

DANCING

THE SPIRAL!



A COMPANION TO THE WRITINGS
OF STARHAWK

FOR CIRCLES & SOLITARIES

BY LUKE HAUSER

CO-CREATED WITH TEEN EARTH MAGIC CAMPERS & TEACHERS

FOREWORD BY STARHAWK

DANCING THE SPIRAL

A COMPANION TO THE WRITINGS OF STARHAWK FOR CIRCLES AND SOLITARIES

Welcome to Reclaiming Quarterly's latest project – a companion text to accompany Starhawk's voluminous writings, featuring magical workings, ritual ideas, activist skills, pagan history, and more.

Our goals are: (1) an exciting and challenging book for people working alone, with friends, or with a circle; (2) inspiration for folks to form a circle so they can do these workings with others; and (3) a fun book to flip through and get inspired!

The book also features a whole section of magical and activist resources – books, music, websites, free downloads, and more.

This draft already contains much of the material, including the just-rewritten Activism section and a whole bunch of new photos. We hope to complete and publish this book as a PDF and print edition in 2025. Meanwhile, we'll post fresh drafts at WeaveAndSpin.org/spiral

We're glad to have you seeing the book – feel free to pass it along, and come back for updates.

Download & Updates: WeaveAndSpin.org/Spiral

Years in development – and not completed yet?!

This book was first created as the Teen Earth Magic Workbook (2017), a 350-page resource for young people, teachers, and those who love them. Print or free download at WeaveAndSpin.org/freebies

Dancing the Spiral re-edits the book for all ages, with a focus on magic for solitaries and circles.

The current draft retains portions of the roundtables and interviews from the teens' book. These will be supplemented by more interviews as this book develops.

When will the book be complete? When the last serial comma is in place – and not a moment sooner!

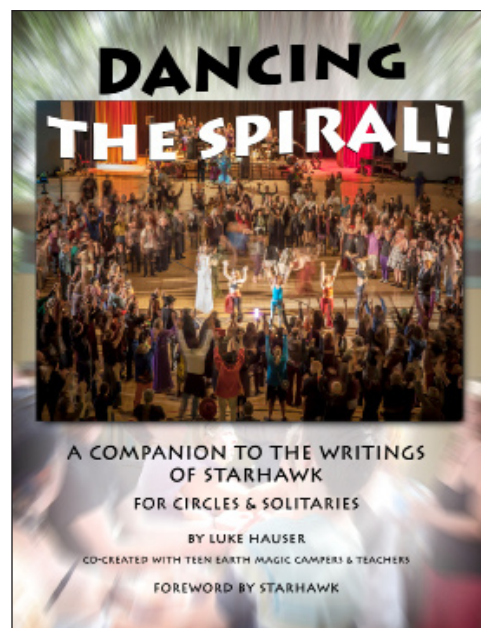
Feedback Welcome

Until this book is published in print, we welcome input. You can email feedback, suggestions, questions, chocolate, and large unmarked bills to:

ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com

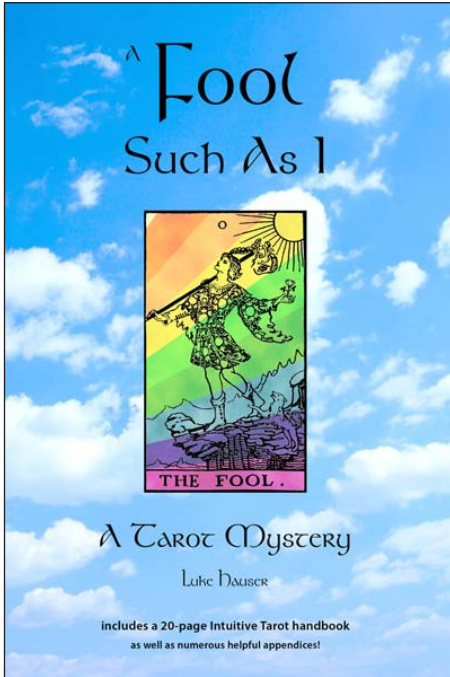
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**Spring 2024 version – this draft and all contents ©2024
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MORE BOOKS BY LUKE HAUSER

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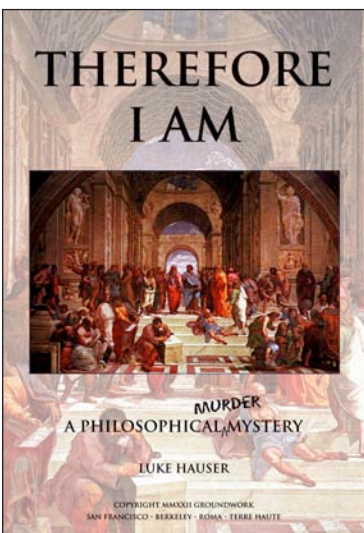
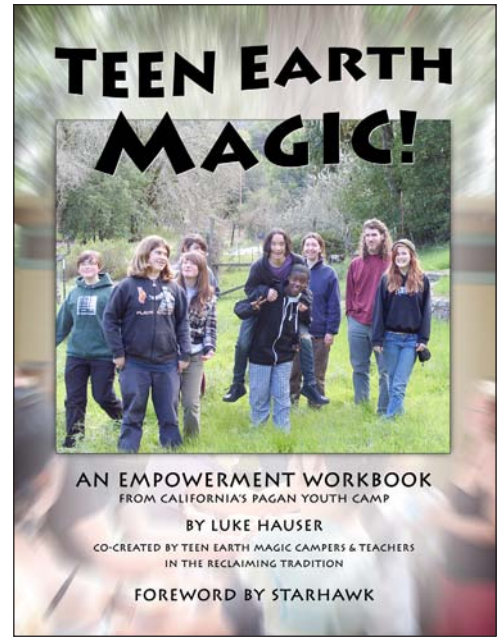
Not for teens only!

For teens, teachers, organizers – and for anyone looking for a challenging book of exercises, interviews, magical and activist workings, chants play-lists, and much more!

This is the original version of Dancing the Spiral.

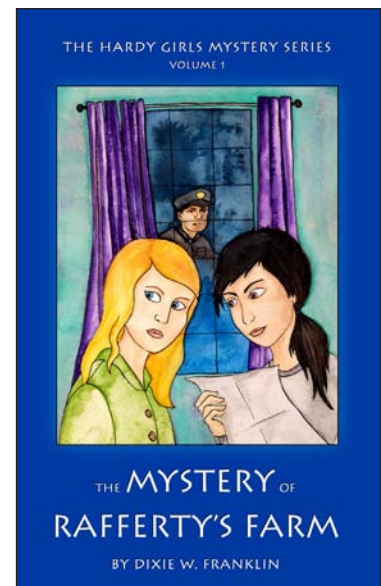
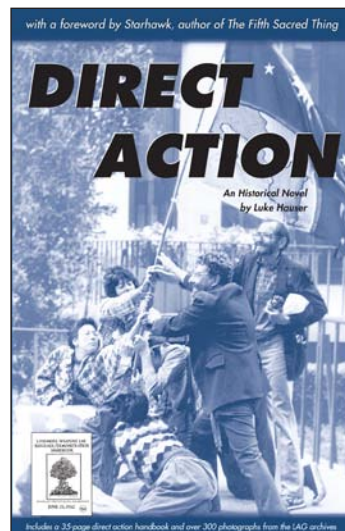
A Tarot mystery – the owner of Arcane Wisdom Magicke Shoppe is dead. His irreplaceable Tarot deck is missing!

If you love Tarot – watch out!



Professors are getting bumped off – and it will take all the tools of Western philosophy to solve the mystery!

An unparalleled narrative steeped in real events – dozens of actions, thousands of arrests – plus over 300 photos.



Fast, fun read for all ages – chapter-book thriller for kids, satire for adults – Luke Hauser channels The Hardy Girls Mystery Series.

DANCING THE SPIRAL!

A COMPANION TO THE WRITINGS OF STARHAWK
FOR CIRCLES & SOLITARIES

BY LUKE HAUSER

CO-CREATED BY TEEN EARTH MAGIC CAMPERS & TEACHERS

FOREWORD BY STARHAWK

GroundWork
San Francisco / Ohlone Territory

Reclaiming Quarterly

part of
Reclaiming Collective
San Francisco



Our Founder

This book is produced and published by GroundWork in cooperation with Reclaiming Quarterly and Teen Earth Magic, part of Reclaiming Collective.

Reclaiming Quarterly and Newsletter were published in print from 1980 to 2011, totaling more than 100 issues.

Today we publish online as well as books and recordings.

Back issues are available free at WeaveAndSpin.org/back-issues

Reclaiming Quarterly (1997-2011) was descended from Reclaiming Newsletter (1980-1997), itself a distant offshoot of *Ye Olde Gazetteer & Reclaymer* (1613-1776). The latter traced its roots to neolithic petroglyphs in western Anatolia, before which RQ's past is shrouded in mystery.

Views expressed in articles, graphics, interviews, advertisements, and miscellaneous marginalia belong to the authors, not to the Reclaiming community or the RQ production cell. Some of us don't even like some of the stuff we print.

RQ is a volunteer effort. You don't need to be in the Bay Area to help! Contact us at:

ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com

WEBSITES

Reclaiming.org

ReclaimingQuarterly.org

WeaveAndSpin.org

DirectAction.org

CampfireChants.org

GroundWork

San Francisco / Ohlone Territory

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Hauser, Luke

Dancing the Spiral: A Companion to the Writings of Starhawk

ISBN: 9798633817140

LCCN TBA

Designed and published via volunteer labor on Ohlone Land, Planet Earth: No Borders!

GroundWork c/o Reclaiming Collective

PO Box 14404

San Francisco CA 94114

Thanks to: Teen Earth Magic, Witchlets in the Woods, Redwood Magic Family Camp, Bay Area Reclaiming groups and the Wheel, CRAFT teachers cell, GroundWork, Mendocino Woodlands, Starhawk & Golden Rabbit Ranchers, Luz, Copper Persephone, Seed, M. Macha NightMare.

Love and appreciation to the late April Cotte, our Witchlets and Redwood Magic Family Camp co-teacher. April's book of exercises (free on the WeaveAndSpin website) inspired us to create this expanded workbook, and her spirit is forever felt in our work. What is remembered lives!

Copy editing and magical consulting by TBA

Cover photo: Spiral Dance invocations – San Francisco 2017. Photo by Michel Rauner.

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Published by GroundWork, an independent project affiliated with Reclaiming Collective. GroundWork, Luke Hauser, and George Franklin are solely and finally responsible for all content except quoted remarks.

This is a work of journalism. It reports activities from Reclaiming Tradition events, remembered to the best of our abilities. We make no further claim to originality, nor accept any further responsibility for the use, application, modification, etc of these workings after publication.

The author sifted through many notes and interviewed numerous participants in an effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained in this book. Notwithstanding this commendable effort, all responsibility for errors, inaccuracies, omissions, inconsistencies, less-than-felicitous phrasings, and/or regrettable puns – as well as any and all issues that might arise from the publication or application of this material – lies entirely with the author, not others cited, Reclaiming Quarterly, or any other part of Reclaiming.

Photos are from Reclaiming and other events. Connections between photographs and text may be coincidental, and do not necessarily depict the working described or the people involved in that working.

Over the years, workings have been borrowed from many places, and have been reworked to suit current needs. This book may have borrowed and/or refashioned a working you helped create without knowing the source. If you feel that a working is your creation or specialty, let us know and we will try to update the credits in future editions.

DOWNLOADS & PRINT EDITIONS OF THIS BOOK

Download of PDF: WeaveAndSpin.org/spiral • ReclaimingQuarterly.org/web/spiral

Print Edition: Amazon.com (maybe 2024?)

CONTACT

ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com • ReclaimingSecretary@gmail.com

This version March 2024.

Welcome to Reclaiming Magic!

“Welcome to WitchCamp!”

Each year, these words open nearly two dozen Reclaiming WitchCamps.

Originally co-created by Starhawk and Reclaiming’s founding generation, WitchCamps and communities now gather across the Americas, Europe, and Australia.

With this book, we welcome you to our circle.

Reclaiming-style magic can be done in large groups, small circles, or alone. It can be done with trained teachers at WitchCamps and classes, and in independent circles.

This book will help create magic that works for you.

Getting Started – Several Ways

Read the Introduction and Ritual chapters.

You’ll hear directly from participants in our camps and communities – What is Earth magic? Why and when do people do rituals? What do (or don’t) people believe about magic and spirituality?

Jump straight into one of the rituals. The Rituals chapter has several rituals that you can do alone or with a small circle – there’s even a drum-trance ritual guided by Starhawk that you can find online. Read the Intent for each ritual to find one that calls to you. There’s also a section on how to create your own rituals using workings from this book or ones you invent.



Pagan Cluster drummers lead a spiral dance at Occupy Oakland, 2011.

Top right: Teen Earth Magic 2010 (some teach at WitchCamps today)!

Flip through the Workings chapter and find one you like. Each working can stand alone – although you’ll probably want to start off by reading Ritual Skills: Sacred Space: Quick Ways, which shows how to create a magical circle as a container for other workings.

Make up more ways. In Reclaiming we say: “Each person is their own spiritual authority.” Each of us creates our own best ritual and magic. The purpose of this book is to share some basic skills and tools and to help you discover what works for you.

Blessings on your work. Welcome to the magic!

Who Can Attend WitchCamp?

Camps welcome new participants, and teach both introductory and advanced skills. The only requirements are a willingness to work in accord with the Reclaiming Principles of Union and an open heart.

Each camp creates its own circle. Some camps are for age 18-up, some all-ages. Several are for families and young people.

Visit WitchCamp.org, or contact us with questions – email ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com

More about WitchCamp – see page XXX.

About This Book

Why a Companion to Starhawk?

Now that you've read all of Starhawk's books, you're probably wondering what more there could possibly be?

Well, for starters, consider these:

- an illustrated essay on magical and activist ancestors
- 175 pages of step-by-step ideas for magical workings – altars, labyrinths, Tarot, spellcrafting, and much more!
- online trances, meditations, and even an entire Spiral Dance ritual
- chants for all occasions, from rituals to birthdays to singing in the shower – with links to streaming sites

Obviously a 350-page companion text was required!

What Is This Thing Called Reclaiming?

Reclaiming is an Earth-based spiritual teaching and grassroots organizing network with local communities and camps around the Americas, Europe, and Australia.

Although each community is independently organized, Reclaiming groups all agree to work in accord with the Principles of Unity – see page XXX.

Reclaiming WitchCamps offer community rituals and workshops on magic, activism, and personal growth for people of all ages interested in Earth-based practices.

Find out more later in this chapter, and at Reclaiming.org, WitchCamp.org, and WeaveAndSpin.org.

Paganism & Other Religions

Some practitioners and teachers of Reclaiming magic are also deeply involved in other spiritual traditions.

In addition to other Pagan traditions, Reclaiming folks are active in Buddhist, Jewish, and Unitarian groups.

Jewish folks and allies have held JeWitch Camp some years in Northern California.

A few combine Earth-based and Christian spirituality – Francis of Assisi and environmental ethics are bridges.

What about Satanism?

Are Pagans connected to Satanism? Perhaps somewhere – but in many Pagan groups, Satan is seen as part of a

different religion. We honor many goddesses and gods, but Satan wasn't part of any Pagan pantheon.

What About Teachers?

This book is designed for people working alone or with friends, or at Reclaiming Tradition camps. Other folks are welcome to adapt it for their use.

Unless you are formally trained in the tradition, please do not teach this material under the name "WitchCamp" or "Reclaiming." Reclaiming communities and camps have a teacher-development process.

Bring Reclaiming teachers to your retreat! Reclaiming teachers can anchor classes, workshops, and rituals, bringing inspiration and Earth energy to your event.

No Grooming or Recruiting – this book is not to be used to recruit youth for circles or classes apart from knowing and communicating with their families. No Reclaiming material is ever to be used to groom young people. Contact us with questions or concerns – email below.

About the Author

Luke Hauser (aka George Franklin) has helped organize Reclaiming rituals, classes, camps, chants recordings, and garage sales for lo these many years.

He co-edited Reclaiming Newsletter and Reclaiming Quarterly from 1996-2011, and writes many emails.

His life goal is to co-launch global eco-pagan revolution and then retire on the proceeds of his alleged novels.

Thank you in advance for your generous support!



Witchlets in the Woods and Redwood Magic are all-ages family camps, where adults, teens, and kids share collective and age-based magic in a magnificent setting. More info at Witchlets.org and RedwoodMagic.org.

Contact Reclaiming Quarterly

Contact us at ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com

Table of Contents

Welcome to Reclaiming Magic! 6
 About The Book 7
 Something Or Other 10
 Foreword: An Interview with Starhawk 11



Introduction

- Reclaiming: On Indigenous Land 15
- What Is Magic? – Roundtable.....
- What Do Pagans Believe? – Roundtable.....
- Covens, Circles, & Solitaries.....
- Etiquette, Hexes, Boundaries, & Safety.....
- Agreements: Building Trust.....
- About Reclaiming & Our Principles of Unity.....
- Gender Complexities – Interview with Mykel Mogg.....
- Cultural Appropriation – Interview with Rahula Janowski.....
- Our Magical Ancestors: An Illustrated Essay.....

Ritual Skills

Ritual Skills.....

- Outline of a Ritual & Wheel of the Year.....
- Ritual: What / Why / When – Roundtable.....
- Creating Sacred Space: Quick Ways.....
- Honoring First People.....
- Grounding – Teens Roundtable & Exercises.....
- Casting a Circle – Teens Roundtable & Exercises.....
- Invoking – Teens Roundtable & Exercises.....
- Invoking Elements & Ancestors.....
- Invoking Deities, Allies, & Energies – Roundtable.....
- Goddesses, Gods, Mysterious Ones, & Energies.....
- Planning a Ritual & Ritual Arc.....
- Magical Themes, Myths, & Stories from Our Camps.....
- How to Lead a Spiral Dance.....
- Chants Resources Online.....

Sample Rituals.....

- Way to the Well: An Online Ritual with Starhawk.....
- A Grounding Ritual & An Affirmation Ritual.....
- Labyrinth Challenges & Stations Ritual Formats.....
- A Water Ritual (from Elements of Magic class).....
- Opening Night at Witchlets.....
- Crafting Your Own Rituals.....



Table of More Contents

Magical Activism

Magical Activism: Reclaiming's Unique Synthesis

- Activism & Magic – Roundtable
- Activist Ancestors: Direct Action Thru History
- Youtube: Brief History of Nonviolent Direct Action
- Reclaiming's Activist History
- Activist Allies & Kindred Spirits
- An Activist Handbook
- Nonviolence, Consensus & Group Process Skills
- Finding Your Own Activism
- Preparing for Action: Skills for Street & Forest
- Workings: Street Theater, Chalking, Mystery Posters



Workings

Exercises & Workings – Complete Alphabetical List

- Tips & Techniques for Teachers
- Book of Shadows
- Boundaries
- Divination & Oracles
- Labyrinth Workings
- Liberation Circle
- Magical Writing
- Mirror Workings
- Pentacle Magic
- Shadow Work
- Spell Crafting
- Tarot: A Key Magical Tool
- Tools of Magic / Wands
- Trust Exercises



Organizing & Resources

- Organizing Magic Camps
- Ethics Agreement & Organizing Tools
- Reclaiming Chants for Rituals and Activism
- Reclaiming Resources, Books, & Publications
- Connecting with Reclaiming Communities & WitchCamps

Index & Guide to the Book

Revolutionary Pagan Workers Vanguard



The author takes the opportunity of a blank page in the current draft to announce his latest novel.

Magic will never be the same!

A Fool Such As I

A TAROT MYSTERY

by Luke Hauser

The owner of Arcane Wisdom Magicke Shoppe is dead. His revolutionary new deck, the Trismegistus Meister Tarot, is missing.

Could the culprit be one of the locals on Oracle Street? Perhaps gnostic sage Madame Bluebloodsky? Self-promoting raconteur Alabaster Crockley? Or maybe feminist maven Wendy Womansdaughter, owner of the Wiccan Wonderland?

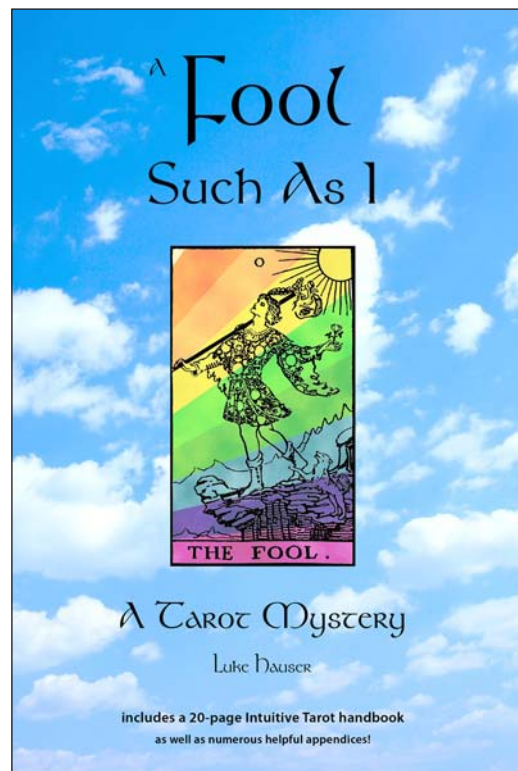
Did the shifty, tie-dyed mountebank from the esoteric street faire have a hand? And what about millionaire Cornelius De Roquefort, founder of the Headstone Eclectic Metaphysical Outlet chain?

Will the Universal Pan-Pagan Interfaith Council – UPPIC, the highest authority in the brave new Pagan world of the Great Return – succeed in hushing up the affair?

Worse yet, is UPPIC looking for a convenient scapegoat?

Join detective and resident custodian Jeff Harrison as he immerses himself in the minutiae of Tarot, taxing all of his intuitive and janitorial skills in a desperate attempt to clean up the messy affair – before he faces trial by ordeal!

Print/kindle edition or free PDF – DirectAction.org/fool/



Foreword: An Interview with Starhawk

(Starhawk's interview for Teen Earth Magic Workbook – to be replaced)

(For now, we've left the interview from the TEM Workbook here – this will be replaced with a fresh Introduction.)

Author Luke Hauser and Reclaiming co-founder Starhawk have been comrades and co-agitators since the early 1980s.

In this interview, we look back at how Paganism has evolved from the days when each of us (often as adults) had to discover Earth-based spirituality on our own, through the early days of Pagan parenting, to today's Reclaiming family and youth camps and communities.

Luke: You grew up Jewish – was that an important part of your younger years?

Starhawk: Yeah. I went to Hebrew schools, and I was Bat-Mitzvah'd. I went to Hebrew high school and after-school programs. If I'd been a boy, I'd probably have grown up to be a rabbi. But in that era – it's not just that there were not women rabbis – it never even crossed my mind as a possibility.

What led you to Paganism and the Goddess?

I always loved fairy tales. I loved the idea of magic. I especially loved the kinds of stories where ordinary, modern-day kids discovered magic in the modern world. I always longed for magic.

When I got to be a teenager, it was the 60s. It was all sex, drugs, and rock & roll – its own kind of magic! I felt like I was having direct spiritual experiences, especially with nature. Judaism didn't say much about that, especially at that time. So I began exploring.

My friend Patty and I eventually met some witches who said they believed that the Earth is alive, that the sacred Being is the Goddess, that sexuality is sacred, that women can be leaders. And I was like, yes!

Was this an organized Pagan group?

It was the American Celtic Tradition. We studied with them for a while, then drifted away. At that point in my life I wasn't very good at following a discipline!

Back then, it was really hard to find out anything about witches. There was very little to read. Sybil Leek, Raymond

Buckland. We read Joseph Campbell and other Jungians. When we met our teachers, Fred and Martha, they recommended that we read Robert Graves' book, *The White Goddess* – which is a pretty heavy read when you're 17.

I was really taken with his idea that there is this underlying Goddess tradition behind all of European culture.

You and I are part of a generation that had to seek the Goddess on our own. Now we see kids raised as Pagans.

When we started Reclaiming in the late 70s and early 80s, it was mainly young, single people. There were some families, and as the community grew and matured, more people had kids.

But most Pagan parents did not grow up Pagan – it was a break with their family and their traditions.

I felt there was a need for a book about raising Pagan kids, if we want the tradition to carry on, and not just be, "Oh yeah, that's something my weird parents did back then."

But I didn't have any kids. Both Diane [Baker] and Anne [Hill] had kids, so it seemed like we would be a good combination to write *Circle Round* (see page 14).

Witchlets in the Woods started in 2001, and Redwood Magic Family Camp in 2013 – over the years, a lot of Reclaiming kids have been raised on that book.

I'm really grateful that people started those camps. It's really important for kids to have a spiritual community with other kids who have the same kinds of weird parents!

You've worked with a lot of young people in your Earth Activist Trainings and other Permaculture work. What have been your hopes and goals?

When it comes right down to it, I'm a pretty practical person. And Permaculture is the practical side of believing the Earth is sacred – really knowing what to do about it.

I've always loved gardening and loved being with nature. And I've also been an environmental activist all my life. It seems like Permaculture is the positive program, as

continued on next page

Foreword: Interview with Starhawk (pg 2)

(Starhawk's interview for Teen Earth Magic Workbook – to be replaced)

Gandhi said. Besides just protesting, this is how we start building the world that we want.

I think young people come through the courses because they are going to have to live in this world, and they're hungry to find out what to do about it.

It's very gratifying when I see people take this work and start projects, or work in a relevant field, or transform landscapes – make real changes – I feel like that's been a huge success.

My hope is always that this is not just about how we entertain or soothe ourselves, but how we really shift consciousness on a larger scale – to understand that the Earth is alive, that we are part of it, and that everything is interconnected.

We have a responsibility to take care of it, to act in its service. And when idiots are destroying it, to do what we can to stop them.

Suppose that in 20 years Reclaiming no longer exists – what are the most important things we can pass along?

If Reclaiming as an organization didn't exist, but people carry it on or transform it in some way – if there were still people creating rituals that have meaning to them, organizing and taking action with the sensibility that this is not just about a power struggle, but this is a sacred activity and a shift in consciousness – that would be success.

Maintaining a tradition is hard in this era, when we have so many possibilities. It not like in the Middle Ages where you grew up in a community with rituals and traditions, and those were the ways things were done. Now there are infinite ways things could be done – there are infinite ways you could spend Samhain evening, whether it's going to a ritual, or staying home and watching Halloween movies.

Let's talk about Teen Earth Magic, which grew out of your organizing.

Teen Earth Magic is vitally important. Teens are at an age when you're really wrestling with these questions – what is life about, what happens when we die, what do I believe, what kind of person do I want to be, what

are my guiding principles going to be?

It's really helpful to have a spiritual community to help you face those questions. To be able to do it in a place where other people will support you is very different than having to do it alone or face the condemnation of your community.

Reclaiming is not a dogmatic religion where we give the answers. But I think

we have an approach that is of great value. I think there's strength in the Pagan tradition, in the creativity and the sharing of power.

Teen Earth Magic creates a really supportive community of young people. It's a beautiful refuge for people who care for one another, who aren't ashamed to learn from one another and teach each other.

What has TEM meant for Reclaiming as a whole?

It's a learning ground, where some of the next generation will come from. They can begin to step up and take roles and guide and shape Reclaiming into its next phase.

We elders are getting older! And maybe not as central as



Starhawk facilitates an exercise at a teens nonviolent direct action training – February 2011. Photo by Luke Hauser/Reclaiming Quarterly.

continued on next page

Foreword: Interview with Starhawk (pg 3)

(Starhawk's interview for Teen Earth Magic Workbook – to be replaced)

we used to be. It's exciting to see younger people wanting to step up.

What about younger people coming into Spiral Dance or WitchCamp organizing?

It's great, although now that I'm older, I see the value in Native American traditions that say, "Honor your elders. Treat your elders with respect and care."

Good luck with that!

Yeah. Empowerment is great, but elders actually do know some things, which we've discovered through trial and error. Youth don't need to be condemned to making the same mistakes all over again. They can learn from our experience.

Part of creating the Teen Earth Magic Workbook is passing along lessons and ways of looking at things.

That's so important. Inside and outside of Reclaiming, young people are grappling with questions around gender, around diversity, all of these issues – trying to contend with not fitting into the roles that society offers.

I think it's wonderful to empower youth to create their own rituals, their own camp – to give them the skills and tools and see what they do with them. Reclaiming and especially Teen Earth Magic have been a supportive space for that work.

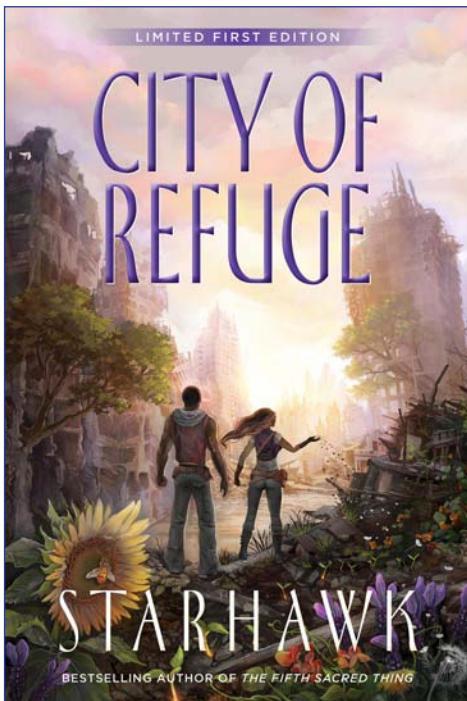
This book is an amazing magical resource for teens – and everyone. I really appreciate the work people have done to gather all of these resources for the next generation.

It's pretty impressive what people in Reclaiming have done – the number of authors and books, the music and chants and rituals – it's been a very creative space!

What gives you hope?

Getting to teach young people Permaculture. Seeing the Parkland [Florida] teens start a whole movement following the violence at their school. That makes me feel hopeful.

Young people in Reclaiming give me a lot of hope – seeing them so passionate about things. Even when I'm butting heads with them, the fervor and life force that they bring to bear is beautiful.



Books by Starhawk

- The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Goddess
- Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, & Politics
- Truth or Dare: Encounters with Power, Authority, & Mystery
- The Twelve Wild Swans: A Journey to the Realm of Magic, Healing, & Action
- The Earth Path: Grounding Your Spirit in the Rhythms of Nature
- Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising
- The Pagan Book of Living and Dying (with M. Macha Nightmare)
- Circle Round: Raising Children in Goddess Traditions (with Diane Baker & Anne Hill)

Novels

- The Fifth Sacred Thing
- Walking to Mercury
- City of Refuge
- The Last Wild Witch (picture-book for kids and everyone)

More resources from Starhawk and Reclaiming – pages XXXXXXXX.

**One more page for Starhawk
interview**

Reclaiming Camps & Rituals Are Often Held On Indigenous Land

Adapted from a statement from Teen Earth Magic.

Teen Earth Magic (and many Reclaiming events) are held on unceded land of Indigenous People.

We live in a society built on genocide and theft.

In our rituals we acknowledge this debt and participate in the magical deconstruction of this abuse.

In our activism we seek to support Indigenous organizing, and to understand and heal the ways settler colonialism has and is influencing our efforts.

We take time to learn about the Indigenous People whose land we gather on, and how to support their ongoing efforts for recognition, autonomy, and healing.

We are engaged in a continuing process of listening, learning, and practicing.

So mote it be.

*Acknowledging Indigenous People in our ritual practice – see *Ritual Skills: Honoring First People* – page XXX.*



About Reclaiming WitchCamps

Reclaiming WitchCamps are intensive retreats in the Reclaiming Tradition* of magic and activism, and offer Earth-based ritual, empowerment and awareness workings, activism, and community.

Camps are co-created by organizers and teachers, and connect via the WitchCamp Council.

The earliest WitchCamp was a teacher-training intensive in California in the late 1980s. British Columbia WitchCamp was the first camp open to all. Vermont, California, Texas, and Germany held other early camps.

Some camps welcome all ages. Witchlets in the Woods(California) and Wild Ginger (Ontario) launched the family camp movement, bringing Reclaiming magic to all ages. Redwood Magic Family Camp and Teen Earth Magic have expanded our youth offerings.

Today, camps can be found in Europe, Britain, Australia, and North America, with local communities in South America as well. Find the latest WitchCamp schedule at WitchCamp.org.

For more about WitchCamp and Reclaiming communities, classes, and workshops, see pages XXX.

Who Can Attend WitchCamp?

Anyone who will work in accord with the Reclaiming Principles of Unity (Reclaiming.org/about) can attend WitchCamp. Some camps are for ages 18-up, and some are for families. Some have specific focuses and constituencies. Visit camp websites for specifics.

Visit WitchCamp.org for camp contacts, or email us with questions – ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com

* - for more about Reclaiming, see page XXX and visit Reclaiming.org.



What Is Magic? – Reclaiming Roundtable

Magic is one of those words that means something different to everyone. Whether or not we “believe in magic” or “do magic” often depends on what we mean by the word.

Here’s what some WitchCampers think about magic. You might want to get out your journal and answer some of these questions for yourself. (See page XXX.)

What does magic mean to you?

Seed (E): That’s like asking a fish, “What is water?”

KaeliMo (Y): It’s super vague – it’s a mystery! It’s different for everybody, which is part of what’s cool.

Heaven (A): I’ll start with a book definition – changing consciousness at will Everyone is able to do it, but many people are not able to let themselves do it. Some people are sort of born into that world. Some people have to talk themselves into it.

IvoryFly (A): It’s an experience. It’s life. It’s not separate. Not like I “go to a place” to do magic.

Meagan (Y): Magic is the ability to influence reality in non-linear ways, to generate energy for an outcome through non-physical means. It’s intuitive, not rational.

Fio (A): One of my missions in the world is re-sacralization – the re-centralization of things that have been lost or changed by Western occult magic. The truest witchcraft

Key: (Y) = youth to approx 30 / (A) = approx 30-55 / (E) = elder



is about people awakened to their own uncanniness, to their belonging to both this world *and* the other world.

Seed (E): It seems to me that the world manifests through a wild, embodied, vivid energy. When we can be with the fire and water and gratitude and creativity and playfulness and mischief, it’s the most natural thing in the world – it’s the way we are if we aren’t cutting ourselves off.

Dusky (Y): Magic is intentionally creating your own reality. I don’t mean that in a delusional sense. It’s like if you wake up in the morning and say, “I’m going to be happy today” – there’s a pretty good chance you’ll actually be happy. When I do magic that tries to affect the world outside me, that’s when the lines get blurry. I’ve always struggled with my scientific mind arguing against my magical self – is this real, or is this just me convincing myself?

Mykel (Y): It’s the ways that our beliefs and intentions fundamentally change the world. Something about myth/story, and how telling a different story changes your situation.

Paul (E): Magic is just living every day. There’s mundane magic and “real” magic – it’s all part of us.

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What Is Magic? – Roundtable (pg 2)



Nurturing our seeds – a magical working at Teen Earth Magic 2010.

What is the link between magic and energy?

Kim (A): We're made of energy. Magic is recognizing that – in your body, in your emotions. When you tap into that, you can create change for yourself and for the world.

Ola'í Wildeboar (Y): To me, magic is the energy of the Earth that flows all around us. It's the little miracles we experience every day and the good feelings that make us light up inside. We are all capable of magic – from the little voice in our head that tells us right from wrong, to the compassion we feel for a friend in need – it's all magic. Our living, breathing, consciously loving souls are magic.

Lilo (A): When you are a witch you are watching threads of possibilities that other people are not seeing – threads of the past, of destiny, of how things work in a natural way, in cycles, in the rhythm of the world. There's responsibility behind choosing one of these threads. If I don't feel responsible for this thread, my magic will not work.

Willow (E): There are energies around me. It's like a musician's relation to a dancer. Doing magic is consciously engaging with that.

Lucy (Y): Magic is the energy created when thought or time or practice is put into something. I believe that everything we do, say, or think sends out vibrations and energy into the universe – to me, that is magic. Practicing magic is the focus on exactly *what* energy you are sending into the universe and why.

Ingrid (Y): What I call magic is moments in time – the quality of the day, walking down the street and it's perfectly sunny and warm, a slight breeze – I don't know how to explain it, but I'm pretty sure everyone knows what I mean, and has felt like that. It's a feeling of, to be completely cheesy, "wholeness" – all-encompassing, more than just the moment.

How does magic work?

Seed (E): It's really a mystery, isn't it? (Long pause). It's an engagement between what's flowing toward us from the world, and what our creative energy is calling. Anyone who does spellwork or that kind of prayer knows that what manifests often has little

resemblance to what you thought was going to happen.

Lilo (A): It "works" because it's natural. As a witch, I understand in my bones and muscles how it works. If I can accept it, I can let it happen smoothly. In the end, I also don't know. It's a mystery. I only know that it happens.

Heaven (A): The reality is that magic is simple. Some people would speak of "sympathetic magic." When you light a candle and focus your will, you create something. You transform yourself into a conduit, and those energies work for you. As I will, so shall it be! Those words are real.

Max (Y): Magic entails knowledge and use of science, universal laws, art, and mystery. Magic is wisdom and love woven into an art form of personal development and transformation.

Jamie (A): It goes back to shamanic roots. We are in a living, conscious world. Everything has life, everything has consciousness. Our job is to be, not just in harmony, but to be connected, at one with it, so we increase all the good work – creativity, generosity, awareness, beauty.

Willow (E): I'm a musician, and everything around me is the dance. Magical tools are my instruments – grounding, singing, drumming, leading trances, being able to look at my shadow.... The way that I play influences how the energy around me wants to move.

John (A): It's an awareness that everything is connected. The modern world isolates and divides us. That's why

continued on next page

What Is Magic? – Roundtable (pg 3)

hanging out in nature is so important – it brings back awareness of the connections, of oneness.

Mykel (Y): For me, magic is something you do, a process – but it’s also a thing that exists in everything, without us “doing” anything. Part of doing magic is opening up to that – that magic is in everything.

How have your ideas about magic or spirituality changed?

Rhys (Y): When I was a child, I thought of magic as a physical power. As I got older I realized that it exists more within myself and what is around me.

Ola’i Wildeboar (Y): When I was little, I thought if I worked hard enough I could learn to fly or shoot lightning out of my fingertips. And that with whatever spell I was doing, the results would be immediate. I realize now that some magic can be visible or physical or immediate, but that’s not usually how it works.

Paul (E): I recall in the early days of Witchcamp, how I’d wait all year for this one week so I could become my real self. At some point I realized that the real magic is living each day with the awareness of our values, of our energies and actions. Noticing what is around us – where do we want to focus our will and our action?

John (A): At first I thought of magic as spells, making



things manifest in the physical world. But I’ve come to understand it more as a process of transformation. Magic is a way of changing the self to change the world. And as the world changes, it changes the self.

Dusky (Y): Over the years, I have been able to incorporate magic into my inclined-toward-science mind. That’s powerful to me, that I never have to choose between magic or science – it could be both. Magic is the science we haven’t yet “scienced,” that we haven’t yet been able to quantify.

Lucy (Y): For me, the realization that most magic doesn’t produce a result in a day. Some of the most powerful work I’ve seen and done is long-term. Thinking of magic as a journey has helped me progress as a spiritual being.

Seed (E): As I get older, I spend so much of my time in “crone” work – prayers for the world, prayers for nature. It’s a lovely inversion that can happen when you are croning, when the attention that was spent trying to construct one’s self turns inside out and points into the world.

Jamie (A): I am more inclined toward the metaphysical. I’m more interested in working with universal elements, not just “Earth” elements. Practicing with a sense of the self that is more expansive, complex, permeable. A more open sense of the real, of who we are.



Top: Maypole at Berkeley PaganFest – see page XXX.

Bottom: Reclaiming’s Besom Brigade at PaganFest.

What Is *Earth Magic*? – Roundtable

What is “Earth” magic?

Sequoia (Y): I have this reaction that we’re on our hands on the ground, we’re directly in contact with the Earth, and we’re speaking the names of plants. It’s a visceral magic. It’s easy to get into this esoteric world of spells and song and poetry – Earth magic is rooted in things that we can see and touch and speak to. Even when it appears in esoteric ways, it’s grounded, literally, in the real world.

Heaven (A): The whole world is magic – and the Earth is magic. We’re trained not to notice this – we have to unlearn our conditioning.

Willow (E): Aligning with an energy of the place you are in – what is it about that relationship that I want to explore, and that it wants to explore with me? Earth Magic can also mean people who have special relationships with trees and plants.

Hilary (Y): It’s the idea of Earth as divinity, the energetic engagement with this being that we reside on. It speaks to our energy bodies and our community bodies, our collective bio-diverse experiential bodies – it’s that web of connection, that interweaving of deity and plant and animal and mineral and unnamed mysterious cauldron.

Fio (A): Everything is body. The body is deeper, wilder, wiser than we are taught. The cosmos is a body. Nothing

happens that cannot be translated through the body.

Dusky: What I believe is that the Earth and everything alive on it is connected, and there is some greater consciousness existing through that – something greater than the sum of its parts.

Sequoia (Y): Earth magic is recognizing the life and magic in the plants and animals we’re interacting with, recognizing it as collaborative and interactive magic.

What do you mean when you say that Earth magic is collaborative?

Sequoia: There’s an older idea of magic as control over the elements – it’s a manipulative type of magic. In Reclaiming, we talk about the concept of power-over versus power-with – Earth magic is very much a *power-with* experience, allowing our concept of sentience to spread across beings that we can’t share words with.

Paul (E): What’s important to me is re-engaging with the Earth. It’s not a metaphor. It’s a physical thing. I can run up to a tree and put my arms around it, I can put my hands in the mud. Earth magic for me is that tangible, sensual, dirty relationship with the Earth. It invigorates me – like going to the Earth spa – and it’s free!

Jamie (A): Earth magic has to be applied. To be a witch is an aspirational thing – it means we are a force for vitality, for wisdom. We bring health and wholeness and wellness and vitality to the whole. We *are* the environment, we *are* the elements.

Hilary (Y): If you are invoking a deity, you are invoking the stories of the people who created them, the stories that are held in the rocks and the drops of water at that place. If you invoke a tree, you invoke the idea of a tree, but you also invoke what the tree has to say, beyond metaphor. When you look at a leaf and see that there’s not enough water, the edges are dryer, and you know what that means for the ecosystem – that’s also Earth magic. It’s not just imagining and personifying Butterfly or Bee or Salmon – it’s listening to what their Earth-bodies are telling us.



Teen Earth Magic gets down to the nitty-gritty with our 2018 theme: Mushrooms & Fungi. Artwork by Aja. Photo by Pavani.

How Do You Describe Yourself?

Take our survey and see how your answers compare to Reclaiming WitchCampers! See the next page for our results.

Words	Call myself	Don't call myself but OK if others do	Don't use or like	Huh?	Notes
Pagan/Paganism					
Neo-Pagan					
Witch/Witchcraft					
Magic					
Wicca/Wiccan					
Reclaiming					
New Age					
Alternative Spirituality					
Spells/Spellcrafting					
Goddess-based					
Earth-based					
Spiritual					
Religious					
Agnostic					
Atheist					
Skeptic					
Anarchist					
Activist					
Radical					
Artist					
Woo					
Hippie					
Other:					

COMMENTS:

How Do People Describe Themselves?

What do Reclaiming folks call themselves? What terms do people use to describe what they're doing?

What better place to start than with young folks?

Here are results from a non-scientific poll taken several years at Teen Earth Magic (see previous page for survey).

The most common self-description words

- Magic
- Witch/Witchcraft
- Artist
- Earth-based

Other words that people like - but more folks say, "I don't use it about myself"

- Activist
- Spiritual
- Pagan
- Reclaiming
- Spells/Spellcrafting

Terms that get high marks, but also a few negatives

- Anarchist
- Radical
- Woo
- Goddess-based



Mixed reviews (half positive/half-negative)

- Alternative Spirituality
- Hippie

Terms that most people are indifferent about or don't like

- Neo-Pagan
- Religious
- New Age
- Wicca
- Skeptic
- Agnostic
- Atheist

And a few write-ins that we'll ask next time

- Super-Awesome
- Free-Thinker
- Off-Gridder

Photos

Teens create body art illustrating camp themes (see page XXX):

- Top: Journey of the Monarch Butterfly (2012)
- Middle: The Bard's Journey (2011)
- Left: Pentacle of the Great Turning (2010 & 2017)

Roundtable: Words & Beliefs

How do you refer to your spiritual involvement? Are there names you use?

Seed (E): I'm not super into the semantics of it. I'm not really fussy about the words.

Dusky (Y): I've been trying to find a word for the entirety of my spiritual existence. I even fluctuate between whether I refer to myself as a spiritual or religious person. Finding a concise word is not easy. I'm usually like, "I'm Wiccan-ish, I'm Pagan-ish."

Kim (A): It depends on the audience! If I was in the hospital and needed a religion on my armband, I'd say pagan. I don't say "wiccan," because that implies more Gardnerian, and it's not particularly my path.

Fio (A): I've been experimenting with this academic term – "service magician" – because it's my literal job! I would also say I fall under the purview of "cunning craft" – a lot of my magic is specifically cunning craft. People come to me to banish spirits from homes, divine, find lost objects, sell their homes and businesses. I would never go about going, "I'm a cunning person!" But that term makes sense.

John (A): I often say I'm part of a neo-pagan movement. I don't know if there's a specific term for the kind of magic that Reclaiming does. As a community we've resisted having too strict a definition or label of who we are, because of our value of openness and wanting to be able to change with the times.

Willow (E): Our tradition draws people who basically don't like to join groups. There's a resistance to boxes and labels. I feel some of that with the word "witch." It's a label to carry.

Paul (E): Depending on the circumstance, I'm either pagan or a witch. To me that's an important thing to acknowledge. I claim it proudly (the word witch).

Do others use 'witch'?

Mykel (Y): I love the word "witch." I like that it's about being a powerful, purposeful person instead of being attached to any one religion. I don't identify as a Wiccan because I associate that word with more theologically-rigid traditions that emphasize the gender binary.

Heaven (A): I think I was born a witch. I had such a real relationship with the Earth from a young age. Everything made sense when I was in nature. I think being a witch is a birthright. It's just who I am. And luckily there's a whole tradition that supports that!

Fio (A): If I meet someone on the street, I would never say I'm a witch. Why would I? But I *am* a witch. That's the term that makes the most sense, that I can go, yep, that's the word that I love, embrace, feel embraced by.

Lilo (A): In Brazil, "witch" has different translations – it can be masculine or feminine. I would say I am a witch in a "feminine" way, so I wouldn't say "bruxo," I would say "bruxa." I think it's a progressive idea, someone who is a queer person but has this beard and this face that can be read

as a man – calling themselves "bruxa" in the feminine way. Sometimes I feel that I have to hide it. It's dangerous here. Very dangerous.

Ingrid (Y): I like "witch," although it requires more explanation, and a lot of people look at you and do this weird smile.

Kim (A): I'm totally okay with being called a witch in mixed pagan company, or in open-minded lay company. But not at work. I guess I'm in the broom closet there.

John (A): I'm the same way. One thing I do is emphasize the connection with nature, and less focusing on spells. I never really got good at spells. I focus more on being in



Key: (Y) = youth to approx 30 / (A) = approx 30-55 / (E) = elder

continued on next page

Roundtable: Words & Beliefs (pg 2)

awe of the oneness of nature, feeling the connection.

Willow (E): When I've built trust and affinity, I come out. By using that word I can do some culture-changing. But it's not the only word I use.

What does 'witch' mean to you?

Willow (E): Someone who does things with healing energy, consciousness-changing ritual. I also tell people the things I suck at – to blow any illusions that I know all the mysterious things. I really suck at kitchen magic. I'm not great with Tarot.

Dusky (Y): Being a rad, bad-ass feminist. Witches are spunky chicks. Witches weren't afraid to be different, and that's a really big part of my self-identity – that I'm okay with being weird and wackadoo and all that stuff. It's part of my spirituality to be weird.

Heaven (A): It's a language that I speak. To be a witch is to speak a certain language.

IvoryFly (A): Witches have good values – life, health, safety, justice, equality.

Paul (E): When I say witch, I mean I am a piece of mud and dirt and sand and tree, in connection to all. We are no longer separate from the Earth – we are part of the Earth. There's also this aspect of connection to "outlaws" – people who spoke real truth to power.

Mykel (Y): The word "witch," to me, means that a person practices the art of doing magic, instead of focusing on any particular theology.

Were you raised in a spiritual tradition?

Ari (Y): I was raised Christian, but I was allowed to check out other religions. My dad was a Pagan and with him I attended rituals and Witchlets, where I began to look into Paganism. Both parents had a respect for each other's religions and never put them down.

Peter (Y): At birth I was a multitude of stitched-together spiritualities. I attended Sunday school, led by my mother, at a small Methodist church where we would watch the Sun rise on Solstice. I was baptized over a Mayan fire for peace and unification of the Earth. As I grew older we settled into Reclaiming and the Red Road.

Seed (E): Christianity never made sense. At church, I would sit there and stare at the tiffany glass windows and just hope that it would end soon. Nature was always the most sacred thing to me.

Mykel: My friend was involved in the Unitarian Church and they have a Pagan Interest Circle that does moon circles. I'd come along, and I was super into that from the beginning. It still feels good and natural to do that. I don't think I have another part of my practice and identity that has stayed with me as long as this has.

How is it to follow in your parents' tradition?

Peter (Y): I always followed in my mother's spiritual path because it felt right. I loved the empowerment of the Reclaiming community, and value the ethics and manners and the recognition of equally valuable traditions from the Red Road.

Ola'i Wildeboar (Y): Both my parents are open to all religions but especially to Earth-based ones. My parents have supported and taught me what I needed to know.

What has drawn you to work with Reclaiming?

John (A): The emphasis on activism is a cornerstone of Reclaiming, and that's something I really resonate with.

Willow (E): Being a Reclaiming witch is being on the fringe of the fringe of witchcraft. We don't have the traditional degrees, the high priestesses, all these structures. For me, Reclaiming tradition is a container that is large enough to hold me in wherever I am in my belief, or lack thereof. I am free to explore what mystery means to me. I want to cultivate a sense of wonder and curiosity – what the hell is out there? What connects us?

Ingrid (Y): I appreciate the activism, and the inclusive nature – wanting to accept and value being diverse. I love that about Reclaiming, that we make space for and value diversity in every sense.

Fio (A): The draw for me was the politically engaged witchcraft. The ecofeminist values. I remember reading *Fifth Sacred Thing* and *Truth or Dare*, and I was very allured by Starhawk's articulation and the prose poetry – such a clever writer! Such a sensuous writer.

Seed (E): When I was young, I had these imaginary friends who wanted to do all the crazy things I wanted to do. In my 30s I stumbled on Reclaiming. It was such a revelation, like all of my imaginary friends existed in the flesh, dancing naked around the bonfire! They were going out in the woods and worshipping the way I worshiped. It was mind-blowing.

Maeve (Y): One of the things I remember about Witchlets is when I was eight and got to have a ritual role, and got to be around a bunch of other people who were doing

Roundtable: Words & Beliefs (pg 3)

roles, people of all different ages. I got to learn by watching and being treated like I was on the same level as the others.

Dusky (Y): When I'm in a Reclaiming camp or group, I don't feel like I have to be any one way. I initially thought I was supposed to be super magicky, super spiritual. But I realized pretty quickly that wasn't the case, that there would be someone in the community that would want to join me in whatever goofball activity I wanted to do.

Where does Reclaiming get difficult for you?

Lilo (A): I would like to see a change in the way we think of community – in the way we deal with and how we maintain community. The way that we build community is intertwined with a very specific and systematic way that marginalizes people with specific skin colors, and centralizes the thought of very specific people. We have work to do.

-- *Jacin!*

== *IFly reQueer support could go here?*

What has changed for you?

Fio (A): There's the amazing "technology – in my training working with a lot of Reclaiming teacher, there's a lot of collaborative ritual technology and ritual technology that is very potent, very proficient – I wanted to learn that. I became very committed.

Paul (E): Once upon a time, years ago, magic was in ritual, and life was somewhere else. That's no longer true. Magic is diffused to every part of my life. There's no longer a separation.

Willow (E): I would totally echo that. When I found Reclaiming, I started cultivating magical lifestyle, not just doing magic in rituals. Reclaiming has given me so many tools for integrating hidden parts of myself, for coming to the crossroads and learning how to feel more integrated and whole. That's an ongoing gift.

What keeps you coming back?

Natasha (Y): A big part of what brings me back is the people. They're my family, people I've grown up with. It's something I feel really lucky and blessed to have.

Seed (E): Our culture is hungry for spiritual and creative community – you have to make it up, make it happen. That's one of the wonderful things about Reclaiming and so many other communities of spirit.

Sequoia (Y): The experience of being a co-creator.

Maeve (Y): The same for me. My first year at Witchlets I was three. It was new and exciting and unexpected at every turn – completely magical. Part of the role I now see myself in, as a Weaver and ritual planner and student teacher, is creating that magic again – keeping that spontaneity and unexpectedness and discovery for new people.

Charlotte (Y): I love having a space for young people to do magic in nature, people who are there for the same reason, who want to do Earth magic. There's only so many teenage witches in your life!

Willow (E): I feel so deeply grateful for Reclaiming. There have been times when I've felt really frustrated. Then I think about how many of the people I love most in the world came from this tradition, this wacky, functional, dysfunctional family. So I continue to stick around and be super-grateful for it.

The growing pains are constant. And I'm grateful that we are evolving and dynamic, even though it's uncomfortable at times.

What Do I Believe (or Not)?

Here's a chance to meditate on your own beliefs and non-beliefs. You could do it while you're washing dishes or commuting to school or work – but why not take a little time and first create a magical circle?

PREP

Set aside 30 minute or more where you can be undisturbed.

Bring – Book of Shadows or journal and pen; water; comfortable, layered clothes; music player if you wish.

Music – Reclaiming's Labyrinth Meditation Music – on all streaming services. Put this 8-minute track on loop and settle in.

Sacred space – decide how you will do it. See the Rituals Skills chapter for ideas for quickly creating a circle (especially pages XXX). You can also simply close your door, stand tall and relaxed, and take five breaths – one each for Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit. When you finish, take a deep breath, say, "Blessed Be," and sit down to write.

WORKING

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – Write for a few minutes about any of these topics that call to you. You may want to leave blank space after your answers for later additions.

What Is Magic?

- What do you believe about magic? Is magic "real"? What does *that* mean? How does magic work?
- What are a few things you believe about magic/spirituality? (Note – "scientific" people can answer this one too – what does "magic" mean to you?)
- What are a few things that you do *not* believe about magic? List a few things you've heard about magic/spirituality that just don't make sense to you. Can you say why?
- When and why might you do magic, a ritual, a spell, etc?
- What is the point of ritual? Why would you or anyone else take part in a ritual?
- Does the word "sacred" or "spiritual" or a similar word have meaning to you? What does it mean in your life and your practice?
- What does Goddess/God/Deity/Divinity mean to you? Do you have relations with or attraction to any specific deities? What do you get from relating to these beings? (Or what might you wish to get)?

Your Involvement and Commitment

- Do you presently see magic and ritual as something you do or wish to do alone ("solitary")? With a small circle? Only when someone else organizes it? With a community of people who gather regularly? What draws you to one or another way?
- What were a couple of pivotal moments in your realizing you are (or might be) a Pagan/anarchist/witch/whatever?
- Do you consider yourself to "belong to" or to "be a part of" Reclaiming or another pagan, spiritual, activist, or artistic group? If so, what does this mean?
- What's something you wished you got from your involvement in Paganism and/or Reclaiming? What's something you could give/offer that you have not yet found the occasion? Any thoughts on your next steps?

More Meditations on Beliefs and Practices

See Starhawk's books: *The Spiral Dance*, *The Twelve Wild Swans*, and *Truth or Dare*.

Covens, Circles, & Solitaries

Circles & Covens

In popular lore, a coven is a secret circle of witches. For magical people, a coven can mean a committed circle, sometimes dedicated to a particular kind of magic.

Around Reclaiming, people tend more to say, “My circle is meeting tonight,” or “I talked about it with my circle.”

Used this way, a circle means around four to ten people who meet regularly as a closed group. Some circles do deep healing magic. Others are “play and pray” groups who meet to do spontaneous (and sometimes less than fully serious) ritual. Some gather to sing or chant, some share food. Some go to protests together.

How Do Circles Form?

Sometimes circles form when folks meet in Reclaiming classes or at WitchCamps.

Other times, a few friends join together.

Some keep showing up, some drop out. New people are invited, until finally you have consistent group. Voila – a circle!

What if people show up sporadically, or they’re always late? You’ll have to decide – is the person’s low level of commitment draining energy from the circle?

How Long Do Circles Last?

A few circles keep meeting for many years. One Bay Area circle that formed in the 1990s from an Elements of Magic class still meets regularly, and most of the members have become Reclaiming teachers.

Others meet for a year-and-a-day, or for a year-or-so. Some end gracefully, with a final ritual and much love. Some fizzle out when people stop showing up.

The good news is, once in a while a circle really jells – just like once in a while a street theater troupe or a hip-hop crew really coalesces and does something amazing. Keep

trying – in the long run, the odds are in your favor!

If a person is leaving the circle, or the circle is ending, maybe you want to have a farewell ritual, to recall good times together and then formally end the relation.

Solitaries – Magic without a Circle

Solitaries – people who work magic alone – have long been part of the magical tradition. In fact, witches and magicians working in groups might be the exception, not the norm.

When we talked to people about this book, one solitary said, “I don’t like doing magic with other people because I always wind up feeling silly.” (Others said this was why they *do* like group rituals.)

Some who love group magic also have a “personal practice” that they do alone – meditation, circle casting, Tarot readings, etc.

It’s like music – some people only play with others. Some do it alone. Many do both, depending on the situation.

In the long run you’ll discover what works for you. We hope this book helps.

Meanwhile, work with what’s available. If you have some friends who want to explore magic, try a circle.

If not, guess what? You’re a solitary until further notice!

Solo Workings in this Book

Most rituals and workings in this book include a Solo Working section. Some are actually “solo work” even in a larger group – Tarot readings, labyrinth walks, altars – you do the working on your own whether you’re a solitary or part of a 30-person group.

Social Magic – For Real!

For workings that need a group, we sometimes suggest trying it with friends – at a birthday party, with a youth group, or on a rainy afternoon. A lot of the workings in this book are fun and powerful whether or not you’re doing a ritual. Try Lifting Each Other Up or a Blessing Circle.



Magical & Ritual Etiquette

Observe these simple guidelines and you'll be welcome in open circles!

Reclaiming and the greater Pagan community share a few practices and a basic etiquette that students of the Craft should be aware of.

These guidelines are always in flux and being renegotiated. In a group or circle, take time to discuss these issues and other agreements (see Introduction: Agreements).

- Don't "out" other people as Pagans or witches. Even as times change and Paganism becomes more widely accepted, understanding and tolerance is not universal. Some people need to protect their identity as Pagans and witches in order not to compromise themselves in other parts of their lives.
- Each person has the right to be addressed by the name and pronoun they request. Some circles begin by sharing preferred names and pronouns, which might be different than what we assume, or how the person identifies in other parts of their lives. We can honor the diversity of our circles by listening and respecting these requests.
- A magical circle is not for observers – it is participatory and experiential. In a ritual, all participants are expected to conduct themselves in a manner respectful to the Goddess and to support the magical workings. If you're not prepared to focus your attention and efforts on the ceremony, don't join the circle.
- Respect boundaries, both physical and emotional. Rituals are not a place for "hitting" on people, or for grabbing random hugs. Ask before touching or hugging. Notice power dynamics, and when someone doesn't want to share or be close. When in doubt, ask.
- Do not take photographs or video unless you have advance agreement with planners. The ritual, and memories of it, are to be carried in your heart. The exception is when a photographer has been designated ahead of time and is announced to participants.
- Craft ceremonies are not inviolably solemn, but they are serious in central purpose. Inappropriate talking, joking, laughing, snacking, etc are disrespectful and interfere with the ceremony. Our attitude, conduct, and energy should reflect both joyousness and solemnity. There will be time after the ritual for the sharing of food, drink, conversation,

and merrymaking.

- Traditional lore teaches that consecrated objects easily absorb energy – do not touch anyone's magical tools, such as a wand, chalice, athame, jewelry, drum, or other ritual regalia, without the owner's permission.
- If you find it necessary to tend to personal needs after the circle has been cast, you can quietly leave and return to the circle. If you leave for good, let someone know.
- The use of alcohol or non-prescription, mind-altering drugs and substances shows disrespect and puts the user(s) on another wavelength than the nonuser(s).
- What occurs in circle is sacred and not to be talked about with those who were not part of the circle (exception – if you feel someone's safety or well-being is in danger – see Introduction: Agreements).

By observing these simple guidelines, you'll find a welcome place in many open circles. And that could lead to invitations to smaller, more intimate private rituals!

Adapted from a Reclaiming Newsletter article by M. Macha NightMare.

Find all 100 back issues at WeaveAndSpin.org/back-issues/.



Magical etiquette – always ask permission before you lie down on Pagan laps.

Curses, Hexes, & Negative Magic

So What About Curses?

Curses and hexes have a long and illustrious history in magic.

Greeks and Romans created “curse scrolls” – thin lead sheets inscribed with names and magical words, then rolled up and dropped into a well or creek, where they survived for millennia until discovered by modern archaeologists. The ancients were serious about their magic!

Halloween brings us the most common image of a European witch – a hag who hurls crook-fingered curses.

And face it, who hasn’t wished for the power to turn their adversaries – or their geometry teacher – into newts?

Asking for What We Want

When doing spells and magical workings, state intentions and desires in positive terms – focus on positive developments we want in our lives and the world.

Avoid infusing magical energy into negative thoughts such as harm to adversaries or fears about how our lives might go.

For example, I ask to ace the interview or audition, rather than not failing. I ask the universe to fill my life with love, rather than that I not feel lonely or rejected.

Notice how this connects to curses – when a co-worker irritates me, I don’t ask that they “lose” their job – although I might wish that they “find” a different one.

The Law of Threefold Return

Unfortunately, as many learn the hard way, when we put negative energy into the world it has a way of returning on us.

In fact, it happens so often that we speak of the Law of Three-Fold Return, or simply the Law of Threes.

Three-fold isn’t an exact calculation – but it’s close enough that I may want to take care about the energy I’m putting into the world!

With most people, it’s easy – I can smile, say a kind word, hold a door, or pay a little extra on a bill – simple acts that send good energy into the world

But what about those truly aggravating people we come across? We all know them – people who we wish would move to Siberia and not stay in touch.

How do I “keep things positive” with them?

A Magical Shrinking Spell

Here’s a handy skill – how to magically shrink someone’s significance in your life.

Suppose a co-worker is driving you crazy by their lousy attitude. Being around them is making you miserable, and it might even hurt your grades.

If you curse or hex the person and wish that they lose their job, you risk having it return on you – you might get away from them by losing your own.

What if instead you crafted a spell where you claim your workplace as your own? Imagine yourself thriving, with ideal allies and support. Make a list of the qualities you want and demand: cooperation, good humor, focus, showing up on time... Try to state them in positive terms (eg, ask for “intelligent discussions,” rather than “no stupid comments.”)

Once you list a half-dozen, say each word or phrase and take a breath, pausing to picture your ideal environment.

Empower your vision by singing along with a chant (visit WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists) – try She Changes Every-

continued on next page



Transformatioal Tableaux – one way to deal with negative energy.

Curses, Hexes, & Negative Magic (pg 2)

thing She Touches (Kore Chant) or Weave and Spin.

Will your aggravating co-worker be there next time? Probably – but they may have shrunk a bit. The more we empower our own work and vision, the less important others' bad attitudes become.

What About Negative Energy?

Magic can change hearts, minds, bodies, and spirits. It helps us to be more focused, grounded, and powerful.

Why spend time doing negative magic toward someone else, when I could be doing positive magic for myself?

But it's a two-way street. What if we feel someone is directing bad energy at us (sometimes subtly, sometimes not), or even doing negative magic toward us?

Shielding & Shadow Work

Shielding is a way to guard ourselves from specific energy while remaining open to the world.

Rather than dealing with difficult situations or negative energy by withdrawing or shutting down, I can craft a magical shield that allows me to fully engage with all parts of my life.

Shadow work isn't about the "negative" – it's about getting in touch with all of the challenging sides of myself and my world. Sometimes it can be fun. Not always.

Why does shadow work matter?

Because when someone aggravates or angers me, it's often because they are "pushing one of my buttons." Their words and actions strike one of my sore spots, and I hurt all over again.

If I look at difficult parts of myself in magical ways, maybe I can be more flexible in "real life."

See Workings: Boundaries and Workings: Shadow

Negative Energy In Rituals

If magic works, I may encounter energies that surprise, upset, and maybe even scare me. What's going on?

Magic, no matter how far-reaching and mind-bending, is always my own experience. No matter what other beings or energies I might encounter, the experience remains uniquely and completely

mine, and is always in my power to challenge, to change – or to step away from.

Banishing Negative Energies

Suppose negative energies do show up during or after a ritual – now what? Here's a few magical techniques for reclaiming your power.

- Turn the lights on. You don't have to wait until the working is complete. If you don't like the energy, turn on a light. Open a door or window. Get some fresh air.
- Name the energies. Trust your intuition and name what you are feeling. Use the name to demand that the energy desist and depart. "Negativity, be gone!"
- Call in positive energies. Name them: "Be here now!"
- Devoke quickly. End the working and quickly devoke what you called in. Open the circle.

Then move to another space and re-ground yourself. Have something solid to eat. Shift your attention – watch a movie, play a game, give your cat a bath.

For more ideas about changing and shifting energy, see Workings: Auras and Workings: Shadows.



Transformational Tableaux – a way to work with difficult energy. What if we act out the tensions and frustrations – then transform them into support and understanding?

Drugs, Alcohol, Health, & Safety

Drugs & Alcohol: Our Agreement

Reclaiming has only a few things where we say, “Don’t do this.” One of those is showing up at rituals or classes after having taken drugs or alcohol.

What counts as a drug? Well, if it’s illegal, or seriously alters your mood, it’s probably a drug for our purposes here.

With common substances like caffeine and sugar that are legal but also impact people’s behavior and moods, camps and classes often ask people to use them in moderation and not use them to “get high.”

What you do outside of rituals and classes is your own business. But if you do magic in the Reclaiming Tradition – and particularly if you invite others to join you – we trust you to remain free of drugs and alcohol before and during the ritual, camp, or class (this includes post-ritual socializing, which is still part of the event).

We can’t enforce this – we don’t have any police, and we don’t have a horrible place to send your soul after you die.

Instead, here are some reasons for asking this agreement:

- (1) We’re going on a journey together – let’s start off from more or less the same place. Showing up and staying drug- and alcohol-free strengthens our group magic.
- (2) Many people are in recovery from substance abuse, or are avoiding substances. Drug-and-alcohol-free rituals create a safer space and show solidarity.
- (3) Magic can be spiritually and emotionally challenging. Would we get high and go scuba-diving or rock-climbing? Then why be so careless with our spiritual practice?



Fire safety tip – never build a ritual bonfire in your bedroom!

Magical Safety: Your Experience

Reclaiming magic does not involve “losing ourselves.” Our practice is about *increasing* our awareness.

It may seem exciting to lose ourselves in a ritual or trance, to let the magic completely take over. But magic actually involves becoming more aware, not less.

When I do magic, I remain aware of what is within and around me. When necessary, I am able to quickly return to full awareness, to act and react as needed.

At the end of a magical working or trance, people typically feel refreshed and filled with life. If I feel depleted, cranky, or bored, something isn’t working.

Sure, anyone can feel cranky or bored *during* a ritual. It happens to the best of us. But if I feel that way afterward, when I can do anything I want – it might be time to try a new type of magical working!

Safety In Community

In Reclaiming we recognize issues of power, inclusion, and safety. As in many traditions, teachers are expected to refrain from intimate relationships with students and mentees. Organizers do not hold power over participants. Each person is their own spiritual and personal “authority.”

Ever-evolving shared and local standards of community etiquette help guide practices – see page XXX.

We work to create structures of accountability such as teaching collectives, listening circles, and conflict go-to people – folks who offer to help mediate issues that arise.

Indoor Fire Safety

At retreats, fire magic plays a major role. At home, fire is not a safe tool. Magic involves an altered state where we don’t always notice mundane details like flammable curtains.

Don’t do fire magic in a physically unsafe space such as bedroom or basement – you’ll feel that negative energy and it will undermine your work.

If you burn candles indoors, avoid open flames. Magic can be distracting – use glass jar candles or an enclosed tea-light holder. Create a sturdy, uncluttered candle altar out of non-flammable material, away from curtains, wall-hangings, clothes, paper, and open cans of gasoline.

Have a smoke alarm and a fire extinguisher handy.

When you leave the room or go to bed, extinguish all candles – make it a dedicated magical practice.

Group Agreements

Why Groups Make Agreements

In camps, paths, and classes, people have found it helpful to make some agreements – ways that we agree to treat one another and the group.

Agreements are part of Reclaiming’s anarchist heritage. Anarchists say that there is no one above us to make rules – we have to come to agreements among ourselves.

The fewer rules, the more cooperative people tend to be. Group agreements take longer, and often come out differently than expected. But they make stronger circles.

For classes, teachers might let folks know the “status quo” of agreements ahead of time, so those attending know what they might expect.

At camps, people often review past agreements to see if we want to change anything, then re-agree.

Agreements for This Book

Here are some agreements that are important if you’re doing magic alone or with others.

The list grows – you can make agreements about all sorts of things, from quiet times, to respectful touch. If you think of other agreements you want – go for it.

Confidentiality – what happens in the circle is discussed only among those present – and only when they are present (no gossip).

Not everyone wants to be “out of the broom closet.” Not everyone wants others to know that they are doing magic, or that they are interested in spirituality.

I can share my own experiences and tell people about a class or circle. But I don’t talk about things others did or said.

Exception – if you feel someone is in danger, it is always okay to talk to someone you think can help. Remember – you only get one chance to break confidentiality with a person. They probably won’t trust you again. Knowing that, make your best decision.

Respect / No Put-Downs – treating others as we want to be treated. Listening. Giving others full attention during rituals and exercises. Learning to support differences and diversity in the group. How amazing it is to be together and not make fun of one another or score laughs at another’s expense.

Remember the Law of Three-Fold Return – the

energy I put out into the world comes back on me three times (see Intro: Curses & Negative Magic). Respect for others makes good mathematical sense!

One Group / No Cliques – include everyone, especially new people. There is a relaxed, open feeling to a group that includes everyone – no one has to work at belonging!

Right to Pass / Self Care – in camps, circles, and classes, people have the “right to pass” – they can sit out an exercise, or take part and choose silence during sharing.

We say: “Each person is their own spiritual authority.” We might add “political and social authority” as well. Each person is responsible for their own well-being.

Reclaiming is about creating your own magical practice – it’s not about checking off a list of things you’ve done. In the end, each of us is responsible for discovering and creating the magic that works for us!

Reclaiming’s Agreements

Reclaiming Tradition also has agreements. The Principles of Unity unify the international community. Not everyone agrees with every word – but at least we have a

starting place for discussions when things get tough!

See more about Reclaiming and our Principles of Unity in the following pages and at the end of the book.



Agreements help build the trust that others will truly support us – trust fall at Teen Earth Magic.

More info at:

TeenEarthMagic.org/workbook/



Who Is Reclaiming?

Reclaiming Tradition is an international network of camps, local communities, and intentional circles. Founded around 1980 in the San Francisco Bay Area, the tradition now includes groups in Europe, Australia, and across the Americas.

Each local community and camp is independently organized. Together, the communities agree to work in accord with the Principle of Unity— see below.



Reclaiming is committed to changing the world through magic and activism. Our vision is rooted in the religion and magic of the Goddess, the Immanent Life Force.

We see our work as teaching and making magic: the art of empowering ourselves and each other.

In classes, workshops, and public rituals, we train our voices, bodies, energy, intuition, and minds.

We use these skills to deepen our strength as individuals and as community, to voice our concerns about the world in which we live, and to bring to birth a vision of a new culture.

A 501c3 nonprofit called Reclaiming Collective is based in San Francisco. Several other Reclaiming communities are also organized as nonprofits.

Principles of Unity – Reclaiming.org/about

Questions, Fan Mail, Chocolate, Etc:

ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com

ReclaimingSecretary@gmail.com

CONTACTS & WEBSITES

International Contacts: Reclaiming.org/worldwide/

About Reclaiming: Reclaiming.org/about/

WitchCamps: WitchCamp.org

Family Camps: Witchlets.org & RedwoodMagic.org

Archives, Writings, & Music: ReclaimingQuarterly.org

Current Features & Music: WeaveAndSpin.org

Chants Playlists: WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists

International Elists including Int'l Pagan Cluster (Activism) Elist – see page XXX for elists!

Photos by Luke Hauser & Alla Irwin

Above: Climate Justice march, Oakland CA, 2015.

Right: Dancing the spiral at Witchlets in the Woods, 2018.



WitchCamp & The Spiral Dance

Two Unique Reclaiming Activities!

Reclaiming WitchCamps

WitchCamps are extraordinary retreats for the study of magic, ritual, and for building and renewing our commitment to each other and to world change.

WitchCamps include all levels of experience (some camps include all ages). Newcomers learn basic magical skills. Advanced paths offer chances to apply these tools. Participatory rituals weave community while building skills.

Camps are currently offered in Europe, Australia, and around North America. Some camps are family- and teen-friendly, and offer programs for various ages.

Many camps are geographically based, and help anchor Reclaiming communities in their region.

For information on Reclaiming WitchCamps, visit:

WitchCamp.org

The Spiral Dance

First held in 1979 to celebrate the release of Starhawk's book, the ritual is danced each year around Samhain – the New Year of the Witches and one of the San Francisco Bay Area's biggest magical gatherings of the year.

This participatory ritual has become a central event in the Wheel of the Year for the Reclaiming community and beyond, as hundreds gather to honor our ancestors.

In addition to year-round ritual planners, dozens of volunteers come together in the weeks prior to create this amazing gathering – singing and playing music, creating colorful invocations, building altars and installations...

If you are in the Bay Area in late October, you can join!

Videos, tickets and information can be found at:

ReclaimingSpiralDance.org



Stilt-dancing invokers welcome Earth at the 2010 Spiral Dance. Photo by Michael Rauner – michaelrauner.com.

Getting Involved In Reclaiming

Reclaiming is not a group you “join” – it’s more like a spider web that links people and groups (and it’s sometimes as messy as a bunch of cobwebs!). Here’s ways to get involved.

(A) Join elists/facebook pages:

- RIDL – Reclaiming’s international list.
- BARD – Bay Area Reclaiming (Local rituals, activism, and events).
- Living River (LivRiv) – Pagan Cluster activism.
- Many Reclaiming groups have facebook pages – search <Reclaiming> and scan the groups.

To join a list, email ReclaimingSecretary@gmail.com.

(B) Visit websites:

- Reclaiming.org – basic info, international contacts.
- WitchCamp.org – international listings, including family and youth camps.
- WeaveAndSpin.org – current posts and selected archive features for all devices.
- ReclaimingQuarterly.org – the original magazine site – back-issues, archives, plus dozens of online features.
- ReclaimingSpiralDance.org – hub site for the annual Bay Area Samhain/Halloween ritual – our largest gathering of the year!

(C) Read a book

- *The Spiral Dance*, by Starhawk – magic and rituals in the Reclaiming Tradition – weaves feminism, activism, and Earth-based spirituality into a powerful blend that helped spark Reclaiming. Get the 1999 edition.
- *Elements of Magic*, edited by Jane Meredith and Gede Parma – a 2018 anthology of magical theory and practice featuring contributions by writers from around the Reclaiming network.
- *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, by Starhawk – a gripping, post-apocalyptic novel embodying Reclaiming-style values and practices.
- *Direct Action: An Historical Novel*, by Luke Hauser – fast-paced story about the activist cauldron in which Reclaiming was born.

(D) Declare yourself part of the Reclaiming community

- Attend a ritual or WitchCamp; create an altar; visit our websites; read a book.
- Gather some friends for a ritual, circle, or study group – or do a solo working.
- Read our Principles of Unity on the next page and ask yourself if you accept and agree with these community statements.
- When you feel ready: Turn clockwise three times and say: “I am co-creating Reclaiming magic – I am a part of Reclaiming!”

(Bonus) Take a class – in person or online

Online Reclaiming classes – join Reclaiming elists, or visit WorldTreeLyceum.org or BayAreaReclaiming.org

For in-person classes, visit BayAreaReclaiming.org or Reclaiming.org/worldwide to see if there is an active group or Witch-Camp community near you – visit their website or email them to find out if they are offering classes.

If you are under age 18, please tell the teachers your age when you contact them, and tell your parent or legal guardian as well. Until you are 18, please do not contact Reclaiming teachers without informing your parent or guardian.



Reclaiming's Principles of Unity

International Statement of Core Values

The values of the Reclaiming tradition stem from our understanding that the earth is alive and all of life is sacred and interconnected. We see the Goddess as immanent in the Earth's cycles of birth, growth, death, decay and regeneration. Our practice arises from a deep, spiritual commitment to the earth, to healing and to the linking of magic with political action.

Each of us embodies the divine. Our ultimate spiritual authority is within, and we need no other person to interpret the sacred to us. We foster the questioning attitude, and honor intellectual, spiritual and creative freedom.

We are an evolving, dynamic tradition and proudly call ourselves Witches. Our diverse practices and experiences of the divine weave a tapestry of many different threads. We include those who honor Mysterious Ones, Goddesses, and Gods of myriad expressions, genders, and states of being, remembering that mystery goes beyond form. Our community rituals are participatory and ecstatic, celebrating the cycles of the seasons and our lives, and raising energy for personal, collective and earth healing.

We know that everyone can do the life-changing, world-renewing work of magic, the art of changing consciousness at will. We strive to teach and practice in ways that foster personal and collective empowerment, to model shared power and to open leadership roles to all. We



make decisions by consensus, and balance individual autonomy with social responsibility.

Our tradition honors the wild, and calls for service to the earth and the community. We work in diverse ways, including nonviolent direct action, for all forms of justice: environmental, social, political, racial, gender and economic. We are an anti-racist tradition that strives to uplift and center BIPOC voices (Black, Indigenous, People of Color). Our feminism includes a radical analysis of power, seeing all systems of oppression as interrelated, rooted in structures of domination and control.

We welcome all genders, all gender histories, all races, all ages and sexual orientations and all those differences of life situation, background, and ability that increase our diversity. We strive to make our public rituals and events accessible and safe. We try to balance the need to be justly compensated for our labor with our commitment to make our work available to people of all economic levels.

All living beings are worthy of respect. All are supported by the sacred elements of air, fire, water and earth. We work to create and sustain communities and cultures that embody our values, that can help to heal the wounds of the earth and her peoples, and that can sustain us and nurture future generations.

Changes to the Principles

Reclaiming's Principles of Unity were created by the original Reclaiming Collective in 1997. The Principles were intended to guide the broader, decentralized Reclaiming network and provide a baseline of agreement as new communities and camps formed.

The Principles can be amended and updated by the BIRCH council (Broad Intra-Reclaiming Council of Hubs), a representative spokescouncil which has met at and between all-Reclaiming Dandelion Gatherings.

To date, two changes have been adopted to the Principles of Unity:

- In 2012, gender language was broadened.
- In 2019, language around nonviolence was modified (see activism chapter), , and a statement that Reclaiming Tradition is anti-racist was added.

Gender Complexities

Key Issues for Reclaiming – an Interview with Mykel Mogg

Mykel has been involved in Reclaiming for over a decade, first as a Witchlets and Teen Earth Magic camper and now as a teacher. He is a trans man, first coming out at TEM, and has been active in bringing awareness of trans issues to broader Reclaiming and Bay Area circles.

Interview by George Franklin.

What made Reclaiming and TEM a safe space to explore gender?

The social dynamics of Teen Earth Magic were geared toward transformation. Everybody was consciously choosing to be in a transformative space, and the container was set up in a way where we all agreed to hold each other in a certain way that made it feel possible for me to explore who I was.

I first thought of myself as sort of being outside of gender at Teen Earth Magic, in a trance. I talked about it with people, and they were like, cool! So it felt like a very low-pressure space to explore things.

There's also something about being at a camp, where you're there for a week, and can try stuff on and decide you don't like it later. You're not changing your whole life, just changing your whole life for a week! You try something on for a week and see if you like it.

Teen Earth Magic was the first place I changed my pronouns. It was a very positive experience. It's scary, but I felt very safe and supported. I felt confident it would be held well. That made it possible for me to go forward into the rest of my life with a foundation that people are holding me this way. It makes it easier to talk to other people who might not react as understandingly.

What specifically did people do that let you know they were your allies – and what wasn't helpful?

Something that gave me confidence was the conscious setting of the container, with very strong norms about how people listen to each other at camp.

I don't think I'd ever heard anyone do a pronoun go-round when I first requested it. That was the first time. But we have these norms where when somebody tells

you something about their life, you listen to them and hold them in positive regard. People didn't do a lot of questioning another person's truth about themselves. That helped a lot.

Having queer teachers who were setting the container and holding the space was really a positive thing.

The hardest things have been a lack of "infrastructure," for lack of a better word. If I wanted a pronoun circle, I had to request it and explain what you should do.

I felt this in my school life, too. I wasn't the first person to come out as trans at my school, but I felt like my teachers didn't know what to do, they didn't have structures set up for asking people their pronouns, so I really had to advocate for myself if I wanted people to use the right name and pronouns.

I had to advocate for gender-neutral bathrooms. I remember going to the Spiral Dance one year, and there were men's and women's bathrooms. So I made my own DIY gender-neutral signs and put them up.

It would be different for a trans person coming out now, because some people have already done the work to set up structures so you don't always have to be asking people to do a pronoun circle or have gender-neutral bathrooms. I think that kind of thing is slowly improving everywhere, where you don't always have to be building the next step for yourself.

What are Reclaiming's next steps?

I would love for Reclaiming to be a leader in trans issues in the broader magical communities. I think overall Reclaiming has made a lot of progress on things like what deities we invoke, and asking for people's pronouns – having these procedural things in place that support trans people coming forward.

I've thought in the past that we were in a place where we all agree that trans women are women, and should be included in women's rituals, and that we could be a voice for that in pan-Pagan spaces. That's turned out to

continued on next page

Gender Complexities (pg 2)

Key Issues for Reclaiming – an Interview with Mykel Mogg

be less true than I thought it was. But I think that we can get there. It's possible for us to get our shit together and be stronger allies, to be advocates for trans people in other spaces that we go to.

What about the question of gender binaries – seeing gender as male versus female?

For a long time I've identified myself as a boy or a man, and that actually does fit into the gender binary on an identity level. But the way I move through the world, the way the world reads and treats me, doesn't fit into that binary. I try not to change the way I look or act to fit into an expectation of maleness. So I'm often read as a woman or as a "what's that?"

I'm thinking about gym class, and it's boys versus girls, and you've got the girls' team over here and the boys' team over there, and the boundary between them is heavily policed.

What's the role of the people who are crossing over that line, or in the middle, or creating a porousness in that barrier? They're doing a service to everyone in that room, to create more freedom and to make that barrier less real, and hopefully less policed.

It makes me think about having different types of people invoking gods, goddesses, etc.

There's been a lot of cool experiments. At last year's Spiral Dance I was asked to do the invocation of the God, which I was excited to do with two of my friends, one of whom is gender queer and very fem-presenting, the other a woman. It was something I hadn't personally seen before in Reclaiming. There are often men in the Goddess invocation – the Goddess is in everyone! But it felt cool to do a similar twist, finding a female archetype of the God and exploring that.

What has TEM meant for your own growth?

Teen Earth Magic has been a home for me within Reclaiming, and in general in my life. It's interesting that it actually only exists for like five days of the year – but I have this cohort of people that I grew up doing magic with, this really solid sense of genuine community.

There's a role it's played in bringing things into reality

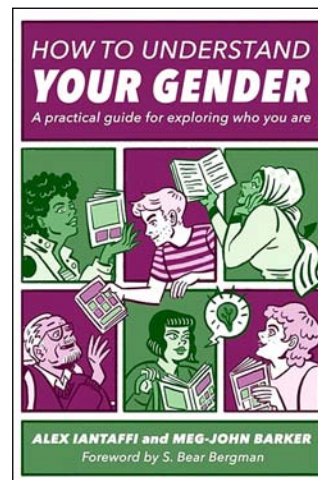
that hadn't felt possible before. When I was a teenager, Teen Earth Magic felt like this place totally outside my life, this wild, fantastical space that was not related to how I was with my family or my school or anything. As I grew up and got more engaged and more involved with organizing, and started seeing people outside of camp, it became more and more a solid part of my daily life. Now I organize with people I first met at Teen Earth Magic, and they're part of my life year-round.

Teen Earth Magic gave me a clear path to leadership within Reclaiming. It got me organizing things and advocating for changes I wanted to see.

There's something really cool about young people who are already growing and changing so much having a space that is really about transformation and change – in a community where people don't expect you to be the same all the time. People are willing to be like, "Oh, I dig how you're growing as a person," instead of expecting people to stay the same.

Any final thoughts?

Thinking about gender at Teen Earth Magic – it's been a political education for everyone, regardless of how they identify. Having queer and trans people around, having the social space to explore one's self – that's one of the most lasting and transformative things we've done at camp.



How to Understand Your Gender

A Practical Guide

by Alex Iantaffi & Meg-John Barker

This down-to-Earth guide covers biology, history, sociology, plus relations with friends and family.

An excellent guide for allies and anyone seeking to better understand the complexities of gender.

***Trans Statement/
Chalen - 2019***

Diversity in Reclaiming

Key Issues for Reclaiming – a roundtable

Short intro framing discussion - TBA

Participants

- name & short bio

- name & short bio

- name & short bio

- name & short bio

- name & short bio

Interviews by George Franklin.

continued on next page

Diversity in Reclaiming (pg 2)

Key Issues for Reclaiming – a roundtable

continued on next page



Diversity in Reclaiming (pg 3)

Key Issues for Reclaiming – a roundtable

Diversity in Reclaiming (pg 4)

Key Issues for Reclaiming – a roundtable

DARC

- *what is it*
- *how to contact*
- *online resources*

Statement on Anti-Racist Practices

from BIPOC & Mixed Race Reclaiming Convergence

This letter was distributed at the All-Reclaiming Dandelion Gathering in 2019. BIRCH, a council of reps from around Reclaiming, resolved to distribute this document widely around our network and asked communities to engage with the challenges.

This is a broad statement and invitation for dialogue, inquiry, and growth to the broader Reclaiming community. It has been developed in active dialogue with Black, Indigenous People of Color (BIPOC) and Mixed Race witches – priestesses, activists, teachers and organizers – who are actively involved in this tradition of witchcraft.

We acknowledge that the Reclaiming community has long been a spiritual home to People of Colour, and many have found their chosen family here. And yet many PoC Witches have also left this tradition because of systemic challenges that remain within it. The gift of a living tradition is that it is constantly changing and growing. It is within this spirit of constant change and growth that we invite a deep dive into growth and transformation for white-identified people in this community.

We define whiteness as a category of imperialist and capitalist race-hierarchy wielded to divide, dominate, and destroy. We understand that the category of whiteness has shifted through the generations and that it originally referred to pale-skinned British people specifically, especially those British people who were party to the invasion and colonisation of sovereign territories and Aboriginal countries, such as Turtle Island (North America) and Australia. Whiteness then expanded to divide poor pale-skinned people of European descent from both the enslaved people of African descent, and the dispossessed First Nations people. We use whiteness to refer to all those people who are now treated as white, in this continuing colonialism of cultures and spirits, and who therefore grow up with whiteness as default.

The following principles represent a magical boundary, an intention, and a clear line in the sand. These principles are offered in an act of self care, self love, and protection. These principles set guidelines of engagement for conversations about anti-racism and decolonization within this tradition and community.

1. Reclaiming is an ethnically diverse tradition. Using “we” and “our” to refer only to white people in this tradition is an act of erasure of BIPOC and mixed race individuals. We invite deeper sensitivity to the many “we’s” and “our’s” used in Reclaiming and also specificity of language (“We as white people in Reclaiming need to address white supremacy and racism and its impact on...”)
2. Whiteness has been the assumed default, the baseline and the standard in this tradition for far too long. It is never acceptable to assume that a fellow witch identifies as white unless they tell you they do. Assuming whiteness is an act of erasure.
3. White fragility is a slippery slope and enacts itself constantly. It does so in big and also subtle ways. It can look like demanding clarification and further information. It can involve the questioning of POC and mixed race witches, projecting upon us, and demanding our emotional labor. This must stop immediately.
4. Do not speak about or for us. We wish to amplify and centralize the power and visibility of People of Colour and have the capacity and will to do so.
5. There are no saviors in this work. We abolish the white savior mentality *and* we disrupt the idea that we are here to absolve you or teach you about white supremacy.
6. Being visible, loud and proud as People of Colour is a way we disrupt white supremacy.
7. Liberation is the goal. Though we might enrich your teaching teams, rituals, consensus meetings and projects we are *not* here for your diversity.
8. A culture of inclusion is *different* from diversity. When you create seats at the table and then expect us to act, talk, worship and relate to story as white people then diversity becomes harm. We demand an end to this. Our rage, joy, devotion, collaboration, magic and resistance are offerings to you individually and to our Reclaiming tradition as a whole. Do not expect them to look or behave through the lens of whiteness.
9. Whether in the Americas, Australia, or many other areas Reclaiming Tradition is practiced, it is often on the colonized lands of Indigenous peoples. This means not simply acknowledging Indigenous peoples in rituals or classes, but requires a radical reconsideration of what it means to practice the Craft on lands that remain occupied by settler nation-states.

Signed by members of Decolonizing Actions in Reclaiming Communities (DARC): Abel Gomez, Passia, Fio Aengus Santika, Sal Lavallee, Samantha Ravenna Shay, Heidi Marian, Rachel Munchkins, Pablo.

Diversity & Cultural Appropriation

Key Issues for Reclaiming – an Interview with Rahula Janowski

Issues of diversity, inclusion, and cultural appropriation are among the most challenging we face in building a spiritual community and a movement for social change. They impact relations to the land where we hold camps and rituals, the stories and deities we work with, and connections to our local cities and communities.

Rahula Janowski is an organizer with Catalyst Project, based in San Francisco and Oakland. In Spring 2018, Rahula and co-organizer Lindsey Shively facilitated a workshop for Reclaiming teachers around issues of cultural appropriation, racism, and white supremacy.

*Rahula has helped anchor Witchlets in the Woods family camp. When she speaks here of “story,” she is referring to the myth, story, or theme that gives shape and content to a camp’s rituals and magic (See *Ritual Skills: Theme and Arc*).*

Interview by George Franklin.

Tell us about the Catalyst Project.

The Catalyst Project is about movement building, building multi-racial movements led by people of color – for racial justice, economic justice. Our particular focus is working with white activists and organizers around white supremacy, working with people who are already in motion, already engaged in work to change the world in a positive way,

We can’t get the world we want unless we destroy white supremacy. We can’t have a world that’s ecologically in balance, we can’t have a world where people aren’t exploiting each other, if we don’t address systemic white supremacy.

Reclaiming and some other grassroots groups are mostly white folks, but there are people of color strongly involved. What issues do you see coming up with these types of groups?

I think what you can see is an overwhelmingly white culture, also called white-privilege culture, where white is the norm, and people who are white have no idea that it’s even happening, while people of color are very aware.

It can be very alienating when white people say or do

things that are racist, not knowing that they’ve done it – for a person of color, speaking up about that can be exhausting. It can also have an impact on your position in the community if you’re the one who is constantly pointing out the ways that people have messed up.

When you have white folks who are really committed to building a better world, and they are told, “You are being racist, or you did a thing that’s racist, or you’re supporting white privilege,” or whatever – some people get really defensive. They make it all about themselves and their feelings instead of the ways they are actually perpetuating racism, even though they don’t mean to.

A lot of the time people mean well, but they aren’t *doing* well.

We talk a lot about intention, but we don’t talk much about impact. Whatever your intent, your *impact* is real, and you have to address that.

Even if you meant well, if you hurt someone you still have to recognize the harm, offer to make amends, and figure out how not to do it again.

As a Witchlets organizer, what issues do you see coming up?

In the years I’ve been a Weaver [ie, a core camp organizer], when it’s time to talk about story, we always talk about cultural appropriation, and we never resolve anything. We generally don’t work with stories or myths coming from non-European cultures. Part of the reason for that is that most people in the weaving team are from European backgrounds, who are identified or would be identified as white. So we don’t have many cultural connections to stories from other places.

When people bring up a story from another region, I have questions like, “What do we know about the context of this story? What do we know about what the story means to people who have told it? Are there dei-

continued on next page

Diversity & Cultural Appropriation (pg 2)

ties, and what do we know about them?"

Say more about cultural appropriation and camp organizing.

I think there are a lot of problems with taking stories and deities and magical concepts from cultures we don't know much about and assuming they are going to work the same way for us.

In the past I would have steered away from working with stories from outside the European tradition.

Talking to people of color around Reclaiming has shifted my thinking a lot – to be able to see yourself reflected in the stories we work, in the magic that we work, is a very important aspect of being part of the community.

How do we have stories that people can see themselves reflected in, while not doing all the things that white people typically do when they take things from a culture that they're not related to?

It's an issue of what comes first – do you need to have a critical mass of people of color to work with a story that comes from, say, the Americas or Africa or Asia? Or do you need to choose those stories to have people of color feel welcome in the community?

I think it will take a lot of work. We need to have some sort of relationship with somebody who has an authentic relationship with the story. We have to build the skills to have these conversations.

A parent at Redwood Magic Family Camp who is Latinx said, "I want my daughter to hear stories from all of her ancestors, not just Europeans." How would you address this?

That's a question – who is initiating this, and why? If there's a person of color involved who says, let's do this story from my people, my inclination would be to have really open conversations about what the challenges are, and then support them if they still want to do it.

I can see us working with a story that the majority of campers are not culturally related to, and putting a ton of effort into educational work. Here's why we're doing

this story. Here's how these deities are different than ones we've worked with before. Here's the colonial history of where this story is from.

Being really curious and really honest – I could see this making it possible.

What about using stories from our Mediterranean ancestors, like Egypt or Mesopotamia – ancient roots of multiple cultures. These increase diversity – but to what extent is this just side-stepping the issues?

Side-stepping is not always bad! Sometimes it's a way to stretch.

I feel okay about Mesopotamia. With, say, the goddess Inanna – is it a living tradition? That's an important question.

Are we stereotyping people in the story based on racist and colonialist ideas? Are we extracting the parts that are useful for us, and dropping the bigger context?

What's the power balance? What's the history? Are we benefiting from the colonization of

the people whose story we want to tell? If so, how are we making amends in the process? Are we working in an authentic and accountable way?

What about stories from nature or the land, such as TEM and Free Camp have used?

I think it's a great way to go. When you use a land-based story, or an animal's life cycle, that isn't going to alienate people based on culture and race – although it still might, depending on who is crafting the story. It's that thing where we have white-privilege stuff that we don't always know we're putting in there.

This offers a way to use stories in our workings and not go diving into the question of cultural appropriation.

I think there are also things that are lost, such as deity. There's a lot of power in old stories because they've been honed through the years – even though we re-hone them, usually to root out patriarchy!

continued on next page

Diversity & Cultural Appropriation (pg 3)

This raises deeper questions. Is it possible to work with old myths and *not* work with patriarchy and colonialism?

Then again – for those of us coming from European backgrounds and living on this land – can we tell *any* story about this land without talking about colonialism?

What are some next steps for Reclaiming communities?

I think having conversations about cultural appropriation that are strongly facilitated by someone who can hold a space for white people who are outraged at the idea that there's anything that they can't have, and other people who are outraged by *that* – all the polarities.

Building relations beyond the edges of our tradition is something we should be doing. Who do we want to build relationships with, and how do we do that?

Maybe coming up with some questions to ask when we choose stories or ritual intentions, like:

- Are there ways this could inadvertently be supporting patriarchy, or supporting racism or capitalism? Who could be hurt by this story?
- What do you want this story to *do*? Do we want a story that's going to propel us out with a purpose?
- Who's here – who are we? What are our connections to various stories, cosmologies, pantheons?
- If we want to work with a story that isn't an obvious choice based on who's in the room, what are we doing to address all of the questions about that?

Most of all, I think it's important to continue to talk about race explicitly, as much as possible, and to work to build the skills to have those conversations.

White people need to learn how to have these conversations both with people of color and without. I think people of color need to be able to opt in – or out – of majority-white space.

What is gained by building a diverse group and movement?

Thinking about people of color within Reclaiming and what they bring – not as “representatives of their race,” but as the people they are – the witches that they are. We could lose them and everything they bring to our

community, from the heart connections to the magic they bring.

Being in a multi-racial space calls us to that work. We see how damaging it is for people who are impacted on a daily basis. Energetically, politically, we're all impacted by that.

Every system that holds down anyone is holding down all of us.

With the ecological and political messes we face, it seems like we need the

participation and the wisdom of all sorts of people to change things.

It's kind of a truism from anti-racist thinking that the people who are most impacted have the best information about how to fight the thing. So people of color have the best information about how to fight racism.

In mostly-white spaces, we don't have enough information about what's happening, and how to change it.

I don't think we can survive the ecological crisis without destroying white supremacy. Which is daunting, since we're really far away from that.

What gives you hope?

I think that kids know a lot more about this than their elders do. Young people, in our tradition and broadly too, have access to a lot more information. They're learning what cultural appropriation is, they're learning about power and race.

I worry about people protecting our traditions too much, and not being willing to learn from kids – who can be kind of annoying and self-righteous sometimes, just like we were when we were young!

But they know a lot, and are starting out so much further along. Their leadership is so important!

Catalyst Project Website

For more about Catalyst Project, visit their website: collectiveliberation.org

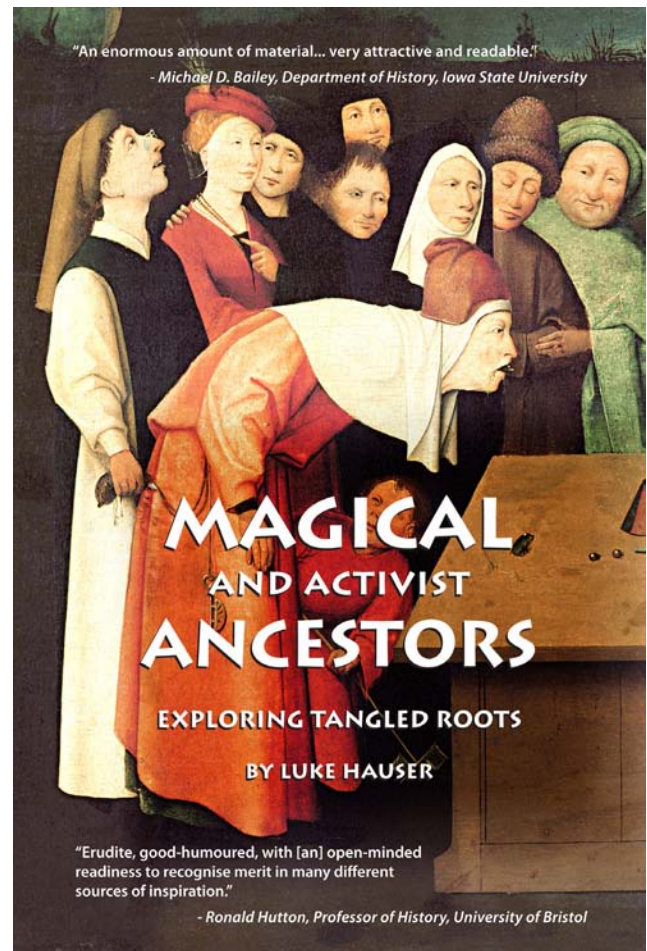
MAGICAL & ACTIVIST ANCESTORS

EXPLORING TANGLED ROOTS

BY LUKE HAUSER

Print Edition or Free PDF – weaveandspin.org/history

Take a deep dive into ancestral legacies. Dozens of short sections ranging from Alchemy to Astral Magic to Hermetic Texts to Gnosticism.



"Erudite, good-humoured, generous, with that open-minded readiness to recognise merit in many different sources of inspiration that is one of the best features of the Reclaiming tradition."

- Ronald Hutton, Professor of History, University of Bristol

"Presents an enormous amount of material in a very attractive and readable way."

- Michael D. Bailey, Department of History, Iowa State University
Associate Editor: Magic, Ritual, and Witchcraft

EXTRA PAGE

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EXTRA PAGE



Ritual Skills

An Introduction to Ritual Skills in the Reclaiming Tradition

- Outline of a Reclaiming RitualXXX
- Wheel of the YearXXX
- Roundtables – Interviews
 - Rituals XXXX
 - Grounding..... XXXX
 - Casting a Circle..... XXXX
 - Invoking XXXX
 - Deity, Allies, & Energies..... XXXX
 - Magical Activism XXXX
- Creating Sacred Space: Quick WaysXXX
- Sacred Space: A Longer ExampleXXX
- Ritual Skills – Step by Step.....XXX
- Ritual PlanningXXX
- Ritual Theme & Arc.....XXX
- Two Classic Ritual Books.....XXX
- Chants Resources Online.....XXX
- Sample Rituals for Groups and Solo Work
– complete index on page XXXX.





Introduction

Rituals in the Reclaiming Tradition

Reclaiming rituals are literally all over the map – from California to Germany, from New England to Australia, from Spain to Brazil – and many points between. Find our various communities, WitchCamps, and contacts at Reclaiming.org/worldwide/. Metaphorically the rituals are all over the map, too. Some are elaborate community gatherings like the annual Spiral Dance, with hundreds of participants. Some meet deep in the forest at WitchCamps. Some take place among a circle in a living room. A lot take place alone or with a few friends.

Basic Structure of a Ritual

Whether it's a formal WitchCamp ritual or an impromptu home working, Reclaiming rituals share a basic outline, adapted from older magical traditions. Here's a quick summary – see the next page for a full outline:

(1) First we “create sacred space” – purify, ground, cast the circle, and invoke elements and allies. In a big ritual, creating sacred space might take half an hour. At home, it could take five minutes or less – it's up to you.

(2) Next we do “workings” – a meditation, walking a labyrinth, spellcasting, shadow exercises, etc – see the workings in the back of this book for many examples from rituals and classes.

(3) After that, we “raise energy” by chanting, drumming, doing a spiral dance (or other dancing), and maybe raising a “cone of power” to charge our magic.

(4) Then we “open sacred space” by devoking whatever we invoked and opening the circle – followed by snacks, socializing, drumming, dancing...

The next page shows a step-by-step Outline of a Reclaiming Ritual. The rest of this chapter goes into more detail about each step, as well as other ritual roles and skills such as teaching chants and tending a sacred fire.

Priestess – a Role, Not a Person

When this book talks about rituals and workings, we often refer to a priestess who does this or that.

Priestess is a role, not a person or gender. It's the word used for anyone who fills a role at camp or a ritual, regardless of the person's age, rank, gender, etc.

Sometimes we use the word as a verb: “Who is going to priestess the cauldron working?”

Most rituals have multiple priestesses – fire priestess, invoking priestesses, spiral dance priestess, etc.

But Who's the High Priestess?

Reclaiming doesn't have “high priestesses.” Ritual roles rotate among people, even at big rituals like the annual Spiral Dance. This keeps rituals fresh and nonhierarchical, and helps spread out responsibilities.

In classes and camps, anyone with a little experience can be a priestess. In solitary work and personal practice, each of us is our own priestess.



Circling up for a ritual – Teen Earth Magic.





Outline of a Reclaiming Ritual

Here is a one-page outline of a typical Reclaiming ritual like those at camps, classes, and workshops. Even when a Reclaiming ritual is improvised, most follow this basic flow, which provides a common language and structure.

Besides these roles, it helps to have a ritual wrangler who can remind people what is happening and in what order – especially when it comes time to devoke in reverse order.

Ritual Flow

BEFORE YOU START

- **Plan the ritual** – figure out what you’re doing and what preparation is needed, assign roles, etc.
- **Purification** – sprinkle drops of salt-water with a sprig of herbs as people enter, or brush people with elegant feathers.
- **Welcome** – a few words of greeting – share the ritual intention, tell folks where the restrooms are, turn off cell phones, etc.
- **Teach chants** – teach chants and songs for the ritual – sing them plenty of times so people feel confident.

CREATING SACRED SPACE

- **Honor First People** – acknowledge that the ritual is held on land unceded by First People, with a commitment to work for justice.
- **Grounding** – often a guided meditation such as the Tree of Life. The aim is to get people present and centered.
- **Casting the circle** – inscribe a circle around the space. This can be done many ways, but often involves someone actually walking around the perimeter of the space and speaking words to each of the four directions, concluding with something like: “The circle is cast, we are between the worlds. What happens between the worlds can change all the worlds.”
- **Invoking the elements** – call in elemental energy starting with Air/East, using song, movement, words....
- **Invoking deities and/or energies** – call in magical support, often connected to the theme of the ritual, camp, or class.
- **Invoking and/or honoring allies** – call in ancestors, the Fey, spirits of the land..

WORKINGS

- **Magical working(s)** – the heart of the ritual. This might be a guided trance to the Isle of the Ancestors, working at altars or stations, plunging into the ocean at Solstice, taking part in a direct action, making a pledge at Brigid’s flaming cauldron, doing a magical crafting project, etc. Many of the workings in the later part of this book can be used as the core of a ritual.
- **Raising energy / spiral dance / cone of power** – after the working(s), you might chant, drum, and dance (a spiral or free-form) to stir up collective energy, focusing it into a cone of power that you can use to empower the magic.
- **Re-grounding after the cone** – touch the Earth and breathe. A priestess might say a few wise words about anchoring the energy in our hearts.

OPENING THE CIRCLE

- **Devoking** – thank and release all allies, energies, deities, and elements you have invoked, in reverse order. Devocations are short, ending in “hail and farewell” or “thank you.”
- **Opening the circle** – a short, reverse version of the circle casting, ending with many people calling out these words: “The circle is open, but unbroken. May the peace of the Goddess go in our hearts. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”
- **Announcements** – at a community ritual, find a place for announcements and for passing the sacred donations hat.
- **Drumming and dancing** – the end of the ritual is the signal for music and dancing to begin. Sharing food is also popular.



The Wheel of the Year

Reclaiming and many Pagans celebrate eight sabbats of the Wheel of the Year. Here's the order for the Northern Hemisphere. Details are from Bay Area rituals. For events in your region (or around the world), visit Reclaiming.org/worldwide.

Samhain/Halloween

At Samhain, the veil is thin between the worlds of living and dead. We remember our ancestors, our Beloved Dead, and all who have crossed over. As we mourn those who have died this year, we also mourn the losses and pain suffered by the Earth, our Mother. Yet as we grieve, we honor the sacred cycle of life, death, and rebirth. We celebrate children born this year, and our own vital connections to the Earth and each other, in which we ground our hope.

Winter Solstice

This is Winter Solstice, longest night of the year. We watch for dawn, the return of the Sun, bringer of hope and the promise of Summer. This is the stillness behind motion, when time itself stops; the center which is also the circumference of all. We are awake in the night. We turn the Wheel to bring the light. We call the Sun from the womb of night.

Brigid/Imbolc/Candlemas

This is the feast of the waxing light. What was born at Solstice begins to manifest, and we who were midwives to the infant year now see the days grow visibly longer. It is the time of initiation, of beginning, when seeds that will later sprout and grow begin to stir from their deep sleep. We meet to share the light of inspiration, which will grow with the growing year.

Spring Equinox

This is the time of Spring's return, the seed time, when life bursts forth from the Earth. Light and dark are equal: it is a time of balance, when all the elements within us must be brought into a new harmony. Kore, the Spring Maiden, returns from the Land of the Dead with the scent of flowers on her breath. As She dances, despair turns to hope, want to abundance, and we sing the Kore Chant:

*She changes everything She touches,
And everything She touches, changes.*

Beltane/May Day/Int'l Workers' Day

This is the time when sweet desire weds wild delight. The green of the Earth meets the red and black of workers' rights in the greening fields, and we rejoice together under the warm sun. The maypole, the shaft of life, is twined

with ribbons in a spiral web, and all nature is renewed. We meet in the time of flowering to dance the dance of life.

Summer Solstice

This is the time of the rose: blossom and thorn, fragrance and blood. Now on the longest day of the year, light triumphs, yet begins to decline into dark. We set sail across the dark seas of time, searching for the isle of light that is rebirth. We turn the Wheel and share the Sun's fate, for we have planted the seeds of our own changes, and to grow we must accept even the passing of the Sun.

Lammas

We stand between hope and fear, in the time of waiting. The grain is ripe but not yet harvested. We have worked to bring things to fruition, but the rewards are not yet certain. The Mother becomes the Reaper, the Implacable One who feeds on life so that new life may grow. Light diminishes, Summer passes. We turn the Wheel, knowing that to harvest we must sacrifice, and light must pass toward Winter.

Fall Equinox

This is the time of harvest, of thanksgiving and joy, of leave-taking and sorrow. Day and night are equal, and we give thought to balance and flow within our lives. The Sun sails West, and we follow it into the dark. Life declines, yet we give thanks for that which we have reaped and gathered. We meet to turn the Wheel and weave the cord of life that will sustain us through the dark.

A Note on Terminology

Local communities use different names for some of the sabbats (Pagan holidays). Reclaiming Quarterly uses the neutral terms "Equinox" and "Solstice" to honor that these are holidays of the Earth Herself, not of any one culture. We often call the cross-quarters by Celtic names.

Descriptions adapted from The Spiral Dance – ©1999 by Starhawk

Wheel of the Year – the chant!

For an easy way to remember the sabbats, listen to Wheel of the Year on our Campfire Chants album. The song was written (as a joke) at a teens' retreat! See page XXX for links.





Reclaiming Roundtable: Rituals

“It’s a place of intense connection with other humans who are open and accepting to that connection – people that you really want to connect with.”

Why do you take part in rituals?

IvoryFly (A): I love the Wheel of the Year. We *are* nature. Our life is a full season.

Ola’i Wildeboar (Y): Rituals are a beautiful way to recognize and be in touch with the Earth. It also helps us learn how to use magic and how to build our own practices.

John (A): I like the energy and ecstasy at a large ritual – raising a cone of power with people. It’s like if you’re in a club dancing, that contact high we get. I like having a role, something to contribute to the energy.

Lucy (Y): I love being part of something so amazing and positive. I love feeling as though I am contributing to the massive amounts of magic that are being produced, and I love bringing that energy back out into the world.

KaeliMo (Y): It’s a supportive and safe format for understanding myself and the world. It gives a template for changing and exploring things.

Key: (Y) = youth to approx 30 / (A) = approx 30-55 / (E) = elder



Do you like community and public rituals?

Willow (E): I love big ritual – amazing, over the top, wow kind of stuff! But it doesn’t have to be dressed in a pointy hat.

Jamie (A): Helping create them (SF community rituals) for nine years has been one of the most powerful, formative experiences for me, as far as group process. It’s also deeply healing.

Kim (A): I tend to be introverted, so it’s really important to me to have a larger community, and to stay connected. I like making our spirituality accessible to a broader audience, to the best of our ability.

Ingrid (Y): Honestly, as much as I enjoy group rituals, I don’t get that much out of them. I enjoy the community. I want to be surrounded by people who understand where I’m coming from. I’ve gotten more out of going to a camp and doing a succession of group rituals.

Maeve (Y): Having the baseline of what group ritual looks like has been really helpful, being able to pull out pieces that work for me.

IvoryFly (A): I know they are a great opportunity for people to learn, to step into their power, to do service. But for me, honestly, it’s tedious when there’s a lot of invocations, a lot of verbiage.

Jamie (A): They need strong form since it’s open to the public – for safety as well as continuity. But I can get frustrated with the repetitious nature. I love tradition, but sometimes it’s too much!

Seed (E): I experience the collaboration with other people as an active source of joy – to stand in the center of the spiral dance and watch those faces go by, it’s such an active sense of connection and joy. We’re each of us so creative, so individual. It makes the world make sense to me.

Rhys (Y): It’s great to practice magic by yourself, but it is extremely powerful to be a part of a ritual and connect with other people.

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Roundtable: Rituals (pg 2)

“I don’t sit down and go, ‘I’m going to do this and this and this – then I’m going to do it backward, and we’re going to be done!’”

John (A): I like being around people! I like the energy, the ecstasy in public rituals, raising a cone of power with people. It’s like when you’re in a club dancing with people, that high you get – it’s a very similar kind of connection.

... speak to me, whatever tree or light on the water – I put myself into a receptive space.

Ingrid (Y): I almost never do formal rituals. But recently

Do you do rituals and magic on your own?

KaeliMo (Y): Yes – but I prefer working with other people more than being by myself a lot of the time – seeing how other people think and how their energy contributes is really helpful in finding new outlooks.

Damien (Y): Magic is one of those things where if you don’t have time, you don’t have to do anything. It’s more of a go with the flow thing and easy to pick up and drop. I enjoy practices like Tarot, magic stones, and pendulums.

Maeve (Y): When I remember! I don’t always remember in the hecticness of everyday life. As I’ve gotten older I’ve realized I don’t have to do everything so formally when I’m by myself.

Ingrid (Y): I don’t sit down and go, “I’m going to do this and this and this – then I’m going to do it backward, and we’re going to be done!” I would rather reconnect and balance myself to the best of my abilities. Maybe it’s just hanging out and experiencing the moment, what’s happening around me – experiencing the natural world.

Miranda (Y): The magic I do on my own is more little things, less like full rituals. It’s like a quick spell, like, “Today I want to try to make this happen!”

When you do a ritual alone or with a small group, do you do all the steps?

KaeliMo (Y): It depends. Sometimes it’s helpful to have the usual structure of sacred space, and I can just do the work. Other times, playing with the structure of creating sacred space is part of what I’m doing. Sometimes the container needs to look different – especially if it involves people who are not part of this tradition. I try to bridge that, to make their way of thinking part of the structure.

Seed (E): Sometimes. Often, I just go out and put myself in an open space. I’m open to whatever plant wants to



I’ve done simple things like, when I’m going into a situation where I feel hesitant or scared, I do a practice where I make an aura bubble, like, “Only let in what is going to make me stronger.”

Willow (E): The longer I work spontaneous magic the more subtle it is. I don’t have to call it ritual, I don’t have to do big invocations, I don’t have to do any of it out loud.

What makes a ritual especially powerful?

John (A): Having a focus, an intention – people in the ritual feeling a connection with one another. And being open to the energy – it’s like a dance. What makes a good dance? It’s a feeling for the rhythm of the people.

Heaven (A): Setting the intention. I want to be very specific in what I’m asking for.

IvoryFly (A): One of my favorite things is when you set up





Roundtable: Rituals (pg 2)

“New Pull Quote New Pull Quote New Pull Quote”

a ritual, and then you get out of the way and let the magic happen. That’s the sweet spot for me. I love the “gates” – rituals around birth, coming of age, first blood. Death. It’s about marking important passages in our lives, the trajectory from birth to death. Rites of passage.

Jamie (A): With rites of passage type rituals, they are more spontaneous, collaborative. It’s more of a closed group by its nature. There’s a quality that is so deeply personal.

Do you find more power in smaller circles?

Kim (A): In a coven, you work together for a while and have a comfort. You’re not coming in with some people being responsible for leading. Everybody is an equal participant. It isn’t like a ceremonial ritual. It’s not like witchcamp or the Spiral Dance. It’s more about the depth of connection.

IvoryFly (A): It can also happen in community rituals. You set it up, you guide the journey, but there’s so many people there’s no way to control it. I think it’s a skill to step out of the way and let the magic happen.

Jamie (A): As we priestess over time, we get better at letting go, letting it flow. It’s important to work this edge, this fluidity. It can help us in our evolution.

Learning to Let It Flow

Jamie (A): I recall a witchcamp ritual that was carefully planned, and then went completely sideways.

The next day even skilled priestesses were saying, “What did we do wrong?” I laughed, because I saw how it showed us: You have no control! It had gone perfectly. But it hadn’t gone the way it was planned.

That’s when you know you are on the point, when that larger thing rises. How can we get better at being comfortable on that emergent edge?

I think that’s what “faerie” means – it means emergent, it means we are *not* controlling it. To provide that beautiful collaborative intention and focus, cultivate the ability to focus – and then see and read what happens, find the juice of it.

To find the medicine, whether we like it or not!



Sacred Space - Quick Ways

INTENT

Sacred space means the overall magical container created by grounding, casting a circle, and invoking allies. Within sacred space we can do any sort of magical working. At the end, we open sacred space.

Sacred space can be a major part of the ritual – for example, the elaborate invocations at the annual Spiral Dance ritual. Other times – especially for personal magic – you might want to create sacred space quickly, so you can get on with the workings.

Let's start with some quick ways to create sacred space so you can jump right into the workings.

Later in this chapter, we'll show in detail what the different parts of Reclaiming rituals might look and sound like.

Starhawk online – do you want to have Starhawk guide you through these steps? Listen to her Way to the Well meditation on iTunes, youtube, spotify, etc. The first ten minutes offer a simple way to create sacred space for yourself.

SPACE & TIME

Once prep and planning are complete, you can create sacred space in a few minutes. This will work for any number – with more people, spread out the roles and allow more time. Enough space for a comfortable circle.

PREP

No materials are necessary, but lots are optional – costumery, scarves, Tarot cards, athames (sacred blades), cauldrons, twinkly faerie lights... Spontaneous magic is sometimes easier if you have a few props and tools at your disposal.

SACRED SPACE: QUICK WAYS (or invent your own!)

As with any Reclaiming practices, feel free to modify this and invent your own most effective ways.

Eventually you'll spend time with each of these skills. If this section is confusing, look further back in this chapter for details.

Honor First People – acknowledge the history of the land:

- Learn and acknowledge the names and cultures of tribes that have lived (and may still live) in your area, and the history of their expropriation and resistance.
- Learn about and mention a present-day campaign for justice for Indigenous people.

Purification – let go of the ordinary world as you begin:

- Sprinkle some drops of water over your head, onto your throat, and touch a drop to your heart.
- Light a match or lighter – gaze at it for a moment – blow it out.
- Fan yourself from top to bottom with a magazine or sheets of paper.

Grounding – take a minute or two to bring yourself fully present:

- Take deep, gentle breaths – on each exhale, let tension, worries, and negativity fall to the Earth – on each inhale, draw up Earth energy and fill yourself.
- Take five gentle breaths, watching your breath, without your mind wandering. If it wanders, begin again.

continued on next page



Purification? Grounding? Circle casting? Or just loosening up before the ritual starts?





Sacred Space - Quick Ways (pg 2)

- Lie down on the ground/floor. Take some gentle breaths – on each exhale, let go of stress, worries, etc. Even though this is the “quick version,” let yourself lie there as long as you wish.

Casting the circle – create a safe circle/sphere of magical energy within which to do your workings. In Reclaiming, there is no one way to cast a circle. The key is – do you feel that a strong container has been created? Here are some simple ways to try:

- Beginning in the North, face the direction, take a breath, and snap your fingers. Turn to the East, breathe, snap. To the South, snap. To the West, snap. Turn again to the North to complete the outer circle and snap. Then face Center – breathe and snap above, then below. Say: “The circle is cast. We are between the worlds. Let the magic begin!”
- Close your eyes and breathe gently. Imagine that on each exhale you are inflating a shimmering soap bubble around yourself. Breathe into the bubble so it fills your space. Then take a breath and touch your center. Say: “Blessed be – let the magic begin.”
- Use yarn to lay a circle around your space. Begin in the North and walk around the circle slowly, breathing steadily. When you complete the circle, face Center and take a breath. Say: “The circle is cast. We are between the worlds. Let the magic begin!”



“Everyone take a drink – welcome Water!”

Invoking elements – in a full ritual, we might call in each element – with words, theatrics, singing and dancing, and humor. Later in this chapter you’ll learn lots of ways to invoke, and you can create more of your own.

Here are some quick, powerful ideas:

- Invoke with an all-elements song such as Air I Am – see Ritual Skills: Chants (pages XXXXX).
- Face the direction, name the element, and speak a few words of power that you associate with the element – North/Earth, East/Air, South/Fire, West/Water, and Center/Spirit.
- Face the direction, name the element (see above), and picture different ways the element appears in the world (in a group, you might speak these aloud).
- Face the direction, name the element (see above), and make a simple dance-movement (in a group, one person might start and others “flock” after them).

Invoking allies – this could be anything from deities to ancestors to energies to animals to plants to the Fey.

- Name a goddess or god who you feel would support the working you plan to do (the internet is good for quick research). Call them with words or a simple dance movement. Finally, welcome them by name.
- Call the mysterious ones – how will you welcome mystery and the unknown? With words? Movements? Silence?
- What kinds of energy do you want present? For instance, creativity, safety, powerful expression, support, etc. Name them, breathing after each. In a large circle, invite people to call out energies and breathe them in. (For more, see Ritual Skills: Invoking Deities vs Energies.)

continued on next page



Sacred Space - Quick Ways (pg 3)

TRANSITION TO WORKINGS

You've now created sacred space, and are ready to do the magical workings in this book, or ones you invent for yourself. With practice, you will learn to create sacred space quickly, yet still have a strong magical container and strong allies.

At this point in a community ritual, you might ring a gong or bell, or sing a short song to let everyone know that the energy is about to change. A priestess steps out and guides us into the working...

OPENING SACRED SPACE: QUICK WAYS

At the end, devoke and open sacred space. Learn to do it quickly so when the workings are done you don't need a lot of time to wrap up the ritual. Even at big community rituals, devoke quickly so you can get on with snacks and socializing.

Devoke in reverse order from how you created sacred space.

Allies devoking – name any deity, beings, or energies you invoked. You can do this simply by naming and saying thanks – “Creativity, thank you and farewell.” “Persephone, hail and farewell.” If you feel called to say more, go for it – but briefly.

Elements devoking – you can simply say something like, “Water, thank you – hail and farewell,” or a few more words. If you invoked the elements with a song, devoke with the same. Many chants have a devoking version – see our website for ideas (See Ritual Skills: Chants).

Opening the circle – this is the final ritual act, since we don't “un-ground” or “de-purify.” Do it similarly to how you cast the circle, only in reverse and more briefly. If you cast with yarn, roll it back up.

If you did snap-casting, skip the breaths – just snap to the six directions in reverse order and say: “The circle is open, but un-broken. May the peace of the Goddess go in our hearts. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!”

Or turn to each direction and speak its name: Below... Above... North... West... South... East... Then say, “The circle is open...” as above.

You've got it! Time for snacks and socializing, writing in your journal, listening to music...

SPEED SPACE – finding our own quickest ways

At political actions we might create sacred space in a minute, so we can do our two-minute magical working and devoke before the march begins or the police arrive!

Back home, too, there are times when we might want to do a quick Tarot reading and don't feel like spending five or ten minutes creating sacred space.

Each of us discovers our own best ways to quickly create sacred space. Practice is key.

Magical tools can sharpen a quick invocation or casting – a nice chalice practically invokes Water by itself. We'll offer more ideas in the following sections, and see also Workings: Tools.

★ **Book of Shadows** – what is the fastest way you can truly ground? Cast a circle? Invoke an ally? Dedicate pages of your journal to a running record of your ideas.



Photo – after sacred space is created, move on to a working – perhaps involving masks, such as this TEM ritual.





Sacred Space - A Longer Example

INTENT

Want to see what an entire Reclaiming ritual looks like? Here's an example of an evening ritual at a small camp. We'll say this particular camp occurred around Summer Solstice, so there was still some dusky twilight as we got started.

This is just an example, not the "correct" way to do ritual. Every Reclaiming ritual that has ever happened has been unique – we couldn't do the same ritual twice if we tried! If what we suggest doesn't feel right for you – create something else.

PREP

Earlier in the afternoon, two teachers and a half-dozen campers got together and planned the evening's ritual, taking into account the ritual arc and intentions for the whole camp.

Since they wanted time for a couple of major workings, they decided that creating sacred space should take only about ten minutes. At the end they reviewed the prep still needed:

Sally and José agreed to arrive at the ritual circle early and bring a bowl of salt water and sprigs of greenery for the purification.

Sagewind offered to do a traditional circle casting, and suggested we used multi-gender pronouns (see Ritual Skills: Circle: Ye Olde Circle Casting – page XXX).

Jeremy and Sharon volunteered to teach *We All Come from the Goddess and Body of the Earth*, and to review the words and melodies ahead of time.

Loreley offered to be Wrangler, keeping track of all the roles and the order of the invocations.

Affinity groups were asked to do short elemental invocations, and people were recruited for grounding and other invocations. Since planners wanted to do the purification as folks arrived at the circle, they moved honoring First People after the welcome.

CREATING SACRED SPACE (an example)

Dinner and cleanup ran late, and dusk was settling as people dressed for the ritual and checked in with their invoking partners.

Ritual planners gathered outside the dining hall, reviewed the order of the ritual, and made sure all roles were filled. Finally, Loreley gave the signal to light the campfire and people began filtering down toward the circle.

Purification – Sally and José hurried down to the ritual circle ahead of the rest and used sprigs of greenery to sprinkle a bit of salt water over people's head, hands, throat, and heart as they arrived at the circle.

Welcome – after everyone gathered, Sharon rang a gong and welcomed us to the ritual, telling us a little about the evening's plans. Jeremy stated the intention of the ritual and the group repeated it three times:

"Feeling the winds of change, we empower our vision of a new world!"

Finally, the two of them taught the chants, so we would already know them when the time came.



Each day after lunch a circle of volunteers gathers to plan the evening's ritual.

continued on next page



Sacred Space - Longer Example (pg 2)

Honoring First People

After a moment of silence, Sojourner stepped forward and said, "As we stand on this land, in this time and place – take a moment and remember that if we are in North America and are not Native American, we are on land that another People inhabited before us. A People who called this place home. We honor those who came before us, who tended and stewarded the land. We acknowledge the injustices they suffered. We take a breath and renew our commitment to justice."

Grounding – The Tree of Life

Stacey stepped into the circle and took a breath. The rest of the circle waited as he closed his eyes.

"Take a deep breath – and let it go," he said. "Grounding is the time to bring ourselves fully present. It's a chance to take some deep breaths, to relax our posture, to feel our connection to the Earth beneath our feet."

"This is called the Tree of Life. It is one of Reclaiming's basic groundings. We'll feel our personal roots sink deep into the Earth, draw up nourishment for our body, and send it up into our energetic branches."

He paused for a breath, then asked us to spread out arm's length apart. "Stand tall and loose, energy balanced, with your knees flexed. Breathe steadily and deeply.... Standing tall, let each breath gently float through your body.... On each inhale, draw in fresh air.... On each exhale, let yourself relax.... Breathe gently and steadily...."

"Picture your spine as the trunk of a majestic tree.... As you breathe, let roots drop down from the base of your spine deep into the Earth... dropping down with each breath... dropping down till they reach the center of the Earth Herself.... Let your energy mingle with the fire at the core of the Earth.... With a breath, let go of anything that you don't need, anything that is not of this time and place.... Let it drop into the Earth...."

He paused, and people's breathing could be heard in the stillness.

"Breathing deeply, begin to draw up power from the Earth.... With each breath, feel the energy rising through your tree trunk.... Feel the power rise up through your core... feel it filling and energizing your entire being...."

"With steady breaths, draw this energy up through your body, up through your chest and neck and head.... And from the crown of your head branches sprout and reach toward the sky.... Let your arms rise like branches, and feel the Earth energy flow up through them.... Reach up and draw down the energy of the stars...."

Now, from your own center, take a deep breath, drawing in the energy of Earth and stars... Feel the Earth and stars mix and mingle in your center.... Breathe in all that you need.... Then let the energy drop back to the Earth, returning to its source.... Let it flow through you and back to the Earth."

Stacey paused for a moment. "And when you are filled with the energy you need, return any extra to the Earth." He bent down to touch the ground. Others did the same, or closed their eyes and touched their center. When it seemed like all were complete, Stacey finished: "Blessed be!" Then he rejoined the circle.



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Sacred Space - Longer Example (pg 3)

Casting the Circle

Sagewind (who uses “they” pronouns) stepped into the circle. They planned to do the traditional circle casting and use multi-gender pronouns for the different directions (see Ritual Skills: Circle: Ye Olde Circle Casting – page XXX).

Sagewind knelt and held their right hand toward the fire and took several breaths. Then they stood and moved out of the circle to the North, stopping a few steps outside the edge.

Facing North, they drew an invoking pentacle in the air, circled it, then “pushed” the pentacle out to mark the edge of the magical circle. Some people did the same, while others faced North with their palms open.

“By the Earth that is Her body,” Sagewind declared.

Sagewind walked clockwise around to the East. The rest turned to face the same direction. Sagewind drew an invoking pentacle and pushed it to the edge of the circle: “By the Air that is His breath.”

They walked around to the South and inscribed a pentacle: “By the Fire of Their bright spirit.”

And then to the West, where they drew a pentacle: “By the Waters of Our living blood.”

Sagewind continued around the outside of the ring to complete the full circle to the North, then came to the Center.

Looking up, they drew an invoking pentacle in the air: “By all that is above.”

Then they drew a pentacle toward the floor, pushed it down, and said: “By all that is below.”

Finally Sagewind swept their arm in a full circle: “The circle is cast. We are between the worlds. And what happens between the worlds can change all the worlds. Let the magic begin!”

“So mote it be,” some people called out.

Invoking the Elements

Although circle casting begins with North, Reclaiming begins elemental invocations with East, the direction of dawn and new beginnings. Affinity groups (small support groups that meet during camp) were asked to invoke the elements, and had planned short invocations before dinner.

Invoking East/Air – The first group stepped out. They seemed a bit tentative, but the attention of the rest of the circle helped bolster them. All eight faced East and took a breath together. Then they started calling out words associated with the element of Air: “Inspiration! Clouds! New beginnings! Breaths! Gusts of wind! Clarity!” Other people around the circle supported them by tossing in their own Air words – some words made sense to everyone, and some seemed personal.

Finally, the invoking group made eye-contact with each other and called out: “Welcome East – Welcome Air!” The rest of the circle echoed it back. The invokers melted back into the circle.

Invoking South/Fire – The next affinity group stepped out. People started rubbing their hands together or clapping them



Practicing an invocation before a ritual at TEM 2012.

continued on next page



Sacred Space - Longer Example (pg 4)

sharply. Others around the circle joined in. Then one invoker called out: "Hold your palms up and breathe in fiery energy of the stars... Hold your palms down and breathe in fiery molten Earth energy... Now place your hands on your center and breathe to the fire in your belly..."

After a moment, the affinity group clapped their hands sharply three times, then called out: "Welcome South – Welcome Fire!"

Invoking West/Water – The third group came into the circle, each carrying an empty cup. One person carried a pitcher of water, which was poured into the cups. The invokers circled the fire and together took a drink. Then they fanned out, dipped their fingers into the water, and started flicking it at people, calling out: "Welcome West – Welcome Water!"

Invoking North/Earth – The fourth affinity group came into the circle and started the song that Jeremy had taught earlier: "We Are of the Body of the Earth / The Earth is of the body of the stars / We are stars that circle from life to death to birth." After three times through, the group ended on a harmony. Jeremy called out: "Welcome North – Welcome Earth!"

Invoking Center – For Center, Goldenrod started a familiar song: "We are a circle, within a circle, with no beginning, and never ending." At the end, people called out: "Welcome Center – Welcome Spirit!"

Allies Invocations

People looked around, wondering what would happen next. Each ritual invokes different allies, and in different orders. Loreley, the ritual Wrangler for the evening, quickly looked at her notes, then leaned toward Sunflower: "Spirits of the land is first," she whispered.

Spirits of the Land – "Oh, right," Sunflower said, and took a step into the circle. "Please join me in honoring spirits of this place. Take a moment and think about the place we are standing right now.... Think about the rocks and underground waters.... the types of trees of flowers and animals you find here.... Think about the many kinds of life that have existed in this place...." Sunflower gazed down toward the Earth: "We thank the spirits of this land for hosting our ritual."

Honoring Our Ancestors – Sandra looked around the circle. "I invite you to take a moment and thank your ancestors – those of your own bloodline, and also all those whose work or writing or art has inspired you... Thank especially any ancestor who helped you arrive at this very time and place.... Blessed be."

Around the circle, people echoed, "Blessed be."

Then Loreley spoke again: "Finally, we invoke deity and energy to support our magic tonight!" (Note – you can find a lot more on this topic under Ritual Skills: Invoking Deity & Energies. Here, we will invoke one goddess and one type of energy.)

Invoking the Goddess – Randall, one of the teachers, stepped out and placed both hands on his center. The rest of us did likewise. "Breathe to your own center," Randall said, "and picture the beautiful blue ocean... Call to the ocean as the Mother... the power of birth and growth and every kind of creativity.... Feel how She speaks to us with Her tides, endlessly calling to us."

He took a breath and began singing: "We all come from the Goddess / And to Her we shall return / Like a drop of rain / Flowing to the ocean." Others picked up the tune, adding harmonies, until the song settled into a gentle final chord.



It's all in the timing – invocation at TEM 2012.

continued on next page





Sacred Space - Longer Example (pg 5)

“Welcome Goddess!” Randall declared and people echoed.

Invoking Creativity – Frida glided into the circle. “I call you to dance,” she called out. “Dance like there is no wrong way! Dance like this is your world!”

Some people joined Frida in the circle. Others swayed a bit but stayed in the outer circle.

Frida called out: “Creative spirit of the universe – come to our circle today! We call to you with our voices! We call you as –” Others joined her in calling out words of creativity: “Freedom! Courage! Inspiration! Color! Dedication! Excitement! Beauty!” Finally Frida cried: “Welcome Creativity!” “Welcome Creativity!” the circle called back.

THE MIDDLE PARTS OF THE RITUAL

A gong sounded, and Sagewind stepped out to guide us into the first working...

Perhaps that evening we did an allies circle... or maybe we hiked down to the nearby meadow to walk a night labyrinth... maybe we did a trance journey to our place of power, then charged the working with fire and flour...

Whatever we did, we probably ended with a spiral dance around the bonfire and sang a high-energy chant like Weave and Spin or We Are the Rising Sun, chanting and toning until we built a whirlwind of magical energy.

DEVOKING & OPENING THE CIRCLE

As the energy settled back down, people took a deep breath. Some bent down and touched the ground, letting any excess or nervous energy return to the Earth.

Now it was time to devoke and open the circle. People felt tired and spacey, and we were glad to have a wrangler to keep track of who went in what order – especially since devocations go in reverse.

Devocations are usually short versions of the invocations – sometimes just a quick “thank you,” or “hail and farewell.” By this time of night, people are usually glad to wrap up and have something to eat.

Devoking/Thanking Allies

Thanking Creativity – Frida stepped forward. “Creative spirit of the universe – thank you for inspiring and challenging us in our magical workings and in our world. We ask that you travel with us and support us throughout this week. Thank you Creativity!” People echoed her final words.

Devoking the Goddess – Randall started singing We All Come from the Goddess. Others joined in, and he slowed the last line to show that he was ending. “Thank you Goddess,” he said. “Hail and farewell!”

Thanking your Ancestors – Sandra invited us each to whisper a few words of appreciation to our ancestors of blood and spirit. “Thank you, ancestors – hail and farewell,” she concluded. The rest of us echoed her.

Thanking Spirits of the Land – Sunflower stretched out her arms. “We thank the land on which we stand – we thank the rocks and waters and living beings. Thank you for hosting our ritual, spirits of the land.”

Devoking the Elements

Goldenrod, who was supposed to devoke Center, looked around. “Do we want to devoke all the elements with a song?”

People nodded, and Goldenrod launched into an easy chant that many people already knew:

*The Earth, the Water, the Fire, the Air,
Return, return, return, return!*

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Sacred Space - Longer Example (pg 6)

Opening the Circle

The song faded, and Sagewind strode to the middle of the circle. They faced North, took a breath, and called out: "Earth!"

Turning counter-clockwise to the West, they called: "Water!"

Continuing to the South: "Fire!"

And finally to the East: "Air!"

They swept their arm around to North to complete the circle, then clapped over their head: "Above!" Reaching down, they clapped once more: "Below!"

Then Sagewind cried loudly: "The circle is open, but unbroken!"

Others joined in, voices rising through the final lines: "May the peace of the Goddess go in our hearts. Merry meet, merry part – and merry meet again!"

Applause and laughter burst out, as if we had just finished a successful dress rehearsal.

Gradually, people drifted into smaller conversations. Sharon sat down by the fire and wrote in her journal. José and Sagewind headed toward the dining hall. "Can you bring some dessert back?" Sandra called after them.

Sunflower picked up a drum and started playing a simple rhythm. Someone stacked a few more logs on the fire...



Ritual in the redwoods – fire circle at Mendocino Woodlands, home of Mysteries of Samhain, Pleasures of Beltane, Witchlets in the Woods, Redwood Magic Family Camp, and California WitchCamp. Photo by Dawnstar.





Ritual Skills: Step-by-Step

Ideas & Inspirations for Each Part of a Ritual

- Honoring First People XXX
- Purification XXX
- Grounding XXX
- Casting a Circle XXX
- Invoking XXX
 - Elements..... XXX
 - Ancestors XXX
 - Deity, Allies, & Energies..... XXX
- Ritual Planning XXX
- Ritual Theme & Arc XXX
- Stories of the Land XXX
 - Example: Journey of the Salmon XXX
- Ritual Firetending..... XXX
- Leading a Spiral Dance XXX
- Teaching Chants..... XXX
- Chants Resources Online XXX





Honoring First People

INTENT

The intention is to honor the People who formerly lived on and cared for this land, and to acknowledge the history of genocide and dispossession that has displaced these People and continues to minimize their presence.

This is not about guilt – it's about awareness of history and a commitment to work for justice. This can be a complicated topic, depending on where you live and the ancestry of the folks in your circle. When this is done well, it can open a ritual on a note of resolution to work for justice.

SPACE & TIME

Any number, usually at or near the beginning of the ritual.

Allow the time needed. This might be a short acknowledgment of First People and the history of expropriation. It might be a longer explanation of a local campaign or other organizing efforts for Indigenous rights.

PREP

How will you learn about First People in your area? What resources are available?

What local organizing or gatherings are happening in your area? Maybe your ritual can tangibly support that work – for instance, by passing out flyers or collecting donations.

WORKINGS

This working can vary widely. Some Reclaiming groups name and honor First People at the opening of rituals, before cast the circle. Someone involved with Indigenous organizing might share update on local actions and ways we can support.

In smaller circles, someone might acknowledge First People and the history of injustice.

At the Spiral Dance in the San Francisco Bay Area, a local Indigenous person often honors the First People of the land we are on before we begin our ritual.

Honoring First People – A Shell Working

Here's a simple working from a Berkeley ritual. Ohlone People lived along the edges of San Francisco Bay for millennia before the arrival of Europeans. They harvested shellfish, and over the years created huge mounds of shells along the waterfront. Reclaiming groups have supported efforts to preserve local sacred sites threatened by development.

Space/Time/Size – space for a small altar and a circle of people. Each person will speak, so best size is 50 or fewer.

Materials Needed – a bag or two of small, plain seashells – enough for 2-3 per person at the ritual. Altar cloth, large bowl.

Prep – create a small altar with the shells already set out in a bowl.

Working – priestess steps to side of altar and speaks words of acknowledgment and apology to the Ohlone People, then invites participants to step up to altar, take a couple of shells, and take a moment to think of one or two words of apology, commitment, power, hope, etc.

Finally, priestess invites people to place their shells back on the altar and speak their words.

Finish – tone or sing over the shells, then say: "So mote it be!"

Afterward – invite people to take a few shells and put them in their garden or a sacred spot as a way of carrying our working into the wider world.





Purification

INTENT

Purification prepares us to enter ritual space. The idea isn't that ordinary life is somehow "dirty" or "impure," but that it fills our days with annoyances and distractions that get in the way of entering sacred space and time. (Some people think a different word is needed for this, but it hasn't surfaced yet – stay tuned!)

In purification, we use elemental power such as flame, air, or salt water to clear away distractions and get ourselves ready to do ritual. Often it is simple – a sprinkle of salt water, a wafting with peacock feathers, the ringing of a bell...

Sometimes purification is part of grounding – near the beginning, a priestess invites people to "let go of what you don't need and drop it to the Earth."

Other times it is done as people enter the room. At the Brigid ritual in San Francisco, priestesses stand at the door holding unlit taper candles. As someone approaches, a priestess steps forward and crosses candles over the person's heart.

At the Spiral Dance ritual, participants pass through veiled portals as they go from the lobby into the ritual room. Some years, priestesses greet people on the other side with salt water, sprinkling it with the words: "You are now entering sacred space – you are now entering sacred time."

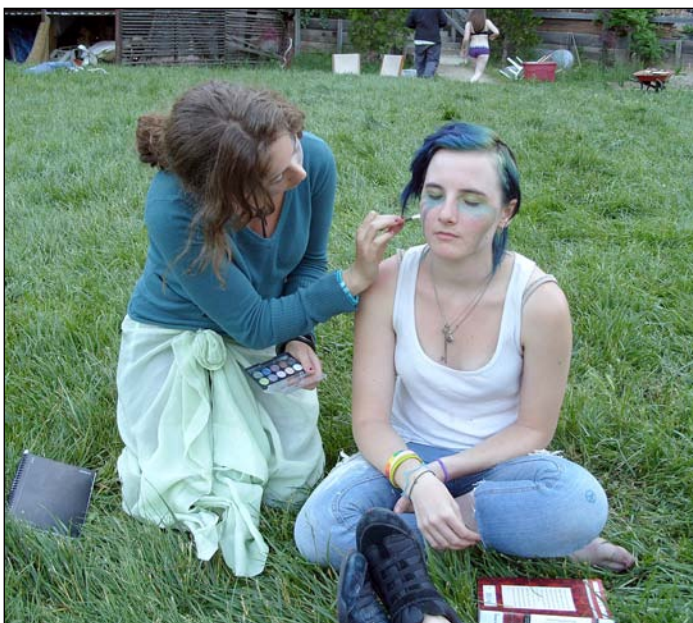
In our daily lives we "purify" (or we're supposed to!) when we wash our hands before we begin the ritual of eating. At some camps we chant a reminder before meals: "Witches wash your hands!"

SPACE & TIME

Purification can be done at the edge of ritual space (as with the Brigid and Spiral Dance rituals described above), or as part of the grounding.

If it's self-directed, set a bowl (or feather or whatever) on an altarcloth near circle. If someone will priestess this part, position them on the approaches to the circle.

Allow a few minutes. If done as people arrive, it won't take much time. Watch out for purifying one person at a time after everyone has arrived. No one wants to stand around and watch someone painstakingly waft air over each chakra of every person at a community ritual.



Could pre-ritual facepainting work as a purification? Try it out!

PREP

- Materials as needed – peacock feathers; bowl/salt/sprig; hand-fan; candles/lighter; etc.
- Set up station and materials at edge of space.
- One or more priestesses to keep the purification moving quickly.

WORKINGS: SIMPLE PURIFICATIONS

Priestesses perform the purification, then silently gesture people forward, or say something like: "You are now entering sacred space – you are now entering sacred time!"

Saltwater and fresh greenery – need bowl of salt water and a sprig of greenery. As people approach, dip greenery into water and sprinkle a few drops on people, saying: "You are now entering sacred space. You are now entering

continued on next page



Purification (pg 2)

sacred time.”

Bowl of salt water for self-purifying – have a large, beautiful bowl filled with salt water. Welcoming graces invite people to purify themselves by dipping their fingers in the water and using it to touch their third eye, their heart, etc as they release energy and thoughts that don’t serve them right now. End by saying, “Blessed be.”

Feather wafting – get a few large, beautiful feathers that you can waft the air with. As each person approaches, invite them to stand with their eyes closed. Waft their aura, saying: “You are now entering sacred space, you are now entering sacred time.”

Feather wafting with Wings – Graces sing Wings (from our album Second Chants – see Ritual Skills: Chants) as they waft people arriving at the ritual:

*Wandering in the deep of the night
A thousand birds take flight
And our dreams are borne on the wings of change
We are weaving the world tonight*

Shaking it out – this can be fun as the circle first gathers – before grounding or welcoming people, invite everyone to shake their bodies out, make noise, jump around, etc.

Games or silly songs – starting with a goofy game or a silly song can tap the nervous energy of the circle, stir it up a bit, and let it go. (Note – silliness doesn’t always work so well with younger teens, or with a group that doesn’t know one another yet.)

Aura carwash – see Workings: Aura Carwash. We do this at the opening circle each year at Redwood Magic Family Camp. It’s a fun way of purifying the entire group at once while building camaraderie – allow ten minutes.

Toning – invite people to use their voices to let go of what is not needed. Priestesses model free-form, wordless singing and release.

Star purification – see Workings: Purification: Star Purification. This is a longer personal purification for individuals or group.

Burning sage – in olden dayes, purifications were sometimes done by lighting a sprig of dried white sage and wafting it around people. More recently, concerns about cultural appropriation of this practice (often adopted from Indigenous Peoples) have curbed its use in our circles. Also, some folks may be allergic to the smell and/or smoke.

SOLO WORKING

Many of these ways of purifying work just as well for one person as 50. The star purification (See Workings: Purification) is designed for one person.

Try doing a quick purification (and grounding) before an exam, sports event, or job interview. What would help clear away your doubts and nervousness?



Pre-lunch handwashing is a key purification – after which the food-blessing circle forms elbow-to-elbow.





Reclaiming Roundtable: Grounding

“I remind myself that whatever happens, the Earth is always here for support. The Earth will always love me, and I can trust it.”

Grounding is a word that covers a variety of ways in which we call our energy back to our own center and strengthen our connection to the Earth.

Sometimes grounding means getting into a deep, trancey space and preparing for prolonged introspective work.

Other times, being grounded means being alert and flexible, such as facing a row of nervous cops at a direct action – or a cranky teacher during an exam.

What does grounding mean to you?

Lucy (Y): Grounding is centering myself in relation to the universe and the Earth.

Heaven (A): I want to work from a place where I’m really centered, with a meditation or a chant or a prayer.

Seed (E): Grounding puts us in our bodies. It puts us in touch with the Earth, with the relation between Earth and sky – we walk through the world forgetting the larger sense of belonging.

Mykel (Y): Grounding reminds me of the bigger picture of the Earth and the stars, so it becomes easier to drop my attachment to little stresses. I can slow down, drop my center of gravity, and be aware of my body and my energy.

Kim (A): It’s a mindfulness practice of getting into your body and your connection to the group you’re working with. It’s slowing down the outside world so you simplify things in your mind, so you can make a conscious decision between your intellect and your intuition.

Peter (Y): Grounding is a connection to my inner self, outer self, and outer community, in equilibrium. I want to be grounded before facing conflict or a difficult topic. I feel that it allows for a smoother conversation and less miscommunication.

Ingrid (Y): I think of grounding like balancing – connecting to a balanced, whole, authentic expression of myself.

Paul (E): The primary skill of Reclaiming witchcraft is grounding. The second and third are grounding. The fourth is something else. And the fifth is grounding.

When do you find grounding helpful?

Ari (Y): In everyday life, when I’m stressed out or need to be clear-headed in the midst of chaos, being able to ground and find my calm center – the eye of the storm within myself – is truly valuable in keeping high-risk situations safe and/or from escalating.

Kim (A): Activism. Anything that might be risky. When you’re trying to change the world, you want to be super



A simple grounding can help people focus when a circle gathers.

present.

John (A): Going into an intense situation -- say death and dying, or talking about a trauma. Often times I’ll find a minute alone and ground -- just be present in the moment. Being receptive to all the emotions and not have them be over whelming. I feel them, but they float through me. Just be open, feel it – it keeps me from overthinking or having inappropriate reactions.

Ola’i Wildeboar (Y): When life gets overwhelming and stressful and I feel myself fill up with worries and anxieties and unpleasant thoughts, I try to find a way to center myself. Often, grounding is that way.

Key: (Y) = youth to approx 30 / (A) = approx 30-55 / (E) = elder

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Roundtable: Grounding (pg 2)

“Oh, right, this is reality. Why do I spend so much time seeing only a fraction of things?”

What’s a favorite way of grounding?

Ola’i Wildeboar (Y): If I can, I go to nature or a space that I consider magical. But often that isn’t available, so I go somewhere quiet and sit. I try to align my spine and feel the ground beneath me. I remind myself that whatever happens, the Earth is always here for support. The Earth will always love me, and I can trust it. Once I become aware, I am usually in a calm state of mind and ready to move forward and make whatever decision I need to make.

Kim (A): The biggest thing is having my feet on the ground. It has to be really freezing for me to wear shoes in a ritual. Putting my hand on my body, on my heart, my center. Breathing. But none of them are quite as good as feeling my feet on the ground.

Dusky (Y): I usually ground lying down or standing. Sitting feels kind of odd. I try to go somewhere quiet. I close my eyes and listen to my breath or to natural sounds around me. I turn down my thinking mind, stopping that constant rush of thoughts. To me, grounding is slowing myself down and feeling myself in touch with everything around me, feeling the connection that I have to other people and nature – tapping into Earth energy.

Heaven (A): When people visualize themselves as a tree and send their roots down into the Earth, then draw it back up through their body and out into the air as branches. The best part is when your branches intertwine with all of the other people, and you’re one solid ring of groundedness.

Natasha (Y): A big part of how I feel grounded is feeling my body in the space – if there’s sunlight on my face or air on my skin. Also checking in with energies going on internally and calming them, putting ones that aren’t serving me at that moment aside so I can be really present and centered.

When or why is grounding difficult?

Seed (E): Remembering – I think that’s one of the hardest things about magic! We don’t remember, we get caught in our narratives. That’s a lovely thing about having magical “family.” I can’t count the times that one of my circle sisters has looked at me and said, “Have you considered

doing some magic around this?”

Charlotte (Y): When you live in a city it’s hard – cities have all this concrete and plumbing and electrical wires underground – but there’s also soil. So I try to find myself connected to that somehow – trying to keep some sort of Earth awareness.



Deep pentacle grounding? Or maybe it’s just nap time on the trampoline.

Kim (A): Well, as a double Libra, grounding is always hard! I work hard to be really grounded. It’s something I do five or six times a day.

Dusky (Y): I don’t interact in the world in a grounded way very often. When I try to be grounded, I get kind of bored. I’m an energetic, bouncy person. But when I do that for too long, it gets exhausting. I recharge when I’m by myself, or when I’m with spiritual people.

So what works when grounding is difficult?

Meagan (Y): The most effective paths to grounding I’ve found are not formulaic, but involve a very subtle tracking of my emotional state, as well as my external environment, and the relation between the two.

Lucy (Y): One thing that works for me is visualizing a flower blooming into the space around me with roots in the Earth, pointing to the sky.

John (A): I’ll touch my body, move. A simple drum rhythm





Roundtable: Grounding (pg 3)

“New Pull Quote New Pull Quote New Pull Quote New
Pull Quote New Pull Quote ”

– I get in touch with the Earth that way. At the end of a ritual I'll look at the clock. It's like grounding back into the real world.

Kim (A): It's a mindfulness practice, getting into your body and connecting with the planet and the group you're working with. It's slowing down the outside world, so you simplify things in your mind and can make a conscious decision between intellect and intuition.

How can you tell you're grounded?

Dusky (Y): My off-the-cuff cheesy answer is, it's kind of like being in love – you just know.

Ingrid (Y): I feel really sure of myself. I often suffer from self-confidence issues, so it's a distinct feeling to me to feel that I have a little bit more power and confidence. I can definitely feel the difference.

Mykel (Y): Often, when I ground, I'll feel a shiver up my spine of the Earth's energy moving through me. After I ground, I usually feel like, “Oh, right, this is reality. Why do I spend so much time seeing only a fraction of things?”

Paul (E): The fundamental aspect is connecting to source energy, something that is part of you and yet separate from you, the Earth and the stars.

Practice Grounding with Starhawk

Practice Reclaiming-style groundings and guided meditations with recordings by Starhawk on youtube, spotify, etc.

See page XXX for details.



Grounding

INTENT

Grounding means something like “relaxing, calling my energy back to my center, letting go of thoughts and energy that I don’t need at this moment, and feeling my connection with the deep core of the Earth.”

In Reclaiming rituals, we might do a combination of purification, centering, grounding into the Earth, and drawing up Earth energy, and call the whole ensemble “grounding.”

Grounding is a valuable personal skill as well. What if you could quickly ground and center yourself before a test, or before a stage performance or athletic contest? What if you could easily renew your sense of groundedness and self-confidence when someone upsets you or makes you angry?

Different people find different ways of grounding that work for them. When a priestess “leads a grounding” at the beginning of a ritual, some people just tune out and do their own personal grounding.

So no one can tell you “how to ground.” You’ll figure that out for yourself. Here are some ways that Reclaiming folks do personal and group groundings, and some workings that will help you explore various methods.

However you ground, you’ll want to finish by returning the energy to the Earth afterward. When you finish the grounding, drop to your knees (or touch any solid object that is sitting on the ground). Place your hands on the ground. Let any excess energy drain into the Earth, where it can be renewed.

★ **Book of Shadows** – grounding is a great topic for your journal or Book of Shadows. As you try out different ways of grounding, jot down notes about what works and what doesn’t. Look back occasionally and notice any patterns and changes.

Online samples – you’ll find sample groundings from Starhawk online. See page XXX for more information.

SPACE & TIME

There’s no limit to the number who can do a grounding together except the ability to be heard. With a microphone, people lead groundings for large gatherings like the annual Spiral Dance. People have even tried it over TV or audiobooks!

On the other hand, trying to lead a verbal grounding on a windy day can be a challenge even for a small circle. In that case, try toning together, with experienced people modeling how to use gestures to draw down calm, powerful, healing Earth energy to their centers.

Groundings typically take two to five minutes. This is a chance to draw healing Earth energy into our bodies and auras. Taking time and care to ground and come fully present can improve all magical – and mundane – work.



Tree-Hugging – the archetypal grounding! JeWitch Camp 2020.

continued on next page





Grounding (pg 2)

PREP

Usually a single priestess leads the grounding. This can be a good role for someone who did not help plan the ritual – they don't need to know the whole ritual flow to do a good grounding.

Grounding priestess – do whatever prep you need. You may want to practice ahead of time. Practice the pauses too... give people time for their own thoughts between your words....

In a small circle or alone, it's fine to read groundings from a piece of paper or play recordings the first few times. But have a goal of doing them spontaneously – once you understand what a grounding is and how it works in a ritual, you'll be surprised at how easy they are to invent!

In a group or circle – invite people to stand if they are able, with their weight evenly balanced and knees slightly relaxed. Standing in a relaxed position often makes it simpler to draw Earth energy up through our bodies rather than sitting or lying down.

WORKINGS: Some Ways of Grounding

Tree of Life

This may be the most common grounding in the Reclaiming repertoire – people envision themselves as trees, exchanging energy with Earth and sky. Roots go down, branches up – amazing how it works!

See Ritual Skills: Sacred Space: A Longer Example. You can also search on youtube for <Starhawk Grounding Meditation>.

Roots Down, Branches Up!

A super-fast version of the Tree of Life grounding – although its strength depends on having a regular practice of grounding that we can quickly call upon.

Stand tall, with your weight balanced and knees slightly bent.... Take a deep breath.... As you exhale, drop your roots down from the base of your spine to the center of the Earth.... On a second deep breath, exhale and throw your arms upward as branches.... Breathe life energy from the core of the Earth to the tips of your fingers and beyond....

Call out: "Roots down, branches up!"

🌟 **Book of Shadows** – try this exercise, then ask – does this grounding actually work for you? What might make it stronger?



Campers practice their grounding skills during a break at Teen Earth Magic.

continued on next page



Grounding (pg 3)

Ground with the Ground

Does it work to lie down on the ground to ground? Try it out. Try different positions. Uncross your arms and legs. Draw deep breaths. Does it work for you? What's different than standing?

✦ **Book of Shadows** – how do you know when you are grounded/centered? Or not? What makes a difference?

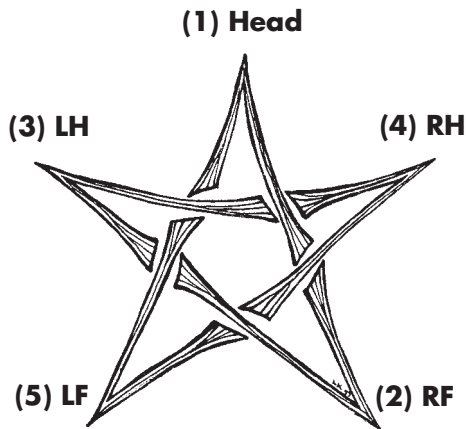
Star Purification & Grounding

See Workings: Purification: Star Purification (page XXX) – this working can be turned into a grounding by adding one piece at the end – when you have completed the purification, take three more breaths, letting your aura be filled with Earth energy, connecting you to the center of the planet. Let it mingle with the Star energy.

Speak or sing the words to the chant, Body of the Earth: "We are of the body of the Earth / The Earth is of the body of the Stars / We are stars that circle from life to death to birth."

Running The Pentacle

Pentacle Magic – see page XXX



Stand as a relaxed star. Take a breath to your center. Let that energy rise gently to a point just above your head.

Begin at the top. Run the pentacle three times as shown (1-2-3-4-5-1), returning to the top to complete it.

Then trace a circle around the star (1-3-5-2-4-1), again finishing at the top.

Let the energy rest there for a moment, then drop gently back to your center for completion of the cycle.

Pop Quiz – compare this to the invoking pentacle on page XXXX. Why is the invoking pentacle a mirror image of the "running" pentacle?

See page XXXX for one possible answer!

Pentacle Grounding

This grounding runs pentacle energy to ground us. (For more pentacle magic, see Workings: Pentacles – page XXX).

Stand like a star, legs spread, arms stretched loosely to sides. Close your eyes and take a deep breath, letting your energy come together in your own center. Breathe again to your center.

Now, on a breath, let your energy rise gently above your head and rest there, glowing like a bright ball of light. Breathe to this energy.

Let the energy drop diagonally through your body to your right foot. Breathe and let your energy rest there, glowing like a bright light.

Continue in this order, resting for one breath at each point:

- Head
- Right Foot
- Left Hand
- Right Hand
- Left Foot
- Return to Head

Run the pentacle three times, finishing above your head. Take a breath..

Now gently run the energy once around the circle in this order:

- Head
- Left Hand
- Left Foot
- Right Foot
- Right Hand
- Return to Head

Take one more breath. Then let the energy drop gently back to your center. Anchor it there with three breaths. Say: "Blessed be!"

continued on next page





Grounding (pg 4)

Instant Grounding

How quickly can I go from ungrounded to grounded? What helps me do this?

Try doing a personal grounding that helps you feel centered, calm, and present. Hold this feeling for a moment. Now touch a part of your body – perhaps your “center.” Draw your grounded attention into that center. Perhaps you can visualize an object such as a rose or a crystal in that spot.

When you finish, set a timer for an hour or so. Now go back to your daily life – anything except more magic.

When the timer sounds, see if you can re-ground simply by touching your center (or whatever spot you chose) and calling up the image you visualized. Can you call back your groundedness with a breath? With three breaths?

Practice helps – try this a few times in different contexts. Try it at a retreat where you feel especially grounded. Try different images until you find one that really resonates. See if instant grounding can become a skill you develop, and not just an exercise you did this one time.

Note – instant grounding depends on a steady practice of grounding. Then when you need it, you’re in practice.

✦ **Book of Shadows** – what are three places/situations where you could benefit from instant grounding? What would make it difficult or awkward? What would make it more possible?

Group Personal Grounding – “Come Back Grounded”

Here’s a good outdoor grounding, when folks have already done other types of groundings at prior classes or rituals. Use a bell or drum to call people back.

When it’s time to do the grounding, invite people to spread out a bit. “Give yourself some space. You’ll have a few minutes. When the bell rings, come back grounded.” Allow 3-4 minutes.

Moveable Grounding

Can you ground while walking? Or – can you stop and ground, then move without losing it?

Try it out. Try grounding while you walk. What makes it different than standing still? Does walking in a circle help?

Can you move after grounding and still maintain your grounding? Would anchoring the feeling in your body help? What if you envision a crystal in your heart – so whenever you touch your heart, you recall the crystal and the grounding it symbolizes?

✦ **Book of Shadows** – after trying some moveable groundings, take a few minutes and write your impressions. What might make moveable groundings work better for you?

Invisible Grounding

When we ground in public, we may not want everyone to notice what we’re doing. What are some simple, “invisible” ways that you can ground? Is it essential to have private space? Can you ground with people around you? With your eyes open?

SOLO WORKING

Grounding is a basic magical skill, in some ways the foundation of all the rest. Maybe that’s why we do it at the beginning of rituals!

Try different ways of grounding as above, including the online recordings from Starhawk, and invent some of your own.

✦ **Book of Shadows** – keep a running commentary in your Book of Shadows. What works in which situations? What changes do you see as you gain skills? When has grounding particularly worked for you? Where and when has it been most difficult to stay grounded?



Reclaiming Roundtable: Circle Casting

“I’ve come to see circle casting as a way to hold an intention. It contains the energy we are working with until we are ready to release it or further direct its path.”

What is a magical circle?

Talise (Y): A circle is a container for magic. It also helps set the tone for your magic. It helps you set the intention that you’re going to do magical working in that space.

John (A): It’s our conduit between the worlds, where we move between the spiritual and material world. That’s where the magic is created, birthed, nurtured, and directed. Casting the circle and acknowledging the elements are ways to balance this work.

Kim (A): It’s a place to be between the worlds – but it’s also a psychic protection. It’s a boundary of where something is happening and where it is not happening, physically and energetically.

Miranda (Y): A magical circle is sacred space.

What does “sacred space” mean?

Miranda (Y): It’s a space that’s created so that the magic you do stays within the circle unless you specifically choose to bring it out. It’s kind of like a barrier – you’re safe within it. It gives you a magical space to work in.

Key: (Y) = youth to approx 30 / (A) = approx 30-55 / (E) = elder



The circle gathers.

Heaven (A): I was taught, “this is a time that is not a time, this is a place that is not a place.” We’re literally stepping between worlds.

Seed (E): A lot of it is about intentionality and beauty. It’s a place where something important is going to happen, in which all of the elements have been invited to be there.

Why exactly do you cast circles?

KaeliMo (Y): It’s a way to separate yourself from outside stressors and create an intentional physical and mental space to safely do what you’re doing.

Heaven (A): Casting your circle is basically saying, I acknowledge that I am doing magic, that we are doing magic together, and we are doing it in this space.

Mykel (Y): I love being in circles of magic, whether I cast by myself or in a group. It changes the space – the air feels physically different once we set it aside as sacred. It reminds me of being in temples, churches, and other buildings of worship because of the reverence and openness they make me feel. The “walls” we build help to define the feel of a space and protect us in the vulnerability of doing magic.

Ingrid (Y): Okay, so I guess this is when I admit that for a long time I had no idea what it actually meant to myself (or others) to cast a circle. It just seemed to be something you “should” do when creating sacred space.

What do you find puzzling about it?

Ingrid (Y): Sometimes, after casting the circle with pretty words (at this point the variations on “By the Earth...” are so numerous and so lovely that I want a list just to read them all again and again), I get the distinct feeling that I missed something. Where was that circle again? I feel slightly less than “between the worlds”.

What do you think might work for you?

Ingrid (Y): At our last camp, I started asking what exactly I was hoping to create when I cast a circle. I’ve come to see circle casting as a way to hold an intention. It contains the energy we are working with until

continued on next page





Roundtable: Circle Casting (pg 2)

“In the moment our circle is cast, we breathe into the fullness of our edges, into the vast presence of each other’s being, and into the woven body of our circle.”

we are ready to release it or further direct its path.

Do you cast circles on your own?

Miranda (Y): Very rarely – maybe once.

Kim (A): I do a lot of work in dropped and open attention, with awareness of the boundary of my aura, awareness of setting a boundary around me. I don’t necessarily call it “casting a circle,” but it kind of is.

Ingrid (Y): Yes, or I’d fret if I didn’t – haven’t you heard at least one story of strange energies taking over a ritual for lack of a “circle of protection?” There are times when I’ve flat out forgotten to cast a circle, or I’ve gotten halfway through invoking the elements and say, “Wait! Hold up! I totally want to bask in your radiance, Fire, but first let’s get the circle cast!” And there are other times that I just decide not to cast a circle.

KaeliMo (Y): I cast a circle for myself when I first got to college. College is a really intense place, and I figured it would be good to go into it with intention, holding my own boundaries. I still haven’t closed it – it’s there until I leave, or I feel that this portion of my work is done. When I feel like things are getting difficult or out of my control, I put some extra intention into it and let myself have the space I need.

Do you have a favorite way to cast a circle?

Ingrid (Y): If I had to pick a favorite – one that speaks to me every time – it would be “Hand to Hand and Heart to Heart” (see page XXX). When we bring each heart into the circle, there is some sort of spark created. In the moment when our circle is cast, we breathe into the fullness of our edges, into the vast presence of each other’s being, and into the woven body of our circle, holding us gently in this transitional space. I love that way of casting. It never gets old for me.

John (A): Some of the most powerful circle casting I’ve seen has been silent. I tend to use a wand or an athame. I imagine different colored energy as I go around, like the color wheel.

Talise (Y): I like when people gather the energy by doing something like passing a seed around, or picking up a rock in your hand and each person touching it to their heart.

Miranda (Y): It’s much easier to visualize if there is a physical circle – if everyone is holding hands in a circle, or one person walking around the circle, it’s like, “Oh, we have a circle!” That’s easier than if someone says, “Now we’re going to imagine there’s a circle here.”

Kim (A): To me it’s not a word thing. It’s energetic. So silence is better for me. I don’t care if I have a tool. It’s about moving the energy around, acknowledging the directions.

Mykel: I like the traditional circle casting structure, because it feels stable, balanced, secure. I also like experiments that play with different combinations of physical and energetic aspects, like making a circle around us with rope or physical objects, or physically taking each other’s hands.



Classes and rituals begin by casting a circle.



Circle Casting

INTENT

Magical circles are part of the ancient lore of witches, occultists, and magicians. A circle can protect us from malignant energy, or summon and hold positive energy. In old stories such as the Legend of Dr. Faustus, terrifying demons can be invoked and controlled if one has cast a strong enough circle.

Even in the mundane world, a circle brings a group of people together on equal footing – unlike sitting in rows facing a lecturer. A circle gives us a sense of belonging and of being separate from anything outside our circle. Whether or not we name it, that's magic!

Casting a circle is a useful skill anywhere from a ritual, to a direct action protest, to walking down the street. You might even want to cast a circle when you're by yourself, as a way of concentrating and collecting your energy.

There's no one correct way to cast a circle. Sometimes it can be theatrical and poetic. Other times it can be five seconds of focusing on your boundaries. Sometimes it's serious, other times playful or goofy.

Ask – is this way of casting a circle likely to create a powerful container that suits the work that you (and other participants) hope to do here and now? If so – go for it!

The important thing is that you can *feel* the circle around you. All of the fine words don't mean much if they don't produce a feeling of being in a strong circle. Experiment with different ways of casting a personal circle. What works for you?

✦ **Book of Shadows** – what are some reasons/times/places you might want to cast a circle? What are some simple ways you discover to quietly create a circle for yourself (see end of this section for some ideas)?

SPACE & TIME

Circles are important for groups of every size, including solo work. Different ways of casting work better for different numbers and situations.

Poetic, theatrical castings work well in community rituals, weddings, workshops, etc – especially places where “casting a circle” is a new concept for many people.

Playful and participatory castings work well at camps and ongoing groups – places where people will experience multiple circle castings over successive rituals, and you want to mix it up.

Each of us will discover (and create) ways that work best for us when we are alone or with a few friends.

PREP

For some ways of casting, you'll need props, or you'll need to recruit a few people to help. If you use Ye Olde Circle Casting, you'll want to decide which pronouns to use (see next page).

Handy magical skill – learn a few simple ways to cast circles for groups of different sizes, so if you're called on, you're ready!

CAST AWAY!

Ready? When the grounding ends, take a breath and begin. No need to announce what you're doing – just begin. Don't be afraid of using big gestures and poetic words (or complete silence) – if that's what calls to you, go for it!

Beware the unfinished circle. In castings where you turn to each direction and name it (common in Reclaiming), start in the North, proceed to East-South-West – then be sure to return to North to complete the circle before moving to Center. Don't leave a gap in your circle.

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Circle Casting (pg 2)

Finishing the Casting

However creatively you cast, it often makes sense to finish by declaring something like: "The circle is cast, we are between the worlds – and what happens between the worlds, changes all the worlds. Let the magic begin!" These traditional words put a "seal" on the circle casting and bring it to a crisp close. It's also something everyone can say together.

End of Ritual – Opening the Circle

However you cast, at the end of the ritual, after all allies and elements are devoked in reverse order, you are responsible for "opening" the circle – often by doing a short version of your casting. See Ye Old Circle Casting just below for an example. This is the final act of the ritual, so keep it short and focused.

When you finish, it's "traditional" to say these words, with others joining in:

"The circle is open (clap hands once sharply), but unbroken. May the peace of the Goddess* go in our hearts. Merry meet – and merry part – and merry meet again!" (* Some say mysterious ones, or "peace and justice," etc.)

WORKINGS: Some Ways To Cast a Circle

What's the best way to cast a circle? There are as many ways as there are rituals. By practicing, you'll learn what works for you in different situations.

Here are some castings we've seen over the years.

Ye Olde Circle Casting

Creative circle casting is exciting. There is also power in "traditional" ways. This formula comes to us from the Feri Tradition (and perhaps other magical traditions from the mid-twentieth century).

This is a good way to cast big circles. One priestess leads, and everyone else either listens or repeats after the priestess, so it's great for newcomers.

Prep – ahead of time, read through these words a few times until you can feel the rhythm of the poetry. Then decide which pronouns you are going to use – in a group, discuss it with other organizers so you are in agreement.

The words outside the parentheses are the version that was common in the early years of Reclaiming and WitchCamps, and are credited to Victor Anderson of the Feri Tradition. The parenthetical "God" text was added in the 1990s by Todd Herriott.

By the Earth that is Her body (by the Grove that is His home)
 By the Air that is Her breath (by the Wind that is His song)
 By the Fire of Her bright Spirit (by the Heat of His blazing passion)
 By the Waters of Her living womb/blood (by the Dew that is His sweet tears)
 By all that is above
 By all that is below
 The circle is cast – we are between the worlds
 What happens between the worlds changes all the worlds
 So mote it be (or: Let the magic begin!)

Honoring Gender Diversity

More recently, some Reclaiming folks have challenged the idea that every person fits neatly into one – and only one – of two possible genders. Some circle castings have substituted the words Our or Their in place of Her/Him. Try saying the above lines using Our or Their in each line.

continued on next page



Circle Casting (pg 3)

Here's a creative circle casting from an Ocean Beach Solstice ritual around 2013:

By the Earth that is Her body
 By the Air that is His breath
 By the Fire of Their bright spirit
 By the Waters of Our living blood
 By all that is above...

What Do You Do While You're Saying This?

Step to the center of the space. Bend and touch your writing hand (or point your athame or wand) to the Earth. Take a breath, gently pulling Earth energy into your hand or the tool. Stand and walk to the North edge of the space so you are a bit outside the circle of people, facing out.

Facing North, use your writing hand (or magical tool) to draw an invoking pentacle (see drawing) and then circle it clockwise. After it is drawn, "push" the pentacle out to the edge of the space. If you're outdoors or in a large room, decide where the edge of the circle will be. In a group, invite others to draw the pentacle with you and help push it to the edge of the space.

Facing North, say: "By the Earth that is Her body" (or "His/Our/Their body" – decide pronouns beforehand – see above).

Walk around the edge of the space to the East. Draw an invoking pentacle and push it to the edge of the circle.

Facing East, say: "By the Air that is Her breath."

Walk around the edge of the space to the South. Draw an invoking pentacle and push it to the edge of the circle.

Facing South, say: "By the Fire of Her bright spirit."

Walk around the edge of the space to the West. Draw an invoking pentacle and push it to the edge of the circle.

Facing West, say: "By the Waters of Her living womb." (Some say "living blood.")

After West/Water – remember to walk back to North to complete the outer circle before coming to the Center.

Step into the Center. Draw an invoking pentacle in the air above you and **looking up, say:** "By all that is above."

Draw an invoking pentacle toward the floor – push it down below the floor – **looking down, say:** "By all that is below."

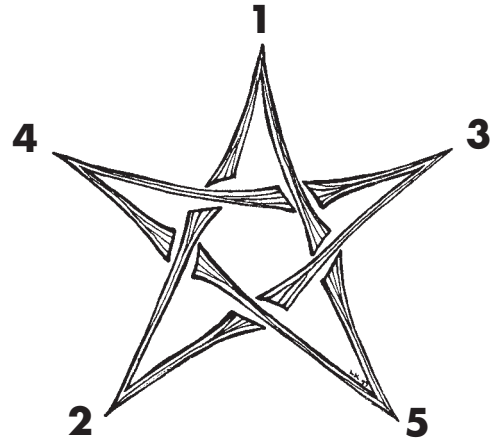
Conclude by saying: "The circle is cast. We are between the worlds. And what happens between the worlds can change all the worlds. Let the magic begin!"

(No other words are needed before the East/Air invocation begins – allow a short pause as circle priestess leaves the circle.)

Opening Ye Olde Circle – at the end of the ritual, after all allies and elements are devoked in reverse order, open the circle with a short version of the casting – priestess steps to the Center and leads everyone in the basic poem. "By the Earth that is Her body, and by the Air that..." – people often use female pronouns here, to remind us that the tradition is rooted in Goddess spirituality. Of course, this is Reclaiming Tradition – it could change at any time!

Invoking Pentacle

Face outward from the edge of your circle



Face North. Take a breath.

Begin at the top. Crisply draw the pentacle as shown (1-2-3-4-5-1), returning to the top to complete it.

Then trace a circle clockwise around the star (1-3-5-2-4-1), again finishing at the top.

Take a breath. Gently push the pentacle to the edge of your space and a bit beyond.

Say, "Welcome Earth!"

Proceed to East...

continued on next page





Circle Casting (pg 4)

Bare-Bones Circle Casting

Here's a stripped-down version of the Ye Olde Circle Casting – good when time is limited (for instance, at a street protest or when it's raining), when it's hard to hear (eg, a windy day at the beach) – and also simply for the impact of minimal words.

Face North. Hold your writing arm out like a sword and point. Take a breath and call out: "North – Earth!"

Pause for a moment, then swing your sword-arm to the right, facing East. Take a breath and call out: "East – Air!"

Swing your sword-arm to the right, facing South. Take a breath and call out: "South – Fire!"

Swing your sword-arm to the right, facing West. Take a breath and call out: "West – Water!"

Swing your sword-arm back to the North to complete the outer circle. Then turn to face the middle. Take a breath and call out: "Center – Spirit!"

Take a breath and feel the circle of energy all around you. Now say: "The circle is cast – we are between the worlds! And what happens between the worlds changes all the worlds! Blessed be."



A shady spot on a sunny day helps gather a quiet circle.

Snap Casting – fastest casting ever!

Here's the fastest circle casting ever, courtesy of a Witchlets teacher.

Step to Center. Shake your body and arms so you're loose and can move quickly.

Face North – say "Earth" and snap! Turn to East – "Air" and snap! Turn to South – "Fire" and snap! Turn to West – "Water" and snap! Turn again to North, then face Center – snap above, snap below. Say: "The circle is cast!"

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – see how quickly you can cast while actually being aware of each of the directions as you snap. Does it feel like a strong circle was created (this will vary for each person)? Would going more slowly make a difference? What else might quickly strengthen this circle?

Hand to Hand and Heart to Heart

Here's an intimate way to cast a circle in a group that already knows one another – the hand-on-heart part could be challenging for people who are less familiar (even though it's just the back of the hand).

Stand in a circle without holding hands. First person reaches out with left hand and takes right hand of neighbor, saying: "Hand to hand (then lightly touching the backs of their locked hands first to their own heart and then to their neighbor's) and heart to heart, the circle is cast." Leave locked hands over neighbor's heart – they then reach out to next person and repeat, around the circle.

Beware – this takes about 10 seconds per person, and may lose focus in groups of more than 25 people. We tried it once in a San Francisco ritual of a hundred people, and the focus was lost early on. Result – it took a long time to cast a weak circle.

continued on next page



Circle Casting (pg 5)

Opening the circle – everyone joins hands. Circle priestess looks to right (counter-clockwise), meets next person's eyes, and releases their two hands. Nod to that person to indicate that they do the same for the next person, until it's gone all the way around and all hands are released. Priestess begins and others join in: "The circle is open, but unbroken..."

Taking Hands and Toning

A quick way to create a circle.

Circle casting priestess needs to be confident holding a tone until others join in.

Once folks are grounded, priestess brings people into a circle, then says: "We are going to cast our circle by building a tone. I will begin by singing a tone and taking the next person's hand. That person will join the tone, then take the next person's hand, and so on."

The priestess pauses and takes a deep breath. Begin a tone (any tone you wish, just hold it steadily). After a few seconds, take the hand of the person to your *left* (clockwise). Look at them so they join your tone, then nod so they take the next person's hand. After that it will probably continue on its own. (You might want a friend at your left to help get things started.)

When the tone comes all the way around and all hands are joined, slowly raise your arms together and let the volume rise. Let the toning peak and come back down in synch with your arms.

When it's silent again, the priestess speaks: "The circle is cast. We are between the worlds. What happens between the worlds can change all the worlds. Let the magic begin!"

Opening the circle – everyone joins hands. Priestess explains: "We will all begin toning, then as we release hands counter-clockwise, each person drops out." Priestess begins by looking at person to their right, letting go of their hand, and letting her voice fade. That person will do the same, and so on. If toning wavers, priestess can subtly join back in and be the last to stop.

When all hands are dropped and toning fades, priestess speaks (and others join in): "The circle is open, but unbroken (all clap sharply). May the peace of the Goddess go in our hearts. Merry meet, merry part – and merry meet again!"

Broomstick Casting

You can use a broomstick to draw the pentacles as you cast in Ye Olde Way. And here's a further twist on the old broomstick:

At one of the early years of Teen Earth Magic, two of our older teens came up with this magical and hilarious circle casting, then matched it with their opening of the circle at the end of camp (see photos on next page).

Prep – two people, two brooms; witchy garb such as pointy hats, striped socks, etc – or any costumes.

Witches begin in the North, mount their brooms, and race around the circle clockwise three times (or race in opposite directions three times, finally meeting again in the North). Then fly to Center, whirl around, and say: "The circle is cast, we are between the worlds..."

Opening – same witches begin in North and use brooms in the ordinary way to sweep up the circle counterclockwise (or in opposite directions). Then say, "The circle is open, but unbroken..."

Take Hands and Start Singing

Here's a fast and easy casting for when a group is already well-established, so it builds off earlier circles.

With no words, priestess simply takes the hands of the person on either side and starts singing: "We Are a Circle Within a Circle." Or simply start a tone that others pick up. Let a few people know you are doing this, so they will join hands right away.

continued on next page





Circle Casting (pg 6)

Packing & Unpacking Circles

If the circle will soon be re-cast (like at WitchCamp or a weekend intensive, where we open the circle at night and re-cast the next morning), we sometimes “pack up the circle” at the end of the night ritual – everyone helps gather it like a big tablecloth and pack it into the center, then perhaps tuck it under an altar, or toss it into the air with instructions to come back the next day.

The next time we cast, everyone helps unpack/unroll the circle. Then a priestess might go around, beginning with North, and “peg down” the directions, stating them aloud as they go. End by saying, “The circle is cast, we are between the worlds...”

At the end of the final ritual or class, do a full circle-opening (perhaps Ye Olde Way, or a creative way).

Invisible Circle Casting (casting without being seen)

Casting a grand, poetic circle is great at a community ritual or behind the closed doors of your bedroom.

But there are times when you might want a strong circle, yet you don't have the luxury of calling out the directions and elements as you turn and inscribe pentacles in the air. You might even want to cast a circle without anyone else noticing.

Maybe you're on a bus or in a crowded hallway and want to feel stronger boundaries. Maybe you have to meet with a supervisor and want to remind yourself of your own center and intentions. Maybe it's exam time and you want to block out distractions.

Each of us will discover our own best ways of quietly creating a circle. Here are a few ways you might try:

- Close your eyes and imagine facing North. Take a breath for Earth. Imagine turning to the East. Take a breath for Air. Imagine South and breathe for Fire, then West and breathe for Water. After you've done it a few times – can you take one deep breath and simultaneously inhale and exhale one-quarter in each direction?
 - With eyes closed, imagine a spiral of energy radiating from your belly and wrapping around your body. Gradually expand the spiral until it's a comfortable distance from your body. Change the spiral into a circle and feel the energy around you.
 - Front-to-back, side-to-side – draw a breath to your center – let it flow slowly forward from your center, then backward, like a pendulum swinging gently through your body. Take a second breath and let the pendulum swing side to side. Now – can you feel it move out in all four directions at once, then gently back till they meet in your center? Can you feel the balance?
- ✦ **Book of Shadows** – what works? Which ways of casting actually help you feel your own strong circle? What gets in the way?

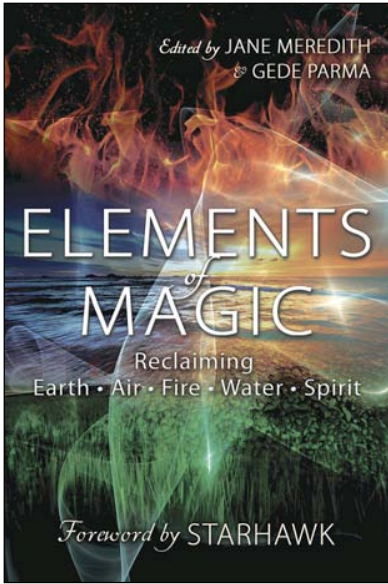


Broomstick casting – the witchiest circle casting ever!



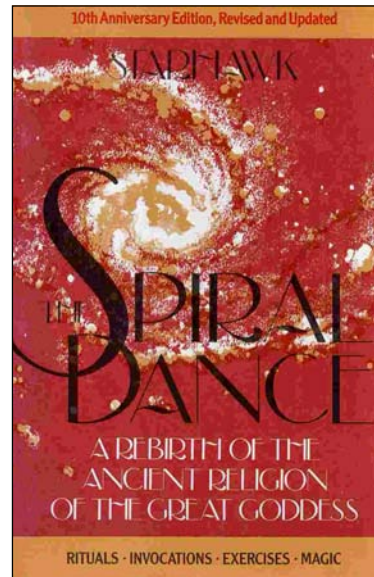
Two Classic Ritual Texts

plus online Reclaiming classes!



You'll find lots of books by Reclaiming authors in the Resources section at the end of this book.

Here are two key texts – one from 1979, the other from 2018 – that share basic Reclaiming magical practice.



Elements of Magic

Reclaiming Earth Air Fire Water Spirit

Edited by Jane Meredith & Gede Parma

Writers from across Reclaiming survey basic magical theory and practice in this anthology from 2018.

Echoing the structure of Reclaiming's Elements of Magic class, chapters feature meditations, essays, and practical workings for each magical element.

Reclaiming Classes Online

World Tree Lyceum & CRAFT Teachers

World Tree Lyceum and the CRAFT Teachers Cell offer basic and advanced magical classes online, including many Reclaiming classes.

Here's a chance to connect with others studying and working magic in our tradition.

WorldTreeLyceum.org | BayAreaReclaiming.org

If you are under age 18, please tell teachers your age when you contact them, and tell your parent or legal guardian you are contacting them.

The Spiral Dance

A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess

by Starhawk

The foundational text for Reclaiming Tradition – the first Spiral Dance ritual at Samhain 1979 was the book release party.

The book, revised and updated in 1999, begins with chapters on Goddess religion and the world view of (modern) witchcraft, then moves on to discuss creating sacred space and ritual, invoking and working with deity and energy, initiation, and more.

Other Starhawk books that cover practical ritual skills for groups and individuals include:

- The Twelve Wild Swans
- Truth Or Dare





Reclaiming Roundtable: Invoking

“Calling on energies and beings greater than myself for support or wisdom.”

What does invoking mean to you?

Ari (Y): To me, invoking means welcoming, inviting, or calling something to share sacred space with you.

Seed (E): It’s a weaving of energy – joining with energies that are wilder and more potent than what we see in our daily state of mind. It’s a turning-towards, a greeting and asking for particular energy or entity to come and be present and join the working.

IvoryFly (A): Can we really “invoke” Air, when it’s already right here, right now? That seems a little arrogant. I re-frame it that we’re acknowledging Air – acknowledging that it are here, and we cannot live without it.

Willow (E): An Indigenous elder who’s been at British Columbia camp said that there’s no need to call what is already here. What we need to invoke is ourselves in relationship, simply acknowledging and thanking.

Heaven (A): The elements are actual, physical things. They’re already here, within us. You’re invoking nature, but you’re also invoking yourself. “Earth my body, Water my blood, Air my breath, Fire my spirit.” You’re invoking the elements, the divine, and the divine that is you.

Paul (E): Invoking, even at witchcamp, is not a performance. It’s heart. It’s a request to come and join us. The essence is to serve the intention from a place of humility, curiosity, and respect.

Jamie (A): It’s an invitation – we’re *evoking*. Our culture is directive, we try to make it happen: Come right here! But it’s already here – that’s the idea of immanence. We are eliciting it to come out.

KaeliMo (Y): I like to think of it more as inviting. It’s weird for me to think about a relationship where it would be,

“You’re here if I want you to be here.” It’s good to have boundaries where you can say, “Here’s where you’re not welcome.” But it’s also like, “Now my door’s open, if you want to come in, it’s cool.”

Why do you do invocations?

Kim (A): To touch bigger than myself or beyond how we are in the normal world – something ecstatic. There’s an energetic shift that makes us feel connected to one another, to the planet, to the universe.

Ola’i Wildeboar (Y): Invoking is a way to honor and to receive energy from something other than yourself, whether it’s a higher power or deity or even an idea. It’s a way to gather the brilliance that these things can offer.

Dusky (Y): The times that I do what I’d more specifically call “invoking” are when I’m working with something that isn’t as close to me, that isn’t an ally. If I were going to invoke a deity, or something that I’m less familiar with, that’s when I would do a ritual, get some pageantry involved, and invoke that thing into myself or into my circle.

At the annual Spiral Dance, you’ve danced elemental invocations. What would you say you were doing?

Dusky (Y): Well, it’s complicated. I guess I’m being a medium. When I do an invocation at the Spiral Dance,

I always invoke it for myself before I invoke it for everyone else. I think of it as opening myself up as a channel. To me, that’s a really powerful experience. When I did the Water invocation, I tried to become Water – I opened myself up as a conduit to Water. It’s like aspecting.

Charlotte (Y): Dancing an invocation feels like trying to embody and honor the element, the energy of Water or Fire. It’s a powerful way to try to connect with something bigger than yourself. With such big concepts as the elements it’s hard to put them into words.



Some invocations are spontaneous, some are rehearsed.

Key: (Y) = youth to approx 30 / (A) = approx 30-55 / (E) = elder

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Roundtable: Invoking (pg 2)

“When I do an invocation at the Spiral Dance, I invoke it for myself before I invoke it for everyone else.”

What other spirits and beings do you invoke?

Kim (A): It comes and goes. I work with trees a lot. I’ve worked with dragons at different times. I haven’t found something that’s like my thing forever. It’s more like, right now, I’m working with this.

John (A): I don’t really invoke them in rituals so much, but. I think turtles got me through my dissertation.

Heaven (A): Whatever makes sense. It doesn’t necessarily matter *who* is invoked, as long as you all agree that you are working towards the same thing. If you are all entrained in the same kind of thought, you’re effective.

What makes for a powerful invocation?

Sequoia (Y): In a big group, a powerful collective invocation is going to invite participation from everyone – more of a collective effort than just a witnessing.

Jamie (A): We have to become what we are invoking. If we want to call healing, become healing. It almost seductive, a mating dance – making ourselves attractive to what we are calling in. Why would the spirit come if you’re not making it a great place to be?

Willow (E): At my first witchcamp we did these massive invocations, this very grand thing. Later I felt like it was sorely lacking in humility. It’s not the kind of relation I want with the mysterious ones. I want to be in relation – not just in a request mode, but in a reciprocity mode.

Charlotte (Y): I am a big fan of moving during invoca-

tions. With dancing invocations, it’s using the body as a way to honor or respect or call forward the element. Even if I’m doing a spoken invocation I try to be moving, to align myself better with what I’m invoking.

Kim (A): For the elements, I think it’s important to acknowledge the four directions as you go around the circle. I like using pentacles to acknowledge the directions – that’s something I was taught from Feri tradition.

Maeve (Y): When there’s space for spontaneity, that makes invocations powerful for me personally. I want to have some sense of what I’m going to do and what the intention of the ritual is. But really, I let myself wait till I’m in the circle to feel what seems to be the right thing. There’s an aspect of invoking that’s the magic of the moment.

Sequoia (Y): I think my favorite invocations are ones that don’t go as planned. There are so many instances where I’ve had this poetry all planned to invoke some deity or element, and when I get into the circle it all goes out the window. If the thing wants to be there, I think it will show you how it wants to be invited in.

Why is devoking at the end of rituals important?

Seed (E): It’s partly so we don’t go crazy, so we’re not psychically leaky people walking through the world. We purposefully go into this space, we do subtle and powerful work – and then purposefully come back, and completely honor and hold that as important – to come back, to be in your body, to be in your daily life.

Willow (E): It’s releasing the intensity. Not necessarily releasing the energy, but sustainably engaging with it as the magic continues to unfold. Usually our magic is not in this moment – it’s got a trajectory, it’s not a one-and-done. How do we continue to stay in relationship, but not as formally as being in ritual together?

Paul (E): Devoking is just polite, it’s courteous. I generally don’t invoke something unless I have a relation to it. It’s like if I’ve been with a dear friend, it’s gratitude to share this dear energy. It’s part of the ongoing relationship.

Fio (A): It is – but do you really mean to say “farewell” to the elements? What does that mean, especially if you’re doing it between the worlds? What you’re saying has magical effect. Is this more and more divorcing you from the elements that sustain you?



Altars are good places for personal invocations and workings.





Invoking

INTENT

Along with grounding and casting the circle, invoking is one of the three main things done to “create sacred space.”

The goal of this section is to help figure out who/what/where/when/why/how you might want to invoke various spirits, beings, and energies, and to help you gain skills to use in rituals and in your personal practice.

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – keep a running record of invocation ideas in your magical journal – it will help you track your magical growth, and remind you of great ideas you’ve tried or seen.

What Is Invoking & Why Do We Do It?

Invoking literally means “in-voicing,” or “in-calling.” Sometimes we say, “I’m calling in Air.” When we invoke, we are calling energies, elements, deities, ancestors, magical allies, etc into our circle to assist and support us in our work.



A quick rehearsal helps craft a crisp invocation.

Invoking can be serious or goofy, simple or elaborate, spontaneous words or a pre-planned skit.

Sometimes invocations are rehearsed, with props and costumes. Other times they are tailored to suit the moment.

Invoking is sometimes the most colorful and festive part of a ritual. People sing, dance, chant, do skits, call out impromptu poetry – with the support of the whole circle.

It’s not exactly a performance, but it’s a chance to play with those kinds of skills.

Before We Start – A Note on Devoking

At the end of a ritual, you’ll usually “devoke” anything you invoked – this is handy to know ahead of time!

In Reclaiming and other traditions, people wrap up rituals by devoking whatever elements/energies/allies they called in, usually in reverse order.

However, WitchCamps and retreats often invoke elements and allies for the entire event. At the end of each ritual, instead of saying, “Hail and Farewell” to what’s been invoked, people say, “Thank you and goodnight.”

At the next ritual, spirits and beings who will be worked with are re-invoked and welcomed again. At the final camp ritual, everything is devoked (the wrangler keeps track and reminds people – see below).

Devocations are usually short, and echo the invocation. This isn’t the time for long speeches. If you invoked with a song, devoke with two lines. When it’s getting late, you can speed

things up by devoking all five elements with one song (such as *When We Are Gone* – see *Ritual Skills: Chants Resources*).

Ritual Wrangler keeps track of invocations and reminds people when it’s their turn to invoke or devoke. At a week-long WitchCamp, the wrangler may be the only person who remembers everything that got invoked through the week.

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Invoking (pg 2)

Who/What Gets Invoked?

Who and/or what gets called in? That's up to each ritual and each person.

Elements get invoked at almost every ritual – often individually, but sometimes all together with a song.

At many rituals, spirits of the land are honored – we thank the place where we are holding the ritual. The Fey (faeries) are often honored as well (although not always “invoked” – see below regarding “what people don’t invoke.”) At Redwood Magic Family Camp we make sure to invoke (ie, to honor and acknowledge) the redwood trees all around us.

Goddesses, gods, and ancestors are often chosen because they can help with a specific working. If a camp is working with a myth (for instance, the story of Inanna’s Descent to the Underworld), rituals might invoke various deities involved in the story (eg, Inanna, Erishkegal, Ninshubar, Enki...).

A harvest ritual might invite Demeter (Mediterranean goddess of grain). A Spring Equinox ritual might invoke the Green Man or Flora or the maiden goddess Persephone.

Rituals also sometimes invoke natural beings like the Sun or the Ocean, and energies such as Commitment or Justice.



Invocation rehearsal, or a game of magical charades? Maybe both?

Gender Complexities

In ye olden dayes (ie, before the early 2000s), Reclaiming and other traditions tended to “balance” gender energy by invoking one goddess and one god. This was sometimes seen in an alchemical sense of uniting “opposite” energies.

Gender has turned out to be a lot more complicated than binary, male/female oppositions, and in recent years invocations have reflected that (see Intro: Gender).

When Witchlets worked with Theseus and Ariadne and the Labyrinth, we invoked the Minotaur so we’d have other options besides male-female – in one version, Theseus married the Minotaur while Ariadne set up a thread shop on Naxos.

Do People Really Believe This Stuff?

Are deities – gods and goddesses – real? It depends on what you mean by real...

Some people think of gods and goddesses as independent beings that we invite to assist us for a specific working.

Others say they are archetypes, or parts of ourselves that we call forward (so Loki might stand for trickster energy within me).

Still others see deities as names for energies in the world (so Aphrodite might represent the spirit of romantic love).

And honestly, a lot of people don’t give it much thought, period.

Sometimes people wonder – if I don’t believe in deities, is it okay to work with them? Sure, but be careful – they may not take kindly to you not believing in them! (Anyway, ask yourself – can I really “not believe” in a deity if it might simply be seen as a name for a type of energy?)

Some camps have explored invoking “energies” rather than deities. If playfulness is wanted in a ritual, why not call it directly instead of calling a god like Pan? To honor the Sun at Solstice, why not invoke it directly instead of calling on Helios or Amaterasu? The answer is up to each person and each ritual (see below, Ritual Skills: Invoking Deity and Energy).

What about the elements? Some say we are calling elements and their qualities into our circle – others say, “No, they’re here

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Invoking (pg 3)

all along – we’re simply acknowledging them.” Some see the elements as guardians of our magical circle.

In Reclaiming, one finds all these and other views. Reclaiming doesn’t have an official theology that says what people are supposed to believe. Each person has to figure it out on their own. Or not.

A fun way to explore these issues is to do spectrums, which can show the range of experiences and opinions in the circle (see *Workings: Spectrums of Belief*). Sometimes a camp or class starts with this working as a way of recognizing the diversity of views within the community.

What Don’t People Invoke?

Is there anything Reclaiming folks do not invoke? Generally people are careful about invoking deities and ancestors from traditions where they don’t have ancestry and/or training. Generally people try to avoid “cultural appropriation” – borrowing practices from other cultures. This is the case, for example, with African American or Native American traditions, which have been oppressed and appropriated in many ways by the dominant society.

It doesn’t make magical sense to invoke deities and ancestors and then not work with them in the ritual. If we invoke Cerridwen and Her Cauldron of Death and Rebirth and then don’t mention her during the rest of the ritual, we may be asking for trouble.

In recent years, some WitchCamps have moved away from invoking traditional gods and goddesses at every ritual. In particular, some groups no longer invoke one god and one goddess – an older Neo-Pagan pattern that implies that there are only two gender options, and we need one of each to have a complete ritual. Folks try to avoid stereotypical gender prejudices such as “gods are rational and adventurous, goddesses are intuitive and nurturing.”

For more on these topics, see *Intro: Gender* and *Intro: Cultural Appropriation*. For more on invoking various sorts of deities, allies, and energies, see the following pages.

The Fey – you may not want to “invoke” the Fey unless you really want faerie energy running unpredictably through your circle – sometimes people *honor* the Fey, setting a bowl of honey or shiny coins some distance from the ritual circle as an offering.

When Do Invocations Happen?

In Reclaiming and many other traditions, invocations happen just after the circle is cast. First ground and cast a circle – then invite allies and energies to assist the work.

Having a standard invoking order makes it easier to do group ritual. No one needs to be in charge – everyone knows that Fire follows Air, and that allies come after elements. When doing your own magic, you can do it in whatever order works for you.

Here is the invocation order for a typical Reclaiming ritual, beginning after circle casting. Begin with the elements:

- East/Air
- South/Fire
- West/Water
- North/Earth
- Center/Spirit
- Allies: spirits of land / ancestors / Fey / deities / energies (order can vary)

continued on next page





Invoking (pg 4)

Where Do We Invoke?

People usually invoke within a sacred circle that has just been cast. The circle holds the deities and energies that get summoned, and helps keep out unwanted energies during the ritual. That way, you can call Demeter for a harvest ritual without getting the entire Greek pantheon tagging along.

In old tales, legendary magicians called in angels and demons from within a magical circle which protected them from the awesome powers the spirits might unleash. If the magician dared to step out of the circle (tempted by the demons, of course), their soul could be lost forever.

Lost souls have not proven to be a major concern in Reclaiming rituals. It's a question of focus, of choosing which energy we want in a particular ritual. Invoking specific deities and energies within a sacred circle creates a more focused working.

How Do We Invoke?

The Sufi poet Rumi says there are hundreds of ways to kneel and kiss the ground. There are nearly as many ways to invoke.

Each person will have ways of invoking that work for them. Some like to chant, some to dance. Some like spontaneous poetry, some want to plan every word. Try different methods and find what works for you.

Each ritual or class will have its own mood – one might be playful, another somber. A ritual at a street protest might be quick and crisp, while a Fall Equinox ritual may be relaxed. The invocations will help set this tone.

In a group – invoke in a bold, loud, clear voice. When someone begins softly, others call out: “Say it, sister/brother/comrade!”

Ask for help – before invoking, take a deep breath and think of what you are invoking. If it's Fire, ask Fire for assistance – “Help me call you into the circle with power and grace!” Let yourself flow with Fire energy as you invoke.

Re-ground yourself after you finish an invocation (or any ritual working).

Practicing Invocations

- Watch experienced people invoke. What do you notice that is different than when you do it? Sometimes it's simply a matter of confidence – they step out with no apologies or mumbled excuses – they just take a breath and dive in.
- Practice invoking an element such as Air which is already present – try closing the door and “singing Air” or “dancing Air” – relax and do whatever your body or spirit wants to do when you think of Air.
- Learn (or invent) an Air chant – sing it over and over, until you're singing it without thinking. What else comes into your mind? How do you feel when you move as you sing?
- Play with Air (or another element) – hold your breath, then exhale as loudly as possible. Breathe quickly, calling out an Air-word between each breath. Use a notebook to waft air over your face.
- Try invoking qualities or moods. Can you invoke a good mood? Can you summon creativity, or relaxedness, or sharp focus?
- At the end of this article are a bunch of ways to invoke. Try a personal “invocation lab” and see what appeals to you.
- Sometimes in a class or path we practice invoking each element in a different way. Here's an outline from a Witchlets path:
 - Air = circle-poem (go around three times, with each person saying one word each time to create a poem).
 - Fire = group movement with no words – how does Fire move?
 - Water = personal check-in plus the chant, (The Ocean Is the) Beginning of the Earth.
 - Earth = look around and name one Earth-object you see – at the end, welcome them all.
 - Center = human knot game ending in a group hug.

★ **Book of Shadows** – after invoking, do you notice anything different? What ways of invoking work better for you? Are there any that didn't seem to work, but still intrigue you? What might help?

continued on next page





Invoking (pg 5)

Ways to Practice Invoking

- **Dance/movement** – spontaneously dance or move for each element – can you dance a quality (anger, peace, confidence)?
- **Sing or rap** a song or chant (See Ritual Skills: Chants later in this chapter for lots of ideas).
- **Pop songs** – find a pop song for each element (use your intuition to match them) – play each one for a minute or so, letting yourself sing, dance, space out, or whatever you want while it plays. At the end of each song, say welcome to the element.
- **Flocking** – someone makes sounds and movements related to the element, others pick it up. This is a simple way for others to show support for a new person doing an invocation.
- **Draw a Tarot card** from the related suit and enact it (eg, for Air, draw a sword-card and act out the image – Swords = Air, Wands = Fire, Cups = Water, Pentacles = Earth, Majors = Center).
- **Tools of the elements** – use a Blade to invoke Air, a Wand for Fire, a Chalice for Water, and a Pentacle for Earth. Center is a challenge – what tool or object would invoke Center for you? (See Workings: Tools for more on this.)
- **Props** – a simple prop can amplify your actions – a blue scarf for Water, a peacock feather for Air...
- **Scavenger invocations** – explore your space and find an object for each element, beginning with Air – use your intuition to tell you what fits. When you find it, stop and look at it, touch it, etc. Then say welcome to the element, leave it, and move on.
- **Invoke in silence** – especially when working alone or in a small group. Name the element, allow a minute of silence, and then quietly say welcome.
- **Snappy invocations** – practice crisp invocations. If you're speaking, what are the fewest words that can do the job?
- **Science brain** – think about each element, starting with Air – ask yourself what you know about that element from science classes, the internet, etc. Think or speak about the element for a minute, then say welcome and move on.
- **Create a skit** that shows/welcomes an element or ally. How might you invoke compassion, self-expression, or confidence?
- **Goofy invocations** – how much energy can you raise by invoking in goofy ways? What if small groups each do the craziest element invocation they can come up with? How will you work with this energy once you've stirred it up?
- **Invoke energies** in place of deities and see what happens – see Ritual Skills: Invoking Deities & Energies.
- **Have a fast way of invoking** that you can use when time is short or energy seems low. A simple song that calls all of the elements can sometimes lift spirits more than laboring through five spoken invocations.
- **Write a really good invocation** – then set it aside and speak spontaneously. Afterward ask – did the advance-writing help?
- **Go online and read about gods and goddesses** – Wikipedia is a good place to begin. When you find a deity you want to learn more about, stop and invoke them before reading further – ie, ask the deity to help you learn about them. When you finish, remember to thank (devoke) the deity.
- **Participation** – can you find ways that others can participate in your invocation, rather than you “performing” it alone? Can you invite people to call out words, to make sounds or movements?
- ✦ **Book of Shadows** – write about your invoking experiments – if you're in a circle, compare notes when you get together.



Invoking Elements

Elemental magic – working with Earth, Air, Fire, Water, and Spirit – is a basis of Pagan rituals. Reclaiming shares with many other traditions the practice of anchoring our magical circles by invoking sacred elements for each quarter (and Center too).

In some traditions, elemental “guardians” are summoned to stand watch at the edges of the circle. An echo of this practice can be heard in The Guardian Song on our Let It Begin Now album.

Others see invoking the elements as a way of honoring the material world in which our ritual is taking place. What better way of anchoring our work in the real world than to take some time to notice the air around us, the fire of the Sun, etc.

Then again, some people just like the chants we sing when we invoke elements. Nothing gathers our invoking voices quite like Sweet Water or The Welcome Flame.

An Entire Book & Elements Chants Too!

We could write an entire chapter, or even an entire book, about invoking and working with the elements.

Fortunately, some other Reclaiming folks already did!

You can immerse yourself in elemental magic by reading *Elements of Magic: Reclaiming Earth, Air, Fire, Water, Spirit*, edited by Jane Meredith and Gede Parma. For more info, see page XXXXX.

Chants – it may not surprise you to learn that Reclaiming folks have written and/or recorded more than a few chants honoring various elements (see page XXXX).

Some, like Air I Am or Earth My Body, quickly summon all of the elements. Others, like Rise with the Fire or Born of Water, dedicate a whole song to one element.

Elements chants: [WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists](#)

Working with the Elements

Invoking the elements is a great place to begin practicing invocations. After all, it’s pretty hard *not* to have Air present in our circle. It’s more a matter of honoring and acknowledging the element than laboring to bring it present.

Sometimes an Air invocation can be magnificent poetry – what’s more airy than words and ideas?

Other times it can mean taking a moment to notice and appreciate a fresh breeze wafting through the meadow where we’ve gathered.

Make friends with the elements – they are one ally that will always be there for us!

🔮 **Book of Shadows** – look at the list on page XXX and try invoking Air in various ways.

Which ways work for you, and which are empty actions? What helps you feel the presence of Air (not just “air,” but “Air”)?

How would you help a group invoke Air together?

Tools of the Trade

In Reclaiming and other traditions, each element is associated with various “magical correspondences,” such as Tarot suits, colors, and compass directions.

Each element also has a corresponding magical tool, such as the athame or the chalice – for more on magical tools and correspondences, see *Workings: Tools of Magic*.

Elements of Magic - Classes Online

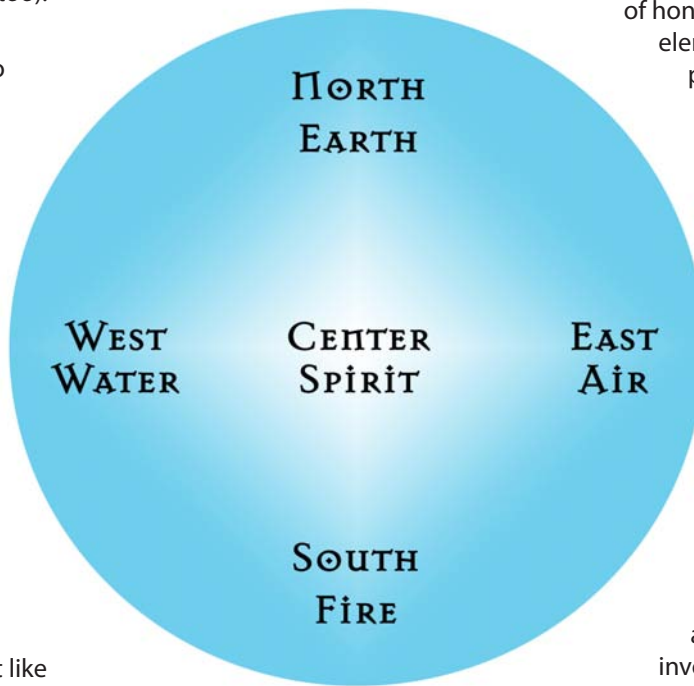
Elements of Magic is Reclaiming’s intro class. Some regions offer local classes, and World Tree Lyceum teaches online:

Bay Area & North Bay: [BayAreaReclaiming.org/classes](#)

Worldwide contacts: [Reclaiming.org/worldwide](#)

Online Reclaiming classes:

[WorldTreeLyceum.org](#) | [BayAreaReclaiming.org](#)





Invoking Ancestors

Ancestor work is at the core of many magical and spiritual practices. In some traditions, knowing and honoring your ancestors is one of the first steps on your spiritual journey.

In Bay Area Reclaiming, the biggest ritual of the year, the Spiral Dance, is held at Samhain – the time when the veil is thin between the worlds of the living and the dead.

Some ancestors are related by close genetics – by “blood.”

Others may have raised us, or helped shape the culture in which we have lived and grown.

And some ancestors are just downright difficult....

Ancestors of Your Bloodline

The most familiar ancestors might be members of your own family who have crossed over. Maybe it’s a grandparent who taught you a favorite recipe or a craft skill, or a beloved aunt or uncle who took you camping.

Some have lost members of our immediate family. Others have never known our blood family or ancestors.

Regardless of which relatives we know, all of us have an ancestral line stretching back through history to the beginnings of our species (and beyond).

Known and unknown, these ancestors made us who we are.

The bodily presence of our ancestors may have passed. But their spirit can be very present. Remembering their love can be a great support in difficult times.

With practice, you can learn to summon them into your circle, to converse with them and gain the strength and wisdom – and hopes and challenges – they have to offer.

How will you invoke a grandparent whom you clearly recall?

How will you summon the spirit of a more distant family ancestor whose name you do not know?

What things about your family background (known or imagined) call you to learn more?

Ancestors of Craft & Culture

Do you have a favorite author from the 1800s? A playwright from 1600 that you think is the greatest? A jazz singer from the 1920s that you sometimes just have to hear?

Maybe it’s an unnamed wise woman and healer from the fifteenth century, or an alchemist from ancient Egypt?

People from your cultural past are your ancestors. Some, like Jane Austen or Will Shakespeare, are known by their

written words. With blues singer Bessie Smith, her recordings keep her voice alive.

With others we may have only a vague idea about who they were and what they did – yet we yearn to know more.

The internet can be a powerful magical tool. So can casting a circle and invoking the ancestor’s presence.

How would you call Bessie Smith into your circle? How would you create a channel for her spirit to reach out to this realm? Photos? Food? Music?

How would you summon an herbalist who healed many neighbors, but died without leaving an enduring trace? Maybe it would involve gathering and smelling various herbs, drinking tea, visualizing a flowering meadow....

Invoking a beloved ancestor can be as simple as saying a name and/or a few words of appreciation. Remember to say thank you (ie, devoke) at the end of your working.

The Unquiet Dead

Calling beloved ancestors of family or culture can be rich work – although even the most amazing and delightful ancestor might present an unexpected challenge.

But other spirits are more problematic.

What about ancestors who participated in genocide and slavery, or who colluded in atrocities such as the witch hunts?

What about an ancestor who abandoned their family, or a great-grandparent who abused their children?

These, too, might be our ancestors – the unquiet dead.

Whether we acknowledge them or not, the unquiet dead have shaped our lives. They, too, have lessons. They call to the living, not only to avoid their errors, but to help heal the damage and pain they left behind. This may be part of our work in this lifetime.

Invoking and doing thoughtful magical work with these difficult forebears may begin the healing.

Altars & Workings

Do you have family photos? Prints of old artworks? Dried herbs or flowers? Words that remind you of someone?

Tending your altar might be a way to connect with your ancestors – and a way for them to reach out to you.

Invoking and working with difficult forebears may be the beginning of the healing.



Invoking Deities, Allies, & Energies

A Reclaiming Roundtable

One of the ongoing discussions and experiments around Reclaiming is relations with deities – gods, goddesses, and mysterious ones – and the myths and stories that have grown up around them,

Some Witchcamps work with myths and deities from older traditions. Does this speak to you?

KaeliMo (Y): Yeah! Sometimes I get the feeling with Reclaiming, when we research deities and stories that go back a long time – Celtic and Greek mythology and things like that – it is really an ancient practice. We might be doing something really differently than was originally done, but it appeals to me.

Kim (A): At witchcamp, the myth or story line can get you into an altered space. I love the history of people hearing the same story, how it gets into our unconscious, energetically. Yet the challenge around historical deity is they are sometimes culturally limiting, gender limiting.

Mykel (Y): I love old stuff! If I wasn't already a Pagan and I wasn't already gay, I'd probably run away and become a monk – because of the discipline and the structure, that feeling of an unbroken lineage of lives of purpose. I think there's a lot of meaning in going back and looking at traditions and what people have been doing for a really long time, and reconstructing that in some way.

What does it mean to reconstruct an older tradition?

Mykel: I feel like Neo-Pagan ideas are connected in spirit to things that have been happening for a long time. But the idea that witchcraft could possibly mean the same things to us that it did to people in Europe hundreds of years ago – I don't think that's true – and I don't think we need that to have legitimacy. You take what works and leave what doesn't, and really own that we're creating something new – it's about self-determination.

Paul(E): At Witchcamp, we create a living fairy tale. It could be ancient, or something new. It comes alive for a community, and it comes alive for the individuals. The story gives you a foundation to work with. The story can create a foundation for wonder to arise.

Willow (E): I love that work so much. I've seen people come to Witchcamp and literally talk with the gods, do oracular work. We have a container that holds that.

Kim (A): love stories, people hearing a repeated story so it gets into people's unconscious and gives us an intention. You can worship the universe and the planet and the dirt of the planet and the trees and Sun – but it lacks the intentionality that we have in a myth.

What is your relation to deity?

Paul (E): I have relations with [looks over shoulder at altar] like twenty different deities that have developed over like thirty or forty years. The main thing they ask from me is, honor us with the life you live.

Fio (A): Spirits are central to my witchcraft. I talk about myself as being married to certain gods. I mean that literally. There are certain gods that I am dedicated in relation with. It's a very Feri thing – each of us is a god in process.

Heaven (A): I'm pantheistic in a way. I would say, "god is in you, god is in me, god is in that tree, god is within, god is without, god is everywhere" – above, below, within, outside. All of it – it's true! When you work with the divine, you may be working with outside deities – but there is also the divine that is within me, and the divine that is within the Earth, that is inherent.

Ingrid (Y): At first deity was easier for me to understand than invoking "nature." You see gods and goddesses represented in books with human features – it was an easier way to have a first step toward interacting with energies – they have their stories. Whether or not we believe they are true, we attribute qualities to them.

Willow (E): I don't think about invoking deities – I think of aligning myself with kinds of energies. Deities are a language for me to describe those energies. I don't know if they exist or not. I don't know if they are beings or not. But I know their energy signature.

John (A): I think deities are social constructions of the natural world, a conduit to the energy of nature – that's a sociologist's opinion! Deities are sacred because the natural world is sacred. I don't think Pan really exists as a half-goat, half-man. Personifying deities, putting them in a story – it's a way to access the energy.

Key: (Y) = youth to approx 30 / (A) = approx 30-55 / (E) = elder

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Invoking Deities, Allies, & Energies

A Reclaiming Roundtable (pg 2)

Dusky (Y): For me, deity is *not* human. Why should deities that govern all of nature be humanoid? That doesn't make sense to me. And when you do invoke a humanoid deity, they are, like people, complex. Pan is a nature god. But if we invoke Pan, we're also invoking a lot of other things like sexuality into our ritual, and we don't necessarily want that.

Kim (A): When a theme is worked for a long time, it develops its own energy, in a Jungian, archetypal sense. So I think that the Goddess is real, and it's the planet, and it's us, it's inside and outside of us. She's real and humanoid and not at all like that, just a spiraling of energy – all at the same time.

Sequoia (Y): I like having deity-specific rituals. I think they make me feel the most Pagan – I love those "Stonehenge moments!" But I find deities to be tricky. It's easy to get kind of academic. I start to go through a list, like what do I know about their energy, what are they like, what are ways I can interact with them? It prevents any kind of energetic exchange. I'm trying to "know" too much, and not allowing space to feel and interact.

Are there special ways you invoke deity?

Paul (E): Every day I say prayers and honor them. A lot of it comes from a place of gratitude, respect – and from that comes relationship. I guess that's its own form of invoking. They seem to be around when I need them. They say, "We are here – try not to do something stupid!"

A Procession of Deities

Jamie: When we moved from Precita to Bernal [opposite sides of a large SF hill], we gathered our friends and processed all the goddesses over the hill. They were the first things we moved into the new house.

IvoryFly: That was cool.

Jamie: I was in front with a broom, they were all festooned with Beltane ribbons, we were singing and dancing. As soon as we came into the back yard, some weight just went "Boom!" It was like a root. And then suddenly relaxation. It was like they were happy to be here.

IvoryFly: That was our intention – to move spirit in. We created space for that, and they were like, "Yeah, let's go!"

Heaven (A): If I'm working with a particular deity, I might sing a song that features them. You can talk about the animals and elements and situations that are sacred to them. When I work with the Temple of Aphrodite, we begin by saying what we are grateful for in the past Moon cycle, and what we would like to manifest.

Fio (A): I love the gods – sometimes I wrestle with them. It's not unknown for me to swear at them. Invoking them is about focusing myself. I don't think that I am getting them to come to me. It's more about turning my attention to what is already there. Or to travel, like the circle is a compass – travel to a god.

Lilo (A): I would take a thread from the last piece Fio said – deity is about relationships with very real forces. At the same that I want something from them, they want something from me. It makes me realize that I should be in a better relationship with them.

Do you typically invoke 'the Goddess'?

IvoryFly (A): If I invoke the Goddess, I'm invoking the Goddess in me, the divine feminine. Growing up a lesbian, and then going to places where everything was built by women, has been so profoundly healing. It counteracts the patriarchy.

Willow (E): Sometimes it inspires me, and sometimes it's blech! It depends on the context. It's good to remember the reclamation of the Goddess, especially in a culture where women still are not treated equally. It feels good to have powerful models, powerful icons and imagery. It's important to retain that archetype.

Mykel (Y): I don't work with "the Goddess" specifically, but sometimes if I'm freaking out I have a sense of something powerful and universal supporting me, holding me – that's my experience of the Goddess. I love the Goddess invocations at Spiral Dance – they're so big and joyful.

KaeliMo (Y): It makes sense because of the scale of the Spiral Dance. With so many different people, invoking "the Goddess" makes sense as a unifying thing. But if I were doing my own ritual, invoking the Goddess might seem really intense and not exactly what I was looking for.

Do you work with particular deities?

continued on next page



Invoking Deities, Allies, & Energies

A Reclaiming Roundtable (pg 3)

Maeve (Y): It's a mixed bag for me, depending on the ritual. If I have time to prepare for an invocation, or have worked with a story that has a specific deity, I really love doing deity invocations. Something about the complexity of deity and the spontaneity – you don't know what aspect of that deity is going to show up!

Miranda (Y): I used to do it more when my mom was part of a coven that did a lot of work with them. I like working with them because they have a specific purpose that they can help with, like "I am the Goddess of Love!"

IvoryFly (A): A lot of people are devoted to particular goddesses and gods. I have mine, and I love having images of them around.

Jamie (A): We have a lot of images of the divine in our space! Any horizontal surface becomes an altar.

IvoryFly (A): I'm a Taurus! I love the physicality – a photograph, an image, a painting of the deity – it makes it personal. Not that they are all human. But for the ones that are, there's a personal relationship. I can embody it.

KaeliMo (Y): I work sometimes with the Fey, and with Pan and Hecate. I think of what they might represent to me, and I focus on that – that's my way of opening the door. I say, "I'm interested in exploring things you might have to share."

Heaven (A): I'm very Goddess oriented. When you need to channel that energy, there are particular names. Invoking particular deities is using a certain level of focus. I worship at many altars! If I want to work with love, there's Aphrodite. I'm a JeWitch. As an African American, the Orisha are very important to me. But I wouldn't conflate these traditions – it's disrespectful.

What's challenging about working with deities?

Lilo (A): Every time I have the experience of working with

them, I change. I can't come back from this connection without changing something.

Mykel (Y): I'm not comfortable invoking a deity I'm not already tight with. I feel like I don't know a deity if I just have one person's version. Where I really get the essence of a deity is when I hear different people's versions – what they all have in common, or the gaps.

Jamie (A): Being able to see deity in myself. I was at a women's camp in the 1980s. There were all kinds of women, and I could see that they were the Goddess. It was easy. And they said they could see it in me. I knew I was seeing it in them. So I figured, okay, there must be something there.

Natasha (Y): I feel like deities are further away from everyday life than ancestors or energies, which have more of a place in the greater society. A lot of the time deities are written off. We have less acknowledgment of their power, which

makes it harder to connect without guidance – a class, or working with other people.

Charlotte (Y): It's easier to feel connected with something like the elements. You can be walking down the street and see the ocean or feel rain, and you're like, "Oh, Water!" But you're not often walking down the street and go, "Ah, Hecate." Unless you're crossing the street, I guess!

What about other types of allies, like ancestors or other beings?

Sequoia (Y): I think the most powerful allies are ones that are physically with us in the space. Here with these trees that have witnessed so much, I get some of the deepest connections I can have in any space. Calling creatures that are here, and ancestors of the land – those are often the



An invocation at Solstice in the Streets – San Francisco, 2011.





Invoking Deities, Allies, & Energies

A Reclaiming Roundtable (pg 4)

most potent allies.

Heaven (A): I always want lots of allies – colors, herbs, elements, deities. Maybe I use rose oil, because rose represents love. Maybe I have a red candle that I anoint with rose oil and add rose petals, then light the flame – I’ve used all the elements.

Willow (E): I work with my lineage – I do a gratitude piece for everyone who has been part of helping me become who I am – my teachers, the ones I chose and didn’t choose, the ones who were painful, the ones who were blissful.

Fio (A): It could be that the spirit I am invoking is this mountain. But also the story of the mountain, the way in which the mountain impacts people even on the other side of the world. For me it is about the practice of the art of relationship.

Kim (A): I’ve worked with trees a lot. I’ve worked with dragons. I’ve never found something that felt like it was my thing forever. It’s like right now, I’m working with this.

Hilary (Y): Sometimes I work with allies without thinking about it. I show up for a grieving friend, and I may not “cast a circle,” but there’s a circle there, and allies are there. There are some allies that I work with formally and have altars to, plant allies or ancestor allies that came to me in some trance a million years ago. And I’ll be standing next to someone I dearly love, and they’re going through something, and I’ll feel this energy come up behind me, and I’ll be like, “Oh, I see what this person needs right now!”

Do you invoke plant or animal allies?

John (A): I don’t know if I’d say I invoke them – but I’m into turtles. They got me through my dissertation.

Dusky (Y): With my spirit animal, sometimes I go for days without thinking about him. When I do think of him, I get in touch, send out little connection threads. If I say I invoke him, it’s really just that I would be sending out connections to him. I do the same with everything in my life that I’m close to.

KaeliMo (Y): I’m more inclined to invoke allies than deities, especially when I’m sorting out personal issues. Usually it’s animals or plants. Things which are more specific to you and your place. Spirits of the land – I create space and sit there and listen and see what I can learn.

What’s an example of a spirit of the land?

KaeliMo (Y): Redwoods have incredible significance to me. I have a personal and tactile relationship with redwoods. I’ve done a lot of magic in the redwoods, and we call the same places home. They have an intense physical presence – like they hold the rest of the forest. I invoked them at college in Ohio, because the redwoods *aren’t* there. There’s a kinship with redwoods, a home feeling.

What’s it like to invoke an animal or plant ally?

KaeliMo (Y): With plants, I find that working with them takes a lot of patience – things are a lot slower and more detailed. It’s never occurred to me to invoke a plant when I’m moving. I don’t tend to do it with words – it’s non-verbal communication. Then I notice whatever feeling I might get in response.

Ingrid (Y): That makes sense, but you want me to invoke a tree? I like that idea, but I have no idea what it means. I’m sitting here and it feels like there’s nice energy coming out of the tree. I enjoy it, it’s calming – that’s my experience.

What about invoking a specific energy like groundedness or perseverance?

Jamie (A): I like working with qualities. There is so much that can happen if we work with, say, Justice. In rituals we’ve had a person holding scales. Everyone gets that it’s Justice. For some people this will be slippery, too broad. It won’t be effective. For others it’s going to work better, this broader version of divinity.

Maeve (Y): I love invoking energies that are simply named, like invoking our “innocent brave hearts” the first night at Witchlets one year. By combining what those words mean to us – “innocent, brave, heart” – it creates something that you wouldn’t have been able to imagine if you hadn’t connected the words.

Sequoia (Y): I think invoking something like “innocent brave heart” allows for an individual experience within the ritual. It’s not as definite as a character in a story. It sets up an energetic intention. That’s what we do when we create sacred space – we build this “church” that we then energetically customize. It’s a space that’s more about personal journeys and growth than worship.

What’s the difference between invoking a goddess of, say, love versus simply calling ‘love’ as an energy?

Miranda (Y): I think calling in “love” is a very broad term. There’s so much to love – romantic love, I love my best



Invoking Deities – Gender Issues

A Reclaiming Roundtable

In ye olden Neo-Pagan tymes, such as Reclaiming rituals prior to around 2000, people aimed to “balance” magical energies by invoking one goddess and one god.

Around 2010, the Spiral Dance ritual added a trans deity invocation, and also an “activist goddess.” The 2018 ritual invoked Justice for the deity invocation, along with a song for the Egyptian goddess Ma’at. The journey continues!

It seems like gender is a complicated part of working with deity!

Kim (A): I’m often torn between the cultural and gender limitations of some of the deities we traditionally have used, and just invoking nature, which is more inclusive but doesn’t have the same kind of archetypal connections.

Sequoia (Y): As a non-binary person, it sometimes irritates me that gender is where all the energy goes. If we want to invoke a specific goddess, why do we need a god every time? Or if we’re trying to have an interaction with a god, maybe the goddess needs a break. Or maybe we’re interacting with a genderless deity.

Jamie (A): I appreciate the ways that we have deities that are *all* the differences, including non-gendered. I would never want to lose the gendered, and the inter-gendered, and the non-gendered, or the slippery androgynes – whatever. It’s incumbent upon us to keep that whole spectrum represented.

Maeve (Y): I’ve moved away from the need to have a binary counterpoint. It feels too attached to gender being the only balance-point. If you want to counter-balance, why not have a different energy, or focus on aspects of a deity besides their gender.

Sequoia (Y): It’s essentialist.

Maeve (Y): Yeah, it’s essentialist. I appreciate being in a space where we can challenge older traditions that say, “We must have a goddess, we must have a god.” We ask, what is the purpose of this magic? Maybe this particular ritual doesn’t need a deity, it just needs an energy.

How have we moved beyond binary god/goddess invocations?

Jamie (A): Our tradition is queer at its roots. By that I mean non-hetero-normative, as well as queer in the wider sense. Cultivating not just a tolerance for difference, but

that emergent edge. Personally, and in our subculture and our larger culture, this is a time for adaptivity, for getting more tolerant, more comfortable with difference and change.

IvoryFly (A): Queerness has always been valued in Reclaiming. I’ve always felt like it’s our divine blessing – queerness in all ways – creatively, spiritually, sexually...

That brings up the idea of working with stories of the land, or nature-based stories.

Mykel (Y): I find that working with non-human stories is more bendy – it bends a lot of our binary ideas around gender, and also identity – one’s identity as an individual, even. There’s the approach that Free Camp and Teen Earth Magic have taken, not so much working with pre-existing folk tales, but focusing on the land and life cycles of beings in nature – stories that are more grounded in “right now,” and not so much engaged with archetypes and folklore.

I’m excited about taking these modes of engaging into any story – looking at modern myths and stories that have not passed into folklore yet. It has the potential to open up all sorts of stories, and not just the kinds we’ve explored so far.

To bring questions of gender and power and relation to the land into all kinds of stories?

Mykel (Y): Yes, I think there’s really interesting stuff that can happen in all these spaces. It’s interesting to explore

Paul (E): At my first witchcamp in 1985 it was a big deal to call in “the God.” This was in the early days, when it was very binary.

It’s important to have a place for “The Goddess.” It’s part of our history, part of the awakening that came out of feminist spirituality. And I think we’ve done a fairly good job of opening up, even if at times it’s painful and clunky. We’re at the forefront of acknowledging things that are going on in the culture. And at the same time we remember where we’ve come from.

I relate to specific deities – Quan Yin, Baba Yaga, _____essa (“Dinessa”) – I don’t even think of them as gendered. So much of deity to me is humans trying to give words to beings and entities that we don’t really have the language to describe.



Invoking Deities – Gender Issues

A Reclaiming Roundtable (pg 2)

the wisdom in finding women's agency in a story where it has not been told that way, or finding the queer and the trans and other things where you don't usually see it. It shifts the story, or shifts your perspective. It's the work of finding the power in the story that didn't seem to have anything there for you.

Sequoia: It allows each person to value and experience deity in the way it comes through for them.

It means treating myths like they're living stories – asking how they're alive for us.

Mykel (Y): I think that's part of how Reclaiming approaches stories – there's faith that there is something in the stories for you, no matter who you are.

What about gender and 'the Goddess'?

Willow (E): I sense tension around an either/or experience. It should be yes/and!

A humility around the mystery. It's gendered, and not-gendered, it's every component of the spectrum – gods and goddesses and queer ones and mysterious beings of all kinds and forms.

IvoryFly (A): I'm a Goddess worshipper – and She can have any genitals. I'm in strong support of a-gendered deity or queer spirit.

Jamie (A): Right – the Goddess is *not* necessarily a female. But I don't want to lose the importance of the feminine divine. That would be a huge loss. The feminine divine is one of the reasons I'm here. It was an intensely important evolutionary stage for myself and other women. It was a very specific quality that I had never had in my life.

Heaven (A): I'm looking for the feminine divine. It's a matter of balance – we live in a world where male gods have had their due. By pushing female deities to the forefront, I'm helping restore that balance. I'm not saying one is more important than the other – the remedy for patriarchy is not matriarchy. It's about creating a world of balance, sustainability participation, reciprocity.

Gender, Deity, & Power: Persephone

One of the stories I think about is Persephone and Hades. I've heard conversations asking where is Persephone's power – as a survivor, or as somebody who has chosen Hades?

Different people might have different ideas about what pieces of the story have power and for whom, but the conversation is never, *is* there a place for Persephone's power in this story?

– Mykel

For more on gender issues, see Introduction: Gender – an interview with Mykel Mogg.



Invoking Deities, Allies, & Energies

INTENT

In Reclaiming and many other Pagan groups, it is an older part of the tradition to invoke one or more deities – gods, goddesses, or mysterious ones – as allies for a ritual. Many people spend years building relations with particular deities.

Deities are sometimes part of a myth featured in a ritual or camp; sometimes they seem especially suited for the work at hand; sometimes they have seasonal or sabbat associations; and sometimes they just strike the planners' fancy.

Deities can carry multi-layered associations – cultural history, psychological challenges, interpersonal dynamics...

They bring myths and tales which can be fashioned into the “arc” of a WitchCamp or class (see Ritual Skills: Theme and Arc). By building a series of rituals around a story such as Inanna's Descent to the Underworld, our workings become a mythical journey.

Extra Baggage: Gender, Violence, Appropriation...

Deities bring a lot of baggage! Old versions of myths, stories, and fairy tales often involve unchallenged hierarchies, assumptions, and oppressions. Some deities are fitted into male/female pairs, and their stories revolve around stereotypical gender roles – men are active and enterprising, women are passive and/or malevolent.

Myths can involve deceit, cruelty, and violence against women and children.

Some stories and deities carry issues of cultural appropriation – what does it mean to “borrow” a myth from an African American or Native American tradition from which the dominant culture has already stolen so much?

Reclaiming and others have worked to “reclaim” our cultural heritage and re-shape it for today. Gender-bending roles, unexpected alliances (eg, Ariadne and the Minotaur), resistance to violence and oppression, and creative solutions to age-old challenges have refashioned some myths for our time.

Other times, camps, classes, and rituals have explored ritual and magic without invoking traditional deities and myths. Approaches have included invoking the mysterious ones, energies, and stories of the land.

For more on these topics, see Intro: Gender, and Intro: Cultural Appropriation.

Invoking the mysterious ones puts us outside the traditional male/female, god/goddess binary systems.

It allies us with all those who live their lives outside of usual expectations and boundaries, and it strengthens those parts of each of us that yearn to break free.

The Mysterious Ones

Who or what (or where or when) are the mysterious ones? Some say they are aspects of deity and spirit that transcend human understanding. They might be beyond species, gender, age, race.... beyond all of our usual categories. Calling the mysterious ones acknowledges that divinity is a mystery that human consciousness cannot fathom.

Invoking the mysterious ones puts me outside the traditional male/female, god/goddess binary systems. It allies me with all who live their lives outside of usual expectations and boundaries, and it strengthens those parts of me that yearn to break free.

How does one invoke the mysterious ones? It's up to each person. How would you call “mystery” into your circle and your life? How would you show that you honor parts of reality (and of yourself) that you do not understand?

Deities vs Energies

At an early teens' camps, participants were invited to help plan a ritual (a step forward at that time!). People signed up to cast the circle, invoke elements, teach songs – but when asked what deities they wanted to invoke, the question drew a blank.

We tried reframing the question – what *energies* would you want to invite into the circle for this ritual? Presto! Everyone had

continued on next page





Invoking Deities, Allies, & Energies (pg 2)

ideas: playfulness, commitment, magic, journeying, soul-sharing....

We could have said, "You want playful energy? Let's invite Pan. You want a journey? Let's invoke Inanna." But it didn't connect with the magic of our circle. Why not just directly invoke the energies we want?

Sometimes people choose a couple of specific energies and create invocations for them. At one ritual we invoked playfulness by having small groups do ridiculous elemental invocations – it worked!

Other times everyone might be invited to call out types of energy they want to see in the circle, then stir them all together.

At Bay Area rituals in recent years, it's not uncommon to invoke a deity alongside an energy, such as Demeter and Compassion, whereas in olden times people might have invoked a god and a goddess.

Who knows what might be invoked in another 20 years?

Spirits of the Land & Other Beings

Some ask: Why invoke gods and goddesses instead of working directly with nature?

At an early Redwood Magic Family Camp ritual, seeking deep allies, we invoked the World Tree, the Green One, and Artemis the Huntress – but someone had to interrupt to remind us to pause and honor the actual redwood trees encircling us.

While planning a Witchlets Tarot working, someone asked: "Why not send people to sit with a tree and do nature divination? If we can read a picture on a card, why can't we read the bark of a living tree?" (See *Workings: Divination: Nature Readings*.)

Some camps have moved toward working with stories of the land rather than older Pagan myths. The life cycle of the Chinook Salmon or the Monarch butterfly have provided the framework for rituals. (See *Ritual Skills: Theme and Arc*.)

Rituals can invoke and/or thank the non-human beings of the land – trees, plants, animals, rocks....

Cultural Appropriation: Challenges for Magical Activists

An ongoing topic in Reclaiming and other groups is cultural appropriation. People are inspired by and want to honor other traditions and cultures, while not cherry-picking stories and practices for rituals.

Broadly speaking, Reclaiming rituals tend not to invoke deities from traditions that have historically been oppressed by the dominant culture, such as Native American and African-Caribbean traditions. Folks drawn to those traditions are encouraged to seek and learn from experienced practitioners rather than inserting bits and pieces into Reclaiming events.

For more on this topic, see *Introduction: Cultural Appropriation*, and the conclusion to the *Magical History* essay (pg XXX).

What Works?

What works for a given group? There is no single template, but here are some thoughts:

- Invoking energies rather than deities works with a younger group or when people are resistant to "religion" and deity.
- Working directly with nature and stories of the land are a good fit for outdoor retreats.
- Traditional deities make sense at certain rituals – a flaming cauldron ritual may call for an invocation of Brigid or Vulcan.
- One way to move beyond gender dualities is to have various people do invocations – folks of various genders might invoke a god or goddess, people of various genders, ages, and physical abilities might dance together to welcome Aphrodite, etc.
- At some Bay Area Beltane rituals, diverse people collectively invoke the Goddess – each proclaiming as they dance into the circle, "I am the Queen of May!"

Invoking is an ongoing experiment. What worked yesterday might not work today. And what you dream up today might never have been possible before this moment!



Invoking Allies: A Pop Quiz!

Discovering Your Allies

✦ **Book of Shadows** – here’s a chance to do some reflecting and writing. Given all of the options, who might some of your best allies be? Consider different types of allies, and write about each.

You could even invoke them before you write. It’s as simple as thinking about something, naming it, and saying, “Welcome!”

Don’t forget to devoke when you finish: “Such-and-such, thank you for working with me today. Hail and farewell!”

Kinds of Allies

For each type, consider whether there is one particular being which you might invoke as an ally. For example, for ancestors of your culture you might choose a favorite author from the past. For deities, you could choose a goddess that your intuition tells you might be helpful. And for types of energy, couldn’t all of us benefit from invoking a bit more patience or understanding?

- Elements (magical, chemical, culinary, quantum...).
- Gods, goddesses, mythical beings, magical beings, imaginary beings.
- Ancestors of your own bloodline.
- Ancestors of your culture.
- Animal allies – favorite animals, scary or challenging animals.
- Spirits of certain places (a favorite place, your place of power, a place you want to travel, etc).
- Trees, plants, vegetables, etc.
- Astronomical bodies such as Sun, Moon, stars, planets, planetoids that used to be planets, large asteroids...
- Types of energy such as Creativity, Perseverance, Justice, Passion, Relaxation, etc.
- And so on!

Reflections On Your Allies

- Why (and when and where) might they be a good ally to you – what calls you to them?
- What are some favorite things about this ally?
- What do you want/need to learn about this ally?
- What might this ally expect from you (for instance, learn about them, make an altar, follow through on commitments, etc)?
- What are some ways that you could invoke this ally:
 - (A) In a private, personal ritual?
 - (B) In a circle of like-minded people?
 - (C) When you are in public and don’t want to be noticed?
- What songs, Tarot cards, colors, etc remind you of this ally (and might be useful in invoking them or feeling them present)?
- Is there a word you can speak, or a place on your body you can touch, that will quickly call back this ally when you need them?

My Own Best Ally

And let’s not forget our closest ally, the one that’s always right there when we need support – our self!

See Workings: Allies: My Own Best Ally.





Ritual Planning

INTENT

Planning a ritual can be exciting, magical, fun – and sometimes a lot of work! Planning often takes as long as the ritual itself.

Words of wisdom for all occasions: Keep it simple. After you've planned the ritual – go back and simplify.

Before beginning to plan, people sometimes do a go-round and share why they are called to be part of this ritual, what this season or ritual means to them, and any inspirations they have. This will often lead into a brainstorm about ritual actions and intentions.

Take notes. At the end of the meeting, read back through what people have volunteered to do. Then give the notes to the ritual wrangler or email them to the planning group.

What if it's a personal ritual? You can still plan carefully. Take some time to think about the magic you intend to do. Write the outline in your journal or Book of Shadows. Have it handy in case you get off track during the ritual and have to wrangle yourself.

Group Process & Consensus

Reclaiming meetings often operate by consensus. This doesn't mean that all the decisions are unanimous – it means that when people disagree they keep trying to find something that works for everyone, or at least something all can live with.

There is no built-in hierarchy – everyone's voice is heard, and no one can out-vote or "pull rank" over someone else (although details may be left to folks who will carry out the decisions).

Sometimes when the decision-making process bogs down, people have to compromise – but other times a new inspiration bursts out that excites the whole group. That's consensus at its best!

For more on consensus and group process, see the Activism chapter.

Intentions – What Is a Ritual Intention?

A ritual intention is a short statement of why you are doing the ritual and what you hope to accomplish. The intention reminds you of the challenges you face and the magical actions you will take. Often a priestess reads the intention at the start of the ritual, and the whole group repeats it three times. "to make it a spell."

Some years at California WitchCamp, each day's intention is inscribed in beautiful calligraphy and posted outside the dining hall. At the week's final ritual, a priestess re-reads the intentions one by one and offers them to the fire.

Sometimes intentions state what is at stake and what change is wanted. Here's the intention from the 1981 Spiral Dance:

"Remembering the dead and the threatened Earth, we reclaim the power of magic to transform despair into hope and action."

Sometimes the intention is short and to the point – the shortest ever for a San Francisco Reclaiming ritual was at Summer Solstice 2011: "Rekindling."

Here are a few more examples of ritual intentions:

- From scarcity to abundance, we share the possibilities of our harvest
- Celebrating the diversity of our dreams
- Reclaiming the Commons and its bounty as our birth rite (and our birthright)
- With our ancestors, we weave the web of connection to protect and regenerate life's resilience
- Unite and press on!

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Ritual Planning (pg 2)

Intentions – first or last?

Some people say that when you plan a ritual, the first thing to do is come up with the intention – then find the workings that fit. This is especially true for one-time, focused rituals such as political actions, coming-of-age rituals, or healing rituals. For instance, activists planning a ritual as part of a protest often spell out the political intention of the action beforehand.

Other times, people start by talking about what sort of working they want to do – maybe we envision a bunch of people in a sunny meadow, milling about and sharing magical thoughts, going on a journey, then talking in small groups. After we know what we're doing, we craft a verbal intention that fits the ritual.

WitchCamp rituals are created as part of our magical arc for that year (for examples, see *Ritual Skills: Theme & Arc*), and we determine ahead of time what the general intention of each ritual will be – for example, we decide whether a particular ritual calls for “seeking allies and community” versus “journeying into the deep unknown” versus “making a commitment.”

Sometimes a ritual is built around specific workings: an ally circle, a night hike, transformational theater...

Whichever way you start, in the end you want two things: (1) a clear idea of the magical work people will be doing during the ritual, and (2) a clearly stated intention.

Planning the Tofu

The core of a ritual will be the magical workings, or the “tofu,” as it is sometimes called (in ye olden tymes it was known as the “meat” of the ritual sandwich – “tofu” honors vegetarian ancestors).

Usually the tofu is a single major working, sometimes paired with a second, shorter one. So there might be a meditation that leads to a question or challenge, followed by an Overflowing Cup Spell that calls in an abundance of resources.

Sometimes we already have specific ideas of workings we want to do – a trust walk, a night sit, or a labyrinth working – and our task is to weave these workings into the ritual arc as best as we can.

You'll find dozens of ideas for ritual tofu in the Workings section of this book – and inspiration to create your own.

Keep It Moving

Remember to balance active exercises, games, etc with quiet bits. Use songs and chants as transitions from one activity to another. If there's enough room and people, do a spiral dance after the main working to empower the magic.

Things to Remember

See next page for some ritual roles you'll need. You'll also need to decide how to create sacred space.

Figuring out how to create sacred space is often the last step. Since the outline is the same at most Reclaiming rituals, you'll already know many of the roles you'll need to fill – grounding, casting the circle, invoking elements, etc.

What about deities and other allies? Think about what magical support your specific ritual needs – goddesses and gods, energies such as creativity or sustainability, allies such as a local animal or plant.

Balance – think about your group or community and its special interests and needs – in the Bay Area, we've learned that the old-style “gender balance” of invoking a goddess and a god excludes an increasing number of people who identify outside of binary genders. Recently some Reclaiming groups have begun invoking the mysterious ones as a way of honoring deities who don't fit into the “god versus goddess” box (see *Ritual Skills: Invoking Deities and Energies*).

Depending on the workings, we might want a really strong circle, or need to save time by invoking the elements with a song.

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Ritual Planning (pg 3)

Ritual Roles

Even in a small circle, you'll need priestesses and a wrangler. For bigger groups, add the other roles below.

Priestesses – priestess is a role, not a person or gender. It's a word for anyone who fills a magical role at camp or a ritual. Most rituals have multiple priestesses – a fire priestess, invoking priestesses, a spiral priestess – even a cleanup priestess.

Ritual roles rotate, so in classes, camps, and community rituals anyone with a little experience can take a priestessing role. In solitary work and personal practice, each person is their own priestess.

Sometimes we use the word as a verb: "Who is going to priestess the cauldron working?"

When priestesses lead a working they typically guide or suggest rather than ordering people to do things. Rather than saying, "Everybody close your eyes," they might say, "I invite you to close your eyes."

Other times, priestesses hold space while participants do their own work. A priestess at a Water altar might wear a veil and repeat a watery phrase over and over as people come and go from the altar.

Graces – magical ushers who help things flow smoothly. Graces might welcome people with a purification by sprinkling drops of water from a bundle of herbs, or slip out of the circle and hide Ostara eggs at Spring Equinox. They also help in subtle ways like joining in group invocations, taking hands for the final spiral, etc. Some people prefer this role to being a priestess.

Dragons – in some public rituals a few people watch the circle's boundaries – letting passersby and bystanders know that they can join us, that the event is drug and alcohol free, discouraging photographers, etc.

Deep Anchor – this is an advanced role. In some rituals, one or two people act as deep anchors. They sit silently to one side of the circle, usually veiled, and meditate, tapping into the deep flow of the ritual's energy. Sometimes they will later report back to the planners about what they noticed. After their time as anchor is complete, a wrangler or tender will help them devoke that role and return fully to themselves. (Sometimes we also call logistics priestesses "anchors" – and they may need tending, too!)

Wrangler – we use this term in two ways.

(1) Someone who helps a deep anchor prepare for their role, watches boundaries, and helps the anchor fully return to the mundane world afterward – they wrangle the anchor's energy. This role is also called a tender.

(2) A person who keeps track of roles, songs, and timing in rituals. The wrangler quietly cues people – especially for devocations, when people are tired and have to remember their places in reverse order. In a big ritual, this person should not have any other roles. You are basically the magical stage manager!

Other roles to remember:

- Ritual space prep/set-up/beautification
- Teaching chants (see Ritual Skills: Chants: Teaching Chants)
- Firetending if needed (see Ritual Skills: Firetending)
- Holy sacred clean-up crew

Step Into the Flow

One of our favorite chants (by Ana Moffett) goes, "Step into the flow and then I let it go..." – a good guide for ritual priestessing!

Just before the ritual begins, all priestesses gather, ground, and do a quick talk-through – the wrangler reminds us as needed. Then we take a breath, step into the flow, and let it go...



Ritual Theme & Arc

INTENT

The goal of a ritual theme and arc is to weave together a series of rituals, workings, and exercises into a journey that lasts the length of the class, camp, or retreat. Circles and solitaires can also create a series of workings based on a ritual arc.

For many camps and classes we choose to work with a myth, fairy tale, or natural theme. *Witchlets in the Woods* has tended to use classic myths and fairy tales (see following pages).

Some camps such as Free Activist WitchCamp and Teen Earth Magic have favored nature-based and activist themes. Camps have been based on the life cycle of the Chinook Salmon (a West Coast species), the journey of the Monarch butterfly, and the Great Turning (see *Workings: Pentacle of the Great Turning*).



Walking the labyrinth – Ariadne, Theseus, and the Minotaur – Witchlets 2012.

Redwood Magic Family Camp has taken nature-based themes and crafted kid-friendly stories – “myths” for our times.

Whatever the basis of our camp theme, the “arc” divides the story into a half-dozen segments that follow the outline of the narrative. The segments inspire the themes of the rituals and morning paths – so when the protagonists go on a journey, we do a journey ritual. When they face an inner obstacle, we do shadow workings.

For instance, with the *Journey of the Salmon*, segments included birth, swimming downstream, exploring the mystery of the ocean, and hearing the call to return home. Can you see how these could be the basis of a series of rituals and workings? Which do you think was the “deepest” working? (See the end of this section for the full *Journey of the Salmon* story.)

PREP – CHOOSING A THEME

It’s great to have wide participation when choosing the camp story. *Witchlets* has several discussions before making the final decision. *Mysteries of Samhain* has an conference call where campers can take part in discussions. Other camps use facebook.

Before we begin debating the merits of various stories, we talk about what we want in general from our camp theme or story. People might suggest things like “liberating our society,” “no gender stereotypes,” “a journey of some sort,” or “a series of challenges.” Then we think about stories we know (or can imagine) that have some of these attributes.

Once we have some ideas, we take a break – sometimes a month or more between meetings – and let the ideas percolate. People can do additional research, talk about why they like one story or another, share problems they see, etc.

And they can start suggesting “ritual arc” ideas for a story. People say things like, “this story has a journey to the underworld, which will make a good trance,” or “this story includes a labyrinth, which we could use for a major ritual.”

Finally planners and teachers choose the story for the coming year – sometimes with a little bargaining about future years.

PREP – CREATING THE ARC

Once you’ve chosen the theme for your retreat or class, delegate a small group to draft an arc. This is a good job for three or four

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Ritual Theme & Arc (pg 2)

people, not a big group. Then bring it back to the planning group, get feedback, and hopefully everyone can consense on it.

Some things to think about:

- A ritual arc should deepen the magic, not be a rigid structure. Let the story inspire you, not shackle you. Adapt the story and arc to the work you want to do.
- The opening ritual helps people feel welcome and included in the circle, and begins to immerse us in the entire story. For the Salmon story, the opening ritual focuses on awakening into a “school” of fish, all starting the journey together.
- Morning paths are good times for discussions, nature explorations, and projects. Night rituals are good for mystery, allies work, and trances. Arc planners think about this back-and-forth flow.
- At a camp with four or five nights, there is sometimes a talent show as part of the final ritual – a subtle way to begin to transition back to daily life. This means the most intense magic – the journey into the deepest mystery, the working expected to be most challenging – is the second-to-last ritual. Arc planners keep that in mind as they look at the story.



Facing the “Minotaur” at the center of the labyrinth – Witchlets 2012.

PREP – GENDER, VIOLENCE, & WEIRD ENDINGS

What about issues such as gender (male/female fairy tale couples whose life-goal is to get married and live happily ever after), or the violence and abuse (often against women or young people) that is central to many stories?

In a word – the stories can be “reclaimed.” Myths and fairy tales are living stories. They have existed in many forms in the past, and they can be reclaimed and reshaped for today.

Roles can change. Genders can change. Characters can act differently – and can question or challenge their “fate.” In our magical work and in the wider world, we can write the latest versions of the old stories.

Example: Ariadne, Theseus, & the Minotaur

In the ancient Greek story, Theseus (archetypal adventurous male hero) comes to the island of Crete to slay the horrible Minotaur (archetypal monster) who is imprisoned in cruel King Minos’ labyrinth. Minos’ daughter Ariadne (archetypal damsel in distress) longs to escape from Crete. She falls in love with Theseus and helps him navigate the labyrinth. Theseus kills the Minotaur, and the lovers escape King Minos’ clutches together (although in old versions they do not live happily ever after...)

When we worked the story at Witchlets 2012, planners really liked the labyrinth (who doesn’t?), the call to fight injustice, and the way Theseus and Ariadne need one another as allies to have any chance of success.

But people weren’t so happy with the Minotaur getting killed without getting to tell its story. And couldn’t Ariadne take a more active role, such as coming up with the plan and persuading Theseus to join her, not just assisting him?

Do Theseus and Ariadne have to fall in love? Do they need to be hetero? Must they even be male and female? Or could they simply be young people who make an alliance to fight injustice?

Do they need to kill the Minotaur? Is the Minotaur really a monster after all? What is our personal “Minotaur” that we find when we travel to the center of the labyrinth? Maybe no one has to kill anyone! Maybe there’s a creative way to outfox King Minos. Can Ariadne, Theseus, and the Minotaur find a win-win-win solution?

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Ritual Theme & Arc (pg 3)

THEMES & STORIES – Examples from Teen Earth Magic & Family Camps

California family and teens camps have worked with all sorts of stories and myths. Themes at Witchlets have ranged from ancient myths such as Demeter and Persephone, to Medieval romances like the Grail or Thomas the Rhymer, to fairy tales such as Sleeping Beauty or The Twelve Wild Swans. These stories have been worked by other camps as well.

Free Cascadia WitchCamp and Teen Earth Magic have followed the life cycles of local species such as the Salmon and the Monarch butterfly, and magical workings such as the Pentacle of the Great Turning and Journey of the Bard. Each of these themes was built into a “ritual arc” to help shape the rituals of that year’s camp (see preceding pages).

Sometimes the camp story is told in great detail – this is common at Witchlets and Redwood Magic Family Camp, where a portion of the story is told each day. Other times the story provides a structure for rituals, but is not fully narrated. The pentacle themes don’t have stories, and some people miss this part of the magic.

Myths & Stories from Teen Earth Magic, Witchlets in the Woods, & Redwood Magic Family Camp

TEM 2008	Savitri & Satyavan (Hindu)	WITW 2001-03	Probably no theme for first few years
TEM 2009	Journey of the Salmon	WITW 2004	Thomas the Rhymer
TEM 2010	Pentacle of the Great Turning	WITW 2005	Quest for the Grail
TEM 2011	Journey of the Bard	WITW 2006	Rowan Hood
TEM 2012	Journey of the Monarch Butterfly	WITW 2007	Sleeping Beauty & the Thirteenth Fairy
TEM 2013	Life of the Redwoods / World Tree	WITW 2008	Amaterasu
TEM 2014	Sweet Magic of the Bee Hive	WITW 2009	Baba Yaga
TEM 2015	Journey of the Salmon	WITW 2010	Sir Gawain & the Green Knight
TEM 2016	Bears!	WITW 2011	Demeter & Persephone
TEM 2017	Pentacle of the Great Turning	WITW 2012	Ariadne, Theseus, & the Minotaur
TEM 2018	Mushrooms & Fungi	WITW 2013	The Twelve Wild Swans
TEM 2019	Mystery of (W)hole Time	WITW 2014	Burd Jan & Tam Lin
Redwood Magic 2013	Earth: Redwoods & World Tree	WITW 2015	The Last Wild Witch
Redwood Magic 2014	Air: Raven	WITW 2016	Cerridwen & the Cauldron of Inspiration
Redwood Magic 2015	Fire: Butterfly & Phoenix	WITW 2017	Brigid & the Cailleach of the Snows
Redwood Magic 2016	Water: Journey of the Salmon	WITW 2018	The Red Mare
Redwood Magic 2017	Center: Gossamer the Spider	WITW 2019	Vasilisa the Brave
Redwood Magic 2018	Earth: Randy Raccoon		
Redwood Magc 2019	Air: How Scrub Jay Broke the Wind		

Teens Workshop Fall 2007	Labyrinths: Ariadne, Theseus, & the Minotaur
Teens Workshop Spring 2011	Nonviolent Activism Weekend with Starhawk & Dress
Teens Workshop Spring 2012	Pearl Pentacle Weekend with Seed
Teens Workshop Spring 2018	Diversity & Anti-Racism Work with Rahula & Lindsey

A Cycle of Themes

Redwood Magic Family Camp has worked with a cycle of elemental themes relating to native species that stretches over five years of camp, then starts again at Earth.

The 2013 Redwoods & World Tree theme was Earth. The Raven legend for 2014 was an Air story. 2015’s Fire story was Butterfly & Phoenix. And see the following pages for our favorite Water story!





Ritual Theme & Arc (pg 4)

STORIES OF THE LAND – Examples from Our Camps

Many Reclaiming WitchCamps work with myths and traditional tales. Myths of Inanna, Persephone, Freya, or Cerridwen, and tales like Sleeping Beauty, Thomas the Rhymer, or Tam Lin have formed ritual arcs for many camps over the years.

Several newer and younger Reclaiming camps have focused more on stories of the land, including Free Cascadia WitchCamp, Teen Earth Magic, and Redwood Magic Family Camp. These camps have had some overlap of teachers and campers, and have swapped camp themes back and forth.

Teen Earth Magic teachers developed the Journey of the Salmon for our 2009 camp (see next page). The story was used at Free Cascadia Camp, Redwood Magic, and also in a local Bay Area class taught by TEM and Free Camp teachers.

The ritual arc for the Journey of the Monarch was crafted at Free Cascadia Camp, and brought to TEM by Free Camp teachers. The Pentacle of the Great Turning was also created at Free Camp (based on Joanna Macy's work) and later brought to TEM.

Other nature-based themes were developed at Redwood Magic, which in its early years wove stories rooted in the Northern California ecosystem combined with magical beings such as the World Tree and the Phoenix (see previous page for complete list).

Here are notes on a few stories of the land we've used, plus the full Journey of the Salmon story.

Journey of the Monarch

Monarch butterflies migrate through many areas including Northern California. Their intuitive navigation and their transformation from caterpillar to butterfly (with the mysterious period in between) mirror our own deep desire to burst free, and the beauty of what comes forth results in rich themes for magical workings.

Life of the Redwoods / World Tree

Redwoods are a communal species. Many trees spring from common roots, and the entire forest interweaves its roots and canopy. For the World Tree, a myth common to various cultures, we worked with the Norse idea of the Lower, Upper, and Middle Worlds. Rituals worked a blend of nature and mythical magic.

Journey of the Salmon

Salmon are born in the upper reaches of many West Coast rivers. Soon they migrate downstream, transforming from fresh water to salt water breathers. Salmon travel vast distances through the ocean, then at some point feel a "call" to return to their fresh water homes and give birth to a new generation.

As you'll see from the following narrative, the goal was to divide the story into a half-dozen segments, each of which could be the basis for a distinct magical working.

For instance, the journey downstream as young Salmon led to workings that explored our hopes and dreams. The transformation to salt water and the journey into the vast ocean were rituals of mystery and unknown changes. The urge to return home was the call to our own deepest truths and dreams, while the journey upriver, swimming against obstacles and strong currents, was seen as struggling to bring our dreams to birth in the real world.

As you read the Journey of the Salmon (next page), see if you can follow the magical arc of the story – maybe you'll adapt it for a ritual of your own?



Ritual planning table amid the redwoods at Witchlets.



Ritual Theme & Arc (pg 5): An Example

Journey of the Salmon

See preceding pages for discussion of how this story can be worked as a "ritual arc" – the paragraphs correspond to a series of rituals and morning paths.

We begin in the North, in the pristine mountain streams surrounded by madrones and manzanitas and round gray boulders with unnaturally smooth, alabaster-like surfaces.

In this sanctuary, the Salmon come to life, born out of eggs left in these cool streams. Like the Salmon, we gather to create a sanctuary, a pool where we can come together to bond and share our stories.

When the time is right, the Salmon begin their journey downstream. Growing with every little rivulet and fin-stroke, we learn that each new estuary that might seem like a turning away from the path, or a period of stasis, is completely necessary in order for us to have accumulated the skills and stature that we need in order to make it through the challenges ahead of us. We dive into the flow of our journey and experiment with new identities, ideas, and ways of doing things.

Once the Salmon reach the delta, this period of experimentation takes on a more urgent timbre. As waves and waves of unbreatheable salt water merge with the sweet fresh waters of the rivers, they find themselves in a place of intense transformation. Their bodies change rapidly in order to prepare for the next chapter of their lives, preparing them to go out into the deep darkness of the ocean's depths. We learn to understand cycles, to investigate how our bodies transform and grow, and how to navigate the tricky brackish waters of transition.

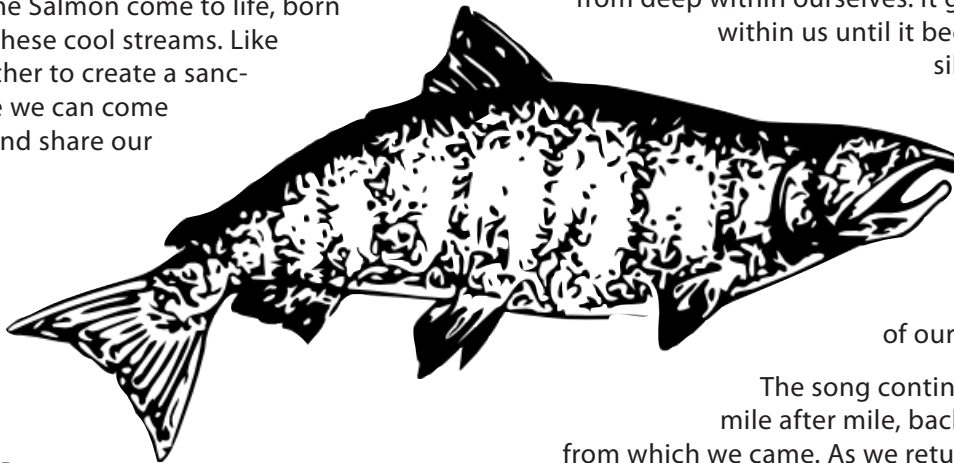
The ocean is a place of mystery. No one really knows where the Salmon go or what they do as they undertake the long journey across thousands of miles of uncharted sea sand. This is a time of testing, of self-sufficiency and empowerment. We delve into the shadows and the unseen, learning to trust ourselves and our intuition. And in doing so we begin to hear a call from far away, yet one that also rises from deep within ourselves. It grows and grows within us until it becomes impossible to ignore.

We turn and follow the song of our destiny, of the legacy of our ancestors, of our own hearts.

The song continues to lead us, mile after mile, back to the rivers from which we came. As we return to our communities, we bring with us the lessons and nourishment of the ocean, all that was once thought to have been lost downstream. We return abundance to the wider community of bears, madrone and manzanita trees, people, osprey, and the river herself. We find ways to engage our fully empowered selves with the healing of the Earth.

We swim unerringly through the labyrinth of streams and rivulets, upstream and over dams. We return to our true homes – whether it is the place of our birth or a place in our heart – and take the steps needed in order to leave a legacy of healing and connection to the circle of life for future generations.

Created by Riyana & Jason Scarecrow for Teen Earth Magic 2009. In addition to being reprised at TEM in 2015, this story has also been worked at Free Cascadia WitchCamp and at Redwood Magic Family Camp.





Firetending Magic

INTENT

A ritual fire is more than the center of our ritual, more than the warmth and light of our hearth. Well-tended, the fire flows with the energy of the ritual – low and spooky during meditation and trance, roaring during the cone of power. Working the magic of the fire adds an extra energetic dimension to the ritual.

Firetending is a unique ritual skill – you’re a priestess with a single task that lasts for the entire ritual – not to mention the time you spend gathering wood and building the fire.

Firetending for rituals is not necessarily a role for “fiery” people – a ritual is (usually) not a fire performance. Let fiery types invoke Fire, while “earthier” types do the building and tending.

Firetender is a role for one or two people. Here, we’ll speak of it as one person – but two can trade off if they keep in close touch. Recruiting more wood-gatherers and choppers helps spread the work out.

COMMITMENT

If you take the role of firetender, you commit to prepare, build, and tend a fire for each ritual during camp. This is a sacred commitment to the camp, to your fellow campers, and to the Goddess (and/or whatever other energies you wish to invoke as witness).

Like kitchen anchor, this is usually a role for the whole length of a retreat or camp. Even if you invite more people to help tend during rituals, the main firetender anchors the fire from start to finish.

The firetender is responsible for the fire from gathering wood through to the extinguishing of the fire at the end of the night, and everything in between. You are responsible for tools such as lighters, fire-starters in damp climates, back-up wood supplies, safety water access and buckets, etc.

You may want to do a short ritual of commitment at the beginning of an event where the firetenders step into the circle, speak their commitment, and are seen and supported by the whole circle.

The first time, you might assist someone with more experience. Watch, learn, and be ready to step in on a moment’s notice. The Goddess sometimes calls quite unexpectedly, and you want to be ready to lend a hand! Ask questions – and when you think you’re ready to tend for a ritual, ask to do it.

FIRE PREP – PRE-CAMP

Talk to the ritual planners and learn where the firepit will be, how big fires should be, and how long they will burn each night. All of this information will affect how much and what sorts of wood you will gather.

Confirm whether plenty of firewood (including kindling if you’re not in the woods) will be at site, or you and others need to bring or gather wood (for instance, we have to bring our own wood to Solstice bonfires at Ocean Beach). Ask if there is a budget for supplies (\$10-20 should do it unless you need to buy wood).

Materials – non-toxic campfire starters (very handy in damp areas); lighters and/or matches; fresh, dry newspaper and kindling (and a plastic bag to keep it dry); a large splitting axe and a small hatchet if needed; wheelbarrow to haul wood; gloves; safety goggles.



continued on next page



Firetending Magic (pg 2)

PREP – RESEARCH DESIGNS

Even if you know how to build campfires, do a little online research. There's always something to learn.

"Log cabin" fires work well because they tend to collapse inward rather than falling over like a "tee-pee" design. Use heavy base-logs and you'll have a long-lasting structure to feed wood into.

At California WitchCamp, Dawnstar and other firetenders have experimented with "Stonehenge" fires – eight-sided bases with a "tower" in the center. The layout creates fantastic multi-layered fires, but it can be hard to tend after a while, as a large mound of coals builds up.



FIRE PREP – AT CAMP

Visit the fire circle and consider doing your own mini-ritual – an offering to the fire faeries, to Vulcan, to the trees that gave their wood, etc. Magical help never hurts!

Prep – Things to Figure Out

- Figure out how big your fire will be and how much wood you will need. Then double your estimate! If it's a multi-day camp, gather enough wood the first day for two fires, just to be sure you have plenty.
- Where will wood come from? Figure out a back-up stash – where can you find extra wood quickly if you run low?
- Are there wheelbarrows or carts? A good axe? Review axe safety with any helpers, and put away axes when not in use.
- What is the emergency fire plan? Where is the all-camp alarm and phone? Where is water, hose, bucket? Where is first aid?



Prep – Things to Do

Allow time for wood-gathering and chopping. Ask for help – and let helpers know exactly what you need so they don't waste their time. Gather wood and build the fire early so you get a pre-ritual break before you light it.

Sort extra wood by size and have it handy – we stack it around the fire to create a "fire-tenders' zone." Gather plenty of smaller wood too – handy for quick bursts of flame.

Keep dry newspaper in a plastic bag – in the woods, old news gets damp fast.

Most important – always have lighters handy! Carry a couple in your pocket all the time. Hide a couple near the ritual circle for emergencies. Stick a few extras in your pack.

continued on next page





Firetending Magic (pg 3)

FIRE MAGIC – TENDING THE FIRE

Maybe you'll find a place to do outdoor rituals with your circle – Reclaiming East Bay (Oakland/Berkeley) celebrated its first public bonfire at Winter Solstice 2021! You'll want to prepare carefully, and to think about the magic of a ritual fire.

The goal – to build the fire up and down with the energy of the ritual. It's not hard to build a big fire – just toss in more wood. The trick is having it rise and fall with the magic.

Build a solid log cabin frame with lots of smaller "stuffing." It will flare up at the outset, then burn down. Keep feeding it during the opening invocations until you get a good hot bed of coals. Then you can let it burn lower as you reach the trance or other "spookier" parts of the ritual.

Number one firetending trick – when adding wood, lean new logs and sticks at angles so air can circulate under them. Laying logs right onto the coals makes them smolder. If you remember this simple trick – angle sticks against one another and leave space for air under them – you'll be surprised how well your fire burns.

Steady feeding = steady fire – feed smaller amounts of wood more often to maintain a steady fire.

More light – sometimes we want light so we can see one another. Small and medium sticks make more and faster light. Have lots of small stuff on hand, because it will burn fast.

Flaring – If you want the fire to flare high (for example, during the cone of power), add a bunch of medium sticks – then take a big handful of twigs and put them on top – they'll flare up dramatically. They'll also burn down quickly – don't peak too early, and/or have plenty of small wood ready.

Lighting the fire – check with ritual planners, who may want the fire lit at a special moment. If it's to be lit midway through the ritual, use non-toxic fire starters and plenty of fresh newspaper for a fast, sure light.

If they leave the lighting to you, here's a magical way:

Phantom fire lighting – ahead of time, place non-toxic firestarters at each end of the fire with plenty of newspaper and kindling a few inches above. When people are milling and talking prior to the ritual, quietly light the starters and step away – after a minute or two, the fire will seem to spontaneously combust.

POST-RITUAL FIRE MAGIC

After the ritual ends, folks might like to hang out around the fire. This is a good time for group story-telling, singing, and gazing into the coals.

Firetending after the ritual can be less formal – others can feed the fire. However, the main firetender is responsible until the fire is put out.

DEVOKING THE FIRE

At the end of the evening, the last people might "devoke" the fire – hold hands around it (sometimes in a horseshoe to avoid the smoke). Maybe go counter-clockwise and each person says one thing they appreciated that day. Then say thank you to the fire and blessings on all who gathered around it.

The firetender remains until the end and puts out the fire.

Afterward – clean fire area and return it as close as possible to its former condition. Stack or return wood.

Devoke and/or thank any faeries, allies, or energies you called in at the beginning. Thank the hearth for warmth and light and for being the center of the circle. Touch the hearth, then touch your hand to your center. Breathe in the fire magic to carry with you.



A classic "Stonehenge" campfire layout.



Spiral Dance: How to Lead

INTENT

It's hard to do a spiral with under about 25 people – but maybe someday your circle will create a ritual for a larger group.

The spiral dance is a magical way to wrap up a ritual (or a street protest, handfasting, birthday party, etc). During this simple dance, every person passes face-to-face with every other person.

The dance is usually done to an upbeat chant – see pages XXX for chants you can hear online.

The following are directions for the single-led spiral that we do at WitchCamps and local rituals – it works for about 30 to 200 people. The larger double spiral done at the annual Spiral Dance ritual in San Francisco has different turns.

SPACE & TIME

25-30 people minimum – you can do it with fewer, but the “spiral” will resemble a snake looping back on itself.

A flat, clear space large enough to make a loose circle. A central altar is great. Takes about five minutes.

Folks who can't or choose not to do the dance can take part by sitting with the drummers in the center.

LEADING A SPIRAL DANCE

Three Things To Remember

- (1) Always move to your left.
- (2) Always turn to face the person behind you.
- (3) Once you turn, follow the line of faces to its end.



The closing spiral dance at Teen Earth Magic – under the World Tree.

Spiral Priestess

The lead spiral priestess helps set the tone of the dance and the way people interact as they pass one another. At a camp or community ritual, look for someone who will make eye contact and radiate warmth and enthusiasm.

Either the priestess knows how to lead, or someone who knows the turns goes second and guide by tugs on the lead priestess's hand. If you have this role, tell the leader not to look back at you: “Keep meeting others' eyes, but listen to what I whisper.”

Set-Up

Important – any people/stuff/obstacles must be moved to the very center or completely outside the circle. The spiral shifts unpredictably, and can't wrap around lawn chairs, trees, etc. Dogs and little kids should not be underfoot, since many dancers are not paying attention to where they are stepping. Holes in the ground should be filled.

Invite dancers to make eye contact, and to move slowly and gently. “The spiral is a stately dance,” someone once said.

Chants – see pages XXXXX for spiral dance songs. This is a good spot for a “classic,” not a new, untested chant, or one with more than four lines. Teach the song at the top of the ritual so people really know it when the time comes.

Drummers

Try to work with experienced ritual drummers, and practice the chant ahead of time. Ask new drummers to wait until after the ritual to join in the drumming. Urge ritual drummers to come to the middle – if they stand outside the circle, the energy

continued on next page





Spiral Dance: How to Lead (pg 2)

gets lopsided. Don't have a drummer lead the spiral – leader should be someone who can focus on steady eye contact.

The Dance

Start in a circle, all holding hands.

Sing the song through one or two times before you start moving to build some energy.

Spiral priestess frees her left hand, so the person to her left becomes the spiral's tail – this is a good place for an experienced priestess.

Always move to your left – clockwise as you spiral inward – always to the left.

Move slowly – your first steps will set the pace for the dance. Spiral toward the center longer than you think – with enough people, wait until part of the circle is three rows deep before you turn. Turning early creates a crescent and lets energy escape (sometimes unavoidable with fewer than 50 people).

First turn – and every turn – turn to face the person following you. This is the easiest way to remember the turns for the single-led spiral. *Always* turn to face your follower. (This is different than the double-spiral at the Spiral Dance ritual!)

Spiral back out. Keep passing faces until you reach the end of the line – you will have passed every person. Spiral priestess is now facing outward, away from the circle, moving to the left.

Continue around outside of circle, facing outward, for about one-third of the circle. Turning early creates a traffic jam.

Final turn – when spiral priestess has gone about one-third around the outer circle, she turns – as always, turn to face the person behind you. You will again be passing each person in the line.

Keep passing people, one by one. After a short while, spiral priestess will suddenly face a “fork in the road” – two double-lines are moving past one another. You may be tempted to swing outside and avoid the congestion. Don't do it!

Remember – always follow the line of faces, one by one. This will lead you back into the spiral and take you toward the center. It may seem like a narrow opening, but just keep tracing the line of faces and you'll find your way.

The Peak of the Spiral

When you pass the last person and reach the center for the second time, you're almost done – however, if it is a small group or there is a lot of energy, you may want to spiral out and back again.

Once the spiral priestess reaches the center for the final time, look over your shoulder – the end of the line will still have their backs to you, spiraling out. Keep singing and spiraling slowly inward until the entire tail has turned and everyone is facing inward. To avoid “tightening” the spiral – move slowly and keep the same person roughly behind you.

Once all spiralers are facing inward, spiral priestess and others drop hands and start clapping. Center-dancer types move inward. Energy wranglers drift outward and work the edges. All keep the chant going strong. Drummers drive the beat.

Cone of Power

Now, if the magic calls it forth, you might raise a “cone of power” – as you sing and tone, the energy comes to a peak. Drumming and clapping stop, and the voices settle into harmonies. The magical energy is focused and sent to the Earth and sky – and finally drawn back into our hearts.

Whether or not there is a cone, the toning finally fades. Hold silence for a moment. Then a priestess can say something like, “Hear our voices echo. Breathe the power of our working. When your heart is full, return some to Mother Earth. Blessed be.”



A Reclaiming-initiated spiral dance at Occupy Oakland, Fall 2011.



Chants: Teaching Chants

At the beginning of a ritual, even in a small circle, teach the chants you'll use – this helps keep the energy moving later on.

No one is born knowing how to teach Pagan chants. It's a skill you have to learn.

It doesn't especially matter how good a singer you are. It's about being able to clearly communicate words and melody to a circle of people ranging from operatic divas to people who only sing when alone in their shower.

Anyone who can carry a tune can do it, regardless of how "good" your voice sounds. Teaching chants and songs is not about having a pretty voice, but about singing clearly and with confidence.

Of course, that's easier said than done!

Singing in front of others is one of the hardest things people in our culture can do – and yet our voices are basic to who we are.

Later in this book you'll find a working called Voice Magic – some ways to release tension and old hurts regarding your voice. Counseling and emotional-release work can help as well.

Don't be surprised if it takes you a while to get comfortable teaching chants. Here are some tips we've learned along the way.

TIPS ON TEACHING SONGS & CHANTS

Choosing the Perfect Chant

- Look for chants whose lyrics and mood connect to the theme of the ritual. See the following pages for resources.
- Introduce a new or more complicated song as an invocation or food blessing – whereas for a spiral dance or to raise energy at the end of a ritual, look for a simple chant that a lot of people already know, or that is very easy to learn.
- If a chant is longer than four lines, it's hard for people to learn quickly enough to raise energy. Consider using just part of it.

Be Ready When You Step Out

- Practice a lot. Know a song in your sleep before you teach it – if you have to look at the words or think about the tune, you're not ready. Sing it fast, slow, high, low, serious, funny. Sing it looking into a mirror. Sing it with a friend (or cat) distracting you.
- Teach a song alone – having two people do it together may seem reassuring, but unless you are pros, two people seldom sing a tune exactly alike. Hearing two voices just confuses those trying to learn the chant.
- Find a way to get your starting pitch. One way is to know which is the highest line of the chant, and sing that line to yourself in a comfortable range right before you teach it. That will keep you from starting too high. (You could also get a pitchpipe.)
- If the chant is longer than two lines, sing the entire chant alone once so people can hear it, then come back and teach it one line at a time, call and response. Then go back and sing two lines at a time, call and response.
- Finally, have people sing the song 5-10 times so the group really knows it when it comes up during the ritual. Most people enjoy singing – get good and warmed up!

Hecklers & Helpful Friends

- When you're teaching a song, people in the circle who already know it may join right in – ask them not to sing yet: "Let people hear one voice – it's easier to learn the tune that way."
- Someone with a loud voice may say: "You're singing too high/too low." Politely remind them that human voices are spread all over the scale, and what works for some won't work for others. Invite those with different ranges to add harmonies. If they persist, ask others who found your pitch difficult to raise their hands – only a few will do so, and you can move on.

Here's the good news – the more chants you teach, the easier it gets!





Chants: Resources Online

Chants & Songs for Rituals

Music is a key part of Reclaiming rituals and magic. Many of the workings in this book include suggestions for songs and chants. You can use any songs that seem right for your workings and rituals – when the occasion demands, people use everything from pop hits to old folk favorites.

Reclaiming choruses (each unique, with a bit of overlap) have recorded several albums of chants by Reclaiming teachers or like-minded people. From the earliest years, Reclaiming teachers and priestesses have crafted chants and simple songs to use in our rituals and classes. Many of our favorites are included on Reclaiming albums.

In particular, Chants: Ritual Music and Campfire Chants include many of our most popular ritual chants.

Reclaiming Chants – Listen Free Online!

Most chants mentioned in this book are on Reclaiming albums and/or can be heard on streaming services. If you're doing a solo working or a small circle, play the chants and sing along!

Listen free on all streaming services. Search <Reclaiming Chants>, <Starhawk>, and <Campfire Chants>.

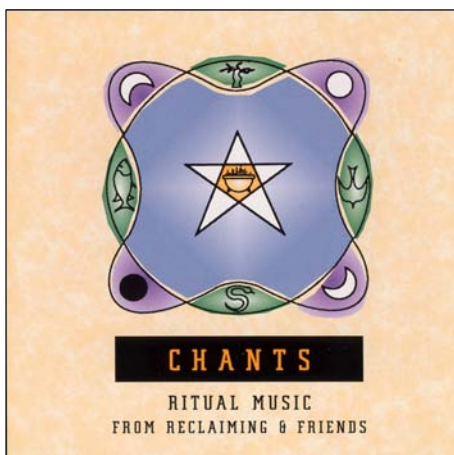
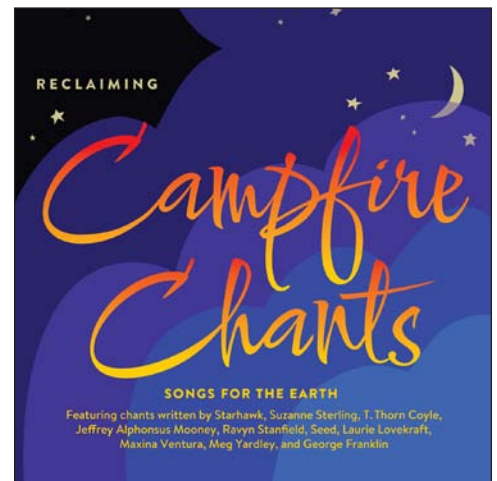
Playlists for spotify & youtube: WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists

Playlists for workings in this book: WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants

Reclaiming chants are written by many people, including Starhawk, Suzanne Sterling, and T. Thorn Coyle. There's even one song written by young folks from Reclaiming – Wheel of the Year, on Campfire Chants!

You'll find these Reclaiming albums online – with more to come:

- Chants: Ritual Music
- Second Chants
- Let It Begin Now (Music from the Spiral Dance)
- Witches' Brew: Songs From the Reclaiming Cauldron
- Campfire Chants: Songs for the Earth
- Cánticos Sagrados: Bilingual Chants for Mother Earth (2023)



Reclaiming Albums – Directly From Our Magical Circles!

Reclaiming's albums are created by choruses that met at the Spiral Dance, WitchCamps, and family camps. Some have been recorded in professional studios, others in garages. Either way, the sound is intended not to win production awards but to draw you into a circle of magical song.

Chants: Ritual Music carries the sound of a Reclaiming circle or class.

Let It Begin Now features the ensemble sound of the band and chorus for the annual Spiral Dance ritual.

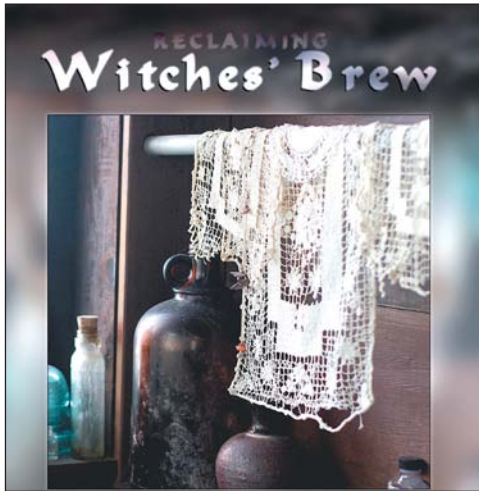
Campfire Chants catches the relaxed harmonies and acoustic music of a late-night WitchCamp bonfire.

Each of our albums will give you ideas for your own rituals, circles, activist marches, handfastings, birthday celebrations – and of course singing in the shower!

continued on next page



Chants: Resources Online (pg 2)



Reclaiming Chants – Whodunnit?

These albums have been recorded by different groups of singers and writers, with some overlap. Maybe you'll help record the next one!

Chants: Ritual Music was recorded around 1990 and released as a cassette tape. Legend says that a small chorus rehearsed for a while, then recorded the entire album in one day.

Campfire Chants (2016) was recorded by folks from Witchlets and Redwood Magic. It took longer than one day. Free Lyrics & Lore booklet at WeaveAndSpin.org/freebies/.

Suggestions for Rituals and Workings

Streaming – search <Reclaiming Chants>, <Starhawk>, or <Campfire Chants> – or search by album titles

Playlists for youtube and spotify – WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists

Playlists for this book – WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants

Gathering the Circle

- Weave and Spin
- Sweet Water
- Air I Am / Earth My Body / Air Moves Us
- We Are the Flow
- We Are the Power in Everyone
- Circle Round the Balefire
- Rising of the Moon
- Wake Again

Personal Commitment

- My Soul
- Let the Beauty We Love
- Let It Begin Now
- Weave and Spin
- Kore Chant (She Changes Everything She Touches)

Earth / Activism / Empowerment

- Sweet Water
- Harvest Chant (Our Hands Will Work For Peace and Justice)
- We Are the Power in Everyone
- We Are Alive As the Earth Is Alive
- Body of the Earth
- Rising of the Moon
- We Are the Rising Sun

Invoking Elements and Allies

- All of our elements chants: WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists

Best Spiral Dance Songs (some of them!)

- We Are the Rising Sun
- We Are the Power in Everyone
- Weave and Spin
- Harvest Chant (Our Hands Will Work for Peace and Justice)
- She Changes Everything She Touches (Kore Chant)
- Sweet Water
- Body of the Earth
- Let It Begin Now
- Rise with the Fire
- We Are Alive

continued on next page





Chants: Resources Online (pg 3)

Favorite Non-Reclaiming Chants

Find these chants and more on the "Non-Reclaiming Faves" playlist on youtube and spotify – WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists

- We Are a Circle Within a Circle
- Earth My Body
- The Earth Is Our Mother
- The River She Is Flowing
- Spiraling Into the Center – *good spiral dance/energy-raiser*
- Step Into the Flow – *good spiral dance/energy-raiser*
- Sweet Surrender – *good spiral dance/energy-raiser*
- The Earth, the Air, the Fire, the Water, Return
- May the Circle Be Open

Chants for the Streets

Many favorite chants were written for street actions – the Bay Area Pagan Cluster sang some of these at the Rise for Climate Justice march in San Francisco.

All are recorded on Campfire Chants except Rise with the Fire from Chants: Ritual Music. For links, see WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists

- We Are the Rising Sun
- Sweet Water
- Rising of the Moon
- Rise with the Fire
- We Are the Power in Everyone
- Weave and Spin
- Harvest Chant (Our Hands Will Work)

Best Sing-Along Chants

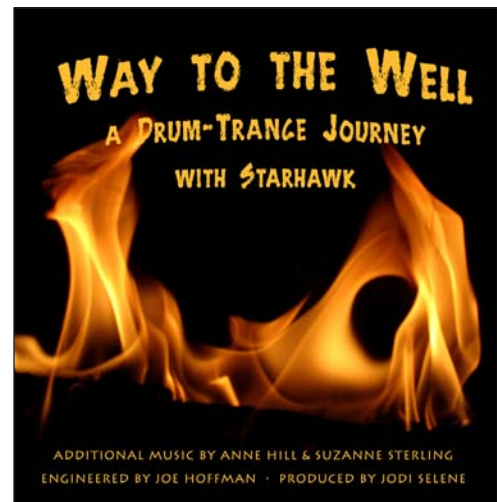
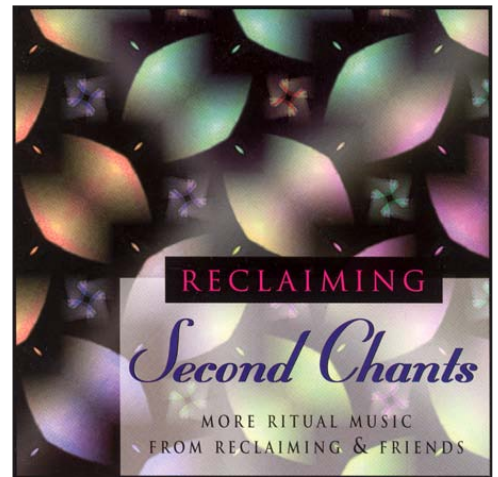
The idea for Reclaiming's latest album, Campfire Chants, came from late-night singalongs. Chants sound different when you're relaxing around a fire. Some work as call-and-response.

- My Soul – *call-and-response*
- Let the Beauty We Love
- The Welcome Flame (Spark Blaze Ember Ash)
- We Are the Rising Sun
- Cycles of the Moon
- Wheel of the Year – *call-and-response*
- Barge of Heaven (Pour It Out For Me) – *call-and-response*
- When We Are Gone – *call-and-response*
- Goodnight Sweet Witches

Trance Recordings – Free Online

- Way to the Well – a ritual trance journey with Starhawk
- Labyrinth Meditation Music – perfect for rituals
- Magical Creativity Trance with Irisanya

Find links at WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists



Reclaiming Chants & Songs – free online!

Listen free to our chants on all streaming services. Search for <Reclaiming Chants> and <Campfire Chants>. Downloads at CDBaby, iTunes, Amazon, etc.

Playlists for spotify & youtube:
WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists

Proceeds benefit Reclaiming organizing, archives, publications, and future recordings!



Reclaiming Rituals

- Way to the Well – an online trance journey with Starhawk.....XXX
- A Ritual for GroundingXXX
- An Affirmation RitualXXX
- Let It Begin Now – a musical journey with ReclaimingXXX
- Labyrinth Challenges – a ritual of personal commitment.....XXX
- Beltane & Dia de los Muertos – Wheel of the Year Highlights.....XXX
- A Water Ritual (Elemental Working)XXX
- Crafting Your Own Rituals – creating spells and workings using this book.....XXX
- After the Ritual – around the WitchCamp fire circleXXX
- Chants Playlists for these and other rituals: WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants



The grandmama of all Reclaiming rituals – the annual Spiral Dance. The first ritual, held at Halloween 1979, was the book-release party for Starhawk’s book of the same title. People liked the ritual so much they did it again, and again... and as people say: “Twice is nice – and thrice makes it a tradition!” The ritual continues to this day, with community participants creating invocations, trances, music, and altars. Visit ReclaimingSpiralDance.org. Photo from 2010 ritual, by Michael Rauner.





Way to the Well

A Trance Journey with Starhawk

Let's begin by accompanying one of Reclaiming's founding priestesses, Starhawk, on a trance journey.

You'll experience the flow of a ritual – and see how simply she creates sacred space and gets on with the working!

Way to the Well – free online

Free on youtube, spotify, etc – search <Starhawk Way Well>

Way to the Well is a 45-minute drum-trance ritual in the Reclaiming Tradition. Starhawk and singers Anne Hill and Suzanne Sterling help you create a personal magical circle and explore sacred wells of power, healing, and challenge.

Set aside an hour in a space where you can relax and not be disturbed. Turn off your phone.

You may want to lie down or sit in a comfortable spot. (If you fall asleep, no problem – just rewind the recording and start again when you're ready.)

Have your journal and water handy, and some healthy snacks for afterward (nuts, fruit, bread).

Once the recording is ready, press pause. If you're using a computer, put a scarf over the screen.

Take three breaths and bring yourself present at this time and place. When ready, press play, and begin the journey.

At the end, take a breath, then journal (or reflect) for at least a few minutes before breaking the energy.

End with a breath, and say, "Blessed be" to your journey.

A Grounding Meditation

The Tree of Life Grounding by Starhawk

The Tree of Life is one of the basic grounding meditations we use in Reclaiming.

By visualizing yourself as a tree with deep roots and tall, striving branches you can anchor yourself to the Earth.

Feeling yourself grounded, steady, and fully present makes a difference anywhere, from magical circles, to personal relationships, to sports and games, to final exams.

The importance of a daily practice

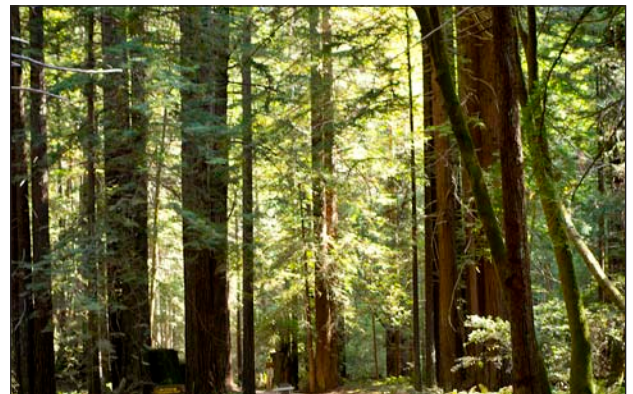
Starhawk: "If you want to practice the craft – if you want to be a witch – it's important to have a personal practice, something that you do every day.

"In some traditions there's a meditation that you do, or a particular prayer that you say. In Wicca, we encourage people to *find* the practice that works for them.

"This, for me, is the basic thing that I do every day, and I find it especially useful in dangerous or tense situations. It's called 'grounding.' Basically, you are connecting your energy to the energies of the Earth."

Youtube – search <Starhawk Grounding Meditation>.

Also on Starhawk's Way to the Well – all streaming sites.



Other Recordings by Starhawk

Available on amazon/audible and elsewhere.

Wiccan Meditations by Starhawk

- Grounding: 1:30 / Place of Power meditation: 16:38

Earth Magic – meditations and exercises for building sustainable relations with ourselves and our planet.

The Fifth Sacred Thing – Starhawk's classic novel about the troubled birth of a new world – now an audiobook.



A Ritual for Grounding

INTENT

Here’s a ritual you can do alone or with some friends or your circle to strengthen your sense of grounding – of being fully, clearly, strongly present in the world. All you need is a youtube connection and some red yarn.

We invite you to do this ritual for yourself or your circle early in your practice. It might be your first working – as it sometimes is in our introductory Elements of Magic classes. Revisit it from time to time, spiraling deeper into the working.

If it looks long (five pages!), that’s because we’re printing it all out like a script. Feel free to improvise, shorten, skim, etc to suit your own needs.

It even comes with a special youtube Grounding Ritual playlist: WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants/

The main working is a **red cord spell** – but before doing a grounding spell, you’ll want to *feel* truly grounded. We’ve included a link to a grounding meditation by Starhawk, or you can read the printed meditation below (or both – whatever helps you feel calm, present, strong, etc).

This ritual can help you feel what it’s like to be strongly grounded in a certain moment, even if you don’t feel that way all the time (who does?). Once you’ve done this spell, you can call it back by touching the red cord, or your own center. To strengthen it, you can repeat the meditation as often as you wish. Some people do a grounding meditation or exercise every day.

Gradually you may notice that it takes less effort to feel grounded, and more disturbance to throw you off balance.

So mote it be!

✪ **Book of Shadows** – before you create the ritual, take some time and write:

- Why are you doing this ritual at this time?
- What do you hope the ritual will accomplish?
- Are you ready to follow through and work on getting more grounded?
- What will be difficult about following through? What changes will you need to make? What sort of support might you need?

SPACE & TIME

Allow enough room for a comfortable circle. Allow about an hour including some journaling time afterward.

PREP

Craft your intention – what do you hope the ritual will accomplish? Can you state this in one sentence? Write it down.

For a group – ask each person to come up with their own intention or commitment.

Materials needed – journal or Book of Shadows; red yarn or embroidery floss (3 feet per person); this book to read the grounding below and/or an internet link to listen to Starhawk’s Tree of Life grounding (see previous page); healthy snacks for post-ritual.

Ritual space – a space where you can close the door or be undisturbed.

Create a small altar either in the center or on one side, on which you can place the red yarn. The altar can be as simple or elaborate as you wish.

Creating sacred space – let’s keep it simple for this ritual. There are plenty of complicated rituals later in the book! Read ahead for simple ideas for grounding, casting your circle, and invoking – feel free to change and substitute as you wish. See the beginning of the Ritual Skills chapter for lots of ideas for quickly creating sacred space.

continued on next page





A Ritual for Grounding (pg 2)

Chants – WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants/

If you have internet access during the ritual, have this Grounding Ritual playlist cued up. It has the music and meditation in the order you'll need them. You can choose either to use the recorded grounding by Starhawk or read the meditation below.

If no access during your ritual, download the music ahead of time – the songs are listed below along with other options. Or substitute songs of your own choice (including pop songs that fit the mood – is there a pop song that would help you ground?).

Either way, have your music player and/or lyrics handy when you start.

Priestessing – for a group, decide who will priestess (lead) each part – ask everyone to take a role. For solo work, you are your own priestess.

RITUAL

When your plans and the space are ready, step out of the room. Get a drink. Turn off your phone.

Before re-entering, take a breath and state your intention to yourself. Step into the space.

Gathering Song – Air I Am (Song #1 on the Reclaiming Grounding Ritual mix).

Honoring First People – take a moment and remember that if we are in the Americas or Australia and are not of the First People, we are on stolen and/or unceded land. We can name and honor those who came before, and renew a commitment to justice for their descendents.

Grounding – two options (do one or both)

(1) Standing (or lying or sitting with good posture) – listen to the Tree of Life Grounding meditation on the mix.

(2) Read this meditation slowly, breathing deeply yet gently. Pause for a moment when you see three typed dots...

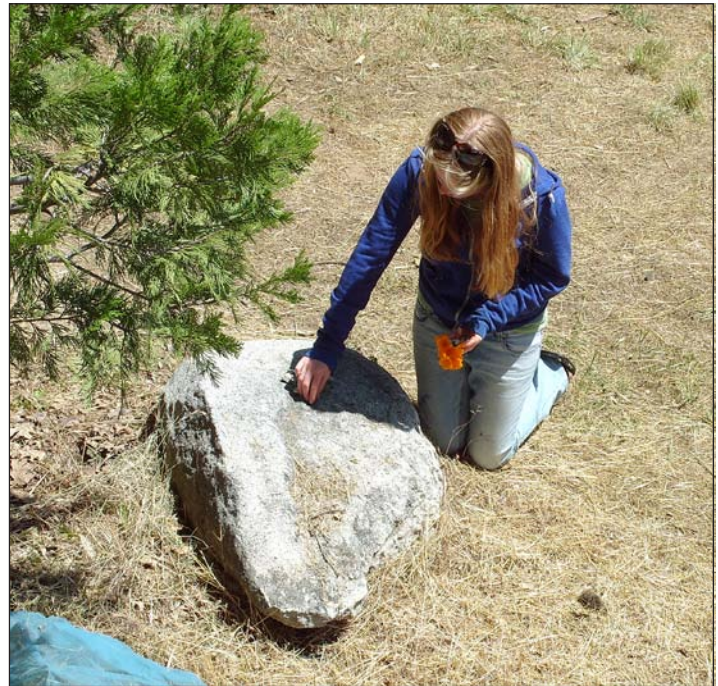
“Take a deep breath... and let it go. Grounding is the time to bring ourselves fully present. It’s a chance to take some deep breaths, to relax our posture, to feel our connection to the Earth beneath our feet...

“This is called the Tree of Life. It is one of Reclaiming’s basic groundings. We’ll feel our personal energetic roots sink deep into the Earth, pull up nourishment for our body, and send it up into our energetic branches...

“Stand or sit tall and loose, energy balanced, with your knees flexed. Breathe steadily and deeply... Standing tall, let each breath gently float through your body... On each inhale, draw in fresh air... On each exhale, let yourself relax... Breathe gently and steadily...

“Picture your spine as the trunk of a majestic tree... and as you breathe, let roots drop down from the base of your spine deep into the Earth... dropping down with each breath... dropping down until they reach the deep, molten center of the Earth Herself... Let your energy mingle with the energy at the core of the Earth... and with a breath, let go of anything that you don’t need right now... anything that is not of this time and place... let it go into the Earth...

“With your breath, begin to draw up power from the Earth... feel the energy rising through your tree trunk... Feel the power



Rock magic is another way to do a grounding spell!

continued on next page



A Ritual for Grounding (pg 3)

rise up through your core... feel it filling and energizing your entire being with each breath...

"With steady breaths, draw this energy up through your body, up through your chest and neck and head... And from the crown of your head let branches sprout and reach toward the sky... let your arms rise like branches, and feel the Earth energy flow up through them... feel it drawing down the energy of the stars... feel the energy sweep through your branches and drop again to the Earth, returning to its source..."

"Let the energy drop back to the Earth... now, from your own center, draw a deep breath, drawing in the energy of Earth and stars... feel the Earth and stars mix and mingle in your center... breathe in all that you need... Let it flow through you and back to the Earth..."

"When you are filled with the energy you need, return any extra to the Earth..." (Kneel and touch the Earth, or touch your center.)

Allow 30 seconds – then stop and take a deep, relaxed breath and say: "Blessed be!"

Casting the Circle – here's use a traditional formula:

Face North and say: "By the Earth that is our (my) body."

Turn to the East: "By the Air that is our breath."

Turn to South: "By the Fire of our bright spirit."

Turn to West: "By the Waters of our living blood."

Turn back to the North to complete the circle, then turn to face Center. Look up: "By all that is above."

Look down: "By all that is below."

Now say boldly: "The circle is cast – we are between the worlds. And what happens between the worlds, changes all the worlds! So mote it be."

Invoking the elements – how about a song? Try Air Moves Us on the youtube mix. Or see suggestions on pages XXXXX.

Invoking an ally (or several) – if you want to invoke a deity or an ancestor, welcome them in any way you wish.

You might also want to invoke a quality such as "groundedness" or "calm presence" that will help strengthen your magical working. How will you do that? It's up to you to invoke in a way that the quality (or goddess, etc) feels present. For more on this, see the sections on invoking in the Ritual Skills chapter.

Chant – Who Is the Goddess? We Are! – on the youtube mix (and also on spotify etc), find the song Who Is the Goddess from our Witches Brew album (sung by Moonrise). You can sing it here to invoke deity into your circle.

Red Cord Spell

Priestess explains a bit about spellwork. Here's the short version – see Workings: Spellcrafting for more.

"A spell is a combination of your intention plus a physical working. When doing a spell, strike a balance between (A) being clear and specific, and (B) leaving the Goddess/universe room for creativity.

"Some cautions – in general, be careful what you ask for (you just might get it!). Beware of doing spells that affect another person – these can misfire and/or return on you, according to the Law of Threefold Return (see Intro: Curses). Put an end-term on a spell. Treat and dispose of spell materials carefully and with clear intention."

Music – start Labyrinth Meditation Music (optional – on youtube mix).

Priestess hands out threads. Invite people to play with the string and feel it in their fingers as they meditate.

continued on next page





A Ritual for Grounding (pg 4)

Priestess leads short meditation, touching on these points (leave short pauses after each phrase):

"What is your foundation?... Start with your body... Where is your own physical center?... Where is your body strong?... Feel your body and your senses as your unique connection to the material world..."

"Tie a knot into your cord for that connection..."

"Feel your connection to the Earth. Feel the pull of gravity... Breathe into your connection to the Earth... Feel the energy move up and down between you and the Earth..."

"Anchor this experience by knotting it into your cord..."

"Think about what gives you a sense of stability, belonging, and connectedness in your life... Is it your home?... Your family and friends?... Your work? Your Garden? Your cat?... Tie a knot for each thing that gives you this sense of stability..."

"Do you have a connection to the Goddess or to spirit?... Do you have a daily spiritual or magical practice?... Meditation? Prayer? Exercise? Walking? Singing or dancing?... Think about ways that you are connected to the divine, and tie a knot in your cord for each way..."

"For anything else that helps you feel connected, that calls you back to your groundedness, that strengthens your foundation, make a knot in your red cord..."

Priestess holds silence for a few moments as people complete their knots. Then invite people to hold the cord in their hands and draw up Earth energy into it with their breath. "Feel the physical substance of the cord. Feel the knots that signify your groundedness."

Begin a low toning. In a group, others join in. Tone until it fades – keep it low, not raising energy here.

Completing the spell

Priestess says:

"Breathe in the strength of this circle and state to yourself a simple affirmation of your own groundedness..."

"You may want to fasten the cord somewhere on your body. If so, fasten it with a final knot while holding in mind your affirmation to strengthen your grounding."

"If you choose to wear the thread – decide how long you will do so. Will it be for the length of this camp/class, for a moon cycle, until you go to bed tonight, until it falls off? State this aloud to yourself."

"If you do not intend to wear the cord, tie a final knot to create a circle. Decide what to do with it – will you place it on an altar, bury it in your garden, carry it in your pocket? Decide for how long."

Song: Weave and Spin – "This is how the work begins!" (on youtube mix).

Binding the Spell

Priestess leads group in call-and-response spell-binding:

By all the power of three times three
This spell bound round shall be
To cause no harm nor return on me
As I do will, so mote it be!

Priestess reminds people: "When the spell is complete – whenever you have decided – dispose of the string magically. Thank it for its work, declare it returned to being just a piece of string, and bury or burn it."

"If you decide to remove the string before the time declared, do it magically and intentionally."

continued on next page



A Ritual for Grounding (pg 5)

Devoking and opening the circle

End the ritual by devoking whatever you invoked, in reverse order. Devocations can be as simple as naming what you are devoking and saying, "Thank you – hail and farewell!" If a song was used to invoke, people might sing it one more time to devoke.

Goddess – say aloud: "Who is the Goddess? I am! Thank you, Goddess!"

Qualities, allies & ancestors – if you invoked any allies or qualities, now is the time to name them and say some words of appreciation and respect, ending by saying, "Hail and farewell."

Devoking the elements – let's sing one of the all-time favorite Reclaiming chants, When We Are Gone, from the youtube mix. When the song ends, say: "Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Spirit – thank you – hail and farewell!"

Opening the circle – a simple way is to repeat the poem that cast the circle. Since it's a poem, we don't typically reverse the order of the elements and directions, but some people do:

By the Earth that is our (or my) body
By the Air that is our breath
By the Fire of our bright spirit
By the Waters of our living blood
This circle is open (clap hands once) but unbroken
May the peace of the Goddess go in our hearts
Merry meet – merry part – and merry meet again!



AFTER THE RITUAL

Now is the time for some healthy, grounding snacks – nuts, fruits, bread.

Music – try Reclaiming's Campfire Chants album.

✪ **Book of Shadows** – this is a good time to journal for a while. If you're in a group, allow 5-10 minutes for writing and personal reflection before you start socializing.

The 24-Hour Rule – consider not "evaluating" a ritual for at least 24 hours afterward. It's great to say you liked it, to compliment someone on their role, etc. But save critical or "helpful" feedback for later. Let people – especially ritual planners – enjoy the energy for a while before you start thinking about how to make it better next time.

Thankfully, there's always a next time – the wheel of the year keeps turning, and pretty soon here comes another ritual!

Blessed be.

Photo – an impromptu altar.





An Affirmation Ritual

INTENT

Here's a simple ritual that you (alone or with friends) can do to affirm yourself and/or a decision you are making.

Maybe there's a project or task that you feel you could commit more time and energy to. Maybe there's someone you could try to be more communicative with.

Or maybe your affirmation is to believe that you are a good, brilliant, amazing, powerful, creative human being! All of this is true – but sometimes it takes some work to recognize it.

What do you want to affirm? What work calls to you?

Do this ritual for yourself or your circle whenever you feel ready. It might be your first working – or it could take place after a year-and-a-day of prep. Or maybe somewhere in between?

Before you create the ritual, take some time and consider:

- is this an affirmation that is about you and your life (not about another person whom you hope to change)?
- are you confident that it will not harm or manipulate you or others?
- are you affirming something that you are ready to follow through and work on?

☛ **Book of Shadows** – write about why are you making this commitment at this time. What will be difficult about following through? What changes will you need to make in your life? What sort of support might you need?

SPACE & TIME

Space for a comfortable circle. Allow about an hour including some journaling time afterward.

PREP

Craft your intention – why are you doing this ritual at this time? What do you hope the ritual will accomplish? Can you state this in one sentence? Write it down.

For a group – ask each person to come up with their own intention (or commitment, etc).

Materials needed – journal or Book of Shadows; pitcher(s) of water – about one gallon for every four people (a quart/liter per person); nice drinking cups; large bowl; towel for under bowl.

Ritual space – do you have a room where you can close the door? A garden where you won't be disturbed?

Create a small altar either in the center or to one side, on which you can place the large bowl. This can be as elaborate as you wish, or as simple as a colored cloth and a few special objects. Note – there may be some splashing water.

Creating sacred space – let's keep it simple this time– there are plenty of complicated rituals in this book! See below for simple ideas for grounding, casting your circle, and invoking – feel free to change and substitute as you wish. See beginning of the Ritual Skills chapter for lots of ideas for quickly creating sacred space.

Chants – you'll find a playlist with chants for this ritual at WeaveandSpin.org/tem-chants/.

Priestessing – for a group, decide who will priestess (lead) each part. For solo work, you are your own priestess.

RITUAL: Overflowing Cup Spell

When your plans and the space are ready, step out of the room. Go to the bathroom. Turn off your phone.

Before re-entering, take a breath and state your intention to yourself. Step into the space.

continued on next page



An Affirmation Ritual (pg 2)

Gathering song – Born of Water (on ritual playlist).

Honoring First People – how will you honor the First People who lived on this land? How might you make or renew a commitment to justice for their descendents?

Grounding & Casting the Circle – two choices

- come up with your own ways to ground and cast your circle (for ideas, review the Ritual Skills chapter).
- refer back to the previous ritual (A Grounding Ritual) and use the ideas from that ritual.

However you do it, finish your circle casting by saying: “The circle is cast – we are between the worlds. And what happens between the worlds, changes all the worlds! So mote it be.”

Invoking the Elements – how about a song? Try Air I Am (on ritual playlist). End by saying: “Air, Fire, Water, Earth, and Spirit – Welcome!”

Invoking an ally (or more) – try invoking a goddess or an ancestor. Welcome them in any way you wish.

You might also want to invoke a quality such as “commitment” or “dedication” that will help strengthen your magical working. How will you do that? It’s up to you to invoke in a way that the quality (or goddess, etc) feels present. For more on this, see the sections on invoking in the Ritual Skills chapter.

Working – small group

Now that you’ve created the ritual container, it’s time to affirm and bind your commitment.

Taking up your cups, gather round the bowl.

One by one, people step up and say: “I call into this cup _____ (such and such energy – eg, “I call into this cup awareness of the abundance of love around me,” or “I call into this cup my own true power,” etc).

Then the person holds their cup over the bowl and again names the energy they are invoking as the priestess begins pouring from the pitcher. As cup fills, priestess continues pouring and lets it overflow into the bowl until the person says, “Now.”

Focusing on their commitment, the person drinks the cup of water. When the person finishes, all call out: “So mote it be!”

Song – when all have gone, bind the spell with a song: Kore Chant (She Changes Everything She Touches).

Afterward – offer the surplus water to the Earth.

Working – solo

You can pour an overflowing cup for yourself. Set up a bowl and pitcher, and do each step slowly and with intention.

Begin with a meditation or Tarot reading where you think about your life and what energy you would especially like to invoke.

Once you know what you want to call in, take your cup and name the energy you are invoking, then pour slowly and let the water overflow into the bowl. When you feel it’s enough, focus on your intention and drink slowly from the cup.

End with a song – see ideas above.

Devoking & Opening the Circle

End the ritual by devoking whatever you invoked, in reverse order. Devocations can be as simple as naming what you are devoking and saying: “Thank you – hail and farewell!” If a song was used to invoke, you might sing it through once to devoke.

Qualities, allies, & ancestors – if you invoked any allies or qualities, now is the time to name them and say some words of appreciation and respect, ending with, “Hail and farewell.”

continued on next page





An Affirmation Ritual (pg 3)

Devoking the elements – sing Air I Am three times, then end by saying: “Earth, Water, Fire, Air, and Spirit – thank you – hail and farewell!”

Opening the circle – one way to open the circle is a simplified “reverse” of the way we cast the circle – if you walked clockwise to cast, walk (or swing your wand or hand) counter-clockwise to open the circle. Then say this together:

This circle is open (clap hands once) but unbroken
 May the peace of the Goddess go in our hearts
 Merry meet – merry part – and merry meet again!

AFTER THE RITUAL

Eat some healthy, grounding snacks. You will probably want to play our Campfire Chants album on repeat for the rest of the day (WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists – the first tracks on the Chants Megamix).

✦ **Book of Shadows** – journal for a while. If you’re in a group, allow 5-10 minutes for writing and personal reflection before you start socializing.

At some point take the bowl of water to the garden or a tree and offer it back to the Earth.

The 24-Hour Rule – try not to “evaluate” a ritual for at least 24 hours afterward. Just enjoy the energy for a while before thinking how to do it differently next time.

Blessed be.

Note – want to see this Overflowing Cup Spell as part of a more elaborate ritual? See A Water Ritual later in this chapter.



WitchCampers limber up for deep magical workings.



Let It Begin Now!

Each year, hundreds of people gather in the San Francisco Bay Area for the annual Spiral Dance ritual, first celebrated in 1979. If you are out this way, don't miss it!

Listening to the original music is a magical journey in its own right – and you can use the music along with this book to create a ritual in your home community.

Let the magic begin – cue up the Spiral Dance playlist at WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants/

Doing the dishes versus creating ritual space

You could listen while doing the dishes or giving your cat a bath. You could listen on your way to work or school. We recommend all of these times and places.

However, you might want to create a more magical space. Lower the lighting (twinkly faerie lights always help!). Make yourself comfortable. Get your journal and a cup of tea.

New to rituals? The Outline on page XXXXX shows the overall flow.



Hear the Spiral Dance album and more on youtube, iTunes, etc – WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants

VISIONING THE RITUAL

Want to see what the annual Spiral Dance ritual looks like?

There are several youtube videos – two feature highlights, plus the entire 2021 “zoom” ritual. Search for <Spiral Dance Ritual>, or find them on the <Reclaiming Chants Megamix> on youtube.

Watch these videos, then close your eyes and imagine a community ritual that you help create. Play these songs and let your mind's eye see the ritual space.

Envision the most beautiful and powerful images that come to you – maybe someday you'll help priestess it!



Water invocation at the 2010 Spiral Dance. Each year dozens of community members dance invocations, sing in the chorus, or anchor altars. Photo by Michael Rauner. Spiral Dance playlist at WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants/

LYRICS to refrains

Lyke-Wake Dirge (first/last verse)

This ae nicht, this ae nicht
Every nicht and all
Fire and sleet and candle licht
May Earth receive thy soul

No End to the Circle / God Song

There is no end to the circle, no end
There is no end to life, there is no end

Set Sail

Set sail, set sail
Over the spray where the waves grow white
Into the night, into the night

Let It Begin Now

Let it begin with each step we take
Let it begin with each change we make
Let it begin with each chain we break
Let it begin every time we awake

Join Reclaiming for the Spiral Dance!

You can be part of the Spiral Dance if you are in the Bay Area at the end of October. If you live here, you can help create the ritual, sing in the chorus, set up an altar, sweep the floor, etc. Volunteers are needed.

You can also use this book and music to create a Samhain/Halloween ritual in your own community. Let it begin now!

For more info, visit ReclaimingSpiralDance.org.





Labyrinth Challenges

INTENT

This ritual evolved as a climactic working at WitchCamp paths – a way to pull together different threads from the week into a final working. People enter the labyrinth one at a time and are met by a priestess who issues a series of challenges. Each time, the person gets further into the labyrinth, until on the final visit they reach the center.

The three labyrinth challenges can be changed and modified to suit the skills and issues your group has been working on.

Hope is the working for solo or a small group. For a class or WitchCamp path, see TeenEarthMagic.org/workbook



Labyrinth ritual at Witchlets in the Woods. The labyrinth is created from fallen redwood branches.

help to write these workings out on a sheet of butcher paper.

For the labyrinth challenges as described here, you'll need a Tarot deck plus a veil or cloak for the labyrinth priestess if you have one (see below). Read the section on intuitive readings at *Workings: Tarot*.

Get beads or another "reward," and a pouch to hold them (plus spool of waxed bead-string – for details, see *Workings: Bead Ceremony*). Labyrinth priestess holds pouch. If indoors, bring materials for altars, or create a different first working.

Have some substantial food ready for afterward unless a meal is about to be served.

Journals – bring your journal or Book of Shadows and set it at your gathering/ending spot.

Priestess – for more than a few people, one person will be the labyrinth priestess, guiding the others through the working, holding tools such as Tarot deck, answering questions, etc. For solo working or small circle, you can self-priestess.

SPACE & TIME

You'll need an open space at least 15 feet square for the labyrinth, plus more space for people to spread out and do their workings. In the woods you might use a small clearing with lots of trees and plants around it.

Works for any number (a small circle can self-priestess after explanation). A larger group will have stretches of time with people waiting to begin or for others to end.

The working takes an hour or so. In a class, there won't be time for much more than creating sacred space beforehand plus a short concluding working – *Charging with Fire and Flour* or the *Overflowing Cup Spell* are good endings.

PREP (lots for this ritual)

Lay out a three-circuit labyrinth in a mysterious spot – or your basement or back yard. (See below for directions.)

Or – create a personal finger labyrinth (see below).

Find a magical location – or make it magical. At Loreley Camp we laid the labyrinth inside a little chapel. To enter, a person had to knock on a heavy wooden door. At Witchlets we laid it in a redwood grove. At Vermont WitchCamp it was in the middle of a wooded glade.

Choose three workings and gather materials. See *Workings* chapter for ideas and lists of materials. For a circle, it may

continued on next page



Labyrinth Challenges (pg 2)

Gathering spot – for more than a few, you'll want a nearby place to gather at the beginning of the working, so people can approach the labyrinth one at a time – a quiet space with music and journals works well here. Also use this spot for people to re-gather at the end, to hold the energy until everyone is done.

Music – cue up Reclaiming's Labyrinth Meditation Music, created for a WitchCamp ritual and recorded by Crow for Reclaiming's album Witches' Brew. Put the 8-minute track on repeat. Free on youtube, spotify, etc – or download it at the usual sites. Find it near the end of the Chants Megamix at WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists.

Labyrinth Challenges Ritual

Create Sacred Space

- Welcome / teach songs
 - briefly explain how the labyrinth challenges will work (and the priestess role in a larger group)
- Grounding
- Cast circle
- Elements
- Invoke deity / energies – possibly:
 - Theseus & Ariadne & the Minotaur (possibly invoke the Minotaur as “alternate possibilities”?)
 - energies such as openness, dedication, mystery

Labyrinth priestess takes their position and invites others to begin a minute or so apart.

For solo or small circle, read through the working below. Write your three workings on notecards and set at the three spots in the labyrinth (see below) Put the pouch of beads (or whatever) at the center of the labyrinth.

Set tools such as Tarot deck in a convenient nearby place – once people understand, each will self-priestess.

This describes the working for a circle with a labyrinth priestess. See below for solo version.

Labyrinth Working (for Class or Workshop)

First visit – one at a time, people approach the labyrinth, about a minute apart. Let's say Chris goes first and enters labyrinth. Labyrinth priestess greets her at end of first circuit (see drawing on page XXXX) and says, “Stop!” Then gives her the first challenge.

First challenge – find a personal space and take 10 minutes to build a personal altar using objects you find. Create a magical space where you can return to do a couple of short workings.

Chris goes back out of the labyrinth, finds a spot nearby, gathers leaves, stones, and twigs, and builds a small altar. When complete, Chris goes back for her second round. Others may finish before her, so order may change.

Second visit – Chris enters labyrinth again, and this time gets to end of second circuit (see drawing on page below), where labyrinth priestess again says: “Stop!” Then priestess gives the second challenge.

Second challenge – draw three Tarot cards, then go to your altar and do a simple reading for yourself about a question such as, “What is one change I would like to make in my life?” or, “What is my next magical step when I get back home?”

Chris walks back out of labyrinth (possibly silently passing others coming in). Draws Tarot cards, goes to altar and does intuitive reading.

When Chris finishes her reading, she returns to the labyrinth.

continued on next page





Labyrinth Challenges (pg 3)

Third visit – Chris enters, and this time gets all the way to the third circuit before hearing: “Stop!”

Third challenge – go back to your altar and do a short personal ritual (including quickly grounding, casting a circle, and invoking whatever elements or allies you wish) that empowers your “next step” from your Tarot reading. Create one phrase or sentence that expresses your commitment. Remember to devoke and/or thank your allies at the end.

Chris goes back out, goes to altar and does a 10-minute personal ritual, creates her commitment phrase, and writes or memorizes it. Then Chris goes back to labyrinth one last time.

Final visit: Chris travels all the way to the center of the labyrinth, where priestess asks if she has completed her challenges.

When Chris says, “Yes,” labyrinth priestess invites her to reach into pouch and draw a bead (or another gift).

Chris silently returns to the original gathering spot till all have finished. People are journaling or quietly gazing at candles – focused and low-key. Strings for beads can be available.

Transition – when all have gathered, have everyone re-ground. Then go around and let each person share their phrase of commitment (aloud or silently). If time permits, you may want to use the phrases as part of an Overflowing Cup Spell (see Workings).

Song – raise energy to empower the pledges with singing – dial up a favorite chant online and have it ready to sing along.

- Song Ideas: Spiraling Into the Center; We Are the Rising Sun; Welcome Flame

Devoke in reverse order and open circle.

Afterward – have something substantial to eat. Maybe it’s meal time. If not, have some fruit, bread, cheese, etc.

Labyrinth priestess – take a minute and re-ground.

Labyrinth Working (Solitary)

Drawing a Labyrinth – for your fingers?

If you don’t have enough space, or want to do this work privately, create a finger labyrinth – a small version that you can “walk” by tracing the paths with your finger.

Carefully draw a three-circuit labyrinth on paper – maybe in your Book of Shadows (see instructions on page XXX).

Drawing the labyrinth is part of the magic. One Reclaiming priestess outlined a seven-circuit labyrinth on heavy paper, then as a meditation carefully drew and colored dozens of little “stones” to outline the pathways.

When complete, place your labyrinth on a table or altar where you can work with it.



continued on next page



Labyrinth Challenges (pg 4)

Choosing Your Workings

Decide on three workings that you feel belong together in your ritual. Your intuition is your best guide. Browse the Workings chapter for inspirations – or make up your own. Gather whatever materials you will need.

If you follow these examples – what materials will you have handy to create a personal altar? Perhaps you already have an altar in the space you're using? Great – think about how you will change it, spruce it up, or honor it as part of this working.

What will be your "reward" at the end – a small talisman that symbolizes completion of the work. Some camps have used beads. Choose some simple magical item that you will "receive" at the end of the working. Place it on the alter near the labyrinth, covered with a cloth.

Doing a Personal Labyrinth Ritual

When all is ready, step out of the space you will be using. Get a drink, use the bathroom. Turn off your phone. Before you re-enter, take three breaths. Step into the space and say: "I am (we are) now entering sacred space. I am (we are) now entering sacred time."

Your ritual follows the flow described for the camp ritual above. Create sacred space (for ideas, see Ritual Skills: Sacred Space: Quick Ways). Then follow the descriptions above, or three workings you choose.

Pause to breathe and perhaps write in your Book of Shadows between each working.

At the end, take three breaths and state that your working is complete. Then remove the cloth from your bead or talisman and pick it up with your non-dominant hand. Take a breath and blow the magic of your workings into the bead.

Say: "Blessed be!"

Once you have devoked and opened the circle, remain in the space for a while. Have some snacks, write in your journal, listen to music, color your labyrinth....

When you finally leave the space, stop and place your hand on your center and say thank you to yourself for the work.

Blessed be!

More labyrinth magic – see Workings: Labyrinths





Labyrinth Challenges (pg 5)

How to Draw a Three-Circuit Labyrinth

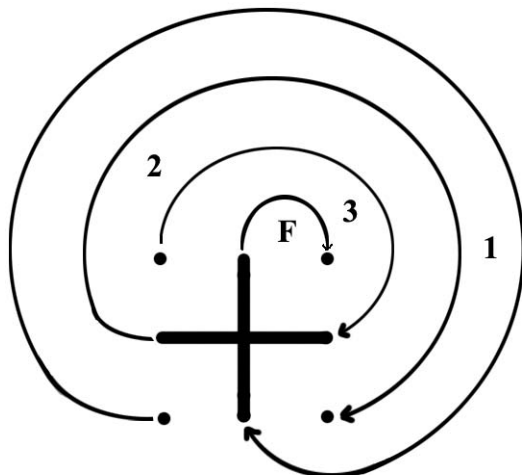
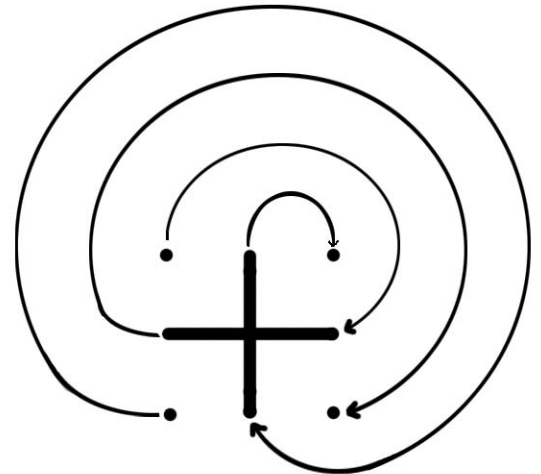
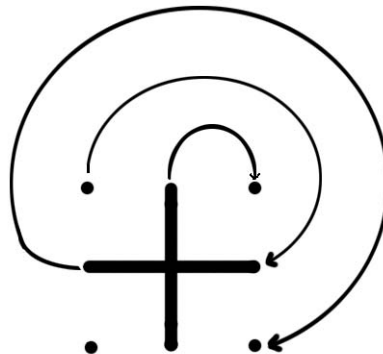
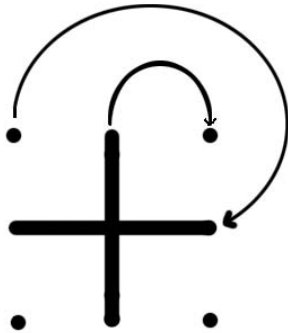
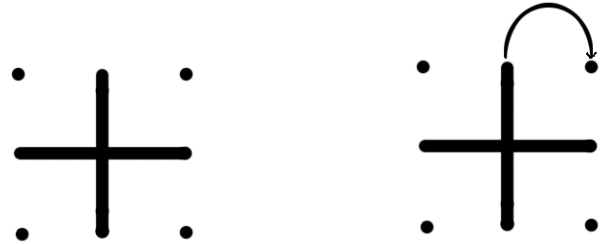
This is not a common layout, but it's perfect for a Labyrinth Challenges ritual.

Make the paths plenty wide for this working (the distance between the lines and the points in the first figure is the width of the paths).

Note that the cross is not the center of the space.

Draw this with chalk on pavement or floor. In dirt, use corn meal – you'll need 30 (yes, 30!) pounds of corn meal to make good thick lines. Start with a thin trace – once you have your outline, use the rest to thicken the lines.

Seven-circuit labyrinth – instructions for drawing a seven-circuit labyrinth as well as other ideas for labyrinth magic – see *Workings: Labyrinth*.



Left - Labyrinth Challenge positions

Numbers indicate position of labyrinth priestess for each of the three challenges plus the final position (F).



Beltane: Dancing the Maypole!



Perhaps the most festive ritual of the year is Beltane, sometimes known as May Day – some Reclaiming groups also honor it as International Workers Day.

People dance the maypole – some with a dozen dancers, some over a hundred. Some have carefully-rehearsed steps. Others – including many Reclaiming maypoles – are a bit more anarchic.

Dancers weave a rainbow of ribbons to honor the abundance of new life, the diversity of our community, and our commitment to the Earth. Red and black ribbons are woven for workers’ and immigrant rights, invoking the memory of past and current struggles.



PaganFest – a community celebration

For over a decade Reclaiming joined other local groups to co-sponsor Berkeley PaganFest.

Organized by the Pagan Alliance, PaganFest included a colorful procession an all-day music and arts festival, and a maypole.

To help revive this community event or for more info, contact ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com



Find a Beltane Ritual Near You!

Search for a Reclaiming group near you:

- visit Reclaiming.org/worldwide
- search Facebook “Reclaiming” – many groups have pages for local events
- join our international googlegroup to find out about online rituals, classes, and more – email us at ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com

No luck? Not to worry – many other groups also celebrate Beltane. Wherever you are located, someone is dancing a maypole. Ask at a local metaphysical shop, or google local events around May Day.





Dia de los Muertos: A Sacred Procession

At the opposite side of the Wheel of the Year from Beltane is the holiday variously known as Halloween, Samhain – and Dia de los Muertos, or Day of the Dead.

Elsewhere in this book you'll read about Reclaiming's Samhain ritual, the Spiral Dance.

For many years Reclaiming has helped support the San Francisco Dia de los Muertos ritual and procession, held November 2 in the Mission District.

Organized by the Marigold Project, the event includes altars honoring young people and women who have died by violence, including victims of war and police violence.



The day begins with altar-making in a local park. Thousands of marigolds provide a unifying theme.

At dusk a short ritual begins the commemoration. WitchCampers often help with invocations.

The ritual is followed by a procession through the Mission, with several thousand people wending their way through the narrow streets and back to the park for a closing.



More Dia de los Muertos Photos

WeaveAndSpin/dia

Help Honor Dia de los Muertos!

Find plans for future San Francisco celebrations as well as photos and background information at DayOfTheDeadSF.org

Photos by George Franklin/RQ



A Water Ritual

INTENT

As part of Reclaiming's Elements of Magic class (offered in some camps, communities, and online – see page XXXXX) people dedicate a session to exploring each element and practicing related magic.

Here's a ritual for the element Water that you can work at home. You can use this outline to create other elemental rituals.

What is Water? Water is our dreams, our emotions. Water is the dripping of a faucet. Water is a simmering pot of soup. Water is the substance of our bodies. When we work Water magic, we become aware of the role of this element (with all its meanings) in our lives, and how we can learn to ebb and flow with its tides.

This ritual includes grounding, casting a circle, and invoking – but the main focus will be on the “workings” – two full workings, including an intuitive Tarot reading and the Overflowing Cup Spell.

Pay attention to the transitions between the different parts of the ritual – the “flow” of the ritual. Some say that the true magic of a ritual lies in the transitions. Use a chime, bell, (or a glass jar with some water in it) to “ring” the transitions. See if you can do this with no words – just ring the chime and begin the next working.

Songs – this ritual has lots of music – the playlist makes good listening anytime! Visit WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants

SPACE & TIME

You can do this alone or with friends. You'll need space to create a Water altar (in the West or Center, as you wish). You'll use this altar for the Overflowing Cup working.

Allow two hours – 60-90 minutes for the ritual, plus prep time and some relaxing time afterward.

PREP

This ritual has a lot of prep. Look through the workings to see when you'll need things like cups, pitchers, bells, etc. In a ritual planning group, this role is called the wrangler – the person that keeps track of details. As a solitary or in a small group, you'll be your own wrangler.

Altar – using your intuition, make a Water altar in the West or in the middle of your space. The altar can be on the floor, or use a small table or a couple of milk crates.

Decorate it as inspiration calls – knowing that the Overflowing Cup working might splatter water on objects. What color cloth will you use? What sorts of objects will you want on a Water altar?

Things you'll need (set on or near your altar)

- Bowl of salt water for purification – set this outside (or just inside) your room.
- Bell, chime, or metal bowl half-filled with water, etc – something that you can tap with a mallet or the butt of a knife to ring a tone. This will help with smooth transitions.
- Book of Shadows and a pen.
- Hand mirror for the Deity invocation (Who Is the Goddess).
- for Working 1 – Tarot deck – if you don't have a deck, use this online site: serennu.com/Tarot/pick.php



Careful preparation is the key to powerful Water magic!

continued on next page





A Water Ritual (pg 2)

- for Working 2 (Overflowing Cup) – large bowl; towel; pitcher of drinking water (and a couple of extra jugs if you're a group); a nice drinking cup (or a magical chalice) for each person. You can set these on your altar, or on the floor in front of it.
- Water bottle or separate glass of drinking water (you might want a drink during the Water ritual!).

Songs – this ritual uses lots of songs – a different chant for every element. Find all of these songs, plus a grounding meditation, in a special youtube playlist:

WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants, or search <Reclaiming Chants Water Ritual>.

- Born of Water (gathering song)
- Grounding with Starhawk (optional)
- Elemental songs (all-in-one, or one per element)
 - Air Moves Us (all elements in one song)
 - Wings (Air)
 - Holy Well and Sacred Flame (Fire)
 - Beginning of the Earth (Water)
 - Let the Beauty We Love (Earth)
 - We Are a Circle Within a Circle (Center)
- Ancestors: Never Lose Our Way to the Well
- Deity invocation: Who Is the Goddess
- Working 1: Labyrinth Meditation Music (optional)
- Working 1: The River She Is Flowing
- Working 2: She Changes Everything She Touches
- Devoking elements: When We Are Gone

Reclaiming Chants & Magical Audio – Free Online

- Playlists for rituals, workings, classes, and just plain listening
- Trances, groundings, audiobooks, & spoken word

WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists • WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants

WORKING: A WATER RITUAL

BEFORE YOU START

When all prep is done, step out of the space. Do any bio-tasks like visiting the restroom.

Take a drink of water and pay attention as you drink it.

Purification – step up to the bowl of salt water. Take a breath and call your energy to yourself. On the exhale, let go of any tensions or distractions into the bowl of salt water. Do this several times. Then, dip your fingers in the water. Let them soak up the purifying power of the salt. Then, touch your belly, neck, hands, heart, third eye, etc. When you are finished, speak these words: “I am now entering sacred space. I am now entering sacred time.”

CREATING SACRED SPACE

Song for gathering: Born of Water.

Welcome – in a group, this is a time to welcome people to the space, explain a little about what to expect, teach songs, etc.

Honoring First People: Take a moment and remember that if you live in the Americas or Australia and are not of the First People, other Peoples lived here before you, and were the first to know the waters of this place. They did not cede this land voluntarily, and their descendants may still live here. Take a breath in memory of those People. Take a second breath

continued on next page



A Water Ritual (pg 3)

as a commitment to work for justice for all people, and especially for First Nations.

Grounding – if you are a group, one of you might lead the following grounding for the others. If you are working solo, you can read the grounding below and follow the steps – or use the grounding led by Starhawk on our Water Ritual playlist.

Grounding priestess invite people to stand tall and loose. Speak the following meditation slowly and calmly – pausing for a few seconds wherever you see three dots...

“Take a breath, and rock easily back and forth until you come to rest balanced on both feet...

“As you breathe, notice the moisture in your mouth... On each gentle exhale, water vapor is flowing out from you, flowing like mist, like a tiny rivulet... meeting other rivulets and flowing together, always gently seeking the easiest way forward...

“And the rivulets flow together into a bubbling brook... into a rushing creek... into a winding river that makes its way past rocky rapids... joining other rivers to form a torrent rolling toward the sea...

“The river widens into a delta, the fresh and salt water mix... and the water flows into the great ocean, joining waters that touch every continent... the tides carrying the water back and forth, back and forth...

“And from the water rises a mist, a vapor, carrying the water upward to the sky... swirling in the winds, billowing as a towering cloud... floating back over the land, carrying the water back to its home... raining down on us, replenishing the Earth and all living things...

“Take a breath for the rains... breathe in the vapor in the air... and complete the cycle of water...

“Touch your center and thank the water that sustains our life...

“Blessed be.”

Casting the circle – how about Hand to Hand and Heart to Heart to cast the circle? This works best in a familiar circle, not strangers. Here’s a group version and a solo version.

Group circle casting – stand in a circle without holding hands. First person reaches out with left hand and takes right hand of neighbor, saying: “Hand to hand (then touching the backs of their locked hands first to their own heart and then to the neighbor’s) and heart to heart, the circle is cast.” Leave locked hands over neighbor’s heart – they reach out to the next person and repeat, on around the circle. When it comes all the way around, with hands still on hearts, first person leads these words: “The circle is cast. We are between the worlds. What happens between the worlds, changes all the worlds. Let the magic begin!”

Solo circle casting – step to the Center and take a breath. Face to the North. Clasp your hands and say, “Hand to hand (touch clasped hands to your heart and then outward) and *from my heart*, the circle is cast.” Turn to the East and repeat. Continue around. Remember to turn all the way back to North before turning to the Center. Repeat once more for Center: “Hand to hand and from my heart – this circle is cast. I am between the worlds. What happens between the worlds can change all the worlds. Let the magic begin!”

Invoking the elements – invoke the elements with song. If time is short, you can use one song to invoke all the elements



continued on next page





A Water Ritual (pg 4)

(we've included Air Moves Us in the playlist). But why not sing a special song for each one?

If you like singing, this is your ritual. You can sing each invoking song for as long (or as short) as you wish. If you're shy about your voice – read *Workings: Voice Magic* – then close the door, turn up the playlist, and start singing!

These songs are on the Water Ritual playlist. Use either the “all elements” song, or skip it and do the other five – or sing them all!

Invoking all elements – sing Air Moves Us at least five times. At end, say: “Hail and welcome, elements!”

Invoking East/Air – Facing East, sing Wings. At end, say: “Hail and welcome, Air!”

Invoking South/Water – Facing South, sing Holy Well and Sacred Flame. At the end, say: “Hail and welcome, Fire!”

Invoking West/Water – Facing West, sing (The Ocean Is the) Beginning of the Earth. At the end, say: “Hail and welcome, Water!”

Invoking North/Earth – Facing North, sing Let the Beauty We Love. At the end, kneel and kiss or touch the ground and say: “Hail and welcome, Earth!”

Invoking Center/Spirit – Facing Center, sing We Are a Circle Within a Circle. At the end, say: “Hail and welcome, Center!”

Invoking spirits of this place – sing a simple tone as you call to mind the special qualities of the rocks, air, and waters of this place on Earth.

Invoking ancestors – sing Never Lose Our Way to the Well as you think about ancestors of your bloodline and your culture. When you finish, name one or more ancestors and welcome them.

Invoking deity – take up the hand mirror. Gazing into it, sing along with the chorus of Who Is the Goddess (if you're a group, pass the mirror around as you sing, with each person holding it up for the next).

Transition – with no words, ring the bell or chime.

WORKING 1 – Intuitive Tarot Divination

Music (optional) – Labyrinth Meditation Music (put the track on loop for this working).

Intent (in a group, a priestess speaks these words and more as needed to guide the working): “Here’s a chance to learn a simple Tarot reading that you can do for yourself. We’ll be reading intuitively, not by book-learning. If you already read Tarot, set aside your knowledge and sink into your intuition.

“Whether you are new to Tarot or already do readings, remember – with intuition, there are no right or wrong answers, only your unique inspirations.

“This will help you frame a commitment or affirmation that we’ll charge with an Overflowing Cup Spell later in this ritual.”

Working – priestess takes up the Tarot cards. Others sit comfortably around the space. Solo – you’ll be your own priestess.

First – the question – sit quietly for a few minutes and come up with a question. It might be quite specific, like: “Should I quit my job and move to a new city?” Or it might be a broad query like: “Show me something new about my life.”

📖 **Book of Shadows** – when you have your question, write it on a fresh page in your journal.

When people are ready, priestess speaks: “We’re going to do a three-card, ‘Past-Present-Future’ reading. We will be reading intuitively, not by book-knowledge. Try to set aside anything you already know about the cards and open your intuition. When you look at a card, let go of judgments and expectations, and follow your first glimmers of thought. With intuitive Tarot reading, there are no right or wrong answers, only questions and inspirations.”

Priestess invites people to think again of their question, say it silently to themselves, then draw (using their non-dominant hand) three cards and lay them *face down* as Past, Present, and Future.

Turn over the Past card. In your Book of Shadows, write “Past Influences,” and the number/suit of the card. Gazing at the cards,

continued on next page



A Water Ritual (pg 5)

meditate on these four questions. After the final question, write your answer (and any other thoughts) in your journal.

- 1) Look at the image on the card. Focus on the picture. Describe several things you see in the card. Let go of stories and interpretations, and just describe things you see.
- 2) Quickly find one object or being in the card that is you. No need to know or say why. Simply feel that it's you.
- 3) Make up a simple one- or two-sentence story about what is happening in the card, including the object that is you.
- 4) Now say briefly – "Given my question and the fact that this card represents 'past influences' – what is its meaning for me?" Write your thoughts in your journal.

Turn over the Present card. In your journal, write "Present Influences," and the number/suit of the card. Repeat steps 1-4 above, taking a few minutes to write after step 4.

Turn over the Future card. In your Book of Shadows, write "Future Possibilities," and the number/suit of the card. Repeat steps 1-4 above, taking a few minutes to write after step 4.

✦ **Book of Shadows** – finally, lay all three cards side by side and see what patterns you notice. Take some time and write in your journal. Let the Tarot images act as inspiration for wherever your imagination might go. Try automatic writing – start your pen moving and don't stop for a few minutes.

Finish by closing your Book of Shadows. Take a slow drink of water, paying attention to each sip.

Group – if you're a circle, you may want to get into groups of two or three and each person take a couple of minutes to talk about your reading – whatever you want to share. The others listen and hold space. Then come back to the circle and do a go-round where each person shares one word about what they gained from their reading.

Song – end this working by singing The River She Is Flowing for as long as you wish.

Transition – when the song comes to silence, priestess rings a bell, then begins the next working.

DISCUSSION – Magical Correspondences: What is Water?

In a group, a new priestess leads this part. Speak these words.

"While your journal is out, start a clean page and write this question: What Is Water?"

"Now set your pen down. Make yourself comfortable and let the spirit of Water flow through your mind. Let ideas and images filter past without judgment or attachment.

"When we say Water, do we mean the stuff our body is made of? Deep healing energy? The place we go swimming? Flexibility? The secret ingredient of instant soup? A symbol for constant change?"

"When I invoke Water, I might be calling in cool, refreshing energy. I might be honoring the whales, a not-so-distant mammalian relative which lives in water. I might be invoking relaxation and washing away tensions and stress. I might be settling in for a long, watery trance...."

"Here are a few Water correspondences to get you thinking." (Read list slowly, one word at a time.)



continued on next page





A Water Ritual (pg 6)

Water Correspondences (a few examples)

- Fluidity
- Steam
- Neptune (the god)
- Rapids
- Blue
- Dolphins

“Now ask yourself: what does Water mean to me? What does my intuition tell me? Write some words and ideas now, and add to your list over the next few days (or weeks).

“After you have written some words that mean Water to you, set your pen down and read the list to yourself. At the end, take a breath, then say to yourself: “These and much more are the gifts of Water. Blessed be!”

Transition – ring the chime and begin the next working.

WORKING 2 – Spell: Overflowing Cup (The Ace of Cups Spell)

Note – this working is explained in more detail in the back section – see Workings: Overflowing Cup Spell.

Prep – Set a large bowl in front of – or on – your altar. Set the pitcher full of drinking water next to the bowl. If you’re a group, have a couple of backup jugs of drinking water somewhere nearby.

Explain – Priestess briefly explains how the spell will work: “After a short meditation, each person declares, aloud or silently, what they are calling into their cup. I will pour overflowing water until you say, ‘Good.’ Then you may drink the water.

“Remember your Tarot reading. Look back at your journal if you wish... What was your question?... What past influences did you discover?... What did you learn about your present situation?... What future possibilities do you see?...

“Let the past, present, and future wash through your mind. Feel the possibilities.... And ask yourself – what energy do I need to invoke for myself to help me step into these possibilities?... What energy do I invoke to assist me in my work? Is there a type of energy that will especially support me?...” (For example, “awareness of the abundance of love around me,” or “patience and understanding,” or “focus and hard work” – whatever will support you.)

Give people time to think, then priestess invites people to take cups in their hands. One by one, people step up and declare (or silently think about) the energy they are invoking into their cup: “I call into this cup _____.”

Priestess invites the person to hold their cup over the bowl. Priestess takes pitcher and begins pouring (solo – pour for yourself, with your attention on the cup, not the pitcher). Let the water overflow the cup and fall into bowl until person says, “Good.” (Solo – pour until you feel that you have enough and then some!)

Person breathes, then drinks the water and with it the magical energy they invoked. As you drink, keep your focus on your commitment. When finished, take a breath, then say clearly: “So mote it be!” (If a group, everyone repeats this.)

When everyone has had a turn, set bowl of water aside. Afterward – offer any surplus water to the Earth.

Song – sing a song to complete and charge the working – She Changes Everything She Touches (Kore Chant)

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – take a few minutes and write in your journal. What feelings came up during and after this working?

OPENING THE CIRCLE

Devoke quickly, recalling a the songs you sang to invoke (or you can sing the songs again if you want – is it ever possible to sing Way to the Well too many times?).

Devoking deity – gaze again into your mirror. Ask: “Who Is the Goddess?” Take a breath and answer: “I am!” (In a group, priest-

continued on next page



A Water Ritual (pg 7)

ess models this, then passes mirror counter-clockwise so each person can do this). At end, say: "Hail and farewell, Goddess!"

Devoking ancestors – take a breath, recalling your ancestors (naming again any you named earlier), then say something like this: "Ancestors, we will never lose our way to the well. We remember you. Hail and farewell."

Devoking spirits of this place – sing a simple tone as you thank the rocks and waters and spirits of this land.

Devoking the elements – why not devote all the elements with one of the all-time favorite Reclaiming songs, co-written by Anne Hill and Starhawk: When We Are Gone. At the end, say: "Hail and farewell, elements!"

Opening the circle (group) – everyone joins hands, then circle casting priestess looks into the eyes of the person to their right – counter-clockwise – and releases hands. Indicate with a nod that they should continue their right. When it comes full circle, circle casting priestess begins and others join in: "The circle is open, but unbroken. May the peace of the Goddess go in our hearts. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!"

Opening the circle (solo) – step to the Center, clasp your hands, and take a breath. Turn to the North, place your clasped hands over your heart, and say, "From my hands and from my heart, this circle is open." Turn counter-clockwise to the West and repeat. Continue around. Remember to turn all the way back to North before turning to the Center. Say: "From my hands and from my heart – this circle is open, but unbroken. May the peace of the Goddess go in my heart. Merry meet, merry part, and merry meet again!"

Announcements – at a community ritual, now is the time for announcements and passing the hat. In a class, this is a time to remind people what they'll need to bring to the next session and offer "magical home adventures" for people who want more.

Saying goodbye – if you're a group, goodbye hugs can be a nice way to end a class. Asking permission before hugging someone is always a good idea, especially when people have been doing deep personal work.

If you're doing a solitary ritual – hug yourself – and take some time to journal, listen to music, and have a grounding snack.

Afterward – offer any surplus water to your garden or a tree as a libation – pour it out as an offering onto the Earth.

CREATING MORE ELEMENTAL RITUALS

Reclaiming's Elements of Magic classes does rituals like this for each element including Center/Spirit. The final session is a student-planned ritual – sort of like a final exam before you are turned loose to do elemental magic in the world!

Now that you've seen a Water ritual, can you take the basic outline and create a ritual for another element?

The recipe is pretty simple, really: you take the outline at the beginning of the Ritual Skills chapter, add one or two workings that seem to fit with the element, mix in a few chants, wave your wand – and voila, instant Reclaiming ritual!

Workings – flip through the back of this book and let your intuition guide you. What workings make you think of Air? Fire? Earth? Spirit?

Chants – look over the chants on pages XXXX – or better yet, go to the links below and give our playlists a listen. There's even a special elements playlist. Visit these web pages:

WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists • WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants • ReclaimingQuarterly.org/web/elements





Create Your Own Rituals

Use this Book to Craft Your Own!

INTENT

Now that you've seen (and heard) some rituals, you can take the tools from the Ritual Skills chapter, combine them with one or two workings, and add chants. Stir vigorously, then let it stand for a while. There you have it – a Reclaiming ritual!

Although organizers love it when people come to our camps, classes, and community rituals, Reclaiming's goal is to empower *your* magic – your unique blend of invocations and workings for yourself or a circle.

You can make your rituals as formal or simple as you wish. Grounding, casting a circle, and invoking elements and allies can be major undertakings, or quick (yet powerful) ways to create a magical container for other workings.

Shortcut – you can use the invocations and music from the Grounding and Affirmation rituals earlier in this chapter, and substitute different workings, divination, meditations, etc.

Want a quick review? Listen to Starhawk's trance journey *Way to the Well* (see page XXXX). You'll see how simply she creates sacred space and gets on with the workings.

Not sure you're ready? Welcome to the club!

A lot of people felt that way when they did their first roles at a WitchCamp or as part of a community ritual, or did their first meditation or Tarot reading on their own. Yet the more often they did it, the better they got. Amazing, huh?

Let the magic begin!

SPACE & TIME

Enough room for your workings. Allow an hour or more for a ritual and some hang-out time afterward – even for solo work.

PREP

Bookmark the Ritual Outline on page XXX – this reminds you of the typical flow of a Reclaiming-style ritual. Reclaiming rituals can be improvised, but most follow this basic flow, which gives us a common language and structure.

Plan your ritual – write down your ideas for creating sacred space, and decide on your working(s) – post-its are handy.

Find chants on youtube, spotify, or other source and “save/like” them – make a playlist of your favorites (or bookmark ours) so they're handy. For ideas, see pages XXXXX and visit WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists.



A ritual planning circle gathers during a teens Pearl Pentacle weekend workshop. Sometimes the best rituals are planned right before they happen – this allows people to shape ritual workings to fit the group's energy.

continued on next page



Create Your Own Rituals (pg 2)

Use this Book to Craft Your Own!

Create an altar – it might be elaborate, or as simple as a cloth and bowl of water – whatever will provide a focal point and help you feel that your space is sacred.

Materials needed – look over the instructions for your workings to see what prep and materials are needed. Put stuff by an altar or wherever will be handy. Bring your Book of Shadows as well.

Have water available, and have some healthy snacks ready for afterward – fruit, nuts, bread – food that will help you feel grounded. Save chocolate and soda for another time.

RITUAL

Ready? You can always keep this book under your altar for quick inspirations!

Step outside your space. Turn off your phone. Ask family or roommates not to disturb you.

Step up to the entrance to your ritual space. Take a breath. When you are ready, enter and begin.

Go at your own rate – every individual or group has their own pace, their own sense of when “enough is enough.” Trust your intuition – while giving things time to come to fruition. Sometimes a working starts slowly, then picks up momentum. Give it time.

★ **Book of Shadows** – when the last ally is devoked and the circle is opened, take a bit of time and write about your experience, what worked (or not), lessons learned, etc. If you’re a group, allow 5-8 minutes. Alone, take the time you need.

Congratulations! Hopefully you feel satisfied when the ritual is complete. If it wasn’t perfect, remember – the Wheel of the Year never stops turning. There’s always next time!



Small circles make for more intimate workings within a larger ritual – Teen Earth Magic 2010.





After the Ritual...

Welcome to the WitchCamp Fire Circle!

Celebrate your rituals by listening to Campfire Chants! Find the album on spotify, youtube, etc and have it ready when your ritual ends.

There's also a downloadable Lyrics & Lore booklet available at CampfireChants.org – including guitar/ukulele chords.

Welcome to the WitchCamp fire circle. We could be gathered anywhere from Vermont to Queensland, from British Columbia to Germany.

On this evening, let's imagine we're gathered among the redwoods of Northern California at one of our half-dozen regional WitchCamps.

The ritual is over. A few folks have headed to bed. Others pull up camp chairs and blankets around the fire ring. Snacks magically appear.

As people talk or gaze into the fire, a camper picks up a guitar and strums a Magnetic Fields song. Someone borrows the guitar and sings Joni Mitchell. Another plays Kimya Dawson on a ukulele. As the fire flares up, we sing The Welcome Flame.

We really do sing chants around the campfire. Not all the time. They're interspersed with Indigo Girls, Nirvana, Beyoncé, the Corries, and always another Beatles song. One Direction gets their due, along with Patsy Cline, Chuck Berry, and Bob Marley.

Still, nothing gets everyone singing more than My Soul or We Are the Rising Sun. And there's rarely a night that doesn't end with Goodnight Sweet Witches.

The ritual may be over – but the WitchCamp circle is cast for the entire evening. Even around the campfire, we are still between the worlds. And what happens between the worlds, changes all the worlds.

Let the magic begin!





Magical Activism

- Roundtable: Magic & ActivismXXX
- Getting StartedXXX
- Our Activist Ancestors.....XXX
- Reclaiming Activism: Yesterday & TodayXXX

An Activist Handbook

- Perspectives on NonviolenceXXX
- Consensus: A Collective ProcessXXX
- Affinity Groups & Anarchist OrganizingXXX
- Solidarity: Together We're StrongerXXX
- Dismantling Oppressions: Racism, Sexism, Homophobia, Transphobia, ClassismXXX
- Preparing for ActivismXXX
- Activist WorkingsXXX
- Activist Resources.....XXX

Photo: Solstice in the Streets, June 2011.





Magical Activism

Reclaiming's Unique Synthesis

From its earliest days, Reclaiming has blended practical magic with front-line activism – taking direct steps to change the world.

When people directly work for change, rather than lobbying someone else to do it – we are activists.

Whether it's volunteering with Food Not Bombs, organizing a community event such as a ritual or festival, marching in the streets, or joining in civil disobedience – we are taking direct action.

Add magical skills, and voilà – magical activism!

Reclaiming: A History of Activism

In Reclaiming's early years, Pagan affinity groups took part in mass direct actions at sites such as Diablo Canyon Nuclear Power Plant, Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, and Nevada test Site.

Reclaiming's early affinity groups are portrayed in Luke Hauser's book, *Direct Action: An Historical Novel* and Starhawk's *Dreaming the Dark*.

Over the years the Pagan Cluster has been active in 1990s anti-war actions, Seattle WTO protests in 1999, anti-globalization protests of the 2000s, as part of Occupy actions in 2011, and with the social and environmental justice movements of the later 2010s.



As we edited this book, Reclaiming folks across the US took to the streets as part of the Black Lives Matter uprising.

Our Activism

This chapter shares history and organizing philosophies as well as tools for taking action to reshape our world.

We'll share stories, skills – and simple ways you and a few friends can take action starting right now!

Follow Pagan Cluster

activism at WeaveAndSpin.org/activism

Photos

Top: Occupy Oakland General Strike, 2011

Middle: Pagan Cluster arrests at 2008 anti-war action, SF

Bottom: Folks from WICCA (Bay Area Pagan Cluster) join the Red Rebel Brigade and Extinction Rebellion for a 2019 action in SF.

Youtube Video

Nonviolent Direct Action: A Brief History
WeaveAndSpin.org/youtube





Roundtable: Magic & Activism

What's the connection between Earth magic and activism?

Jamie (A): Activism is the application, the fruit, the walking of the talk. If there isn't activism, there isn't magic.

Ingrid (Y): You don't have to be Pagan. You just have to care about the Earth. If you come from a strong connection to the Earth, then activism is a given.

Miranda (Y): It's an overlap, like a Venn diagram. You can be an activist and not be spiritual, or, spiritual and not really an activist. And then you can be both. If you do Earth magic, you want to do something to take care of it.

Kim (A): It's a spiritual calling to make the world a better place. That's why we're here as humans.

Talise (Y): Ritual is about making change – to have the intention to go out and make a change.

John (A): My activism is part of my bigger spiritual path. An injustice is happening, or something is out of balance – magic and activism come into play to bring that back into balance.

What draws you to do activism with a spirit-based group like Reclaiming?

John (A): The emphasis on balance and connection, using one's intuition to address injustices, not just theories of revolution. There's a sense of feeling it. I sometimes do stuff with other groups. It actually *is* magical, but if you ask the people involved, they wouldn't say it was magic.

Kim (A): I'm not exclusive to Reclaiming. I choose to do things with Reclaiming people because there's a connection to magic, to the bigger picture, to using intuition and magic to change the world. I also like doing traditional tactics with people that I have a deep spiritual affinity with, that I've done things over and over with, that have the same spiritual values. There's a groundedness in community.

How do rituals relate to activism? How does magic affect the world?



Pagan Cluster activists magically soften the "Bankers' Heart," the local name for the massive granite blob at San Francisco's Bank of America plaza.

Where does it get difficult?

John (A): It's a long road. If I didn't do it with other people who have a similar orientation, I'd just get depressed. I still get depressed sometimes! But when I'm feeling connection with community and with the world, there's strength, empowerment – there's power-with.

Mykel (Y): It's weird to me what issues catch on with people – sometimes it seems kind of random. When I feel emotional about something, it's hard for me that others don't feel the same urgency as I do.

Have you done spell-type magic around activism?

Sequoia (Y): Yes, but when it's a mobile kind of situation, the spells are very informal. I don't employ tools, like physical objects. If I need fire energy, or I need a grounding, I view my body as the vessel of my magic.

John (A): When people think about witchcraft, they think of spells and stuff. I never got good at that. I emphasize more connecting with nature. I focus on the oneness of nature, feeling the connection.

Maeve (Y): I've been lucky to go to protests with witches, where we do stuff together – a brief grounding, maybe a pop-up circle that can travel with us. This can help

continued on next page





Roundtable: Magic & Activism (pg 2)

contain and conserve our energy, instead of getting overwhelmed, which I can easily do in a big crowd when many things are happening all at once!

Hilary (Y): In the last year, yes. Quite frankly, there were fascists coming to San Francisco. And I was like, I'm freaking out and I feel helpless and I want to do something. So I called on my community, many of whom I met through Witchlets and Teen Earth Magic, and they were like yeah, I feel the same way. We did a spell in the middle of a march through San Francisco.

You did the spell during the protest?

Hilary (Y): Right – as we were navigating cops with giant machine-gun-looking things, guarding buildings for gosh knows what reason, and we're checking twitter feeds to find out where these [right-wing] people were – it was in-the-moment, a spell we did in the middle of the street. It doesn't often occur to me to do that!

What are ways you do activism in your personal life?

Hilary (Y): When we were in a drought, I made a conscious effort when I was using water, to say thank you to that water. That was a result of a spell we did at Teen Earth Magic around water. We did a ritual as a gift to water. From there, I did a year and a day of gratitude to water.

Mykel (Y): Recently I've been involved in a letter-writing group to get resources for prisoners to advocate for themselves. I have a pen-pal in a state prison. She's a trans woman. I feel like what I have to offer is that I can listen. It's a concrete way I can, not dismantle the system, but fight against the isolation it causes. I can relate to people and decrease isolation – that's something I know how to do, that fills this huge need. That feels really good.

Ingrid (Y): While I do believe we can change ourselves and our community through ritual, I feel like there's this other piece – there's personal steps we can take. It's about weaving together a state of living that allows us to be conscious and really engage with the environment and

living on this planet – coming to a place where we really deeply care about reducing our impact.

Kim (A): My professional work has been with underprivileged populations, trying to make the world a better place.

John (A): I'm a sociologist – I made a leap of faith that education is a path to liberation. It's frustrating, and it hasn't gone as smoothly as I'd have liked. But I have hope in the people I've taught. I've opened some eyes to injustices in the world.

Follow the Pagan Cluster at WeaveAndSpin.org.



Occupation of the main Bank of America lobby in the San Francisco financial district – Solstice in the Streets, 2011.



Magical Activism: Getting Started

Reclaiming is an “activist” tradition. When we say the Earth is sacred, we are willing to work to protect and heal our planet.

Activism means many things – it can mean taking part in a protest or occupation, and even risking arrest, as many Reclaiming people have done over the years.

It can mean volunteering in a soup kitchen – Reclaiming folks helped start Berkeley-Oakland Food Not Bombs, and in turn FNB activists created the North Altar for many years at the Spiral Dance.

It can mean dancing in the streets, as people did at Solstice in the Streets, Occupy Oakland, and many other events. It can mean rituals, silent vigils, festivals, and marches. It can mean writing letters or attending public hearings and city council meetings.

Activism also means how we live our daily lives. Am I reducing my carbon footprint? Do I recycle or collect rainwater? Take public transit? Practice nonviolent communication? Take an active role in my community (whatever that means to each of us)?

GETTING STARTED – Alone & With Others

Solitary Activism – What Can We Do Alone?

The personal is political – this wisdom comes from the feminist movement, reminding us that the ways we treat one another, ourselves, and our community – the ways we live our daily lives – are just as important as our efforts to change the wider world.

If we organize for peace but fight with our fellow activists... if we work to protect the environment but drive everywhere we go... if we say our body is a living temple but feed it with junk food – we’re out of balance with ourselves.



Solstice in the Streets – young folks from Reclaiming helped organize a day of activism and street theater in San Francisco in 2011.

✪ **Book of Shadows** – personal-as-political – take five minutes or more and write in your journal about some ways you might want to change the way you live your daily life.

When you finish, look back and ask: “What is one thing I could do in the next week to begin to make these changes?” Write that down.

Take a breath and read it again. Does it seem right? Does it seem do-able?

If so, write the date and sign your name. If not, take a breath and release it for now.

Either way, inhale as you commit to continuing to look at your life, and exhale to seal the working. “So mote it be!”

Educate ourselves – we can visit Guardian.co.uk, [Vox](http://Vox.com), and other progressive sites and learn what is going on in the world. We can learn about alternative energy, new transit design, home gardening, etc. Hopefully our learning inspires us to take the next step and seek out like-minded people.

Permaculture – learning about and practicing Permaculture (sustainable agriculture and social practices) is another step we can take on our own. The Earth Path by Starhawk is a good introduction, and you can visit Starhawk.org for her current workshops and writings.

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Magical Activism: Getting Started (pg 2)

Finding Others – Wherever We Live

Co-conspirators – beyond the “personal as political,” though, activism needs co-conspirators. Trying to change the world alone is a great way to burn out and get discouraged and cynical. Having others – even a few – to share activism can make all the difference.

If you know interested people – friends, school comrades, folks at your church, temple, or synagogue, local activists you’ve met – you’re in luck! With even one friend, you can do bannering, street theater, sidewalk chalking, and other actions. As you step out, others may come forward to join you.



A Pagan Cluster has been part of many direct actions, occupations, and encampments going back to the 1980s. A large and vibrant Pagan Cluster took part in the 1999 Seattle WTO actions, and at many other “convergences” – activist gatherings for protest, networking, and education.

Groups of Pagans have taken part in Bay Area actions, including Occupy actions in 2011. Reclaiming folks spiral danced at Occupy Oakland, did activist preps and got arrested in San Francisco, and organized singalongs at Occupy Berkeley. One Witchlets family even moved in at Occupy Berkeley.

What are groups doing in your area? Join in and start sharing your own inspirations. You just might be the spark that’s needed!

What If I Don’t Know Others?

Don’t know others interested in activism? Not to worry. No matter where you live, there are good-hearted people working to change the world.

Think about the issues you care about – then look around and find an issue that has already brought people in your community together.

By volunteering at a community garden you’ll meet other caring, active people who like getting their hands dirty. Maybe there’s a bike repair co-op where folks might be excited about making street theater props. Join a letter-writing circle, and you might find people interested in other activism as well. Unitarian

and Quaker congregations as well as local eco-villages and environmental groups are good places.

Wherever we are, we can take the first step. Find people doing something you believe in, and ask to join in.

Taking the First Step

Do you know your next step? Do you know who you will contact and what you want to do? Go for it!

Looking for a little more clarity? Try an intuitive tarot reading (see *Workings: Tarot*) with questions such as: “What issues and types of activism call me? Where should I look for allies (and co-conspirators)?”

In making a commitment, consider a personal working such as the Overflowing Cup to add magical energy to your resolve.



Magical Activism: Getting Started (pg 3)

Internet Activism? Nope...

What about the internet?

Use the web to find activism in your hometown – maybe a Food Not Bombs group or a soup kitchen, a health clinic looking for volunteers, a Black Lives Matter group, anti-nuclear activists, a bike co-op, people working for the rights of women, gays, minorities, etc.

Use the internet to learn about issues – but see the next section for some thoughts on “the news.”

Beyond that? Clicking a mouse isn’t “Earth activism.” All the “likes” in the world don’t add up to one forest saved.

Creating change comes by weaving our life energy, not sharing status updates. World-changing energy is spun not by typing words, but by chanting, spiral dancing, or laughing together, whether you are circled around a

WitchCamp bonfire or in someone’s living room.

Magic itself can be solitary. Depending on where you live and who you know, you may be doing rituals alone right now.

But wherever you are, you can seek kindred activist spirits. Serving food together, picking up trash on a beach, co-tending a community garden – these connect people more than digital “chatting” ever will.

What About Following the News?

What about staying up on “the news”? Does it make us more effective activists and human beings to know up-to-the-minute facts about distant events?

Here’s some thoughts.

Most “news” is entertainment in disguise. Its purpose is not to educate or empower you, but to sell the accompanying advertising.

The last thing “news” aims to do is empower us. After all, if we felt empowered, we probably wouldn’t be sitting at home watching the news.

The unspoken message of media reports is always that the “news” is happening somewhere else, and you are not involved. Your job is to watch and consume.

If there’s a hurricane in your hometown, by all means, follow the news. If something distant happens that actually demands your personal response, don’t worry – your friends will text you about it.

What if we agreed that we will spend no more time looking at news than doing activism? What if for every hour we spend looking at media, we spend an hour cleaning up a hiking trail or going to a protest march?

What if we caught up on the news once a week, figuring anything important will stick around for a while, or we’ll hear people talking about it?

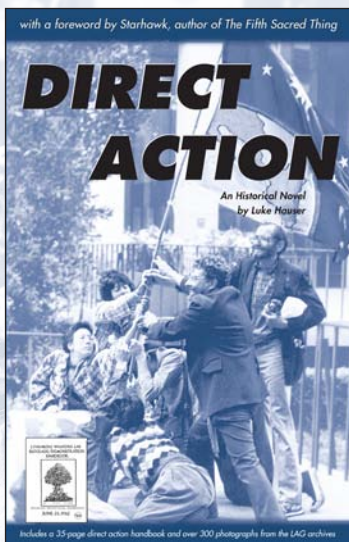
Just asking.

News can be irresistible, like chocolate. When you need to indulge, try the UK Guardian.

The Guardian (guardiannews.com)

If you are called to the news, bookmark The Guardian, a daily newspaper and website based in London.

It’s the best source of English-language news on the internet, with lots of U.S. and world news.



Luke Hauser’s historical novel tells the back-story of Reclaiming, placing the Pagan Cluster amidst California’s vibrant activist scene.

Free download of PDF version – DirectAction.org

“Affinity groups, consensus, and solidarity come alive. Engaging stories of real people – stories that can be laughed at, cried over, and treasured.”

– Karen Pickett, *Earth First!*





Reclaiming's Activist Roots

A Cauldron of Direct Action

Reclaiming was born amid the anti-nuclear movement of the early 1980s. In California, protests at Diablo Canyon Nuclear Plant, Livermore Nuclear Weapons Lab, Vandenberg Air Force Base, and downtown San Francisco involved thousands of people in nonviolent direct action and laid foundations for several decades of activism.

Read this history at DirectAction.org



Pagan affinity groups and circles were deeply involved in these actions, helping bring an air of grounded positivity to what could often be a tense and agitated milieu – in jail, in the streets, and even in meetings!

Activism-infused rituals such as the annual Brigid ritual are dedicated to renewing our commitment to justice.



Top right: A youth affinity group blockades Livermore Lab, June 1982.

Middle left: A wide range of affinity groups took part in 1983 occupations of Vandenberg AFB, where new nuclear missiles were being tested.

Lower right: An affinity group circles up for check-ins during jail in "the tents" – Livermore, June 1983.





Reclaiming Activism Today



In the aftermath of the Pagan Cluster's involvement in the 1999 Seattle protests of the World Trade Organization, an international Pagan Cluster joined a series of economic-reform actions in Europe and North America.

Read about the Seattle actions in issue #77 of Reclaiming Quarterly, and later actions in subsequent issues – free downloads at WeaveAndSpin.org/back-issues



Top left: Solstice in the Streets, a roving street protest and celebration organized by Teen Earth Magic and Reclaiming, San Francisco, June 2011.

Top right: Pagan Cluster drummers join a Foreclose the Banks march during the Occupy actions, San Francisco, 2011.

Lower left: In recent years, Reclaiming activists have joined others for climate justice actions with groups like Extinction Rebellion, Sunrise Movement, and Youth Versus Apocalypse.





Reclaiming Activism Today



Top: Reclaiming activists got back to our anti-nuclear roots in this Spring 2011 rally in front of the State of California office building, where hearings were underway concerning Diablo Canyon nuclear power plant.

The earliest Reclaiming-affiliated affinity groups took part in 1979 and 1981 civil disobedience actions at Diablo.

Right: Reclaiming and friends bring a spiral dance to the streets of downtown Oakland during the General Strike as part of Occupy Oakland, Fall 2011.



Lower left: An important movement of recent years is Black Lives Matter. This 2015 Martin Luther King Jr Day march in Oakland drew together a diverse crowd to demand accountability from local police and governments.



Activist Allies & Kindred Spirits

Spirit-based activists can bring magic and positive energy to the streets, from music circles to giant puppets to spiral dances, and much more.

Luckily, Reclaiming doesn't have to organize every event we're part of. In any city you can find street artists, soup kitchens, and local festivals. In rural areas you can look for Earth First! and other nature defenders.

Groups such as Unitarians, Quakers, and Jewish Renewal often host activist circles.

Here are some allies we've found over the years – with many more to come!



Photos: Food Not Bombs groups gather surplus food from local markets and restaurants and collectively prepare free meals. That's Reclaiming co-founder and Berkeley-Oakland FNB anchor Judy Foster at top right and middle left.



Right: Activist groups including Reclaiming blockade the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers office in solidarity with Indigenous resistance at Standing Rock. San Francisco, 2018.

Solidarity events happen in many cities and for many causes – new people are always welcome!

Solidarity photo by George Franklin.

FNB photos by Lydia Gans, courtesy of Reclaiming Quarterly.





Activist Allies & Kindred Spirits (pg 2)

Right: Sista Boom, along with the Brass Liberation Orchestra and other street music ensembles that often include Reclaiming folks, have long enlivened peace and solidarity marches.

Maybe it's time to dust off that old xylophone in your closet!

Check with music stores for local bands – or post a note and start a group yourself.



Below: Earth First! and other forest defenders take to the trees to defend the remaining wilderness. This 2002 “basket” action, coordinated by the Buckeye Forest Council, protested logging in an Ohio forest. Reclaiming folks have been part of similar actions in California. Photo courtesy Reclaiming Quarterly.



Above: Reclaiming folks join local artists and residents each year to honor the beloved dead at the Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) commemoration in San Francisco. Photo by Ember Ward, courtesy Reclaiming Quarterly.



An Activist Handbook

A brief introduction to collective process

Affinity groups, consensus, solidarity – these are the nuts and bolts of our organizing.

For some, they are tactical tools to be adopted for one action.

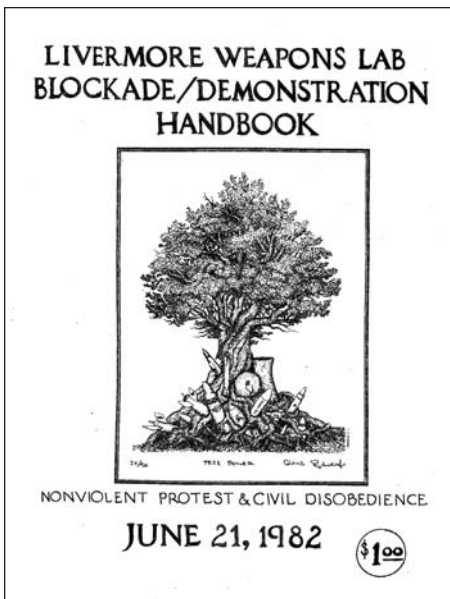
For others, they form part of a unified philosophy, a way of life.

In Reclaiming, both these views and all points between are found. The challenge is to find ways to work together.

In the rest of this chapter we'll discuss these topics, showing how they've been applied and the sorts of questions and challenges that arise.

Handbook Contents

- Perspectives on Nonviolence.....XXX
- Consensus: A Collective ProcessXXX
- Affinity GroupsXXX
- Solidarity: Together We're StrongerXXX
- Preparing for ActionXXX
- Activist Workings.....XXX
- Activist ResourcesXXX



Read more about nonviolent direct action and its connections to consensus and feminism in the Direct Action handbook and other activist handbooks – available at DirectAction.org.





Introduction & Overview

The following sections offer various tools and tactics for direct activism.

Some of these may be familiar from everyday life, others not so much. Each may have practical value for you.

I (and those from whom I've adapted ideas and practices) don't claim to have developed step-by-step instructions for creating nonviolent social revolution.

Yet what we offer is more than a grab-bag.

Taken together, nonviolence, consensus, solidarity, and fighting oppression comprise not just a toolkit, but a new perspective on political engagement – a new way of life.

So – do these approaches need to be used in toto, or can we pick and choose?

Smorgasbord? Or Gestalt?

Taken alone, collectivity is good idea, as is non-violence or consensus or nonhierarchy.

But notice how they fit together like puzzle pieces.

If a group (or corporation or state) is built hierarchically, how “collective” is it really going to be?

And if I “choose to act differently,” how nonviolent will that state/corporation/group turn out to be?

If our goal is a cohesive community where each person is empowered to take action without waiting for orders, won't it be more effective to organize collectively and nonhierarchically?

One Step At A Time?

One of the conundrums of organizing is where to start, and how to accomplish one task (such as disarmament or social justice) without addressing dozens of others (eg, economics, environmentalism, racism...).

It seems like we need to overhaul our entire social structure, economic system, and personal relations at the same time.

Good luck to us!

Living the New World Into Being

As our revolutionary forebears discovered, simply writing new constitutions and dictating new economic structures doesn't produce a world that most people really want to live in.

It doesn't matter how fantastic the new structures are if people are treated like cogs in the machines.

Part of creating a better world is learning to treat each other better – to work as if each person matters and has a valuable contribution. In a word, collectivity.

Getting From Here to There

At the same time, we can't simply will the new world into being and immediately implement total collectivity – for one, we'd be going to so many meetings that nothing would ever get done.

So where to start?

One place is in our community organizing. Maybe I can't immediately collectivize my job or rental apartment. But perhaps I and a few comrades can form an activist cell (an “affinity group,” some say) that organizes in a new way.

No one is in charge (although it helps to have one or two people act as informal “secretaries”

to keep track of details).

Decisions are made by consensus (and room is left for autonomous action).

The group allows time for looking at its internal processes, including issues like sexism, racism, etc.

What About Nonviolence?

Will your group be nonviolent at all times? (This may include questions of property destruction and/or use of

continued on next page



angry language.)

That's up to you to decide – and it may turn out that you cannot reach consensus and need to break into two or more groups.

Ask this:

- are you talking about a single action, or a longterm commitment?
- is it possible/effective to use violent (or angry) tactics against others while avoiding them within your group?
- can your group remain nonhierarchical while engaging in acts such as property destruction?
- tactically – is the entire group committed to accepting the consequences of the acts you plan? Remember – once one person is arrested, the rest of you may quickly be discovered.

Below we'll discuss nonviolent activism in more detail.

The Value of Advance Planning

Clearly affinity groups have a lot to discuss!

You don't have to figure it all out at once. We aren't going to solve racism or homophobia in a few meetings.

But do your best to discuss anything that might come up in an action you are planning.

NONVIOLENCE - Add in next section or in intro??

- moral
- strategic
- tactical

ALSO - more re Pagan Cluster

-

- page of photos?

MENTION --Ancestors Book; DA





Perspectives on Nonviolence

Pagans often speak of honoring all life. When that life is a friend, a flower, or a dolphin, honoring their spirit is easy.

But when it's an angry right-winger, an impatient cop, or a frustrated teacher, it can be a lot harder.

Not everyone who takes part in direct action protests is a committed pacifist. Not everyone who takes part in Reclaiming rituals is, either. But somehow we have to find ways to work together.

Agreeing to nonviolence in a particular action is one way people find common ground in an intense situation.

In civil disobedience actions, participants often reach basic understandings around nonviolence. This helps build unity and trust, knowing that others in the streets – including folks who have never met – have agreed to the same guidelines.

These guidelines and the accompanying discussions come from 2000s globalization protests, passed along by 1980s anti-nuclear activists, who learned from Quaker organizers educated by the US civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, who brought lessons from 1930s labor struggles...

These tactics continue to be used to the present day, including major actions at the 1999 WTO protests in Seattle and the Foreclose the Banks blockades during the 2011 Occupy movement.

What Does Nonviolence Mean?

Nonviolent action demonstrates a different model of human nature – people taking a humane and principled stand for the world and for all life.

Nonviolence strives to be an alternative way to initiate change. It attempts to minimize bitterness and isolation in people affected by our actions, and tries to break the cycle of violence breeding more violence.

Nonviolence in extended campaigns has led to notable successes, such as ending racial segregation on buses in Montgomery, Alabama, as a result of a 1956 boycott. More recently, sections of Headwaters Forest in Northern California were saved from logging by peaceful occupations and tree-sits.

Over the years, much of the US direct action movement has incorporated nonviolence into the heart of its strategy.

Why Do People Choose Nonviolence?

The following assumptions and goals help explain the rationale for practicing nonviolence:

- Respect all life.
- Transform opposition rather than destroy it.
- The means must be consistent with the ends.
- Use creativity, humor, and love.
- Aim for fundamental change.
- Nonviolence is active.
- We can withhold cooperation from those who abuse power.

Guidelines for Nonviolent Action

These guidelines, adapted from those of American Friends Service Committee, are understood as basic agreements, rather than philosophical/political requirements.

The guidelines are meant to act as a basis of trust among participants who often come together only for a specific action. The guidelines are under constant discussion and are seen as a current working understanding, not as statements etched in stone.

1. Our attitude will be one of openness, friendliness, and respect toward all people we encounter.
2. We will use no violence, verbal or physical, toward any person.
3. We will not damage any property.
4. We will not bring or use drugs or alcohol other than for medical purposes.
5. We will not run.
6. We will carry no weapons.

continued on next page



Perspectives on Nonviolence (pg 2)

Dynamics of Nonviolence

The conventional view of politics sees government and corporations as having power over society, with the rest of us dependent on the good will and caprice of “power-holding” institutions such as military, police, courts, and bureaucracy.

The theory of nonviolence proposes a different analysis: that political power often depends on the cooperation of ordinary people. Withdrawal of cooperation can restrict and sometimes even dissolve power.

Power often depends on continued obedience. When people refuse to obey their “rulers,” their power may begin to crumble.

Practicing Nonviolence in a Violent Society

Our nonviolence is no guarantee of how others will behave. Police, employees, or right-wingers may behave differently.

When we interfere with the smooth operation of the machine, even nonviolently, we may be met with aggression by police and others. How do we remain nonviolent in such situations?

The first thing is maintaining human contact with the perceived “opponent.” Body language is important – especially remaining calm and making eye contact. Listening rather than talking may help prevent conflicts from escalating.

At some point a person or an affinity group may withdraw or disengage from a conflict (assuming the police let you go).

Planning Ahead

It is crucial that affinity groups meet ahead of time to discuss and role-play responses to potentially violent situations. For instance, an affinity group may decide (in advance?) to physically surround someone being assaulted, while distracting or calming the attacker.

Responses such as this vividly demonstrate the goals of nonviolent direct action. We intervene so that corporations and governments can’t do more harm and abuse, even as we model the world we vision.



Photos: Nonviolence In Action

Blockade and support action at the entrance to the main offices of Wells Fargo in San Francisco. Foreclose the Banks protest, 2011.

Many more photos from actions at ReclaimingQuarterly.org & WeaveAndSpin.org

Direct Action: An Historical Novel – dozens of action stories and photos (see page XXX).





Consensus: A Collective Process

Imagine a world in which everyone matters, in which we consistently see one another as friends and comrades rather than as exploitable objects.

Each person is heard, and their opinions matter. No one gets ignored because a majority feels differently.

True, everyone doesn't get their way all the time. In fact, there's a lot of give and take, compromising, and learning to live with less than we might wish. Sometimes we have to stand aside and let others have their way for the good of the whole community.

The reward – getting to live in a diverse world in which conflicts are dealt with collaboratively and nonviolently. We learn to seek solutions that are good for all, not just lucrative for the few.

Occasionally, magic strikes – a group in conflict finds a way forward that no one foresaw when the discussions began.

Welcome to consensus at its best!

What Is Consensus?

Consensus is a process in which no decision is finalized until everyone in the group can accept (“accept,” not

necessarily enthusiastically embrace!) the decision and is willing to implement it without resentment. Ideally, consensus synthesizes the ideas of the entire group into a unifying decision.

Unlike voting, consensus is not an adversarial, win/lose method. With consensus, we do not have to choose between two alternatives. Those who hold different views do not become opponents.

Instead, diverse views are seen as giving fresh and valuable perspectives. As we work to meet everyone's concerns, our decisions are strengthened.

Consensus is not the same as a unanimous vote. It does not necessarily mean total agreement.

Rather, it means reaching a decision which takes into account all of the people and views in the group and attempts to synthesize them into effective action.

How Do We Do It?

Coming to genuine consensus is a real and difficult skill. It involves patience, willingness to listen, and an openness to new ideas.

People must be committed to expressing their own ideas and feelings and also encouraging others with different views to express theirs as well.

Because the ideal of consensus is to reach a decision that is not only acceptable to everyone, but is actually best for the whole group, there must be a “bottom line” of shared beliefs about what is best for all concerned.

These are the “principles of unity.”

These basic agreements will not encompass all the beliefs of each individual in the group, but rather help define the working relationships of the members.

For activist groups these principles might include whether or not there are commitments to nonviolence, to mediating disputes among members, to working against racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.

You may also discuss whether you are forming for a single action or project, or as an ongoing group.

Without such basic principles of unity and a willingness to work within them, consensus won't succeed.



Let's hope this affinity group reached advance consensus on how long to sustain their lockdown – it might be hard to circle up now that the the action has started! Richmond oil refinery around 2008. Photo by George Franklin.

continued on next page



Consensus: A Collective Process (pg 2)

Roles in a Consensus Meeting

Facilitator: This is a shared and rotated role, and is valuable even in small circles. Facilitators should remain neutral on topics being discussed. When an issue arises about which a facilitator feels strongly, they should step aside and let someone else facilitate.

Facilitators help move the group through decision making. They take suggestions for the agenda, make sure necessary roles are filled, call on people to speak in turn, etc. By calling on quiet people, soliciting opinions from those who hang back, and limiting those who tend to dominate, facilitators help each person have a chance to participate.

Facilitators help the group resolve conflicts and make decisions by summarizing, repeating, or rephrasing proposals as necessary. See below for more ideas.

Vibeswatcher: Pays attention to the group's process. Stays aware of the feelings people are not expressing. Reminds the group to relax and take breaks as needed. This role is especially important in large meetings.

Other Roles: Child care, notetaker, timekeeper.

Consensus Nuts and Bolts

(Want to see these processes in action? See Direct Action: An Historical Novel – page XXX.)

An issue comes up for discussion, and a facilitator is chosen (see above).

For example, an affinity group (AG) is trying to decide what its first action will be. After general discussion, the facilitator suggests a **go-round** during which each member has two minutes to speak. One person takes notes on a large sheet of butcher paper that can be seen by all.

When everyone has spoken, the facilitator or someone else attempts to **synthesize the ideas into a proposal** – a suggestion for what the group will do.

"I propose we join the September environmental protests."

The facilitator then calls for **clarifying questions**: "Do you mean blockading, or public education, or what?"

When the proposal is clearly understood, **additions may be offered**: "I propose we concentrate on street theater, leafletting, and provide support for those who want to be part of the civil disobedience action."

The facilitator then asks for concerns and objections. The **proposal is modified** as concerns are expressed. For



Small break-out groups allow for more intimate dialog during a large-group consensus process. Don't forget to take stretch breaks, and plan ahead for snacks and meals. Consensus isn't an endurance contest!

example, a group member might say, "I'm concerned that doing street theater and leafletting is too much – I prefer to focus on theater."

After discussion, perhaps with another go-round on the subject, the proposal may be modified. In its final form, it might be something like this: "Our group will do street theater early in the day, then join the support march during the civil disobedience action."

Allow time for any **discussion and concerns**.

If there are no further objections, the **facilitator can ask for consensus**. If there are still no objections, you have your decision.

If consensus can't be reached, the group **stays with the previous decision** on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable. (If a group decides to do nothing, members may decide to leave and join other groups.)

Blocking: Any individual in the group may "block consensus," but a block should be used very cautiously.

A block is *not* just a "no" vote, or an expression of disfavor. A block says, "I believe what the group wants to do goes against our 'principles of unity'. I cannot allow the group to do it – and I am willing to delay or obstruct the group over this."

A block implies that a decision would be unethical and/

continued on next page





Consensus: A Collective Process (pg 3)

or violates the group's principles of unity. When used for lesser reasons, blocking frustrates the process and can destroy a group.

Consensus and Action: The goal of consensus process is not just to make a decision, but to carry out the plan of action. Often a person's commitment to a decision is in proportion to their sense of participation in that decision. Consensus attempts to involve all members of a group, not just the "leaders."

People sometimes complain that consensus is too time-consuming. Especially when a group is learning to use the process, it may seem cumbersome. But discussion time is compensated by the increased energy and enthusiasm with which people carry out a decision. There is no dissatisfied minority to undermine a decision. Because group members feel part of the decision-making process, they often take on responsibility in new areas.

Spokescouncils: In larger groups and coalitions, each

affinity group, work group, or other subgroup selects one or two people to act as their spokespersons. Reclaiming uses this model for its international BIRCH Council, and it is sometimes used by activist coalitions.

These "spokes" carry their groups' opinions and proposals to spokescouncils. Spokes try to consolidate, synthesize, and iron out differences between proposals so as to create proposals agreeable to all.

The new proposals are then relayed back to the affinity groups by their spokes, the issues at hand reconsidered by each subgroup, and a new position (or perhaps the old one) is reached.

The new positions are brought back to the next spokescouncil. If consensus can be reached, great. If not, the process may be repeated, or the group may decide to return to the previous decision. The role of spoke should rotate so that power remains decentralized.

Process Suggestions

A major contribution of the feminist movement to social change movements is an awareness that effective group process and meaningful personal interactions are crucial factors in developing a successful movement.

Nonviolence and consensus begin at home, in the ways people treat each other. The personal *is* political.

Relationships within the group cannot be separated from the accomplishment of political goals. Effective group process, in fact, means valuing co-operation over competition, recognizing the contributions of each individual, and decentralizing power through a non-hierarchical organizational structures.

1. Use go-rounds. Equalize participation by going around the circle speaking for a specified time.
2. Value feelings. Include time in meetings for expressing emotions and for personal interactions.
3. Meet separately. Allow time for subgroups such as women, LGBTQ folks, BIPOC people, etc to meet separately in order to strengthen people's participation.
4. Meet in small groups. Allow time for meeting in small groups during larger meetings so that people who feel more comfortable there can speak more freely. Small groups give each person more speaking time. A spoke from each small group can report back to the larger group, particularly if proposals have been discussed.
5. Share skills, rotate responsibilities.



Consensus isn't just for anarchist activism or WitchCamps. Here, the general assembly of Occupy Oz consenses to include flying monkeys in all future actions. Berkeley PaganFest c. 2005 by George Franklin.



Affinity Groups & Anarchist Organizing

Picture yourself at a giant peace convergence, or a Pride march, or maybe a Black Lives Matter protest. Hundreds, even thousands of people are striding down the street, chanting and singing. It feels great!

There's power in numbers, in being part of a large and vibrant group.

It's also easy to feel a bit lost. Even if I'm with a friend or two, we don't really have a plan. People drift away, and we don't always leave with the people we came with. Afterward, despite the power of the action, we might feel agitated and alienated.

That's why someone invented affinity groups.

What Are Affinity Groups?

An affinity group (AG) is a small group that gathers for political or cultural action.

The Pagan Cluster, which includes many Reclaiming folks, has been active since the 1980s at many actions and convergences in Europe and the Americas – email ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com for more info..

The concept of affinity groups is not a new one. Actually, affinity groups are an ancient form of organization by people seeking to make a better world. What makes more sense than small groups of friends and neighbors who share an "affinity" working together?

Reclaiming's work groups (sometimes called Weavers) are one type of AG. A street theatre group is another. Magical circles can be considered affinity groups, and magical skills help build connections and trust among members.

In direct action protests, small action groups – some ongoing, some formed just for the one action – are often called affinity groups.

Action Affinity Groups

These action AGs are usually composed of 5 to 15 people. Some groups focus around a specific interest, issue, or philosophy, such as opposing sexism or racism, being medics, LGBTQ+, Dead Heads, or single mothers.

Affinity groups serve as basic planning and decision-making bodies for an action, including preparations and followup. Each affinity group provides for its own physical needs and makes its own decisions using consen-

sus process. Spokespeople representing AGs meet in spokescouncils to communicate, co-ordinate, and consolidate the different groups' decisions, then relay information back to their AG.

Affinity groups serve as a source of support and solidarity. By generating trust and decentralizing decisions, the AG structure also reduces the possibility of infiltration by outside provocateurs.

Pre-Action Planning

Affinity groups should try to meet several times before the action to build trust, work on group process, plan for the action, and have a good time together. Sharing food

can help a planning meeting be more enjoyable. Group names and identification such as T-shirts or armbands can help bring a group together.

Prior to a civil disobedience protest, a nonviolence prep and at least one followup meeting should be devoted to legal and jail preparation, in

which everyone's questions, fears, reactions, emotions, and attitudes can be shared in depth.

After the action, your AG can meet again to debrief and share inspirations and new ideas. Just as with a magical circle, if the group is going to end, consider honoring it with a special gathering (how about a ritual?).

Affinity Group Support People

Support people are members of the affinity group who take back-up roles. They may attend an action but avoid arrest, or remain at home and be available for home support. Among the things they can do are:

- collect a list of people that members of the AG want to be contacted in case of injury or arrest.

continued on next page



Practicing affinity group maneuvers at an activism prep.





Affinity Groups & Anarchism (pg 2)

- take care of arrestees' cars, belongings, IDs, etc.
- support on home front: plants, animals, kids, jobs, etc.
- answer media or legal calls as needed.
- keep in touch with folks from your AG on the streets and/or in jail, and greet them when they return.

The Long Run – Keep Trying!

Some affinity groups continue as political/support groups and do other things together (for example, anti-war activism, street theater, gardening, hosting parties and coffeehouses, alternative tech, tofu factories, etc).

Others come and go with each wave of actions. Activist convergences, meetings, and organizing projects are good places to meet others looking for an affinity group.

It can be discouraging when a vibrant, exciting group does an action together – then breaks up. Same with a theater group, a hip-hop crew, or a sports team.

What to do? Find those who want to continue, invite a few more to join – and try again!

Work Groups/Cells

Work groups (or cells) are a different type of affinity group. They come together to take care of particular tasks and functions for a group, event, or action. WitchCamp organizing teams are work groups.

Work groups focus on things like logistics (how to get things done), communications, publicity, legal and admin support, food and hearth needs, medics and first aid, music, and event planning.

And every project needs a clean-up crew!

For small projects, one work group might tackle all of these tasks.

Coordinating & Spokes Councils

Ongoing communication among work groups and affinity groups is important.

Representatives of work groups might meet as a coordinating council. In Bay Area Reclaiming, this coordinating group is called the Wheel.

For some events and actions, planners may host one or more meetings of affinity group reps known as a spokescouncil (the reps are spokes-people for their AG, or “spokes”).

What Is Anarchism?

Good question – it depends on which anarchists you ask, on which day, who they are with, and what might be distracting them at the moment.

The term, Greek for “without a chief,” came into common use in the 1600s in France and England. It was first intended not as an organizing model, but as an insult hurled at disorganized groups.

In the late 1800s, loosely-connected groups calling themselves anarchists⁰ arose across Europe and in the Americas. Although they engaged in a variety of activities, they became infamous for bombings.

The word came into its present use in the later 1900s as a response to the top-down, mass organizing of the 1960s anti-war movement, as well as to older Civil Rights and labor union approaches, which often involved leaders telling the “masses” what to do.

Feminist and gay rights movements of the 1970s pioneered the use of small, consensus-based groups, which in turn led to affinity group organizing in the anti-nuke movement of the later 70s and 80s.

Anarchism Today

Anarchism Today – sounds like the name of a glossy supermarket magazine.

In practice, the word is used by a wide range of people, groups, and tendencies.

Not all agree on non-violence, and many anarchists might avoid arrest rather than courting it.

The essence of anarchism is that our actions create the future. Tactics are chosen accordingly.

In the streets, anarchists co-exist with other tendencies. The challenge is to offer meaningful and inspiring ways for people to be involved in activism.

So mote it be!



A spirit-based affinity group circles to meditate during an action. Black Lives Matter march for Alan Blueford, Oakland 2012.



Solidarity: We're Stronger Together!

The notion of solidarity is as old as humanity. It especially comes to us from the labor movement. As early capitalism drove workers from farms and workshops into factories and sweatshops, people realized that unless they banded together they would be crushed.

In activist circles, solidarity means that we make plans together and stick to them. Before I act, I check in with others in my group – are we good?

In civil disobedience actions, we often make advance solidarity agreements about dealing with arrests and jail.

Our legal system operates by divide-and-conquer – once arrested, it's you versus the entire system. Our power comes by sticking together, by refusing to cooperate until we are guaranteed that all will be treated fairly, we disrupt the repressive power of the legal system.

Solidarity is also a way of life – to live in connection and mutual support with other living beings.

How might I live differently if I weighed each action and decision based on how it might impact not just me, not just my family or community, but the entire Earth for generations to come? That's solidarity!

Jail Solidarity In Direct Actions

The power of jail solidarity lies in two facts. (1) In a mass arrest situation, the authorities need cooperation to process large numbers of people. (2) It is expensive to keep us in jail. This gives us collective bargaining power.

Protesters often agree in advance to insist on mass arraignment (so no one is left behind), equal sentencing for equal actions, no fines (unequal impacts on different people), and no probation (prevents future activism).

Tactics can include not responding when names are called; sitting or lying down; milling about; chanting. We can calmly surround a threatened brother or sister, physically protecting them from being taken away. In more extreme cases we can refuse food, or refuse to get dressed.

A powerful tactic is to communicate to the judge and prosecutor that if our demands are not met, we will all plead not guilty, ask for individual jury trials, and not waive our right to a speedy trial. We can resist being taken to arraignment until we are guaranteed fair treatment.

Jail solidarity should not be coercive. If someone must get

out of jail to keep a job or to take care of their family, they are not breaking solidarity. However, if you cite out ahead of others you are not assured that your sentence will be the same as those who exercise collective bargaining.

Don't abuse solidarity. Save it for when it really matters.

Jail Solidarity Demands

The following are issues around which jail solidarity has been exercised in the past:

No bail, no citing out. This keeps us together and in communication, at great expense to the government. It is very difficult to bring this pressure to bear once we are out of jail, so as many people as possible should be prepared to stay in jail for at least a few days.

Equal treatment. Authorities know the power of our unity and will try to divide us. No one should be given harsher treatment or isolated from the group. Everyone should receive the same sentence for similar actions, and inflated or unfair charges against a few people should be dropped.

It is hard to maintain solidarity with people who are on probation or have outstanding warrants, as they fall under different rules – so pay your tickets before blockading!

Advance Agreements Are Key

For solidarity to be effective, plans must be made before reaching jail. Authorities won't (usually) wait patiently for us to reach consensus on solidarity before they start employing divide and conquer tactics.



Solidarity in action – *Direct Action: An Historical Novel*
– print or free PDF at DirectAction.org





Dismantling Oppression

Racism, Sexism, Homophobia, Transphobia,
Classism

continued on next page



Dismantling Oppression (pg 2)

Racism, Sexism, Homophobia, Transphobia,
Classism





Finding Your Own Activism

Activism means many things within Reclaiming, from changing our daily lives to Pagan Cluster street protests. What unifies us is our belief that we can create a better world for humans and all beings.

Reclaiming's Principles of Unity state, "All living beings are worthy of respect. All are supported by the sacred elements of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. We work to create and sustain communities and cultures that embody our values, that can help to heal the wounds of the Earth and her peoples, and that can sustain us and nurture future generations."

On the next page, you'll find a ritual that helps focus and express your concerns about the world.

✪ **Book of Shadows** – here's a chance to reflect on what activism means to you and how it might be part of your life.

EXERCISE: Activism Questionnaire

If I could change one thing in the wider world, it would be:

If I could change one thing about my own life that would make the world a better place, it might be:

Something I do well that does or could make a difference in the world is:

One type of activism I've seen or imagined is:

Something that gets in the way of going to an activist event or meeting is:

One magical act I could do toward changing the world (and myself) is:

If I did one "activist" thing that involved leaving my own house, it might be:

If one thing in my life needed to change for me to be more "active," it might be:

True or false: To get involved in an issue, I'd need to see others working on it first. If true, what difference would it make?

True or false: If I were to "get active," I would have to be more flexible. If true, in what way?

True or false: Going to meetings or events would be easier if I knew someone else who was going. If true, what's one thing you could do to improve your odds of finding someone?

Reflect: Are you a hopeful person? What are you especially hopeful about (or not)? When is it hard to be hopeful?



Salt & Apple

A Ritual to Share Our Concerns About the World

INTENT

Speaking and sharing our concerns and dreams about the world is part of activism. When a group gets held in jail for even a few hours, you can do a check-in circle where people share what brought them to the action that day. Even in the most focused action, like the Foreclose the Banks protests that were part of Occupy San Francisco, every person had their own reasons for taking part – their own intention.

In any sort of organizing (rituals, activism, dance or theater, youth work...), we learn the importance of finding time to share our thoughts and feelings – in a circle, with a friend, and/or with our journal.

Here's a simple ritual to share concerns and commitments.

SPACE/TIME/SIZE

Any number, alone or in groups of two to eight. Room for groups to spread out. 20-45 minutes depending on number of people.

PREP

Decide on a way to create sacred space. See *Ritual Skills: Sacred Space: Quick Ways* for ideas.

Need a small bowl of salt water for each group, plus a bowl of apple slices and one whole apple per group.

It helps if there is a priestess in each group who knows the plan – or you can write out these simple instructions and give a sheet to someone in each group – this person can go first to model the working.

WORKING - Sharing Our Concerns

Gather folks around the apples and bowl of water. Share names. Close your eyes and breathe together. Then tell people we will do two rounds. People can speak or hold silence when it is their time. Listeners maintain attentive silence – no cross-talk.

First round – pass the salt water. Each person holds the bowl for 30-60 seconds and shares (aloud or silently) something that deeply concerns them about the world. At the end of the go-round, silently look around the circle and breathe together.

Repeat go-round, passing the whole apple and sharing one thing you already do or feel called to do. When all have gone, look around and take a breath together. Then pass out the apple slices. Together say: "So mote it be!" – and eat a slice.

Re-circle and charge the magic with a song: *We Are the Power in Everyone*; *We Are the Rising Sun*; *She Changes Everything*.

Compost the remaining apples after you finish.

SOLO WORKING

Prep – need bowl of salt water, apple, journal. Create a simple (or elaborate) altar that you can sit beside for this working. Place the salt water and apple on it. You may want background music such as *Labyrinth Meditation Music* (see page XXX).

Get comfortable near the altar. Close your eyes and think for a few minutes about something that concerns you – not just you, but something that affects other people or living beings. Then dip your fingers into the salt water, take up your pen, close your eyes and consider things you might do – from the grandest to the smallest – to help make the world better.

✪ **Book of Shadows** – write about (1) something you already do to make the world better; and (2) one further thing you feel called to do. When you finish #2, add a sentence saying one simple step you could take toward that goal.

When you finish – At the end, dip your fingers in the salt water again, then take a bite of the apple. Close your eyes as you chew, affirming your commitment to action with each bite.

Charge your intention with a song – see ideas above. Finish eating the apple and compost any remains.





Preparing for Action

Group Process

Group decision-making – Reclaiming groups work by “feminist process” – a catch-all term for things such as small-group process, non-hierarchy and/or rotating leadership, consensus decision-making, listening skills, and more. See the preceding pages for more on group process.

The ways we work together – rotating leadership, equalizing talk-time, valuing the different ways that people contribute – may be as important in creating a new world as the issues we are working on.

These skills and outlooks come to us from the feminist and gay rights movements, which have challenged not just male oppression and hetero-normatism, but all kinds of hierarchy and domination.

Activist Skills: Read up!

At DirectAction.org you'll find links to various activist handbooks, including a 16-page Direct Action handbook – partly written and influenced by Reclaiming affinity groups which helped create the anti-nuclear and anti-war movements.

This handbook has short sections on consensus, nonviolence, feminism, and masculine oppression. You'll also find writings on racism and homophobia – ways that people are brought into conflict one another.

If you plan to “take it to the streets” with some of the actions below (or ones you cook up), look through this handbook. Ask others to read and discuss it as well.

Is Reading Enough?

Before going into action, look for a “nonviolence prep,” an activism workshop led by experienced folks that teaches skills for street activism and civil disobedience. This is important even if you do not intend to risk arrest – in fact, there are important roles for people who do not plan to be arrested.

Although I wish this chapter could offer a direct action prep, protesting is one of those practices that is best passed along in-person and experientially.

Why? How is it different from rituals, which we don't seem shy about writing up?

When civil disobedience and other protests go wrong, people can be physically injured or sent to prison. If you're feeling called to this kind of activism – and we hope some of you are! – look for local trainings with experienced people. Visit page XXXX for Pagan Cluster links, or check with Unitarian or Quaker congregations or Food Not Bombs groups for local organizing.

Taking Art to the Streets

Art actions are creative, inspiring – and generally safe – ways to do street activism. See the end of this chapter for several ideas. With banners, chalk actions, street theater, or mystery posters, any of us can step out and bring our message to the wider public – and the planning is half the fun! Gather some friends and spend an afternoon creating your props. Take time for scrub-jay lines – see next page. These are a fun way to prepare for interactions you might have.

✪ **Book of Shadows** – how can you include magic in your planning and actions? Can you see some advantages to grounding and casting a circle together before you start? What allies might you invite (and remember to thank/devote at the end)?

Process Guidelines

One major contribution of the feminist movement to current social change movements is the awareness that effective group process and meaningful personal interactions are crucial factors in developing a successful movement. Non-violence begins at home, in the ways we treat each other.

Such an awareness stresses that relationships within the group cannot be separated from the accomplishment of political goals. Effective group process, in fact, means valuing co-operation over competition, recognizing the contributions of each individual, and decentralizing power through a non-hierarchical organizational structure.

Process Suggestions

1. Use go-rounds. Equalize participation by going around the circle and allowing each person to speak for a specified time.
2. Value feelings. Include time in meetings for expressing emotions and for personal interactions.
3. Meet separately. Allow time for women to meet with women and for men to meet with men in order to facilitate self-awareness and strengthen each person's participation. This applies to other groups as well, such as blacks and whites, etc.
4. Meet in small groups. Allow time for meeting in small groups during larger meetings so that people who feel uncomfortable speaking in large groups can speak more freely. Small groups will give each person more speaking time as well. A spoke from each small group can report back to the larger group.
5. Share skills, rotate responsibilities.

WWW.DIRECTACTION.ORG 8

Learn more about activist skills from the Direct Action handbook– available at DirectAction.org/handbook/.

continued on next page



Preparing for Action (pg 2)

Scrub-Jay Lines: Preparing for the Streets

Scrub-jay lines are a fast, fun way to explore energy around personal and political issues. This is good practice before doing a public action – we can role-play conflicts that might arise. (See also Workings: Boundaries: Scrub-Jay Lines.)

Here’s an example using the question, “Is protesting worthwhile or a waste of time?” Form two equal lines, each person facing another person. Each round lasts 30-60 seconds. To change partners, one line shifts one space to left.

- (A) Decide which line will be pro- or anti-protesting for this round. On a signal, argue strongly for your view without listening to the other person – interrupt, talk over them, ignore what they say – just keep arguing for your view. Facilitator, egg people on!
- (B) Change partners. Decide who is Yes and who is No. The question is, “Is protesting a waste of time?” On a signal, just start repeating your word: “Yes! Yes! Yes!” or “No! No! No!” Do your best to out-talk the other person. Even if you start laughing, try to keep going.
- (C) Change partners once more. Decide who is “Yes” and who is “No.” On the same question, have a calm discussion and really try to listen to one another. Go a little longer on this round, or let people change roles.

Come together as a circle. Facilitator asks:

“How did it feel to be so invested in a view? How did it feel to have someone else try to persuade you? Talk over you? Ignore you?”

“How did the Yes/No round feel? Did people laugh? If so, what was up? Do you often get to simply say ‘No’ without explaining?”

“In the final round, did anything you said or did especially reach the other person? What made someone laugh? What misfired or got nowhere? Of all the rounds, what behavior was most satisfying to you, personally? What might you try another time?”

More ideas – here are some more ways to use scrub-jay lines to prepare for activism – make up your own for your issue and/or city.

- One side are interested passersby, the other are protesters trying to explain, “Why I am here today.” (Trade roles so each person does both sides.)
- Cops vs protesters, yelling and/or trying to dialog.
- Pretend you are talking to a friend about what you are doing – what might inspire them to join?
- One side is chalking sidewalks, other side is a local resident who doesn’t want you doing it.



Photos: A Scrub-Jay Line

A scrub-jay exercise at an activist prep.

Scrub-jay lines let us role-play possible interactions and conflicts – and also practice talking to people about our beliefs and passions – before we go out into public.

Sometimes the lines explode into group dancing!





Magical Skills for the Street

Street Magic – Remembering How to Stay Grounded

One challenge when doing street activism is staying centered and grounded amid tension and pressure. Remaining calm while the person next to you is screaming at a riot cop can be daunting for the most experienced priestess!

When doing activism with magical comrades – a Pagan affinity group or Pagan Cluster, we might say – people (ideally) take time beforehand to do a short ritual, tapping magical skills to strengthen the group's focus and groundedness.

Grounding – alone or in a group, take a breath and remember your connection to the Earth. In the streets (or any intense situation), it's good to practice grounding with eyes open. "As I ground, I visualize a deeply-rooted tree, and I anchor that image in my center. Whenever I touch my center, I can call back the image and renew my sense of groundedness."

Circle casting – an affinity group can cast a flexible circle, helping feel connections within the group as well as the boundary with the wider world. I can cast my own circle as well: "I cast a personal circle of protection and awareness – I invoke the directions and elements and ask them to alert and protect me whenever I encounter discordant energy."

Invoking elements – maybe this is part of circle casting, as above. If time allows, you could invoke the elements with a song.

Invoking allies – here's a key piece of activist magic! I can invoke magical allies and protectors (maybe Hermes for quick movement and clear communication), political models such as Martin Luther King Jr, ancestors such as the Diggers or Suffragettes, artistic activists such as ACT UP, etc. Who would you want walking by your side as you step out? Invite them!

Anchoring the magic – anchor the magic by picturing a symbol such as a crystal or a tree which you place in your center, touching the spot to fix the symbol. Any time you need to remember your grounding and allies, touch this spot.

Dream Actions: Stirring the Activist Cauldron

Goal: A visioning brainstorm where imagination can run free. In your ideal activist group – what would you like to do?

Space/Time/Size: Alone or in a small group (form circles of five or six if it's a larger group). Space to gather comfortably.

Materials: A cauldron (a metal or glass bowl will do, or you can simply use an altar cloth); flowers, crystals, and other small, earthy objects of beauty – place in and around the cauldron or on a cloth in the center; a small bowl of salt water.

Working: Ground and cast a circle. Invoke elements and an ally or two. Gather comfortably around the cauldron or altar. Lie on your back if you wish. If you're a group, lie with your heads toward the center.

Brainstorm the most amazing direct actions. Extravagant theater, huge encampments and blockades, a roving spiral of chanting Pagans, giant puppets shutting down the financial district of a major city.... Don't worry about being realistic here – there'll be time for that later. Share inspirations, visions, and laughter.

As the energy wraps up, invite people to share any last thoughts – especially if someone has been quiet.

Sit up and gather around the cauldron. Each person speak one word. Begin stirring clockwise, singing Weave and Spin or She Changes Everything She Touches (see page XXX). Sing until the energy seems complete, and let the song wind down.

Using your hands as a scoop, dip into the cauldron and draw up some of the energy, as much as you need. Drink in the energy like cool water., or imagine pouring it into your heart. End by saying: "Blessed be!"

Devoke allies and elements you invoked and open circle.



Activist Workings

Introduction – Legal Street Actions

Direct action often means “taking it to the streets” – but it doesn’t always have to mean risking arrest. Sometimes our goal is simply to get our message out to people, not to disrupt anything.

Even when some people plan to risk arrest in a civil disobedience action, a wider group can find other ways to reach a wider audience – street theater, banners, music, giant puppets....

Here are several ways for a small group of friends (a circle or affinity group) to do street activism with minimal risk of arrest – although that doesn’t mean everyone you meet will agree with your action (see Sidewalk Chalking on next page).

Street Theater

Street theater is a way to have fun, tap into creativity – and help create world change.

A few people doing a three-minute performance with simple costumes and props can engage and educate the public. If you do it as part of a larger action, you’ll raise everyone’s spirits!

Street theater, as with banners, rallies, sidewalk chalking, drumming, etc, directly intervenes in public space and challenge popular consciousness.

Seeing people taking public action sometimes touches bystanders as much as the particular message. People remember what they saw, not what they heard – a good argument for colorful props and minimal dialog.

Materials – posterboard, scissors, and markers for signs, masks, etc. Masks and costumes as needed (thrift shop!)



Solstice in the Streets – Reclaiming youth created props and street theater as part of Solstice in the Streets. After an opening circle, a procession wound through downtown San Francisco, stopping to do performances and music at banks, oil companies, and nuclear energy corporations – but also at sites like public fountains and plazas, celebrating visions of Summer in the City. Photo by George Franklin.

Choose your issue or focus – brainstorm an issue. If you already have the issue, what will be your specific focus?

This is a good chance to use some of the group process skills covered above – see Preparing for Action. Take your time and give everyone a chance to share ideas, concerns, and hesitations. Look for an issue and action that unites your group.

Creating the theater – will you do the “writing” together, or do one or two people have an idea that others will support? Either way, leave plenty of room for individual inspirations. Let people create their own parts where possible.

- Skits – keep it short. Repeat the same one-minute piece over and over. Keep dialog to a minimum and go for colorful, larger-than-life images. Masks draw attention – and help you stay anonymous if you wish.
- Signs – think of sign-boards, like in silent movies – an easy way to convey a simple message.
- Silence – using masks and props, silently “occupy” a visible public space. After ten minutes, march silently to a new location and repeat.

Start and end with magic – as with any street action, you can start and end by grounding, casting a circle,

continued on next page





Activist Workings (pg 2)

and invoking allies. Whether you're two people or a thousand, a short opening circle will help unite your group.

At the end, do a circle where each person shares about their experience (in a larger group, use small groups of six to eight). De-voke and open the circle. If there are new people, pass around a sign-up sheet – a key part of magical activism!

Mystery Posters

Goal – postering is direct action aimed at educating our community. By taking our message outside “approved” channels (media, books, pulpits, classrooms), we claim public space for political dialog and communicate directly with others. Posters can share images, concerns, poetry, philosophical questions.... What do you want to say?

Materials – paper, including colored construction paper; thick and thin colored markers; brushes and water-paints; glue-sticks; scissors; simple collage materials; duct tape; stapler or tacks; snacks for while you create posters and/or afterward.

Space/Time/Size – any number, in groups of 3-6. Allow an hour or more. Scout out the postering possibilities – you need enough sites so you can divide into small groups. This may mean a list of campus buildings, phone poles on busy pedestrian streets, etc. This sort of logistical planning can be done ahead of time by a small group.

Prep – most of this action is prep. Hanging the posters may only take a few minutes – although you can make a magical ritual out of it, remembering to ground and cast a protective circle before you go out. What allies would help with this work?

After creating your circle in a quick, fun way, talk for a little while about things and issues on your minds and about ways you might awaken the curiosity of others. Might you use slogans? Questions? Cartoons and drawings? Collages? Poetry? What kinds of designs will catch attention?

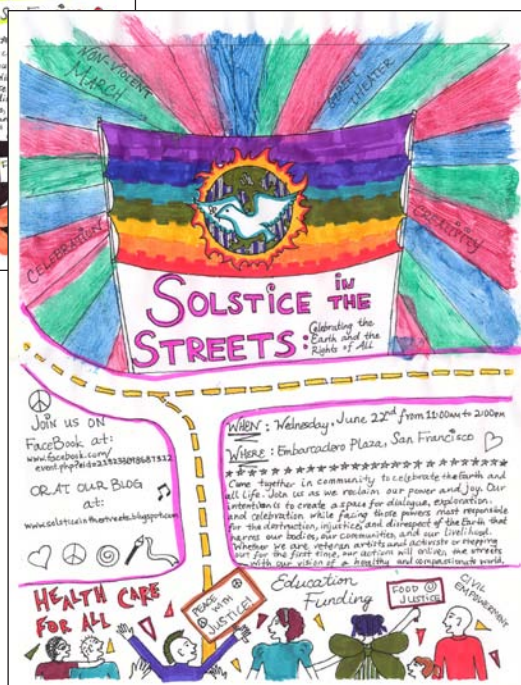
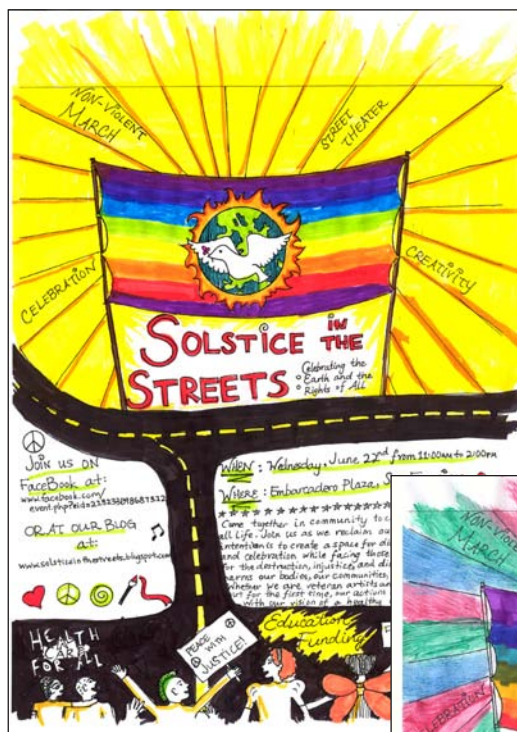
Share ideas and inspirations. Then take 20 minutes or so and create hand-made posters. Don't worry about details or perfection – aim for what will grab attention. The more obviously hand-made the posters are, the better.

When complete, do a quick show-and-tell where you admire one another's creations.

Action – ground and cast a protective circle, then hang the posters as secretly as possible. Unless you choose otherwise, the origin of the posters will be a mystery.

Afterward – return to the place you created the posters. Circle up and take a few breaths together. Go around and let each person say a little about how the action felt, a highlight, etc. Remember to open your circle and say goodbye to each participant.

continued on next page



These aren't exactly "mystery" posters, since we included contact information – hand-colored posters for Solstice in the Streets.

At Teen Earth Magic that year, people colored posters in their spare time. Poster design by K. Mogg. Coloring by TEM campers.

Video of 30 hand-colored posters: WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants



Activist Workings (pg 3)

Bannering – a Legal Direct Action

Goal – create a banner and hang it in public. Bannering is direct action – like postering, we take our message outside the “approved” channels (media, books, pulpits, classrooms). We claim public space for political dialog and communicate our ideas directly to other people in our community.

Materials – heavy paper (several sheets at least 3 x 6 feet); pencils; a few colors of poster-paint; half-dozen brushes; duct tape.

Prep – discuss and reach consensus on: (A) what goes on the banner (words and images), and (B) where to hang it (a hallway, a balcony, the side of a panel-van, the front door of city hall...).

Action – if folks in your group are willing, ground (or take some breaths) together. Cast a circle. Invoke elements and an ally or two.

Involve everyone in the group in drawing and painting the banner. For purposes of this action, no one is an expert. Use pencil-sketches, ruler lines, etc to make painting easier. Once you’ve agreed on the message, don’t worry if the artwork isn’t perfect – it will magically be exactly how it needs to be.

Document the action – photos are fun, but be sure to get permission before you photograph people at a direct action. If the banner connects to local issues, you might want to let local media know about it. Provide local media with an “unposed” photo of your group putting the banner up and they may put it on their website!

Afterward – return to the place you created the banner. Circle up and take a few breaths together. Go around and let each person say a little about how the action felt, a highlight, etc. Remember to open your circle and say goodbye to each participant.

More Ideas for Actions & Exercises

- **Bubbles** – move through town or a mall blowing soap bubbles (inspired by Berkeley poet Julia Vinograd, the Bubble Lady).
- **Puppets** – puppets (hand-held or wearable) liven up any occasion. Find directions for building wearable puppets and other props online. Building and decorating them is half the fun!



Sidewalk Chalking – chalking on public sidewalks is an accepted form of free speech in San Francisco, Berkeley, Oakland, and hopefully your town as well!

- **Masks** – make or buy masks and do simple street theatre. Masks can quickly identify a character or an emotion for on-lookers – and wearing a mask can make street acting easier!
- **Workings: Shadow: Composting Oppressions and Composting Headlines** (see Workings chapter, pages XXXXX).
- **Workings: Spectrums** – spectrum exercises help us articulate hopes, doubts, beliefs, and commitments. Try some spectrums around what people believe, how willing they are to do certain kinds of activism – and why (see Workings chapter, page XXXX).
- **Solstice caroling** – find a few friends, learn some songs, and busk on the street for Solstice, Beltane, etc. A ukulele or two makes singing easier. Since your audience will keep changing, you only need to know a few songs! For ideas, see our chants lists on page XXX..
- **Sidewalk chalking** – similar to Mystery Posters and Bannering – find a couple of friends, brainstorm some ideas (maybe questions? A single word? A quick line drawing?) – and head for the streets. Maybe you want to choose a lookout and/or someone to talk to anyone who approaches you.





Activist Resources

Activist Books by Starhawk

- Dreaming the Dark – visionary activist tools
- Truth or Dare – the personal and the political
- The Earth Path – building relations with our home
- Novels
 - Fifth Sacred Thing – a world in conflict and revolution
 - Walking to Mercury – activist-infused prequel to FST
 - City of Refuge – creating the new world
 - The Last Wild Witch – an eco-parable – now on youtube!

Reclaiming's Activist Backstory

Direct Action: An Historical Novel by Luke Hauser – the activist roots of Reclaiming. It's funny, too!

Print or free PDF at DirectAction.org.

Activist Handbooks

Free PDF downloads of direct action handbooks. Practical discussions of consensus, nonviolence, affinity groups, feminism, confronting oppression, and much more.

Visit: DirectAction.org/handbook/.

Pagan Cluster Listserve

The Living River (LivRiv) is the Reclaiming Pagan Cluster's international activist list. Learn about upcoming actions, workshops, etc. Contact others and join the actions.

To join the Living River elist, or for questions, contact: ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com.

Websites for Magical Activism

- Starhawk.org – workshops, writings, resources.
- EarthActivistTraining.org – intensive retreats with Starhawk and others.
- DirectAction.org – free downloads of Luke Hauser's activist novel, plus handbooks, music, and more.
- WeaveAndSpin.org – current Reclaiming posts.
- ReclaimingQuarterly.org – includes photo-coverage of Pagan Cluster actions from about 2005-2016, plus front-line reports from Starhawk, Kate Raphael, Lisa Fithian, Juniper, Luke Hauser, and more

Key Issues & Allies

M4BL.org – Movement for Black Lives

ExtinctionRebellion.us – XR stateside

Rebellion.earth – XR in UK

FoodNotBombs.net – food for people, not profit!

Keep Us Posted!

If you're involved in activism in your area – and doubly so if you have a Pagan affinity group – let us know! Email ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com.

Chants for the Streets

Some of Reclaiming's favorite chants were written for street actions and marches. See [Ritual Skills: Chants Resources](#) for playlists – pages XXX.

Photo – Black Lives Matter march, Oakland, c. 2012.





Three Activist Narratives

Memoir, History, Fiction

Sometimes we need handbooks and how-to manuals. Sometimes we need a documentary.

Then there are the times we really want a good story!

Here are three activist narratives by Reclaiming Pagan Cluster activists, each with its own unique perspective.

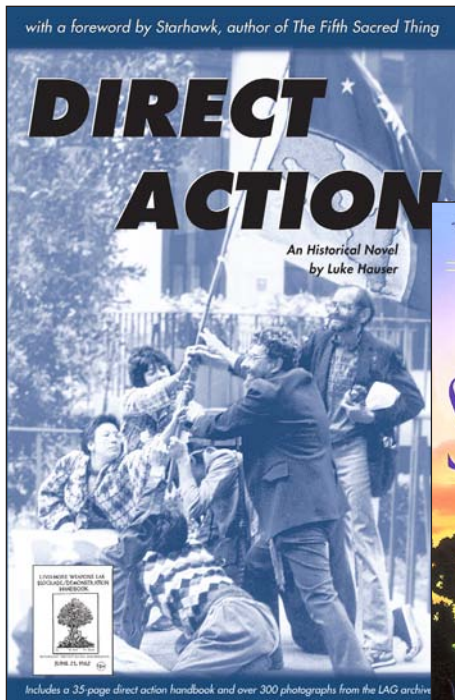
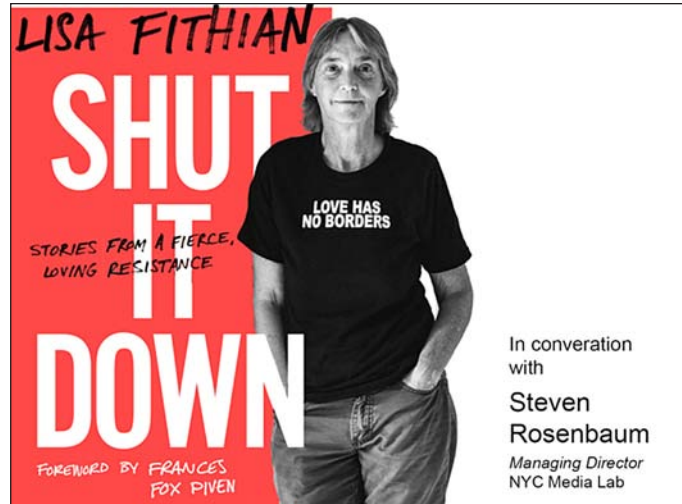
Shut It Down

Stories from a Fierce, Loving Resistance

by Lisa Fithian

Lisa traces her personal journey through a litany of global actions of the past two decades, sharing key lessons and insights from each.

Follow her from Seattle in 1999 through Occupy in 2011 to Standing Rock and Ferguson in recent years.

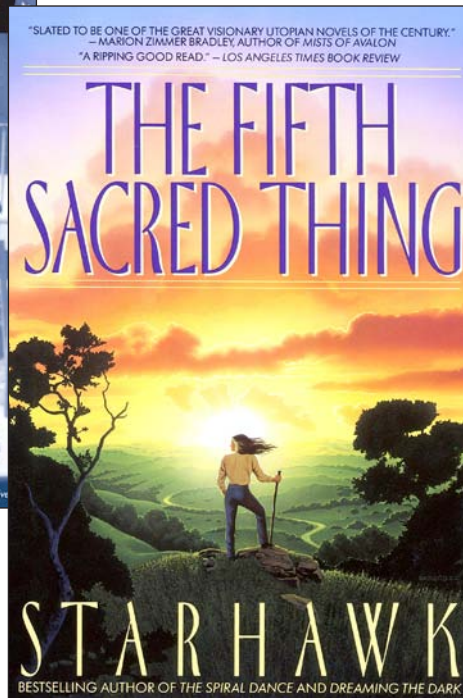


The Fifth Sacred Thing

by Starhawk

Set in post-apocalyptic California, this stirring novel pits the authoritarian Stewards against the anarchistic pagans of Northern California, who have created a rag-tag utopia where no one lives in want, culture and cooperation are uppermost, and the Sacred Elements are valued unconditionally.

This novel is part of a trilogy with *Walking to Mercury* and *City of Refuge*.



Direct Action

An Historical Novel

by Luke Hauser

Action-packed (and photo-filled) narrative of the vibrant activist cauldron that gave birth to Reclaiming.

Although set in 1982-84, the 2003 novel incorporates analysis and critique of direct action and civil disobedience strategy and tactics through the end of the millennium.





Magical Activism Through History

Inheritances, Stories, Legacies



Magical & Activist Ancestors – a new book!

Take a look back at previous generations of activism and their legacies. *Magical & Activist Ancestors* began as an essay for this book but soon grew into its own paperback.

“An enormous amount of material... very- attractive and readable.” – Michael D. Bailey, Iowa State University

Print edition or free PDF – WeaveAndSpin.org/ancestors

Reclaiming Activism: Yesterday & Today

A photo journey from 1980 to 2020!



Youtube: A Brief History of Nonviolent Direct Action

Luke Hauser's 25-minute survey of activism through US history – including many Pagan Cluster photos!

WeaveAndSpin.org/youtube



ACTIVIST ANCESTORS

A SHORT BIBLIOGRAPHY

Reclaiming's Activist Origins

Starhawk: Dreaming the Dark

Luke Hauser: Direct Action: An Historical Novel

Activist Fiction

Starhawk: Walking to Mercury

Starhawk: The Fifth Sacred Thing

Starhawk: City of Refuge

Kate Raphael: Murder Under the Fig Tree

Kate Raphael: Murder Under the Bridge

T. Thorn Coyle: The Witches of Portland

Activist Nonfiction

Starhawk: Truth or Dare

Starhawk: The Earth Path

Starhawk: The Empowerment Manual

Lisa Fithian: Shut It Down

Luke Hauser: Teen Earth Magic Workbook



Activist Websites

Starhawk.org (all Starhawk, all the time!)

EarthActivistTraining.org (Starhawk & friends' trainings)

DirectAction.org (book, resources, downloads)

ExinctionRebellion.us (environmental activism)

Wslfweb.org (anti-nuclear and peace activism)

Activist Chants

WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists

Photos

Above: Occupy San Francisco / Foreclose the Banks, 2011.

Left: Occupy San Francisco, 2011.

Next page – lower left: M. L. King Jr Day, Oakland, 2015.

Next page – top three: Livermore Action group, 1982-83, by Janet Delaney, Keith Holmes, Ted Sahl.





Youtube: A History of Nonviolent Direct Action



Join author Luke Hauser for an illustrated video journey through the history of nonviolent direct action in the United States.

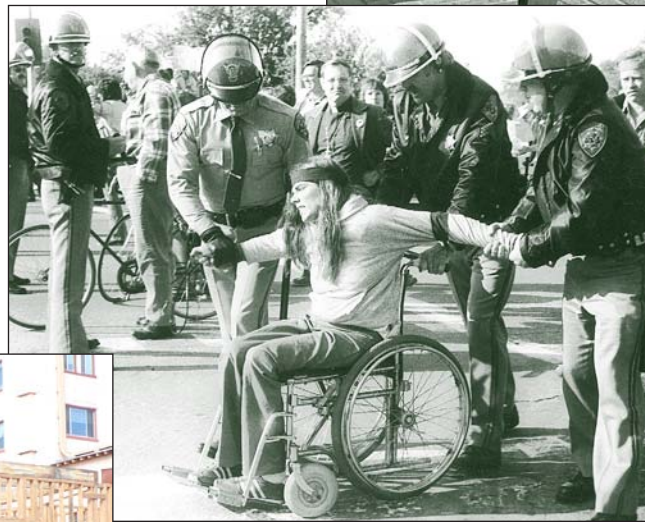
The show traces grassroots activism from its roots in the American Revolution, abolitionism, and the women's

suffrage movement, through Civil Rights and anti-war organizing, anti-nuclear and peace movements of the later 1900s, and finally the vibrant social and environmental justice movements of today.

Illustrated with over 100 photos and images, the show follows the development of nonviolent civil disobedience, urban street tactics, and peace camps, culminating with Black Lives Matter, Extinction Rebellion, and other direct action movements of today.

The video is a crisp 25 minutes – including intermission!

Produced by GroundWork and Reclaiming Quarterly – DirectAction.org/youtube



Nonviolent Direct Action: A History

An illustrated video journey with Luke Hauser

DirectAction.org/youtube



Workings & Exercises

- Intro & Small-Group Techniques..... 173
 - Transitions, Small Groups, Milling 176
- Affirmations..... 180
- Allies Circle / My Own Best Ally..... 181
- Altars / Scavenger Altars 184
- Auras / Aura Carwash..... 190
- Automatic Writing 196
- Bead Ceremony..... 197
- Blessings & Star Goddess 199
- Book of Shadows 202
- Boundaries: Collages / Scrub-Jay Lines 203
- Campfire Activities 206
- Circle Workings 208
- Collages 211
- Costume Magic..... 213
- Divination: Nature Readings / Oracles / Scrying..... 214
- Flaming Cauldron 219
- Games - Cooperative / Quick & Active 221
- Grounding: Red Cord Spell 225
- Harvest Stations..... 227
- Intuitive Practices 229
- Labyrinth Workings..... 230
- Letter to Myself 233
- Liberation Circle..... 234
- Lifting Each Other Up 236

- Magical Writing..... 239
- Mirror Affirmations / Boundaries / Goddess 241
- Nature Sit / Night Sit 244
- Non-Judgmental Listening..... 246
- Overflowing Cup / Ace of Cups Spell 248
- Pentacles Magic: Intro / Pearl / Great Turning..... 249
- Purification: Bridge Challenge / Star Purification... 255
- Shadow Work 259
 - Shadow: Tarot & Mirrors / Shadow Party 260
 - Composting Headlines & Oppressions 262
 - Costume Shadows 266
- Spectrums of Belief & Choice 268
- Spellcrafting 271
 - Spell: Breaking a Commitment 274
 - Spell: Burning or Composting Putdowns..... 275
 - Spell Candles 276
 - Spell: Charging with Fire & Flour 278
 - Spell: Temperance Pouring 279
 - Spell: Waters of the World 280
 - Spell: The Wicker One..... 281
 - Spell: Yarn Binding..... 283
- Tarot: A Key Magical Practice 285
 - Tarot Reading: Quick Intro (one page) 288
 - Tarot: Intuitive Reading 289
 - Tarot: Reversals & Difficult Cards..... 293
 - Tarot: Living Tableaux 295
 - Tarot: Speed Readings 296
 - Tarot: Tarot Stories 298
 - Tarot: Journey of the Spirit..... 299
- Tools of Magic / Magical Correspondences 303
 - Tools Cakewalk 307
- Trance: Place of Power (Online) 309
- Transformational Tableaux 310
- Trust Walk..... 312
- Voice Magic..... 317
- Wand-Crafting..... 322



Some workings get folks moving, such as a cooperative water game.





Workings: Intro

A Magical Compendium of Workings from Reclaiming

In Circle, Alone – or at a Party?

The workings in this chapter are the core of many rituals, classes, and WitchCamp paths. This is a “greatest hits” from over 40 years of Reclaiming magic!

We’ve described them here for small circles (4-8 people). Most also describe them as solitary workings.

These workings are described for larger groups in our Teen Earth Magic workbook – visit TeenEarthMagic.org

Not all of these workings are “Pagan.” Some of these make perfect birthday-party activities – what could build group spirit better than lifting one another overhead?

If you’re using this book with a group, take a look at the agreements we often make at our classes and camps – they’ll help lay a basis of trust. Read Intro: Agreements.

We hope you use these workings in many ways to add power, awareness, and energy to different parts of your life!

Sacred Space

We often weave these workings into a simple ritual by creating sacred space at the beginning. We pause again for a few minutes to open the circle at the end.

There’s a practical reason for working within sacred space. Magic involves focused attention and intuition. Before we jump into a spell or other working, we take time to clear our attention and to awaken our intuition.

It doesn’t always have to be an elaborate process. For ideas, see Ritual Skills: Sacred Space: Quick Ways.

At the end, remember to devoke and open the circle. Devoking elements or allies can be as easy as saying their name, taking a breath, and offering, “Thank you!”

Adapting & Teaching These Workings

We’re glad to see these exercises used by other groups and traditions. Truth be told, we’ve borrowed more than a few. You can continue the tradition.

Any group who accept our Principles of Unity can declare themselves a Reclaiming circle. See page XXXX.

However, unless you are formally trained in our tradition, we ask that you not present yourself as a Reclaiming

teacher, or refer to your activities as a “WitchCamp.”

Reclaiming is a formal tradition with trained teachers. Local communities and WitchCamps also have processes for training new teachers and organizers.

If you want to participate and study in the Reclaiming Tradition, a great place to begin is at a WitchCamp – find camps in many regions at WitchCamp.org.

No Grooming or Recruiting – this material is not to be used to recruit youth for circles or classes apart from knowing and communicating with their families. No Reclaiming material is ever to be used to groom young people.

If you have questions about anyone teaching this material, contact ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com.



Some workings are quiet and reflective, like this collage workshop.

Let the Magic Begin!

Whether you begin by choosing one of these workings, jumping into the Rituals chapter, or reading more of the book first – trust your intuition.

Are there others you might circle with? What workings might appeal to others you know?

When in doubt, we recommend the ancient divination tool known as bibliomancy – skim through the book and let something jump out!



Tips for Rituals & Circles

Ways of shaping ritual energy

Here's some handy tips for shaping ritual energy. Getting comfortable with these techniques will help keep your rituals and circles lively and flowing.

Ring the changes – a chiming bowl and/or gong marks mood changes, gathering times, etc – without you speaking a word.

Sing the changes – similarly, when you complete a working and move to the next, mark the transition with a song that pertains to one or both – you'll find lots of ideas at Ritual Skills: Chants.

Don't dumb it down – 'nuff said.

Right-to-pass – everyone is present and tuned in – but no one has to do or say anything, and people can also move to the sideline and take a break.

Mix it up – this is true for adult classes too. Have a mix of active and quieter exercises. Use "stations" rituals (see Rituals: Stations Format) as a way to give people choices and variety.

Increase participation – use go-rounds, dyads and triads, etc. Invite pairs of people to take on ritual roles – this way, quieter folks might be drawn into participation. Match newer people with experienced folks to pass along skills.

Quick games and songs – toss them in to provide a breather from more intense work.

Make agreements, not rules – where strict rules are needed (for instance, no one goes off-site), explain why, and ask if people will "agree" even though it's not really a choice – ask people's buy-in on as much as possible.

Create opportunities for leadership – people are more engaged and cooperative if they also get a chance to lead. Some folks will have games, songs, and activities they want to lead. Find out what others want to offer and try to weave it into a ritual. Give them good support.

Take breaks – snack breaks, time-out for games, or even letting people check their messages can help loosen things up.



Simple drumming focuses energy. Play a heartbeat while someone speaks or leads a trance or song.

Magical Toolkit

- timer
- bell / chime / bowl
- tea lights & lighters
- altar cloth
- knife & scissors
- rope (several sizes)
- tape (several kinds)
- paper, pens
- markers (different sizes)
- pad of large paper
- planning notebook
- water for drinking
- magical tools:
 - athame
 - chalice
 - mirror(s)
 - tarot deck(s)
 - drum(s)

Moving Stuck Energy

Even the best circle can get stuck. Maybe you've done a long go-round and everyone has been heard, but there is no resolution. Maybe you've done a long, slow magical working that left everyone sluggish.

Shaking our bodies, getting fresh air – these are quick ways to move energy. Sometimes what is needed is to debrief in dyads or triads (see above) – give people a chance to open up and talk with one or two people before moving on.

What about something wordless like an Aura Carwash (see Workings: Aura Carwash)? How about reinforcing our circle with some high-impact rounds of Pass the Knot (see Workings: Circle: Pass the Knot)?

Or maybe you need an upbeat song like Rise with the Fire of Freedom or We Are the Power in Everyone.





Affirmations: Words of Power

INTENT

A humorous, active way to get in touch with our own brilliance, beauty, wisdom, etc. Can be awkward and challenging for some people, but hopefully ends on a positive note for all.

People are asked to interact a lot. Can be difficult for a brand new group, but a good opening exercise on day two or three.

TIME & SPACE

Fifteen minutes including transitions and debrief. Enough space to mill around.

PREP

Need note cards with affirmative words written on them, one large word per card – see below for a list of ideas. Words should be ordinary ones that are easy for people to guess. Need as many cards as participants. Don't let people see them ahead of time.

- Set of 16 words below, and add your own.
- Tape to affix the cards on people's backs – people cannot see their own, yet it is easy to see each others' words.

WORKING

Gather people in a circle and affix one word to each person's back, so the person doesn't see their own word.

When all are ready – people walk around speaking to one another as if their affirmation was true of that person. For instance – if Sally Ann's word is "Brilliant," people might catch her attention and say, "You are so smart! You shine like a diamond!"

The goal is to guess your word. Some will get theirs right away, others will be stumped. Priestesses help the last few people.

When complete, gather in a circle. Go around and each person speaks their word, allowing a pause after each to let it sink in. At end, priestess says: "Each of these words is true of every one of us. These are our birthright, our true being. Breathe them in."

Song for wrapping up: My Soul; Opening Up in Sweet Surrender; Let the Beauty We Love.

SOLO WORKING

Need – Book of Shadows; note cards or slips of paper; pen or marker. Write one affirmative word at the top of each note card or slip of paper.

Scramble them, then draw the words like divination cards – for each card, write at least three more positive words.

After you've drawn five or more cards and written for each, go back and underline a half-dozen words. Make a short poem that includes these words – read it aloud three times, breathing between each reading and reminding yourself that every word you read is true about you.

Affirmation Words

Intuitive	Skillful	Lovable	Brilliant
Insightful	Fantastic	Radiant	Powerful
Amazing	Wonderful	Strong	Beautiful
Gorgeous	Incredible	Passionate	Talented



Allies Circle

INTENT

This is a powerful working which illustrates our connections with others and the deep support available from our community. This working could follow a shadow working or meditation – one that touches places where we feel alone or powerless. We’ve used Allies Circles as the final ritual working at several camps – a culmination of our time together. Doing the working around a campfire adds an extra touch of magic. It could also be done as the first working in the final morning path, followed by Lifting Each Other Up.



TIME & SPACE

This is a working for half-dozen or more – a dozen is ideal. Consider doing this as part of a birthday party. Meanwhile, see My Own Best Ally on the following page.

Each person will speak, and many will want to go more than once.... In a circle of about 12-25 people, this working can take an hour. Any more people than this and it will get long, so consider limiting people to speaking once each.

You’ll need room for a loose circle. A fire or altar in the center helps focus the energy. Circle should be 8-10 feet back from center.

PREP

Ritual fire in center, or create a central altar.

If you are not already in ritual space, cast a circle and invoke elements and allies for this working as a strong magical container. Remember to devoke afterward.

Need one or two priestesses to do a short meditation and facilitate the working – a good chance to pair a veteran and a newer teacher.

Ask a couple of mentors or teachers who have done this working before to go first and second, to model how it works (and to offer examples of the sorts of things people might share – some people will know right away, and others will have to think about it).

Examples might be:

- “I can’t concentrate at school and it’s hurting my grades.”
- “I have chosen my own name.”
- “I don’t fit into the gender role that was assigned to me at birth.”
- “Sometimes I’ve done things to hurt myself.”

Priestesses also prepare one or two final statements that will close the working on a solid, inclusive note. For example: “I feel stronger when I am surrounded by friends and allies.”

continued on next page





Allies Circle (pg 2)

WORKING

Gather in a circle. Priestess explains working: “We will be doing an Allies Circle. One by one, we will have a chance to step into the circle and say something true about ourselves where we want to know that we are not alone, and feel the support from our allies. A couple of mentors will go first, and then people can go whenever they are ready. Let’s allow everyone to have a chance to speak once before we go a second time. As with all of our workings, you have the right to pass.”

Priestess leads a short meditation about where in your life you might want allies, where you might feel alone or unsupported. What would it be like to ask for and receive support from this circle? Give people a few moments to think about this.

First person (a mentor chosen ahead of time) takes a couple of steps into circle, and makes a statement such as: “I can’t concentrate at school and it’s hurting my grades.”

Priestess: “Anyone who wants to claim this statement as true for themselves, take a couple of steps forward. (Usually at least a few people step up, sometimes most of the circle.)

“Take a look at those who have stepped in with you. (They look around.)

“Now turn and look at the outer circle – your allies. (Any teachers and mentors in outer circle model support – good attention, perhaps holding your palms open toward center.)

“Inner circle, acknowledge your allies, and return to the circle.” (Inner folks nod, touch their hearts, etc, then rejoin outer circle.)

Second person steps in, perhaps saying something more challenging such as, “Sometimes when I’m depressed I feel like hurting myself.”

Priestess repeats guiding steps above (“those who claim this statement step in,” etc). After a few rounds, priestess won’t need to say so much, but it often helps to give simple directions for each round.

Continue until all have had a chance. When everyone has gone once, invite people to stop and take a breath.

If time permits and people seem focused, people can go a second time.

At some point, you’ll want to close the working.

Closing the working – this exercise can go on and on, as people think of more ways they can ask for support. The challenge is to feel when the energy is starting to slacken, and have a strong closing ready.

When time is short, you could say, “We have time for a few more...”

Priestess or someone else has pre-planned the last round or two – statements that are likely to include most or all people in the group. Example: “I feel stronger when I know that I have allies.”

Song – I Would Know Myself In All My Parts; Let the Beauty We Love; We Are Alive As the Earth Is Alive; My Soul.

SOLO WORKING

This is a hard one to do alone, or even with a few people. A good solo working for this material is Allies: My Own Best Ally.





Allies: My Own Best Ally

INTENT

Recognizing that we have the skills and tools to be great allies to ourselves.

TIME & SPACE

Any number. 15 minutes including transitions. Room for people to sit and write – close enough to hear priestess.

PREP

Sheets of paper or Books of Shadows, pens or markers (markers are easier on uneven surfaces).

WORKING

Each person gets a pen and several sheets of paper (or blank journal pages). Priestess guides:

(1) Write at top of page: "If I were embarking on a magical quest, my ideal companion / ally / guide would be like this" – then free-write for a couple of minutes. Write as fast and continuously as you can, without editing or over-thinking. Just keep writing.

(2) Take a breath, then go back and underline some key words in your writing that describe your ally. Here is an example:

"They would be strong and dedicated, unwavering in their support. They would be good-humored and able to laugh at mistakes, wrong turns, etc. And they would be intelligent enough to figure out when they are doing something useful and when they are wasting their time."

(3) Below this, write: "As an ally, some secret magical tools I possess are:" – and make a list of the underlined words:

- | | |
|---------------|--------------------------|
| - strong | - good humor |
| - unwavering | - support |
| - intelligent | - doing something useful |

(4) On a fresh page, write: "When I think about doing something amazing in the world, what I worry about is" – free-write for a minute or two. Here's an example:

"That I will not be able to maintain a focus, that I will get distracted and try to do too many things, that I will misestimate my talents and waste my time pursuing dead ends."

(5) Underline a few key worries, and make a list of them:

- get distracted
- misestimate my talents
- waste my time

(6) Now look back at your list of ally-skills. Next to each worry, match a "secret magical tool" from the first list. Here's an example:

- get distracted / unwavering
- misestimate my talents / use my intelligence
- waste my time / doing something useful

(7) Write in your journal: "To apply these skills, what would I need to change in my life? What would I need to do differently? Is this something I am willing to do? What is one step I can take toward this goal?" (Maybe also do Workings: Letter To Myself.)

(8) Talk in dyads or triads – "What would it mean to be my own best ally? How would I need to grow? What's one step I can take?"

(8) Re-circle. Go around – each person says one word from their "secret magical tools" list. Hear the words as a poem.

SOLO WORKING

Same as above.





Altars

INTENT

An altar is any dedicated space set apart from the mundane world. Setting up a magical altar can represent “making space” for magic – and making time and space for yourself.

It might be a dresser-top, a table in a corner, or a favorite spot in a garden or woods. It might live inside a suitcase or box and be brought out only for special occasions. It could be on the nightstand – a place you visit daily. But you might consider a more versatile space that supports more varied types of workings.

If you like making art, an altar can be like an installation and can include other artworks you create. Altars at public rituals like the Spiral Dance are sometimes interactive installations created by local artists.

Altars can also be very simple – a carved glass pitcher on a blue cloth could be an elegant West altar. A stack of rocks in a grassy field can anchor North.



At this participatory Spiral Dance altar from 2008, people could write a name or place a pebble for a beloved ancestor. Photo by Michael Rauner.

Place or remove items from an altar with intention. Pause, breathe, and be aware of your actions.

TIME & SPACE

Any flat space that won't be disturbed. A dresser-top, a nightstand, a window sill. Time – however much you want to devote to setting the altar up, then later adding to and tending it.

Altars are a great solo working – and see the following pages for some group-altar ideas.

PREP

Prepare your altar by visioning and gathering magical items and accoutrements. The prep never ends!

Altar Health & Safety

Food – unless you are intentionally creating an altar to

honor ants and flies, remove food offerings at the end of the day. Compost leftovers to send them back into the cycle of life.

Fire – magic can be distracting. Whether you're in your bedroom or a forest, take extra precautions. Indoors, use glass jar candles, not open flames. Keep wall-hangings away from your altar. Tie back curtains. Have a smoke detector and extinguisher handy.

WORKINGS

Elemental Altar(s)

A dresser-top might offer enough space to create mini-altars to each element (Air in the East, Fire in the South, Water in West, Earth in North). Perhaps Spirit/Mystery in the center can be a different tarot card every day.

Limited space? How about an elemental altar that changes daily (or weekly or when you get around to it). Begin with “Air” items, changing to Fire, Water, Earth, and finally Center/Mystery. Tarot cards can be part of this elemental altar too – see the correspondences under Workings: Tools of Magic.

continued on next page



Altars (pg 2)

Ancestor Altar

At Samhain (Halloween, a season for ancestors in many traditions) we build altars to honor ancestors of our families, our spiritual and cultural traditions, and also the First People of the land we are on.

Photos, books, musical instruments, old tools or artifacts.... What speaks to you of your own past?

Prepare a meal for the cultural heritage of one of your ancestors. If you're making a new dish, go online and find out how and when this food was traditionally served.

Before eating, prepare a dish of food for your ancestor and place it on your altar with words of remembrance and offering. Afterward, compost leftovers so they'll go back to the cycle of life, death, and rebirth (and not the cycle of ants).

As you eat, listen to music, read poetry – whatever that connects you to that culture.

✧ **Book of Shadows** – before you clean up, sit quietly, and write in your journal.

Interactive Altar

Add this working to any altar. Cut small strips of paper large enough for a word or phrase. Place them on your altar next to a nice bowl.

Each time you pass your altar, stop for a moment and write a word inspired by your altar. Place the writing in the bowl. Later, stop at your altar, take a breath, pull a strip of paper, and read it.

✧ **Book of Shadows** – want a quick inspiration for your writing? Contemplate your altar, then pull a tarot card, set it on your altar, and write the first thoughts that pop into your head.

Altar to Your Dreams

Sketch (on paper or in your mind) an altar that celebrates and honors your dreams, your vision for your life.

What is the centerpiece? What colors are the altar cloths? Does it include “natural elements” such as water or fire?

How might it be interactive (ie, what is something that you or someone else might *do* at your altar)?



A Spiral Dance altar, created by people attending the 2014 ritual. Photo by Michael Rauner.

Words of Inspiration

Copy favorite quotes, questions, challenges, etc. Place them intentionally on your altar.

What other objects do you see on this altar?

How will you know when to remove the writings?

Magical Workbench

Altars are ideal spaces for magical work – a place to ground, cast a circle, do divination, charge magical tools (see Workings: Tools).

Like any crafts person or artist, we want our tools handy and unclut-

continued on next page





Altars (pg 3)

tered. For some of us, that means placing items neatly on shelves. For others, it might mean storing them in a drawer.

Ideally, do you want your magical tools laid out like a workbench? Or do you want them out of sight after a working?

What belongs on your magical workbench? Is it elemental tools like a chalice and blade? Is it a deck of divination cards, face down and ready to draw?

Is it your latest tarot reading or throw of the runes, lingering partly as inspiration and partly as decoration?

SOLO WORKINGS

A personal altar can be a magical workstation. It's a place to ground, cast your circle, read tarot or runes or do other divination, charge magical tools (from athames to guitar picks), bless your art or writing...

It can also be a work-in-perpetual-progress – an ongoing magical experiment made up of your workings and readings.

GROUP WORKINGS

Labyrinth Challenge Ritual (see Rituals: Labyrinth Challenges) – as their first challenge, invite each person to use whatever objects they find (if indoors, bring a variety of objects), and create an altar that honors their work with the group. Perhaps a second challenge is to return to the altar and do nature divination (See Workings: Divination: Nature Readings).

Living Altars – in a small group of about six people – take a moment and each envision an ideal altar (perhaps to honor a decision or commitment they have made). Each person quickly describes their altar – and the others join to make a human sculpture of it.

Giant Altar – a favorite with younger groups – build a giant elemental altar using found objects, some as big as anyone can haul back. Set a few guidelines (“Don’t bring back a living tree, no poison oak, no small creatures, etc.”) – and go for it!



A simple, powerful altar to the Fey – Spiral Dance 2009. Photo by Michael Rauner.



A sparkly floor altar greets people arriving at the 2015 Spiral Dance. Photo by Michael Rauner.



Altar: Scavenger Altars

INTENT

Elemental Altars Scavenger Hunt – a fun way to engage with the elements in the outdoors. This is a good balance to a gathering that will mostly be sitting still.

Try this as the elemental invocations in a ritual.

Can include all five elements, or focus on just one.

TIME & SPACE

Any number, in groups of three to five. Allow a half hour or more. If outdoors, set some boundaries.

With a young group, include a mentor or teacher in each group.

PREP

Make scavenger lists in advance – include some items people are likely to find for each of the element. Invite people to add other magical items for each element, and to spontaneously find additional items.

Example – Air items: feather; something fluffy or airy; white flower; decayed wood that is mostly air; one additional object that says “Air” to you.

Set boundaries and figure out where people can make altars. Tell people how long they will have, and ring a bell as a five-minute warning.



WORKING

Groups of three to five – hand out scavenger lists. Depending on time, groups could each take one element, or each do all five.

Challenge people to find items, then construct a simple altar to the elements. Bonus points for cool objects not on list.

Ring a bell when five minutes remain and suggest people stop searching for items and focus on “sculpting” their altars.

When altars are finished (or time runs out), do a Tour des Altars. Each group shows off a few special items, and says why they feel those items belong with this element.

End with an elements song (see Ritual Skills: Chants – page 112).

SOLO WORKING

Using the list on the next page (or your own list), go outdoors and find as many items as you can. Make an altar in your yard or in an outdoor spot. Sing or listen to an elements song.

An impromptu scavenger altar at California WitchCamp.

Photo by Otter.





Auras

INTENT

Our aura is the life-energy that fills and surrounds our physical body. One's aura can change size or texture depending on our mood, physical health, etc. When we say someone has "big energy," we're talking about their aura taking up a lot of space.

The size of our aura varies, depending on mood and physical energy – typically it extends about 4 to 12 inches from our bodies.

Our aura is the way we experience the world. When we are in a peaceful, life-filled place like a forest or a room full of friends, we feel love and inspiration filling our aura, our entire being.

When we are surrounded by pressure, unhappiness, anger – our auras can't help but be affected. Soon our own energy feels more stressed and anxious.

Sensing Auras

Some people sense auras by moving their hands a few inches from the physical body (rubbing your hands together first may help). You may notice warmth or cold, various textures, or tingling. You might sense areas of tension or pain.

Some people see auras as colors, or as a kind of radiant energy (a plain white background might help). Some sit silently facing a person and "read" their aura (gently touching your third eye may help).

By experimenting, each of us finds our own ways.

When we become aware of our own and others' auras and personal energy, we can take steps to strengthen or change how we are in the world and how we experience other people.

Here are some ways to work with auras, including becoming aware of our own and others' energy, finding ways to shift our aura, and learning to shield ourselves from others' energy.

TIME & SPACE

These exercises can be done alone or in a group. With more than 20, break into sub-groups. When it's time to share, form triads if you're over a half-dozen. You can do one or two of these workings in 20-30 minutes, or build a longer sequence. Try alternating quiet and active workings.

PREP

Read through the exercises so you have some ideas ahead of time (especially for the Aura Fills). If you're a group, choose a priestess to lead each working.

SENSING AURAS

Begin by becoming aware of your own energy. Rub your palms together, then hold them about six inches apart. Close your eyes and slowly move your palms closer. You may start to feel pressure, as if you are compressing a balloon, or a springiness like a rubber band. Maybe you feel radiant warmth. Play with this until you find your own ways of sensing this energy.

Practicing with a Partner

Practice sensing others' energy by working in a group or with a trusted friend. Sit facing one another but not touching – touch will distract you during this exercise.

One person (whose energy will be read) sits quietly, closing your eyes and breathing steadily. Let your mind wander without trying to figure anything out.

Second person (reader), using your various senses but without touching or talking to the person, see if you can sense your

continued on next page



Auras (pg 2)

partner's aura. Move around as needed. Try doing this for a specific amount of time – say three to five minutes.

- Hold your open palms three to six inches from the person's head, neck, belly, or hands – hold your hands steady, then slowly move them closer and further – can you feel a difference?
- Sit facing the person – if possible with a plain background. Soften your gaze and notice the colors around the person. Of course you'll see actual colors of the person and surroundings – let these be, and notice whether other colors glow around the edges of the person. You may see ripples or waves of energy. Don't worry about figuring it out – just spend a minute or two noticing.
- Sit facing, soften your gaze, and notice the person's energy-body – using your intuition, where is the person holding energy? Where is it flowing freely? Where do you sense strength? Where are worry or fear?

When time is up, both people stand and stretch, then sit down and each take a turn sharing what the experience was like. Use "I" statements and speak gently – "I felt this or that, I sensed this or that." Try saying, "I sensed cautious energy around your heart," not, "You have bleak, hideous energy stuck in your heart!"

Stand and stretch again, and change roles.

When both are complete, do something to shift the energy – put on music, dance, read tarot cards, pet the cat...

AURA MAGIC / AURA SHIFTING

British occultist and author Dion Fortune described magic as the art of "changing consciousness at will." We can change how we are in the world by consciously shifting the energy of our aura.

In real life, this can be difficult! If you feel insecure, you can't just snap your fingers and be confident. But you can practice ahead of time and learn ways to shift your energy. Here are some aura games that you can do alone or with a group.

Ground first – eg, close your eyes and breathe for 60 seconds – then touch the Earth and breathe three times.

Cast a circle around the space. Then each person take a minute and cast a personal circle (actually a sphere) around yourself. You can do this by closing your eyes and on a series of easy breaths be aware of the space around you, as if you are inside a bubble. Breathe into this sphere to inflate it – then bring it in about six inches away from your body. Sense its boundaries. This is roughly your aura.

Noticing Our Aura

Pay attention to the boundaries of your own aura. You might rub your hands together and then use the palm of one hand to feel the edge of your energy-body.

When you can sense the edge of your aura, close your eyes and notice what is going on inside. How is your physical body doing? Are you nervous? Relaxed? Afraid you're doing it all wrong? Just notice, let go, and notice again.

Moving Within Our Energy Bubble

Imagine yourself inside a big soap bubble. Use your breath and hands to push the bubble out from your body. Feel its edges. Patch up any leaky spots.

Without speaking, and with soft eyes, move around the space, letting yourself feel what it's like to move within your own personal energy bubble. (We do this all the time – but now we're really paying attention!)

Can you move around the room and still feel a solid circle around you? If it wavers, can you stop and restore it with a silent breath? What helps you stay focused on your own present experience?

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Auras (pg 3)

Boundaries – Inflated & Deflated Aura

Create an energy bubble as above. Take a few breaths and see if you can bring it about six inches from your physical body. When you have it, move slowly around the space, noticing how it feels to move past other people.

Inflated Aura – take some easy breaths and inflate your bubble. Pump your energy larger – use your hands and arms if it helps. Feel yourself inside an inflated bubble. Now move around the space. Notice that your energy probably overlaps with other people or objects. Notice what this is like.

If you're a small group, stop and do a bit of sharing (larger group break into triads – if alone, write in your journal):

What was this “inflated aura” like? What colors and/or emotions does it make you think of? What situations does it remind you of? Would you be inclined to inflate your aura at a party? At a mall or in a cafeteria? Around your friends or family? If you are leading a magical working or making a presentation? If you are scared?

Deflated Aura – take some easy breaths and deflate your bubble. Let extra energy flow down into the Earth, and draw your aura in very close – use your hands and arms if it helps. Feel yourself inside a very tight bubble. Now move around the space, keeping some distance from other people or objects. Notice what this is like.

Do some sharing or write in your journal:
What was this “deflated aura” like?

What colors and/or emotions does it make you think of? What situations does it remind you of? Would you be inclined to deflate your aura at a party? At a mall or in a cafeteria? Around your friends or family? If you are leading a magical working or making a presentation? If you are scared?



Aura workings can get folks up and moving – a nice balance with quieter workings such as meditations and trances. JeWitchCamp/Wilderness Torah, early 2020.

Boundaries – Aura Fills

Now that we've become aware of the difference that a shift in our aura can make, let's take it a step further. What if we consciously filled our aura with a specific energy? What if we could fill our auras with positive energy when we feel uncomfortable, with calming energy when we feel nervous, or with sparkly energy when we need to shine?

Here's a game that lets us practice shifting our aura – “changing consciousness at will.” Create an energy-bubble surrounding you, as above. Notice the overall energy inside your bubble... What color is it?... Do you have a name for this type of energy?

Now let this energy fall down into the Earth, and call into your aura the energy of cold steel.... Let cold steel fill your aura.... With each breath, feel yourself encased in cold steel.... Now soften your eyes and move slowly around the space, noticing what it feels like to move as cold steel.

After a minute, stop. Let that energy slide down into the Earth. Take a breath and let it go. Now with a breath, fill your aura with lime jello.... Let green lime jello fill your energy-body.... Breathe deep, and feel yourself immersed in lime jello.... Now soften your eyes and move slowly around the space, noticing what it feels like.

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Auras (pg 4)

Continue with a few more – if you're a small group, invite others to call out ideas. In a bigger group, have a priestess or two to do this. Here are a few more ideas:

- Fluffy pillows; cactus; smiles; peanut butter.
- Moods: seriousness; gloom; confidence...
- M&M auras (one flavor on the inside, one outside): fuzzy kitten inside / cactus outside; guard-dog inside / smiley-face outside.

At the end, come together and do a bit of sharing or write in your journal: What were the different energies like? Did any feel more "natural" to you than others? Did any feel uncomfortable? Can you see ways you might use this to change energy in your daily life (maybe not the lime jello...)?

To close, do a quick purification – take five breaths – on each exhale, let go of any stray or unneeded energy. Then stand straight and tall and take three deep star-breaths – calling bright star energy to purify your aura from head to toes (see Workings: Purification: Star Purification for a full version of this working).

Earth Auras

Our aura radiates from the core of life at our center. Other living beings have auras too. Cats, trees, bees, flowers...

Find a natural setting such as a park or garden (or a redwood forest if one is handy). Take a short walk through the area. Then stop and ground, cast a personal circle, and invoke energy such as openness and awareness.

Find a plant that calls to you – a tree, a fern, a flower, a weed. Sit down next to it. Say hello. Close your eyes. Tune in to the energy of the plant. Try using your hands to sense its aura (without touching it). Use your heart to sense its life rhythm. Notice without attachment – notice and let go.

✦ **Book of Shadows** – what did you notice about the plant? How is its aura similar / different from humans? What feelings came up for you? What did you notice about yourself?

At the end – thank the plant for sharing, and appreciate yourself for noticing it.

SOLO WORKINGS

Many of the workings above can be done solo. Maybe you can find a friend who will try aura sensing with you?





Automatic Writing

INTENT

Here's a good exercise to loosen up creativity and expression. Legend says that author Ernest Hemingway began his workday with automatic writing – typing a page as fast as he could, ripping it from the typewriter, and hurling it into the trash can. Only then he was ready to write for keeps.

This exercise also works as a discernment and self-divination technique (see below).

TIME & SPACE

A quiet, comfortable space for writing. Any number of people. Allow at least 10 minutes.

PREP

Pens and paper for each person (or laptop, etc if you prefer). Create a circle.

WORKING (basic and as divination)

Get a clean sheet of paper and a pen (or set up a fresh computer document). Get comfortable. Set a timer for five minutes. Or write for the length of a favorite pop song or dance jam.

Start writing, and don't lift your pen from the paper (or fingers from the keyboard). Keep writing no matter what comes out.

If you get stuck – write about getting stuck. Write about having nothing to write about. Write about how much you hate writing!

Assume that no one else will ever see what you write. Let strange voices come through. Let weird comments and half-finished sentences spill out. Change gears as often as you feel the inspiration. Just keep the pen (or your typing fingers) moving.

Afterward – go back and underline promising bits that you might want to follow up.

Self Divination

Before beginning, frame a question and write it at the top of the page. Breathe into this question. Now do a page or more of automatic writing, letting it go where it will.

Go back and underline a few key points, re-read your initial question, and do some more writing starting from those points.

Read it back and ask yourself – what have I just told myself about my question?

Wrap-Up – in a group – go around and read a single sentence that has power for you.

Thank yourselves and open the circle (or go on to another working).

SOLO WORKING

This makes a great personal writing exercise (ask Hemingway!).



Take time to write in your magical journal – Teen Earth Magic 2011.



Bead Ceremony

INTENT

The bead ceremony is a tangible way to show group identity and belonging – a ceremony in which each person receives a unique bead as a symbol of their taking part in a ritual.

Sometimes we've done the bead ceremony early a class so people can wear the beads later on. Other times we've done it as a culminating piece, such as at the end of the Labyrinth Challenge ritual on the final day of a class. The bead is the "reward" for completing both the labyrinth and the class (see Rituals: Labyrinth Challenges).

TIME & SPACE

Space for a comfortable circle. A good end-of-session working. Allow ten minutes.

PREP

Ahead of time – buy fancy and unique beads for the whole group, plus a few extras. You can get fancy beads for \$1 or so.

A pouch that is easy to reach into to draw a bead.

A big spool of waxed necklace string (ask a bead store for what you need) – test that it will fit through the beads you get (yes, we've made that mistake). Precut string into two-foot lengths, and have scissors and extra string handy.

A center altar with a basin or large bowl, a pitcher, and some jugs of water.

Decide who is priestessing which parts – here's a good opportunity to share leadership.

WORKING

In a prior working, each person comes up with a magical commitment to themselves – something they pledge to do or change. Or do this right at the beginning.

Gather in a circle. Priestess has pouch of beads, with pre-cut string handy. Don't give out string until the end – it's distracting.

Priestess invites people to recall their commitment to themselves, and to find a way to express it in five words or fewer.

One by one, people are invited to step into the circle and state their pledge aloud (or in silence). The rest of the group responds, not in unison but each in their own way: "We hear you, we believe in you, we support you..."

Priestess asks: "Have you heard the support of this circle? Breathe into the support. Then reach into this pouch with your non-writing hand and draw out a bead that symbolizes your pledge and the support of this circle."

When everyone has a bead – hold them over the bowl, everyone reaching out into center. Tone together.

Priestess pours water lightly over everyone's hands and beads as people tone together. After 20 seconds or so, priestess begins slowly raising their voice and lifting their bead. All join in slowly lifting their beads toward the sky, voices rising into shouts of release as the toning reaches its peak.

Gently bring the beads and energy back down. Priestess invites people to touch their bead to their own center and state their commitment to themselves.

Priestess brings in the pre-cut string and distributes it. People string their beads and put them on.

Song – something that consolidates the energy without raising it further. Examples: We All Come from the Goddess; The River She Is Flowing; Water and Stone (Solid as a Rock); Let the Beauty We Love.

SOLO WORKING

The bead ceremony symbolizes "belonging to this group at this time." Perhaps you and some friends want to make such a commitment to each other, or to a shared project? Could you ask friends to do this with you for your birthday?





Blessing: Elemental Blessing

INTENT

A participatory way to share the blessing of an element (or a forest, a season, etc – substitute what works for your group). We created this working for an Air ritual, where we were thinking about communication and language, but it can work for any element, deity, or energy.

TIME & SPACE

Enough space for people to mill around. Allow ten minutes including transitions.

PREP

Supplies – colored markers, small notecards or pieces of paper.

Choose and learn closing song – see below. Teach this song at the beginning of the ritual or right before this working.

WORKING

Everyone chooses a colored marker and small notecard.

Priestess invites people to hold the colored marker over their hearts and invoke their power of expression and communication (give people a moment to do this).... Then priestess calls upon Air's powers of inspiration, hope, new beginnings, freshness, etc – whatever energies of Air you want to call.

Now invite each person to write on their card, in one to five words – a blessing of Air. Invite people to use their intuition and write whatever sincere blessing comes to them. Give people a minute or so – if someone seems stumped, say, "Try saying 'Air,' take a breath, and write the first word or phrase that comes to you."

When ready – invite people to turn to someone, exchange cards, and each say: "Blessings of Air to you." Each person silently reads the card they've been given, then together they take a breath and nod their thanks.

Turn to another person and exchange cards with them, saying: "Blessings of Air to you." Continue for several rounds.

Song: After a few rounds, priestess starts singing and gradually gathers all voices – here's a few ideas: My Soul (good for call-and-response if one person knows it well); Let the Beauty We Love; Never Lose Our Way to the Well (See Ritual Skills: Chants).

Fade song. Priestess calls out (and others echo): "Welcome Air!"

SOLO WORKING

To do this working alone, you'll need to write a half-dozen Air-cards (one to five words each).

Where will you get your ideas from? You could start by taking a breath and writing whatever comes to your mind.

When you have written a half-dozen cards, mix them face-down. Close your eyes and take a few breaths. Draw a card and say to yourself: "I welcome the blessings of Air." Then read the card aloud. Repeat for as many cards as you wish. Or leave them on your altar and draw one now and then.

✪ **Book of Shadows** – what are your blessings of Air? Which do you need, and which can you offer?

Finish with a song – see above for ideas.



Blessing: Star Goddess

INTENT

A simple pentacle blessing – blessing us with deep healing energy from within our own heart. This working was developed for the Love point of the Pearl Pentacle (see Workings: Pentacle: Pearl Pentacle).

TIME & SPACE

Any number, working in pairs (or as a solo working). Enough space for pairs to be arms' length apart. Allow 10 minutes.

PREP

Teach song ahead of time.

WORKING

Priestess – explain the working first, then verbally guide people through it. Remind people this is a no-touch exercise.

In pairs, decide who will be Goddess and who will be Star first. Goddess will do a blessing for the Star.

Star – facing Goddess, cup your hands in front of your heart. With gentle breaths, pour your own healing, self-loving energy into your cupped hands. When your hands feel full, pour the energy into the non-writing hand of the Goddess in front of you.

Goddess – receive the energy into your non-writing hand as if you are holding a jar of paint. Imagine your writing hand is a paint brush. Dip it into the healing self-love and paint a pentacle onto the aura of the person in front of you, starting with their head.

Paint broad strokes onto the Star's aura in this order: head - right foot - left hand - right hand - left foot - head. Paint several cycles, layering on their self-love. As you paint, notice the person's aura field. Are there blockages? Spots of bright or fiery energy?

End by painting a clockwise circle around the pentacle-person's aura, then come to rest. Thank one another and debrief.

Star – what did you notice about your own energy? Could you feel your own self-love being painted, or was it hard to tell?

Goddess – what did you notice about your energy as you painted? Speaking gently – what did you notice about the Star's aura?

Switch roles and repeat.

End with a song: Body of the Earth; I Would Know Myself; Let the Beauty We Love.

SOLO WORKING

To do this blessing alone, you'll work both roles.

First, cup your non-writing hand in front of your heart. With gentle breaths, pour your own healing, self-loving energy into your hand. When it feels full, take one more breath to seal the energy.

Dip your writing hand into the energy. Close your eyes and begin painting a star onto your aura with your own healing self-love.

Paint broad, rich strokes, in this order: head - right foot - left hand - right hand - left foot - head. Paint several cycles, layering on your self-love. Finish by painting a clockwise circle around your aura. As you paint, notice your aura field. Are there blockages? Spots of bright or fiery energy? Murky places?

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – when you finish, get your journal. What did you notice about your own energy? Could you feel your self-love being painted, or was it hard to tell? What did you notice about your aura? Were there any stuck spots? What is your thought about those places? When you finish writing, place your hands over your heart and thank yourself for your work.

End with a song: Body of the Earth; I Would Know Myself; Let the Beauty We Love.





Book of Shadows

INTENT

Create a Book of Shadows (also called a magical journal) that can accompany you on your magical journey.

Is it a grimoire? Sort of. In ye olden tymes, grimoires were collections of spells and invocations. Herbal lore, healing practices, and practical astronomy were mingled with random invocations, assorted superstitions, biblical numerology, and some-times-misguided advice.

Did anyone practice these spells and rituals, or were they concocted to defraud gullible aristocrats? Some famous grimoires such as the Key of Solomon and The Book of Abramelin the Magician can be found online – enjoy them with a grain of salt.

Many people today use the phrase “Book of Shadows” to signify one’s personal magical compendium. You can collect spells, wise words, exercises, dried flowers, chants, recipes, jokes – as well as keeping a running record of your magical evolution.

The book you are reading right now is a Book of Shadows – and it’s changing all the time!

Your Book will grow and change – and the cover may as well. In this working, we will create the first version.

TIME & SPACE

Any number, given space and supplies. Allow an hour including set-up and transitions. Enough room to spread out and work.

PREP

Each person needs a fresh, undecorated journal with lots of pages – bound or looseleaf.

Collage supplies (see Workings: Collage) – invite people to find other images too, and/or to leave room for adding images.

Large envelopes to put unglued images in. Pen or marker(s). Music – try Labyrinth Meditation Music (see page 113).

WORKING

Priestess leads a short meditation: “Hold your undecorated book in both hands and close your eyes. Feel its solidity, its weight. Feel the angles of its corners. Open it and feel the smoothness of the paper.

“Take a breath and begin to picture your own Book of Shadows. What colors do you see? What images?

“Look over the collage supplies. Without too much thought, select some images to begin with. You can add more later.

“Try them out on the cover of your book. If something feels right, lightly glue or tape it down. If you’re not sure, keep experimenting. Maybe the cover will never really be finished – a magical work in progress!”

When time is up, gather the images. Go around and let each person have a chance to share one image from their Book.

Charging the Book

When time is up, bring the newly-forming books to the center. Priestess invites each person to think about the power, beauty, and wisdom that will fill their book. Ask the universe to provide the words and images that are right for your work.

Song: holding your Book, sing a song to charge the magic: Weave and Spin; My Soul; Let the Beauty We Love.

As the song fades, kiss your Book of Shadows and welcome it to your magical journey.

SOLO WORKING

Same as above. Set a timer for 30 or 45 minutes. At the end of that time, stop and collect your images and ideas. Sift through them without attachment and let them speak to you. Say one word for each image that you believe you will use on the Book.

✦ **Book of Shadows** – throughout this book you’ll find suggestions to develop in your Book – let the magical writing begin!



Boundaries: Scrub-Jay Lines

INTENT

Scrub-jay lines (also sometimes called hassle lines) are named in honor of the feisty little blue-feathered birds that taught us this exercise (Western Scrub-Jay, *Aphelocoma californica*). This is a fun, powerful way to practice boundaries.

This can raise a lot of chaotic, unfocused energy – follow it with something that strengthens our ability to establish and hold boundaries. Try Workings: Aura Fills.

See also the Activism chapter (page 161) for ways we use this to prepare for street theater and other direct actions.

TIME & SPACE

Any number, in pairs. Enough space to stand in two equal facing lines – adapt to the available space. Allow about 15 minutes including transitions.

PREP

Ground first, then cast or strengthen the group circle. Consider what will follow this chaotic exercise.

WORKING

Line up in two rows with each person facing a partner. Name one line A and the other line B.

Each side is given a “position” to argue – often just a single line or even one word – and then given one minute to talk as loud and fast as they can, with absolutely no attempt to listen to or understand the other. Be as loud and obnoxious as you want – but no touching the other person.

Here are some lines to give to the sides:

A = Yes! / B = No!

A = I am blockading a military building / B = I need to get to work

A = Pizza! / B = Burritos! (or cake vs ice cream)

A = Police breaking up a crowd, “everyone must leave!” / B = Protester refusing to leave

A = Shut up! / B = No, you shut up!

A = Such-and-such needs to change immediately! / B = Change is a gradual process and requires patience

Make up your own – make them as polarizing as possible.

After a minute, ring a bell – it will take people a moment to settle down. Then ask: “What was that like? Did you have any impact on the other person? How did it feel not to be listened to? If you had it to do over again, would you say or do anything differently?”

Now ask people to take a breath, change partners and repeat a couple more scrub-jay lines. Ask: “What was different about how you approached it? Did anything change for you in later rounds?”

Next – do something that strengthens our ability to establish and hold boundaries. Try Workings: Aura Fills.

SOLO WORKING

Try this at a party – simple games such as “Yes / No” or “cake vs ice cream” can raise a lot of fun energy.





Circle Blessings

INTENT

A simple, musical way to bless each person individually. Can be used to charge their commitment, put power behind a word or phrase they have created in a prior working, or bless each other as we head back to the mundane world.

This working can also be done by singing people's names to them.

Helps create an intimate feel. Works well toward end of a ritual or class, as a final working before devoking.

TIME & SPACE

Need an open circle with no fire or altar in the center. Enough room for a tight but comfortable circle.

Each person will step in for about a minute, plus a few minutes for transitions. Over 25 people may run too long.

PREP

This working is a good wrap-up to a class or workshop – so prep includes determining which working this will follow.

A good working before this is one where people come away with a word or short phrase that is both a powerful affirmation and an ongoing challenge to them. For instance: "I am an incredible singer!" or "I love myself more every day!"

WORKING

Form a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder. Priestess invites people, one by one, to step into the circle and speak aloud the power-phrase they developed in a prior exercise (or to state their name).

The rest of the circle sings / tones the phrase (or name): "You are an amazing singer," "Incredible voice," etc. Person closes their eyes and just listens.



What if someone chooses to step into the circle but remains silent? Others could still tone or sing their name to them.

End with a song – I Would Know Myself in All My Parts; Let the Beauty We Love; Let It Begin Now.

SOLO WORKING

In a safe, quiet space, speak your affirmation aloud. Breathe into it. Now try singing that affirmation to yourself. No one is listening – sing to yourself.

End by placing your hands over your center – wherever that is for you – and breathing again. State your affirmation aloud. Breathe into it again.

Consider combining this with Workings: Mirror Affirmations.



Circle: Yarn Web

INTENT

A fun way to weave the circle together – a good early exercise in a camp or class.

Use this also to “charge” group intent – each person speaks one word of what they are invoking as they toss the yarn.

TIME & SPACE

Need an open space to make a circle with no altar or fire in the center. About ten minutes..

PREP

A large ball of strong, colorful, all-natural yarn.

WORKING

Explain that we are “invoking” qualities that we want for our circle during camp or class. It helps to have a teacher or experienced person go first, and they can toss the yarn to another experienced person to get things rolling.

Stand in a circle. First person has the ball of yarn. They hold onto the loose end, speak one or a few words about what they are calling in (“in-voking”) for the group, then toss the ball across the circle to someone else.

Second person wraps the yarn loosely around their wrist, speaks their invocation for the group, and tosses the ball to another.

When all are woven together – feel the connections. Tug a little. Trace the yarn to see who you are connected with.

Try moving or rotating as a web – can you keep all the connections taut?

With a small group at Redwood Magic, we passed the nodes – each person passed the point they held to the person on their left, then we’d look to see the new ways we were connected to people.

Song – before ending, charge the web with a song: “We are the flow, we are the ebb / We are the weavers, we are the web.” (See Ritual Skills: Chants– page XXXXX.)

At an early Witchlets path, people wanted to preserve the web, so we carefully moved it to the side of the circle and laid it on the ground. Otherwise, gather the yarn up when you’re done and consider burning it at the end of the ritual or camp.

SOLO WORKING

Like many of these exercises, you can do this with friends without calling it Pagan or magic. Try a yarn web at a party, especially when people don’t know one another well. Invite people to speak their name aloud and call in qualities they want for the party and for each other.

Alone – on a big sheet of paper, write the names of yourself, friends and family, pets, allies, goddesses, etc in a big circle. Using a marker, connect the points using some random method. You could roll dice and count around the circle to that number, or drop something onto the paper and whoever it lands closest to gets the thread next.

When you’re finished, see what patterns emerge. Soften your gaze and look at the web that connects you to all of these beings.

★ **Book of Shadows** – write about the personal connections you have, and those you can envision – maybe with people you haven’t even met yet. What do you want and expect from your friends? What do you offer?





Collages

INTENT

Collages are a chance to work with visual and tactile media and express ourselves in non-verbal ways.

For some folks, collaging is a great means of tapping deeper wisdom. Others will rush through the project. Start collages in class or path, then let people work on them more during free time, or take them home to finish.

Collages can help focus issues in our lives. Will you collage about “the state of my life,” “what I want for the world,” “endangered species,” or what?

We also use collage in other workings – see *Workings: Boundaries: Collage Shields* and *Workings: Book of Shadows*.

TIME & SPACE

You’ll need plenty of table / floor space, plus room for supplies to be available and completed collages set aside to dry.

Any number of people, depending on supplies. Allow 45 minutes with optional time later.

PREP

Collage supplies – pictures, magazines, etc. Pay attention to what you bring – fashion and exercise magazines promote dubious images of young people’s bodies and lives.

Posterboard for each person. Scissors and glue-sticks. Manila envelopes are handy for saving unpasted images.

Would ambient music help? How about Labyrinth Music? (See page 113.)

WORKING

Invite people to ground and center. Recall prior workings or rituals that you hope might influence the collaging. Invite people to look over the collage materials and let images come to them.

Work on collages. Let people know when 15 and five minutes remain. Pass out envelopes to hold unpasted images.

At the end, display or present the collages. Each person can make a one-minute presentation of their art. Even if the cuttings are not yet glued down, people can share images and say why they chose them. Use a timer or people might go on forever!

If it makes sense – put all the images in the center and raise some energy over them with a song.

Songs: Weave and Spin; Let the Beauty We Love; We Are the Power in Everyone.

SOLO WORKING

Choose a theme. Spend a week or more gathering images. Lay them out in various ways without gluing them down.

Step back and look. What images are you missing? What needs to move? When you’re ready, glue things down.

How will you honor and charge your work when it’s complete? Is there someone you can share it with?



Some people like the quiet, reflective space of the collage table.



Costume Magic

INTENT

Are you the sort of witch or magician who doesn't feel like you can cast a spell or invoke a goddess unless you are properly attired? You will feel right at home at Reclaiming WitchCamps!

Some years at California WitchCamp an entire cabin is dedicated to magical costumery – a place anyone can stop en route to the ritual circle and find the perfect gown, corset, top hat, or feather boa. Priestessing the costume cabin is a camp volunteer chore.

On the other hand, if you are one of those people for whom "dressing up" means wearing a colorful T-shirt, for whom comfort is the first law of fashion – you too will feel at home. Reclaiming's dress code is one place we are in complete agreement with ceremonial magician Aleister Crowley: "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law."

Witchy garb can be a fun way to "dress the part" – and also to challenge our "shadow" sides. We can use clothes to discover and encourage different parts of ourselves. For some of us, wearing colorful costumes is a major magical challenge!

If costumes are your calling – whether always or as a special working – read on!

TIME & SPACE

Allow a couple of hours, or an afternoon. This is a good working for a small group, where each person can really be seen by the others. Space will vary – and may include a visit to a local thrift shop.

PREP

Look through the workings below – most need a bit of wardrobe prep.

Decide whether you'll take photos – people might feel more free to experiment without cameras.

WORKING

This is your working. You can create sacred space as simply or as elaborately as you wish. Here's a simple way:

Ground using your breath – can you take five consecutive breaths, focusing on your breath, without your mind wandering? (Start over when you find it wandering.)

Casting the circle – how will you cast a strong circle to hold your experiments? Would wearing a costume help?

Invoking elements – sing a song that invokes all the elements; invoke each element with a few words that come to mind; change the color of your scarf for each invocation; or even change costumes – what color or mood will help you invoke Air? Fire?

Deciding What To Wear

If you need this book to help decide your costumes, you are indeed in need of wardrobe magic! But don't despair – help may be closer than you think. Here are a few possibilities:



DIY witchy fashion – Reclaiming style!

continued on next page





Costume Magic (pg 2)

- (1) Trust your intuition – if your heart calls out for you to wear a pointy hat and curly-toed boots (or maybe punk or goth or hippie or hip-hop styles) – try it out. Close the door, ground and cast a circle, invoke allies – and let the alchemy begin!
- (2) Get wardrobe consultants – go thrift store shopping with friends. Get some help with a make-up experiment. Ask someone whose wardrobe you like, even if it's not "your usual style." Ask them to help you find your own style – they might be delighted at the opportunity! And while you're at it – maybe this is someone interested in mixing in a bit of magic?
- (3) Try some shadow magic. If your heart says "yikes!" – go with it. After you dress in some shadow-costumes, everything else will seem more comfortable! See Workings: Shadow: Costume Shadows.

Fashion Laboratory

For some people, WitchCamp is a week-long fashion laboratory. Costumery abounds, and a special space may be dedicated to costumes. Some stop by the costume cabin, tent, tarp, or duffel bag every evening on their way to the ritual. For others, it takes a special magical challenge to get them to experiment.

We've done costume workshops (pre-planned and impromptu) at some of our camps, providing a safe space for costume-shadow work – dressing (and cross-dressing) in the most challenging ways we are willing.

Prep – gather clothes, scarves, wraps, ribbons, shoes, gloves, cloaks... Can you find some sparkly clothes or fabric? What about kids' toys that spin, flash, etc? Gather fancy clothes, simple clothes, strange clothes... Do you have siblings, cousins, or friends who can help? Do you have a budget for a trip or two to the thrift shop?

You may also want to use make-up and face paint – make sure no one is sensitive to products before you get started.

Glitter – we avoid sparkle-glitter. Most glitter isn't biodegradable, and it's hard to sweep up from carpet or forest floors!

Fashion Designer

What is your ideal magical outfit? How about your wackiest? Or maybe the way you would *least* like to be seen?

Take some time, ground yourself and cast a circle, then daydream for a while about how you will be attired. Do you stand and move differently in certain garb? Where do you see yourself? Indoors or out? Alone or with others?

✦ **Book of Shadows** – when you have an image, draw or write a description in your Book of Shadows. Find some clothing magazines that you can clip details from, and collage together your costume(s).

Make a short list of costumery you would like – the essentials, not every accessory. Choose one item and do a quick brainstorm on what it would take to obtain it – is it money? A trip to a special store or festival? A sewing lesson? More clarity on exactly what you are looking for?

Write down one step you will take toward your envisioned costume and a rough timeline. Close your journal, and put a scarf or a favorite item of clothing on top of the book. Take a breath and say: "So mote it be!"

Costume Shadows

All of us have costume shadows – edgy clothes that would make us cringe to be seen in! This is a fun and challenging shadow working that can be done with friends without calling it "Pagan." Consider turning off cameras to encourage experimenting.

See Workings: Shadow: Costume Shadows.

SOLO WORKING

You can do this working alone – but maybe there are others you know who might enjoy it? Maybe a Fashion Lab Party?



Divination: Nature Readings

INTENT

Here's a chance to do free-form divination, not from a tarot deck or horoscope, but from nature. A multi-colored rock, a gnarled branch, the flow of water over a creek bed – what do these have to teach us?

This is a solo working that can be done in any sized group. Use this working to gain clarity around a question or issue.

Divination from nature, candle flames, etc is sometimes called “scrying” – see page 218.

TIME & SPACE

Any number, working alone (or in dyads). Allow 30-40 minutes – 5-10 for intro, 10-15 for divination, and 10 for debrief.

Outdoors or inside, you'll need room to wander and come across rocks, trees, water, etc.

PREP

You'll want a bell or drum to call people back.

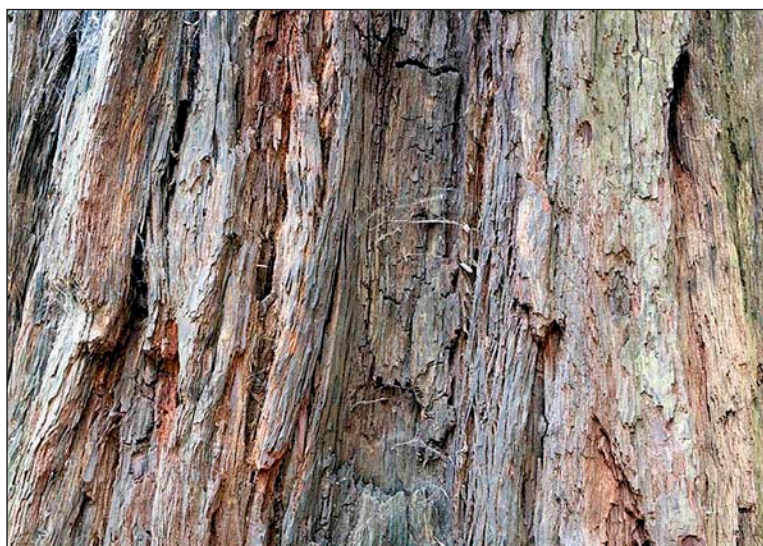
Outdoors – space for people to spread out and do personal divination.

Indoors – ahead of time, collect more items than there will be people – interesting rocks, driftwood, moss, sprigs of ivy, etc. Lay them out on an altar or cloth, or around the edges of your room.

What will follow this? Perhaps it will lead to a decision or commitment followed by a charging working such as the Overflowing Cup Spell or Charging with Fire & Flour?



I can stop for a moment to scry into a puddle. Photo Max Pixel.



Redwood bark may contain mysterious messages for us! Photo WikiCommons.

WORKING

Priestess – invite people to take a breath and consider a question or issue that is up for them. If several, choose one. If nothing specific comes to you, just open your mind to a message from nature. Priestess says:

“In a moment, you'll have a chance to find a natural object that calls to you (we'll call it a rock here). Remembering your question (or clearing your mind), soften your gaze and look at your rock and ask: ‘Who or what are you?’ Listen, then say or write the first things that come into your mind.

“Next, turn the rock or move yourself to a different angle. Ask: ‘What is your story?’ Listen, then say or

continued on next page





Divination: Nature Readings (pg 2)

write your first thoughts.

"Once more, either turn the rock, or move to a different angle. Ask: 'What is your lesson for me?' Listen, then say or write your first thoughts.

"Take a breath and look at the object, recalling the things you've heard. When the bell rings, return to the circle."

Outdoors – wander silently, letting your gaze fall on pieces of wood, rocks, tree stumps, flows of water, etc. Find one that speaks to you. View it from different angles, and question it three times: "Who or what are you? What is your story? What is your lesson for me?"

Indoors – establish a simple order – perhaps youngest to eldest, or going around the circle. Each person, without further reflection, pick the first object that calls to you. Find a place to sit alone, turn the object around to different angles, and question it three times, as above. Ask and listen with all your senses.

Priestess – ring bell to call people back after 10 minutes. Invite people to find a partner and decide who will go first. Give each person two minutes to share what they experienced in their divination, and what it might say about their personal question. Partner listens non-judgmentally.

Closing – go around the circle and each person share one word about their divination.

Song for transition – My Soul; Let the Beauty We Love; I Would Know Myself.

SOLO WORKING

Same as above – bring your journal. You may want to come up with your question or issue before going outside to find an object. Or you may want to go out with an open mind and invite the wisdom of nature to come to you.

Find an interesting object.

Ask: "Who or what are you? Listen with your senses. Just listen for a couple of minutes. Then write.

Ask: "What is your story?" Listen, then write your first thoughts.

Ask: "What is your lesson for me?" Listen, then write your first thoughts.

When you finish the questions, free-write for a few minutes about what you have experienced, and what it might mean for your question. Don't worry about making sense – just write.

End by going back to your nature-responses and underlining three key words. For each word, take a breath and speak it aloud three times.

Finally say: "So mote it be!"



What do rocks have to teach us about ourselves? Let's ask! Photo WikiCommons.



"I see a lobster and a porcupine dancing a tango! I wonder what the clouds are telling me about my life?" Photo Max Pixel.



Divination: Oracles

INTENT

A multi-layered working in which some people will act as oracles and some will receive readings.

Work with tarot decks or other oracle cards – or try it with a pendulum or nature scrying. We'll describe it here as tarot.

In *Reclaiming Tradition*, we say, "Each person is their own spiritual authority." This means that no oracle, however extraordinary, can gift-wrap the truth for you. The most an oracle (or a book) can do is to make a provocative insight, or ask the perfect question that will help *you* discover the answer you are seeking.

Use this working to come up with a commitment or insight, and follow it with a working that will "charge" your commitment – some ideas are: *Lifting Each Other Up*; a spiral dance, or charging with the *Overflowing Cup Spell*.

TIME & SPACE

Two people can do this working, or any number of pairs. You'll need room for folks to spread out a bit. Allow at least 10 minutes per person (so each pair needs minimum 20 minutes) – more if you do multi-card oracles.

PREP

People get in pairs. Each pair will need a tarot or other divination deck or tool. Each person should also have their journal handy. Decide who will be the oracle (divination priestess) and who the querent (questioner) first.

WORKING

Oracle – ask querent to relax and clear their mind – take a few breaths and let go of whatever you don't need to be present.

Invite querent to think of a question or an issue for the reading. This question might come from an earlier working or station. If querent does not have a question or issue, suggest that they simply open their intuition and see what comes through.

Invite querent to draw a card face down, take a breath to open to its messages, and then look at it. Oracle can then ask a series of questions (pause between each one to allow person to reflect):

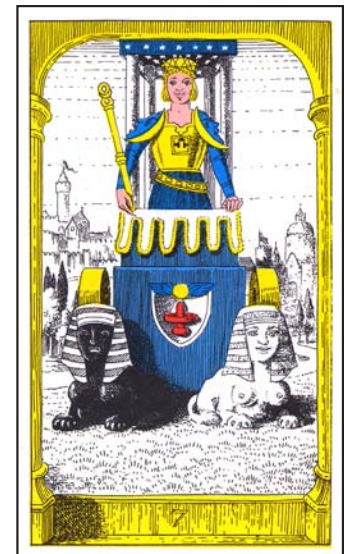
- What objects and beings do you see in the card?
- Which object is "you"?
- What is going on in the card?
- Is there something you would change or add to the card?
- Finally: What does this card tell you about your question? Trust your first thoughts and intuitions.

When the reading is complete (or time is up) – querent takes a few minutes and writes in their journal. Person who has been oracle can also write in their journal, or use the time to think about a question or issue for their own reading.

After a few minutes, lead priestess invites people to stand, shake themselves off, and move around a bit without talking. Then switch roles and repeat the oracle working.

After both people have had turns, you may have gained some insights and perhaps a new commitment or inspiration. Next, do a working to charge this insight or commitment – some ideas are: *Lifting Each Other Up*; the *Overflowing Cup Spell*; a spiral dance; or charging with fire (see *Workings: Spell: Charging with Fire & Flour*).

Good songs for charging an oracle reading – *My Soul*; *Weave and Spin*; *Let It Begin Now*; *She Changes Everything She Touches* (Kore Chant).



Lots more divination – see Workings: Tarot





Divination: Scrying

INTENT

Gaze into a hazy surface and see with the mind's eye. Scrying is a form of personal divination, a way of tapping into our subconscious and into the magical energies around us.

The classic scrying tool is a crystal ball. Cloud-gazing is a playful way of scrying, as is staring into the embers of a fire. You can also use elemental tools, such as a large bowl of water (perhaps with a few drops of oil), a candle flame, an unusual rock, or the bark of a tree. Any of these can help tap our inner seeing, intuitive sight, and clairvoyance.

We can scry in search of a specific answer, or we can simply open ourselves to whatever comes through. Scrying can also be a prelude to another exercise which develops or deepens the scrying information. For instance, I may come out of scrying with a sense of a next step or a commitment. A working like the Overflowing Cup Spell could then charge the commitment.

TIME & SPACE

Any number, with one candle, bowl of water, etc for every few people. Space to cast personal circles and be comfortable. Allow 30 minutes including prep and journaling. Fire safety note – see page 31.

PREP

Decide what your scrying medium will be and then prepare it. Here, we'll speak of a candle flame or bowl of water, but you can adapt as needed. At a camp, try nature scrying – each person finds a tree (or fern, etc) to sit and scry into.

Need – candle or bowl of water; journal and pen; optional Labyrinth Meditation Music (see page 113).

Decide how long to scry – 10 minutes is good to start. Don't stop early. You may want to set a timer, or in a group choose a priestess to watch the clock and ring a bell.

Set your bowl or candle on a low altar or surface so you can easily see it from where you will be sitting.

WORKING (group or solitary)

In a group, the scrying priestess speaks this part as needed. Solitaries can do the working as they read along.

Ground and center yourself. Invoke elements or any allies you wish – perhaps with a song.

If you want to work with a specific question, take a moment to frame it. Write it at the top of a journal page and set it aside.

Make yourself comfortable. Close your eyes and take a breath. Now open your eyes and gaze softly at the flame or water.

Don't try to see anything. You may feel insecure: "It's not working," or "I'm not doing it right." Acknowledge the fears, then let them drop into the Earth. Don't worry about what you see, whether it makes sense, etc. Later when you write in your journal, you may be surprised about what comes into your mind.

After a while, the flame or surface of the water may seem to speak or "mime" to you. Its dancing may seem to tell a story. You may see or be aware of images. Notice them, and let them float past. If your mind wanders, close your eyes, take a breath, and gaze again. Scrying may take practice. It might help to put on meditative (instrumental) music, or to close your eyes and gaze at your eyelids. With experience, you'll find ways that work for you.

At the end of the allotted time, stop scrying. Stretch, then write in your journal. At the end, underline three powerful words.

If you're a group, go around and each person shares their three words (maybe in three rounds, to build energy). If solitary, stand and face the altar again and speak your three words, breathing between each. At the end, touch your own center and breathe.

Song – a gentle song is good: Let the Beauty We Love; The River She Is Flowing; My Soul; The Welcome Flame; Born of Water.

Devoke and open your circle.



Flaming Cauldron

INTENT

This working evolved as a part of the annual Brigid ritual (aka Imbolc or Candlemas) in the San Francisco Bay Area – pledges for the coming year are made to the Goddess before a flaming cauldron (a standard-issue Dutch oven – see below).

This is a simple yet dramatic working. This might be used as a commitment ritual toward the end of a camp, ritual, or class – “What is my work as I go back into the world?”

Do this outdoors. Don't light a cauldron in your room, basement, or other closed spaces.

TIME & SPACE

Outdoors or a large, well-ventilated space (not a bedroom or basement). Thirty minutes for a small circle, and add 30-60 seconds for each additional person (fifty people will take close to an hour to do this working).

PREP (lots of prep for this working)

Central altar – card table or low table that can hold a hot cauldron – eg, with a heat-proof brick or wet towels under it.

- large basin of water (in which the flaming cauldron will be set).
- greenery and flowers to decorate the basin.
- the iron cauldron itself is placed into the basin (see below for cauldron prep).

Anvil & hammer – ideally a real anvil or a piece of railroad track – needs to be heavy. Use a short-handled sledge hammer.

- could also use a deep-sounding bell or bowl – a high-pitched bell or a gong is the wrong tone for this working.

Priestesses – lead the opening meditation and explain the working; lead spiral dance; anvil priestess.

Songs – Holy Well and Sacred Flame; Never Lose Our Way to the Well (visit WeaveAndSpin.org/tem-chants for our Brigid chants playlist).

Prepare cauldron (*practice the cauldron ahead of time – it's fun – but see cautions below!*)

- standard sized cast-iron Dutch oven with lid (not an heirloom – it may get slightly damaged during cleanup).
- epsom salts — about an inch layer in the bottom of Dutch oven.
- isopropyl alcohol 91 percent (get several bottles – you don't want to run out).
- don't add alcohol until you're ready to light the cauldron – then add to about a quarter-inch above the salt.
- wet towels.
- fire extinguisher.
- altar table that can stand heat (or use concrete, brick, ceramic tile, etc).
- for a lot of people (60+), have a second cauldron with epsom salts ready, swap after about 20-30 minutes.

Cauldron Cautions!

- as flame begins to sputter out, use the cauldron lid to completely extinguish the flame.
- *never* add alcohol to a cauldron with even the tiniest flame! The tiniest flame can instantly ignite fresh alcohol.

continued on next page





Flaming Cauldron (pg 2)

- once flame is completely out, pour in more alcohol and relight.
- don't try to burn slips of paper in a cauldron fire – it just makes a soggy mess.
- cleanup is a challenge. The longer the cauldron burns, the more the salt hardens. A chisel or screwdriver is often needed.

WORKING

Create sacred space. You might want to invoke Brigid, Vulcan, or the Sacred Well to join you.

Once sacred space is established, priestess leads a short meditation to help people come up with a pledge or commitment. One way is to have folks walk counter-clockwise around the central altar as the priestess guides them to think about the coming year and a change or commitment they might want to make. When a person knows their commitment, they turn and walk clockwise, until everyone is walking that way. Priestess then invites people to take a breath into that commitment and find a seat around the altar.

When the cauldron working is ready to begin, the cauldron is lit (priestesses have quietly poured 91 percent alcohol into cauldron at the last minute).

Sing – “Holy Well and Sacred Flame” (this simple chant can recur whenever the flame goes out and cauldron needs refilling).

People are invited to take seats around the center altar, leaving room for others to step forward.

The anvil is struck three times to signal the start of the working. If no anvil, use a deep-sounding bell or bowl.

One at a time, people approach the cauldron and state their commitment. Remind people to keep their pledge brief. Pledging in silence is always an option. Have one or two experienced people step up first and model brevity.

After each person states their pledge, the anvil priestess strikes the anvil or rings the bell once.

When most have gone, priestess invites remaining people to step up and pledge.

When pledges are complete, priestess strikes the anvil in three sets of three (nine total) to complete the working.

Songs – good songs to end this working are Way to the Well or She Changes Everything She Touches (Kore Chant).

For a circle or smaller group, raise energy with a song.

For a group of 25 or more, a spiral dance is a good way to empower the pledges. Begin slowly to give people time to shift their energy (see Ritual Skills: How to Lead a Spiral Dance).

SOLO WORKING

You can do a pledge ritual using a glass jar candle.



Grounding: Red Cord Spell

INTENT

A simple spell that reinforces grounding – great for a new group that is just learning about grounding. We sometimes do this on the first night of Elements of Magic classes, and it's a good circle or camp working as well.

This is a spell working, not a grounding per se. It assumes the group has already done a strong grounding as part of creating sacred space – this working will build off of the earlier grounding.

People often end by tying the cord onto their wrist, ankle, or waist. Some people choose to wear their grounding thread "until it falls off," which can sometimes be quite a while.

TIME & SPACE

Enough room for people to spread out. Allow 15-20 minutes including transitions.

Music if you wish: Labyrinth Meditation Music (see page XXXXX) or a simple heartbeat played on a frame drum.

PREP

Need red embroidery floss – enough for everyone to have a three-foot length. Have some extra embroidery floss along with scissors. Pre-cut three-foot sections and lay them aside where they won't get tangled.

WORKING

When we do this spell, the group has already done a full grounding such as the Tree of Life at the beginning of class – so this exercise can simply call back people's groundedness from earlier (see Ritual Skills: Grounding).

Explain a bit about spellwork. Here's a recap – see more at Workings: Spellcrafting:

- a spell is a combination of your intention plus a physical working, charged with magical energy.
- when doing a spell, strike a balance between (A) being clear and specific, and (B) leaving the Goddess / universe room for creativity.
- be careful what you ask for (you just might get it).
- beware doing spells that affect another person – these can misfire and/or return on you three-fold, according to a magical law (see Introduction: Curses).
- put an end-term on a spell.
- treat and dispose of spell materials carefully and with clear intention – "I am now discarding these old spell materials."

Red Cord Spell

Priestess hands out threads. Invite people to play with the string and feel it in their fingers as they meditate.

Start music or drumming (optional).

Priestess leads short meditation, touching on these points (leave silent pauses after each phrase):

"What is your foundation? Start with your body. Where is your own physical center? Where is your body strong? Feel your body and your senses as your unique connection to the material world. Tie a knot into your cord for that connection.

"Feel your connection to the Earth. Feel the pull of gravity. Breathe into your connection to the Earth. Feel the energy move up and down between you and the Earth. Anchor this experience by knotting it into your cord.

"Think about what gives you a sense of stability, belonging, and connectedness in your life. Is it your home? Your family and

continued on next page





Grounding: Red Cord Spell (pg 2)

friends? Cooking a good meal? Your work? Tie a knot for this sense of stability.

“Do you have a connection to the Goddess or to spirit? Do you have a daily practice of magic? Meditation? Prayer? Exercise? Gardening? Walking? Think about things that connect you to the divine, and tie a knot in your cord for each.

“For everything that helps you feel connected, that calls you back to your groundedness, that strengthens your foundation, make a knot in your red cord.”

Allow people a minute or two to complete the work. Then invite them to hold the cord in their hands and breathe up Earth energy into it. “Feel the physical substance of the cord and the knots that signify your groundedness.”

Begin a low toning. Others join in. All tone until it fades. Keep it low – you are not raising energy here.

Completing the Spell

The priestess says something like:

“Breathe in the strength of this circle and state to yourself a simple affirmation of your own groundedness. (Pause.)

“You may want to fasten the cord somewhere on your body. If so, fasten it with a final knot while holding in mind your intention to strengthen your grounding.

“If you wear the thread – decide how long you will do so. Will it be for the length of this camp or class, for a moon cycle, until you go to bed tonight, until it falls off? State this aloud to yourself.

“If you do not intend to wear the cord, tie a final knot to create a circle. Decide what to do with it – place it on an altar, bury it in your garden, carry it in your pocket. Decide for how long.”

Binding the Spell

The priestess leads the group in a call-and-response spell-binding:

By all the power of three times three
 This spell bound round shall be
 To cause no harm nor return on me
 As I do will, so mote it be!

Priestess reminds people: “When the spell is complete – whenever you have decided – dispose of the string magically. Thank it for its work, declare it once again just a piece of string, and bury or burn it. If you decide you need to remove the string before the time declared – do the same as above – do it magically and intentionally.”

SOLO WORKING

You can do this spell alone, reading the meditation as you go. You may also want to review Ritual Skills: Grounding.

Weave this working into a simple ritual. Ground, cast a circle, and call in the elements. Invite an ally or two who will help you feel more grounded (deity, energy, animal ally, etc). Remember to thank and devoke in reverse order at the end.

Remember to set an end-time for the spell, and to dispose of the materials magically when the spell is complete.



Intuitive Practices

INTENT

Intuitive practice is a good description of many magical workings. This page shines a special light on this part of our magic.

We're working intuitively when we sense and work with energy, when we read tarot without an instructional book, when we do a spell that we created or modified – and also when we learn to pay attention to our gut feelings and first impressions.

Is every gut feeling or first impression correct? Hardly! Sometimes people whom we instantly love turn out to be less than perfect allies. And likewise, people we initially hold at a distance wind up being our closest friends.

Yet how many times do we say, "If only I'd paid attention to my gut feeling," or "If I'd just have listened to my doubts...."

Our goal is not to follow our intuition blindly – but to learn to listen to it and pay heed to its signals. Intuition is a flashing light saying, "Pay attention! Something might be happening here!"

Intuition is like any other skill – we're born with a certain amount of aptitude, and after that it's up to us to learn to use it. Our intuition – our ability to see, hear, feel, sense, and understand inner messages – grows stronger the more we exercise it.

Luckily, intuitive workings are often simple and fun – tarot, pendulums, dreamwork, scrying...

TIME & SPACE

Intuitive practices are great solitary work. You'll want a quiet, private space. In a circle, have plenty of room for people to spread out and get comfortable. Allow plenty of time – a half hour is good for a working.

PREP

See each working below for materials needed. You'll need your Book of Shadows, a pen, and drinking water.

Before doing any of these workings, do a short grounding and cast a circle (see Ritual Skills: Sacred Space: Quick Ways). Invoke an ally or two to support your work. Remember to devoke / thank the allies and open your circle at the end.

WORKINGS

Intuitive workings are scattered through this book. Here are a few key exercises for strengthening your intuitive skills.

Intuitive Tarot

The images of a tarot deck are an invitation to open our intuition. Set aside the deck's booklet and see what comes to you. Not an experienced reader? Perfect – intuitive reading is a great introduction to tarot. See Workings: Tarot: Intuitive Tarot.

Nature Divination

Opening awareness to nature can bring us in touch with our deep selves. See Workings: Divination: Nature Readings.

Scrying

Scrying means gazing into a hazy surface and seeing with the mind's eye. Scrying helps us tap into our subconscious and into magical energies around us. We can scry into a flame, tree bark, the surface of water... See Workings: Divination: Scrying.

Auras

Learning to read others' auras, and to modify our own, is a magical skill that's useful in day-to-day life. See Workings: Auras.





Labyrinth Workings

INTENT

A labyrinth is a great tool for focusing a meditation. Following the twists and turns of a labyrinth carries us into a magical realm. This page offers several ways you can use labyrinths in rituals and classes.

If a labyrinth is not available at your site, you can create one in an hour, following directions on page XXXX. Once you've blessed a labyrinth, people can walk it on their own, especially if you give them some ideas.

There are three typical labyrinth layouts: three, seven, and eleven.

Eleven circuits is a traditional form that appears in European churches such as France's Chartres Cathedral and has been replicated in some North American churches. These have very elaborate layouts with many twists and turns.

Seven circuits appear in ancient Mediterranean sites and elsewhere. The layout is simpler, yet resembles eleven circuits in that one does not move steadily from the outside to the center.

Three circuits is a simplified arrangement that we use for workings such as the Labyrinth Challenges ritual (see page 125).

Solo – you can also create a handy finger labyrinth for personal use and portability – see next page.



Even a simple spiral labyrinth fascinates kids – and adults too. This three-circuit spiral is made from dozens of marigolds, hundreds more of which decorate altars at San Francisco's Dia de los Muertos ritual and procession each year on November 2.

TIME & SPACE

A limited number of people can move through a labyrinth at once. If the group is too large for your labyrinth, try using it as part of a "stations ritual," where you work as smaller subgroups (see Rituals: Stations Format, page 130).

It's difficult to do any labyrinth working, including transitions, in under 30 minutes. If time is short, share some ways to work with labyrinths, and let people do it in their free time.

If you're making a labyrinth, you'll need at least 10 feet square for a three-circuit, and 15 feet for a seven-circuit. Outdoor labyrinths can be bigger. We made a seven-circuit at Witchlets from fallen tree branches that was 40 feet across.

PREP

If no labyrinth is available, make one (see page 232), or create a finger labyrinth (see next page).

continued on next page



Labyrinth Workings (pg 2)

WORKINGS

Walk & Meditate – 7 or 11 Circuits

Walk a labyrinth with magical intent. Approach the entrance with a question or issue in your heart. At the entrance, kneel and touch the Earth, grounding yourself at the portal. Walk slowly, doing your best to keep your question or issue foremost in your mind. As you follow the turns, let go of linear thought and allow images to float past.

Each time the circuit turns, stop for a breath and recall your question or issue before starting off in a new direction (with 11 circuits, you'll be stopping a lot!). When you reach the center, kneel and re-ground and be receptive to insights and intuition. Do this again when you exit the labyrinth. Journal afterward.

Chakra Meditation – 7 Circuits

In some Eastern traditions, chakras are energy centers running up the spine. You can match the seven circuits to the seven chakras, with the outermost circuit corresponding to the root chakra. As we make our way through the circuits, we can meditate in turn on each chakra, applying its insights and tools to our question. (You can find chakra meditation tools online.)

Labyrinth Challenges Ritual – 3 Circuits

See Rituals: Labyrinth Challenges (page XXXX). This is a stations-type ritual using a three-circuit labyrinth.

Mirrors at the Center – a Shadow Working

Set up a small table in the center as an altar. A veiled priestess stands at the center of the labyrinth. Place some hand-mirrors face down on the table. Having several mirrors lets several people do the working at once.

This takes a cue from the ancient Greek story of Ariadne, Theseus, and the Minotaur, and could be part of a larger ritual arc based on that story.

What if the creature at the center of the labyrinth is your own reflection?

This working needs enough light for people to see themselves in a mirror. Also – unless you're a small group, everyone won't be able to do this at once, so you'll need something for folks to do as they wait their turn – fire or water scrying, tarot, drumming....

A second priestess begins with a short meditation about walking the labyrinth and opening up to the parts of ourselves that we do not usually see and acknowledge. Priestess





Labyrinth Workings (pg 3)

asks: "What if the creature at the center of the labyrinth is parts of myself that I don't want to look at?"

As people arrive at the center, they are invited to gaze into a mirror and get acquainted with the "creature at the center of the labyrinth."

As they walk back out, they are invited to meditate on what they just saw.

Song: Let the Beauty We Love; Opening Up In Sweet Surrender.

Finger Labyrinths

Draw a seven-circuit labyrinth on a sheet of paper (see next page for directions). When it's complete, ground yourself, then slowly trace the circuits with your finger. Try doing a chakra meditation this way – see page XXXXX.

One Reclaiming teacher drew a large seven-circuit outline, then went back and carefully drew in hundreds of "stones" along the lines that separate the circuits, meditating on each one as if she were laying the stones in a real labyrinth.

SOLO WORKING

Labyrinths are a great tool for personal meditation and workings. You can draw a labyrinth with chalk on concrete, or make yourself a finger labyrinth.

Try any of the above workings on your own. You can even do the Labyrinth Challenges working (see Rituals: Labyrinth Challenges). Journal afterward.

If you can return to a local or regional labyrinth, keep an ongoing journal about your experiences. What thoughts and images recur for you? What distractions keep popping up? What changes over time?



What do we find at the center of the labyrinth?

LABYRINTH MYTH: Ariadne, Theseus, & the Minotaur

The ancient Greek myth of Ariadne, Theseus, and the Minotaur is built around a magical journey into (and back out of!) a labyrinth. We've used this myth as the core of a one-day workshop, and at Witchlets in 2012.

See Ritual Skills: Theme & Arc for details about how we used this myth in ways that challenged older gender assumptions.

Labyrinth directions on next page



Labyrinth Workings (pg 4)

How to Draw a 7-Circuit Labyrinth in One Easy Lesson!

Here's how to draw a seven-circuit labyrinth. It's easy after you practice a few times.

The distance between the tips of the lines is the width of the paths.

Note that the cross is not the center of the labyrinth – the cross is below and to the left of the center.

The first loop you draw is the actual center – you might want to make this more of a bubble so there's extra space.

Where To Make Your Labyrinth?

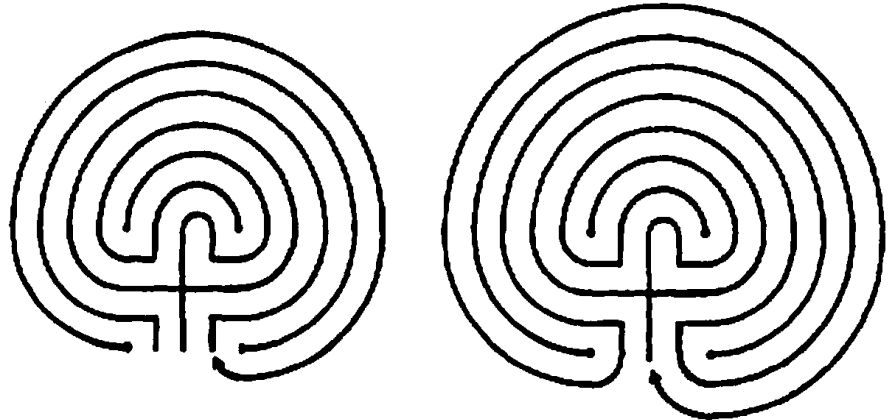
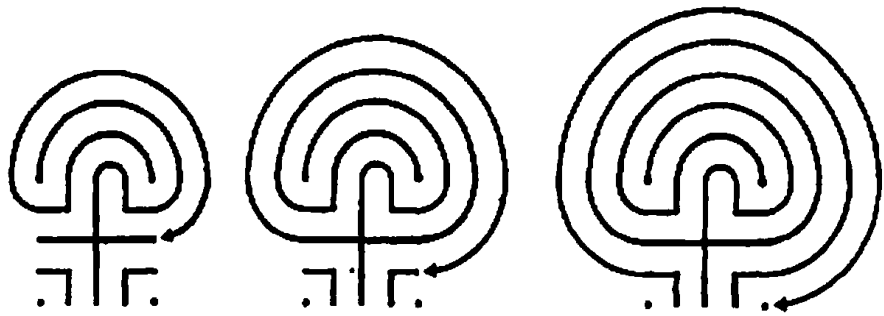
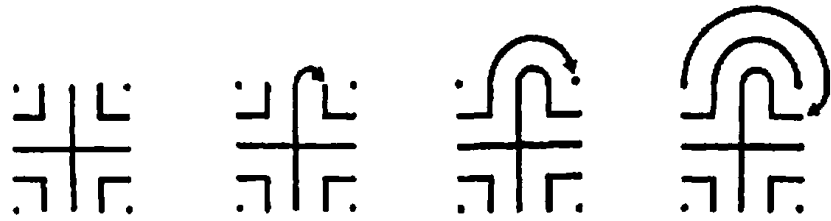
If you have a driveway or patio, sketch one in chalk.

You can draw a 15-foot diameter version on dirt with about 30 pounds of corn meal (plus extra just in case).

Or scratch the design into the ground and place rocks along the lines.

At the 1996 California WitchCamp at Mendocino Woodlands, the Earth Path made a daily practice of gathering and laying rocks for a 7-circuit labyrinth.

The Woodlands staff liked it, and years later the labyrinth is still there, the rocks long since embedded in the ground.

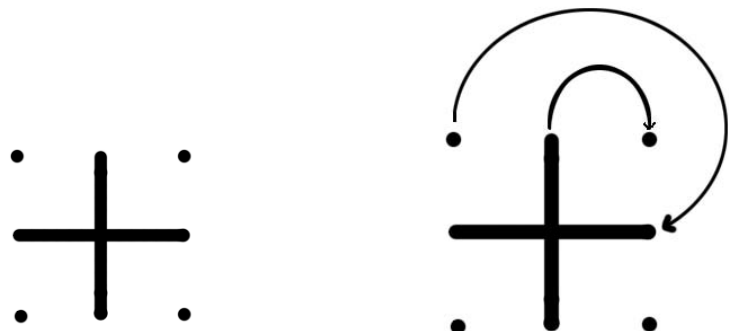


Drawing a 3-Circuit

This is not a common layout, but we've found it a perfect design for our Labyrinth Challenges (see Rituals: Labyrinth Challenges – page XXXX).

If possible, make the paths two to three feet wide for this working.

Start the labyrinth from this diagram, and follow the same procedure as above.





Labyrinth Workings (pg 5)



Reclaiming Quarterly Proofreaders Road-Test Labyrinth Instructions

Before we put anything into print, Reclaiming Quarterly's dedicated proofreading squad street-tests every word!

In our old magazine we ran an article called "Five-Minute Labyrinth," showing how seven people could draw a labyrinth in – allegedly – five minutes.

During a break in proofing, our team found a

quiet intersection in San Francisco's Castro District and drew a labyrinth on the pavement.

It took 40 pounds of corn meal and 45 minutes – but finally we did it – a five-minute labyrinth!



WeaveAndSpin.org/labyrinth

More labyrinth features on our website!





Letter to Myself

INTENT

Here's a way to send our magical intent into the future – our own future. Each person mails a unique magical message to themselves. It's a good working toward the end of a circle or class. It never gets old, and we've also done it at various WitchCamps.

This working can build off a prior exercise that develops a commitment to take the power of camp or class back into our daily lives – consider preceding the letter writing with a tarot reading, meditation, silent sit, etc.

TIME & SPACE

Room for people to sit and write. Allow 20 minutes including transitions.

PREP

Sheets of fancy paper for everyone, plus a bunch of small slips of colored paper (three to four per person). Fine-point magic markers (they're colorful plus they write well on uneven surfaces).

Blank letter-sized envelopes and enough first-class stamps for everyone. A basket or colorful bag to put the letters in. A priestess to collect and later mail the letters, plus a list of people's names and addresses (perhaps from registration forms).

WORKING

Prior working establishes a commitment we want to take back into the world, or perhaps a sense of our own power and resolve.

Priestess hands out paper and pens, and invites people to write a letter to themselves "back home" – but don't sign it yet.

This letter is only for you. Capture the power and spirit of camp / class, and write a letter to inspire you when you read it later.

Write things from camp / class that you want to remember. Write thoughts you have had during the class / camp about how powerful and creative you can be, and about what you want your life to be like. Write specific commitments.

Don't worry about elegance. Write your first thoughts (priestess ring a bell for three-minute warning).

When finished, read it over and add an affirmation – something like, "I believe in you!" Then if you're ready – sign it.

Priestess passes out envelopes, and invites people to address one to themselves. (Some younger folks won't know their full address – have them write their name, and get the address later.)

Each person places their letter in an envelope – but *don't* seal it.

Power boost – here's an idea inspired by Jamba Juice. Each person takes a few slips of paper. On each slip, write a word or phrase of power, encouragement, support – things like Go, You can do it, We believe in you, Keep trying, Strength, Love, Beauty...

Fold the slips and put them into the basket or bag. Tone over the basket to charge the words.

Each person now draws a few out. Without reading them, drop them into your envelope. Then seal it.

Collect all the letters in a basket or colorful bag in the center.

Song to raise energy over letters: My Soul, We Are the Power in Everyone; Let It Begin Now,

Then tell people – we will mail these to you a few days after camp / class ends.

SOLO WORKING

Do the working above and write a letter to yourself. Seal it in an envelope and address it. Let it sit for a few days. Then mail it.

When it arrives, cast a circle and read it.





Liberation Circle

INTENT

This is a general working that you can shape to suit your group's specific needs. Decide ahead of time what the theme will be. A liberation circle can follow a tarot reading or meditation that involves people choosing an act of liberation for themselves. Perhaps they want to enact taking a risk, hear words of support, hear their name sung to them, etc.

Taking chances / circle of support – each person is invited to take chances doing things that they are usually scared to do in a group. For instance: singing alone; dancing; silently looking into people's eyes.

Circle of affirmation – each person steps in and states an affirmation that they would like to hear spoken to them (a tarot reading or meditation beforehand can help people come up with their affirmation).

Singing with support – each of us sings with the support of the group, then alone, and again with support – so we can hear our own voice ring out alone, then be supported again (this is scary for many people!). See *Workings: Voice Magic* (page 318).

TIME & SPACE

Works best with half-dozen or more. Have enough room for sub-groups to spread out a bit. You'll need about two minutes for each person in the circle, and about 10 minutes for transitions.

PREP

Choose focus of working.

Teach songs ahead of time so you're ready to sing when it's time (see ideas below).

WORKING

Here are several workings that you could do within a liberation circle. You can also adapt them to your work.

Taking chances / circle of support – priestess invites people – one at a time as they are ready – to step into the circle and do something risky such as sing, dance, or simply be seen. People can ask for the types of support they want, such as silent attention, smiles, words of support and encouragement, etc.

Note – how do we fully support each other while remaining honest? If someone is taking a chance and singing in a shy, awkward voice, we don't want to tell them, "You have a beautiful voice" (they may not believe that) – but we can say, "It's wonderful to hear you sing!" (which they may be delighted to learn).

Between people, everyone sings the song: Inanna (Deep Calls to Deep); My Soul chorus; Perfect Offering.

Circle of affirmation – do a short meditation or tarot working ahead of this, so each person comes up with one word or a short phrase they would like to hear.

Priestess invites people – one by one when they are ready – to step into the circle and tell the rest of the group what affirmation they would like to hear. They close their eyes, and the group says and sings the words to them – some boldly, some in whispery voices. Go for about 60 seconds, then come to silence.

Between each person, everyone sings a simple song: Inanna (Deep Calls to Deep); My Soul chorus; Perfect Offering.

Singing with support – each person will have a chance to sing with the support of the group. Easiest way is to go around clockwise, letting people pass and go later if they wish. Note – allow extra time for this working – the debrief might take a while. (See also *Workings: Voice Magic*.)

continued on next page



Liberation Circle (pg 2)

Decide who will go first. Let that person laugh and shake out any nervousness before you start.

Group (including that person) sings a tone together. After 30 seconds or so, priestess signals with hands for everyone except the one person to fade out – the one person who continues is encouraged to keep toning boldly, and if possible look around at people – the rest of the group silently supports with their eyes. After 20 seconds, priestess signals rest of group to fade back in, then everyone fades down together.

All take a deep breath before the next person's turn. If someone is having feelings, encourage them to stay with it as the next person begins.

Afterward – leave plenty of time for debriefing. Do a go-round and let each person say how they felt while singing alone. Priestess can speak gently if it makes sense: "What would it be like to sing boldly all the time?" "I'm sorry that anyone ever told you not to sing loudly," etc. Be ready for some emotions to flow.

Finish these workings by singing a gentle song together.

Song Ideas – Let the Beauty We Love; My Soul; Let It Begin Now.

SOLO WORKING

Try the Singing with Support exercise above with recorded music. Look online for some trance music or some other simple, continuous sound (dance music, Sufi music – anything that has a fairly consistent sound that you can tone to). You'll also need a recording of a song you really like to sing for the end.

Create sacred space quickly – use a song for the elements to loosen your voice up (see Ritual Skills: Chants).

Put the music on, take a smooth, deep breath, and begin to tone with it – find a comfortable tone that seems to fit the music, and relax into it. See how strong and bold you can make your voice (this is scary for some of us – even those who like to sing!).

Once you are toning steadily, fade the music out. Keep toning for a few seconds, as steadily and boldly as you can. Notice the feelings of insecurity or fear that come up, and let them pass. Just keep going. After 10-15 seconds, fade the music back up as you continue toning.

Pause and take a deep breath. Laugh if you want to. Shake your body out. Try it again.

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – after three to four times, stop and write in your journal. Did it get any easier as you repeated it? Did you notice anything else that made it easier?

Repeat if you want.

Song – end by singing a favorite song along with a recording. Choose any song you want – if in doubt, visit our Ritual Skills: Chants pages and try My Soul or Let the Beauty We Love.





Lifting Each Other Up

INTENT

This will be hard to do with under eight people – maybe it’s perfect for a birthday party where people are willing to do some serious magic?

This works well after a working where people have made a commitment to themselves (via meditation, tarot, labyrinth, etc) – now each gets to feel the support of the whole group for their commitment.

We often accompany this lifting-up with the song “Humble Yourself,” a contemporary Christian song with a few strategic Pagan changes (see below for search info).

Humble yourself in the arms of the wild
 you gotta lay down low and
 Humble yourself in the arms of the wild
 you gotta ask Her what She knows and
 We will lift each other up, higher and higher (2x)

Pagan version by Beverly Frederick on youtube. Original lyrics: “Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord,” by Robert Byron Hudson – available on youtube, spotify, etc.

TIME & SPACE

You’ll need at least seven or eight people. A space of natural beauty is ideal, with enough room for your circle and a little extra room.

Allow about two minutes per person plus a few minutes of transition.

PREP

This follows a working where people make a self-commitment – perhaps in a meditation, a tarot reading, or walking a labyrinth.



Teach the song Humble Yourself (ideally at the beginning of class or ritual). If you don’t know it or don’t want to use the song, you can tone as you lift. Practice toning together at the beginning of the class or ritual.

Talk for a few minutes about respectful touch and ask people to agree to pay attention to this.

WORKING

In groups of eight to twelve, gather attention and priestess explains:

“One at a time, people will have chance to step into the circle and be lifted and held by the group.

continued on next page



Lifting Each Other Up (pg 2)

"When it's your turn, step into the circle and (if you wish) state your pledge / intention from the earlier working. Then close your eyes and hold silence. Cross your arms so your hands are on opposite shoulders. When the circle is ready, gently lay back.

"Lifters circle person to support all points. Join wrists with the person across from you. Someone prepares to cradle head and neck. Strong people at shoulders and hips.

"Lifters sing Humble Yourself – or tone – as person lays back. Catch body and lift legs until the person is held at your waist level. You can cradle the person there, or gently lift them overhead.

"Continue singing or toning for a minute or so. Then lower the feet back down and gently lift the person to standing. Bring the song to a close or fade the toning as the person comes back to their feet."

The person rejoins the circle, and the next person goes. People go when they are ready. If there is a lull, priestess gently asks, "Are there others who are ready to go?" and leaves some space before wrapping up – usually everyone will take a turn.

SOLO WORKING

This is a good working for a birthday party – lift the birthday person first, then invite others to take a turn. Maybe there's a non-Pagan way to create a circle to help stay focused and let go of silly energy (save it for later in the party).





Luscious Eating

INTENT

A fun, sensuous way to get in touch with the earthiness of our bodies via eating delicious fruit – a great way to end any ritual or class!

Works well after a trance or after another intense working - a nice way to re-ground into our bodies.

The advanced “feed one another” version (see below) can be a sweet working in a group that is ready for this. Try this is a later class or path, maybe after an especially intense working that leaves people very open.

TIME & SPACE

A quiet, private space where people can gather in a circle. Number of people – however many can share food.

PREP

Fruit – especially juicy berries. Ripe raspberries or blackberries are ideal, as are melons cut into small pieces. Try banana slices, tangerine sections, peach quarters, etc.

Toothpicks are great, especially if people will be feeding one another.

A nice serving tray heightens the magic.

WORKING

Explain that many fruits grow from five-petaled flowers and have five seed pods. Slice an apple crossways and hold it up: “Behold the mystery of the pentacle!”

Then bring out trays of fruit and invite people to eat intentionally, one piece at a time, savoring the luscious earthiness.

Advanced work – feed one another. This is edgy for some people – be prepared for this to take over the energy if you do it. Toothpicks help for this work.

Song – end with a gentle song that celebrates being together: Air Moves Us; Barge of Heaven (Pour It Out for Me); Let the Beauty We Love; The River She Is Flowing.

SOLO WORKING

This can be a solo working. Try doing it after some other intense magical or personal work (or after finishing difficult homework). The key is intentionality. As you prepare and then eat the fruit, focus on the earthiness of your body and the food you are eating.

Journal afterward.



Magical Writing

INTENT

What does writing mean to you? Something you do at school? A dream job? A nuisance? A glimmer of an idea for a story you want to tell?

Writing, like rituals, spellwork, and other aspects of magic, involves working with and shaping flows of energy.

Whatever our writing ambitions, we can benefit from a magical practice. If you have a daily magical practice, you'll find ways to weave support for your writing.

If you don't have a regular practice – here's a chance to develop one!

The Magical Writer is a Reclaiming-style writing class created by author Luke Hauser that applies the tools of magic and ritual to our creative practices. It is occasionally taught in the Bay Area and has been offered as an online class. You can also do the work alone or with friends.

The Magical Writer course can help you build a steady writing and magical practice. You'll develop skills such as:

- Creating magical writing space
- Invoking allies and characters
- Shadow work: integrating our inner critic
- Plot, story, and myth
- The alchemy of editing

TIME & SPACE

For one person or a small group.

A writing group reminds us that we are not alone with our work. We can learn from one another's experiences and find ways to share inspiration and practical lessons.

PREP

Download the free Magical Writer course booklet – visit WeaveAndSpin.org/freebies.

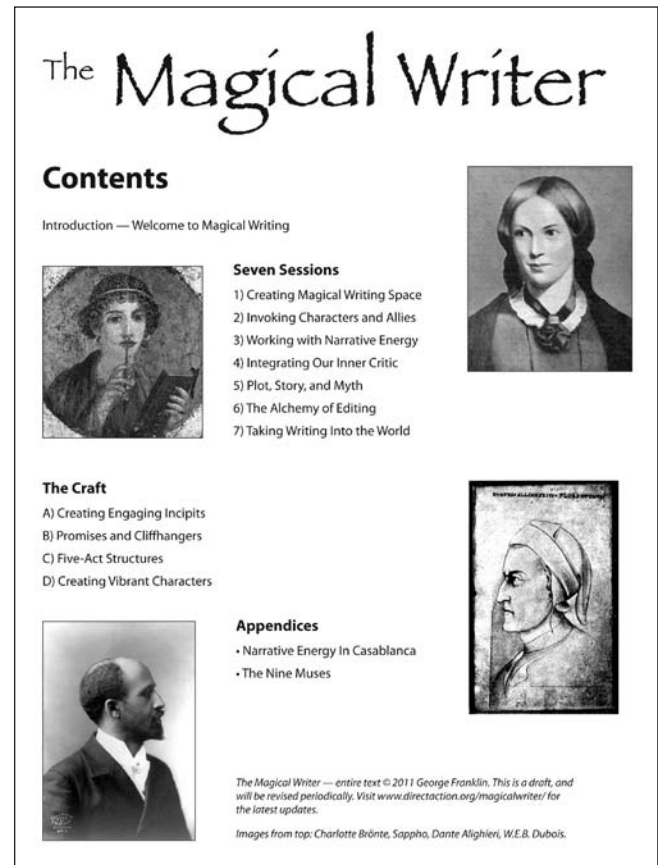
Think about where you want / need to create a writing space that works for you. Is it your room? Your back yard? A local café or library? On the bus or train? Where will you start?

Will you work best alone, or will finding a friend or three help you stay focused?

Do you need a computer? Blank paper? A new journal with a hand-decorated cover? Will a special pen or marker(s) help?

WORKING (Solo or Small Group)

The Magical Writer booklet includes about a dozen sessions. Cumulatively they offer a survey of basic writing skills. Each lesson features a short introductory essay plus a page of tips and exercises.



continued on next page





Magical Writing (pg 2)

Workings include tarot readings, creating a writing altar, outlining a favorite movie, rant-writing, talking back to our inner critic, telling vs showing, taking our writing into the world, and more.

You can work the Magical Writer course on your own or with a writing group by downloading the class booklet, which features a seven-unit class plus several bonus sessions. Work the sessions in sequence, or pick and choose among those that call to you.

Skim the booklet, choose a working – and let the magic begin!

Free Magical Writer course booklet – visit our website, DirectAction.org/magicalwriter.

Magical Writer classes – visit the same website: DirectAction.org/magicalwriter.

More Reclaiming Classes

You can study Reclaiming magic online, by joining a local class, or on your own.

BayAreaReclaiming.org lists local offerings.

WorldTreeLyceum.org offers classes online – including Reclaiming's core magic classes.

The Magical Writer

Session 5 — Plot, Story, and Myth

How do we move from the stories in our hearts to a structured narrative that can sustain its energy over the course of a book?

A plot is the scaffolding that allows us to transform the raw energy of our stories into a compelling and emotionally satisfying narrative.

Plots are remarkably simple and repetitive. Christopher Booker says that all of Western literature consists of seven (later he said nine) plots. But to find this limiting is like bemoaning that all of Western music consists of just twelve musical tones. An infinite number of songs can be crafted from those twelve tones, and an infinite number of stories from a small number of plots.

Myths and Plots

Myths embody simple plots, and often share common features such as a Call, a Challenge, a Journey, a Period of Testing, an Initiation, a Climactic Struggle, and a Triumphant Return.

Myths are remarkably supple. I think of a myth as a collection of story-elements — characters, conflicts, situations, possible outcomes — which each storyteller assembles in a unique way. Homer wrote a version of the *Odyssey* — but James Joyce and the creators of *O Brother Where Art Thou* did, too. All were reworking “traditional” material.

Myths as Organizing Devices

Myths and folktales can be used explicitly — think of Marion Zimmer Bradley, John Barth, or the film version of *The Iliad*. Ancient and medieval myths and legends have lost none of their power, and lesser-known tales could provide great material for modern narratives.

Myths can also be used as subtle structural patterns — Joyce's *Ulysses* makes few explicit references to Homer's work, yet the classical text underlies the structure of the entire novel. Hunter S. Thompson's *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* mirrors a phantasmagoric journey to Hell, cleverly disguised as America.

Even when we don't follow a myth so strictly, we can use mythical elements to strengthen the scaffolding of our work. Many stories will benefit from a Journey, a series of Challenges — and of course the Climactic Struggle (which may take place on a battlefield or at a formal wedding).

The Magical Writer

Exercises — Session 5

Mythical Elements

Whether or not we adopt a myth as our organizing structure (hey, it worked for James Joyce!), we can strengthen our storytelling by integrating mythical elements into our plots.

A Call is a typical way to start a story — whether it is a call to a journey, a task, or an interior awakening, it is this first glimmer of awareness that sets the story in motion.

Challenges, with initial failures and a growing recognition of the need for special preparation, often lead to a decision to undertake a journey and/or seek special training. Action-adventure films often emphasize this arc.

A Journey takes the story into the wider world. Characters gain experience while meeting fresh challenges. A journey can also add color and excitement to the story — the “exotic.”

Testing and Initiation are ways of structuring conflicts and having them lead to a clear outcome. The initiation doesn't need to be formal, but a significant threshold must be crossed and acknowledged — readying the character for the ultimate test.

The Climactic Struggle brings the story-elements and characters into a final showdown — Theseus and Ariadne vs the Minotaur, Dorothy and her friends vs the Wicked Witch, etc.

The Triumphant Return can be shown (as when the princess is restored to her rightful throne amid general acclaim), or simply suggested (as when the gunfighter rides alone into the sunset amid the applause of the moviegoers).

MythCrafting

When we perform magical spells, we speak of “spellcrafting,” the art of envisioning, creating, and charging our intentions.

What if we applied the same approach with our writing — and our lives?

Think of the stories we tell ourselves about our limitations, the likelihood of failure, and the negligible impact of our actions. Can I take these disheartening tales about “how the world is” and transmute them into narratives of empowerment?

What magical tools help me tap into the stories that get buried beneath the clamor of the world? What are the roles of trance, divination, and dreamwork?

In what ways can my storycrafting support my complete emergence into the world?

Some Resources

The Writer's Journey: Mythic Structure for Storytellers and Screenwriters by Christopher Vogler. Based on the work of Joseph Campbell.

Shakespeare's Game by William Gibson. Dissects the Bard's plays to illustrate plot-construction. The best book I've read on plotcrafting.

Myths and Appropriation

I consider European and Mediterranean myths “fair game.” The only reservation I have about reworking myths is borrowing materials from cultures which traditionally have been exploited by my inherited European culture.

Writing Exercises

My Life as Myth

Choose a favorite myth and rework it as part of a story you are working on, or part of your autobiography.

In your story, what monsters are battled? What special skills are involved? What princes, princesses, or royal children of other genders do we meet?

Does your narrative have a Call? An Initiation? A Triumphant Return?

Transforming a Myth

Choose a myth that annoys you, and rework it in a manner that empowers you. You can reinterpret the myth, introduce new characters or other elements that transform the story, etc.

Change anything you want, but somehow keep the original myth visible.

Modern Pantheons

Create a dozen deities or other magical beings. Be sure to give them super-powers and special areas of influence (e.g., love, war, barbequeing, etc).

Use an arbitrary method — coin-toss, drawing cards, etc — to assign them places in a hierarchical pantheon or family. Draw a chart of their relations.

Once they are assigned places, what conflicts arise? Is a gender or generational rebellion taking shape? Can the top dogs retain their position? Make whatever moves you feel are needed.

Now write a short myth that explains the changes, why they had to happen, and why the world is a better place for it.

The Magical Writer, created by Luke Hauser, is an online course plus advanced lessons – each session featuring magical and practical exercises and workings.

Download the complete Magical Writer booklet – visit DirectAction.org/magicalwriter.

Dancing the Spiral

235



Mirror Affirmations

INTENT

An affirmation is a simple statement of how we want to be (and be seen) in the world. Examples: "I will speak boldly. I am a really smart person. I will treat other people with respect."

We can use a mirror to strengthen this sense of who we are and who we want to be.

Combine this with a prior exercise that develops a few personal affirmations – a tarot reading, a meditation, etc.

TIME & SPACE

Enough room to spread out a little. Allow about 15 minutes including journaling and transitions.

PREP

Each person needs a mirror. Ask students to bring a hand mirror to circle and bring a few extras. Each person should also have a journal and pen handy.

Each person will need two or three personal affirmation statements. You may want to use a prior exercise to develop these affirmations – a tarot working, a meditation, etc. Or they can be developed as a meditation at the top of this working.

WORKING

Find a space. Ground and cast a circle around yourself.

If you already have affirmations from a prior working, call them forth now. If not, take a couple of minutes and come up with two or three simple statements that say how you want to be in the world. Write them down.

Now make yourself comfortable. Take a few deep breaths and on each exhale let go of any judgments.

Gaze into the mirror and meet your own eyes. Welcome yourself. Exhale any judgments.

Now state one of your affirmations, gazing into your own eyes. As quickly as judgments and opinions come up, take a breath and let them go. Then repeat the affirmation. As often as other thoughts pop up, just keep repeating the affirmation and gazing into the mirror.

After a minute or so, put the mirror face down. Exhale. Shake yourself out. Get a drink of water. Breathe.

Try it again with a different affirmation.

✦ **Book of Shadows** – after a few rounds, get out your journal and write a bit. Ask yourself – where did it get difficult? What affirmation was the easiest and/or hardest to accept? What is so difficult about looking into my own eyes?

Group sharing – go around and share one word or phrase. Close with a song such as Let the Beauty We Love or We Are Alive.

Daily practice – consider repeating one of the mirror-affirmations each day for a month, or for a year and a day. Keep a journal about how your experience changes over the period.

SOLO WORKING

Same working.





Mirror Goddess

INTENT

A simple way to remind ourselves that we are the Goddess. Can be used as a Goddess invocation in a small group, or as a pair-working with multiple mirrors.

TIME & SPACE

Either a circle of up to about 30 people, or enough space to spread out in dyads if you prefer. You'll need a mirror for each group.

As a circle, this will go quickly – 20-30 people in few minutes. Any larger and it's hard to keep the focus.

As dyads, allow three minutes..

PREP

Need a hand mirror for group invocation, or one mirror for every pair in larger group. If this is a class, ask people to bring small mirrors. You may want to combine this with other mirror workings in the same class or ritual.

WORKING

Group invocation – first person holds mirror up to person on their left and says: "Behold the Goddess." Hold mirror for several seconds as they gaze at their reflection – longer in a small group.

Pass mirror to that person, and they do it for the next person. When circle is complete, say: "Welcome Goddess!"

Devote by going in opposite direction, or simply have people look around at one another and see the Goddess prior to thanking Her (ourselves) and bidding Her (ie, our Goddess-selves) farewell from this circle.

Pair-working – same idea, but do it in pairs, with each pair having their own mirror. Go back and forth three times.

SOLO WORKING

Choose a short song or chant that you like. Let the Beauty We Love is great for this working (see Ritual Skills: Chants).

Start the song about a minute from the end (or however long you want to gaze).

Gaze into a mirror and say aloud: "Behold the Goddess." Gaze into your own eyes and see the Goddess until the song ends.



Mirror Shielding

INTENT

A simple, physical way of establishing our boundaries and personal energy as a strong shield. Useful in stressful situations such as protests, arguments, or life in general.

For more on working with personal energy and boundaries, see *Workings: Auras*.

TIME & SPACE

Enough room to spread out at arm's length from one another. Five to ten minutes depending on how much people get to practice.

PREP

A hand-mirror is helpful but not necessary.

WORKING

First, breathe deeply and re-establish your own grounding and center. Now breathe in energies you want – groundedness, peace, calm, clarity, etc. With deep, gentle breaths, fill yourself with these energies.

Using either a hand-mirror facing out, or the palm of your hand facing outward (like a cop saying, "Halt!") – circle it around your head, keeping the mirror-face or palm facing out, and say:

For all other energy sent toward me
May it harmlessly reflected be

As you speak this rhyme (chosen because it's so simple that it takes no concentration), keep your attention entirely on the positive qualities you called in – on your own center. Let the mirror do the outer work.

Repeat around your heart, and again around your pelvis. The whole time, keep your attention on your own center. Speak the rhyme (or something simple that requires no particular thought) and move the mirror (or your palm), keeping your attention on the positive qualities you are invoking.

Finally, pass the mirror (or your palm), still facing out, up and down in front of your entire body, saying: "So mote it be!"

Place the mirror aside, face down. Touch the Earth or your own center to ground any extra energy. Breathe again to your own center to complete the working.

SOLO WORKING

Same working.





Nature Sit / Night Sit

INTENT

A challenging personal meditation – sitting alone in a field or forest, we open to mystery (doubly so if it's night-time!).

This working draws on each person's own inner resources and responses to their environment. As one teacher put it – "We'll take people out into the woods and let the trees do the teaching."

This is a good working for near the beginning of a ritual – create sacred space, then go on a hike and silent-sit. Come back to the circle and do a working that pulls people back together – an allies circle is a good contrast to the solo work of silently sitting. Or use Workings: Overflowing Cup to empower insights that came to you as you sat alone.

TIME & SPACE

This is planned as an outdoor working – you'll want a patch of field or woods, away from people, dogs, and traffic – and a space in which people can safely sit alone. It could also be done in a large building such as an old church, where you could hike through darkened hallways.

For night sit, priestesses need to be familiar with the space so you can lead a hike in the dark – then go back and find everyone!

Any number, but the more people, the more space you need to spread out. Allow about 20 minutes for the sitting, plus about 20-30 more minutes for prep, hiking, and wrap-up – the more people, the longer it will take.

PREP

This working requires a fair bit of prep, especially if you plan a night hike. You'll need to know the route well, and be sure there isn't poison oak, swampy ground, loose dogs, etc.

You'll need a long circular trail that begins and ends at your ritual space.

You'll need at least five priestesses. Walk the trail together ahead of time and get comfortable leading a hike around the space. For a night sit, do it the night before, walking in the dark.

Find a bunch of spots along the way where someone can comfortably sit for 20 minutes. Return in daylight to check for poison oak, bee-hives, swampy ground, trip hazards, etc.

Dogs – before the ritual begins, check about dogs on the land. Some people will not want to sit alone if they are worried about roaming dogs. Can dogs be leashed or inside during this working?

Cars – if there are vehicles on the site, can you negotiate a 30-minute no-drive period, or choose a trail away from roads?

Tell folks to wear warm, comfortable clothes.

Ahead of time – let people know what you will be doing. If someone really resists, find a way to work with them – perhaps their sit-spot can be near the main fire circle, or they could bring a camp chair with them.

Priestesses – you'll need a lead priestess for the hike, another to follow at the end of the line – and a couple of roving priestesses who tap people out of line and sit them in the dark. A fifth priestess stays and anchors the ritual space – a bonfire, or an altar with candles and a bowl of water, etc.

Beforehand, count the number of sitters. If you don't know every person, make a list of names.

WORKING

This description is for a night sit. For a nature sit, look for the most beautiful area you can find. Place people far enough apart that they can't see one another.

continued on next page



Nature Sit / Night Sit (pg 2)

Sacred space is already created, and a fire or altar established for people to return to afterward.

Priestess gathers people, explains the working (do it now, not earlier, so people aren't fretting over details). Invite people to leave behind flashlights, phones, water bottles, etc – take only warm clothing.

Ask that once the walk starts, people remain silent until all return to the ritual circle.

Priestess speaks: "We are going on a silent hike and night sit. This is an opportunity for you to encounter the mystery deep in your own center – what insights rise within you when you are alone in the dark? What questions, doubts, or fears arise? What new possibilities shine before you?"

Invite people simply to be open and let thoughts and feelings flow through them.

Gather in a single line and commence sacred silence. Check that all priestesses are ready. Lead priestesses begin the hike. Go slowly – this creates a spooky mood, and allows the roving priestesses time to seat people in the dark and catch up again.

Once everyone is seated, priestesses wait until 20-25 minutes have passed from the start of the hike, then slowly go back around to gather people. Be as quiet as possible so folks further along don't hear you coming until you are close.

When you have retrieved the last person, count everyone and make sure you didn't miss anyone. If you did, start singing and send a priestess back around the circuit.

When the hike is complete and all are back together – do a quiet song to unify the group: *The River She Is Flowing; My Soul; Let the Beauty We Love*.

SOLO WORKING

You can do a nature sit by yourself, as part of a longer personal ritual or as its own working. You could follow the nature sit with a tarot reading (see *Workings: Tarot: Intuitive Reading*), and/or charge the working with *Spell: Overflowing Cup*.

Find a safe, quiet spot where you won't be disturbed, and a second spot nearby where you will begin and end.

Bring a timer, your journal, and some solid, grounding snacks for afterward (nuts, berries, bread, apples). Dark sunglasses might help you create your own private space.

Create sacred space for yourself at the beginning spot. You can do this quickly and quietly – try "invisible casting" (see *Ritual Skills: Circle Casting*). Call in an ally or two to support you.

Then say to yourself: "I am going on a silent hike and sit. This is an opportunity for me to encounter the mystery deep in my own center – what truth comes to me when all is silent and dark? What questions, doubts, or fears arise? What new possibilities shine before me?"

Take a breath, then slowly and silently walk to your sit-spot. Make yourself comfortable. Set your timer for 20 minutes. Close your eyes and relax.

After 20 minutes, stand and stretch. Silently walk back to your starting point. When you get there, sit down and write in your journal for a few minutes.

★ **Book of Shadows** – consider answering these questions in your journal: What surprised me? How bored or irritated did I get? What thoughts kept popping into my head? How did I feel about my daily life?

After you finish writing, how will you bring this working to completion?

For a short wrap-up, try a song: *The River She Is Flowing; My Soul; Let the Beauty We Love*.

If you want to do a longer ritual, follow the sitting with an intuitive tarot reading (see *Workings: Tarot*), then charge your reading with *Workings: Overflowing Cup Spell*.

Remember to devoke any allies you called and open the circle.





Non-Judgmental Listening

INTENT

The intent is to truly listen to another person with no judgment, advice, or attempts to fix anything. This working reminds us that each of us is an amazing magical being – and that we are okay just as we are.

The good news is – we are! Humans are okay, even when we make mistakes and hurt one another. Our task is to do better in the present and future, not to feel lousy about the past.

Non-judgmental listening can be a good way to check in at the start of a class – but you'll want to do some teaching before you turn people loose with it. It can be hard for some people to just listen (or be listened to)!

We have sometimes used this exercise as part of a "listening stations" ritual on the first day of classes or WitchCamp paths – small groups rotate among three stations – listening to nature, listening to myself, and listening to one another (where we practice non-judgmental listening). See Rituals: Stations Format.

This sort of listening is not a replacement for the ways we usually talk with family or friends – it's another way of being together. Try setting aside 10 minutes and doing this with a friend(s) the next time you're together.

This practice is based on techniques from co-counseling (aka reciprocal peer counseling).

PREP

Get people into dyads or triads, preferably with someone they do not know very well (sometimes it's easier to be open with someone whom we don't have a lot of other connections with).

Groups of three take a little longer, and are not quite as intimate – but they increase our odds of having someone really listen to us.

Use a timer and give people three to five minutes apiece. A bell to ring changes is handy.

Let people know how long they will have to talk, and that you will signal when it's time to switch, so they don't have to worry about the timing. Remind people about agreements around confidentiality – this is doubly important if we are to feel safe and "non-judged."

TIME & SPACE

Any number, in dyads or triads. Enough space to spread out a bit. Allow about five minutes per person (10 minutes total for a dyad, 15 for a triad), and a few minutes for transition. You may want a few minutes at the end for the entire circle to de-brief if this is the first time your group has done this.

WORKING

Get people into dyads / triads, then ask for their attention. Priestess speaks: "We are going to practice listening to one another with no judgment, no advice, and no attempt to fix or take care of one another. This can be harder than we think!

"Each of you will have a three-minute turn. Listeners, give the speaker your full, silent attention – show them with your eyes that you are fully present. Let go of judgments, advice, or helpful support. Try thinking things like, 'What an amazing human being! I bet they can handle anything life throws at them! Wow, what a wonderful person!'

"There is no need to speak, nod, smile, affirm, or actively support the speaker – just be fully present. At the end, everyone simply say, "Thank you."

"Speaker – when it is your turn, take a breath. Three minutes is a long time! Go slowly. You can talk or be silent as you wish,

continued on next page



Non-Judgmental Listening (pg 2)

but use your entire time. Look your listeners in the eye when you can. Talk about what you wish. If feelings come up, let them flow. This is your time. Feel what it is like to have other people fully present with you – people who are not judging you or trying to fix you. They are simply listening to you.”

Let people talk, ringing the bell for changes. At the end, call people back.

If time permits, ask folks to share a bit about how this felt. Some might say things such as, “That was hard – I really wanted to say something supportive.” Others might say, “Wow, I’m not used to being listened to that way!”

At the end, especially if this has been difficult for some participants, re-affirm that we have just done powerful magical work – we have been fully present with one another!

Song: Let the Beauty We Love; I See Myself In You.

SOLO WORKING

We can actually listen to ourselves non-judgmentally. Take your Book of Shadows and find a quiet, solitary space. You may also want to bring a hand mirror and combine this with the mirror affirmations working (page 241).

Close your eyes and breathe a few times. On each breath, say this simple affirmation: “I am okay just as I am.”

After a few breaths, stop and write a bit. Try writing: “I am completely okay – and that means...” – and free-write from there.

When self-judgments come up, breathe and let them go. Repeat aloud: “I’m completely okay just as I am.”

Repeat this several times – breathe and say the affirmation a few times, then write.

★ **Book of Shadows** – what do you notice? Does the writing change? What feelings come up?

Try it again – take a breath and say, “I am okay just as I am.” Write some more.

At the end, close your journal. Take a breath and remember the affirmation you have spoken. Say: “So mote it be!”

Song: Let the Beauty We Love; I See Myself In You.





Overflowing Cup (Ace of Cups Spell)

INTENT

Picturing the overflowing Ace of Cups tarot card (see the Rider-Waite-Smith deck), we weave a gentle, watery spell for charging an intention or commitment, or for calling abundance into your life.

This is a good climactic working for a class or ritual, for instance after a trance or tarot reading where people arrive at a “next step” commitment. It can also fit well after workings where people are challenged to welcome abundance into their lives (often naming the abundance they desire).

TIME & SPACE

Takes a minute per person, plus a few minutes of set-up and a song at the end. More than 25 people will risk losing focus.

A quiet space with an open center where an altar with a large bowl can be set up, or place altar next to a low fire.

PREP

Need:

- a large bowl.
- pitchers of drinkable water (or one pitcher and some jugs of water) – at least two full cups of water for each person.
- cups for all – if a class, invite people to bring a chalice or favorite cup.
- a few towels.
- small table to elevate bowl if available – greenery or cloth to decorate central altar around bowl.

Teach songs: Born of Water; Let the Beauty We Love (or My Soul).

WORKING

This spell builds on a prior working such as a tarot reading or a meditation where people make a commitment, or decide what energy they want to invoke in abundance. Sacred space is already cast.

Place bowl and pitchers in center. Have cups handy – people may already be holding and charging them from a prior working.

Song – gather around the bowl and sing: Born of Water.

One by one, people step up and say: “I call into this cup _____ (such and such commitment or energy – eg, “I call into this cup awareness of the abundance of love around me,” or “I call into this cup my commitment to sing daily”).

Hold cup over the bowl. Priestess begins slowly pouring. As cup fills, let it overflow into the bowl until person says, “now.”

Focusing on their intention, the person drinks the water. When they finish, all call out: “So mote it be!”

Song – when all have gone, bind the spell with a song: Let the Beauty We Love (or My Soul).

Afterward – open the circle. Offer surplus water to the Earth.

SOLO IDEAS

You can pour an overflowing cup for yourself. Set up a bowl and pitcher, and do each step slowly and with intention.

Begin with a meditation or tarot reading where you think about your life and what energy you would especially like to call in.

Once you know what you want to call in, do the Overflowing Cup Spell above. After it overflows, drink slowly from the cup, focusing on your intention.

End with a song.



Pentacles: Intro & Running Energy

INTENT

Learning to run pentacle energy through the body and aura can be used as a meditation, for grounding and purification, and as a daily (or occasional) personal practice. For some, the Iron or Pearl Pentacle becomes a core part of their magical practice.

The work is simple: we name each of the five points as a quality, then run energy through those qualities.

Pentacles can be the basis of a class or WitchCamp path, working with one of the points each session. We've done Pentacle weekend intensives, squeezing all five points into three very busy days.

Reclaiming inherited two pentacles from the Feri tradition, in which some early Reclaiming teachers were trained: Iron and Pearl. You'll find an intro to Pearl below, and you can read more about the Iron Pentacle in Starhawk's book *The Spiral Dance* and T. Thorn Coyle's *Evolutionary Witchcraft*.

Various other pentacles have been created and taught. In the mid-2000s, Free Cascadia WitchCamp developed the Pentacle of the Great Turning based on Joanna Macy's work. Teen Earth Magic used this as our camp theme in 2010 and again in 2017. You'll find more on the Pentacle of the Great Turning in this chapter (page 252).

TIME & SPACE

Any number, with room to spread out at more than arm's length. Allow 10 minutes including transitions.

PREP

Whatever pentacle you are doing, run it over a period of time until you can do it in your sleep. Doing (and especially leading) a pentacle working requires steady concentration. Struggling to remember the points of a given pentacle is a distraction.

WORKING – Running Pentacle Energy (Pearl Pentacle)

This working uses Pearl Pentacle as an example – substitute other pentacle points as desired.

Many Feri initiates run the pentacle only around the outer ring, as described by Starhawk in *The Spiral Dance*. However, others do it across the body, and it is often taught this way in Reclaiming. This working runs energy across the body and then around the circle. You can do it while standing or laying down.

Priestess invites people to spread out and be comfortable, then make a star with your arms, legs, and head. (Think of Leonardo Da Vinci's image of "Vitruvian Man" standing inside a circle.)



Begin by renewing your grounding and finding your center. Breathe to your center and gather your attention there.

Now on a gentle breath, lift that energy until it comes to rest slightly above your head. Some people see / feel this as a colored ball, others as a vague wave of energy. Some just pretend they feel something. It's all good.

Love (Head) – Name the energy point above your head Love. Breathe to Love, to the love you feel in your life, to the love you have for friends, for community, for all the Earth.

continued on next page





Pentacles: Intro & Running Energy (pg 2)

On a breath, drop the energy down to a point just above your right foot. Again, feel this energy however you can – each of us does it differently. Just notice the energy above your right foot.

Law (RF) – Name this right foot energy point Law. Breathe to the many forms of “law” in your life – gravity, alarm clocks, government, rules of grammar, your daily schedule.... Let go of judgments and feel the many roles Law plays in your life.

On a breath, let the energy rise and cross your body to a point just above your left hand. Feel this energy however you can.

Wisdom (LH) – Name this left hand energy point Wisdom. Breathe to your own innate wisdom – the many ways that you understand life and love and art and beauty. Breathe to that part of yourself that has always had this wisdom, waiting only for it to be awakened.

On a breath, let the energy cross your body to a point just above your right hand. Feel this energy above your hand.

Liberty (RH) – Name this right hand energy point Liberty. Breathe to liberty and freedom in your own life – political freedom, freedom to think your own thoughts, freedom to change and grow, free time, etc. No need to judge – just breathe to Liberty’s many forms.

On a breath, drop your energy across your body to a point just above your left foot. Feel this energy hovering above your foot.

Knowledge (LF) – Name this left foot energy point Knowledge. Breathe to the many forms of knowledge and “know-how” you have acquired, that your community and society share – breathe to your own desire for more knowledge, more skill and expertise.

Finally, on a breath, let the energy rise again to the point above your head and say again, Love.

Running the pentacle – now that you know the five Pearl points, let’s run them in order. Review as needed: Love - Law - Wisdom - Liberty - Knowledge.

Take a breath to your center. Then, beginning just above your head, see if you can pass the ball of energy steadily through the five points, pausing to say the corresponding word and feel the presence of each point.

Run this pentacle three to five times, ending back at Love.

Then, beginning at Love, run the energy around the circle, moving to your left: Love - Wisdom - Knowledge - Law - Liberty. Do this one or more times, ending again at Love.

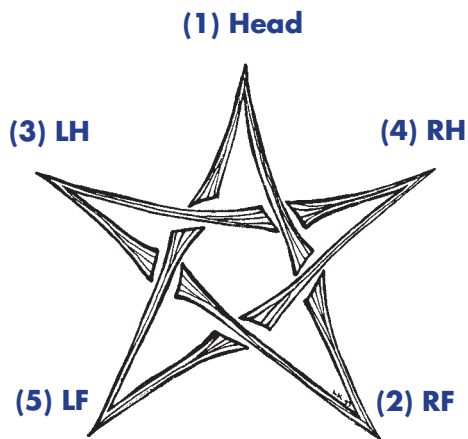
Finally, on a gentle breath, let the energy drop back to your center. Anchor the Pentacle of Pearl in your center. Feel the rays run from your center out to the five points. Breathe to this connection.

You are the Pentacle of Pearl!

continued on next page

Running The Pentacle

Pearl, Iron, & Other Pentacles



Stand as a relaxed star. Take a breath to your center. Let that energy rise gently to a point just above your head.

Begin at the top. Draw the pentacle on your body three times as shown (1-2-3-4-5-1), pausing for one or more breaths as you contemplate the meaning of each point (see this page for Pearl points).

Finally, trace a circle around the star (1-3-5-2-4-1), taking a breath at each point, and finishing at the top.

Let the energy rest there for a moment, then drop gently back to your center for completion of the cycle.

* * * *

Note – compare this to the invoking pentacle on page 72. Why is the “invoking” pentacle a mirror image of the “running” pentacle? Possibly a coincidence?

Some say that with the invoking pentacle, we are inscribing it onto the air in front of us. Whereas when we “run” a pentacle, it’s as if the Goddess is facing us and inscribing it onto our body – hence it creates a mirrored image.



Pentacles: Intro & Running Energy (pg 3)

WORKINGS: Shadow & Imbalances

Can you feel the “shadow” sides of the pentacle? What would the opposites or contradictories of these points be? What if a point is too strong or too weak? The shadow side of the Knowledge point might be acting like a know-it-all – or getting brain-freeze at test time. What are your personal Pearl Pentacle shadows?

You can work with shadow energy, or with points that feel weak or out of balance.

Slowly run the Pearl (or any) Pentacle. As the energy alights at each point, notice which points feel out of balance with the others. Are any points heavy? Wobbly? Weak? Overpowering?

Use your breath to reshape the energy. Add or release power around that point. Use slow, deep breaths to steady and strengthen a point. Continue until the five points feel more in balance.

For shadow work, run the pentacle in full, then come back and reshape the energy of a specific point. If I am a victim of brain-freeze at test-time, I might picture the Knowledge point (left foot of Pearl) so warm that my frozen knowledge thaws at the slightest touch. Picture the facts unfreezing and becoming as soft and malleable as warm clay. Repeat this for a few days until you can easily call up the thawing images.

At the end of each session, run the entire pentacle again, and try to feel the Knowledge point more in balance with the others.

SOLO WORKING

Same as above. Running pentacle energy is a great personal practice. Run it quickly sometimes, and other times stop and meditate on each point.

Do a weeklong Pearl Pentacle working. Cast a circle which you will quickly renew each day.

On the first day, after creating sacred space, take some time to run the full Pearl Pentacle and meditate a little on each point. For the next five days, after running the full pentacle, spend five minutes meditating on one of the five points, in order.

On the seventh day, focus on the full pentacle again. Feel the balance (or not) of the five points. What has changed over the past week? Where is the pentacle still unbalanced?

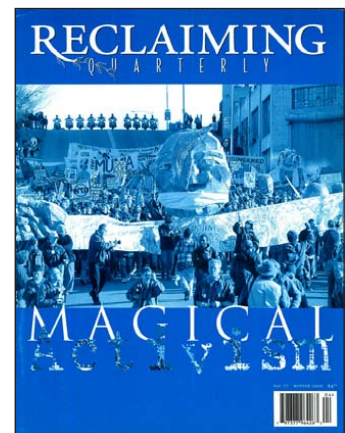
✦ **Book of Shadows** – what changed over the course of the week? Which points need strengthening or healing? Is this a daily practice that you want to continue?

Remember to devoke and open your weeklong circle at the end.

More Pentacle Readings

- Pearl Pentacle interviews – WeaveAndSpin.org/pearl-pentacle
- Starhawk – The Spiral Dance
- T. Thorn Coyle – Evolutionary Witchcraft
- Jane Meredith & Gede Parma – Magic of the Iron Pentacle

Magic, activism, and much more – in our back issues!
 Download all 101 issues of Reclaiming Newsletter and Reclaiming Quarterly
 Free – at WeaveAndSpin.org/back-issues
 Image – RQ #77, Winter 1999 – Magical activism at the WTO protests in Seattle





Pentacle of The Great Turning

Based on the work of Joanna Macy

Desire
Surrender
Transformation
Solidarity
Manifestation

*Use the ideas in the preceding pages, as well as advanced workings from T. Thorn Coyle's book *Evolutionary Witchcraft*, with this activist pentacle. The Pentacle of the Great Turning has been used as a theme at several camps – and we'll probably revisit it again in a few years!*

Here's an article by Reclaiming teacher Riyana, plus thoughts on living during the Great Turning by Joanna Macy on the third page.

By Riyana Moon

Around the world, different ancient cultures have prophesied a time of great change: the sensation of time speeding up, Mother Earth becoming less and less able to support life, species going extinct by the thousands, the whole world being torn asunder by greed, ignorance, and lethargy. And in the midst of this, a great awakening – a turning, a rite of passage into a new, greater consciousness.

Ecospiritualist Thomas Berry calls this evolution of consciousness the "Great Work" of our era.

Joanna Macy, an elder of the Buddhist tradition and an anti-nuclear activist for over thirty years, calls it the Great Turning: "It's the essential adventure of our time: the shift from the industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilization."

Healing the Earth

For witches and other people who practice daily to send roots down and connect deeply with the Earth, we sometimes feel our own hearts and spirits torn apart by the devastation of our Mother. Some of us feel the confusion of the many creatures whose homes and families are dying, like a daze we can never quite shake

off. Still others are haunted by the sorrowful songs of the dammed rivers and the Salmon who cannot find their way back to their ancestral homes.

Healing the Earth and learning to live harmoniously with Her ways may be the Great Work of our time, but it is hard work. Activists get burned out, Earth healers become encumbered by their own wounds, and dreamers close their eyes to the visions they see, because it's simply too much at times.

The Pentacle of The Great Turning is a tool that was created through a community visioning process by Free Activist WitchCamp in 2007 to honor, inspire, and give birth to this Great Work. The points of the Pentacle were harvested from dreamings on Brigid Eve, visioning under the full moon, and, of course a series of seemingly endless consensus meetings, from which we emerged with a true witches' tool: one that paradoxically works inwardly and outwardly at the same time – which is precisely the magic needed to bring about the awakening we dream of.

Desire – the work begins in Desire. This is Desire in its multi-faceted, bright and shadowy sense: our deep, loving connection to the Mother, our irresistible attraction to life, our hunger for ecstasy, our yearning to know Her in our bodies, our hearts, our souls. It is through deepening our connection with Her and with our love for life that we can viscerally understand the extent of the destruction facing our planet, and the intensity of the coming storms if we do not find another way of living.

The sheer enormity of what we have done and what we must learn to do in order to survive and ensure the survival of other living beings is overwhelming to think about – nuclear waste with a half-life thousands of years

continued on next page



Pentacle of The Great Turning (pg 2)

long, 50 percent of all species disappearing, an island of plastic waste twice the size of Texas floating in the Pacific Ocean. It's tempting to turn away, to return to the much smaller and more manageable details of our private lives, but that's not how the Great Turning is woven.

Surrender – all we can do is Surrender to the fears that threaten to close our hearts like a stone, the sorrow that makes us feel brittle like dried leaves, the rage that thunders against the hollows of our stomachs like sticks, the apathy that feels like empty death. We Surrender into faith. We may not know if there's anything we can do to stop the destruction, but we choose to try to do something rather than let our worry of personal failure hold us back. We open to the luminous, bright light of adventure.

Transformation – in that opening, an amazing Transformation blossoms. Some traditions call this blossoming the inklings of enlightenment; some call it becoming indigenous, rewilding, or finding the primal self; some call it coming through the dark night of the soul into knowing the love of the divine. In the many names and forms of this Transformation, there is a common thread: we open up to the great web of life as our selves, we see how this web holds us, is within us, and that we are of it. We are nature, we are the land. We are nature and the land healing herself.

Solidarity – from this knowing, we can move into true Solidarity with all of our relations. Lila Watson, Aboriginal activist, once famously said, "If you have come to help me you are wasting my time. But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let us struggle together."

In the Great Turning, we extend Watson's insight beyond the boundary of species lines to include the Salmon and the hazel trees, the orcas and the wild bunch grasses, the stray cats in our neighborhoods and the scrub-jays that drive us crazy at dawn with their scratchy cawing. We reach out with our hearts and prayers to listen to the wisdom of all beings, knowing that we need the voices of all of them in order to create truly meaningful, culture-altering, save-the-world solutions.

Manifestation – the last point on the Pentacle is Manifestation: not only the communal manifestation we are creating – The Great Turning – but also the unique callings of our individual lives that make up our own personal part of it. This brings us back to Desire – what we want to do with our lives to help the healing of the Earth, the work that we are yearning to do, the visions

we long to bring to fruition.

For some of us, a big part of the work of the Great Turning is our activism, whether in the streets or in community centers. For others, our work is as healers and artists and ritualists working to change the consciousness beneath the actions that are so detrimental to the planet. Still others are crafting new initiatives and new systems for our culture, finding visionary ways to manifest the Great Turning in the here and now.

Most of us dance between many different spheres of the work, following our hearts and minds and the wise words of our guides to find the right road for us.

In all of these places, the points of the Pentacle of the Great Turning can help keep us grounded, inspired, and connected in the wider context of our work. May it be so.

Riyana adores the magic of song, women's blood mysteries, herbs, and incorporating writing and poetry into her witchy work. She has taught at WitchCamps and intensives across the U.S. and abroad, and often crafts ritual and facilitates classes in her local community in the San Francisco Bay Area.

This article first appeared in Reclaiming Quarterly.

Running the Pentacle

As per the preceding pages, ground yourself. Draw your personal energy to a small ball in your center. Let this energy rise to a point just above your head.

With gentle breaths, move the energy to each point and let it rest for a moment. Run this cycle three times, ending at the head. Finally, bring your energy back to center.

Head: Desire

Right Foot: Surrender

Left Hand: Transformation

Right Hand: Solidarity

Left Foot: Manifestation





Pentacle of The Great Turning (pg 3)

by Joanna Macy

The Great Turning is a name for the essential adventure of our time: the shift from the industrial growth society to a life-sustaining civilization.

The ecological and social crises we face are inflamed by an economic system dependent on accelerating growth. This self-destructing political economy sets its goals and measures its performance in terms of ever-increasing corporate profits – in other words by how fast materials can be extracted from Earth and turned into consumer products, weapons, and waste.

A revolution is underway because people are realizing that our needs can be met without destroying our world. We have the technical knowledge, the communication tools, and material resources to grow enough food, ensure clean air and water, and meet rational energy needs.

Future generations, if there is a livable world for them, will look back at the epochal transition we are making to a life-sustaining society. And they may call this the time of the Great Turning. It is happening now.

Whether or not it is recognized by corporate-controlled media, the Great Turning is a reality. Although we cannot know yet if it will take hold in time for humans and other complex life forms to survive, we can know that it is under way.

And it is gaining momentum, through the actions of countless individuals and groups around the world. To see this as the larger context of our lives clears our vision and summons our courage.

Personal Guidelines for the Great Turning

Come from Gratitude

To be alive in this beautiful, self-organizing universe – to participate in the dance of life with senses to perceive it, lungs that breathe it, organs that draw nourishment from it – is a wonder beyond words. Gratitude for the gift of life is the primary wellspring of all religions, the hallmark of the mystic, the source of all true art.

Furthermore, it is a privilege to be alive in a time when we can choose to take part in the self-healing of our world.

Don't Be Afraid of the Pain

This is a painful time, filled with suffering and uncertainty. Like living cells in a larger body, it is natural that we feel the trauma of our world. So don't be afraid of the anguish you feel, or the anger or fear, for these responses arise from the depth of your caring and the truth of your interconnectedness with all beings. To "suffer with" is the literal meaning of compassion.

Dare to Vision

Out of this suffering a new world can arise, not to be constructed by our minds so much as to emerge from our dreams. Even though we cannot see clearly how it's going to turn out, we are still called to let the future into our imagination. We will never be able to build what we have not first cherished in our hearts.

Roll Up Your Sleeves

Many people don't get involved in the Great Turning because there are so many different issues which seem to compete with each other. Shall I save the whales or help battered children? The truth is that all aspects of the current crisis reflect the same mistake, setting ourselves apart and using others for our gain. So to heal one aspect helps the others to heal as well. Just find what you love to work on and take joy in that. Don't try to do it alone. Link up with others – you'll spark each others' ideas and sustain each others' energy.

Act Your Age

Since every particle in your body goes back to the first flaring forth of space and time, you're really as old as the universe. So when you are lobbying at your congressperson's office, or visiting your local utility, or testifying at a hearing on nuclear waste, or standing up to protect an old grove of redwoods, you are doing that not out of some personal whim, but in the full authority of your 13 billions years.

JoannaMacy.net

Learn more about Joanna Macy's work at JoannaMacy.net.

Cooking the Great Turning – see next page.



Pentacle of The Great Turning (pg 4)

Young Adults Cook Up the Great Turning!

For a decade now, young adults have helped anchor rituals and path-work at Teen Earth Magic, Witchlets, and Redwood Magic Family Camp.

But we've always had an experienced adult who cooked for camp. Sometimes the TEM cook was also a teacher (how did they do it?). Other years we paid someone a small stipend to keep us fed and happy.

In 2017, several of our TEM "graduate students" stepped up to create the hearth for our camp – ie, to prepare our meals for five days.

We knew they could cook – but it seemed like a stretch doing it for 25 people (and, as it turned out, in 100-degree heat!).

Still, what is WitchCamp about if not stretching?

To add to the challenge, the hearth team decided they wanted each day's menu to correspond to the point on the Pentacle of the Great Turning that we were exploring that day – so the opening dinner was "Desire," the first point on the pentacle, and so on.

See the next page for our complete menu with Great Turning correspondences. It's sort of like a pop quiz.

How does a hard-boiled egg illustrate desire?

How are scrambled eggs a sign of transformation?

How does kettle corn show manifestation? Yeah!

For more on the Great Turning, see preceding pages.



The TEM 2017 Kitchen Team – three young adults who've been part of camp for many years supported by an intrepid parent – lovingly serve lunch to appreciative campers.





Pentacle of The Great Turning (pg 5)

Camp Menu – with Pentacle of the Great Turning points!

Saturday Dinner: Desire

Pasta & sauce
Garlic bread
Salad

Saturday Dessert: Desire

Something with roses

Sunday Breakfast: Desire

Cereal & milk
Toast
Fruit
Hardboiled eggs
Protein
Coffee & tea
Oatmeal
Yogurt

Sunday Lunch: Desire/Surrender

Sandwiches
Cucumber salad
Chips
Lavender lemonade

Sunday Dinner: Surrender

Curry rice
Chicken
Tofu
Collard greens

Sunday Dessert: Surrender

Mango & coconut sticky rice

Monday Breakfast: Surrender

Cereal & milk
Toast
Fruit
Coffee & tea
Oatmeal
Yogurt

Monday Lunch: Transformation

Sandwiches
Pasta salad
Nettle pesto
Chips
Iced tea

Monday Dinner: Transformation

Burrito bar
Fixings
Green salad

Monday Dessert: Transformation

Cookies (ginger? chocolate chip?)

Tuesday Breakfast: Transformation

Cereal & milk
Fruit
Tofu scramble
Scrambled eggs
Potatoes
Yogurt

Tuesday Lunch: Solidarity

Sandwiches
Bean salad
Chips
Honey & ginger popsicles

Tuesday Dinner: Solidarity

Falafel bar
Turkey meatballs
Homemade hummus
Quinoa tabbouleh
Pita

Tuesday Dessert: Solidarity

Peach cobbler

Wednesday Breakfast: Solidarity

Oatmeal, cereal, & milk
Toast
Fruit
Coffee & tea
Yogurt

Wednesday Lunch: Manifestation

Sandwiches
Rice salad / egg salad
Vegetable soup
Chips

Wednesday Dinner: Manifestation

Chili
Meat on the side
Cornbread
Fixings
Red cabbage salad

Wednesday Dessert: Manifestation

Kettle corn

Thursday Breakfast: Back to Desire

Leftovers!



Purification: Star Purification

INTENT

A simple, physical way of clearing dissonant energy and filling your aura with fresh star energy.

Remember – our bodies are of the Earth – and the Earth is of the stars. When we call down star energy, we're tapping into our own ancient source.

Balance star and Earth energy. After you have filled your aura with star energy, draw up Earth energy and mingle them in your center. Let yourself be the connection between stars and Earth.

TIME & SPACE

Any number, with room to spread out at arm's length. Allow 10 minutes so people have time to practice.

PREP

Priestess demonstrates this working, then each person practices on their own.

WORKING

Priestess describes and demonstrates:

Ground yourself and find your center. Breathe to your center.

Now, using your hands as gentle guides, draw up Earth energy. Tease it up through your aura with your breath – let a column of energy rise effortlessly through you, entering your feet or the base of your spine and flowing out the top of your head.

Imagine all the various energies inside you as multi-colored clouds filling your aura, swirling inside you.

Now, hold your two hands in front of the top of your head, palms down, elbows out to the side.

On an out-breath, smoothly push the multi-colored Earth energy down through your body and aura, all the way down and out of your roots.

As you push the colors down, let your breath draw silver star-energy from above to take its place. As your hands push the colors downward, let yourself fill with silvery energy from above. Focus your attention on this silvery star energy entering your body and your aura.

When your hands go below your knees, shake them off. Breathe to the silvery energy filling you.

Repeat several times – use your hands to gently draw multi-colored Earth energy up, then use your palms to push the swirling colors down and out, breathing in silvery star energy from above.

After a few times, breathe and feel the silvery star energy filling you.

Now, from below, call up clean, pure Earth energy and let it mingle with the star energy in your center. Let this energy drop and re-ground you to the Earth.

Song: Body of the Earth (“We are of the body of the Earth / the Earth is of the body of the stars”).

SOLO WORKING

Same working.





Shadow Work

INTENT

Shadow work is at the core of Reclaiming magic – knowing yourself in all your parts. There is great strength in fully knowing yourself – and with it come opportunities for change.

What is one's shadow? Shadow is those parts of ourselves that we repress, ignore, or pretend don't exist.

Shadow is sometimes negative – shame, fear, doubt. Your shadow may include greed and selfishness. It may include feelings that are too scary to let yourself know. Sometimes we refer to screwed-up politicians or pop stars as embodying society's shadow – they act out our worst patterns.

Other times our shadow can be our big, colorful, flamboyant parts. Some people's shadow includes speaking up in groups, singing out loud, or being silly. Others' might include sleeping late or taking a day off.

Shadow is those parts of ourselves that we don't want anyone to see – sometimes not even ourselves!

Shadow can be very uncomfortable – we don't always get to choose when these issues come up and demand our attention. Parts of ourselves that disturb or scare us might come leaping forward at the worst possible moments.

Why do we do magical shadow work? Perhaps if we create a safe container to allow our shadows out, we can defuse some of their energy and make them less likely to pop up unexpectedly. Also, our shadows often hold a lot of old pain, shame, or guilt. These old feelings hold us back from being our best and brightest selves.

Our goal in this work is to provide a safe circle where our shadows can come forward. Maybe we'll discover things we want to work more on – for instance, expressing ourselves more boldly, or wearing more colorful clothes.

Confidentiality – in much magical work, and shadow work in particular, it is important that we be able to trust those with whom we are open – trust them to hold us in a strong circle, and trust that our experience will not be turned into gossip. See Introduction: Agreements.

What Balances Shadow Work?

Shadow work can be intense, and calls for balance.

The intent of shadow work is to spend time with unfamiliar and uncomfortable energies. In a class or ritual, we'll want to balance the energy before we end.



Shadow work at the center of the labyrinth.

With a shadow party, the working provides its own balance. In that case, try coming into a close circle with arms around shoulders and singing one of the songs below.

If you have more time and/or more is needed to bring the group out of shadow-space, try one of these workings:

- Post-Shadow Mirror Milling (see end of this section)
- Workings: Blessing Line (takes one minute per person)
- Workings: Luscious Eating (takes 10-15 minutes)
- Workings: Allies Circle (takes longer – major working)
- Workings: Lifting Each Other Up (major working)

If the shadow work leaves people quiet or contemplative, consider doing a low-key spiral dance with deep eye-gazing.

Songs: Opening Up In Sweet Surrender; Let the Beauty We Love; My Soul.

continued on next page



Shadow Work (pg 2)

TIME & SPACE

Any number of people, with enough space to move comfortably – the space should be private enough for folks to feel safe showing themselves and being vulnerable.

PREP

Scarves and costumes can help some people step into their shadows. Hand mirrors and tarot decks are also helpful for some workings. Journal or Book of Shadows. See below for specific prep for each working.

WORKINGS: GENERAL SET-UP

For any of these workings – ground and cast a circle. Invoke allies – each person might call an ancestor / ally to support them in this work (this can be done all at once – priestess simply invites people to each call their own ally – perhaps by people calling their names into the center). Remember to devoke and open your circle at the end.

In a group, priestess can propose or remind people of agreements about confidentiality and respect. We want to create a safe circle to share our full selves – and we may not want the rest of the world to know about it quite yet!

Shadow workings can be preceded by a short meditation. Priestess invites people to look inward and see what parts of themselves lie hidden... dormant... what parts might feel safe coming out today.... What parts of myself might enjoy a chance to wear different clothes and move in different ways.... With a breath, welcome those parts of yourself, both known and yet-to-be known... welcome them to the safety of our circle.

WORKINGS: Discovering My Shadow

Writing My Shadow

In your magical journal or on a blank sheet of paper, list one or more answers to each of these questions:

- something my family does not do / is not good at is _____ (list a few)
- something about my family background that I don't like is _____
- an adventure I would never undertake is _____
- something that really embarrasses me is _____

Go back and underline any strong words and any words that appear more than once. Now ask yourself – what do these words tell me about the parts of myself that I don't usually like to acknowledge? What is one part of my shadow that I could work with today? Write that at the bottom of the page.

Tarot Shadow Discovery

You'll need your journal and a deck for each person (or people can share a card if they both select it). Lay out the cards face up. Each person sift through them and find three to five cards that you do *not* like – trust your gut.

In a pair-share and/or in your journal, speak and write the card's title and a couple of sentences about what you don't like. After a few cards, go back and underline any strong words along with words that appear more than once. Now ask yourself – what do these cards and words tell me about the parts of myself that I don't like? What is one part of my shadow that I could work with today? Write that at the bottom of the page.

Mirror Shadow Discovery

Looking in a mirror can bring up shadow material – fears that I am not good looking, that my skin isn't clear enough, that I'm

continued on next page





Shadow Work (pg 3)

clumsy and scared and can't even look into a mirror right! Set a timer for a few minutes and stay with steady eye contact until the timer rings. Afterward, debrief in pairs and/or write in your journal about what feelings came up.

The final working of this section, Post-Shadow Mirror Milling, is a nice balance to this discovery working.

WORKINGS: Working With My Shadow

Shadow Party

Here's a playful yet intense way to draw out our shadows. All of us have costume shadows – clothes that would make us cringe! For the well-dressed, it might be baggy jeans or an old button sweater. For the casual crowd, our costume shadow might be a fancy dress, tight pants, or a gaudy feather boa. It's different for each of us.

How about gathering a variety of clothes, some mirrors, and see what shadows show up?

For more on this working, see below, Workings: Shadow: Costume Shadows (page 266).

Stepping Out As My Shadow

This working is best for groups of 12 or fewer – if more, try smaller sub-groups. Each person takes a minute and steps into the middle of the circle and embodies their shadow – step in and act like the parts of yourself that usually get held back.

Maybe you dance and sing a song. Maybe you look people in the eyes and say, "I love you." Maybe you let yourself be sad in front of others. Some people may simply step into the circle and let themselves be seen. And some may take the right to pass.

Having an experienced person go first may help break the ice.

A good way to follow this is Workings: Circle Blessings or Workings: Blessing Line.

Letting the Shadow Speak

Automatic Writing is a way to let our inner shadow voices speak. By writing so fast that we don't have time to censor ourselves, we may hear some of those buried voices. See Workings: Automatic Writing.

Labyrinth Shadow Work: the Monster at the Center

What if the monster at the center of the labyrinth turns out to be a mirror? See Workings: Labyrinth Workings.

Composting Headlines and Composting Oppressions: Activist Shadow Workings

On the following pages you'll find two shadow workings for when we feel weighed down by negative headlines or the heaviness of other people's attitudes and behavior – see following pages, Shadow: Composting Headlines and Shadow: Composting Oppressions.

CONCLUSION: Post-Shadow Mirror Milling

This is a nice balance to the Mirror Shadow Discovery working above, or to any shadow work. Use this to wrap up an intense round of shadow work.

You'll need half as many mirrors and veils as people in the group. Half of the group wears veils and hold up mirrors, milling around saying things like, "Look at this amazing person! What a beautiful person! Behold the Goddess! You can do anything!"

The other half mills about silently, gazes at themselves in the mirrors, and listens to the truth.



Shadow: Composting Headlines

INTENT

We did this exercise at the very first Teen Earth Magic camp, as a way to deal with oppressive and disempowering news headlines by transforming them into compost.

This is a good mid-week working – and a hard place to begin or end. You'll want to follow this with something upbeat.

TIME & SPACE

Enough room for a group to gather. Outside is best – dig a hole if you can.

Since each person will read and bury their headline, more than 20 people will get clumsy. Allow a few minutes per person plus about 15 minutes for group work and transitions.

PREP

Presumes people are already grounded and a circle has been cast. This is not a good first or last working in a class – do something lighter before, and uplifting afterward.

In the class or ritual where you do this working, invoke some powerful world-changers as allies.

Dig a small but deep hole – set the dirt aside to refill it. If no hole is available – get a washtub half-filled with dirt, plus a bucket of extra dirt – the dirt will end up in a compost bin, so it's fine if it has twigs or other organic debris mixed in. You'll want a dropcloth or towel for the floor. Make a plan to compost or recycle the dirt afterward.

Prepare a bunch of news headlines – gather some ahead of time if you can, but also make some of your own – print them out ahead of time if you can (samples on next page). Fold them.

WORKING

Gather in a circle. The priestess leads a short meditation about the state of the world and the way our society bombards us with bad news – an alarming amount of which is true – and most of which seems calculated to make us feel hopeless and powerless. We are going to begin to change this at a magical level.

Bring out folded headlines and invite each person to select one. (Priestesses might pre-select a few they want to include.)

Go around the circle and slowly read the headlines aloud. Hear them. Feel their weight. When the circle is complete, take a couple of minutes to groan and shout and shake it off.

Priestess comments: "This is the version of reality that is fed to us every day. But we can challenge this version." Go around again and read one headline at a time. People hiss and boo while the reader rips the headline into tiny bits and drops them into the hole or basin. Reader picks up a scoop or handful of dirt and tosses it over the fragments.

Repeat until all headlines have been read and buried. Toss in more dirt to cover all of the paper.

Balancing the Shadow With Positive Headlines

Priestess leads a short meditation to help people come up with positive news headlines for the world we are building. Then everyone calls out ideas. Dream big!

Song: She Changes Everything She Touches (Kore Chant).

Afterward – fill the hole and transplant a few hardy weeds over it. If you used a basin, dispose of the dirt in a compost bin.

continued on next page





Shadow: Composting Headlines (pg 2)

SOLO WORKING

Gather / make seven news headlines, and/or use some below. Dig a hole or get a basin of dirt as above. Bring your journal. Ground and cast your circle and invoke some world-changing allies.

Read the headlines slowly, pausing for a breath after each. Let yourself feel their weight. This is the “reality” that you hear about every day.

Now read them again, one at a time. Take a breath, and state a simple contradiction: “This is wrong,” “This has to change,” etc.

Rip the headline apart and drop it in the dirt, tossing dirt after each one. At the end, toss three more handfuls of dirt.

☛ **Book of Shadows** – turn away from the composted headlines. Close your eyes, breathe deeply, and let some positive headlines come to you. Picture the world the way you want it to be and write about it in your journal. When you have several ideas you like, read them aloud, followed by saying, “So mote it be!”

When you are finished, raise your spirits by singing *She Changes Everything She Touches* (officially known as *Kore Chant*).

Open your circle (ie, devoke). Put the dirt you used into the compost.

NEGATIVE HEADLINES – Some Examples

- **Polar Life Nears Extinction**
- **30,000 Die Annually in Car Accidents**
- **Government Denies Climate Change**
- **Logging Increases in National Parks**
- **Education Budget Cut To Fund Military**
- **Prescription Drugs Kill Thousands**
- **Gridlock Ties Up Government**
- **Student Loan Burden Rises**
- **Gun Limits Rejected**
- **War Enters Another Year**
- **Banks Tighten Credit Policies**
- **Transit Fares Rise - Service Cut**
- **Only 2% of Old Growth Forests Remain**
- **Budget Cuts Hit Poorest Citizens**



Shadow: Composting Oppressions

INTENT

Here's a variation of the Composting Headlines working, this time from Teen Earth Magic 2018. We were looking for an energetic way to transform oppressive and disempowering ideas and words, from personal to political to ecological.

Since our camp theme that year was Mushrooms & Fungi, we hit on the idea of collectively breaking down and composting a tree of oppressions.

Just as it can take generations and even centuries for fungi to break down a fallen redwood tree, the changes we envision may take a long time to manifest. So we invoked time magic to travel far into the future, to an age when the oppressions had been broken down and transformed into justice, ecology, etc.

This is a good mid-week working, or midway through a workshop.

TIME & SPACE

Enough room for a group to gather. Outside is best – dig a hole if you can (if not, see prep below).

Allow about 20 minutes for group work and transitions.

PREP

Need:

- Small but deep hole – set the dirt aside to refill it. If no hole is available – get a washbasin half-filled with dirt, plus a bucket of extra dirt – the dirt will end up in a compost bin, so it's fine if it has twigs or other organic debris mixed in.
- Pile of garden debris – leaves, dirt, twigs, etc (no thorns). Some buckets of water.
- Lay out the "tree" – a long strip of light newsprint or butcher paper (about three feet wide x 12 feet long). Use light-weight paper so it can easily be torn and trampled.
- Thick-point colored markers, plus two to three people to scribe (ie, write down words as people call them out).
- If inside, you'll want a dropcloth or towel for the floor and a plan to compost or recycle the dirt afterward.
- One priestess leads a short meditation about oppressions, and another leads the debris-throwing part, starts song, then facilitates transition to composting the scraps of torn-up paper. A third priestess can help by doing simple drumming.

This presumes people are already grounded and a circle cast. This is not a good first working in a class, and not easy to follow – do something lighter beforehand. After – either make this the final working for a class, or try something meditative like tarot.

In the class or ritual where you do this working, invoke some powerful world-changers as allies.

Teach songs at start of class / ritual if possible – we used Weave and Spin (See Ritual Skills: Chants), plus this new "prequel" verse. When teaching the prequel verse, consider invoking the history of anarchism – in the past, it often meant "smashing" the state, capitalism, etc. Whereas today it often means working cooperatively and nonhierarchically, building alternatives, etc.

Weave & Spin (on Campfire Chants album)

Weave and spin, weave and spin
 This is how the work begins
 Mend and heal, mend and heal
 Take the dream and make it real

Tear & Shred – Prequel Verse

Agitate! Demonstrate!
 Organize to smash the state!
 Tear and shred, tear and shred
 Rip it up until it's dead!

continued on next page





Shadow: Composting Oppressions (pg 2)

WORKING

Gather in a circle around the “tree.” Priestess leads short meditation about oppressions – personal, societal, economic, etc – all the ways we’re made to feel that we do not belong or that the world does not support our dreams and visions.

Drumbeat begins. Priestess invites people to begin calling out or writing words and short phrases, from the biggest and most global to the most intimate and personal. Scribes write words as fast as people call them out, or people can write their own.

When this slacks off, and/or paper is getting covered with words, priestess invites people to add last words or phrases. Drum fades. Then all step back and take a breath.

Priestess says wise words about how these oppressions can seem overwhelming – but by working together, and by taking small, steady actions, we can transform this tree of oppression into new life.

Invite people to pick up handfuls of debris and start throwing them onto the paper tree. Start song: “Agitate! Demonstrate!” Others get water and splash it onto tree. People dance and jump on the tree – finally getting down and tearing apart the soggy paper until it’s a big mess.

As energy winds down, let song fade. Step back, take a breath, and look at the mess. Then quietly begin to pull the bits and scraps of paper out of the pile and start throwing them into the compost hole (or bucket).

During this part, priestess can talk about how, when fungi break up a dead tree, there are some mushrooms which sprout first and break up the big chunks, then others come along later and break down the smaller pieces. Some people will do the same. Keep going until every scrap and bit of paper is in the compost hole.

Circle round the compost hole. One by one, each person takes a handful of dirt and throws it into the hole, calling out a word of power: “Justice! Peace! Happiness!”

Song – shovel in the rest of the dirt and take turns dancing on it as you sing the original lyrics to Weave and Spin.

SOLO WORKING

It will be hard to raise this sort of energy alone – try the previous working, “Shadow: Composting Headlines” – and add some “words of oppression” as well.



Shadow: Costume Shadows

INTENT

This is a fun and challenging shadow working that can be done with friends without calling it “Pagan.”

All of us have costume shadows – the clothes that would make us cringe to be seen in!

For the well-dressed, it might be baggy jeans or an old button sweater. For the casual crowd, our costume shadow might be a fancy dress, tight pants, or a gaudy feather boa. It’s different for each of us.

Sometimes folks at WitchCamps have planned costume workshops where people try on clothes – and personas – they ordinarily would never let themselves be seen in.

Other times the “work” emerges spontaneously during break time. Since one person’s daily garb is someone else’s shadow, the “costumes” are already on hand.

TIME & SPACE

This can be done alone, but you’ll feel more support if you do it with a friend(s). You’ll need private space with room to move around. Allow an hour or more.

PREP

Need – journal; mirrors (full length if possible); and lots of clothing!

Music – favorite pop songs. Or how about playing Labyrinth Meditation Music on loop? (See Ritual Skills: Chants – page 113.)

Gather a variety of clothes, especially extremes – very flashy or very plain. You can find “shadow clothes” at a thrift shop – for some people, wearing a dress of any sort is major shadow work. For others, cheap jeans do the trick.

Spread the clothing out on a costume altar (perhaps a table or your bed) so you can see what you’ve got.

Confidentiality – you’ll want to do this work with trusted friends. See Introduction: Agreements for trust agreements we use at TEM. You may also want to agree “no photos.” If you do this as a “working,” decide who will priestess the meditation below.

WORKING

Gathering & Meditation (start here for ritual-friendly groups)

If it works for your group, create sacred space – ground together and cast a circle. If your friends are not Pagan, maybe you can take a minute and breathe together? If it’s a ritual-friendly group, you might want to invoke energies like “safe space” and “openness.”

Ask if people will agree to confidentiality and to supporting one another through the working. Talk about this a little if needed, and see if you can reach some basic agreements.

Then invite people to get comfortable. Priestess leads a short meditation:

“Close your eyes and breathe easily.... Imagine yourself walking down a garden path... a beautiful garden path.... What colors do you see?.... What smells come to you?....

“Imagine this garden is your special garden, created just for you by your own imagination.... Let it come to life around you.... What do you see?.... What sounds come to you?....

“As you walk, you come to a small glade with a circle of plants and trees.... Around the edges of the glade are big mirrors, and as you walk you catch glimpses of yourself... Glimpses of your smile... of your glowing aura....

continued on next page





Shadow: Costume Shadows (pg 2)

“Gradually you stop in front of a mirror and gaze at yourself... You see that you are dressed in a most unusual fashion!... in fact, you are dressed in a way you would ordinarily *never* dress... but here in the safety of your garden, you are fascinated....

“Gaze gently and lovingly at yourself in the mirror.... Let that reflection know that it is welcome and accepted here in this garden.... Ask that shadow-reflection to come along to a costume party....”

Shadow Party (start here with “non-Pagan” groups)

The leader puts on music and invites people to gather around the clothing. At first just gaze and imagine. Then slowly begin to try on items that might appeal to your shadow. Go for extremes – if you usually dress carefully, go for the sloppiest look possible. If you always wear pants or shorts, try a dress. Don’t forget to accessorize!

As you experiment, give one another support and encouragement, without pushing things on one another. Let each person discover and adorn their own shadow.

After a while, settle on a shadow costume and finish up. Then gather in a circle. Take a couple of breaths together, silently looking around. Then begin silently milling around. Move as your shadow – if your shadow is flashy, move that way. If your shadow is grungy, move that way.

Meet one another’s eyes and give smiles of welcome to all the shadows. If you’re two people, you can do this less formally – just take a few minutes to silently appreciate one another.

After a few minutes, get into groups of three and talk. How does it feel to dress and move in the world in such a different way? What does it show you about how you usually are? Anything new that you’d like to carry back to your daily life?

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – take a few minutes and write in your journal.

Completion & Commitment

When you are ready to complete the working, gather again. Go around the circle and each person say one to three words about the experience. Then say thank you to your shadows – you might close your eyes, touch your heart, and quietly say thank you (knowing your shadow is always with you).

Take a few minutes and get back into your usual garb. Set the costumery carefully back on the altar.

Come back together and do a quick aura brushdown – without touching the other person, brush all the stray energy out of their aura, from head to foot. Especially brush the heart, belly, and voice. Remember to brush the back side as well. When you’re done brushing, shake your hands off so the energy falls back to the Earth. Then use your hands to fluff the person’s aura – starting low, fluff the energy up like a billowy cloud (for more on this, see Workings: Aura Carwash).

If you created sacred space, remember to devote any energies you called in and open your circle.

SOLO WORKING

You can do this working alone – where will you get clothing really different from what you usually wear? Is there one other person you know who might enjoy this working?

Solo – you’ll want a variety of clothes, a mirror, a timer, music, and your journal.

Create sacred space. Set a timer for 20 minutes, Put on music. Read the meditation above. Start experimenting. Look often in the mirror, and each time say to yourself: “Is this a part of me?”

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – when the timer sounds, settle on a shadow outfit – the stranger the better! Then take some time and write in your journal.

Complete the working as above (Completion & Commitment), taking time to thank your shadow.



Spectrums of Belief

INTENT

A spectrum breaks down binary oppositions into a range of responses. Instead of yes or no, black or white, we have gradations. This exercise tends to get people talking more than if we raised the same issues while seated in a circle.

People can see that they're not alone in their beliefs and skepticism, and that all of us (including teachers) move around on the spectrums of beliefs and practices.

TIME & SPACE

Room to spread out in a line without crowding. If you're in an open space, set boundaries – some people will go past the space's limits, and will probably want to explain why. Check for poison oak, swampy ground, etc.

Ten rounds will take at least 20 minutes. Allow more time if people want to go on.

PREP

Clear the space. Have some statements ready. Choose a couple of priestesses to explain the working and get things going.

WORKING

Designate one end of the line as Strongly Agree and the other as Strongly Disagree. Priestess reads a statement. For each statement, people move around and choose their own place on the line – toward one end, or perhaps near the middle.

Once folks settle into their positions, priestess asks people in various places on the line to explain why they chose that position. Some people will really want to talk — priestess calls on several people each time and equalizes participation.

After a few rounds, open it up to others to call out a statement. Be ready with a few if needed, and a good one to close with.

Song – a favorite song to pull energy back together: Let the Beauty We Love; Sweet Water.

SOLO WORK

Draw a line on a piece of paper. Left end is Strongly Agree, right end is Strongly Disagree.

Read first statement below. Write the number "1" above the line where you would fall. Below, write the number and then a sentence or two about why you chose that position. Repeat for a half-dozen or more statements.

Look back at what you've written. What patterns do you see? Underline a few words or phrases and read it aloud as a poem.

STATEMENTS (or create your own)

- (1) I consider myself a spiritual person.
- (2) I have an altar.
- (3) I believe the Earth is alive.
- (4) Sometimes I have trouble fitting in.
- (5) My family is religious / spiritual.
- (6) Sometimes I feel hopeless about the world.
- (7) I believe in or have some connection with The Goddess / God / Higher Power (change wording to suit yourself).
- (8) Schoolwork comes easily to me.
- (9) I enjoy new situations and groups of people.
- (10) I am "out" as a Pagan with friends / family / work.
- (11) Sometimes I find Paganism / magic sort of silly.
- (12) Popular music (or _____) is important to me.





Spectrums: Cross-Spectrums

INTENT

A chance to think about and articulate their responses to various real-life situations, and see how others respond. This was created for the “Law” point at a Pearl Pentacle workshop, but it also works as a stand-alone exercise.

This working seems to get everyone talking, much more than if we just sat in a circle and talked about the same things. It’s a good “mixer,” as people move on every round.

It’s a good working for early in a class or ritual, as it will stir up the group’s energy.

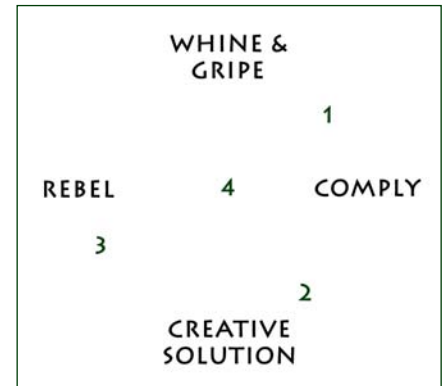
TIME & SPACE

A dozen maximum, so everyone gets a chance to speak on each round. For more, break into smaller groups. Need about 10 x 10 feet for about a dozen people.

Minimum 20 minutes, and allow more if teens want to keep going.

PREP

Signs for the four directions (see diagram) will save having to repeat them each time, but folks will catch on after a few rounds.



WORKING

Explain the way the exercise works. Explain what each of the four directions means, and that people can position themselves anywhere within or just outside the circle – at one station, or between two or more.

Main axis = rebel vs comply / Cross axis = whine-and-gripe vs creative solution

Priestess poses a question such as those below, and people array themselves among the various options – usually placing themselves between two or three of the stations (eg, “I whine and gripe, but eventually I comply”).

Once arrayed, ask people in various positions if they want to explain why they are there. Remind folks to listen, but a bit of cross-chatter doesn’t hurt as long as the speaker gets heard.

If someone is not speaking much, quietly ask, “Sally Ann, is there anything you want to share?”

After a few rounds, open it up to teens to pose situations. Have a few more ideas in reserve, including a good “final question.”

To close, come back into a circle. Go around and say one word about how you are feeling at the moment.

Examples

1 - whine and gripe but comply

2 - creative way of complying

3 - rebel and look for creative way out

4 - a little of each!

QUESTIONS/SITUATIONS

A mix of personal / mundane situations and more charged political situations (numbers are for Solo working below):

- (1) Alarm rings and you don’t want to get up.
- (2) Friends invite you to do something that doesn’t feel right to you.
- (3) You hear that they are clear-cutting half of the Mendocino Woodlands (or another location).
- (4) Parent tells you to do homework before going on the internet.
- (5) You see cops harassing someone, and when you try to film it they order you to stop.
- (6) A friend tells you something potentially dangerous and makes you promise not to tell anyone.
- (7) You promised to do something with your family, and now friends want you to do something else.
- (8) Create more questions and situations for you and/or your group.



Spellcrafting: Intro

INTENT

What is a spell? Some people say that a spell combines a clear intention, a physical act, and a charge of energy. This means that a spell is more than just wishful thinking – we will actually do something in the world to get results. Likewise, a spell is more than simply taking action – we also need to craft a clear and focused intention.

Spells aim to change something. We don't usually do a spell to keep everything exactly the same.

Sometimes a spell helps us do work we plan to do anyway – such as creating a Book of Shadows, practicing the sousaphone, writing a poem, etc. Making it a spell instead of a chore helps focus our energy and creativity.

If we want to practice music or work on our art each day, we could make it more magical by quickly grounding and casting a circle. Maybe we want to dedicate the time to the Muses and ask their assistance in bettering our craft.

Anything we want to accomplish or help bring about in the world can be woven into a spell.

Simple vs Complicated

Spells can be as simple as taking three breaths and lighting a candle, or as elaborate as an entire multi-day WitchCamp. Spells can be performed in a few minutes, or spread over a period of days or months. We could dedicate a corner of our garden to a living spell, tending it as part of a magical practice. We could charge a stone or piece of wood with our dreams and visions, then travel to the ocean or river and cast it into the waves to carry it into the wider world.

In the following pages we'll share some of TEM's favorite spells. First, though, we'll give you a basic outline so you can create your own, explain Threefold Return, and talk about how to reverse a spell.

TIME & SPACE

Spellcrafting can be done alone or with any number of people. Sometimes a circle might work together to do a group spell – for instance, a healing spell for a friend or a spell for world peace.

Other times people may work in a group, but each does their own specific spell. When we teach spellcrafting in a class and make spell candles, each person comes up with their own magical intention and creates their own unique candle (see Workings: Spell Candle).

You'll need a quiet space, and enough room to spread out. Allow plenty of time – spellcrafting is a good “open-ended” working, where you take as much time as is needed. You'll know intuitively when your work is complete.

PREP

Gather materials you need – see the following pages for ideas. Collage materials and glass jar candles are always handy.

Have your Book of Shadows with you for working on your intention and writing about your experiences.

WORKING: Crafting a Spell

Including creating and opening sacred space, spellcrafting has six steps:

- (1) Create sacred space.
- (2) Craft your intention – what is the purpose of your spell?
- (3) Create and perform your working – what physical actions will you do to bring your intention about?
- (4) Declare how long the spell-working will last (until the candle burns down, until next year's WitchCamp, a year and a day, etc).
- (5) Charge and bind your spell – bring the creation of the spell to a close.
- (6) Open sacred space.

continued on next page





Spellcrafting: Intro (pg 2)

Sacred Space

Begin by creating sacred space – ground, cast a circle, and invoke elements and allies so you'll have a strong energetic container for your magical work. See Ritual Skills: Sacred Space for more info.

Creating an Intention

Your intention will express what you are trying to bring about, and how.

Maybe you already know exactly why you want to do a spell – to get better grades, to find a job, to fall in love.... Or maybe you just have a sense that you want things to be different.

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – take some time and think about what you want to accomplish with your spell. Why are you doing it now? Write down words and ideas as they come to you. After a while, go back and underline words you like.

Now try writing a fresh sentence that uses some of the underlined words. Include (A) what you are trying to change or accomplish, and (B) what you will do. Make it as specific as you can. Here are a few examples:

- In order to get into college, I will do a spell to help me study harder.
- Seeing a world filled with war and hate, we work a spell for peace and justice.
- When I feel alone, lighting this spell candle will remind me that my life is full of love.
- Knowing I am overcommitted, I perform this unbinding spell to break my pledge to help plan the Spring Bazaar.

Write your intention a few times in different ways, until you get a sentence that really captures your intention. Then re-copy it on a fresh page of your Book of Shadows.

Crafting the Physical Working

How will you enact your spell? What physical actions will you perform? How will the action relate to your intention?

- If your intention is to break an old habit or pattern of behavior, you could physically break something – a stick, perhaps.
- If your intention is to attract love, you might want to create and burn a pink or red spell candle.
- If your intention is to call for peace in a time of war, you might want to do a spell working outside a military base or government building, perhaps dancing in the street or even risking arrest as part of the ritual. This is actually how Reclaiming was formed around 1980, as part of anti-nuclear protests (see page 148).
- Candles can be decorated with images that show our spell coming to fruition. A yarn bracelet can remind us of our intention.
- Your spell working might also require accomplishing a real-world task, not just a magical one. If you do a spell for “better grades,” you might have to include a commitment to study more!

Setting a Time Limit

Decide how long the physical working will take. We might want the effect of the spell to continue, but we put an end-date on the spell itself. This might be when a spell candle has completely burned, or when a yarn bracelet falls off. Or it could be a definite amount of time, like a semester or a week and a day.

When the time limit has ended, dispose of the leftover materials with solid focus – even if you're dropping stuff in the recycling bin, stop, take a breath, and remember that you are completing a magical task.

Charging & Binding a Spell

When the preparation of a spell is complete – when all that remains is letting it do its work – we raise some magical energy and “charge” the spell. This can be done with a song (She Changes Everything She Touches is perfect), by singing a tone over the working, by dancing around it, by blowing our breath across it....

continued on next page



Spellcrafting: Intro (pg 3)

Then we'll put a seal on the working as a way of showing that the "crafting" part is complete. This is called "binding" a spell (not to be confused with "binding spells," which aim to control someone or something).

Before you bind the spell, state the time-limit for the spell aloud: "This spell will be complete in one month," or "This spell will be complete when the spell-candle is fully burned," etc.

You can bind the spell any way that works for you. With a candle, you might literally tie a bow around it. You can also use the power of your voice to state that the spell is bound. Here's a rhyme we sometimes use:

By all the power of three times three
This spell bound round shall be
To cause no harm nor return on me
As I do will – so mote it be!

Open Sacred Space

When you've completed the spellcrafting, remember to devote any allies and elements and open your circle.

CURSES & SECOND THOUGHTS

Negative Magic & the Law of Threefold Return

What about spells directed at other people? Can we compel the object of our desire to love us? Can we bind and constrain another person who is competing with us? Can we bend someone's will to our own by the force of our spells?

As with any manipulative practice, we run the risk of harming ourselves more than impacting anyone else. The Law of Threefold Return is clear – whatever intentions or actions we direct at others are likely to return on us three times. These are poor odds, and tend to discourage most witches from doing spells against other people.

With Reclaiming magic, our goal is to make changes in our lives and in the world, not to manipulate others.

See Introduction: Curses and Negative Magic.

Releasing or Breaking a Spell

Once in a while, we have to un-do a spell. For example, when we did the working, our intention seemed clear. But later we can see that our spell and commitment are just digging us deeper into a lousy situation.

Luckily, magic is reversible – by using more magic. See page 274 for a spell for breaking a commitment.

SOLO WORKING

Spell working is often a solo working – Spell Candles and the spells for Breaking a Commitment, Temperance Pouring, and Waters of the World are perfect for solo working.

The Yarn Binding Spell is a favorite for symbolizing the bonds in a group – can you adapt this to a group of friends for a birthday party?





Spell: Breaking a Commitment

INTENT

Sometimes we make promises or commitments that at the time make sense – but later we realize that the commitment is not good for us or others. “I’ll help organize this event,” “I’ll always be here for you,” “I’ll do such-and-such for a year and a day”...

We strive to honor our word, to be people of integrity. Our word is our bond.

But situations change. There are times when carrying through on a commitment is not in anyone’s best interest. What if, after giving the situation careful thought, we realize we need to break our word?

Here’s a magical, intentional way to break a commitment while still honoring our word and our integrity.

We used this exercise with The Twelve Wild Swans story at Witchlets one year – at the plot-point in the story where the twelve brothers are forced to reconsider a vow they have made, we were invited to look at our own lives and consider whether there was a past commitment we needed to break. If we felt so, we broke a stick and cast it into the fire.

TIME & SPACE

Any number. Room to wander about a bit if possible. Takes about 15 minutes including transitions.

PREP

Need a small, pencil-sized stick (or popsicle stick) for each person – if you’re in the woods, tell people to find a stick ahead of time. If indoors or urban, find or buy enough. Make sure they can easily be broken in half.

You’ll need something to do with sticks afterward – a fire to burn them, a compost bucket with dirt to bury them, etc.

WORKING

Ask people to find and bring a small, breakable stick (or pass them out at the beginning).

People begin walking clockwise. Priestess invites people to feel the solidity and inflexibility of their stick.

“We make commitments and give our word to do things, yet there are times we need to break a commitment for our own good and that of the world.

“Consider commitments you have made which are still open-ended. Is there one that you want to reconsider? Is there a commitment which may have once served you, but no longer does?” (Give people time to think about this.)

“When you think of a commitment that you need to break, turn and walk widdershins (counter-clockwise).”

When all have turned and are moving widdershins, ring a bell and ask people to find a partner and decide who will go first.

Priestess: “First person, take the stick in both hands. Take a breath and balance yourself. State that you are about to break a commitment that no longer serves you or the world. There’s no need to give details unless you want to. Partner silently witness.

“When you are ready, snap the stick in half and place both pieces _____ (in the fire, in a compost bucket, etc).”

Switch roles.

When everyone has gone (or passed on their turn), charge the work with a song.

Song: Letting Go; Let It Begin; My Soul; She Changes Everything She Touches (Kore Chant).

SOLO WORKING

Same as above. Even if alone, state your intention aloud. Before and after breaking the stick, write in your journal.



Spell: Burning (or Composting) Putdowns

INTENT

All of us have heard harsh putdowns such as, “You can’t do that,” “You don’t look right,” or “You don’t belong” – and dozens of variants.

Sometimes even people who love us will say hurtful things that are meant to be helpful, such as: “That talent doesn’t run in our family,” or “Don’t try that, you’ll just end up getting disappointed.”

Here’s a simple, high-impact way to let go of past negativity in a safe, supportive group. Although each of us contributes a putdown, they are read anonymously, so it feels as if they could have been said to any of us.

Together we consign them to the fire (or compost bin).

Balancing the energy – follow this working with a balancing exercise that calls in positive energy – see *Workings: Spell: Charging with Fire & Flour* or *Workings: Overflowing Cup Spell*.

TIME & SPACE

Any number of people – but over 25 will get long. Allow one minute per person plus five minutes for transitions.

PREP

Need strips of paper pre-cut, plus fine-point magic markers (easy to write on any surface). A basket to hold paper and markers.

Fire – find someone to gather firewood and build / tend the fire. You’ll need a lighter and some paper or fire-starters. Check on fire safety gear, nearby water, etc. Firetender also stays to put the fire out at the end. See *Ritual Skills: Firetending*.

Compost – no fire available? Change this working to “Composting Putdowns” – you’ll need a bucket of dirt. After reading a put-down, tear it up and use a hand-trowel to bury it. Afterward, dump the whole thing into a compost or green waste bin.

Choose and teach a song to complete the working – see below for ideas, or visit our chants playlists – links on pages 112-113.

Working

Each person gets a slip of paper and a marker.

Priestess: “Think of a time when you were in a group and you did not feel safe or welcome. Think of something someone did or said that hurt you or made you feel less welcome or safe. Write it down in one or a few words – print clearly so another person can read it. Don’t include your own or anyone else’s name or anything that would identify you. Fold paper up.”

When finished, gather markers and folded papers. Circle around the fire. Pass the basket and invite everyone to draw one piece of paper – it doesn’t matter if you get your own, just don’t say so.

One by one, someone reads a “put-down” aloud, then wads it up and throws it into the fire (or compost). Whole group chants “Burn! Burn!” or hisses, boos, etc. Do this quickly, one after the other, so you build momentum.

Song: seal the working with a song: *Step Into the Flow*; *Let It Begin*; *She Changes Everything She Touches* (Kore Chant).

SOLO WORKING

You can do this alone or with friends. Unless fire is available, use a compost bucket. What if you did this at the beginning of a party?





Spell Candles

INTENT

This working weaves a personal intention into a magical candle.

Each time the candle is lit, the spell is strengthened. For instance: "As this candle burns, I will become more and more aware of the love that fills my life," or, "As this candle burns, it will release my creativity!"

When the candle is completely burned, the spell is fully activated.

TIME & SPACE

Quiet indoor space with room to spread out. Any number of people, given enough space and supplies. Allow up to an hour with prep and transitions. If people are taking candles home, leave time for glue and paint to dry sufficiently to travel.

PREP

Enough tall glass jar candles for each person. Plain candles with white wax allow people to decorate with colors they choose.

Collage materials. Color xeroxes of tarot, goddess, or animal divination cards work well for this spell, as well as a variety of positive images and words from magazines.

Mod Podge glue works best (get Mod Podge Washout for Kids), but half Elmers glue / half water will work if you press the images down for a few minutes. Have cheap brushes handy to apply the glue.

Colored package-ribbon, little beads and shells, etc (to decorate candles). Markers or paints that work on glass.

How will people carry their candles away? Wrapped in tissue paper and tape?

For more details, see *Workings: Collage*.

Music: Labyrinth Meditation Music is perfect for this working. See page 113.

WORKING

Finding My Intention

For this working – and for most Reclaiming magic – we like to say: "Do spells for yourself, not for (or against) others."

Magical energy sent toward others without their consent can misfire badly, even if it's intended as "positive" – and whatever energy we send out or call forth can return on us threefold (see page 28).

Priestess leads a short meditation, asking: "What is one part of my life that I would like to strengthen? Where could I use some magical support?" Invite people to come up with a single, clearly stated answer to use for this working (you can always create more candles for additional intentions).

When you have a short, clear answer, state it in positive terms. Try saying, "I invoke confidence when I perform," rather than, "I want to get rid of stage fright."

State your short, clear intention three times so you won't forget it. Write it down in your Book of Shadows. The spell is underway.

Magical Candle Safety

Tall glass jar candles are safer than open flames. But no candle is fire-proof.

- Dedicate a flat, fireproof altar to candles.
- Extinguish candles any time you leave the room and relight them when you return.
- Keep candles away from curtains, wall-hangings, magazines and papers, and cans of gasoline.
- If you have long hair, tie it back when working with fire.

Please take extra precautions when mixing fire and magic.

continued on next page



Spell Candles (pg 2)

Crafting & Charging the Spell Candle

Start music. With your intention clearly in mind, find some collage images that will reinforce your spell. Get ribbon, paints, and anything else you need. Take 20 minutes or so and create your candle.

Give people a five minute warning. Then come back into a circle.

Each person holds their candle in front of them. Priestess says: "Take a minute and look around and see the candles. Know that each one of us has crafted a spell to bring magical support to some part of your life. Together we are going to charge those spells."

Holding candles, go around and each person say one word or phrase. Then tone together for a couple of minutes – weave dissonance and harmonies to create a pool of energy that finally ends in harmonies. Let the tones subside to silence.

Priestess: "Feel your candle in your hands.... Speak your intention softly into the candle and anchor it as a spell.... Breathe the power of this circle into your candle."

To bind our intention into the candle, repeat after Priestess:

By all the power of three times three
This spell bound round shall be
To cause no harm nor return on me
As I do will – so mote it be!

The spell is now anchored in the candle. It will be activated when the candle is lit. Unless you declare otherwise, the working will be complete when the candle is completely burned.

Burning the Candle to Activate the Spell

To activate the spell, light your candle at home, within a sacred circle.

Place the candle on your altar.

Ground and cast a circle. You can do this quickly – just be clear about what you are doing. See *Ritual Skills: Sacred Space: Quick Ways*.

Welcome the spirits of Fire who will help with this spell.

Before you first light your candle (and every time you re-light it), re-state the intention of the spell aloud. Some say that stating it three times strengthens the spell.

Light the candle with the clear intention that the spell will come to fruition. When the flame is lit, take a breath and say: "So mote it be!"

Extinguish your candle and relight it as often as you leave the room – for safety and to reinforce the spell. Each time you light it, state your intention and say: "So mote it be." This simple act reinforces the power of the spell.

When the candle is completely burned down, the spell is complete. State your intention three more times. Thank the candle and Fire for their work.

Dispose of the candle intentionally – even if you put it in the trash or recycling, do it with care and one last farewell.

SOLO WORKING

A spell candle is a uniquely personal working. A solo spell is the same as above. Hold your candle and tone to charge the working. If it helps to put on music and sing along, try that. For ideas, see *Ritual Skills: Chants*.





Spell: Temperance Pouring

INTENT

Temperance – we take the name of this working from the Temperance card of the Rider-Waite-Smith tarot deck, where an angelic figure pours a blue liquid from one chalice to another. Temperance here means the process of bringing conflicting energies into a healthy balance.

This spell draws balance into our lives and helps us develop our ability to work with discordant energies.

This working might follow a meditation or exercise where we become aware of some opposing tendencies within ourselves – eg, the desire to achieve great things versus the desire for a relaxed, peaceful life, or the desire to please my family versus the desire to live my own life.

This is a nice end-of-ritual working – after an earlier exercise that brings up the conflicts, use this spell to bring yourself back into balance.

TIME & SPACE

Any number – under a dozen is optimal for intimacy. Room to gather around an altar. About 30 minutes including transitions.

PREP

Simple yet beautiful Center altar with pitchers, jugs of water, and two drinking cups per person. If a class, ask people to bring two cups about the same size for themselves.

WORKING

From a prior working or meditation, each person has an idea of two energies within ourselves that we want to learn to balance. Here we'll use the example above about achieving great things versus relaxing.

In a circle, each person picks up their two cups. Priestess leads a short meditation in which we reconnect with the two energies we want to balance.

Go around the circle, and one at a time each person names their drinking cups (aloud or silently), thus:

“By art I name thee (first cup) ‘achieving great things,’ and by art I name thee (other cup), ‘a relaxing, peaceful life.’” (We’re using the word “art” here in the sense of “the magical arts.”)

Priestess pours each cup half full. Go around the circle and each person names their cups. Priestess fills all halfway.

Priestess invites people to begin gently pouring the water back and forth from one cup to the other, being aware and silently naming each one, back and forth. Do this for about three minutes.

Then come to rest with each cup again half full. Name the first cup to yourself – drink it. Name the second cup to yourself. Drink it. Feel their blended energy within you. Slosh around a little to really mix them. Finally, take a deep breath and relax.

Song: Step Into the Flow; My Soul; Let the Beauty We Love.

When all are done – devoke the cups: “By art wert thou named, and by art unnamed. You are now just a ceramic drinking cup (or mug or whatever).” Repeat for your second cup.

Take a drink of water from one of the cups and enjoy it simply as water. Offer any leftover water to the Earth.

SOLO WORKING

Same as above – a good solo working. Remember to un-name the cups at the end.



Spell: Waters of the World

INTENT

Join an international, decades-old spell for pure water! This is an ongoing collective working to cleanse and revive all waters on our planet. Each person is invited to bring a small sample of water from a place significant to them and add it to the mix.

This spell was initiated in the 1980s. Gradually, waters from every continent including Antarctica have been added. At the end of the ritual, people are invited to take a small sample home and pass it on.

This spell is part of many WitchCamps and the annual Bay Area Brigid rituals. It can be done as a Water invocation, or as a separate working. It is sometimes done by the Pagan Cluster at direct actions.

Some people carry small vials of Waters of the World in their pocket at all times, just in case Waters might be needed!

Caution: Do not ever drink Waters of the World – the spell is still in process, and we can't yet guarantee the purity of all water on Earth. Also, don't leave Waters standing – keep mixing them with other water and/or offer them to your garden or a local park.

TIME & SPACE

Any number, although people might not go one-by-one if there are 50 people waiting to participate. Space enough to circle with an altar in the middle. Allow about 10 minutes including transitions.

PREP

Ahead of time – invite people to bring small samples of water from a place significant to them (eg, the ocean, rainwater, a stream, a home faucet...)

Need a large bowl with some water in it, some spare water, and a magical spoon for stirring. If you have Waters of the World from a prior ritual, add a few drops at the beginning.

Glass vials for folks to take home samples are optional.

WORKING

Gather in a circle that has already been cast. Priestess says a few words about Waters of the World being a spell for healing and reviving all waters on the planet, a spell that has been going for several decades, in which each of us can take part.

Invite people to step forward and pour a small amount of the water they brought into the bowl, stating aloud where it comes from. In a larger group, several people can pour at once, rather than coming forward one by one.

When all are finished, priestess pours in a bit of the spare water, stirs it a few times, and declares: "May all the waters of Earth run free and clean!"

After the ritual ends – invite people to come forward and take a small amount of the Waters home. Sometimes planners bring along a bunch of small vials for people. Remind folks not to consume Waters of the World.

Finally, offer a few drops to the place you have circled as a farewell blessing.

SOLO WORKING

Prepare your own Waters of the World. Begin with a half-dozen sources near your home. Each time you visit a new site – around your town, and however far you travel – bring along a small bottle and gather samples. Keep a list of the sources and read it each time you add a new one.

Add some rain water – even a few drops will instantly connect your water to all waters everywhere on Earth!

Charge your Waters by singing a song: Born of Water.





Spell: Yarn Binding

INTENT

This is a good final working for a class or circle, a simple working that weaves our energy one last time before we separate – and places a binding on our intention to take the energy back to our individual lives.

This working sends each person home with a yarn bracelet.

TIME & SPACE

Any number can do this working – we do it with 100-plus people at Witchlets as part of our final spiral dance. The bigger the group, the longer it takes. Including the spiral dance, allow 20 minutes for a group of 100, and 10-15 minutes for a group of under 20.

With fewer people it will move faster – you could add a go-round where people state a commitment.

PREP

You'll need a large ball of colorful yarn – what color(s) symbolize your camp or class theme? Wrap skeins into balls ahead of time for easy handling. Get about six feet of yarn per person to allow plenty of slack.

A large hand mirror. A few small round-tipped scissors will come in handy at the end, along with a few graces to cut the threads apart. Magical journals.

Teach the song ahead of time, so when the time comes, you can start right in. You can teach it while the yarn is being passed.

Song ideas – see Ritual Skills: Chants – pages XXX.

WORKING

Gather people in a circle. While the yarn is being passed (which can take a while in a large circle), priestesses can make final camp or class announcements, teach the song, practice their stand-up comedy routines, etc.

Yarn priestesses – go clockwise around the circle, loosely looping the yarn around people's wrists with some slack. Note – leave enough slack between people so they can move their arms independently.

Mirror-priestess – priestess goes just behind the ball of yarn, holding a hand-mirror up to each person and asking without waiting for an answer: "What do you hold in your heart from this year's camp? What will you take away with you?"

When everyone has yarn and mirror has completed circle, priestess invites people one by one to state (or hold in silence) their commitment. After each (including silence), the group answers: "So mote it be!"

Sing your chant at least a few times through. When complete, priestess allows a silent moment, then says something like: "Breathe in your commitment, and feel the magic of this circle, the miracle of this time and place. Breathe in that special power and connection to this commitment that is yours alone, that you will take away with you.... Breathe it in and anchor it in your heart...."

After a moment, priestess circulates with round-tipped scissors as people are ready to have the yarn cut.

Priestess concludes: "If you wish, tie your length of yarn to your body as a spell to charge your magic, and decide how long it will remain there – for a day, a month, or until it falls off, as you so choose. State that time period aloud. Blessed be."

✦ **Book of Shadows** – on a clean page, write in your journal for a few minutes about what the yarn will symbolize – does it represent completion of a class or project or ritual? Does it symbolize a commitment for the future? What color(s) of yarn symbolizes this?

Devote and open the circle.



Tarot: A Key Magical Practice

Tarot is one of the most Reclaiming-friendly of magical tools. With roots dating back to the Italian Renaissance, Tarot can be used for many types of workings, from games to decision-making to a journey of the spirit.

The key is intuition – awakening our deep inspiration and awareness about our own lives, our community, and the planet.

Some people say that when we do divination, it's not cards we're reading – it's our own soul. Tarot cards are simply an aid.

The following pages talk about intuitive Tarot. But let's start with the cards!

Finding the Right Deck

The past 50 years have seen an explosion of Tarot and divination decks. Hundreds of decks have been created, drawn, photographed, painted, collaged....

Intuitive reading works best with a deck which spurs creative thinking in the broadest way. Some beautiful or striking decks catch a mood or outlook well – but every card triggers the same response. We're looking for decks that stir a broad range of feelings, thoughts, and gut responses.

As with all Reclaiming magic – you are your own best authority. You'll know when a deck inspires you.

Maybe you already have a deck you like. Maybe you have a deck or three, but none of them inspire you. Maybe you have no deck at all.

Not to worry! Tarot decks are available for \$20 or less at new age stores or online. Or see the next page for an online card selector.



Some Good Decks for Intuitive Readings

Rider-Waite-Smith – if there's such a thing as "the" Tarot deck, this is it – Arthur Waite's designs are rich but uncluttered, and Pamela Colman Smith's calm, introspective artwork mirrors the widest range of moods and emotions. The deck is Eurocentric.

Modern Witch – this recent reworking of the Rider-Waite-Smith images reflects a broad range of races, genders, and ages.

Motherpeace – created by Vicki Noble and Karen Vogel around 1991, its simple, uncluttered artwork features people of many cultures, genders, ages, etc. Round cards allow nuanced readings (eg, what might it mean when a card is not quite straight up, or rotated a little past upright?).

Marseilles Tarot – reproduction of circa 1750 cards by unknown artists, with simple, vivid images. Some of the images go back to the original 1400s Tarot decks. Many modern decks reflect the Marseilles imagery.

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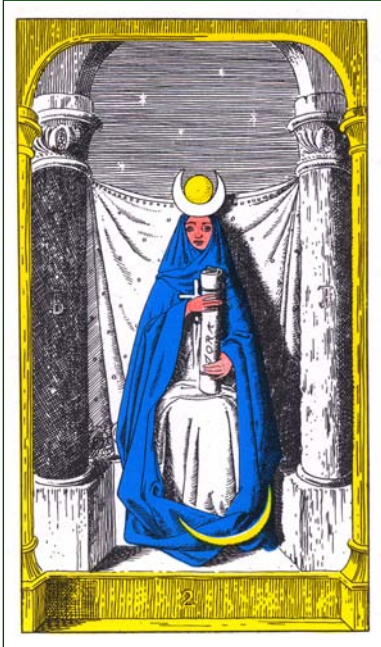
Tarot: A Key Magical Practice (pg 2)

Tarot Card Drawings – Online!

You can find websites online that let you draw single Tarot cards and/or multi-card spreads, including three-card (our favorite for intuitive work), Horseshoe, and Celtic Cross.

Here's a great site that's active as of 2022. The deck is Rider-Waite-Smith, one of our recommended decks (see previous page). The site displays the cards with no interpretations – perfect for intuitive divination!

Tarot Card Generator: serennu.com/Tarot/pick.php



Reading with the Mind's Eye

Here are a few tips for reading intuitively – see the following pages for more:

- Put away booklets and “expertise” – look to your intuitive response to the cards.
- No one can read for you – all they can bring is questions and random insights.
- Look at the pictures and describe – let the images awaken your intuition.
- Pay attention to first thoughts and reactions – there is no wrong response.

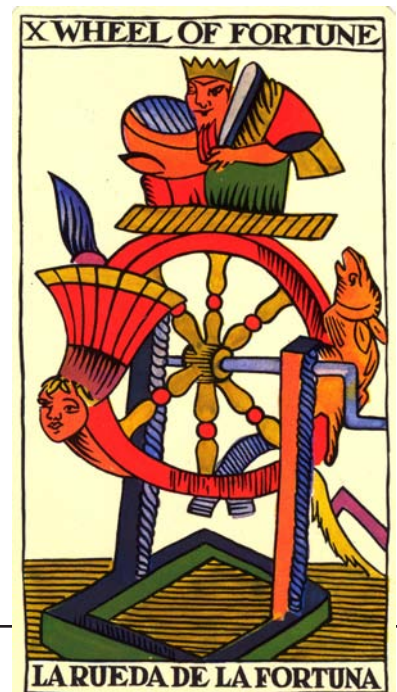
Everything You Need to “Know” to Get Started

(1) There are three types of cards in a standard 78-card Tarot deck: Court cards, Minor Arcana, and Major Arcana. See “Jargon” below for details.

(2) No card has a fixed meaning, and no one else can tell you the cards' meanings for you. The magic of Tarot is within you – let the images awaken your intuition to meanings that are uniquely yours.

(3) Some people like to pull cards with

their non-throwing hand – ie, their receptive hand. Pull cards and lay them face down, according to the spread you are doing (see “Jargon” below). As you read, turn them up one at a time and contemplate them. At the end, look at all of them together. Write in your journal.



Tarot Jargon

Cartomancy – divination using cards. “-mancy” is a Greek stem meaning divination – hence geomancy, lunamancy, pyromancy, etc.

Court Cards – these 16 cards, called King, Queen, Knight, Page, or sometimes different titles, are similar to the face cards in playing-card decks.

Crossing Card – an additional card which adds to the meaning of the card it crosses. The Celtic Cross layout builds in a crossing card – and you can add more!

Divination – using a magical tool such as Tarot, pendulums, fire-scrying, rock-reading, etc, to discover our own true meanings, attitudes, and intentions. Divination gives voice to the divine within each of us (see Workings: Divination).

continued on next page



Tarot: A Key Magical Practice (pg 3)



Major Arcana – the 22 “special” cards not found in playing card decks. In many decks they are numbered 0-XXI (0-21) in Roman numerals, with names like Magician, Star, or Tower. In the Renaissance game of Trionfi (google for more info), these cards were trumps. For divination, they’re intriguing, but not inherently more powerful or meaningful than the minors or court cards. Sometimes it’s fun and/or enlightening to do an all-majors reading.

Minor Arcana – the 40 cards numbered Ace through 10, as in playing-card decks. In most modern (post-1900) decks, these cards have pictures corresponding to older divinatory meanings. These images tend to depict situations that we find ourselves in.

Querent – the one asking a question and receiving a reading – or doing a reading for themselves.

Reader – the one offering a reading, either professionally, as a gift, or for one’s self.

Spread – the pattern in which cards are laid out, with each card in the pattern having a particular focus, such as Past-Present-Future, Mind-Body-Spirit, or more elaborate spreads such as the 10-card Celtic Cross. For intuitive readings, try simple three or four card spreads (so you can hold the entire spread in your mind). You can read about other Tarot spreads online.

Tarot Workings in the Following Pages

- Tarot Reading: Quick Intro
- Tarot: Intuitive Reading
- Tarot Games & Exercises
- Tarot: Living Tableaux
- Tarot: Speed Reading
- Tarot Stories
- Tarot: Journey of the Spirit



Tarot images from Motherpeace, Marseilles Tarot,





Tarot Reading: Quick Intro

INTENT

In Reclaiming we say: “Every person is their own spiritual authority” – and their own best tarot reader as well!

There are no wrong answers. When you’re not sure – go with your first feeling or thought. Keep gazing at the images.

The following pages share lots of background and workings. Here’s a one-page overview.

PREP

Frame a question: What question or issue do you want to explore with this reading? Or are you simply opening yourself to what comes through? Write it in your journal.

Spread: Decide on your spread (layout). This intro describes a three-card “Past-Present-Future” spread.

Draw cards face down: When ready – draw three cards and lay them *face down* as past, present, and future. (You can do this online too – see page XXX.)

INTUITIVE READING – Four Simple Steps

Take a breath and center yourself, then turn the “past” card up. Take about 15-30 seconds for each step below.

1. Look at the image on the card. Focus on the picture, rather than the number or suit. Name three things you see with your eyes. Let go of stories and interpretations. Describe what you see.

2. Find one object or being in the card that is “you.” No need to know or say why. Just feel it.

3. Tell a simple story about what is happening in the card, including the object that is you.

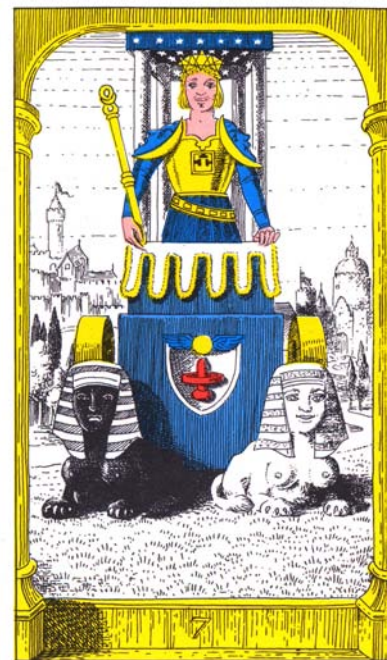
4. Now say briefly – given your question and the fact that this card represents “past influences” – what is its meaning for you?

Repeat for present and future cards.

When finished, recall your question, then look at all three cards together, face up. Soften your eyes and see what overall patterns emerge.

Write in your journal.

Ready for more? Turn the page!





Tarot: Intuitive Reading

INTENT

Intuitive reading is a good introduction to Tarot for one person or a group – no prior experience needed.

With intuitive Tarot readings, we are not asking Tarot to predict our future – we’re asking it to reveal our own hidden secrets. We’re using the power of its magical images to unlock our own inner wisdom.

So first, take whatever experience and knowledge you have about Tarot cards, breathe into it – then set it aside. All that information will just get in the way of your intuition.

Wisdom vs Knowledge

One of the advanced classes in Reclaiming is called Pearl Pentacle (see page 249). Two of the five Pearl points are called Wisdom and Knowledge. We always end up discussing: “What’s the difference?”

Tarot shows the difference – when we work with Tarot, we develop both knowledge *and* wisdom.

Knowledge helps us learn facts about the history of Tarot, about the occult (ie, secret or hidden – that’s what the word “occult” means) meanings of the images and numbers of the cards. Knowledge is what we can learn from teachers and books.

Wisdom is what Tarot awakens in each of us. Wisdom is our inner truth, unique to each of us. Wisdom is what we seek when we close the book and listen to our own intuition.

You can gain Tarot knowledge online or in other books – see Tarot Resources on page 294. In this working we’re going to focus on awakening your deep wisdom by directly encountering the Tarot images.

What About Books?

Can you resist the temptation to “look in the book” that comes with your deck, or one of the many you can buy that “explain the meanings”? Trust your intuition – set aside the book until you have your own relation with the deck.

If you want to read about Tarot, try Mary Greer’s *21 Ways to Read a Tarot Card*. She’ll give you lots of ideas about divination without telling you “what the cards mean.” That part is for each of us to learn for ourselves.

What Exactly Is Intuitive Reading?

When we read intuitively, we are actually reading our souls! The cards (or other divination methods) are simply tools to help us gain access to our own deep wisdom, and to the wisdom of our species, our planet, and the cosmos.

Reading intuitively means opening ourselves to the images on the cards – images that echo back through history and through our own being.

There are no wrong answers or mistakes. Whatever pops into our minds could be a clue to the cards’ unique meaning for us. Stay with the thread – tools like automatic writing and non-judgmental listening can help us hold our focus as the magic slowly emerges (see Workings below).

We can help others read intuitively too – instead of showing off our knowledge, we ask questions that help our partner tap their own wisdom and intuition.

Note – in a class or ritual, these exercises can be used to frame a commitment that can be carried into a further working – use Tarot as a discernment tool to ask something like: “What is my next step regarding such-and-such issue?” Then do an empowerment working such as Overflowing Cup or Charging with Fire & Flour to charge and empower your commitment.

continued on next page





Tarot: Intuitive Reading (pg 2)

TIME & SPACE

Quiet space. For a group, space where people can sit in pairs and hear the priestess. No size limit. A bell helps mark changes. Allow half-hour or more.

PREP

In a group, decide who will priestess this working. Solo – you are your own priestess. You'll need deck(s), journal, and a bell.

Choose a deck (or decks – if you share, one deck covers about 15-20 people). See preceding page for deck-ideas.

Decide on a type of spread – three-card Past-Present-Future (or Body-Mind-Soul) work well – it's easy to keep all three cards in your mind at once. The 10-card Celtic Cross can be complicated for intuitive work – when you're ready, go for it!

You can print out steps 1-4 below, so you don't have to keep repeating. Or write key words on an easel or erase-board.

WORKING – Basic Intuitive Reading

Background: Explain that we are reading intuitively, not by book-learning. Invite people to set aside anything they already know about Tarot. With intuition, there are no right or wrong answers, only inspirations and insights.

Briefly introduce the spread – for this exercise, we'll use a three-card "Past-Present-Future" reading.

Invite readers to frame a question. You may do a short guided meditation to help people clear their minds and discover a question or issue, or simply open themselves to mystery.

When ready – each person draws three cards and lays them face down as past, present, and future.

In pairs, decide who is reading for themselves first, and who is witness. Reader turns their "past" card over, and quickly answers these questions. Witness can remind the reader of the questions as needed, but otherwise simply listens and encourages.

1. Look at the image on the card. Focus on the picture, not the number or suit. Describe three things you see with your eyes. Let go of stories and interpretations, and just describe what you see.

2. Find one object or being in the card that is you. No need to know or say why. Just feel it.

3. Make up a simple story about what is happening in the card, including the object that is you.

4. Now say briefly – given your question and the fact that this card represents "past influences" – what does it mean for you?

Witness encourages reader to think out loud and "go with your first glimmer of thought." There are no wrong answers.

Trade roles, and the second reader does the same steps for their past card. Repeat for present and future cards.

When finished, lay all three cards face up and each take a turn sharing the patterns you notice and any further thoughts.

Come back to the circle and do a go-round where each person shares one word about what they saw or learned.

Solo – Take some time to look at the entire spread. Soften your eyes and see what patterns emerge. Write in your journal.

WORKINGS: Intuitive Tools for Personal Work

Daily Card Altar

Create a Tarot altar – simple or elaborate. Each day, choose a card (randomly, or perhaps work your way through the Majors of a favorite deck?). Journal about the card – write for a few minutes first thing in the day and again last thing in the day.

What changes? How did the card "play out" through the day?

continued on next page



Tarot: Intuitive Reading (pg 3)

Maybe you want to dedicate a page per card in your journal, so you can add later thoughts – or even create a special Tarot Book of Shadows.

Invoking the Cards

After you cast your circle, try invoking the Tarot cards themselves. Invite the spirit of Tarot into your circle. Flip quickly through the images and welcome them to your circle. Ask them to speak to you – promise to be a good listener! Remember to devoke at the end of your working – you can devoke with a simple, “Thanks!”

Ten-Card First-Thought Challenge

Ground and cast a circle. Take a couple of moments and either come up with a divination question, or open yourself to mystery. Choose 10 cards, face down. Turn over each card – say the first few feelings / ideas / thoughts that pop into your mind. If you are working in pairs, scribe for one another. Solitary, quickly jot down one or a few words for the card. Repeat for each card.

After 10 cards, go back and underline a half-dozen words – especially any words that you repeated. Write a short poem using all of these words. In a group, share your poems. Solo, take a breath and read it aloud.

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – how did this seemingly random reading comment on your life and/or question?

Face Ups

Write a list of moods and emotions that you often feel – for instance, anger, laughter, frustration, boredom, excitement.

Lay the cards face up. Look through them, gradually finding a card that most closely matches each word on your list. Write its name, and a sentence or two about why this card is the best match.

When you finish your list – flip through the deck face-up and choose a couple more cards that you especially like. At the bottom of your list, write the names of these cards – next to each one, write a sentence saying what appeals to you. Ask: “How would my life be different if I more often felt like this card? What is one step I can take toward that?”

Automatic Writing

Choose a card, speak its name aloud, and gaze at it for a moment. Then begin writing without lifting your pen from the page. Write about anything you want, but don't stop until you have filled at least half a page. Quick glances at the card are okay, but keep the pen moving. For more, see *Workings: Automatic Writing*.

Non-Judgmental Listening

Turn up a card, take a breath – and just listen. Let thoughts and judgments drift through your mind without sticking. On each exhale, let them go. After a few minutes, turn the card face down and write in your journal. For more on this technique, see *Workings: Non-Judgmental Listening*.

Create a Unique Card

Invent a new Tarot card. Name it, describe it – you can even draw or collage it. When it's complete, how will you charge it? Maybe a special ritual? Or maybe a quick zap? See *Workings: Zap*.

Some Reclaiming folks have created their own divination decks. You can google Dory Midnight's Dirty Tarot, Gaiamore's Earth Deck, Seneca's Creative Liberation Now Tarot cards, and Elka's Seeds of Wisdom deck.

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Tarot: Intuitive Reading (pg 4)

Workings in the Following Pages

- Tarot Games & Exercises
- Tarot: Living Tableaux
- Tarot: Speed Reading
- Tarot Stories
- Tarot: Journey of the Spirit

Tarot Games

- **Doom** – this is a quick, fun game. Everyone gives the worst possible reading of a card – especially the happy ones! What is the most horribly pessimistic interpretation you can give to the Star or the 10 of Cups?
- **Scrub-jay lines** – in pairs, each draw a card. Set timer for 90 seconds, and argue over whose is best. (See Workings: Boundaries: Scrub-Jay Lines).
- **Tell a story** – from a face-up deck, choose eight or ten cards and use them to illustrate the story of your life.
- **Draw ten cards** face down – study them for a moment, then make up a story using every one of them.
- **Group story** – each player draw five cards. Going clockwise, and as quickly as possible, each person plays a card that adds to the story. If you're stumped, you have to draw another card until you can continue the story.
- **Go Fish** – use Major Arcana as wild cards. If someone asks for your sixes and you have none, you can play a wild card (Major) instead, and give it whatever number you wish. Try this with a new deck – you'll get to know the cards quickly.

Crazy Majors Story Telling

Here's a short, fast-paced story-telling game. Try this when you have ten minutes of spare time at a camp. We used this to de-brief from the first Mysteries of Samhain camp, and wound up re-telling the whole story of camp, complete with all of the rituals, our favorite late-night snacks, and the giant bug discovered in someone's cabin.

The game is similar to Spades or Crazy Eights. Each player draws five or seven cards and holds them in their hand. The goal is to tell a fast-paced story about camp (or whatever) – and to be the first to run out of cards.

Player #1 lays down any card – for example, the Four of Pentacles – and begins a story that refers to the card (in this case, a person holding four pentacles). :

"We arrived at camp with all our stuff and got settled in."

Player #2 can then play a Four, a Pentacle, or a Major – if they have none, they draw cards until they get one. Let's say they have the Four of Cups (a person leaving four cups behind and walking away):

"Then we put our stuff aside and began the journey."

Player #3 might lack Fours or Cups, so they play a Major – let's say the Chariot: "We hitched up our magical chariot and plunged ahead!"

After a Major, the next player must play a Court Card – let's say they don't have any, so they draw until they turn up the Queen of Wands:

"Right away we came to a magical priestess, who ordered us to stop!"

Next player can play a Queen, Wand, or Major – and so on, until people run out of cards and the story is complete.

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Tarot: Intuitive Reading (pg 5)

Tarot Check-Ins

A fun, visual way to do personal check-ins. Try this in dyads or triads, so people really have some time to share. It will help to have more than one deck.

Lay all cards face-up. Invite people to choose three cards that will help them share in a check-in. If two people want the same card, see if they can share and each use it in their turn.

Get into groups of two or three. Decide who is going first. Others lay their cards face down and give full attention. In one or two minutes, the person shows the cards and shares why they chose them.

Tarot Card Pantomimes

Priestess tapes a Tarot Major on each person's back - others look at it and try to help the person guess by pantomiming clues.

Reversals, Shadows & Difficult Cards

Reversals and "negative" cards are different things – but they can work together.

No Tarot card is inherently negative – but some are harder to like than others! If we read just the surface meanings of Death or the Hanged One, the outlook won't be very cheery. But what if we look past the obvious symbols and read other parts of the card intuitively?

Try the four-step reading above – look at the smaller details of the image – what do you see? What if you deliberately made up a funny or happy story about the card?

We can also stretch meanings – the Death card can mean the end of mortal life – but it can also suggest changes in general; the end of a situation (maybe one that you *want* to end?); a time of rest and repose; and/or a prelude to rebirth. Does the caterpillar "die" so that the butterfly can be born? How is this a metaphor for situations in your life?

Reversals

A reversal is when we draw a card and it's upside down. We can ignore this and turn the card upright. Or we can read "reversed meanings" – we can ask what is the opposite of the obvious meaning? What blocks or obstructs the usual meaning?

If the Six of Pentacles shows someone being charitable, a reversed meaning might be greed or stinginess – or it might mean that I am the one who needs help.

Motherpeace Tarot, which uses round cards, carries this a step further – cards can be upside down, or rotated forward or backward – imagine the possibilities! No wonder this is such a popular deck.

Can you see how reversed meanings might be useful when drawing negative cards? And also for reminding us that those wonderfully positive cards like the Lovers or the Star have reversed meanings, too.

Tarot shadows – reversed meanings can be seen as the "shadows" of the usual meanings of cards, and they show us how complex our shadows can be. The shadow of Justice might be struggling against injustice. The shadow of the Devil card might be liberation – a positive shadow! Learn more about this at Workings: Shadow.

Tarot Shadows

Frame a question, or decide that your reading is open-ended.

Lay cards face down, choose ten. Turn them face up and choose your favorite seven cards.

Set those aside, and read the other three cards as your Body / Mind / Spirit shadows (see Tarot Reading: Quick Intro above).

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Tarot: Intuitive Reading (pg 6)

Reading a Difficult Card – an Example

We did a Tarot working where everyone drew one card and did an intuitive reading. Afterward, someone said, “I got the Devil card, and I’m a little freaked out.”

Our group stopped and looked at the card (from the Motherpeace deck), showing a pharaoh atop a pyramid holding smaller humans in chains. We talked about what was happening in the card, and what thoughts and feelings it called up.

Someone said the card suggested the ways we feel trapped or bound in chains – external chains, or those we put on ourselves.

Someone noticed the hierarchy of the pyramid, with the pharaoh at the top holding others beneath him.

We turned the card upside down – what might a “reversed” meaning be? If the card is about feeling trapped or chained, then the reversal might mean breaking out. Or maybe it’s about the ways that we hold ourselves in chains of our own making. Each person will see different meanings – each unique to their situation.

If this were your card, can you see ways it might apply in your life? Can you see how even a “negative” card can carry very powerful and ultimately positive meanings?

Tarot Salon – Readings for a Camp

What if we did a Tarot workshop, then later people practice their skills by offering readings to the wider camp – a Tarot salon!

One year we did Tarot workings in Ravens (Teens) Path at Witchlets, and then teens offered readings to the rest of the camp. Teens who didn’t want to offer readings helped decorate the space and acted as gate-keepers.

Tarot Altar – Wisdom & Knowledge

How about creating a Tarot altar where you can set out specific cards, such as all the Aces, or a particular card such as the Magician or Tower from several different decks, etc.

Maybe changing the cards can become a mini-ritual of its own.

Tarot Resources

- Mary Greer – Tarot Mirrors, Tarot for Yourself, and 21 Ways to Read a Tarot Card – you’ll gain knowledge *and* wisdom!
- Cynthia Giles – The Tarot: History, Mystery, and Lore – where did Tarot come from, and why there are so many decks?
- Online Tarot card generator (for readings): serennu.com/Tarot/pick.php

SOLO WORKING

Intuitive Tarot reading is a deeply personal practice. Even in groups, each person usually receives their own reading.

A Tarot altar is a way to become acquainted with a new deck, or to experience cards in new ways. See ideas above.

As a solitary, or with a few friends, close your door and cast a circle. When you read, speak your answers and interpretations aloud. Consider the possibility that one of your magical ancestors might be listening.

Resisting the Book – Solo Workers Too!

Can you resist the temptation to “look in the book” that comes with your deck? Trust your intuition – set the book aside until you have your own relation with the deck. Want to read about Tarot? See Tarot Resources just above.



Tarot: Speed Readings

INTENT

A fast, fun way for a group to do Tarot readings. This can be a good introduction to tarot, as it invites people to use their intuition to directly encounter tarot images. It also gives people experience at offering readings to others.

For beginning and experienced readers, these quick readings help strengthen our sense that intuition is the surest guide to the magic of the cards.

This working lets people explore a personal question, perhaps as part of a larger ritual flow. For instance, if we are doing an Allies Circle as the main working, we might do a tarot speed reading first and reflect on what sort of support we need in our life.

The structure we're using here is called a wagon wheel – two concentric circles facing one another. By rotating the circles, it's easy for everyone to switch partners with minimal commotion. (See Workings: Intro: Some Handy Techniques).

TIME & SPACE

This works best for 10-25 people – if larger, break into smaller groups. You'll need enough space to form a loose circle.

Allow 10 minutes for a one-card reading and 20 minutes for a three-card reading.

PREP

Choose a deck – one deck covers about 15-20 people. A visually rich deck such as the minor arcana of the Inner Child deck, which few people will have seen before, works well. Other good decks: Voyager; Motherpeace.

Rider-Waite-Smith is rich and multi-layered – but can be familiar, encouraging readers to default to previous knowledge instead of directly encountering the images. The Thoth deck is too schematic for this work. Avoid decks with words on the cards.

Decide on a type of spread. You may want to do a single card, but once you've done all the set-up, why not go for three? Past-Present-Future or Body-Mind-Spirit are easy for beginners. Celtic Cross is too complicated for this work.

A bell or rattle helps mark changes.

WORKING

Before you begin – explain that we are reading intuitively, not by book-learning. Invite people to set aside anything they already know about tarot. With intuition, there are no right or wrong answers, only inspirations.

Briefly explain the spread – for example, a three-card Past-Present-Future reading.

Invite people to frame a question. Perhaps the question relates to the overall theme of the ritual. Or it may be a personal question. If you're doing a solo working, take a minute and write this in your journal.

When ready – each person draws one card which will represent Past Influences. Keep it face down.

Now form two equal circles, one inside the other. Outside face in, inside circle face out, so each person is facing another person from the opposite circle. Explain that people will speak one at a time, with their partner silently witnessing.

(1) Priestess rings bell and says: "Outer circle, look at your card and immediately say a few objects or beings you see in the card – no stories, just what your eyes see. You'll have about 30 seconds."

Give outer circle time – then ring bell and repeat: "Now *inner* circle look at your card and quickly say a few objects or beings you see in the card."

continued on next page





Tarot: Speed Readings (pg 2)

Give inner circle time to read, then ring bell. "Thank your partner. Then outer circle rotates one space to the left."

(2) Priestess rings bell and says: "Outer circle, take a minute and make up a simple one- or two-sentence story about what is happening in your card."

After a minute or so, ring bell and invite inner circle to do the same. Give them a minute to share about their card, then ring bell. "Thank your partner. Then inner circle rotates one space to your left."

(3) Priestess rings bell and says: "Outer circle – given your question and the fact that this card represents Past Influences – what is the meaning of this card for you? Go with your first glimmer of thought. There are no wrong answers."

After a minute or so, ring bell and invite inner circle to do the same. Give them a minute to share about what they see in their card, then ring bell. "Thank your partner."

If you're doing a 3-card reading, invite people to take a breath and remember their question, then draw a second card for Present Situation. Again form two circles, with a few people switching sides to mix up the pairings.

Repeat steps 1-3 above for "Present Situation."

Then do the same for a third card – in this example, "Future Possibilities."

After all cards are read, rotate once more, and then invite each pair of partners to find a place to sit down together. Decide who goes first. Take a few minutes and lay all three cards face up and see what patterns you notice, sharing your thoughts with your partner.

After a few minutes, priestess rings bell and asks partners to switch. Second person reflects on their three cards.

Finally, come back to the circle and do a go-round where each person shares one word about what they saw or learned.

Song – finish with a song such as She Changes Everything She Touches (aka Kore Chant); Let the Beauty We Love.

SOLO WORKING

Working solo, you'll need a deck and your Book of Shadows.

Choose the cards and lay them face down. Then turn them up one at a time and immediately write your first thoughts about each. When you've done all three, set them side-by-side, take a deep breath, and see what overall patterns arise.

How about a **Ten-Card Sprint**? How fast can you actually read ten cards?

Death – An Example of a Difficult Card

The Death card – oh no! Our dreams are doomed forever! Abandon all hope!

Or maybe not. How else might we interpret the challenging image on this card?

Notice the scythe-wielding figure is "clearing the ground." As light bursts behind, even crowned monarchs get swept aside to make room for what may come next.

Are there parts of your life that you may need to change in order to "clear the ground" for new dreams to come to fruition? What might need to be pruned away?

Does making changes require chopping off heads? Maybe the card is suggesting that we could be a bit more gentle than the Grim Reaper? Or maybe not....





Tarot Stories

INTENT

A fun way to do extended personal check-ins. For some folks, using the tarot cards will make talking about their lives easier. Try this on a middle day of path or class (first and last days will be too busy) – allow time for long check-ins.

Tarot tip – this is a non-divinatory way to explore tarot and engage with the cards without the pressure of “doing a reading” – a chance to simply look at the images and think about how they might relate to your life.

TIME & SPACE

Room to spread out. Work in groups of two-three people.

Need a tarot deck for every two-three people. Having several different decks is fun.

Allow five minutes for explanation and gathering cards, and 10 minutes for story-telling.

PREP

Need multiple tarot decks – at least one for every two to three people so folks have a choice of images (after all, everyone might want the Lovers or the Fool!). Invite people to bring their own decks if they want.

Any decks are fine, since people will select cards face-up. The familiar Rider-Waite-Smith is great for this work, since people might already recognize and have associations for the images.

You'll need a simple way to form triads before drawing cards, along with a timer and a bell to ring changes.

WORKING

Priestess spreads multiple decks face up on the floor or table, mixing them all together. Invite people to gaze at cards and see their own stories reflected. Using your non-writing hand, choose three to five cards that you can use to tell a story about what is going on in your life.

When you have your cards, find your triad and a place to sit down. Decide who goes first. Each person will have two minutes to share their story, with others silently witnessing.

First person talks about what is going on in their life, using the cards as props if they are useful. You may want to lay the cards out in a pattern if this shows their meaning for you. Or you may wind up ignoring the cards and talking about whatever you wish – it's your time!

Check-ins might begin: “I chose these cards because...”

Give first person two minutes, then ring bell and suggest people change. Ring bell again two minutes later and suggest that third person should be starting.

As time runs out, there may be a lot of chatter in the room as people connect – let this continue for a few minutes.

Transition – ring bell three times to call group back together and move on.

SOLO WORKING

Alone or with a friend, draw face-up tarot cards to tell a story about what's going on in your life. Lay the cards out in a pattern that shows how these parts of your life connect (or how they don't). Afterward, write in your journal.





Tarot: Journey of the Spirit

INTENT

Sacred myths often include a journey where the heroine learns skills, faces obstacles, discovers allies, and finally passes a challenge that demands all of their talent and perseverance.

Journeys make great magical workings. Labyrinth workings are one form of journey, where we travel in and out of the magical circuits. Stations rituals (see Rituals: Stations Format) involve a journey among several workings, culminating in a group working such as a spiral dance. And going to a Reclaiming WitchCamp is itself a magical journey!

Tarot cards are perfect for personal journey work. The Major Arcana from I to XXI are sometimes seen as the Journey of the Fool – the Fool (card zero) begins with the Magician (I) and progresses through the various cards, meeting challenges, allies, and gifts to emerge into the World at card 21 (XXI).

We can use tarot to craft a personal magical journey. We choose the beginning and end of our story with our eyes open – we know where we are, and we see where we want to go. Then we draw cards that give us divinatory information about obstacles, allies, and challenges.

Solo Working – this working was developed for a class called The Magical Writer (see page 239 for free course booklet). Although we've used it in groups and classes, it is actually a personal working, perfect for a solitary ritual. It explores our personal goals and dreams, the obstacles that get in our way, and how we might address them.

TIME & SPACE

Allow 60-90 minutes including creating sacred space. Any number, but everyone needs their own deck (or a way to share cards, or an online card generator). Room for people to spread out a bit.

PREP

Figure out how you'll create sacred space – for ideas, see Ritual Skills: Sacred Space: Quick Ways.

Create a tarot altar for the working – simple or elaborate. You might want to think about lighting – mysterious, but enough light to see the cards clearly.

Need – a tarot deck for each person (or a few people can share cards), or an online card generator (see page 286). Use a favorite deck for this working – whatever calls to you.

Also need – Book of Shadows and pen; drinking water; anything needed for invocations, etc.

You may also need to do some prep for the Charging the Outcome step – see near end of this working.

Journey of the Spirit

A personal ritual of transformation

Question

Self-Signifier

Call or Challenge

Obstacle

Ally

Testing / Initiation

Climactic Struggle / Showdown

Triumphant Conclusion / Return

NOTES

continued on next page



Tarot: Journey of the Spirit (pg 2)

Preparing Your Book of Shadows

On a fresh page of your journal or Book of Shadows, write the date and this title: Journey of the Spirit. Under it, write "Question" and leave an inch or so blank.

Below that, copy this list, leaving about an inch under each one (use two pages if needed):

- Self-Signifier
- Call or Challenge
- Obstacle
- Ally
- Testing / Initiation
- Climactic Struggle / Showdown
- Triumphant Conclusion / Return

INTUITIVE READINGS: A Quick Review

See Workings: Tarot: Intuitive Reading above for a full intro to this topic.

Here's a quick way to read a card for yourself. Try using it for your journey reading, taking a minute or two per card.

Intuitive readings are a way of encountering tarot as a personal magical tool. The point is to discover your own unique relation with tarot, rather than looking up other people's meanings in books.

In intuitive readings there are no wrong answers, only fresh inspirations – the point is to tune into what our inner voice is telling us. Our first thought is often the truest, least-censored response.

- (0) state your question – write it down. Then turn over your card.
- (1) name a few objects or beings in the card that catch your eye.
- (2) name one object or being that is you.
- (3) make up a simple story about what is happening in the card.
- (4) say in one or two quick sentences what the card tells you about your question and your life.

✦ **Book of Shadows** – write the name of the card and your thoughts. If you feel stuck, write the first thing that pops into your head. Follow your own muse wherever it takes you, and don't worry about what other people (or tarot books) think or say.

WORKING – Journey of the Spirit

When your prep is ready, step out of the space. When you are ready to re-enter, take a breath and let go of any expectations about what is going to happen. Take a breath and dedicate yourself to the magical flow. Step into the space.

Create sacred space as you have planned – acknowledge First People, ground, cast the circle, invoke elements and allies.

As a final invocation, take a moment and say a few words of welcome to all the storytellers of history – from mothers at the crib to our favorite novelists. Welcome the magic of stories!

Tarot Reading: Your Question

Take a breath and close your eyes. Take as much time as you need to come up with a question about where your life is going. It might be specific ("Should I quit playing piccolo and take up the tuba?"), or it might be broad and general ("What can this reading show me about my art and creativity?"). When you have a question, speak it aloud. If it feels right, write it down in your book next to the word Question. Speak it again.

continued on next page





Tarot: Journey of the Spirit (pg 3)

Drawing Your Cards

First, lay the entire deck *face up* (if online, find a way to view all the cards from a deck). Choose one card that signifies you – whatever card speaks to you. Then choose a second card (face up) that signifies the “desired outcome” – a card that shows generally how you want your Question to work out. Lay these two face-up cards about a foot apart.

Shuffle the rest of the cards and lay them face down (or set tarot-card generator for random). Soften your gaze and let your non-writing hand hover over the cards. Gradually choose five cards, placing them *face down* in a row between the two face-up cards. Set the rest of the deck aside.

Online, you may need to draw cards one at a time. If you get a repeated card, you can draw again.

First Card: Self-Signifier

In your Book of Shadows, under the word Self-Signifier, write the name of the first face-up card you chose. Write about why you chose this card to represent yourself, and what images attracted you.

Second Card: Call or Challenge

The next card, face down, will represent our Call or Challenge. If our journey was an ancient myth, this is the moment where the main character hears about a monster that threatens their village – and realizes they must fight it.

What will your personal challenge be? Tarot can't tell you – but it can help you discover it for yourself.

Turn the card over and do a quick intuitive reading. You can follow your own practice, or follow the four-step process above. Let the card inspire you, not limit you. End by saying what the card tells you about your Call or Challenge. Write down your first thoughts, along with the name of the card.

Third Card: Obstacle (External and/or Internal)

The next card will give you information about an Obstacle that gets in your way. Sometimes the Obstacle is external – a person or situation is thwarting us. More often, the true Obstacle is internal – it's not another person who blocks me, but my own doubts and fears of standing up to that person or finding a creative solution.

Turn the card over and do a quick intuitive reading, as above. Think about the Question you asked, about your Call or Challenge – then say what Obstacle is getting in your way. Write down your first thoughts, along with the name of the card.

Fourth Card: Ally

Our path may be blocked – but luckily we aren't alone on our journey. One or more Allies are ready to help. It may be another person that we need to seek. Or it might be a spirit helper or an animal ally who can bring energies that we need.

We may know some of our Allies. But there may be others we never suspect. Tarot can help discover those hidden Allies.

Turn over the next card and read it as above. For this step, think about your Challenge and the Obstacle you face. Then, along with the name of the card, spontaneously write what sort of Ally you want or need. Is it a companion? A teacher? A fierce guardian? A trickster? Don't worry about being realistic or following the card – ask for what you want and need.

Fifth Card: Testing / Initiation

A magical journey often includes some sort of instruction, followed by a Test or Initiation. If the heroine is going to face their challenge, they need to gain (and prove) some new skills.

What new skills or knowledge do you need to answer your challenge? Turn over the next card and do an intuitive reading, as above. Think again about your Call or Challenge, your Obstacle, and your Ally. Then, along with the name of the card, write about what new skills or knowledge you might need to gain. Write whatever comes to mind.

continued on next page



Tarot: Journey of the Spirit (pg 4)

Sixth Card: Climactic Struggle / Showdown

Nearly every great myth, legend, or fairy tale winds up with a Climactic Struggle. Sometimes it's a battle with demons, such as Beowulf. Other times it's a showdown with an authority figure, such as the stepmother in Cinderella.

In real life, our struggles are usually less epic. Maybe our "Showdown" is a difficult talk with a parent, a friend, or a boss. Sometimes it's a change in our life, such as a commitment to study for a big exam in a class we hate, or a decision to eat healthier food.

You have framed a Question, answered a Call, and traced the steps of a magical journey. What Showdown or change is needed to bring the journey to completion?

Turn over the next card and do an intuitive reading, as above. Consider what action needs to be taken – and especially what difficult decisions need to be made. Along with the name of the card, write your thoughts – and consider writing at least one concrete step that you can take.

Seventh Card: Triumphant Conclusion

You've reached the final card, which you drew face-up – it's your ideal outcome, chosen before you had any idea of the path you would travel. How does the card look now? Is it still your desired outcome? Would you choose a different outcome card now that you've experienced the journey?

Close your eyes and take a breath. Open your eyes and do a quick intuitive reading, as above. For the final step, say aloud what this card means as far as the outcome of your Question and your entire Journey.

Then, along with the name of the card, write your thoughts.

If you are satisfied, you're ready to empower the outcome. However, if your final card now seems less than ideal, flip through the deck face-up until you find a "desired outcome" card that you prefer. Write a bit about why you would prefer this conclusion to your journey, including possible problems and pitfalls.

Charging the Outcome

As part of your Journey, you may have written down a concrete step that you feel you can take. If not, do that now.

Read it again. If it seems right, move ahead to the working below. If not, write some more about what action, if any, you feel you can commit to.

To charge the outcome, you can do a working such as the Overflowing Cup (allow about 20 extra minutes). If time is short, how about a Zap? (See *Workings: Overflowing Cup*, and *Workings: Zap*.) Or sing an upbeat chant – see pages XXX-XXX.

Opening Sacred Space & Journaling

When you have completed the working, open sacred space, remembering to devoke whatever you have invoked.

★ **Book of Shadows** – afterward, take some time to write in your journal (or you may want to do it before opening your circle). If you're a group, see if you can agree on some journaling time before you move on to snacks and socializing.

SOLO WORKING – Journey of the Spirit

Same as above – this is essentially a solo working.

For more tarot-based magic and exercises, see *The Magical Writer* course booklet – see *Workings: Magical Writer*.





Tools of Magic

INTENT

Magical tools – from cauldrons to athames to labyrinths and many more – are part of the lore and practice of magic.

Tools can extend and sharpen our practices the way a hammer or a paintbrush can extend what our hand alone could do. Using an athame (a single-bladed magical knife – see below) can help strengthen and “sharpen” my circle casting.

Tools can also become a distraction. If we’re more concerned with the beautiful new chalice we’re holding than with the spell we’re casting, we’re tripping over our own feet.

✦ **Book of Shadows** – when you get a new tool, tarot deck, cape, etc – create a page in your Book of Shadows where you can keep notes about the tool, how and when you use it, what surprises you, etc.

Also – see below for more writing ideas about magical correspondences.

Tools Lab

Let’s think of this as a tools laboratory – a time to experiment, to work magic, to play with magic, to pick up tools and set them aside as intuition and experience dictate.

✦ **Book of Shadows** – dedicate pages to tracking your experiments. What works the first time you try it? What takes a few tries? What’s exciting at first but doesn’t grow deeper?

You can buy athames, cauldrons, chalices, and other tools at new age stores or craft festivals, online, at WitchCamps, etc.

You can also make your own – a powerful way to engage with a tool that will be uniquely yours (see Workings: Wand Crafting).

Elemental Tools

Reclaiming has adopted correspondences between the sacred elements and certain tools from older magical traditions.

continued on next page

Magical Correspondences / Correspondences Magical

Reclaiming shares these magical correspondences with many (but not all) other traditions:

Direction	Element	Season	Tool	Body-Tool	Tarot Suit
East	Air	Spring	Blade / Athame	Edge of Hand	Swords
South	Fire	Summer	Wand	Pointing Finger	Wands / Batons
West	Water	Fall	Chalice	Cupped Hands	Cups
North	Earth	Winter	Pentacle	Body-Star	Pentacles / Discs
Center	Aether	–	Labyrinth / Cauldron	Personal Center	Major Arcana

✦ **Book of Shadows** – can you extend this table to include other categories for each direction / element? What colors might fit with each element? What sorts of natural items? What types and colors of stones? What emotions? What types of music? What foods? What animals? What books or movies? What magical skills?



Tools of Magic (pg 2)

These tools also correspond to the traditional tarot suits as shown on Rider-Waite-Smith and many other decks. (Note – not all older traditions agree on these correspondences, and not all Reclaiming people use these tools.)

Air = the blade (tarot = swords). Also called an athame (ah-thah'-may) – a magical knife that cuts through clutter and confusion.

Fire = the wand (tarot = wands). Wands direct magical energy – in movies, this energy is often portrayed as fiery.

Water = the chalice (tarot = cups). Cups and chalices hold energy, contain it, overflow with it, etc.

Earth = the pentacle (tarot = pentacles or disks). The pentacle or disk holds and supports energy.

Center = mystery! (tarot = major arcana). Center is not one of the four classical elements (which come down to us from the ancient Greek tradition), but in Reclaiming it is often invoked and worked with either as a fifth element, or as the synthesis of the other four. What tools might symbolize center? A labyrinth? A cauldron? A ring? A spiral?

Other Tools

There are an endless number of other magical tools. For a writer, a pen might be the perfect tool for casting a circle. For a gardener, pruning sheers might symbolize cutting away what we don't need from our own lives.

Tarot is a powerful and multi-faceted tool. Labyrinths are tools in various spiritual traditions. Meditation and trance are tools. The list goes on and on.

The Workings chapter of this book introduces various tools. How will you make some of them uniquely your own?

Tools Etiquette 101

Many magical tools come with centuries or even millennia of lore, legends, and practical advice. You can read endlessly online. Here's a few ideas we can pass along:

- Obtain or make your own tools – even if you buy a tool or get one second-hand, find a way to make it your own (see below).
- Keep tools on an altar, in a magical pouch, displayed on your wall, etc – not tossed in your sock drawer (unless that's the working you're doing!).
- Don't use magical tools in a frivolous way unless (A) you have created a strong magical circle, and (B) you are prepared to deal with the consequences. Having fun with a tarot deck can be a great magical practice. Juggling flaming cauldrons is best left to the experts.
- When you're getting rid of a tool, cleanse and dispose of it in a magical way (see below re "releasing" tools).
- Don't handle other people's tools, or any tool on an altar, unless the owner invites you.

Sharing Tools

Tools are like clothes – some you share, some you don't. Assume the same for tools – it's always a good idea to ask before picking up someone else's tool, whether it's an athame, a tarot deck, a drum, or a cordless high-speed power drill.

If you bring a tool, deck, drum, etc to a class or circle, others may assume it's okay to handle. If you're doing the Tools Cake-walk working (see below), the point is to handle various tools. If you don't want something touched, be clear at the outset.

If a tool is placed on an altar, it's usually hands off unless you are told otherwise. A magical faux-pas at a 1990s Bay Area ritual



continued on next page





Tools of Magic (pg 3)

involved an altar created by local Native Americans. Several ritual participants picked up and handled items on the altar, which was not the way to build good cross-cultural relations. We learned to explain this etiquette ahead of time.

TIME & SPACE

Working with tools can be done in a circle, a class, solo – or all of the above. Read the ideas below and allow yourself plenty of time to explore different sorts of tools and ways of using them.

PREP

Read the ideas below and obtain the tools or materials needed.

WORKINGS

Tools Altar

You can use a general magical altar to charge tools – perhaps give them a special corner, oriented toward the appropriate direction (eg, an athame might rest in or point toward East).

If you have space, you can also create a special altar where tools can be charged and re-charged. Maybe it's divided into sections, one for each element and its corresponding tools, tarot cards, natural objects, stones, etc.

The Toolular Body

Our bodies consist of a multitude of magical and practical tools.

The “chopping” edge of our hand is a blade that can cut through a magical morass. Imagine the focused power of a karate chop.

Our pointing finger is one of the most powerful wands around. As a game, try pointing at a friend with different “tones” – point in excitement, blame, laughter, anger.... If you have a circle, try “zapping” magical objects with your pointing wand-fingers (see Workings: Zap).

Our cupped hands are a chalice. The Greek philosopher Diogenes is said to have drunk from a battered cup until one day he saw a girl drinking from her hands. He threw away his old cup, saying, “A child has taught me about simplicity.”

If we stand and extend our arms and legs (like Leonardo’s picture of a Renaissance person standing in a circle), we become a pentacle, or a star. This comes in handy when we do pentacle magic (see Workings: Pentacles).

And each of us has our own center – although no one else can tell us exactly where it is.

Charging, Blessing, Cleansing, & Releasing Tools

You can make a tool your own by cleansing, charging, blessing, holding and breathing, carrying, and sleeping with it under your pillow. You can also create a ritual to empower the tool.

Cleanse away old energy with water or fire, then immerse the tool in new energy. Create magical space (quickly or thoroughly, as you wish). Then hold a new blade or wand under running water or over a candle flame. Breathe deeply. As you exhale, picture any old energy held in the tool washing or burning away.



Athames – photo courtesy Glastonbury Witch Shop.

continued on next page



Tools of Magic (pg 4)

To call in fresh energy, fill a bowl with water. Place your hands on the bowl and breathe. Imagine the power you wish the tool to have. Picture yourself holding and using the tool along with specific ways you will use it. Breathe all of this into the water. Set the bowl down and touch your tool to the water. As you inhale, draw the magic from the water into the tool.

Finally, hold the tool in both hands and declare: "You are my _____ (chalice, athame, etc). So mote it be!"

Suppose that you have charged and used a tool, then decide it is not for you after all. Before donating it to your WitchCamp's silent auction, how will you release and cleanse your own energy so it doesn't cling to a tool someone else may be using?

You could create a short ceremony where you use it one last time – or do something as simple as laying it on the floor, walking three times counter-clockwise around it, then declaring: "You are no longer my _____. Hail and farewell!"

Tools Cakewalk

Here's a fun way for one person or a circle to experiment with various tools, share tools-lore and practical information, etc. See Workings: Tools Cakewalk.

Divination Tools

You can do divination using tarot and other kinds of decks, pendulums, crystals – or maybe the bark of a tree or a passing cloud? Tools can make introspection and discernment work richer (and more fun). See Workings: Divination.

Create a Tool

Even if you like discovering and buying beautiful or unusual magical tools, you'll learn by crafting one of your own.

Unless you have a home forge, you probably can't create a metal athame. But you could carve one. Let yourself see the blade you want. Then look around for a piece of wood that seems to "contain" the blade. To carve it, you'll use another blade – how will you magically charge this carving knife (and de-charge it when you're done)?

A spell candle lets you put your own creative energy into a simple magical tool – a flame. See Workings: Spell Candles.

Witches traditionally make their wands by hand, using a branch that calls especially to them. See Workings: Wand Crafting.

Tools, Tools Everywhere

Experiment with other magical tools such as tarot, labyrinths, meditation, etc. Which ones especially resonate for you? How will you make these traditional practices uniquely your own?

SOLO WORKING

Same as above. How will you make the tools your own?





Tools Cakewalk (Divination)

INTENT

A quick, fun way to sample various magical tools, from wands and athames to tarot decks and runes, and also to get some magical input on an issue or challenge.

Players frame a question from their lives, then randomly visit several magical tools (or tarot decks, etc) to see if any might be useful for further work and exploration.

A traditional cakewalk moves around a large Monopoly-board type layout. Some of the squares have cakes, pies, etc. Some have funny things like onions or spinach. Music plays, and players move from square to square. When the music stops, you get whatever is on the square you're standing on. Charity money is raised by charging the players to participate.

Tools Cakewalk – some tools are magical (wand, crystal, athame, etc), some mundane (spatula, pliers, ballpoint pen, etc), some bookish (dictionary or cookbook).

Tarot Cakewalk – each square has a different tarot or other divination deck, or sub-sets such as court cards, majors, etc.

Divination Cakewalk – each square has a different divination tool – tarot, runes, astrology, animal spirit cards, oghams, herbal, coins to toss, etc.

TIME & SPACE

This working needs an even number of people, so the guiding priestess can step out if the group has an odd number. With a small group, skip the colored tiles and all share in one group.

Takes 10-15 minutes including transitions. This can be a fun working, so leave time to extend it if people are engaged.

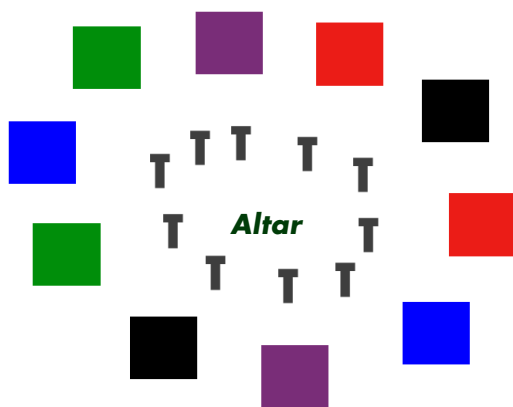
Need a quiet space with room for a floor-altar in the center (ie, no fire in the middle).

PREP

Need one tool (or deck, etc) for each player, plus two extra tools. For a class, you can ask people to bring a favorite tool, deck, etc – but make sure it's okay for others to handle it. Above are ideas for several kinds of cakewalks (see Intent above).

Space-markers (for more than about five people) – one space for each player plus two extra spaces. Get multi-colored paper

continued on next page



Tools Cakewalk Made Easy!

Layout for an eight-person cakewalk (with ten total spaces / tools). Tools or tarot cards (T) are arranged on a floor altar in the center, one per colored (or numbered) space.

Music plays or is sung, and people move clockwise. When the music stops, reach down and pick up the tool for your space.

Consider how this tool – or one it makes you think of – could help with your present challenge.

Colored spaces indicate which two people will do pair-share. Two unmatched colors (if any) form the final pair.



Tools Cakewalk (pg 2)

to mark the spaces (or use white paper and write numbers on them). Make two of each color or number – this facilitates pair-shares (see diagram above).

Lay out a circle of the colored (or numbered) squares, using two of each color or number mixed around the circle. Total exactly two more squares (and tools) than the number of players.

Lay tools around the edge of a central floor-altar so it is clear which square each tool connects to (but make sure they will not be stepped on).

Music – either sing a short song with a clear ending (such as Air Moves Us) or use recorded music that can be turned on and off easily.

WORKING

See diagram on preceding page.

Priestess invites participants to think about some issue or challenge in their lives for which a magical tool (or divination tool or tarot deck) might come in handy. Breathe to that challenge.

Start music (or begin singing a simple song with a clear ending). Players walk around the grid clockwise. When music stops, pick up the tool in your space. Priestess asks: How might this tool, or something else it makes you think of, be useful with your current challenge?

Turn to another player and share for a minute how you might magically use this tool (or something it makes you think of) to address your issue. With colored or numbered squares, find your match – if circle has two extra spaces, two colored squares may be unmatched – these two people should pair up.

Repeat three or four times.

Finally, ask each person to go and stand on the square of the tool that seems most useful, or which is most suggestive, regarding their question. More than one person can share a tool.

Go around and share briefly why that tool (or deck etc) called to you and how you might use it (it's always okay to pass).

SOLO WORKING

Gather a dozen "tools," ranging from magical (athame, chalice, divination deck) to ordinary (ballpoint pen, pliers, house keys). Lay them on the floor in a small circle.

Think about some issue or challenge in your life for which magical tools might come in handy. Breathe to that challenge.

Walk around the circle singing a short, simple song. When the song ends, stop and pick up the closest tool and ask yourself: How might this tool, or something else it makes me think of, be useful with my current challenge?

★ **Book of Shadows** – after a few rounds, journal for a while. What tools seemed most useful? Which other tools do you wish you had landed on? What have you learned about your challenge?





Trance: Place of Power

A Recorded Trance with Starhawk

INTENT

Here's a guided meditation for getting in touch with our personal power, led by Starhawk.

You'll find a recorded version on youtube – search <Starhawk Place Power>. It's also part of Starhawk's Way to the Well ritual, available on youtube, spotify, etc.

A place of power is a personal magical space where you can go in your imagination when you need a quick reminder of your value and power as a living, breathing human.

This is a working you can return to time and again, renewing the strength of your place of power so it's there when you need it.

Here's how Starhawk describes the Place of Power in her book, *The Spiral Dance*:

"You will enter into a new space, a place in which you are completely safe and protected, where you are in complete control and in touch with your deepest sources of strength. It may seem to be indoors or outdoors – it may contain anything or anyone you like. It is completely yours. Wherever you may be, whatever state of consciousness you may be in, you can return to your place of power, simply by visualizing it."

You can weave this trance into your own working, as below.

TIME & SPACE

Comfortable space for people to sit or lie down. Allow about a half-hour including transitions.

PREP

If you are doing this as part of a ritual, then you already have your plan for sacred space. If not, find a way to ground, cast a circle, and invoke – see *Ritual Skills: Sacred Space: Quick Ways*.

You'll want your journal and some drinking water. Wear loose, comfortable clothes.

Have your sound system ready and the track cued up.

WORKING

Once you have created sacred space, make yourself comfortable and begin the trance recording. Let your mind wander along with the trance. Trance is not a task or a chore – it's a relaxed journey.

The Place of Power Trance recording is about 12 minutes – you may want to play it through a second time and let yourself linger in the space.

When the recording is complete, let yourself relax for a few minutes. Write in your journal if you wish.

Remember to devoke and open the circle at the end.

SOLO WORKING

This is a perfect personal working. It's also part of the longer *Way to the Well* online ritual – page 115.

You can find more recorded works by Starhawk on amazon, iTunes, etc – *Wiccan Meditations*, *Earth Magic*, and her best-selling novel, *The Fifth Sacred Thing*.



Transformational Tableaux

INTENT

Suppose we were in a difficult situation – one where we felt really stuck – and suddenly someone made a small movement and everything shifted?

One way of doing magic is to perform an action in a ritual that is intended to ripple out into our wider lives.

This exercise lets us create a tableau of a difficult situation with the help of several allies. Then we'll have a chance to make small changes in the tableau that – if the magic works! – can completely transform the meaning of the situation.

An example – suppose in your tableau you are speaking the truth to Sally Ann, who has her arm up like she is going to hit you – enacting a fear that speaking the truth is dangerous. After you and your group strike this pose, someone moves Sally Ann's arm so instead of threatening to hit you, she is reaching out to hug you.

This working might follow a meditation or exercise which brings you in touch with something that is blocking your growth. After you do the transformative work, follow it with a spiral dance or other way of raising energy and charging the working.

TIME & SPACE

Each person needs about six to eight minutes, plus a few minutes for set-up and another five to come back into the big circle – so allow up to an hour for a group of five. If eight or more, make two groups.

Enough space to spread out.

PREP

Priestess – watches the overall energy, lets people know when there are 15 minutes remaining, etc.

Song – learn song and/or cue it up to play later. Here's a few ideas:

- She Changes Everything She Touches
- We Are the Rising Sun
- Weave and Spin

WORKING

If possible, teach the song at the beginning of the ritual or class. If not, teach it at the beginning of this working.

Priestess invites people to close their eyes and picture a situation in which their energy is blocked or does not flow easily – perhaps a situation where you feel uncertain or where you hold yourself back. Picture yourself in the situation, and imagine a simple way for the group to help you enact it.

One at a time, have the group enact someone's situation. When it's your turn, explain quickly what the situation is. Then others can help create a tableau where you enact the feeling of being blocked

continued on next page





Transformational Tableaux (pg 2)

or stuck. Once the group has it, hold it for a minute so you can feel yourself in the situation. Feel what it's like to be stuck there.

Now ask others in your group to suggest very simple changes – maybe just one person moves – so that the meaning can change entirely. Try a few changes until you find one that really works for the person whose turn it is. Then hold that tableau for a minute. Feel what it's like for the energy to have shifted.

End by everyone shaking off the energy. Then the next person goes.

When all have taken a turn, return to the main circle. To bring the whole group back together, go around the circle and each person says a single word that captures their feeling at the moment. If there's time, go around three times – saying the same or a different word, as you wish.

Song – when the word-circle is complete, pause for a moment, then launch into the song.

SOLO WORKING

For a solo working, try this as a personal dance.

Start with your “stuck” pose. Make one small movement at a time and freeze, until you have shifted entirely to a “liberated” pose.

Once you have your movements, go back and see if you can make them into a simple, flowing dance.



It was lunchtime at an early Teen Earth Magic camp, after a morning workshop. I had my camera, and said to this group: “Act like you’re doing a really intense magical working!” (Luke Hauser)



Trust Walk

INTENT

A fun, embodied way to build trust and awareness. Doing trust exercises with various partners helps weave bonds among a group.

Sequence of trust workings – trust exercises can build during the week. Trust walks are a starting place, progressing on later days to trust runs and falls.

TIME & SPACE

Plenty of room to move around, and plenty of interesting obstacles. If indoors, see if you can use hallways and stairwells. If outside, set wide boundaries and let people go.

Work in pairs, and one group of three if needed.

Allow 30 minutes including debrief and transitions

PREP

Enough blindfolds / scarves for half of the people in the group. Ask people to bring a blindfold to class. A bell or gong to call people back from some distance.

Prep the area so it's safe yet cluttered with obstacles – you may want to create a “journey” past various obstacles.

WORKING

Get people in pairs – try a quick game such as having people line up by their birthdays, then go down the line and pair folks.

Invite people to stand near their partner and re-ground. Remind them: “You are about to do something in which another person will completely trust you. This is not the time for pranks or practical jokes. Trust is a sacred connection and responsibility. Look at your partner and ask, ‘Can I trust you?’”

Invite pairs to decide who will be blindfolded and who will be the guide first. Take a moment to develop some nonverbal signals such as shoulder taps in order to communicate, and to agree to move slowly and carefully.

Once blindfold goes on, all talking ceases.

Give people 10 minutes or so to wander and explore. Guide can offer silent experiences such as touching moss on a tree, climbing over a fallen tree-trunk, putting fingers into creek-water, etc.

Priestesses walk around and keep an eye on the less-focused guides, walking along and coaching them as needed.

After 10 minutes, call people back and change roles.

Afterward – debrief by shaking off the energy, then go around the circle and share a few words about how we are feeling (in a larger group, share one word).

Transition – do something to re-establish the group – a group working such as a Blessing Circle or Lifting Each Other Up, or a song.

Song – Spiraling Into the Center; My Soul; Let the Beauty We Love; Step Into the Flow.

SOLO WORKING

Get a friend and try this. Can you find an intriguing yet safe place to explore while blindfolded?

The key is to establish and maintain trust throughout the walk. This is not the time for practical jokes!





Voice Magic

INTENT

Our voices are a main way we put ourselves out into the world. They are a way we show the world, “I am here – I matter!”

Wouldn't it be magical if we awoke one day and had complete confidence in our singing and speaking voice? Unfortunately, it will take a little longer than one day. But we actually can improve both our voice and our confidence.

Strangely, we were all born believing we could sing. Watch little kids – you can't stop them from singing. They don't even wait to learn the words – they just jump in and sing along!

In our society, most people are not encouraged to use their voices except for plain, unadorned talking. Only the chosen few are encouraged to sing or speak in public. The rest are told that we don't have “good voices,” and that things will go better for us if we don't risk singing.

What a loss! When we hold back, the world loses our unique voice.

Imagine a world where everyone who dared to sing sounded exactly the same – where every song sounded like a soft drink commercial. Is that a world you want to help create by your silence?

Some say that our voice is a divine gift – that our voices were given to us by the gods and goddesses so that we could call their names. When we “invoke” an element or a goddess, we are literally “in-voicing.”

We can learn to raise and strengthen our voice – and our confidence in it.

TIME & SPACE

See Workings below for size and time suggestions.

Safe space – you'll need a “safe” space for singing – a place where no one can hear you, or where those within earshot are going to be supportive. These workings will be less effective if we feel that others outside the circle are listening and judging.

PREP

Find / create a safe space for singing. This might be your room or basement, an ocean beach, or a solitary spot in the hills. Local schools might have practice rooms you can use free or cheap.

Before you begin this work – and every time you do voice magic – ask your voice to be your ally and to work with you. Place your hand on your throat and let your voice know you appreciate its courage.

WORKINGS

Sing A Lot / Sing Along

Half of the secret of a good voice is – sing a lot. The more we sing, the more relaxed our vocal chords become – and the better we'll know the secrets of our unique voice.

Sing along – dial up cheesy songs on youtube and join in. Here's a secret: Peter, Paul, & Mary were made for singing along!

Sing with a mirror – see the first Solo Working below: How Could Anyone Ever Tell You.



continued on next page



Voice Magic (pg 2)

Circle of Support

Up to about eight people – if more, do sub-groups. Allow an hour for eight people – strong emotions can come up around our voices, and you want time for them.

This is a simple, challenging, and powerful exercise that lets each of us hear our voice ring out strong and clear – and be supported by our circle. It's a good working for later in the week, when people know each other better. It's a "watery" working that can bring up strong feelings, and it can flow beyond time boundaries.

Priestess does a short intro – use the Intent section above for ideas. You might want to show people the hand-signals below (louder, softer, fade out).

Stand in a close circle. Decide who be the singer first – an older camper or student teacher might go first and model this exercise. Once you start, go clockwise around the circle. If someone passes, offer them another chance at the end.

Priestess invites the whole circle to sing a tone together. Take deep breaths, and sing the tone as long as you comfortably can, then breathe and come in again. Practice toning for a few minutes until it is smooth and easy for the group.

Now, priestess begins to "conduct" the group – when you lift your hands, people get louder – when hands go lower, get softer. When priestess makes a fade-out signal, everyone fades out – except the one singer whose turn it is. That person keeps toning steady and strong.

The first time, singer can close their eyes if they want – but keep toning steadily.

After 10 seconds or so (less at first, more later), priestess brings the rest of the circle back up around the singer.

Once people get the idea, you can go around the circle without stopping – each person getting 10 seconds or so of "solo" time, then the whole group fades up again and moves on to the next person.

After once around, stop and do some sharing. What did it feel like to sing alone? To have others come back in? Give people time to share their feelings.

Do another round, again about 10-15 seconds each. When this is complete, go around and each person take a moment, look around at the others, and say, with whatever strength you can give it: "I like my voice!"

Advanced working – the person who is toning looks around the circle meets others' eyes. The listeners simply mirror back love for the person – don't try to offer words of support, etc. Just listen and love the person.

At the end, do a circle of sharing. Give people a couple of minutes apiece, and more if emotions are coming up (see Workings: Non-Judgmental Listening).

Complete the working with a simple, beautiful song that everyone knows (teach it beforehand if needed). Song ideas: My Soul; Let the Beauty We Love; When We Are Gone.

Singing Our Intentions & Affirmations

Here's a way to use our voices to empower an intention or affirmation we have made. Up to about 15 people. Larger than that, make smaller sub-groups.

From a prior working, each person comes up with a word or phrase of power or affirmation. This could be tarot or another divination working, walking a labyrinth, etc – complete that working by coming up with one word (or phrase).

Gather in a close circle. One at a time, each person *sings* their word or phrase – and the rest of the circle sings it back, adding harmonies, descants, echoes, etc. Sing it a second and third time with more power, and hear it sung back.

When everyone has taken a turn, finish with a gentle song like Let the Beauty We Love or My Soul.

continued on next page





Voice Magic (pg 3)

Stage Fright: A Mini Laboratory

Want to get rid of stage jitters? The secret is to feel them ahead of time. A couple of us invented this working one year before singing a new song at the talent show. The singer quickly experiences a whole range of audience responses, has nervous reactions to them – and moves on.

No prep needed – you just need a partner or two. Larger group, split into triads. Allow five minutes per person plus a few minutes for transition.

One person is the singer (or any performer – we'll say singer here). The others are listeners.

Singer – sit or stand comfortably, ready to perform. Use your actual performance, or choose a song or chant that you enjoy singing. Your task is to sing your song (or read your poem, do your dance, etc) for the listener – and fully experience whatever emotions come up. When you feel irritated, nervous, amused, upset, hopeless, etc – stop singing and stay with the emotion. The point is to feel the emotions, not to plow through the song. If you find yourself laughing, yawning, crying, sighing, groaning – you're doing great! Just let it flow.

Listeners – sit or stand face to face with the singer, a little closer than is comfortable. You will display all sorts of responses to the singer, about 10 seconds each. For example: (1) adoring attention, (2) boredom and yawning, (3) start asking the singer a question about the song, (4) start applauding joyously, (5) say in a flat voice, "That's really great, good job," (6) start singing along, but out of tune or the wrong words, (7) scoot in really close to the singer without touching them, and so on. Try different ways until you get a response from the singer. Then:

Listeners – whenever the singer stops singing, switch to supporting any emotions they are having. If they are laughing or crying, just sit with them. However, if they stop singing and start talking, encourage them to go back to singing. For more on this, see *Workings: Non-Judgmental Listening*.

After each person has a turn, take time to debrief. Talk for a minute apiece about what came up, and what you learned.

End with some affirmation – a hug (always good to ask first), or perhaps each person says one word of encouragement to the others. Take a moment and choose the word carefully – what will your gift of a single word be?

SOLO WORKINGS

Singing is one of those things that, like sleeping or dying, you have to do for yourself. Fortunately, practicing is fun. Dial up youtube, find your favorite old songs, and get to work!

Here are some magical voice workings you can do on your own:

How Could Anyone Ever Tell You?

You'll need a hand mirror, some privacy, and a connection to youtube or spotify. Have your journal handy too.

Go online and find the song *How Could Anyone Ever Tell You*, sung by Libby Roderick (or Elaine Silver). Listen until you can sing along (it's easy).

Ground and cast a simple circle. Invoke the mystery of your own voice. Touch your throat and gently ask your voice to work with you – promise to support it and believe in it.

Now look into your mirror and breathe. Just gaze for a moment. Then start the song and sing along. When it ends, start it over or put it on loop. If emotions come up, let them flow. There's no rush – this is your time. Most of us have old, deep messages that insist our voices are *not* beautiful, not whole, not a miracle.... It will take time to let go of these old, mistaken messages and get back in touch with our true voices.... How amazing when we stop and remember that every single voice is a miracle!

If this exercise works for you, stay with it as long as you can. Bookmark the song and return to it from time to time.

★ **Book of Shadows** – finish by journaling for a while. Remember to devoke any allies and open the circle.

continued on next page



Voice Magic (pg 4)

Mirror Singing

You'll need a hand mirror and some privacy. Have your journal handy too.

Ground and cast a circle. Call an ally or two – maybe a fearless animal? Finally, invoke your mirror – without looking into it, ask it to support your voice, and to work with you to unleash the magic of your voice.

Close your eyes and tone a bit, letting your voice wander freely. Go low, high, soft, loud – all with no strain. Try falsetto, try short bursts of notes. Try moments of silence in between the sounds.

Now pick up the mirror.

Amazing – gazing silently into the mirror, make a face that says, “You are so amazing!” Close your eyes, take a breath, and sing this line in your most operatic voice (make up an opera tune): “My voice is the most beautiful in the world!” Open your eyes and see if you can repeat it while giving your “amazing!” look (don't be surprised if it's hard). Try it a few times, then jot any thoughts in your journal.

Bored – now make a face that says, “This is so boring....” Close your eyes, take a breath, and sing a line from a song or chant you like. Open your eyes and repeat it using the bored expression. What thoughts come up? Jot them down in your journal.

Curious – make a face that says, “I wonder what my voice really sounds like?” Close your eyes, take a deep breath, and on the exhale let go of judgments about your voice. Do this a second time. Now take a breath and sing a simple, clear tone. Open your eyes and look into the mirror. What emotions do you see in your eyes? Try this a few times, then write in your journal.

Try a few other emotions if you wish. Then finish with this one:

Belief – make a face that says, “I think I can do this.” Gaze into your eyes for a minute until you can really feel at least for a moment that it is possible – you can sing! Now, continuing to gaze into the mirror, sing a simple tone or song. See if you can hold this expression of belief – “I can do it.” If your voice wavers, stop and let any emotions come up. Then close your eyes, take a breath, and begin this step again. Stay with this for a few minutes and see how long you can sing while believing in the possibility of your voice.

🌀 **Book of Shadows** – after a few minutes, stop and write in your journal.

Finally, devoke what you invoked, including thanking the mirror for its support.

Singing with Support: Solo Version

Some of the beauty of this working is feeling each person take a risk and sing out (see page XXX). Maybe you know a few friends who like singing and might want to try this exercise?

You can also work it as a solo exercise, as below.

Prep – you'll need private singing space; a music player and some trancey music; a hand mirror.

Choose music that is simple and “trancey” – music without words or virtuoso solos. Some ideas are new age meditation music, Sufi trance music (Qawwali), or electronic dance music. If you use your computer for music, cover the screen with a scarf to lessen distractions.

Alone or with One or Two Others:

As the music plays, try toning along with it – see if you can find one tone that you can just sing and hold, even as the rest of the music changes. Take your time until you have a tone that you can strongly hold as the music plays.

With the music still playing, practice getting softer and louder – then when you're ready, get a good breath, hold your note strong and steady, and turn the music down. Hold the tone for 10 seconds or so, then bring the music back up.

Try it a few times. Then stop and do a bit of sharing – with others or with your journal. What did it feel like to sing alone? To

continued on next page





Voice Magic (pg 5)

have the music come back in?

Now gaze into your mirror. Meet and hold your own eyes, letting go of judgment. When you can take a full breath without judgment, look at yourself and say with whatever strength you can give it: "I like my voice!" Continue gazing for a few seconds, and then say: "Thank you!"

Put the mirror down and try the exercise a few more times.

✪ **Book of Shadows** – write: "I like my voice" – then whatever you think next. Try automatic writing, keeping the pen moving no matter what comes out. Try filling a page with thoughts about your voice. What changes do you notice by the end of the page?

Close the working with a song that you enjoy. It could be a Pagan song (see end of Working above), or a favorite pop song – whatever makes you happy to sing along.

Singing in Tune: How to Practice

Singing in tune with other voices or instruments is a magical experience. Music consists of vibrations in the body and in the air. When our voice closely matches the pitch of another voice or instrument, the vibration is literally doubled. Instantly we feel a magical strengthening of our voice!

No one is born knowing how to sing "in tune" – ie, to sing exactly the same pitch as another tone. Some people seem to learn at a very young age. Others learn later.

Tone Deaf – no one (unless you have sustained a serious injury to the ears or brain) is "tone deaf." If you think you are, you simply haven't learned the magic of singing in tune. When you do, you will be amazed how powerful it feels.

However well we sing, we can benefit from practicing this skill – here's a fun way.

Need – an instrument that produces a clear, consistent pitch while you sing at the same time – a piano, guitar or ukulele is ideal.

Play a single note and listen. Just listen. Play the same note and listen again. Appreciate that note. Now play the note, then stop the sound and see if you can still clearly hear it in your head. Try this a few times – strike the note, then stop it and hear the pitch in your head.

Now, play the same single note, listen, and try to sing the same pitch you hear. Let your voice waver all it needs. Strike the note again as often as needed.

If you aren't sure, you probably do not quite have it – when you get it, you'll feel a strengthening. Take a break. Ask your voice to be your ally, and to work with you. Place your hand on your throat and let your voice know you appreciate its courage!

Try again – once you feel you are singing the same pitch, tone it steadily. Strike the note again and see if it still seems to match your voice. If so – repeat with a different pitch.

Sleep on it – if it doesn't feel like you're getting it, take a break for an hour or a day ("sleep on it") and try again.

If you're getting it, try the Singing with Support exercise above, which encourages you to hold tones longer. As you sing, listen for the strengthening feeling that comes when you are in tune.

Thank your voice – finish by thanking your voice. Take a drink of water and feel it slide past your voice box. Touch your throat and thank yourself for singing!



Wand Crafting

INTENT

In Reclaiming and other magical traditions, the wand is the tool of Fire. The wand can direct and focus energy (think of the power of pointing at someone – and multiply that by the strength of your wand).

It can be used to amplify energy for casting a circle or invoking Fire. The wand extends your hand and increases its energy as you draw a pentacle or make other magical gestures. It can be used to charge other workings.

Wands are tools of transformation. The wand we're making will probably not turn people into newts. But try pointing it at your homework, then take a breath and demand that it be easier. Do this three times. It might work!

Any time we use a wand or any magical tool or working, remember the Law of Three-Fold Return – whatever energy we put into the world or toward other people has a way of returning on us three times (see Introduction: Curses).

TIME & SPACE

Space to spread out and do craft work. Allow at least 30 minutes, plus time and space afterward for glue or paint to dry.

PREP

Each person needs a wand-sized stick. Traditionally, people find their own stick (ask people to find and bring one to the class or ritual, and teachers bring extras). A wand is often the length from the inside of your elbow to the tip of your middle finger.

When you think you have found your stick or other object, take a breath, quiet your thoughts, and ask: "Are you my wand?" If you get a negative answer, keep looking. If you get no answer after a couple of tries, use your intuition – *is this your wand?*

Wands can be made of many objects – stones, seashells, metal rods, fountain pens.... You can do online research about the different magical qualities of various trees and materials. The important thing is to ask the material if it is your wand, as above.

Wand-decorating supplies might include: crystals; ribbon; beads and string; paint; fine-point pens for inscribing symbols; fine wire; glue.... Whittling knives and sandpaper are handy. Music might help cut down on chatter (try Reclaiming's Labyrinth Meditation Music – see Ritual Skills: Chants).

WORKING

People gather with their wand-sticks. Materials are laid out.

Priestess shares wand lore – what wands are good for, how they might be used, cautionary tales (see Intent section above).

Priestess leads short meditation on the power of wands and making a wand your own. People are holding their sticks as they meditate. Priestess invites people to envision their wand, to see what it looks and feels like.

Then, still in trance, people are invited to decorate their wands, mainly in silence.

When time is up, gather in a circle with wands. Hold them out for others to see. Go around and invite each person to say a word or phrase about their wand or the wand-making experience (remember the right to pass).

Song to charge wands: We Are the Power in Everyone; Rise with the Fire; Air Moves Us (includes all elements); Toning.

Finally, bring people fully out of trance by having them pat the edges of their body and say their name aloud three times.

SOLO WORKING

You can make a wand as above. How will you charge your wand? A song? Holding it over a candle or under running water?



Resources, Organizing, & Miscellany

- **Organizing Resources**
 - **WitchCamps and Earth Activist Trainings**
 - **Connecting with Reclaiming & Our WitchCamps**
 - **Chants for Rituals, Circles & Streets**
 - **Activist & Magical Resources**
 - **Books by Reclaiming Authors**
 - **Complete & Helpful Index To the Book**
 - **Lots of Other Fun Stuff!**



Want to create a Reclaiming-style WitchCamp or family camp – see the next page to learn more about organizing camps in the Reclaiming Tradition. Photo by Alla Irwin.

Camp Organizing Resources

Starting a Camp!

Want to start a camp for your own group or tradition? Best wishes! The Witchlets organizing manual gives a great overview. Find this and other resources on our website – WeaveAndSpin.org/resources.

Want to start a **Reclaiming Tradition camp** in your area, or link your camp to our network? Start by attending one of our camps, where you'll meet teachers and organizers and get a feel for Reclaiming's ever-evolving culture – visit WitchCamp.org for camp info as well as contacts for the WitchCamp Council.

To be a Reclaiming camp, you'll need at least a couple of Reclaiming-trained teachers (who in turn can help train local teachers for your community). Maybe you already know them? Or contact us to find teachers in your area.

Visit WitchCamp.org, or email ReclaimingSecretary@gmail.com.

Bring Reclaiming Teachers to Your Event

Already doing a camp or other event?

Whether it's a retreat, workshop, conference, or class, Reclaiming teachers can anchor offerings for youth and/or adults and bring fresh inspiration and deep Earth magic to your event. Weave your community into the Reclaiming web!

Email us at ReclaimingSecretary@gmail.com.



Over the years, Witchlets teens have grown into young adults. Some have stayed part of camp, helping pass along the magic to a new generation!

Witchlets Organizing Manual & More Camp Resources

Starting a new camp or retreat doesn't have to mean reinventing the logistical wheel. We've learned our craft from others, and gladly pass along our lessons.

Visit our Organizing Resources page, where you'll find manuals, forms, and other stuff we've found useful, including:

Witchlets organizing manual – timeline, tasks and roles, waivers, camp culture guidelines, and more – a complete how-to manual.

Redwood Magic camper packet – the PDF we send to campers a few weeks before camp – bring-list, camp culture guidelines, info about schedule and kitchen, map and directions....

Promo cards and brochures – samples.

Waivers and forms – liability and medical waiver, photo release, ethics agreement.

Group process resources – consensus, feminism, nonhierarchy, dealing with sexism, racism, homophobia, and more.

Find these and more online at:

WeaveAndSpin.org/resources

Reclaiming WitchCamps

Magical Intensives in Europe, Australia, & North America

Reclaiming WitchCamps are intensive retreats for the study of magic, ritual, and for building and renewing our commitment to world change.

WitchCamps include all levels of experience. Newcomers learn basic magical skills. Advanced paths offer chances to apply these tools and skills.

Camps are currently offered in Europe, Australia, and around North America. Some camps are family-friendly, and offer programs for various ages.

Early WitchCamps were teacher-training intensives. In the 90s the idea blossomed into broader retreats. Reclaiming Collective teachers traveled and trained others, gradually building a large network of WitchCamp teachers.



Many camps are geographically based, and help anchor Reclaiming communities in their region.

Family camps have included Tejas Web, Witchlets in the Woods, Redwood Magic, and Wild Ginger.

Others are built around a particular theme or constituency, such as Free Activist WitchCamp, JeWitch Camp, and Teen Earth Magic. There have also been camps for women, and Queer Camp met twice in the 2000s.

Several camps focus on seasons or sabbats: Winter WitchCamp (Minnesota and Spain) and Mysteries of Samhain (Northern California).

WitchCamp.org – visit our website for a current schedule of Reclaiming WitchCamps.

Earth Activist Training

With Starhawk & Earth Activists

Starhawk's Earth Activist Trainings (EAT) helped inspire Teen Earth Magic. EAT can set your life on a new path... or show you how to save the world.

EAT is practical Earth-healing with a magical base of ritual and nature awareness, integrating mind and heart, with lots of hands-on practice and plenty of time to laugh.

Permaculture has many tools to address the problems of climate change and environmental degradation, and EAT's courses focus on solutions and positive approaches to the grave problems which confront us today.

Experiential courses include: hands-on projects, songs, exercises, discussions, and rituals, as well as classes.

EAT practices Social Permaculture – the application of ecological principles to designing beneficial human relations.

EAT teachers are deeply involved in organizing around climate change, anti-racism, and social justice as well as environmental issues. They work with the Black Permaculture Network, and have a commitment to share these skills and



*Planting seedlings with intention, magic, and micorrhizal fungi.
Photo by Luke Hauser.*

tools with the communities most impacted by injustice.

EAT Contacts

EarthActivistTraining.org and Starhawk.org

EarthActivistTraining@gmail.com

Campfire Chants – Our Latest Album!

Here's our fifth album – and see below for our latest project!

Join us around the WitchCamp bonfire for inspirational chants and songs perfect for rituals, circles, marching for peace and justice – and singing along!

Featuring chants written by Starhawk, Suzanne Sterling, T. Thorn Coyle, Alphonsus Mooney, Laurie Lovekraft, Seed, Max Ventura, Meg Yardley, and more, these are among our most-sung chants from WitchCamps, classes, and rituals.

Several are among our favorite activist chants – perfect for rituals, rallies, and direct actions.

Recorded by a homespun, all-ages chorus accompanied by conga, guitar, flute, fiddle, clarinet – and even harmonica and ukulele.

Listen free at youtube, spotify, google, etc. Downloads at CDBaby, iTunes, and other usual sites.

Proceeds support Redwood Magic and Reclaiming's family camps.

CampfireChants.org – links and more info.

WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists – links to all of our chants on youtube and spotify.



Lyrics & Lore Book – free online! (or full-color print edition at amazon)

50-page book of interviews, history, and stories about the chants – plus lyrics and guitar / ukulele chords.

Hear from Ravyn Stanfield (We Are the Rising Sun), Suzanne Sterling (My Soul), Starhawk (five of her most-loved chants!), and more.

Plus sections on past Reclaiming music, WitchCamps, activism, the Spiral Dance ritual, and more.

Free download at CampfireChants.org.

Full-color print edition just \$15 at amazon. Proceeds benefit future recordings, publications, and archives

Muy Pronto – Bilingual Chants!

As this book goes to press, our Campfire Chorus has begun rehearsing songs for a new album of bilingual Spanish-English versions of our favorite chants – stay tuned for details!

Info & Demos: CampfireChants.org/cantos-sagrados



More Chants Albums from Reclaiming

Chants: Ritual Music – 19 classic chants from the early days, recorded by a chorus and drum.

Second Chants: More Ritual Music – more chants and songs from the early years, recorded by soloists, chorus, and folk accompanists.

Let It Begin Now: Music from the Spiral Dance – chants and songs from our annual Samhain ritual.

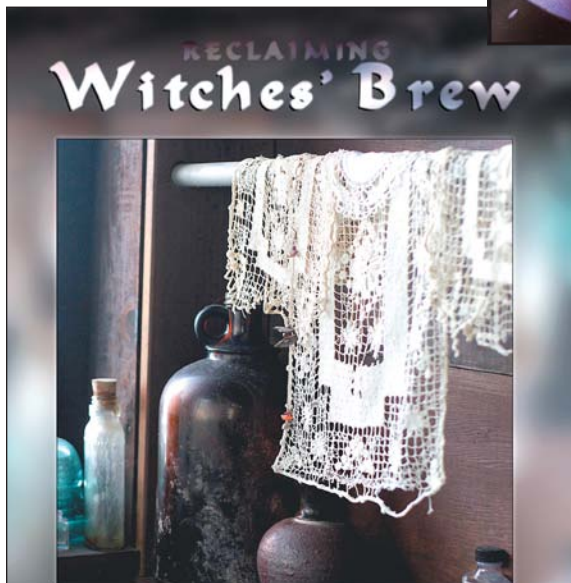
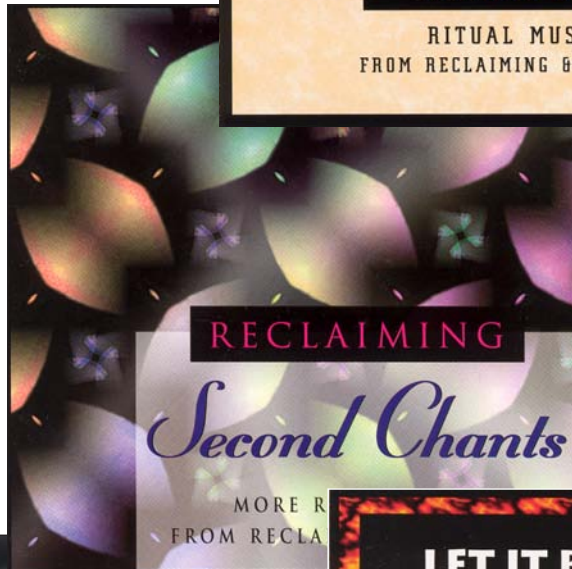
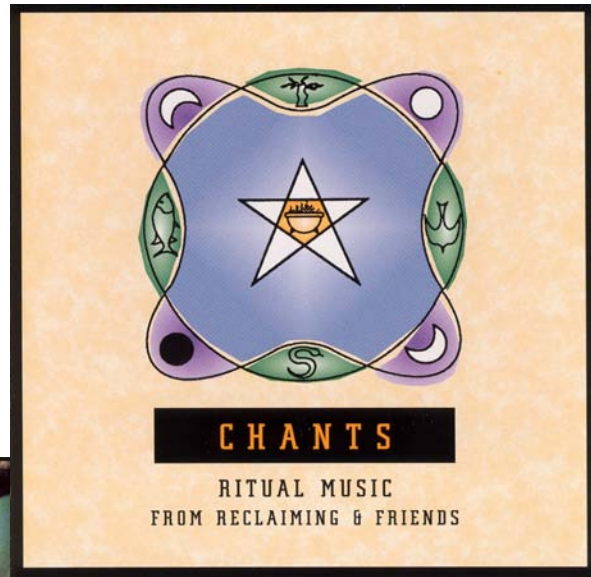
Witches Brew: Songs & Chants from the Reclaiming Cauldron – greatest hits from teachers and musicians around Reclaiming – including Labyrinth Meditation Music.

Campfire Chants: Songs for the Earth – post-2000 Reclaiming hits, recorded by chorus and folk ensemble.

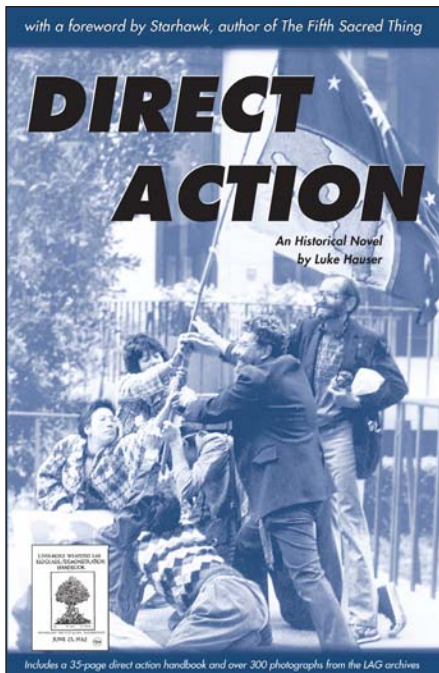
Cantos Sagrados – bilingual Spanish/English versions of our favorite chants (coming soon).

Way to the Well – a 45-minute trance journey ritual with Starhawk.

WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists – links to our chants on youtube and spotify.



Magical Activist Resources



Direct Action: An Historical Novel

by Luke Hauser

"Affinity groups, consensus decision-making, and solidarity come alive. These are engaging stories of real people – stories that can be laughed at, cried over, and treasured."

– Karen Pickett, Earth First!

More than 7000 people were arrested in nonviolent protests in California during the early 1980s, developing the art of direct action in the U.S. to a peak not reached again until Seattle in 1999, and perhaps never surpassed.

Luke Hauser narrates the back-story of Reclaiming – the history of a community of activists who helped lay foundations for today's resistance movements.

Direct action is more than getting arrested. It's solidarity. It's affinity groups and collective process. It's nonhierarchy and respect for diversity. It's coalitions and alliance building.

It's not just a political tactic – it's a whole new practice.

Free download or read online – DirectAction.org.

Print edition at amazon.

Magical Activist Websites

Starhawk.org – workshops, writings, and resources.

EarthActivistTraining.org – intensive retreats with Starhawk and others.

DirectAction.org – free downloads of Luke Hauser's activist novel, plus handbooks, music, and more.

WeaveAndSpin.org – current Reclaiming posts.

ReclaimingQuarterly.org – includes photo-coverage of Pagan Cluster actions from about 2005-2016.

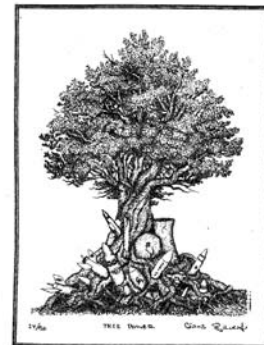
Reclaiming's Activist Elist

The Living River is the Pagan Cluster's international activist listserv. Learn about upcoming actions, workshops, and more. Contact others and join the actions.

Questions or to join the list:

ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com.

LIVERMORE WEAPONS LAB BLOCKADE/DEMONSTRATION HANDBOOK



NONVIOLENT PROTEST & CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

JUNE 21, 1982



Process Guidelines

One major contribution of the feminist movement to current social change movements is the awareness that effective group process and meaningful personal interactions are crucial factors in developing a successful movement. Non-violence begins at home, in the ways we treat each other.

Such an awareness stresses that relationships within the group cannot be separated from the accomplishment of political goals. Effective group process, in fact, means valuing co-operation over competition, recognizing the contributions of each individual, and decentralizing power through a non-hierarchical organizational structure.

Process Suggestions

1. *Use go-rounds.* Equalize participation by going around the circle and allowing each person to speak for a

specified time.

2. *Value feelings.* Include time in meetings for expressing emotions and for personal interactions.

3. *Meet separately.* Allow time for women to meet with women and for men to meet with men in order to facilitate self-awareness and strengthen each person's participation. This applies to other groups as well, such as blacks and whites, etc.

4. *Meet in small groups.* Allow time for meeting in small groups during larger meetings so that people who feel uncomfortable speaking in large groups can speak more freely. Small groups will give each person more speaking time as well. A spoke from each small group can report back to the larger group.

5. *Share skills, rotate responsibilities.*

WWW.DIRECTACTION.ORG

8

Activist Handbooks

Free PDF downloads of classic direct action handbooks. Practical discussions of consensus, nonviolence, affinity groups, feminism, confronting oppression, and much more.

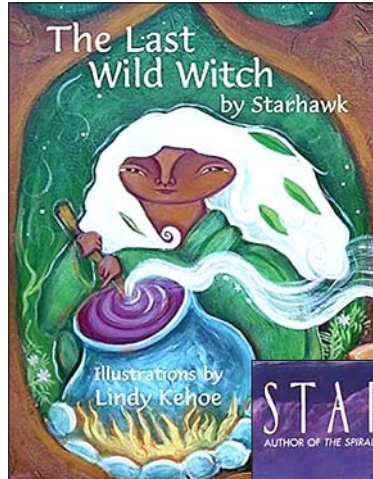
DirectAction.org/handbook/



Books & Resources from Starhawk

Books by Starhawk

- The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Goddess – the basic text from the early years of Reclaiming
- Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex, & Politics – visionary activist tools
- Truth or Dare – the personal and the political
- The Earth Path – building relations with our home
- The Empowerment Manual: A Guide for Collaborative Groups
- The Twelve Wild Swans: A Journey to the Realm of Magic, Healing, and Action



Novels

- The Fifth Sacred Thing – the troubled birth of a new world
- Walking to Mercury – activism-infused prequel to FST
- City of Refuge – creating the new world
- The Last Wild Witch – an eco-fable for children and everyone

With Others

- Circle Round: Raising Children in Goddess Traditions – with Anne Hill & Diane Baker
- The Pagan Book of Living & Dying – with M. Macha NightMare

Audiobooks by Starhawk

- Fifth Sacred Thing – the troubled birth of a new world
- Earth Magic: Sacred Rituals for Connecting to Nature's Power
- Wiccan Meditations – a short introduction to Pagan spirituality
- Wiccan Blessings & Rituals: Celebrating the Traditions of Earth-Based Spirituality
- The Beginner's Guide to Wicca

Pagan Chants from Starhawk

Recorded by Reclaiming

Albums with Starhawk's chants on all streaming and download services. Listen free at spotify and youtube.

For a Starhawk & Reclaiming playlist of all these songs and more, visit:

WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists.

from the album **Campfire Chants**

- Sweet Water
- Rising of the Moon
- Weave and Spin
- We Are the Power in Everyone
- Body of the Earth

from Chants: **Ritual Music**

- Rise with the Fire
- Kore Chant (She Changes Everything She Touches)
- Where There's Fear There's Power
- We Are Alive

from **Second Chants**

- Barge of Heaven
- When We Are Gone (with Anne Hill)

from **Witches Brew**

- Who Is the Goddess (with DJ Hamouris)

from **Let It Begin Now**

- No End to the Circle
- The God Song (with Michael

Charnes)

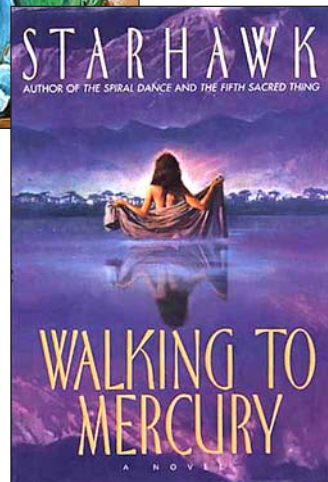
- Set Sail (with Mara June Quicklightning)
- Let It Begin Now (with L. Gale & A. Khan-Engel)
- Demeter's Song (I Am the Wealthy One)
- No End to the Circle (Devocation)

Drum Trance Ritual with Starhawk

- Way to the Well (on all streaming services)

Starhawk.org

- Starhawk.org – all Starhawk, all the time!
- EarthActivistTraining.org – Permaculture intensives with Starhawk and others



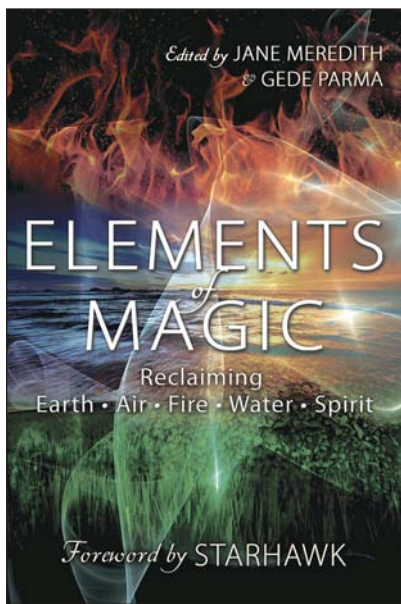
More Books from the Reclaiming Network

T. Thorn Coyle

- Evolutionary Witchcraft
- Kissing the Limitless
- The Witches of Portland (novels)

Alex Iantaffi

- Life Isn't Binary
- How to Understand Your Gender (with Meg-John Barker)



Gerri Ravyn Stanfield

- Revolution of the Spirit: Awaken the Healer: An Invitation to Radical Healing

Suzanne McAnna

- Tarot Through the Witch's Eye

M. Macha NightMare

- Pagan Pride: Earth & Goddess

Jone Salomonsen

- Enchanted Feminism: The Reclaiming Witches of San Francisco

David Miller

- I Didn't Know God Made Honky Tonk Communists: A Memoir About Draft Card Burning & Witchcraft

Phoenix LeFae

- Hoodoo Shrines and Altars
- Cash Box Conjure: Hoodoo Spells
- What Is Remembered Lives

Margo Adair

- Working Inside Out: Tools for Change

Candace Savage

- many titles on Bird Wisdom, the Prairie, Wolves, Bees, and more

Sea Raven

- The J'Argon (novel)

Jane Meredith & Gede Parma

- Magic of the Iron Pentacle
- Elements of Magic (editors – plus many Reclaiming contributors!)

Jane Meredith

- Journey to the Dark Goddess
- Aspecting the Goddess
- Rituals of Celebration
- Circle of Eight

Gede Parma

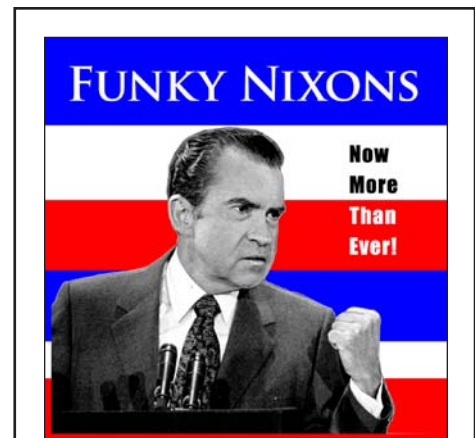
- By Land, Sky, & Sea: Shamanic Witchcraft
- Ecstatic Witchcraft: Shamanic Craft
- Spirited: Beyond the Circle

Cynthia Lamb

- Brigid's Charge (novel)

Dixie W. Franklin

- The Hardy Girls Mystery Series



FUNKY NIXONS

Straight Outta Berkeley – garage-based rock, rap, and country music.

Timeless tunes to lift your political blues and set those revolutionary toes tapping. Proceeds benefit Reclaiming publishing.

On all streaming and download sites.

The Magical Writer

A do-it-yourself online course!



A dozen sessions to inspire your writing and creativity:

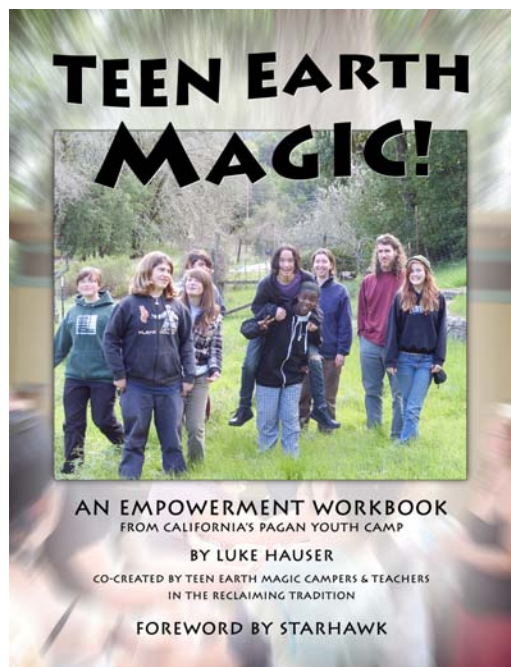
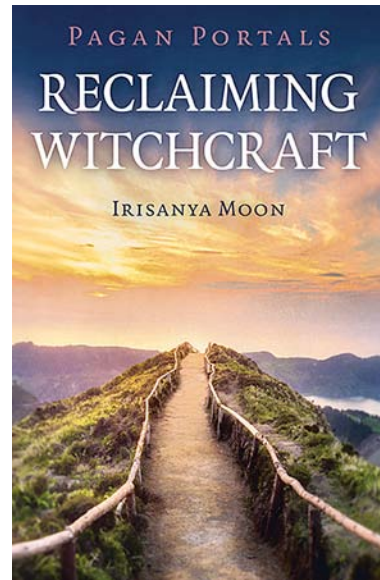
- magical writing space
- invoking characters and allies
- integrating your inner critic
- plot, story, and myth

Course booklet – free download
DirectAction.org/magicalwriter



More Books from the Reclaiming Network

- Gwion
- Irisanya
- Hauser - A Fool Such As I
- TEM
- Campfire Chants Book
- Kate R
- Urania
- GaryJ
- Dress
- Georgie
- Lisa Fithian
- Magical Writer
- anthol that Stephen P sent (see files)



TEM BOOK AD!!!

Reclaiming Newsletter & Quarterly – free!



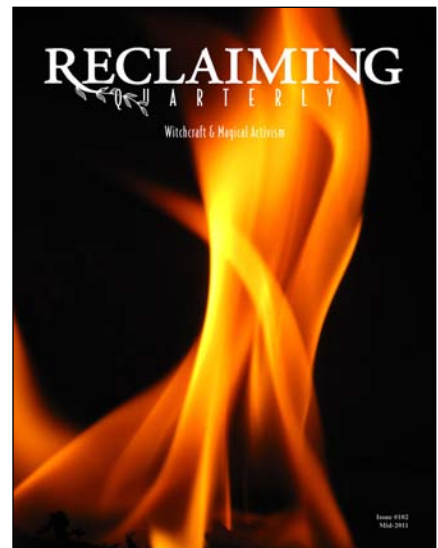
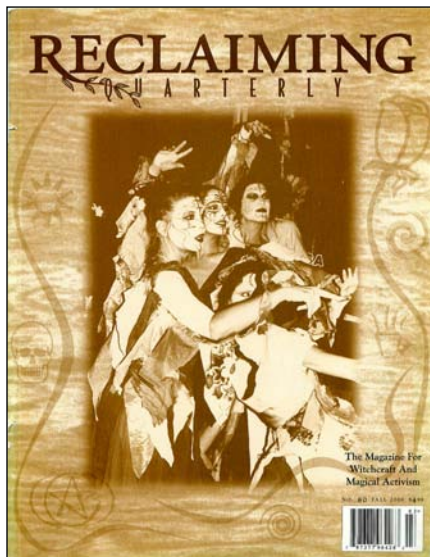
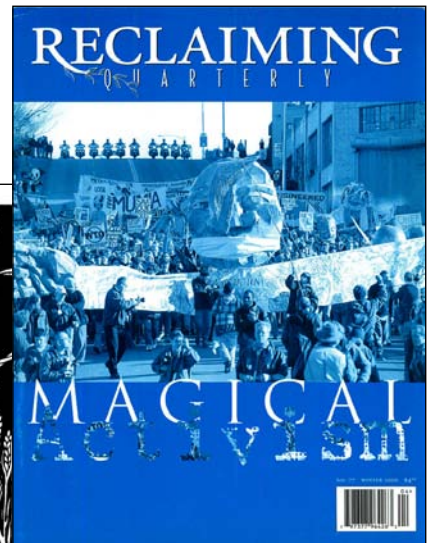
Catch up on 40 years of Reclaiming news & views!

From 1980 through 2011, Reclaiming published more than 100 issues of our Newsletter and later the Quarterly.

The publications appeared quarterly until around 2004, and sporadically afterward. Escalating costs and diminishing demand for print finally turned the magazine into ReclaimingQuarterly.org (and more recently WeaveAndSpin.org).

Get all 100+ issues free online – find single issues or a zip file of the entire collection at:

WeaveAndSpin.org/back-issues/



Featuring writers, artists, poets, and photographers from around the Reclaiming network – magic, activism, humor, poetry, recipes, history, tradition, and much more!

Free downloads – WeaveAndSpin.org/back-issues/

Reclaiming Resources for Your Phone!

Features from Our Websites

WeaveAndSpin.org – 40 Years of Reclaiming

One of the advantages of being around for 40 years is, you build up closets and cupboards full of cool stuff to put on your website. Here's what we found when we cleaned out the attic at Black Cat House:

Chants & Audio – see page XXX.

Back Issues of our old print media: Reclaiming Newsletter & Reclaiming Quarterly – see preceding page.

Activist archives & photos – books, articles, photo-features, and more – see page XXX.

All of this and more is now available on our new magical website – WeaveAndSpin.org

Hi-techie website – read on your phone

Don't want to mess with those pesky PDF downloads?

Tired of staining your hands while employing antiquated pre-millennial ink-based media?

Our most popular magical and activist features from 40 years of Reclaiming publishing are now posted on our website, WeaveAndSpin.org!

Even better, Reclaiming Quarterly's digital magic team has put a re-sizing spell on the site, so it automatically adjusts to fit your screen. Just don't forget to devoke!

Now *you* can join the growing ranks of satisfied customers who read Reclaiming on their phone, tablet, Dick Tracy wrist-radio, etc.

Also works on old-fashioned desktop screens.

PDFs and Print – Have It Your Way!

If you really must have your Reclaiming in PDF format – see preceding page to download entire back issues.

You can even print out selected pages and get toner on your fingertips. You are your own spiritual authority.

There's no limit to the ways you can enjoy Reclaiming's features and archives!

WeaveAndSpin.org

Where's ReclaimingQuarterly.org?

Ever notice that we used to have a website named after our magazine? Well, guess what – it still exists!

We never took any of it down. It just doesn't do the high-techie re-sizing for your phone. You pretty well need one of those antique desktop thingies to get a good gander at the old site.

But it's still there, waiting for you! If WeaveAndSpin.org doesn't satiate your craving for all things archival, type in this URL and watch the magic unfold:

ReclaimingQuarterly.org



Chants on Your Phone

Reclaiming Quarterly's team of audio alchemists have been experimenting with miniaturizing our music, and at last have succeeded in making our chants so small they will fit in your phone!

You can find links to the entire collection of Reclaiming chants and other audio at:

WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists

Find Reclaiming Online

We've even reconfigured our main Reclaiming websites – which until recently were still 1990s-style desktop sites that were micro-sized on your phone.

Well, believe it or not, they now display on all devices!

You'll find articles and resources about Reclaiming – who we are, how we work, how we got started, what we've been up to for the past 40 years...

You'll also find local Reclaiming groups and Witchcamps.

Reclaiming.org

WitchCamp.org

Teachers, Classes, & Starting a Camp

Reclaiming Core Classes Online!

World Tree Lyceum Offers Reclaiming classes

World Tree Lyceum offers basic and advanced magical classes online, including many Reclaiming classes.

Here's a chance to connect with folks studying and working magic in our tradition.

Visit WorldTreeLyceum.org.

For other online classes and rituals – join our international googlegroup – email ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com.

Important – if you are under 18, please tell the teachers when you contact them, and inform your parent or legal guardian.

Bring Reclaiming Teachers to Your Event

Whether it's a retreat, workshop, conference, or class, our teachers can anchor offerings for youth or adults and bring inspiration and magic to your event.

Email us – see below.

Starting a Reclaiming Camp

Want to start a Reclaiming camp in your area, or link your camp to our network?

See the early pages of this chapter for organizing resources (page XXXX).

Gather a team. Share your visions. Look for a site.

To be a Reclaiming camp, you'll need a couple of Reclaiming-trained teachers (who in turn can help train local teachers for your community). Maybe you already know them. Or contact us to find teachers in your area.

Blessings on your journey!

Quiz Answer

A: How many are in camp? It's a group effort!

Who Can Attend WitchCamp?

Reclaiming WitchCamps are welcoming and inclusive – we welcome anyone who is willing to work in accord with our Principles of Unity. Visit Reclaiming.org/about

Some camps are for all ages, some for youth, and some 18-up. Visit the websites for specific camps to see their age ranges, costs, and other information.

Visit WitchCamp.org for camp contacts, or contact us with questions – see below.

Who Can Teach Reclaiming Magic?

Anyone in agreement with our Principles of Unity can convene a Reclaiming circle. We're honored to have you

adapt these exercises for your own use.

However – unless you are formally trained in our tradition, please do not teach or otherwise professionally use this material under the name "WitchCamp" or "Reclaiming."

Reclaiming has a teacher-development process. Email us for more info.

No Grooming or Recruiting

No Grooming or Recruiting – this book is not to be used to

recruit youth for circles or classes apart from knowing and communicating with their families. No Reclaiming material is ever to be used to groom young people.

Contact us with questions or concerns.



Q: How many WitchCampers does it take to set up a tent? (See bottom of page.)

Contact WitchCamps & Reclaiming

ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com

ReclaimingSecretary@gmail.com

How to Get Involved with Reclaiming

Reclaiming Websites

Reclaiming.org – portal site with basic info about Reclaiming, links to local groups, etc.

WitchCamp.org – dates and links to our WitchCamps and family camps in Europe, North America, and Australia.

BayAreaReclaiming.org – local rituals, classes, and events in the San Francisco Bay Area.

ReclaimingSpiralDance.org – information, tickets, and volunteer opportunities for our biggest annual gathering in the Bay Area, each year around Samhain.

ReclaimingQuarterly.org – archival website of our former newsletter and magazine (1980-2011) – hundreds of articles, publications, downloadable files, etc.

WeaveAndSpin.org – new Reclaiming Quarterly-sponsored site with current posts, archive highlights, links to music and videos, and much more.

WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists/ – youtube and spotify playlists for chants and other recordings.

CampfireChants.org – links to our latest album and past chants albums.

DirectAction.org – free downloads of activist handbooks and other resources.

TeenEarthMagic.org – information about TEM, our book, and other resources.

Facebook – many local Reclaiming groups, camps, and circles have pages – visit Reclaiming.org/worldwide for current contacts.

Reclaiming Listserves/Elists

Any interested person can ask to join these lists.

To join, email us: ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com.

RIDL – Reclaiming International Discussion List – keep up with classes (including online), WitchCamps, activism, and more from around the Reclaiming network.

LivRiv – the Living River is the listserv of the Pagan Cluster – keep up with international activist organizing and find out how you can take part and/or support.

BARD – Bay Area Reclaiming's elist, open to all who are interested. Local rituals, classes (online too), music and nature circles, activist gatherings, and more.

Reclaiming Magic Classes – local, retreats, & online

Various Reclaiming communities offer classes and workshops in ritual, activism, personal growth, and more.

For current offerings, join our elists – see info on this page – and visit our websites:

Reclaiming.org/worldwide.

BayAreaReclaiming.org

Online Reclaiming classes – see top of page XXX.

In the Bay Area for Halloween? Join us for

The Spiral Dance



First held in 1979 to celebrate the release of Starhawk's book, the ritual is danced each year around Samhain – the New Year of the witches and the Bay Area's biggest magical gathering.

This participatory pageant has become a central event in the wheel of the year for the Reclaiming community and beyond.

Dozens co-create the event, and hundreds gather to dance the sacred spiral.

If you are in the Bay Area in late October, join us!

Tickets are available online. Many volunteers are also needed to create this wonderful community ritual.

Visit our website for more information.

ReclaimingSpiralDance.org

Ye Olde Index (pg 2)

Discernment (figuring stuff out)
 Workings: Divination.....214-218
 Workings: Tarot.....285-302

Diversity Issues
 Interview: Diversity & Cultural Appropriation.....40
 Myths, Deities, & Ritual.....90,91

Divination
 Workings: Divination: Nature Readings.....214
 Workings: Divination: Oracles.....216
 Workings: Divination: Scrying.....218
 Workings: Tarot.....285-302

Drugs & Alcohol.....30

Earth Activist Trainings with Starhawk343

Earth First!.....163-165, 171, 346

Elemental Practices
 Invoking Elements.....84
 Correspondences & Tools.....84, 303
 Book: Elements of Magic (2018).....102
 A Water Ritual.....133
 Creating Elemental Rituals.....139
 Workings: Altars: Scavenger Altars.....187
 Workings: Elemental Blessing.....199

Energy-Raising Workings
 Workings: Flaming Cauldron.....219
 Workings: Lifting Each Other Up.....236
 Workings: Spell: Charging with Fire & Flour.....278

Ethics Agreement.....337

Etiquette in Circles & Rituals.....27
 Magical Tools Etiquette.....304

Final & Climactic Workings (end of class or ritual)
 Workings: Flaming Cauldron.....219
 Workings: Overflowing Cup Spell.....248
 Workings: Trust Falls.....312
 Workings: Lifting Each Other Up.....236

Fashion, Witchy Etc.....212-213

Fire Skills & Spells
 Fire Safety.....9, 31
 Firetending.....103
 Workings: Spell: Burning Putdowns.....275
 Workings: Spell: Charging with Fire & Flour.....278
 Workings: Spell: The Wicker One.....281

First People: On Indigenous Land.....15
 Cultural Appropriation Issues.....40, 90-91
 Honoring First People.....59
 Solidarity Actions.....170

Flaming Cauldron.....219

Food Not Bombs.....170

Forest Activism.....163-165, 171

Outline of Ye Booke

The book consists of five chapters. See Table of Contents for complete outline.

Introduction introduces voices of Reclaiming and our culture.

Ritual Skills follows the order of a Reclaiming ritual – index on page XXX.

Rituals shares a dozen different types of rituals – index on page XXX.

Activism is a bit anarchic – starts on page XXX.

Workings chapter is alphabetical – complete index on page XXX.

Resources chapter is just plain fun to look through!

Free PDF – Download at Our Website

Download a free PDF of this book as well as the Teen Earth Magic Workbook – same delightful text – plus most of the photos are in color.

The PDF version is also handy if you want to print selected pages for a workshop.

Visit WeaveAndSpin.org/spiral and WeaveAndSpin.org/resources.

Free Activist WitchCamp..... see Free Cascadia

Free Cascadia WitchCamp.....16, 20, 41

Funky Nixons.....348

Games, Cooperative.....221
 Games, April's Book.....174, 222

Gender Issues
 Interview: Gender Complexities.....38
 Circle Casting & Gender Issues.....71-72
 Invoking Deities & Allies: Gender Issues.....80, 89-90
 Ritual, Myths, & Gender.....97

Getting Involved with Reclaiming.....36, 350-351

Goddesses & Gods..... see Deity

Goddess, Mirror Working.....242

Great Turning, Pentacle of the.....252, 254, 341

Grounding.....62-67
 Grounding: Tree of Life.....53, 115
 Teens Roundtable.....62
 Ritual Skills: Grounding.....64
 Pentacle Grounding.....66
 Online Tree of Life Grounding with Starhawk.....115
 A Grounding Ritual.....116
 During Activism.....162
 Workings: Grounding: Red Cord Spell.....225

Gun Control (Student Activism).....151

Handbooks, Activism.....155, 346

Hauser, Luke
 This Book.....1-358

Other Books.....7
 Direct Action: An Historical Novel.....154, 346

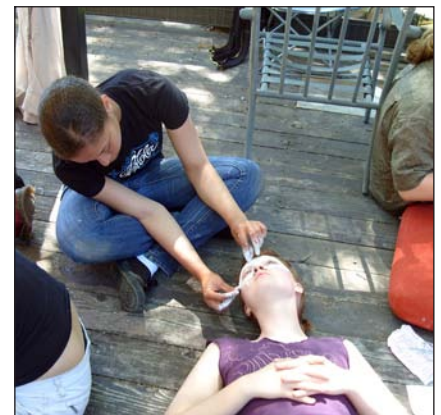
Hearth (Kitchen).....340

Hexes & Curses.....28
 Hexes & Negative Spells.....273

Indigenous People..... see First People

Intuitive Practices.....229
 Workings: Auras.....190
 Workings: Divination: Nature Divination.....214
 Workings: Divination: Oracles.....216
 Workings: Divination: Scrying.....218

continued on next page



A mask workshop lets us explore different identities.

Ye Olde Index (pg 3)

Workings: Tarot, Intuitive289

Invoking..... 77-92

Invoking: Example of Ritual Invocations..... 54-56

Invoking Pentacle (How to Draw).....72

Teens Roundtable.....77

Ritual Skills: Invoking.....79

Invoking & Gender Issues..... 80, 89

Ways of Invoking.....83

Invoking Elements.....84

Invoking Ancestors.....85

Invoking Deities & Allies..... 86-91

Journey of the Spirit (Tarot).....299

Labyrinths

Ariadne, Theseus, & the Minotaur97, 231

Labyrinth Challenges Ritual125

How to Draw 129, 232

Labyrinth Workings.....230

Finger Labyrinths231

Law of Threes / Threefold Return.....28

Law of Threes & Spellwork273

Letter to Myself233

Liberation Circle234

Lifting Each Other Up.....236

Listening

Listening Stations Working132

Non-Judgmental Listening.....246

Listserve & Elists for Reclaiming351

Listserve: Pagan Cluster (Living River)..... 155

Loreley WitchCamp 16, 224, 332

Macy, Joanna (& The Great Turning).....252, 254

Magic

What Is Magic17

What Is Earth Magic.....20

Beliefs.....23, 80

Magical Correspondences.....303

Magical Activism..... see Activism

Magical Writing see Writing

Meditative Workings

Ritual Skills: Grounding..... 65

Way to the Well (Online ritual with Starhawk)115

Workings: Nature Sit & Night Sit244

Workings: Trance: Place of Power (Online).....309

Mentors (Young Adults).....335

Milling Exercises179

Mirror Magic

Workings: Mirror Affirmations.....241

Workings: Mirror Goddess242

Workings: Mirror Shielding243

Workings: Voice Magic: Mirror Singing320

Motherpeace Tarot Deck.....285

Mysterious Ones90

Myths & Stories

Cultural Appropriation Issues 40, 90-91

Gender Issues.....89, 97

Ritual Themes & Stories96

Ariadne, Theseus, & the Minotaur97, 231

Themes & Stories from Our Camps98

Native Americans see First People

Occupy (2011 Protests) 107,148-153

Online Classes with World Tree Lyceum350

Online Trances & Meditations..... 115, 309

Opening Workings (start of class or ritual)

Workings: Purification: Bridge Challenge255

Workings: Aura Carwash194

Workings: Non-Judgmental Listening.....246

Workings: Spectrums 268-269

Oracles..... see Divination

Organizing

Family & Youth Camps.....326, 350

Camp Organizing Resources327

Organizing Timeline & Camp Grid (Schedule)..... 338-339

Overflowing Cup Spell248

Parents: A Word To Parents 9

Pearl Pentacle249, 289

Pentacle Magic.....249-254

Invoking Pentacle (How to Draw).....72

Workings: Blessing: Star Goddess.....201

Workings: Pearl Pentacle.....249

Running Pentacles250

Workings: Pentacle of the Great Turning252, 254

Permaculture

Permaculture Stations Working.....131

Earth Activist Training (EAT)343

Place of Power Trance (Starhawk online)309

Purification60

Workings: Purification: Bridge Challenge255

Workings: Purification: Star Purification.....256

Reclaiming

About Reclaiming 34-37

Principles of Unity37

Getting Involved, Website, Contacts..... 36, 350-351

Reclaiming Chants 111, 344-345

Classes: Local & Online350

Reclaiming Newsletter (1980-1996).....6, 349

Reclaiming Quarterly (1996-2011)6, 251, 349

Recorded Trances & Meditations..... 115, 309

Redwood Magic Family Camp

Diversity Issues..... 41-42

Magical Themes98

Camp Organizing Resources327



Can you count the Teen Earth Magic folks in this whirl? The Spiral Dance 2007. Photo by Michael Rauner – michaelrauner.com.

Ye Olde Index (pg 4)

Resources.....342-351
 Activist Resources.....155
 Camp Organizing.....327
Revolutionary Pagan Workers Vanguard.....357
Rituals
 Complete Index to Rituals Chapter114
 Create Your Own Rituals145
 Activism: Salt & Apple (A Ritual of Concern).....159
 Harvest Stations.....227
Ritual Skills
 Complete Index to Rituals Skills Chapter58
 Ritual Outline.....45
 Creating Sacred Space.....49, 52
 Ritual Planning92
 Ritual Roles95
 Ritual Themes & Arcs.....96
 Ritual Skills Stations Working.....131, 257
Sacred Space: Quick Ways.....49
 Speed Space.....51
Sacred Space: A Longer Example.....52-57
Salmon, Journey of99-101
 Salmon Journey Brainstorm101
Scrying218
Shadow Work
 Intro: Curses, Hexes, & Boundaries29
 Workings: Pentacles & Shadows.....251
 Workings: Shadow Work259-267
 Workings: Composting Headlines.....262
 Workings: Composting Oppressions264
 Workings: Costume Shadows266
Shielding.....see Boundaries
Shoes, Witchy.....212



One last hug before camp ends!

Solitaires & Solo Work.....26
 Solo Workingssee Workings Chapter!
Solstice in the Streets..... 23, 88, 148-153, 166-169
 Handmade Posters168-169
Spectrums of Belief & Practice268, 269
Spells & Spellcrafting.....271
 Curses, Hexes, & Negative Spells28, 273
 Grounding: Red Cord Spell225
 Overflowing Cup Spell.....248
 Breaking a Commitment274

Burning or Composting Putdowns275
 Spell Candles.....276
 Charging with Fire & Flour.....278
 Temperance Pouring279
 Waters of the World280
 The Wicker One281
 Yarn Binding Spell.....283
 Tarot: Journey of the Spirit299
Spiral Dance: Book by Starhawk102
 Other Books by Starhawk.....347
Spiral Dance: How to Lead106
 Cone of Power108
 Spiral Dance: Good Chants112-113
Spiral Dance: Occupy Oakland 2011107
Spiral Dance Annual Ritual35, 114, 351, 354
 Let It Begin Now: Musical Ritual Online124
 Spiral Dance Altar Photos.....184-186
Spirits of the Land.....91
Star Goddess Blessing.....201
Star Purification256
Starhawk Resources
 Foreword: An Interview.....12
 Online Trances.....115
 Earth Activist Training343

Seven Key Reclaiming Resources

- **Chants Online** – pages XXXXX & WeaveAndSpin.org/playlists
 - **Books & Downloads** – pages XXXXX & WeaveAndSpin.org/books
 - **Join an Elist** – page XXX & ReclaimingSecretary@gmail.com
 - **WitchCamps** – page XXXXX & WitchCamp.org
 - **The Spiral Dance (SF Ritual)** – page XXXXX & ReclaimingSpiralDance.org
 - **Download PDF of this Book** – WeaveAndSpin.org/spiral
 - **Teen Earth Magic** – pages XXX & TeenEarthMagic.org
- Contact Reclaiming** – ReclaimingSecretary@gmail.com

continued on next page

Ye Olde Index (pg 5)



Books & Chants347

Stories of the Land99

Student Activism151

Tarot Workings..... 285-302

Tarot: A Key Magical Practice.....285

Good Decks for Intuitive Reading285

Tarot Jargon286

Intuitive Reading & Exercises288

Reversals & Difficult Cards.....293

Tarot: Living Tableaux.....295

Tarot Speed Readings.....296

Tarot: Journey of the Spirit299

Teaching

TEM Teachers Over the Years..... 6

Teaching Teen Earth Magic.....9, 174, 350

Teacherly Tips & Toolkit175

Teaching Younger Teens323, 328

TEM Teachers for Your Event350

Reclaiming Classes, Camps, & Contacts350

Online Classes with World Tree Lyceum350

Teen Earth Magic

About..... 8, 16, 98, 334

Who Can Attend..... 16, 350

Teaching This Material9, 174, 350

TEM Teachers' Voices.....336

TEM Organizing Calendar338

Camp Grid (Schedule)339

Hearth (Kitchen)340

TEM Teachers for Your Event350

Teens Interviews see Teens Roundtables

Teens Roundtables & Interviews

Foreword: An Interview with Starhawk.....12

What Is Magic?.....17

What Is Earth Magic?20

What Do We Believe?23

Gender Complexities (Mykel Mogg)38

Diversity & Cultural Appropriation (Rahula Janowski) ...40

Ritual Skills: Rituals.....47

Ritual Skills: Grounding.....62

Ritual Skills: Casting a Circle.....68

Ritual Skills: Invoking.....77

Ritual Skills: Deities & Allies86

Activism: Magical Activism.....149

Activism: Student Activism151

TEM Teachers: What Calls Us?336

Temperance Pouring Spell279

Threefold Return / Law of Threes.....28, 273

Tools of Magic.....303-308

Workings: Book of Shadows.....202

Elemental Tool Correspondences.....303

Workings: Tools Cakewalk307

Workings: Wand Crafting322

Trance

Online: Way to the Well with Starhawk115

Online: Place of Power with Starhawk.....309

Transformational Tableaux.....310

Transitions (Techniques)175, 176

Trust Exercises.....312-316

Workings: Trust Fall312

Workings: Trust Run315

Workings: Trust Walk316

Vermont WitchCamp16, 332

Voice Magic.....317

Workings: Singing With Support318, 320

Singing In Tune321

Wagon Wheel Technique178

Wand Crafting322

Water: An Elemental Ritual133

Waters of the World Spell.....280

Websites & Elists for Reclaiming351

Wheel of the Year Rituals.....46

Wicker One Spell281

Witch22, 23

Witchy Shoes.....212

WitchCamp: About & Contacts.....35, 343

Witchlets In the Woods Family Camp330

Diversity Issues.....40-42

Magical Themes98

Opening Night Teens Ritual140

Camp Organizing Resources327

Early Teens Paths330

Photos.....325-333

Workings: Complete List.....172

Workings: Introduction173

Workings: Tips for Teachers175

Workings: Teacherly Toolkit175

Workings: Handy Techniques.....176

World Tree Lyceum (Online Classes).....350

Writing

Workings: Automatic Writing196

Workings: Book of Shadows202

Workings: Magical Writing239

Yarn Binding Spell283

Young Adults (Mentors)335

Younger Teen Groups

Sacred Space: Quick Ways.....49

Workings: Ideas for Younger Groups.....323

Organizing: Teaching Magic to Teens328

Yuba River.....19

Zap (Quick Charging & Empowering).....324

That's all, folks!



After camp – waiting for a ride home (and catching up on a week's worth of texts!).

XXXX

Ex-Teens Launch Geezer Earth Magic!

continued on page D-359



A Reclaiming teacher rushes to the aid of a WitchCamper whose air invocation has gone awry.

DANCING THE SPIRAL!

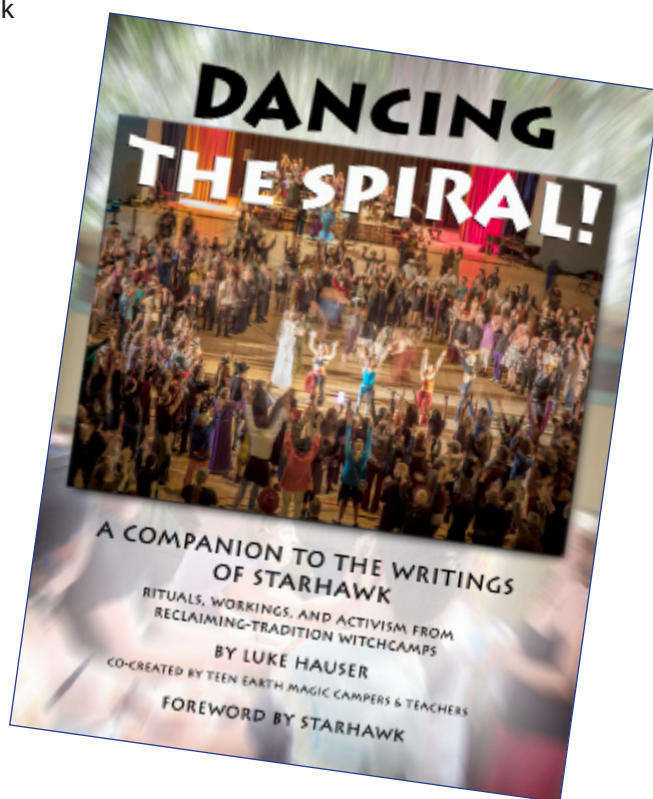
A COMPANION TO THE WRITINGS OF STARHAWK

Welcome to our book – here's a few ways to get started!

- **Read** the Roundtables and hear directly from Reclaiming WitchCampers – (pages XXXX and more).
- **Skim** the Table of Contents (pages 10-11) or Ye Olde Index (pages XXXX) for an overview of the book.
- **Play** Reclaiming chants while flipping through the book (see pages XXXX for online links).
- **Jump** to the chapter on Magical Activism for some quick inspiration (page XXXX).
- **Listen** to an online ritual with Starhawk while reading (see page XXXX).
- **Do Bibliomancy** (divination from a sacred text) – open the book at random and start reading!

Want to do a ritual without reading the whole book?

- Read the Ritual Skills intro and outline (pages XXXXX) and Sacred Space: Quick Ways (pages XXXXXX).
- Select a core working from the Workings chapter or another that interests you.
- Choose a few chants that fit your theme and mood (pages XXXXX).
- Let the magic begin!

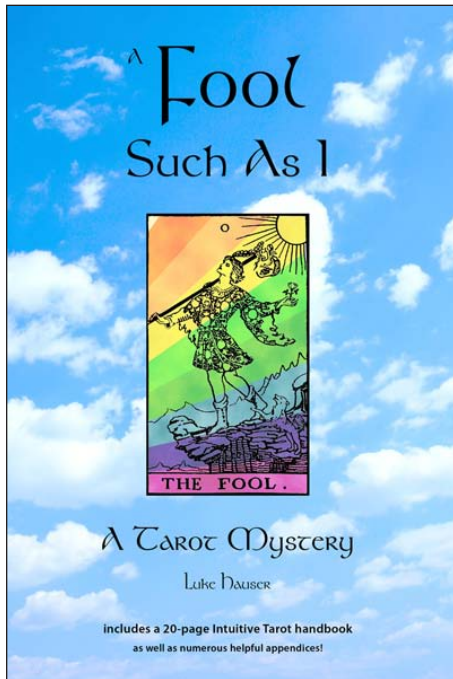


A word to organizers & teachers

Please see page 9 for a special welcome and more information about Reclaiming and our WitchCamps. You can contact us at: ReclaimingQuarterly@gmail.com

MORE BOOKS BY LUKE HAUSER

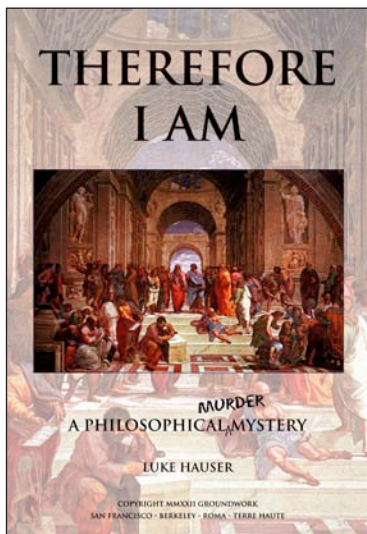
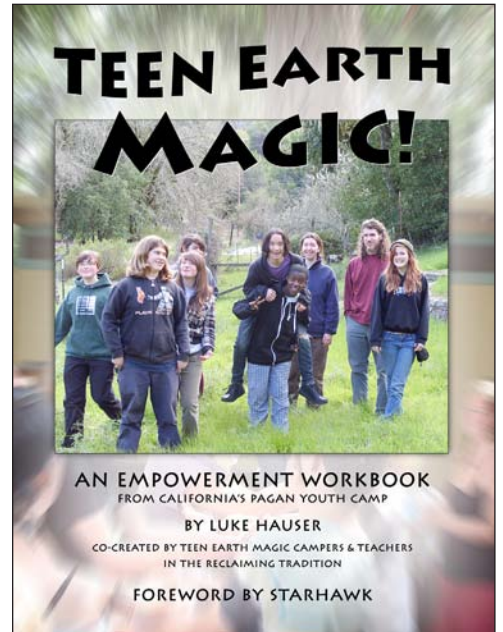
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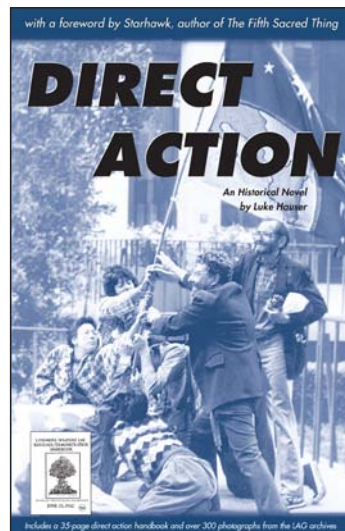
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A Tarot mystery – the owner of Arcane Wisdom Magicke Shoppe is dead. His irreplaceable Tarot deck is missing!

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