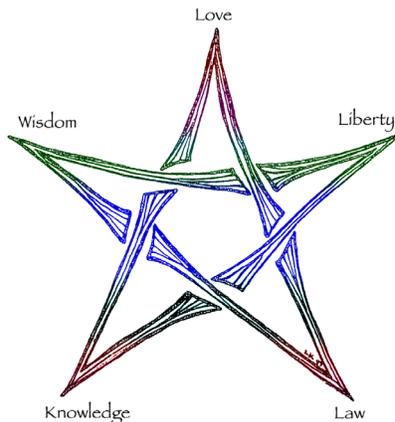
Finish by returning your energy to your center. Ground excess energy by touching the floor or your own center and breathing.

Pearl Pentacle Magic: the Oyster Trance

One common Pearl working is the Oyster Trance. We journey to the depths of the ocean to explore how the oyster anchors itself, how its body is shaped, how it feeds, how it lives.

A pearl begins to develop when an irritant penetrates the oyster's shell. It attempts to expel it. If this fails, the oyster secretes layer upon layer of nacre, gently washing the wound over and over again. Eventually the irritant is completely coated with nacre, accepted, and transformed into a precious pearl.

In the same way, we learn to work with our own irritants and wounds, whether from the outside or from within, gradually transforming them into our own unique pearls.



What is a Core Class?

Core classes are the basic curriculum of Reclaiming, laying the foundation for advanced magical work.

Bay Area Reclaiming core classes:

- Elements of Magic – an introductory class in Reclaiming-style magical practice.
- Iron Pentacle – Sex, Pride, Self, Power, Passion.
- Pearl Pentacle – Love, Law, Wisdom, Liberty, Knowledge.
- Rites of Passage – plumbing the unconscious via dreamwork, trance, and story.
- Tending the Community Temple.

Although each offering varies, there is a basic curriculum for each class.

Over the years there have been other classes suggested as core: Power and Mystery, Pentacle of the Great Turning, Advanced Elements, deity-based classes, priestessing skills, and more.

If you want to see any of these classes offered, contact the CRAFT teachers cell, which offers classes and workshops in the greater Bay Area and around California.

You can find complete class listings at www.Reclaiming.org/classevents/ — or email quarterly@reclaiming.org

Reflections on the Pearl Points

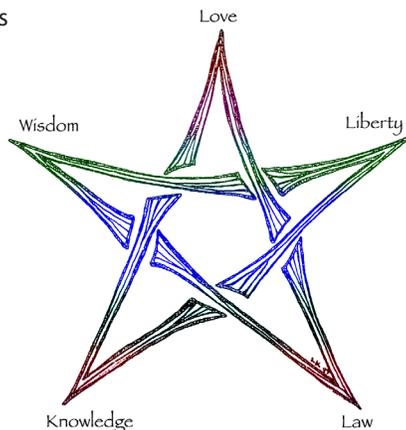
Men's Pearl Pentacle class ♦ San Francisco 2010

Wisdom

Insight
Intuition
Gnosis
Athena
Discernment
Integrity
Wisdom of Fools
Earth Wisdom
Paradox

Love

My Law is Love unto all beings
Affection
My Love is poured out upon the Earth
Trust
Passionate
Nurturing
Divine
Aphrodite
Eros



Liberty

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness
Liberation
Free Choice
Free Speech
Transformation
Freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose
Power-with

Knowledge

Know myself in all my parts
Know thyself
How do I know what I know?
Gnosis
Arcane knowledge
Tree of Knowledge
Common Knowledge

Law

Respect
Before the Law there came a man from the country...
Dharma
Law of Gravity
Consensus
Law of Threefold Return
Murphy's Law
Jupiter
Do as thou wilt is the whole of the Law

Pearl words harvested from Men's Pearl Pentacle class, San Francisco, Spring 2010: Gwydion, Alphonsus, George, Jason, Michael, Chionesu, Jonathan, Kevin, Henri, Ross, Abel, Leif, Mark. For more information contact quarterly@reclaiming.org

the energy of deep healing ...

... to be present with our wounded places ...

... oceanic ... the full moon ... deep mother energy

An RQ interview with Seed

How/when did you start working with Pearl? What draws you to it?

I was introduced to the Pentacle of Pearl in the mid 1990s as a Reclaiming initiation challenge: to run the Pearl Pentacle every day for a month and a day. Once I experienced its power, I kept on running it every day for over a year.

My initiation took several years, and during that time the Pearl Pentacle became a “boon companion,” a medicine. It sank in so deeply that I didn’t know if I was running it or it was running me – I would just recognize it continually arising.

It seemed to be laid out so beautifully — the points matched the natural way that my thoughts arose and my spirit worked in the world.

Was Pearl a core Reclaiming class at that time, or did you help introduce it into Reclaiming?

At that time it was not a core class, but it was being taught occasionally. I had taken it with Beverly Frederick, and others were teaching it. I was one of those who supported it becoming a core class. It is such a lovely balance to the Iron Pentacle, which was already a core class.

Tell us about your early work with pentacles.

I came to pentacles as a student, as an initiate. I stepped into a tradition that was already teaching pentacles. I accepted them on their face and began working with them. Those who studied directly with Victor and Cora Anderson may have a deeper sense of the origins of the pentacle practices.

What came to be meaningful to me — a personal meaning — is that the five-pointed star is such a deeply potent form in nature, and for us as humans.

A great number of the foods that we eat, the fruits and vegetables, are from plants with five-pointed flowers: berries, apples, pears, cherries. It makes sense that the pentacle is a symbol of abundance, nearly essential to the worship of the feminine divine.

The five-pointed star flipped, with point at bottom, is the sign of the horned god, much maligned by Christian culture. This is another primordial symbol of nurture and abundance – the hunt.

The human body itself is a five-pointed form. So, it makes so much sense that to honor ourselves and to honor the abundance and fertility of the Earth, we would be drawn to work with the five-pointed star.

What does working the Pentacle of Pearl mean to you?

Pearl energy is the energy of deep healing – the ability to be present with our wounded places in such a way that we can reclaim them and turn them into jewels. It feels very oceanic, with the influences of the the full moon, of the deep mother energy.

When and how have you found it useful? Do you have specific Pearl practices?

The Pearl Pentacle is inside all of my practices. This is one of the beauties of Pearl – I’ve never had to set it aside. Certainly, whenever there is crisis in my life, Pearl tends to arise. At these times, it is mainly a tool for contemplation and for clarity. Holding the crisis in each point in turn: How is love manifesting in this situation? How are the laws of human emotion and of nature shaping it? What wisdom is being revealed? What possibility/liberty is opening up? What knowledge is gained and how can it be of service?

What is the relationship between the Pearl and Iron Pentacle?

Iron Pentacle energy tends to be brighter, more jagged – it evokes individual power, how we show up in the world. Pearl is more about embracing and integrating this power. It’s often said that Iron is more about

continued on next page



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the individual, and Pearl about being in healthy community. I think Pearl is also deeply individual, and Iron at its best is a blessing for community. There's a universality to both.

Some have said that Pearl as a new-agey, "goody-goody" Pentacle – I completely disagree. There is plenty that is challenging in each of the points of the Pearl Pentacle, as there is in the deep ocean and deep mother energy. We teach it in a way that plumbs those resonances, working with the irritant, the piece of grit that creates the pearl, and with the challenges of compassion.

Some teachers feel Iron should be taught before Pearl, but that hasn't been my personal experience. I've taught Pearl first and found it to be a complete working. I have observed that sometimes when people have taken Iron, they are eager for Pearl as a balm. I feel that anyone who wants to study either one would benefit.

How do you run the Pentacle-points?

There are so many ways to run pentacle energy! Here, it's good to mention that within Reclaiming, there are differences in the order in which the points are named. The way they are named in *The Spiral Dance* is Love, Law, Wisdom, Power, Knowledge, and this is how I was taught them.

Another permutation reverses the positions of Wisdom and Knowledge. I find it really evocative to place Wisdom before Knowledge. Our culture has a such a bulimic relationship to knowledge. We seem to feel, as a culture, that we need to have "ingested" all kinds of data before we eventually come to wisdom. It can be useful to first explore our own wisdom – to know what is calling to our spirit and what is deeply and most important, in order to then know what to study, what knowledge we want to gather and to share.

The word "wisdom" comes from a root meaning "to see," close in meaning to the word "vision." This is an exciting way to run Wisdom energy. I like

running Knowledge as "service." At the end of the road, what is worth sharing with the world?

More recently, the point named "Power" has been taught as "Liberty." I have begun to teach it this way. We explore "choice" within Liberty. The word "choice" goes back to roots meaning "to enjoy" and "to taste," or "gusto." I love linking liberty/choice to intuition, to what feels and tastes healthful and good.

What are some skills and techniques you use to strengthen and balance the points?

We use trance, story-telling, healing, shadow work, enactments, scrying, an ddivination, among other techniques. Healing work comes in more with Pearl than with Iron. The specific exercises arise out of the energy of the points themselves.

Any "cautionary tales" from your experience?

To me, the energy of Pearl is like a tonic herb – there are certain plants that are just good for people. I guess if you did nothing but run Pearl, it might be a little out of balance. If someone were running Pearl as a watery, deep energy, and what they needed was to balance with fiery, bright energy, they would need to create that balance. Each of us is so unique in our needs and our creative paths. That said, the Pearl Pentacle is a wonderful tool, a deeply healing practice.

Seed has been teaching Reclaiming classes in the Bay Area since 1995. Her teaching is characterized by warmth, mischief, sensuality, and emotional depth. She has been involved in community building in many forms, including providing open circles, conflict resolution, mentoring, and working to promote inclusiveness throughout the community. She is an initiate of the Reclaiming tradition and a longtime member of the San Francisco Bay Area CRAFT Teachers Cell.

RQ interview by George Franklin.

Some thoughts from Rose May Dance

Why do you work the Pearl Pentacle?

I run both Iron and Pearl Pentacles daily. Pearl completes Iron. Not that Iron doesn't stand on its own, but Pearl is a nice complement. I work inside the pearl, as if I am the seed that the pearl is covering. It's like my aura.

What is your experience running Pearl energy?

It's a soft and beautiful practice. Pearl softens the Iron – it sits inside it. I get a 360-degree experience, like a round pearl. I like whorling with color – pearl is iridescent.

How does it fit into your daily practice?

My daily practice also includes the Ha Prayer. I send my breath to my aura and to my God-self. Living in San Francisco, my world often looks grey. It's easy to see this world as a pearl.

What do you mean by working "inside" the pearl?

Actually, I am inside and outside it at the same time. That kind of mystery appeals to me.

There is some variation of the Pearl points, How do you run them?

Instead of Knowledge I sometimes find myself saying "History." And I say "Liberation" instead of Liberty.

Any last thoughts?

I think it's good that we developed Pearl as a core class, but it needs to grow and have more practice.

Rose May Dance has a lifelong eclectic spiritual practice, and has worshiped the Goddess since 1979 (in Reclaiming since 1981). She is a devotee of the Laughing Goddess who lovingly spins the universe.

Pearl Pentacle and the Roots of Reclaiming

An RQ interview with Gwydion

How and when did you start working with the Pearl Pentacle?

I was introduced to the Iron and Pearl Pentacles as part of Feri Tradition when I first began studying the Craft. Most of my work for the first five years focused more on working the Iron Pentacle. I explored the Pearl Pentacle occasionally during that time; I think that you can't help but work the Pearl Pentacle when you are working Iron. I think it happens whether or not we are conscious of it.

My work with it really deepened when Thorn Coyle and I began teaching Pearl Pentacle together more than fifteen years ago. When I work on teaching a topic, the process challenges my perceptions about it and transforms how I work with it. Part of the teaching process for me is figuring out how to articulate my thoughts and experiences with it, which in turn deepens the work for me.

What does the Pearl Pentacle mean to you? What is its special significance compared to other magical tools?

Someone at work recently described the process of self-reflection and self-improvement as being like that of a pearl. It is taking qualities or experiences of ourselves which we find unpleasant or uncomfortable and choosing to accept even these aspects as part of our being (even though we might wish we could just spit it out); of allowing ourselves to be transformed by it and ultimately to find strength in it. For me, this is what Pearl Pentacle is all about. It is a tool to

I was taught that Reclaiming has four core roots: the psychology movement, anarchist politics, feminism, and Feri Tradition

aid us in this work of self-reflection and self-improvement.

When and how have you found it useful? How is it different from the Iron Pentacle?

For me, Pearl Pentacle is a tool that helps me in my relationships with others, whereas Iron Pentacle helps me in my relationship with myself. Of course there is overlap, but when I'm having difficulty in my relationships with others I eventually manage to remind myself that I can only change myself and how I choose to interact with others.

Pearl Pentacle has given me the tools and courage to face myself and be willing to make changes. I'm not always able to do this right away, but eventually I come back to "what do I own in this situation, what can I do differently?"

In preparing for a class on the Wisdom point, I read an ancient proverb that said that wisdom comes to those who risk making mistakes and then learn from those mistakes.

What is its significance within the Reclaiming tradition? Why is it considered a core Reclaiming class?

I was taught that Reclaiming has four core roots: the psychology movement, anarchist politics, feminism, and Feri Tradition. I see our work in Reclaiming with the Pearl Pentacle being influenced by both the psychology movement and Feri Tradition.

The Pearl Pentacle is inherently a tool of the Feri Tradition; it comes to us through the teachings of Victor and Cora Anderson.

The psychology movement influences this work through its strong focus on self-exploration, reflection, and self-improvement. This gets back to the concept that Pearl helps us in this work of self-reflection and self-improvement.

This, too, is an integral part of Feri Tradition, not only through the use of the Pearl Pentacle, but also the Iron Pentacle, and work with our shadow selves. Much of the focus of the core work we do in Reclaiming and Feri is actually focused internally on our own healing, empowerment, and self-improvement.

I see the Iron Pentacle as "how do I relate to myself" and the Pearl Pentacle as "how do I relate with others." I realize that this is an over-simplification because both are inextricably intertwined, like a ten-pointed star or web; you pull one string and the entire system is affected. But if Pearl influences how I relate to others, through love or laws for example, then the Pearl

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Pentacle also influences or acts as a tool to help us in the Reclaiming roots of anarchist politics and feminism.

Let's take feminism first: at its core principles, feminism is about how we value, respect, and treat one another regardless of our differences (especially those of gender and sexuality).

Ultimately, it is the manifestation of the principles of equality and liberty. And yet, how can we achieve these principles if we do not reflect on our own relationships with ourselves and with those around us? How can we treat our co-workers, lovers, friends, and family with respect, seeing their inherent value (even when we are angry with them or feeling hurt by them) without expanding our own capacity for Love? Through our own work on self-liberation and learning from our own mistakes, we gain the capacity for compassion and empathy.

Reclaiming's structure and decision-making process derive from roots in anarchist politics. In order for a network of semi-autonomous cells connected to a central hub to work, there needs to be trust, empowerment, and acting from a place of stewardship of the community. Through the Pearl Pentacle, we are able to come to agreement on our core values and make agreements on the processes we will use to work together.

Can you share a few Pearl stories from working with other teachers in the Reclaiming and Feri Tradition?

One of my favorites is the Devotional Dance movements that Thorn created for each of the Pearl Pentacle points. These are simple repetitive movements that really help to anchor each of the points, the qualities of those points within our bodies.



This transforms abstract concepts into physical manifestations, which I think makes the points more accessible.

Another favorite is some of the workings Alphonso, George and I did in the Men's Pearl Pentacle class (San Francisco 2010). We worked to push the boundaries and take risks even when one or more of us found the exercises challenging and uncomfortable. I found it challenging, healing, and powerful to be playful, physical, and intense in a diverse group of men.

What are some skills for strengthening and balancing the points? How do you strengthen the weaker points?

I think the best way for strengthening and balancing the points

is simply to run the energy through the points and around the circle on a regular basis. Not only does this work to strengthen and balance the points, I also find that it energizes me.

Anything else you'd like to share?

I once heard someone in Reclaiming say that what is missing in our tradition, our community, is the power of forgiveness. I've often felt this way

as well. I think Pearl Pentacle is a strong tool to aid us in the power of forgiveness for it teaches us that though we take risks and may fail, we learn from those mistakes and act differently. Through this process we gain the knowledge to discern when we are wrong. Through our own empowerment we gain the strength and courage to apologize to those we may have hurt, and forgive our selves and others.

Gwydion is a queer witch and a science geek. He is a Reclaiming priest and has taught Reclaiming classes,

workshops, and witchcamps locally and abroad for nine years. Gwydion has been a member of the San Francisco Bay Area Reclaiming community for over 20 years.

RQ interview by Abel Gomez.

For further reading

- *Evolutionary Witchcraft*, by T. Thorn Coyle
- *The Spiral Dance*, by Starhawk
- "Reclaiming and the Iron Pentacle" — articles from the RQ Archives — visit www.ReclaimingQuarterly.org

Pearl Pentacle: Our Collaborative Creation

by Ravyn Stanfield

Natural pearls occur when a grain of sand or debris is trapped inside a mollusk and is rubbed against the inside of the shell, irritating the soft inner sanctum. Eventually, the edges of the particle are smoothed and an iridescent pearl is formed. The pearl's energy is also associated with the moon and mirrors, the ocean, the shimmering interior faces of sea shells and all reflective surfaces.

The Pearl Pentacle is a teaching of both the Reclaiming and Feri traditions. Many say that this Pearl energy resonates at the same musical notes as Iron Pentacle, but one octave higher. Sex vibrates up to Love, Pride vibrates up to Law, Self vibrates up to Knowledge, Power to Liberty and Passion to Wisdom. Pearl has been said to be the work of many lifetimes. The energies of Pearl have more potential to be shared amongst people who hold similar values. Iron creates a solid core of a being, an individual star in the body of the Star Goddess. Pearl creates a collective vision of the way that we can live with each other, many star beings shining in the same galaxy. It is softer but in some ways, stronger and more absolute.

The longer we work the Iron Pentacle, the more responsibility we

Editors' Note – this article works the Pearl Pentacle with the Knowledge and Wisdom points reversed from the diagram on page 38: Knowledge in the left hand and Wisdom in the left foot.

Like the Moon

Like the moon reflects the sun

You and I reflect each one

There are forces we cannot see

They're inside us,

They remind us to be free

– Jeffrey Alphonsus Mooney

take for our own lives and choices. We begin to stop shaming ourselves; we also discontinue blaming others for our own feeling states. We recognize our attempts to maneuver other people and contrive all aspects of our environment. We take charge of our resentment and search for the places where we can forgive the harm that has been done to us and find ways that we can thrive. The intention of Iron Pentacle is to stop submitting our will to others; it is also about relinquishing our need to control what others do. Instead, we learn to formulate statements about ourselves, to request that our needs be met rather than make demands of others or ignore our own needs entirely.

After we have run the Iron Pentacle energies in our bodies and lives for some time, it is common to notice disturbances, and perhaps conflict as we change familiar patterns that have kept us small and safe. It is not always easy. Keeping a strong connection to Sex and the life force can fluctuate with changes in health, weather, work, relationship.

As we realize our Pride in our abilities, we may take on more visible efforts and receive difficult feedback from the public that sends us into a shame cycle. The multiplicity of roles we take on in our lives exert pressure upon us that can make it difficult to show our true core Selves all the time. If we choose to exert our influence, we may get some push back from those around us who are not used to our full Power or fear that we may be trying to dominate them. When we express our Passions, we may experience disappointment when things we care about are not shared in exactly the way we had hoped. Staying current with the Iron Pentacle energy is a process, not ever a finished product. As we integrate Iron, we will fumble and bumble, hurt the feelings of others and get lost. Iron makes us whole and human; it does not make us perfect. Perfection is not ever the goal.

I experience Iron Pentacle energy as the progression from Birth to Love--our gift, our human birthright. When we work Iron, it hopefully leads us to love of self and others from a place of recognizing ourselves more fully. That Love initiates the Pearl Pentacle, and we gain experience of these Pearl energies through exasperation, mistakes, loss, and aging. I see Pearl pentacle as the progression of Love to our eventual Death- the Pearl energies of Love, Law, Knowledge, Liberty and Wisdom being some of the gifts we gain along the way if we are lucky.

If we continue to revisit our creation

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myth of the Star Goddess making love to Herself in the black mirror of space, we learn by heart that all creativity comes from self love and the dance with ourselves reflected in another form. Collaboration is a place to unearth new inspiration. We get out of our own heads and share space in the creative void, using the chemistry of two or more to shape something that we would not have formed by ourselves. Creative partnerships or group work can open us to worlds of possibilities that we would never have considered alone. Time in community can also create even more conflict, projection, competition, emotion and opportunities for growth and change. This is why we practice Pearl in community. It takes the irritation of other people being their imperfect selves and rubbing up against our imperfect selves to really polish our rough edges. When we dedicate to the Pearl Pentacle, we are willing to figure out what will work for all parties involved and care for ourselves at the same time.

LOVE

In Pearl, we begin with Love. This version of Love cracks the heart open; it's the way my being moves toward something and makes room for it, the welling up of tears in my eyes when I am truly touched. Love is the warmth in my belly or chest, the joy, communion and the ineffable magic inherent in contact with another being. This is not the love we find in greeting cards and it is not solely about romance. This Love is based in Iron and so it is fierce, not ethereal. When we have repeatedly connected with the life force of Sex to the point where it rises unbidden in our bodies, that life force energy can expand beyond our edges. We form energetic connections of Spirit between ourselves and other beings; we

begin to accept our interdependence.

With this kind of Love, we start to forgive ourselves for all the errors that we have made. We also let down our defenses, even when others make mistakes that hurt our feelings. We believe that we can recover from hurt and even thrive. Love unlocks the gates of the heart in a healthy way; we relinquish the thoroughfare that opens so wide that anything can overwhelm our being and the fortress that protects us from every harmful potential. Instead, our hearts have uncomplicated gates that



open and close as situations determine whether we use our boundaries more and less. Love occurs when we are strong enough to return to life force, to run it through the parts of life that feel painful, like death and loss. Love comes when we can get a sense of humor about our life struggles and the rigorous expectations we have of ourselves and others. Love appears when we are willing to act on the behalf of the life force and stand up for what is essential to us. Love is about the self interacting with another, whether this is an animal or plant ally or the relationship with our planet or another human. Love approaches when we restore the

flow of life force or Sex within and outside ourselves. Love claims our collaboration.

LAW

This energy of Love flows into Law. Law lives in the way that following our Pride creates a personal code of ethics, in the beliefs that we must follow for our health. Law expresses my private definition of integrity, as well as natural law, the inevitable cycles of life: birth/growth/harvest/death/rebirth. Law is about living in right relationship. This

Law is born in Pride, all that we can do and accomplish. We recognize our gifts and we begin to share them. We notice the events that happen to knock us off balance; we catch ourselves when we start to think obsessively about our mistakes. We no longer hold our past responsible for our limiting beliefs and we stop blaming others who do what we are afraid to do ourselves.

In the octave between Pride and Law, we develop

our own code of honor based on what helps us feel within our integrity and what encourages us to feel proud of our behavior. In Law, we strive for congruence between our actions and these codes. We are curious about the principles of other people and we ask questions about their motives. We describe the impact of others' actions and ask for reparation in a way that recognizes the worth of each person. We honor the places where other people cannot do exactly what we want and

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we are able to negotiate. This energy of Law is a Fire that we build and tend together so that it can warm us all. We do not necessarily hold all people accountable to our personal codes but we strive to find the agreements between ourselves where we can all benefit. We can collaborate within our communities here; what do we accede is vital; what is inevitable? How will we base our lives on the natural laws we experience? What are the agreements that we celebrate together? What are the boundaries that we hold sacred? How could accountability to each other feel supportive of our individual talents and Pride? Law helps us determine when we prevent someone from doing harm if we see actions that do not acknowledge the laws of our planet or the worth of each human.

KNOWLEDGE

Law flows upwards into Knowledge. Knowledge is the awareness in my bones, what I intuit, what I have spent time learning, my life's lessons. Knowledge includes my intellect but is not limited to this as there are many ways of knowing. Knowledge is the truth that I understand enough to speak/teach/impart it to another. We so often ask How do I know or When will we know? The work of diving deeply into Self and repeatedly asking the questions of who we are give us these answers by building trust in our bodies, our intuitions, our lessons. We acknowledge our shadow and our potential for acting unconsciously from fear. When we have this kind of knowledge rooted in the

Editors' Note – this article works the Pearl Pentacle with the Knowledge and Wisdom points reversed from the above workings: Knowledge in the left hand and Wisdom in the left foot.

self, we catch ourselves when we act from shadow. From the experience of realizing the Self, we construct Knowledge of the world. We integrate information and put it into practice.

Knowledge, like Air, is all around us and welcomes our inspiration and conspiracy with it to choose, teach and share it with others. When many people who know themselves come together and work on a project, it is refreshing. The conflicts and agitations that come up in the community have a much better chance of providing fodder for evolution. Knowledge spreads from the individual to the group: This is where we were successful, this is where we got stuck, this is how we moved beyond the conflict. Knowledge helps us move forward and answer our ancient questions of Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

LIBERTY

Knowledge moves through the heart and across the chest into Liberty. Liberty is the freedom from constraints, collective life force in motion, the transformation from solid to liquid to gas, unfettered power rushing. Sometimes it is even the way that knowledge allows us the ability to make another choice, sometimes it is our sovereignty. Liberty is not one person's magic and this can be incredibly challenging. The strange fabrication of uninhibited freedom to do whatever we want, whenever we want is not the kind of Liberty that we can ever realize if we expect to live around other beings.



Sometimes the work of Liberty is to negotiate our needs within the needs of others and compromise for the good of the whole. Sometimes, Liberty occurs when we refuse to release our beliefs completely, even when we hold a vision that seems unpopular. Liberty is sometimes asking the folks who oppose our views how we could better take their concerns into consideration. Other times, it is advocating for the desires of a group of allies who is not at the negotiating table. Other times still, it is admitting that we do not know what is best for anyone else unless we ask them.

As a result of time spent with Iron, we no longer inflate ourselves to control others nor deflate ourselves to please them. Our Power from within increases and so does our influence. We live in a world where people use power over to destroy the planet and feed their own greed. Is it any wonder that we are suspicious of Power itself? Yet, there are many places where we desperately need more Power being used for healing the damage on our planet, not less. When we learn to trust that our power with others is happening even if we are not in the physical proximity of our allies, we are on our way to Liberty. When we learn to use the Power that corresponds with our level of responsibility and

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allow our influence to benefit others, we adopt Liberty. When we listen to as many voices as possible, as well as the one within ourselves to make decisions, we are beginning to create the song of Liberty.

Liberty by definition is not the magic of one person, it is much more like an ecosystem. A tree and a lichen and a waterfall can all be powerful within the same ecosystem. A river and a rock wall and a great wind will negotiate their relationship over time, finding their roles and shaping each other. We have to trust that humans will cooperate in

trying to move things with our will; we no longer force things to go our way, instead we look for the leverage, the power points, the places where we can assist fruition or give into it. Wisdom invites us to surrender and rely on a watery flow that defies purely rational training. Wisdom comes through our life initiations, our passage from one state of being to the next. We acquire it at the end of the lifelong alchemical transmutation of our patterns; it is knowledge we have performed over a period of time. The more we pursue our Passion and have varied and deep encounters with life, the more Wisdom we receive.

we move through this cycle together, building and reforming culture. We keep experimenting with new faces of humanity and moving towards the predestined end of our lives. And after Death, both ours and the eventual collapse and rebirth of culture, we may be reformed back into the nourishing Dark of the Star Goddess. Death and Darkness will lay together until the spark of Love and Light that is our reflection in the curved mirror of space brings us into being again. Our orgasm and the reformation of matter from nothing creates us anew as Iron pentacle shaped humans, each of us singular stars in the gown of the Star Goddess.

We will never change the world with only our own efforts. The lone warrior is useful to push or direct us in emergency moments and in those times when we need one voice to offer us revelation or example. Collaboration is crucial. Our cumulative effect is rooted in our relationships with ourselves and our connection to each other and the Earth. Our irritations become valuable, even beautiful over time as they yield gifts. We can soften our hearts towards each other and still emanate our strength. Pearl reminds us to tell each other how amazing we are as often as we tell each other how much we could improve. It gives us the opportunities to laugh at ourselves, smooth our edges and like the moon, reflect the shining powerful light of the sun and influence the tides of our human changes. The tide will indeed be turning when we finally allow ourselves to grow in our shared power and glow in our lucent magnificence, each of us an iron star, each of us an iridescent pearl.

Gerri Ravyn Stanfield is a healer, author, and educator dedicated to liberating the sacred leadership abilities and super powers within each of us. Ravyn creates ceremony and ritual art, weaving poetry, music and performance into contemporary offerings of the human imagination. Visit www.gerriravynstanfield.com



this way again. We could do our parts to communicate lovingly and clearly and act in integrity with our Laws and use our Power to heal and create beauty. It seems more difficult these days to create societies based in Liberty, but perhaps we are just out of practice!

WISDOM

Liberty opens to Wisdom. Wisdom is the gift of following Passion to its end, the integrated and polished teachings of life experiences. Wisdom asks us to become an artisan of life, to develop the ability to honor mistakes as our best teachers. With the energy of Wisdom, we stop

Wisdom is best held in a group. No one person's life can offer them every single experience. The practice of listening to the wisdom of the group before making a decision is one we could stand to recreate in our communities. We can also give ourselves the opportunity to sit a little longer with our emotions before we speak to others, crafting responses that are based in our wisdom and offered with Love. What might change about our feedback to each other if we were involved in that level of magic?

And Wisdom surges back to Love and the Pearl energy streams through us unbounded and vast as

...and a brief addendum...

After we finished production for this feature, we received two additional posts from Reclaiming teachers, which we include here.

An addendum from Rose May Dance

See short interview with Rose May Dance on page 40 of this issue. — RQ

I learned a lot about the Pearl from Reclaiming classes I took in 1980 and 1981. I remember my teachers, Star and Lauren Gale, arguing about which way everything went and that is where I heard Lauren say, “it is if the Goddess were drawing a pentacle on the front of your body.”

I think *The Spiral Dance* uses Knowledge on the left hand and Wisdom on the left foot, an edit because some early teachers thought Knowledge should come before Wisdom.

Now that I am older and perhaps begin to enjoy a bit of wisdom or at least perspective, I find Wisdom opens the way to Knowledge, which I work as “Knowing”. Anyway, the Reclaiming way is sort of “any way that works for you,” (Amusingly, in *The Spiral Dance* Star quotes Victor Anderson as saying something like “White Magic is pure poetry, Black Magic is anything that works!”)

In early Reclaiming classes, all our trances were inside a pearl inside and outside us. I feel my Pearl encircling neck, heart, breasts, and solar plexus.



Some thoughts from Brook

I was first introduced to Pearl Pentacle through Feri study, not through Reclaiming (though I was and remain, of course, very much Reclaiming in conjunction with Feri).

My mentors gave me the points and suggested that I run energy through my body-as-a-Pearl-Pentacle, and then meditate on each point in turn, doing this in invoking order. Pearl was never “described” to me.

I ran Pearl energy almost daily for about 6 months, I think. I did it consistently until the points developed deep personal meaning, solidified somatic meaning in my body.

Then I added an exercise I had read on a Feri list where one runs iron energy through each point in turn on ones body in invoking order, head/Sex, right foot/Pride, etc. Each Iron point is brought to a bright orange flame, as a piece of iron heated in a fire.

On the second pass, each orange, flaming, iron point is turned into a blue, pearl flame, from Sex to Love, from Pride to Law, and so forth, through an invoking pentacle-in-the-body.

I did this daily for 2-3 months. As the magic worked me, this series deepened not only my personal relations with Pearl but also revealed relationships between Iron and Pearl.

This Feri Pearl work was all done solo. It was a big change to start thinking about pearl work as group work, as community work. It was a big change to (somewhat) disconnect pearl from iron once again as a distinct body of work.

Another anecdote that may be of interest:

I was introduced to Pearl with Wisdom at the upper left point of the pentacle and Knowledge on the bottom left point.

Later, when I started to work with Reclaiming Pearl, I had to re-do these associations, as my co-teachers typically had these two points switched: Knowledge on the upper left point, Wisdom at the bottom left.

My associations built up over years with the flow of Pearl and with the relationship between Iron and Pearl points had to be reformed. During this same period, many Reclaiming folk changed Power, as I’d learned the upper right point (just like Iron), to Liberty.

Ah, back to daily pentacle work we go. “She changes everything...”