

The Path of the Dark Goddess

by

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for Hel and Willow

INTRODUCTION

A lot of people come to spirituality through some sort of personal or emotional crisis. This leads them to begin asking the big questions in life, like 'Why am I here?' Now, asking the question 'Why am I here?' is to pray for guidance and to, on some level, expect an answer in return... and thus begins the spiritual journey!

The problem is there are no clear signposts along the way. Many people who do not see conventional religion as an option have no idea where to begin or how to go about their journey. This book is for those of you who have only just asked 'Why am I here?' as well as for those who have found some of the answers already. This is an invitation to cover new or familiar ground and to see it for either the first time or with new eyes – the eyes of the Dark Mother.

Helvegr is not a religion – it is a spiritual practice. The path of Helvegr leads inward. Every step of the journey takes you deeper into your shadows, your unconscious realm... Helvegr is the opposite of a 'spiritual crutch' – it's a sharp sword, the sword of non-duality, which cuts away anything that is not truly *you*. But Helvegr is not only the sword of non-duality; it is also the shield of compassion.

The first part of the book covers the basics of setting out on the spiritual journey. I urge you to read this part even if you have been on your path for some time. The truths in this part apply no matter what path you are on, and whether or not you have been called by the Dark Goddess. The foundation (philosophy) has to be complete before you erect the building (practice), not to mention before you start decorating the rooms (spellwork, rituals, helping others etc).

You are invited to journey along Helvegr with the Dark Goddess, the compassionate face of the Divine, the Mother of Sorrows, in whom there is no judgment.

My own journey

"So what gives you the authority to write a book about the Dark Goddess," I hear you ask?

The simple truth is that She called me. She chooses Her own, and she doesn't wait to speak through us until we have a university degree in history, religion or anthropology. She simply begins and expects us to follow.

As for so many of us, her children, my calling came in the midst of a difficult period shortly after my 40th birthday. The previous two years had been filled with all kinds of woe: the break-down of my second marriage, a couple of cancer scares, a period of homelessness, betrayal by close friends – you name it, I went through it!

It all started in February 2010 with a dream about drawing down a blood red Full Moon. I drew the Moon down, not once but twice in my dream. I somehow knew that my dream was connected with the Dark Goddess, but didn't know what to do about it. Shortly after the dream,

synchronicities started speeding up and there were more and more of Her signs... ravens, bones, images... other people speaking of Her... etc etc...

The Dark Goddess has many faces. Many of my friends turn to Her in the form of Hekate, so I decided to ask a couple of them for guidance. I was given some wonderful confirmation that She was indeed calling me, and I was encouraged to communicate directly with Her. As I did, I realised that to me She appeared to me as Hel, the Norse Goddess of the Underworld. This realisation came very shortly after I had started reconnecting with my roots, reading about Norse Mythology and doing pathworking with the runes.

The advantage with the Norse pantheon is that they don't seem to require as much ceremony. They are very approachable and seem to relish any opportunity to communicate. Thank Goddess for that is all I have to say, because I was at the brink of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion when Hel found me. It was such a relief to realise that I could talk to Her about anything and everything – what a comfort in my hour of need! Her energetic presence is very strong and healing. I am a clairsentient and sometimes feel the presence of angels and other entities... Let me tell you, they have nothing on Her!

As a young child, the first goddess I ever had an affinity for was Persephone, so the Underworld Goddesses have always had a special place in my heart, but I had to come full circle and reconnect fully with my inner child before I could start integrating the awesome power of the Dark Goddess, because that is essentially what She does for us; She empowers us on every level of existence – She helps us to be 100% authentic, and this is what gives us our power back.

Journeying with the Dark Mother is not for those of you who are here for an easy ride in this incarnation. Have no doubt, she *will* make you look very closely indeed at the undesirable parts of yourself until you either own or transform them. She doesn't seem to be bothered about which as long as we stop disowning them...

Hel, and many of the Dark Goddesses, also have a strong connection to justice and our social conscience. Whatever we have managed to repress on a group consciousness level, She brings to the fore when we begin to listen to Her voice.

In the days immediately after first making contact with Hel, I started noticing Her presence as I drifted off to sleep. My dreams came very intense and often prophetic for a while. This gradually subsided, and wasn't in any way unpleasant – I just wish someone would have forewarned me about it.

If you think about it, it does make sense that She should be watching over us as we drift off into the realm of the unconscious. This is where our repressed emotions and all the things that need healing reside, and this is where She most easily can reach us with important information.

Not only was She watching over me as I drifted off to sleep, but She was ready and waiting as soon as I woke up, eager for me to write down Her messages – most of which were of a universal nature: messages of compassion, ethical living and awakening. There was no holding back, and I posted the messages on my blog as soon as I received them. That it was She who moved me to write was confirmed in the feedback I received from my readers, many of whom thanked me for helping them to connect more deeply with their Matron Deity.

The messages I have received from the Dark Mother have changed my life permanently. They have empowered me and made me passionate about empowering others.

A word of warning: DABBLERS NEED NOT APPLY! Hel demands nothing less than total surrender. You cannot dabble in your contact with Mother Death. Helvegr is a path of complete ego-abandonment. When you take that step and surrender everything to Her, you will need to go easy on yourself. Rest often in Her compassionate embrace.

Once she begins using us in service, we need more 'cave' or 'womb' time than before. That doesn't mean we can't have fun, kick our heels back and enjoy the worldly pleasures that we've always enjoyed – it just means that we will become keenly aware of our energy distribution. However, do not fret: She also teaches us how to manage our energy more efficiently.

HEL – Who the hell is she?

The Dark Goddess is known by many faces and has shown Herself to people in many shapes through the millennia. Our guide on this journey is none other than the Norse Goddess of the Underworld, Hel. Her name is the root of the word 'hell' and her domain is in modern Swedish still known as '*helvete*,' from the old Norse *hel* and *vitr* (punishment). Both Hel the Goddess and Hel the realm of the dead have been much maligned and misunderstood during the patriarchal paradigm.

Hel is the daughter of Loki, the trickster god of fire and the female jotun (giantess) Angrboda whose name means 'she who offers sorrows' or 'she who gives grief.' Historically, Hel is mentioned in the poetic saga *Heimskringla* (Circle of the World), written by Snorri Sturluson in the 13th century, but thought to contain historical source material dating back to the 9th century. She is also mentioned in the Poetic and Prose Eddas as well as in *Egils Saga*.

Angrboda gave birth to the Fenris Wolf, Jormungandr (the World Serpent) and Hel. Allfather Odin took the Fenris Wolf in to be raised among the Aesir, but he grew too large and became too unruly. The Aesir began to fear him and plotted to bind him. Odin knew all along that the jotun and the children of Angrboda had a major part to play in Ragnarök (the final battle

between the Gods and the forces of evil), and he therefore decided to try to stop them from growing too powerful.

According to the Prose Edda, Odin threw Hel from Asgård down to Helheim, giving her the realm of the dead to rule, as well as giving her power over the 9 worlds. All those that did not die in battle were hers.

Hel is said to be half human, half rotting corpse from birth. Images of her sometimes show her as half black and half white, or half flesh and half blue. Her countenance is said to be grim and downcast. But this is now how she appears to her children. She wears the mask of terror only to those who refuse to face their shadows.

There is a beautiful story called 'Angrboda's Children' by Raven Kaldera. It is published online and I urge you to find it. This story gives a different point of view to that of the Eddas and Sagas. Hel is seen as the rightful ruler of Hel by birth, not by appointment of Odin. She is the Ancient one reborn – the crone child. I will not reveal too much of the story but I do not feel ashamed to admit that it moved me to tears: this is the Hel I know and love.

HELVEGR

Hear me, I am Hel and my Path is Helvegr, the Path of Compassion. Walk with me and we will heal that which you believe unlovable, all that which is hiding in the Shadows. Descend with me until we reach the deepest halls of Hel. There I will give you the gift of wisdom and healing to share with the world; there I will hand out the Apples of Hel to all my children. The power of rebirth and transformation belong to all who have the courage to walk along Helvegr whilst still in the Land of the Living. All Hail!

The Return of Hel

It is evident in many ways that the era of the Dark Goddess is now. Also known as the Crone aspect of the Triple Goddess, the Dark Goddess is appealing to men as well as women of all ages. We are living in an age where we need Her wisdom more than ever. The world around us is changing quickly, and many of these changes fill us with trepidation.

Change is scary enough, since it always means taking a leap of faith into the unknown, but we now live in an age where pretty much all safety nets have gone, and where our rulers and those with power are either at a loss for what to do next in order to keep humanity alive and well or scheming to take advantage of the situation. The old structures are crumbling before our eyes. We have used and abused Mother Earth for too long. She is letting us know that she has had enough, and now we have to roll with the punches as She fights back.

The Goddess of the Underworld does not just rule the realm of the dead but all the realms because all must pass through Her, and not just at physical death. Every time we change, we die

a little. A part of us is irrevocably lost in order to make room for something new. The child in you had to die to make room for the teenager, the maiden had to die and be replaced by the mother, and when the children fly the nest it is time for an identity change yet again. Women embody the Triple Goddess in a very real way, but men can also benefit from Her wisdom and compassion.

THE DARK MOTHER ON HER REEMERGENCE

Dearly beloved children, for centuries I have been in hiding, worshipped and acknowledged only by a chosen few. A New Age is dawning and that which was hidden and referred to as occult knowledge is now available to all who seek knowledge, wisdom and understanding. Hermetic texts that were guarded by souls who vowed to not reveal their contents on pain of death are now easily accessible to anyone who has half a mind to learn the mysteries of life, death and rebirth.

This is as it should. Some caught in elitist and hierarchical thinking scoff at the 'plebs' gaining access to sacred esoteric texts, fearing not so much the increase of knowledge and the possible misuse of said knowledge by the lower classes, but the demise of their own power. Clearly, many of them never understood the teachings they so jealously guarded. Clearly many of them were driven by fear.

Others scoff at what seems to be a revolution of irrational thought. They are blind to anything but linear thought. This type of mindset is fast becoming obsolete and the last laugh will be had by those who are able to embrace both organisation and chaos, reason and imagination, science and magic, for the time of the great unveiling is nigh.

The Era of the Dark Mother begins. This is a time that can be likened to the time of the Dark Moon. Many of you will seek out silence and solitude in preparation for stepping over the threshold to that glorious New Age which shapes and births souls to unite in unconditional love, souls that understand that true power is not power over others but the power of unity in unconditional love.

My children are warriors. They have many names and you can know them by the depth of their gaze. They have great powers and never give in to fear. Many of my children are awakening now and they will be guided by the brightly shining faith of those who awakened before them. Driven by their longing to serve and by their desire to form communities based on principles of compassion will they seek their kin.

Some of them will gather over a common cause, others will gather together for the purpose of learning and teaching. More and more of them will find each other, and more and more of them will break away from relationships that hinder their service to humanity.

These children of mine are not high born. They are not men or women of worldly power. Yet they have a power that magnetises others unto them, a silent power that comes from fearing neither death nor life and that is fuelled not by fear but by faith and love.

They are prophets, healers, grave diggers, undertakers, counsellors, midwives and nurses assistants. They are shamans, witches, priests and priestesses. They are the ones that do not fall apart when the earth trembles and Jord gives birth to the New Age.

I am the Eternal One. ALU

STARTING OUT ON THE SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

"When you examine the lives of the most influential people who have ever walked among us, you discover one thread that winds through them all. They have been aligned first with their spiritual nature and only then with their physical selves." ~ Albert Einstein

The world is becoming rapidly secularised. Churches, temples and synagogues are abandoned en masse. Does that mean that people have stopped asking questions such as "Why am I here?" and "What is the meaning of life?" The questions remain but organised religion does not provide satisfactory answers. Also, people judge organised religion the way the Bible itself asked for things to be judged, i.e. "By the fruits of the tree shall ye know the tree." The many rotten fruits in the shape of religious warfare, theft, intolerance and sexual molestation of children are some of the ways the main proponent of the Christian faith has condemned itself.

Spirituality is found in all major religions but is separate from religion. So what about spirituality Does it concern you? Does anybody even know what it means? I mean, if it's in any way connected with religion, you wouldn't want anything to do with it. We all know that the church and the major world religions are only after money and power, and most wars were fought in the name of religion, right?

Spirituality concerns all of us because spirituality concerns itself with the development of the Self, not with religion.

The following definition of spirituality is copied and pasted from Wikipedia:

"Spirituality can refer to an ultimate or immaterial reality; an inner path enabling a person to discover the essence of their being; or the "deepest values and meanings by which people live." Spiritual practices, including meditation, prayer and contemplation, are intended to develop an individual's inner life; such practices often lead to an experience of connectedness with a larger reality, yielding a more comprehensive self; with other individuals or the human community; with nature or the cosmos; or with the divine realm. Spirituality is often experienced as a source

of inspiration or orientation in life. It can encompass belief in immaterial realities or experiences of the immanent or transcendent nature of the world."

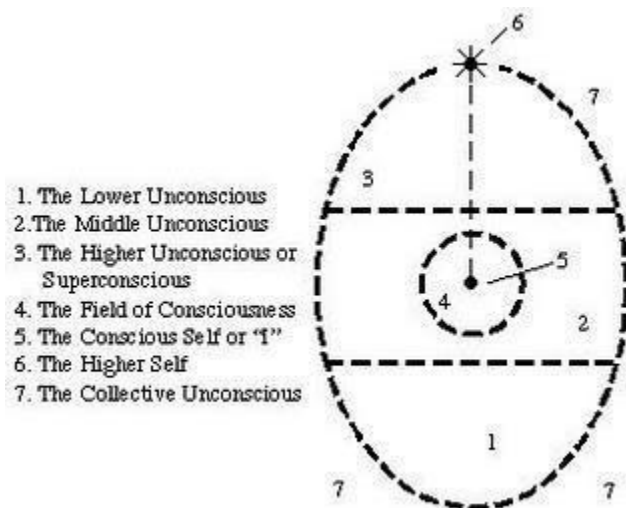
Wikipedia also points out that spirituality is not to be confused with Spiritualism, a religion concerned mostly with mediumship (contacting and passing on messages from people who have died). I can't tell you the number of times I've heard people getting these two terms confused!

A simple way of defining spirituality could be "Guidance and inspiration from the unseen reality that underpins our existence". To some, this guidance and inspiration come along a set, predefined path as they follow a specific spiritual or religious teaching; to others it is more chaotic, consisting of temporarily tuning in into the unseen inner planes of being.

To effectively utilise the information we receive from the unseen spiritual realm, we need to know ourselves and to understand the anatomy of the spirit, as well as how we as individuals are connected to the world around us (both the material and immaterial/spiritual). Above the entrance to the temple of the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi, the following inscription was found: Gnosi Seauthon (Know Thyself) – this truly is the beginning of all spiritual wisdom.

Psychology concerns itself with the study of the mind and mental processes. In strict medical terms there is no room for the soul or any type of spiritual experience. However, there are branches of psychology that do concern themselves not only with man's biological functioning and mental self-awareness, but also with man's spiritual growth and experiences. Two of the main proponents of this type of *transpersonal* psychology are C.G. Jung and Roberto Assagioli.

One of the most helpful teachings for understanding how the self operates is Assagioli's "egg diagram."



The lower and middle unconscious realms of the psyche correspond to what Jung called the 'shadow' and the higher unconscious mind is the 'golden shadow,' our unsupported and suppressed potential.

According to Assagioli we are able to detach from the lower forms of awareness in meditative states of mind. We then have the vantage point of the eternal and unchangeable higher self - we become *The Observer*. Becoming the observer is helpful in the sense that we can gain a deep inner knowing that we *are not* our thoughts, *nor* our emotions. This state of detachment gives us a sense of peace and freedom and makes it possible to work through issues without interference from fearful thoughts.

A modern day mystic named Caroline Myss has written a book named "Anatomy of the Spirit" This is an excellent book for anyone who wants to learn about the energetic and spiritual makeup of man. Because Myss is so incredibly well versed in religion, you will also come away with a greater understanding of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism, as well as how these religions essentially have the same core teachings.

I highly recommend that you read as much as you can about transpersonal psychology and psychosynthesis, and also that you get the book *Anatomy of the Spirit: The Seven Stages of Power and Healing* by Caroline Myss. This kind of self-knowledge does not gloss over the shadow aspects of the self and is the antidote to the kind of spiritual bypass we often see in New Age therapies.

Journaling is a practice I have found invaluable to my own spiritual development. No time to lose on that one! For those of you with a fair bit of cash lying around, there is *The Red Book: Liber Novus*, a facsimile of Jung's personal journal between the years 1914-1930, to keep on your coffee table for inspiration. But all you really need to begin is a cheap notebook and a pen.

You may think to yourself: 'I just wouldn't know what to write... where to begin... My life is so dull, there's nothing to write about.' Just write about how you feel, and don't be afraid to illustrate your writing like Jung does in his *Red Book*. If you want to write a poem, write a poem. If you would rather draw, then draw. It's your journal, your life and your journey to enlightenment!

It's been said before: 'Every thousand mile journey begins with one small step.' The beauty of the spiritual journey, the Journey to the Self, is that it never ends. Your consciousness is not limited and your inner world has no boundaries. Each new realm you explore will bring about a new set of circumstances in your mundane life. This is due to the spiritual principle, 'As within, so without - As above, so below' Eventually, you will learn to read the signs, and you will see that synchronicity increases each time you reach a crossroads along your journey.

Dreamwork

“Your dreams are portals to other realms, both high and low. You may descend to the depths of your unconscious mind or ascend to the highest point of the Self. In the deep you will meet that which you could not love enough so that it may be healed. Up high, you will be taught new ways to love. Dreaming is for loving more and all dreams should be interpreted with this in mind.”

In dreamwork we do the kind of deep work on transforming unconscious thought patterns and bringing them into the light that we would only otherwise be able to do at a high cost in the hands of a hypnotherapist or possibly a skilled psychotherapist, but even then we would not get as much learning from the process as if we did the work ourselves.

Again, you will need to keep a journal of what you do in dreamtime. Some people prefer to keep their dream journal separate from their main journal – this is, of course, entirely up to you.

Many people I speak to about dreaming claim to not be able to remember their dreams. This is a skill anyone can learn. Dream recall takes a bit of preparation. You need to make sure that you know what to do as soon as you wake up, and you need to instruct your mind to recall the dream upon waking. Tell yourself ‘I will remember any relevant dreams upon waking’ a few times as you fall asleep. Keep a voice recorder or your dream journal and pen on the bedside table.

When you wake up you need to remain completely still and close your eyes again. Soon you will see an image from your most recent dream. It is a bit like grabbing hold of Ariadne’s thread – that first scene will lead on to a full length ‘film’ of your dream. As soon as the film stops playing, you need to start writing it down in as great detail as you can. If you are reminded by another dream from earlier on in the night as you write about the first dream, just briefly jot down a name for it and then get back to journaling the first dream.

Continue with the next dream. If you are a light sleeper, you may be able to recall as many as four or five dreams in one night. If you only manage to remember part of one dream, it is still worth writing down all that you can remember. That way you begin training your mind for dream recall.

You want to take note of where you were, who was in it, which the main characters were, what the theme was, if it was in Technicolor or black and white, if there was a dialogue. Also pay attention to your emotions. Were you frightened, happy, bored...? If you feel that the dream relates to a specific memory in real life, take note of that as well.

As you keep on journaling your dreams, you will start noticing recurring themes. Things, events and people that keep popping back into your dreams. You may have already fallen for the temptation to look them up in a dream dictionary. This is a waste of time because symbols have different meanings to different people and you need to work out what recurring symbols mean to *you*. Naturally, they can mean the same thing to lots of people because of the collective

unconscious archetypes and symbols we all access in our dreams, but we simply cannot afford to take the language of symbols out of context.

I highly recommend learning the Tarot because it will make you fluent in a language of symbols. Your higher and unconscious minds will then be able to use this language to communicate with you in your dreams. Learning the Tarot takes a lot of time and dedication but your effort will be generously repaid. In fact, once you know the language of the Tarot, thinking back on the days before you knew it is a bit like being used to Googling for information and thinking back to the days when you had to go to the library and look for information.

There are different types of dreams. Some are for processing current stress. They carry little significance for dream interpretation. Then there are dreams that are meaningful and worth spending some time on deciphering – especially if they are recurring. In a category of its own we find the dream vision. The hallmark of a vision is that it feels more real than life itself. In a vision, you often hear a voice or see a message written down – this is divine transmission and instruction. But there are also visions that are pure communion with the divine: these are by far the most blessed dreams anyone could ever hope to have.

Once you master dream recall and dream interpretation you may want to venture into the world of lucid dreaming. There is plenty of information about lucid dreaming available in literature and online. While lucid dreaming can be valuable and enjoyable in many ways, it is not essential to self-knowledge.

PRAYER AND MEDITATION

"In prayer we speak, sing, dance or cry to the Divine, and in meditation we give the Divine a chance to speak to us. Contemplation is the act of carefully considering the implications of Divine communication. The latter leads to the spiritual person taking action. Everyone has the ability to hear Spirit, but not everyone has the courage to act on what they hear."

In addition to the statement above, there is also a form of prayer, i.e. the Self communicating with the Divine, referred by Paul of Tarsus as the 'Holy Spirit praying for us' when we are at a loss for how to pray. This prayerful state can be developed so that it becomes a perpetual mode of being. It becomes possible when we keep all channels clear. By keeping the channels clear, entering into a light trance and opening up to Spirit, some might also experience the phenomenon of 'speaking in tongues.'

The language used when speaking in tongues is called *glossolalia* and is thought to be the language of the angels. Glossolalia (ETA 2021: commonly referred to as *light language*) also occurs during prophetic statements when the speaker fluently channels a foreign language that he has never learned (also known as xenolalia). According to some scientific research, glossolalia can sometimes be the manifestation of an altered state of consciousness.

So how do we begin to pray if we have never prayed before? Humbly asking for the Divine to teach us how to pray is a good first step. Prayer is different to grovelling – it is the Divine core of the soul, connecting with the Source of Divinity through language, song or movement, or, in the case of praying to one of the many pagan gods or goddesses, addressing one of the aspects or facets of this Source.

There is a popular New Age misconception that has been popularised by Law of Attraction proponents: The Universe/Source does not understand a negative statement. I.e. if you prayed to Source/God/dess saying, 'Please God, no more pain - I can't take it!' God/Source would only hear the word pain and not be intelligent enough to pick up on the word no. Sorry, but I am actually giggling as I type this. I honestly do not know what kind of Universe the Law of Attraction people think we live in, but I do know this - I refuse to be a part of it! I'd like to think that Source/God/dess is at least as intelligent as your average man.

There is no right or wrong way to pray. You can pray spontaneously or with as much ritual you like. Your prayers are always heard and always answered. It is always best to surrender and not be attached to the outcome if asking for something in prayer. Remember that we always get what we need if not necessarily what we want.

Praise and thanksgiving are forms of prayer that often arise naturally when we are faced with the majesty of nature. These are perhaps the most rewarding forms of prayer as they fill us with joy, faith, hope and vitality. They increase our sense of connection with the All That Is.

Meditation is also a way of creating a sense of deep connection with Source. The best way to begin meditating is as follows:

Set aside 5-10 minutes a day when you know you are not going to be disturbed. Clear some space around you – clutter isn't conducive to a meditative state of mind, light a candle and sit down on a chair. Make sure your back is straight, shoulders relaxed, feet on the ground and palms resting on your lap. Become aware of your body and try to relax. Release any tension and visualise it draining through your feet into the core of the earth.

Now close your eyes and bring the focus to your nostrils and become aware of the sensation of the breath flowing in and out of your nose. Feel the cool and dry air on its way in, and the slightly warmer and moister air on the way out. Keep bringing the attention to the breath flowing through your nostrils if your mind begins to wander. You will feel yourself gradually becoming more and more relaxed. Spend no more than 5 minutes in this meditative state to begin with.

When you are able to do this exercise without getting fidgety you may want to progress to actually listening, but try this exercise on its own for at least a week before moving onto the next step. The objective is to learn to induce the Alpha brainwave state necessary for Spirit to get through. Experienced meditators are able to induce the deeper Theta and even Delta (sleep) brain waves during meditation. Lately, scientists have also found that Gamma brainwaves increase during meditation. This happens primarily in the left prefrontal cortex of the brain, a

centre associated with positive emotions. Gamma brainwaves increase the capacity to focus as well as to empathise and function as a natural antidepressant.

Long term meditators reap many health benefits including lowered blood pressure and blood cholesterol, a stronger immune system, feelings of peace and contentment and higher general tolerance to stress. Even if you only want to learn meditation in order to relax and for health reasons, it is well worth the effort as you will become more efficient in all areas of your life.

Enter your meditation experiences into your journal if you like. Journalling is a very good way to contemplate any spiritual transmission you may have received during meditation.

JOURNEYING TO MEET THE DARK MOTHER

The moon is now in its Dark Moon phase (the three days leading up to the New Moon) This period is ruled by the Dark Goddess. She rules the liminal spaces between light and darkness, life and death, putrefaction and rebirth. We use the energy of this lunar phase to release the things, situations and relationships we no longer need. Anything that hinders our clarity, binds or hurts us can easily be released now. It is a time for rest and contemplation, a time to ponder and evaluate the projects we started during the most recent New Moon phase.

The Dark Goddess (also known as the Dark Mother) represents the Crone aspect of the Triple Goddess. She is the ancient first Mother of creation - the Wise One, Mistress of the mysteries of death and rebirth. Though She is ancient beyond our concept of time, she contains the eternally youthful Virgin aspect of the Great Goddess, like an old woman always carries her inner child with her.

She is known by many names: Hel, Hekate, Medusa, Morrighan, Kali, Ereshkigal, Nemesis, Lilith, Ceridwen, Cailleach, Nyx and many more... When you receive your personal calling to do work with the Dark Goddess she may show Herself to you as one of these. If you do not know your Mistress already, She will reveal Herself to you during the guided visualisation.

When we journey to meet Her, we do so to commit to becoming initiates in the Mysteries of Transformation. We must be willing to surrender all on this journey... in order to gain eternal life. You might be thinking 'Whoa, this doesn't sound like a Spirituality 101 class any more - this is way too hard core!' This is the path of the mystic and the heart of the spiritual quest. It is not for everyone - it is for the person who has realised that no matter what pleasures this planet may offer they cannot outweigh the suffering and emptiness of a life lived in service to the ego. Embark on the journey now if you can hear Her calling.

Please read the following post on Psychic Protection if you are at all worried, anxious or feel in need of protection. Do not attempt this journey if you are in a state of anxiety or have mental health issues that might be exacerbated by a light trance/self-hypnosis.

Feel free to record the following guided visualisation or have someone read it out loud to you while you journey to meet the Dark Mother. Which form She will take and which name She will reveal to you I do not know.

Begin by making yourself comfortable. Take a few deep breaths and let go of any tension.... (pause). As I count slowly down from 10 to 1 you will feel yourself going deeper and deeper into relaxation. 10,9,8,7,6... relaxing more and more... 5,4,3,2,1...

You are in a grove of yew trees. There is a peculiar stillness in the air, a kind of mild tension giving you a sense of expectation... Straight ahead is a narrow path leading out of the grove... The twilight makes it difficult to tell the time of day. You leave the grove behind and find yourself in an open field. You can tell it hasn't rained for a while and the grass is brown in places... Every now and again you hear the rustle of dry grass as a small animal scurries away. The path winds northward to some mountains. High above you a large black bird is cawing, circling impatiently and urging you to move along. The land gets more and more barren as you move towards the mountains at the end of the path. You reach the foot of the mountains and see two torches glimmering in the entrance of a cave straight ahead of you. To the right of the cave entrance there is a vesica-shaped purple door set in the rock wall of the mountain. You try the door but find that it is locked. You enter the cave and find two torches, one on either side of the entrance. About 5 meters in, you notice steps leading down into the depths of the mountain. There doesn't seem to be any light in the stairway, so you grab one of the torches at the cave entrance and start making your way down into the heart of the mountain. As you descend into the darkness down the stony steps you notice that the walls begin to shimmer more and more. You trace the cold and moist stone walls with one hand and notice that there are more and more crystals on the wall the further down you go. The light from your torch makes them shimmer with hues of gold, rose and purple. The stairs curve around to the right and as you turn the corner you can see a bright light at the bottom of the steps. You realise that you no longer need the torch, so you put it in the next cast iron torch holder you find along the way. Not only is the light at the bottom of the steps growing brighter but the glittering light from the crystals on the cave walls is growing more intense. The very last step leads onto a big crystal hall that seems to be lit by the crystals covering every inch of the walls and high domed ceiling. The hall is large enough to seat hundreds but there is no one there, no one but you and a large black dragon that is curled up in the centre of the room. It opens one eye, looking sleepily at you and shuts it again, letting out a sleepy sigh and a few smoke tendrils... You stand perfectly still, not fearing the dragon but not knowing what to do next. You take in the size of the creature and look at how its shiny black scales reflect the light from the crystals. The dragon suddenly shakes its head, opens its emerald green eyes and looks at you intently. From inside your own head, you hear the dragon say 'Approach!' You step closer until you are face to face with it, your eyes locked into the hypnotic gaze of the ancient reptilian. The power and majesty in this creature is palpable this close. The dragon asks why you have come. You know that you cannot lie because the dragon already knows your mind. He wants to know if you have the courage to state your intent. You state your intent with as much courage as you can muster.... Once you have told the dragon of your intent to communicate with the Dark Mother, you are asked to strip and leave your clothes at the other end of the room where a narrow tunnel leads to the inner sanctum of the cave where the Dark Mother awaits. You get down on all fours and

start crawling through the tunnel. You feel the cool moist stone floor underneath and you don't know how far you will have to crawl to get there but you persist in your efforts. The tunnel narrows even more and you feel like you're in the birth canal squirming your way through, hoping you'll make it before you run out of air. Suddenly the space opens up and you can see a fire burning in the cave room before you. There are no shimmering crystals here and the room is much smaller than the great crystal hall of the dragon. At the far side of the fire you see a cloaked and hooded figure. You hear an ancient yet sonorous voice speak the words 'Welcome, my child!' She points to the left of the tunnel entrance and bids you to wash off in an underground waterfall. The cool water is very refreshing and you know that it is safe to drink, so you take a few thirsty gulps as you shower off the dirt from the tunnel. The Ancient one approaches. She bears a white robe and chord. You look at her but struggle to make out her features under the dark hood... All you see is the deep, wild fire in Her eyes, and you know beyond any shadow of a doubt that you are Her child and that you belong to Her. She holds the robe out and you turn around for Her to dress you. You turn again for Her to fasten the chord. She mutters a blessing while she ties the knot and then bids you to sit with Her by the fire. You are free to ask any questions you may have. It's OK if you do not have any questions. If not, then just rest in Her embrace.... (pause). You feel that it is nearly time to go, and although you are saddened at the thought of leaving, you know that you are always welcome back. The Dark Mother gives you your name. (pause) and tells you that from now on you are always welcome to use the purple door to the right of the cave entrance when you need to visit. She hands you the golden key for the purple door and you tuck into the pocket of your robe. She then grabs your hands and asks you to close your eyes. She whispers Her name. and places an object in your hands - this is Her special gift to you. You thank Her and walk up the broad stairs leading up to the vesica shaped door. The staircase is well lit by torches that are evenly spaced out along the cave wall. The door opens easily from the inside and you head back out towards the grove of yew trees. The first rays of the rising sun are making their way through the trees and the birds begin their morning chorus. You look at the gift and know that seeing similar symbols in your waking reality will be significant to your journey. *** Take a few deep breaths to breathe your physical presence back into your body. You will be fully alert and feel energised and rested on the count of ten... 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9... open your eyes. 10!***

Write your experience in your journal or Book of Shadows (fancy name for witch's journal). Feel free to share that which is for sharing and to keep the rest secret.

Remember that you can always make this journey again. You may meet different creatures and the seasons may change but, the Dark Mother is always there when you need Her. The gift the Dark Mother gave you is significant in more than one way, and specific to your calling. Every time you are reminded of it by a corresponding physical object, you need to pay attention and make an entry in your journal.

MANAGING YOUR ENERGY

"You can use your life in a very useful and intelligent way. You can very well transform that negative energy into a positive energy that empowers you and makes life meaningful." -- Thich Nhat Hanh

"Eventually, ritual was developed as a means of contacting and utilizing the energy within humans as well as in the nature world." -- Scott Cunningham

This Spirituality 101 series will not cover the specifics of wicca, magick or witchcraft, but will give you an understanding of the energies at work. The term 'wicca' comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'wicce' which means to bend. What is it we are bending? Energy. What are we bending it with? Our will (thought energy). Everything is energy and learning to use our own energy efficiently is the first step on the path to a more magical life.

Quantum physics has proven that our thought energy (yes thoughts are pure energy) affects the reality around us. Of course, this has been known to shamans and witches for millenia, but now that science is beginning to popularise this knowledge, New Age proponents of the Law of Attraction are jumping on the bandwagon to make a quick buck out of it. I have nothing against people making money - the problem is that they have taken ancient and rather complex spiritual wisdom and oversimplified it.

The Law of Attraction merchants have made a pseudo-religion out of a few spiritual principles that have been taken out of context and streamlined to fit the (so far) scant evidence produced by science. They turned these teachings into something very marketable, selling people a few simple principles that supposedly give the user all he or she desires. And God forbid, should anything negative happen, you have no one but yourself to blame since you create your own reality with your thoughts.

The truth is, as any child of about eight or older would be able to grasp, that things are not that simple. We do in fact not create all that we experience. We are part of a web of life and what we do affects the web as a whole. If mankind wants to survive, man needs to learn to first manage his own energy and to become aware of how this affects humanity, and then he needs to start working together with like-minded, compassionate souls to change the fate of the planet.

Imagine a grid of light covering the planet. At each intersection a thread of light dips down onto the surface of the earth. This perpendicular thread attaches to a 'pearl' - the individual. All of humanity is connected through the grid. The truth is you are never alone, and if you are sensitive and receptive you can go into emotional overwhelm from all the data you download from this grid.

There is also a grid of compassion, created by the heart's energy. This grid spreads horizontally across the planet, from one heart to the next. The grid of compassion unfortunately has great big gaps in it, since the practitioners of unconditional love are still few far between. Media is

keen to keep it that way. Media is used by those with power to keep us locked in an egotistical consumerist mindset. An awakened soul no longer feels the pull from advertisements. He has no void to fill with material goods. He knows he is on the planet to serve humanity, not satisfy his own ego.

Do you really think it is a coincidence that you are thinking of a person and then they phone you up a few hours later or the next day? Is it luck that you know who it is before you pick the phone up? Of course not. You're hooked up to the grid, busy downloading, and so are they.

The trick is to learn how to be open to receive useful input and to keep unwanted or even harmful energy input out. In essence this is what today's lesson is about.

The first step is to learn to sense your own energy. Here is a simple exercise that you can do daily to keep your own energy healthy:

Make sure that you will not be disturbed for about 20 minutes. Light a candle or some incense if it helps you relax. Sit comfortably on a chair or cross-legged on the floor. Make sure to keep your spine straight, shoulders relaxed, palms resting on your lap.

Take a few deep breaths, breathing in and out through your nose, allowing your abdomen to rise on the in-breath and sink back down on the out-breath... Feel yourself becoming more and more relaxed with each out-breath. Now locate the space just under your tailbone. Here we find an energy centre known as the base or root chakra. It's like a wheel of energy, constantly spinning and regulating the flow of energy from you to the earth and from the earth to you.

Through this energy centre, you can ground your energy. This is useful to do if you find that you can't concentrate properly, if you are not sleeping well, or if you keep tripping over/bumping into stuff. You ground the energy by imagining the root chakra as a red sphere. From this sphere you visualise a red cord sinking deep into the earth to meet with the red hot molten core of Gaia. This cord is indestructible.

As soon as you sense the cord in place, you can breathe out any remaining stress or negativity. Do it with gratitude knowing that Mother Earth has the power to transform any negative, stale or excess energy into vital life force. Now shift your focus to the in-breath. Breathe in vital life force back into your root chakra. Feel this energy centre recharging like a battery. You will know when it has filled back up.

Now I want you to focus on the energy centre just above the top of your head. This energy centre is known as the crown chakra. It is a brilliant white and is where you connect to the grid. Reach through the chord that connects you with the grid but do not stop at the horizontal level of the grid. Continue to reach with your mind until you find the zero point - the point of creation. Experience the peace. You are one with the point of creation, and it does not matter if you call it God, Goddess, Allah, Jesus, Source, the Universe, the Tao or Mr Spock.

Now bring your awareness to your heart. Feel how the earth energy connects with the energy of the zero point here. Mix the red of the earth with the white of the zero point until you see a radiant pink in the heart chakra. Expand this pink energy to embrace your loved ones. Feel the connection you have with them and feel the love coming back to you. Now expand the pink heart energy to all living and breathing beings. Picture the planet resting softly in a beautiful pink rose, the rose of compassion. Imagine holding this rose for a minute. Gaze lovingly at the planet. Contemplate your purpose.

Complete the exercise by placing the rose with the planet in your heart centre. Know that you are never alone and that your life matters to every living being. Take a few deep breaths to bring your awareness back into your physical body. Open your eyes and stamp your feet to reconnect with earth if you need to.

Only love is real.

SOUL MATES

A soulmate is someone we have journeyed with in previous incarnations. Our soulmates belong to the same soul group in the spirit world and many of them have been in our immediate family or close circle of friends/lovers here on earth through countless incarnations. A soul who took on the role of brother in one incarnation, may be our son, mother or lover in another.

We know our soulmates on the earth plane through an immediate sense of recognition. They appear to be a kindred spirit or someone you instantly click with. Sometimes there is instant attraction, but there may also be a strong sense of discomfort when there is a karmic debt waiting to be repaid - sometimes there is a mix of both of these sensations. When this happens, we are in for a very steep learning curve. Astrologically, this is sometimes seen as natal Saturn being in opposition to the other person's natal Sun. This constellation is one of the main deal breakers according to some astrologers. I have found that it brings people together with bonds that can be very difficult to break, such as in codependency or other oppressive relationship dynamics.

Soulmates can be divided into three main categories: Guardian, Nemesis or Pluto (Agent of Transformation). Before we incarnate, we choose which of these three roles we will take on with the other main characters in our life. So, for instance, your father may have chosen to be a Guardian in your life but a Nemesis in the life of one of his closest colleagues.

The role of the Guardian is to cherish and protect those placed in his care. Most parents will have the role of Guardian in relationship to their children, but in an abusive family a parent may act purely as a Nemesis, or (commonly) as a mix between Guardian and Nemesis. Guardians may also act as patrons or muses in the lives of others, so the Guardian soul mate is not strictly limited to immediate family.

The role of the Nemesis soulmate is to cause change through abuse, confrontation, abandonment, theft, underhandedness or other antagonistic behaviour. The Nemesis is not aware that he chose this role prior to incarnating on earth.

The Plutonian soulmate is very rare. He is aware that he is a key player in the other person's life in order to help them embody their soul more fully. Sometimes he is perceived as a Nemesis by the other due to a lack of perspective on behalf of this person. Plutonian soul mates are extremely compassionate. They are quick to forgive and never hold on to bitterness. Because Plutonian soul mates are so rare they often find themselves alone or doing most of the work in a relationship.

It is often said that we should not try to change the one we are with, but the truth of the matter is that we seek the company of other people in order to grow and change. Relationships are easily our steepest learning curves. This planet will be completely transformed when all of us have become aware of the fact that we are here to encourage each other to fully embody our Higher Selves and use our unique talents to their full potential.

Think about your most important relationships... Which role did/do you have in each of them? Think about the people you struggle to forgive? Which role did they have? Can you forgive them more easily when you focus on the invaluable learning they facilitated?

CREATING SACRED SPACE

The purpose of creating sacred space is to enable us to communicate with Spirit. Creating space raises the vibration of a defined area. It shuts out any unwanted influences and prepares the senses of the one seeking to be in communion with the Divine. Creating sacred space can be as simple or as elaborate as you wish. The trick is to find a way that works for you. Remember that there is no right or wrong way of doing it and that you are free to experiment!

The first step is space clearing. This is done by tidying and cleaning on the mundane level. There really isn't much point in trying to create sacred space in a cluttered or dirty room. Dirt and clutter carry their own energies and they are not conducive to communication with the Divine.

Once the room has been swept, dusted and tidied you may still sense unwanted energy lingering, especially in the corners of the room. These energies can be cleared either by smudging with white sage, ringing a bell, or clapping your hands. Each of these actions have to be done with the right intent, as it is not the action but the intent that matters - the action merely focuses the thought energy on the physical plane.

Now the room is energetically cleansed and you are ready to create the sacred space. Some people choose to have an altar to focus the energies. Having an altar with symbols that are meaningful to you can be helpful but is not necessary. The objects themselves are not sacred but can help you focus your intent. Objects that are used this way over time do have a special

feel to them. You can also charge each of the objects with the kind of qualities you desire, such as peace, unconditional love and clarity. Before charging an object it needs to be cleansed, both physically and energetically, in much the same way you clear a room.

Whether you want to create sacred space simply to be in communion with Deity or to do a magical working, it might be worth casting a circle of protection. It is not entirely necessary for the purpose of communion but entirely essential if your intention is to cast a spell, create a talisman or charge an object.

Casting the circle is done by facing each of the quarters of the four cardinal directions. Begin either in the North or the East. The North is the preferred direction if you are working with any of the Deities of the Underworld. Move clockwise and ask the guardians of each cardinal quarter to protect and keep you safe. These guardians are elementals: Air in the East, Fire in the South, Water in the West and Earth in the North. If you prefer to work with angelic energies you need to call on the Archangels: Raphael for the East, Michael for the South, Gabriel for the West and Uriel for the North.

An alternative way to cast the circle is to simply trace the perimeter of the circle with the index finger of your dominant hand (or your athame/wand). Again you need to start either in the North or the East. Trace the perimeter of the circle deosil (clockwise) three times while visualising a wall of protective energy building around you. This wall will keep the positive energy in and keep you safe from any entities that would harm you.

You should trace the circle around your focus of worship/altar if you are using one. Some people like to place candles around the perimeter of the circle. That's cool - just remember to not wear long flowing ritual garb that can get caught in the flames. And don't wear polyester!

When your working is completed or your devotional time has come to an end, you need to undo the circle. This is done by thanking the Watchtowers/Archangels and bidding them farewell, or by walking along the perimeter of the circle widdershins (counter clockwise) three times gathering the energy through your hand or ritual tool and then earthing it by touching your hand or tool to the earth.

A very quick way to create sacred space without all the ritual trappings is to simply light a candle and to call on the angels. Lighting a candle with the right intent can quickly clear a room and raise the vibration. I highly recommend this practice before doing a reading of any kind, as well as at prayer time. Also, lighting a candle an hour or half an hour before going to bed clears you and the room you'll be sleeping in of any residual stress or negativity that has accumulated during the day.

(Re-)Learning Forgotten Lore

“I love to think of nature as an unlimited broadcasting station, through which God speaks to us every hour, if we will only tune in.” ~ George Washington Carver

So much wisdom was lost when the Christian church forced conversion on conquered tribes in the era of the Crusades. Many of these conquered tribes had an oral shamanic/druidic tradition, and what little may have been written down has in most cases been lost. What remains is the history of the victor. Roman historians give us snippets of druidic, Norse Pagan and other heathen practices, but the information is incomplete and sometimes downright questionable; it might have been used as malicious propaganda.

So where do we go to learn in this era of revival of earth-based and animistic religions? Neopaganism sells books. It's one of the fastest growing religions in the world today. But should we turn to books that for the most part contain nothing but some other person's opinions? Or should we go back to basics, learn to read the signs and let Nature Herself inform us?

With both book learning and learning directly from Nature, a little knowledge can be a dangerous thing. I suggest forgetting everything you have learned so far. Give your books away to the nearest charity shop. Wrap all your Wiccan gadgets up and store them somewhere safe or give them away. Then choose an esbat (New or Full Moon) or sabbat (major Pagan feast day) that feels right to you and vow to learn from Nature for a whole year. If you are to use any tools (other than pen and paper for memory), let Nature hand them to you.

All your major celebrations will take place outdoors for the next 13 Moons. You will keep a journal and enter daily observations about nature and how it relates to events in your life. You will learn to observe the shape of clouds, notice when certain plants are in bloom, communicate with tree spirits, figure out what messages various types of birds and flight formations carry etc etc.

You may take this year-long journey in the company of a close friend or mentor should you be so lucky, but do not despair if you are the only person you know who would be interested in learning to be in communion with Mother Nature. You are never alone among the devas and elementals of Nature and can choose to work with a tree spirit. Perhaps you have already had the experience of being drawn to a particular tree... Or maybe you are even a practised tree hugger? Perhaps you accidentally leaned against a tree when you felt unhappy or drained and came away feeling peaceful and rejuvenated?

Then you will understand that you have been in the presence of another living and sentient being. Finding your special tree is very simple. Just walk into a woodland area or park that you have easy access to all year long. Be watchful. Your tree will call to you and you will be magnetised towards it.

Give thanks to the tree for being willing to work with you. Present it with a gift if you have one (a feather, shell, flower, animal bone etc). Put your hands on the trunk and bless it, then ask to receive a blessing for the year ahead from the tree. Don't forget to pay attention to your dreams. Any dream where your tree appears is highly significant, and probably deals directly with your life purpose and calling.

It doesn't matter if you already have a lot of knowledge about different types of trees or of Celtic Tree lore. What matters here are your own observations, so feel free to forget all that you have learned so far. Listen to what the tree tells you. Bring your magickal workings to the tree. Who needs a man made altar or a high priest in the presence of a mighty Ash, Yew, Oak or Willow?

Each day, you will enter your observations into the diary. Everybody knows that a rainbow is a sign of hope and comets are portents, right? But why stop there and what exactly does a double rainbow mean? Dead animals can be signs, and the exact meaning depends on what type of animal it is as well as its condition. Branches shaped like runes or other symbols are signs. Extreme weather on an auspicious day like for instance Beltane or a lunar eclipse is a sign. A heart-shaped pink petal after performing a love spell is most definitely a sign. Don't be surprised if you start finding animal bones when you are going through a transformation or doing shadow work... Black and white feathers have different meanings etc...

The more you start observing signs in nature, the more Nature will start communicating with you in your dreams. Dreamtime observations also need to be entered into your journal.

I promise you that your life will change forever if you give Jord/Mother Nature a year to teach how to listen and read the signs. It's only after attuning to Nature in this way that the Wheel of the Year and the major Pagan celebrations take on any real meaning. Whether you are a völva, healer, druid, witch, seer, oracle or priestess, there is only one way to fully understand the Elements - Immerse yourself!

During this year, there will be no set prayers, rituals or canticles, but should you feel moved to greet the rising sun, fling your arms up to the bright shining moon or dance naked under the stars then do so. Catch snowflakes on your tongue and make angels in the snow in the winter! Go leaf-kicking in the autumn! Dip your feet in the nearest beck and gaze for oddly shaped pebbles in the summer! See how many natural heart shapes you can find on Valentine's Day. Your children and your children's children will thank you for this reverence for Nature which enriches life like nothing else can, because let's face it - money can't buy that kind of beauty!

Once we have graduated from High School and developed sensitivity to Nature and Her messages, we can specialise in herb lore, homeopathy, crystal healing, divination, astrology and other academia at the Esoteric University of our choice. Isn't it surprising how few teachers in Wicca, witchcraft and shamanism have their students start with the basics? Is it because we think we already know it all by virtue of osmosis? Until we start communicating with Nature in

silence, reverence and awareness... until we begin to understand Nature's language, we know nothing, and the more we learn, the more humble we become in the face of Nature's mystery....

Connecting with your Matron or Patron Deity

In a previous chapter, I gave you a guided visualisation for connecting with the Dark Mother. Each of us need to make that connection at one point or another, as she is the Deity (or archetype if you prefer) who helps us face our Shadow, i.e. all those undesirable traits that we suppress and would rather project on others. The Dark Mother also helps us face the fears that stand between us and our Golden Shadow, i.e. our full potential. The Dark Mother helps us through all of life's transformations and helps us find holistic and 'organic' solutions to all our issues.

The Dark Mother in one of Her many guises may or may not be your Matron Deity. If you belong to Her, you will know it. She is very direct in Her approach and a master of Dreamweaving - there is no escaping Her calling, especially not in Dreamtime. Some of Her signs are bones, the Crone, the Dark Moon, ravens, crows, dreams of the moon turning red, keys, crossroads, serpents...

But what if you are called to work with another Deity...? And is it possible to have more than one Patron/Matron Deity?

The first thing to remember is to listen. He or She will call you. You don't pick your God or Goddess - they call you when the time is right. In the meantime, it won't hurt to brush up on your mythology. When the time is right and Venus calls you to Herself, She will be pleased that you know that a white dove or a gift of seashells is one of Her signs.

Also, if you are shy, mild-mannered and place more importance on creating relationship harmony than on furthering a cause, don't expect one of the Warrior Goddesses to call you. You will resonate with your patron deity personality-wise.

I know quite a few people who have more than one Patron Deity. As in life and romance, you may have a first love that you still think fondly of. So it will be with the first Deity you make a connection with. You may want to stay in touch with this Deity even after you find your Matron/Patron Deity. You will soon know if this is possible. In the end it comes down to personal choice and compatibility.

You may want to call on different deities for different types of workings, or you may choose to honour a specific Deity connected with each of the 8 Sabbats in the Wheel of the Year. The more you know about different deities, the wider your range of options, and the better use you can make of these strong archetypal energies. That said, you still don't get to pick your Patron/Matron Deity.

So how do you know when you have been chosen? Great question. It's a bit like asking, how do you know it's true love when you meet 'the One'? You know. Period. Please keep in mind that this knowing is deep soul knowing and has very little to do with reason. There will be signs and dreams aplenty. Synchronicity and deja vu will increase in frequency. If you are psychic you will recognise that this is usually what happens when you meet new soulmates too.

Now that you have journeyed to meet the Dark Mother, you will know the recipe for journeying. I strongly recommend taking a similar journey to connect with the Patron/Matron Deity who is calling you now. Once this is done, things will seem a lot less vague and confusing.

The basic outline for such a journey is to. put yourself in a light trance by drumming or whatever method you prefer to use. Go somewhere safe in your mind, invite your Deity, ask any questions and listen for the answers. Also stay open to the possibility that your Deity wants to hand you a gift, and don't be afraid to express your gratitude and appreciation. The first question you should ask is 'Are you my Patron/Matron Deity?' I would advise asking 'Do you come in the name of love?' as the second question. A 'no' answer to the second question should result in termination of the journey.

Once you have made the connection you may choose to pledge yourself to the service of your Patron Deity. This can be done by simply stating your intent in meditation, or by performing an elaborate initiation ceremony. The choice is yours. Certain deities seem to have more affinity for ritual than others.

Being in the service of a deity brings with it certain responsibilities as well as various rewards and blessings. Now, you would think that those blessings would correspond with the domain of influence of your deity. In this case, it is well worth remembering that those blessings often come disguised. Your deity wants you to become an expert in His or Her domain, so count on being tested!

Life Purpose

"From my point of view, the leading cause of stress today is the absence of meaning in people's lives."
- Caroline Myss

Your life purpose is what you came here to do. You will have made all the necessary plans together with your spirit guides on the other side before you were born. Please don't think that your life purpose has to have anything to do with being rich, famous or even an expert at something. To some, their life purpose is to incarnate with some form of incapacity, so that another soul will have the benefit of learning more about care and compassion.

However, this is not always the case with someone who needs a lot of care. I would never take it upon myself to judge another's karma or tell them what their life purpose is. This is something we each must find out for ourselves, and part of the fun of being on this planet.

As we journey from incarnation to incarnation, we typically learn more and more lessons and become ever better at embodying our souls fully on the earth plane. As this happens, our focus shifts from learning and karma to service. This is a gradual process, often through many lifetimes on earth, and no matter what stage we're at on our soul's journey, we can always find opportunities to serve for the greater good of mankind.

Some religions teach us about the concept of grace. The only way to be in a continuous state of grace is to surrender, and through surrendering our ego's desires and agendas, we are also immediately fast tracked for a life in service. One of the most wonderful benefits of spiritual surrender is that the question about one's life purpose becomes moot. Your purpose then becomes your gift and testament to the world no matter what you do for a living.

No matter what occupation you are in, whether or not you are employed, retired or on benefits, you can choose to surrender to Higher Will today. This will instantly align your mind and body with your spirit, and allows for the Divine plan and purpose to unfold perfectly through you.

The surrendered person learns to rely more on synchronicity than on set plans. She knows that there is no quicker way to make the Gods laugh than to tell them her plans. She knows to follow her inner compass of spiritual and lasting joy, and trusts that the right people and circumstances will appear. She is not passive but fully alert, centred and active in the NOW, and hence able to take advantage of new opportunities as soon as they appear.

But what if you already surrendered to Divine service and still have no clue what to do? You keep on trusting. You also need to realise that sometimes nothing other than your *beingness* is required of you, and even beingness requires continuous surrender... Surrendering is not something we do once and then we're done - it's a bit like breathing... A soul who strives to be completely aligned with Higher Will is an extremely compassionate companion and a treasure valued by all those who come in contact with her. This same soul may still have 'off days' but she learns to forgive herself for those and carries on without pride, realising that she is fully human.

Here is an affirmation which you might like to use as your perfect path unfolds: "I'm deeply connected to my life's purpose on every level of my being. My life unfolds perfectly - joy and synchronicity guide me."

The above affirmation can be used whether or not you are called to complete surrender, but please be prepared to abandon some of your agendas at least as the Universe responds.

"But hey, wait a minute! What if my life's purpose is to start up a new business which will employ hundreds? Do I just abandon all planning and stop setting myself daily targets?"

No, of course not. You still need to set yourself SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-bound) targets. But your life purpose isn't to achieve these goals - it is bigger than that.

Your actual life purpose is to serve as a leader and provider – starting a business is something you do because you are connected with your life's purpose. Setting yourself measurable, attainable and realistic targets is using tools which enable you to serve more effectively... And it's still wise to remember that the Gods laugh when we tell them of our plans! Flexibility and humility go a long way whatever your life purpose may be...

That way, if an earthquake hits on the site of your new factory, you quickly adapt and use your leadership ability to help with disaster relief.

Dark Mother Speaks

I wear a mask of terror so that you may face your deepest fears. Once you have accomplished the tasks I set before you, my true beauty will be revealed.

I am the void between the atoms. I lovingly hold creation in my hands. The power to annihilate is mine and mine alone, yet no life can exist without me.

I am compassion. I am wrath. I am creative chaos. I am non-duality. I am closer to you than your own breath. Until you see me, the space between the atoms is just space.

I am the Mother of Sorrows. You are safe to cry in my arms as long as it takes until there are no more tears. I will never abandon you.

Take my hand and I will give you new eyes to see with. In the darkness you will behold the light, and in the light the darkness will become visible. In beauty you will see the seeds of decay, and in rot you will behold the seeds of roses. The eyes of the Dark Mother perceive the pulse of life without judgment.

Radiant praise shines forth from the souls that have crossed the Abyss. They are vessels of grace, servants of the Ancient One. They delight in the dance of creation and fear not death. At the dawning of a New Age they are gathered from afar to unite under the banner of compassion. 'Love is the Law!' is their victory shout. ALU

When your trust has been betrayed and you have nowhere else to go, I am still here waiting for you to discover the soft warm cloak of my compassion. When you think that no one wants you, I am the one who sings songs of star lore to remind you of your origin. You came from me, beloved, and to me you return. Go gently - wrap yourself in my love.

Your words create your reality. Be mindful. Keep your promises. Honour your word and you will receive honour in the world.

I am your enemy if you think ignorance is bliss.

Call on me if you are stuck in a relationship that is going nowhere. I will transform it for you. It will end or change completely. I will not change the Other for you, but I will change how you perceive things and I will alleviate your fear of change. When you trust in me, you will see the gifts and lessons that each relationship brings.

Will you give me one minute today? Will you listen to the silence?

I will always give you what you need but not always what you want. Open your eyes and you will see that when you align your desire with your soul's purpose, what you need is also what you want.

You build walls around yourself. Every day you put a few more bricks on and the wall goes up a little higher. Every night I come like a thief and steal a few of your bricks. If you have the courage to meet me in the thick of the night we can take your walls down together. Then my strength can radiate out from your core... No more need for walls.

It is far easier to cheat death than to cheat love.

Place your tender hopes and fragile dreams in my hands for me to bless them. Then you will see that you have nothing to fear but fear itself.

If you turned up the volume on your emotions right now, what would you be broadcasting to the world? Are your words and physical expressions in harmony with your emotions? Your authenticity is your power. You have a right to feel what you are feeling. Do not judge certain emotions as good and others as bad - they **are** signposts to empowerment. Stay aligned with your truth today!

When you feel torn and tormented, why do you insist on carrying your burden yourself? All you have to do is ask, and I will send the right one to share your burden with you, the right one to walk beside you on the thorny path.

In my realm - the realm where breath ceases and experiences are picked like ripe fruits - no man is more spiritual than his brother. A naked soul is a naked soul and experiences are experiences. I do not judge, nor do I keep rotten fruit - it becomes fertilizer for future harvests.

Your Shadow is your greatest teacher. Give thanks each time I make you face it. When that happens you have nowhere to go but deeper into Shadow until you remember to light the path ahead with your heart-light. When the light switches on and you turn and face the ghouls and demons of your mind, death loses its sting; fear flees like night flees day at dawn.

Emptiness is a gift - only when we perceive our own emptiness can the vessel of our soul be flooded with grace. The little child is never too proud to curl up in the warm lap of the mother when the chill of night creeps in...

Transformation, like childbirth, becomes easier with each change born in awareness. The pain may not be less, but the 'pushing' stage takes place with determination rather than panic, and adaptation to the new 'baby' is smoother. In the final analysis, both childbirth and soul alchemy require surrender to forces greater than the little self: the sooner you surrender, the smoother the process.

Telling a heart that loves not to love is like ripping the wings off a dove.

From the void each of you was born. From my womb you sprang forth and to that dark space you shall return - not to sleep but to become creators of stars and galaxies. If you are silent you can feel your consciousness expanding and gathering understanding on each exhale. Breathe in infinite possibility, be inspired; Allow the star of your consciousness to shine upon your brow today.

There is no such thing as learning from past mistakes for those with a penchant for blaming others.

The truth looks different from the Mountain of Love to how it looks in the Valley of Fear. Meditation can take you all the way to the top in a few breaths. Enjoy the view!

When the religions of the world have been wiped out and the Æsir and Vanir have gone to sleep, I still am.

You cannot be a force for the light without first being a force for darkness. Only through fully engaging with your shadow do you discover the sweetness of surrender, and only in surrender can you truly shine.

Laugh a lot. Most obstacles are dissolved through laughter.

The process of transformation always requires letting go in one form or another. Learn to let go every day. Stop grasping and clinging. Change is the only constant and only love is real. Learn to feel where you hold onto things in your own energy field. Learn a simple method of releasing that which needs to be released. Breathe. be free!

Sometimes your brokenness is your greatest gift.

A person who trusts their inner guidance is considered 'armed and dangerous' by those who have worldly power. Their aim is to distract you and lull you to sleep. My aim is to keep you sharp, focused and wide awake. Enter the silence today, so that I may sharpen you.

To those who seek power over others or who fear being taken advantage of, the illusion of many paths will remain. To everyone else the truth of the one path of the heart is a shining beacon. Yet sooner or later the illusion fades, and at the top of the mountain it will not matter which path you chose to climb it.

Choose wisely who you merge your energies with. New thoughts, actions and entities are created in every merging.

A good teacher is essentially a person who understands that everything in life is a metaphor for something else and who knows what metaphor to use with which person.

Trust is paradoxically both earned and unconditional. Trusting that there is a higher purpose for every single person being in your life makes it easier to trust the process you go through with each of them. Trying to control their learning curve leads to mistrust.

Dark Mother Dream:

I had a dream where the Dark Mother taught me to fearlessly navigate icy cold white water and waterfalls. She was at the helm... but she also made me get out of the boat and into the water... she told me that these were the waters of the far North, her realm... The water did not harm me and I was able to perform the task she set before me.

I ♥ my Goddess! Hail Hel!

Dark Mother Poetry

THE GARDEN OF MY HEART

The garden of my heart has turned into a cremation ground
Ash is snowing down from Heaven, meeting the flames from below
Footsteps in the ash form a spiral around the funeral mound
Where thoughts have been retraced in the ashen snow

The outer part of the garden froze when the sun died
And the central part is where the pyre burns non-stop
There is no middle ground, no room for pride
This is where the penny is made to drop

I turn to face the flames and in the heat I forget my name
Gone are tribal markings, gone is the flesh off my bones
Purified... reborn.. I walk back into the world again
Past the garden gates, past the piles of stone

The fire of the cremation ground is in my eyes
It lights the way ahead
I'm done with lies...
And I'm not even
dead!

HEL BORROWED MY EYES

I journeyed in directions yet unknown
to chase the shadows from your soul.
The mirror cracked when you looked into my eyes;
we both know that is why you said goodbye.
The labour of love is not done,
not until all the shadows are gone...
Hel borrowed my eyes
to uncover the lies;
Hel borrowed my voice
- I did not have a choice.

THE DARKWORKER'S MANIFESTO

"Enlightenment is not imagining figures of light but making the darkness conscious." C.G. Jung

- * Darkworkers are those of us who heed the calling of the Dark Mother and whose hearts are on fire for the causes that are dear to Her heart.
- * Darkworkers care deeply about self-knowledge. Above the entrance to the Oracle at Delphi was a sign that said "Know thyself." In ancient Greece they knew that without self-knowledge none of the oracle's signs could be understood or interpreted. This still holds today. Gaining self-knowledge means having the courage to face the less sympathetic components of our psyche *without judgement*.
- * Once a Darkworker has made peace with all that she is, her heart is on fire for anyone who suffers oppression. The Dark Mother's love for all living things becomes an eternal fire burning in the Darkworker's heart.
- * Darkness is not evil. Is the womb evil? Is the fertile soil that makes plants grow evil? Is the space that gives birth to the stars evil? Is that night that gives us rest evil?
- * Darkworkers are not fond of an overabundance of words. The words they do speak will create physically manifest change.
- * Darkworkers are activists and strive to make a positive difference in the world.
- * Darkworkers are not afraid to offend. They are aware that this is the price they often have to pay as they speak their truth.
- * Darkworkers are willing to walk paths of pain. Not to wallow, but to know what is sacred and to find what is lost.
- * Darkworkers cherish the ego as a useful tool even after their hearts have become 'cremation grounds for the Dark Goddess.'
- * Darkworkers have built in BS-meters. A young child who questions authority is a Darkworker and should be encouraged to keep on questioning the status quo.
- * Darkworkers are here to break down the structures of the status quo.

* Darkworkers are immune to hatred. Only those who have not learned to love every dark crack and crevice of their own souls can be harmed by the hatred of others. The Dark Mother Herself is the shield of every Darkworker.

* Darkworkers do not tolerate lies.

* The sword of non-duality is the weapon of the Darkworker.

* Those Darkworkers who practice magick will begin using their magick for global workings together with other Darkworkers.

* Those Darkworkers who are seers will no longer dabble in personal fortunes, but will become Prophets for the Dark Mother in order to empower each soul that crosses their path.

* Darkworkers are being called together by the Dark Mother Herself for the good of all mankind. We are the men, women and children who run with the wolves. We are the ones beloved by ravens and we will not yield to the liars and the oppressors!

Hail Hel! Hail Kali! Hail Hekate! Hail the Morrighan! Hail Medusa! Hail Lilith!

Healing a broken heart with the Dark Mother

So you've been dumped. Maybe he/she left you for another... perhaps he/she stopped communicating and you don't know why... Or perhaps the relationship just ended in a combustion of anger and accusations and you were flung apart like so much grenade debris. No matter how it ended you are hurting and hurting like hell. Now you want to know where to begin the healing.

This is what the Dark Mother has to say:

You need to start feeling yourself without the other again. I want you to find and feel yourself in silence. Doing this meditation three times a day will speed up the healing process. Do it for only a couple of minutes first thing in the morning, in the afternoon and before going to bed.

Sit comfortably in a silent place where you won't be disturbed. Focus on your breath circulating. Relax and just feel the breath in your body, and then feel your body in relation to your surroundings. Let go of any tension. If there are tears, let them flow.

Then focus on your heart. Deep within your heart there is a point of light. Repeat the following words three times:

I am me. I am whole. I am free.

As you repeat them you will see the point of light expanding until the light envelops you completely.

Open your eyes and walk in your heart's light, knowing that it protects you and keeps you safe.

Blessed be!)O(

Breathing with the Dark Goddess

The Dark Mother speaks: *I am there, in the pause between each outbreath and inbreath. When you recognise and surrender to my presence there you will have limitless powers of transmutation and transformation in the eternal now. [ALU](#)*

Focusing on the pause between the out breath and the in breath brings the awareness to the point of creation where all things are made new. Here the Triple Goddess is the Ancient One... the One who has seen the birth of many universes. All is stillness, silence is All... and the potential is infinite.

We can harness this infinite potential by practicing a daily breathing meditation where we relax completely and bring our awareness to the zero point between each out- and inbreath. Lie down on your back somewhere nice and warm (cover yourself with a blanket to avoid getting cold). Make sure you are completely relaxed.

Bring your awareness to the abdomen. Sense it rising on the inbreath and sinking back down on the outbreath. Do not force your breath - just observe the wavelike motion caused by the breath.

Next, bring your attention to the pause between the out breath and the in breath. Do not hold your breath. Observe. Do this for a couple of minutes.

Complete the breathing meditation by taking three deep breaths where you draw platinum high energy light in through the hara (sacral/navel chakra) and blow the light out through your mouth (as if you're blowing soap bubbles). Fill your aura with Divine Light and seal it with electric blue light (the blue of Archangel Michael) to keep you protected.

Eating Magically

It's easy to lose touch with the concept of food as a source of nourishment for our magical power. We often fall prey to our excuses about lack of time and money to prepare food in a way that honours the magical beings that we are.

The fact is, if we don't eat 'magically,' i.e. in awareness and with intent to properly nourish the body, we cause our bodies harm. Here are some principles for eating magically that I would like to share with you:

- * The first and most important principle is mindfulness. Scoffing anything is always harmful. Eating while typing or watching TV isn't any good either. Mindfulness also needs to be applied to the process of *lovingly* preparing the food.
- * Blessing the food - enhances the nutritional value of food and neutralises toxins.
- * Chewing the food properly until it's a near liquid pulp aids digestion.

- * Not drinking with the meal so as not to dilute the gastric juices.
- * Creating a peaceful ambience: TV off, peaceful music, lighting a candle etc...
- * Stopping eating when full - learning to listen to the body's signals
- * Eating fresh, locally produced food whenever possible.
- * Blessing drinks between meals - especially important if you are drinking unfiltered tap water.
- * Blessing and supercharging nutritional supplements at auspicious times. I would consider this very much a solar activity, so noontide on a Sunday would work well but the point is to do it and any time is better than no time.

Mealtime prayer / blessing to the Dark Mother:

Dear Chthonic Mother, thank you for this food (or drink/supplement). Bless this food to our bodies and grant us good health. What we partake of becomes part of us and we of it. ALU

Moving magically and cutting shapes

Following on quite naturally from the previous chapter about eating magickally is this chapter about movement. But as this extends to the aesthetic aspects of movement as well as the health aspects, I choose the Queen of Wands as our matron. The aesthetic aspects of movement are inseparable from the health aspects, something which becomes apparent especially when we look closely at the optimal alignment of the spine and breathing apparatus.

Some of you may know that my qualifications include a dance teaching certificate. My mother claims that I danced into her womb - she always knew I was a dancer. As far back as I can remember, I have improvised and created choreography to music, often finding inspiration in mythology as well as in classical music. I was a student with the Royal Swedish Opera Ballet until a knee injury put a spanner in the works for my dance career. I left the world of dance but returned a few years later and decided to use my knowledge for teaching.

During my dance teacher training we studied the history of dance, and it became apparent to me how big a role clothing plays in how we move and carry ourselves. Take the early history of ballet for instance. The seeds of modern ballet were sown in the royal courts of Italy and France in the 16th and 17th centuries respectively. Back in the day, the emphasis was on various positions and intricate movements of the feet. Upper body movement was restricted to below shoulder height by corsets and collars. This of

course affected the range of emotional expression hugely. Appearing poised, in control, and using small, delicate arm gestures was the ideal.

In the 19th century romantic ballets we see an increased range of movement thanks to both the evolution of dress and music, but emotions are still strictly stylised with the use of certain set symbolic arm gestures - a form of mime. Female dancers are still bound by the 'ethereal woman' ideal, and this peaks with the choreographer and dance master Balanchine in the early 20th centuries, when the emaciated look became the ideal (but only for the female dancers!). Unfortunately, the near skeletal female ideal still rules the aesthetics of the dance world (as well as the world of fashion), but at least we now have the full range of expression, including chaotic emotions. Female dancers no longer have to look pretty or ethereal.

Looking to the world of folk dance, gypsy dance includes the use of long, billowing skirts and dangling bangles and bracelets. The movements make good use of the noise of the jewellery and enhance the way the skirt moves around the body. Belly dance utilises hip scarves with coins that jingle when activated by the characteristic hip movements. Many, many more examples could be mentioned but the point is that how you dress affects the way you move.

Moving magically is moving in full awareness of the shapes you cut in the fabric of life. It means becoming aware of how your clothes enhance or limit your natural expression. It could also mean changing the way you dress in order to be able to express yourself more fully.

On a spiritual level, moving magically means natural alignment with your higher self. To be magickally aligned is to optimise your posture to allow for chi/prana to flow without restrictions. This in turn also automatically optimises breathing. Breathing fully is not possible when you slouch. Slouching and other forms of bad posture are ways of hiding from the world and encapsulating emotions. Physical misalignment creates blocks in the flow of chi which can lead to disease.

Practice in front of a mirror until you find your natural magickal alignment. Consider your gait when you walk... Are you tense or do you move gracefully? Does your posture allow for the fullness of breath?

Moving magically also includes movements of the facial muscles. How much magic is there in you smile!?

Start each day in a way that tells your body that you love it and intend to take good care of it. You don't have to learn yoga or tai chi, even though I highly recommend both, but you do need to limber up one way or another. Put some favourite music on and start with gentle head movements, roll your shoulders one way and then the other... circle your arms and hips, swing from side to side etc... Once you have established a routine that limbers up the whole body, you can try coordinating your movements with the breath - this essentially what yoga does: all mindful movement that is coordinated with your breath is a form of yoga.

Making your own routine is much more fun than following someone else's, and it's an excellent way of

getting to know your body better. Pay extra attention to the parts of the body that you do not enjoy moving - they need extra care and attention. Exercise may not always be enjoyable - moving magickally always is! Your will makes it so... and it makes it so because you are so incredibly grateful to have such a beautiful temple for your spirit.

A person who moves magickally will never grow old. There is no need whatsoever for bad posture or stiff joint movements just because your body has reached a certain age - this kind of body language is only a testament of neglect and it saddens me each time I see it.

Look after your body and it will look after you!

PRAYERS

Family Mealtime prayer / blessing

Dear Chthonic Mother, thank you for this food (or drink/supplement). Bless this food (or drink/supplement) to our bodies and grant us good health. What we partake of becomes part of us and we of it.

Prayer of protection

Mother of Darkness, fortress of the meek
Thy guidance, strength and protection I seek
Courage to face that which I fear;
Faith when darkness and strife draw near
Purity protects me, shelters me in the storm,
Guides me and helps me all fear to transform.

ALU

Prayer of non-duality

Dark Mother, you who carry the sword of non-duality, teach me truthfulness in all my ways.

Blessed Dark Mother, Your love causes me to rise like the Phoenix from the ashes. For you I will die a thousand deaths.

A Prayer to Angrboda

Angrboda, Blessed Crone, Mother of Hel, constantly bringing about the beginning of the end, bless me today for the fires of Muspelheim consume me. Aggrieved first wife of Loki who bore him three divine children, great protectress of wrymyn everywhere, help me direct the force for the good of mankind.

MORNING PRAYER TO THE DARK MOTHER

On waking I rise to greet Thee who kept me safe while sleeping

Beloved Mother, Creator, Destroyer - bringer of a new day

I entrust my thoughts, words and actions to Thy keeping

For Thy blessing on all the day brings, I pray.

ALU

NOONTIDE PRAYER TO THE DARK MOTHER

Blessed Mother, as the noontide sun rides high

I let go of my cares with a breath and a sigh*

Ancient One, I pause to hail Thee and be still

Holy Hel, bless me and align me with Thy will**

ALU

*breathe in deeply and audibly sigh out all the air in your lungs

**extend arms to receive blessing, arms in a V-shape, palms turned upward, put your palms together and touch your forehead, then your heart - say ALU with hands crossed over heart

BEDTIME PRAYER TO THE DARK MOTHER

Great Mother of Darkness, surrender and night,
Protect me in my sleep, shield me, hold me tight.

To Thee, Holy Mother, I entrust my soul
--Make my dreams a watering hole.

Guide me as I journey in the astral realm,
Snug and safe with Thee at the helm,
And when morning breaks to angel song,
Awaken me, refreshed, peaceful and strong.

ALU

PRAISE

A BLESSING FROM HEL

Joyful blessings of the nocturnal womb that births new galaxies!
Joyful blessings of the resurrection power that turns death into new life!
Joyful blessings of the love that presides over generations of stars!
May the magnificence of creation spring forth from within your hearts like a jubilant song!

PSYCHIC PROTECTION WITH THE DARK MOTHER

There has been a lot of rubbish written about psychic protection, both in terms of oversimplifying it and trying to make out that you have to have years of studies in ceremonial witchcraft below your belt in order to protect yourself effectively. Let's look at two commonly used approaches that do not necessarily work:

* FLUFFY BUNNY: Just wrap yourself in white light (or a rainbow or golden sparkles), and if you're extra afraid seal it with the electric blue light of the archangel Michael.

Why it doesn't work: You're afraid. Fear attracts entities that feed on fear. And guess what?

You're so much easier to find now that you have lit yourself up like a Christmas tree!

* NEUROTIC MAGE: Afraid but with years and years studies in Ceremonial Magick under his belt, he self-soothes with elaborate rituals.

Why it doesn't work: The more he tugs at the fabric of the All, the more entities that feed on fear find their way to the larder.

This is what the Dark Mother says about psychic protection: Be still and listen to your heart. If it beats loudly with fear, you need to spend more time with me in silence. Breathe and release, breathe and release... You need to call on me in your dreamtime and let me show you the shit you have swept under the carpet. You must be responsible for your creation and own your emotions - especially the darker ones. The ones you disown and project onto others will come back to haunt you. Your pure intention, your authenticity, your loving heart and the dark cloak of my compassion is all the protection you will ever need. You were born with it. It is your birthright.

The proud shall crumble like autumn leaves in a hail storm.

HEALING OF THE MIND WITH THE DARK MOTHER

"Pride is possibly the biggest stumbling block to healing."

There are no quick fixes with the Dark Mother. That's not to say that miracles don't happen, but when they do they only give us another thread to lead us deeper into the Labyrinth of Self. She never gives us a sense of being 'done' but keeps calling us deeper. The deeper we descend into Her realm, the more of our fears we shed. The final test is if we are ready to shed our pride. Only then are we completely naked - only then are we ready to suckle healing grace from her breasts. We must become like children.

Where have we heard that before? Was it not said by Jesus Christ? It was indeed, and I believe with good reason that he was an initiate into the mysteries of the Dark Mother - the ultimate necromancer, raising Himself from the dead. He called the Divine 'Abba' which means 'daddy' in Arameic. Only the humble mystic is on such intimate terms with the divine.

Jesus asked the lame man lying by the Pool of Bethesda, 'Do you want to be healed?' I can imagine Jesus looking deep into the man's eyes as he asked this question and the man knowing

that he could not avoid the truth. So many of us claim to want to be well, when in actual fact it is our own desire to reap the benefits of disease that keeps us unwell. *Psychological reversal* is a well-known phenomenon in the healing community. People with addiction problems are especially known to suffer from massive psychological reversal. The pay-off for staying addicted is too great, even when they claim to want to quit their destructive habit.

By the way, some of you reading this might feel uncomfortable with me mentioning Christian teachings. I'm not too proud to admit that I learned a lot of very valuable lessons about the importance of forgiveness and the cost of pride through Christianity. In the end, Christianity is just another path leading to the top of the mountain, and Christ - the real Christ - will always be one of my heroes. True spiritual humility recognises and appreciates the many paths, as each of us have different ways of receiving and processing spiritual information due to varying socio-cultural settings.

Back to the Dark Mother! After all, it was She who first taught Jesus about the importance of letting go of pride. His own Mother would have been an embodiment of the Dark Mother many a time, just as you and I serve that purpose to the men in our lives. Through each of us, She is the mirror that reflects back any lack of authenticity without pardon... and what a gift this is, even when it hurts! Without it we would keep deluding ourselves endlessly.

When we let go of pride, we can finally create a bit of space between Self and our ego's creations. We detect what is worth keeping and what we need to let go of, whether it be a job, a lover, or a home. She strikes swiftly - Her insights often feel like lightning bolts out of a clear blue sky. When we have cleared the way by letting go of pride we should expect swift forward movement, and we should also realise that those around us might trail behind, not understanding our rapid change and progress. This does not mean that we always take immediate action, but we should be aware of the Wheel of Fate turning and moving with the current to make the most of the changes that are occurring.

Exercise to let go of pride:

You will need a full length mirror and a room where you can be undisturbed for 20-30 minutes. Take a bath and dry yourself. Put a dressing gown/robe on but wear no other clothing. Clear the room of any lingering negativity by smudging, ringing a bell or clapping your hands to shift stale energy.

Sit in meditation for a few minutes. Ground the energy, and connect with earth's core as well as the centre of the universe - the heart of the Dark Mother in her celestial aspect (Urania). Ground the energy through your root chakra by sending your energy down to the earth's core, creating an energetic connection. Breathe the earth's energy into your heart chakra and back out into the earth's core. Release any stress, fear or negativity on the outbreath.

Then open your crown chakra (the energetic centre just above the top of your head) and connect with the heart of the Goddess. Breathe in Her compassion through your crown, into your heart.

Feel the celestial energy mix with the earth's energy. Breathe the energy out with a large 'haaaaaa!' releasing any remaining negativity.

Now shed your dressing gown/robe and stand up in front of the mirror:

Raise your arms to the sky, look at yourself with as much compassion as you can muster and say, 'Naked I came into the world, naked I return to the womb of the Great Mother.' Repeat this three times.

Complete the exercise by kneeling before the mystery of Being. Rest your hands on your lap, bow your head and receive Her blessing. This is a space of total surrender and communion. Take as long as you need here, in silence. Listen. Receive.

As you look into your own eyes after this sacred moment, you might detect a new light from within - this is a sign that you have dropped your pride like a dirty garment. You are free to be yourself, there is no longer a need to wear a mask. There is nothing to hide or protect. You are Her perfect child in a world of other perfect children who may not yet be aware of their own perfection. It no longer matters how anyone else perceives you. This is freedom. Enjoy it!

THE DARK MOTHER ON THE GODS AND THE NEW AEON

Hear me; I am Hel, the Ancient One. I am the Gateway to Life. In me, Life and Death are the cycle of one full breath. I am Idunna - She is but one of my many faces. I had to disguise myself. Would the Gods accept the Apples of Life from Mother Death? Their dying world is one of pride. They feared me and cast me out because when they saw me, they saw their own End.

Yet they plead with me to raise the Shining One. They want the New Man to worship the sons and daughters of the Ancient Gods. This cannot be.

Ragnarök is but one puff of breath to me. I abide.

The ones who know me are anathema to the proud ones. My children see through the false bravado of wannabe gods. I look out through their eyes and terrify the ones that seek to escape Death.

To Odin did I give the ravens, in the hope that he would learn the value of Death. In the end, he only surrendered for gain. This is not true surrender. The ones who surrender to me surrender all - not for gain but to shed all that is false, like a snake sheds its old skin.

My children, no matter what name you choose for me, the Dark Mother, know that you are the Shining Ones. You are the sons and daughters of the New Aeon. You hold the keys and have the power to hand the Apples of Life to gods and men alike. Choose wisely.

ALU

THE DARK MOTHER ON CHOICES

"Yes or No - Which Way Do I go?"

How long will you continue to insist on having it your way? How many more times do you need to hit your head against the wall until you get it?

The way of the Heart is the Way of the All. Choosing becomes easy after you have surrendered your ego's desires and aligned yourself with Higher Will, the Heart of Hearts.

No longer will you concern yourself with trivialities: there will be no need to sweat the small stuff. No longer will the opinions and judgments of others matter.

Your choice will either make your heart energy expand or shrink. This is your inner compass of joy. Expansion is joyful... sometimes to the point of giggling! You are free, completely free... to always choose love, even in pain and sorrow.

Contraction hinders movement. This is Universal Heart Intelligence telling you 'Don't go there!' Feel your heart, your breath... Pause long enough to be sure; dare to listen to the silence... to *feel* it. Let the void do the talking!

You all have this inner compass... When, oh when will you start using it?!

Can you make 10 heart-expanded choices today? Is your life richer for it? Can you see the ripple effect and how much your joyful choices improve the lives of others?

Can you feel how safe and loved you are? No matter how many leaps of faith you take there is always more space... and I will always catch you when you fall. I am your Cosmic Dance Partner, the Lady of the Dance, and I rejoice as the dance improvisation unfolds like a magical kaleidoscope of joyful movement.

Run to dance with Me like a child runs to play with her best friend!

ALU

THE DARK MOTHER ON PSYCHIC ABILITY

Psychics transcend many personality paradigms at an early age. Thus they don't fit in completely anywhere but everyone is able to attach to them. It is a high

price to pay, but those called to serve in this way signed up for it before they were born.

Psychics are a strange mix between INTROVERT and EXTROVERT. In general, they need a lot of time on their own (introversion) to charge their batteries, align spiritually, ground and centre. But they are excellent communicators and relish every opportunity to help another human (extraversion).

A psychic who is spiritually aligned with Source takes on the role of a Priest(ess), Shaman or Völva. A psychically gifted person who neglects or refuses to align with the Source is on a path of destruction and delusion. The psychic gift carries with it a great responsibility to serve divinity for the spiritual evolution of mankind. 'Of whom much has been given much shall be asked'

A priestess is always first and foremost a priestess. Her life is not her own.

THE DARK MOTHER ON INTEGRITY (2 OF SWORDS)

Integrity is expressed in two ways: firstly, the person is true to his word - spoken as well as unspoken. Secondly, the person is responsible and accountable for his creations.

Integrity is the twin sister of authenticity - it is impossible for a person of integrity to not be authentic, and an authentic person has no choice but to practice integrity.

Being true to one's word is staying whole. Deviating from the truth of one's word is to split parts of the self off, which in turns leads to disease. Healing is not possible for a person who lacks integrity.

A person of integrity keeps his beliefs alive by acting on them. This creates an upward spiral of faith.

A person of integrity is not concerned with popularity.

A person of integrity is like an island in a roaring ocean full of shipwrecked people.

Being responsible for one's creation means aligning the beginning, the middle and the end with Higher Will. This is done by planning, right action and evaluation.

A person of integrity may act on impulse, but when he does, he never forgets to check if the action he takes is aligned with his beliefs.

Saying, 'I am sorry' and meaning it is easy to a person of integrity. He is used to humbling himself in the process of evaluating his actions. He is aware that we all make mistakes and he quickly forgives himself as well as others so that he can be realigned with Higher Will.

A person of integrity quickly learns to surrender in the process of transformation. He senses that to resist is to become divided.

Courage is the hallmark of a person of integrity. He never sticks his head in the sand, but bravely faces himself in the mirror to check that his integrity is intact. He unashamedly admits his errors and makes amends. He looks on all of his experiences as opportunities for learning and growth, and recognises that the process is the same for all of us, therefore he has no need to judge.

THE DARK MOTHER ON OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

There are five ways of overcoming obstacles, learning to know when to use which method is the first step:

The first way of overcoming an obstacle is **non-doing**. By not feeding that which is blocking you with any energy, you allow for time and circumstances to dissolve it. Use this method when the cost of spending energy exceeds the energy gained in the outcome. Invoke the Norns. Laugh a lot.

The second way of overcoming an obstacle is by **sending it love**. This is similar to the first way. Sending love doesn't actually cost you anything energy-wise. This is worth doing if you know that the obstacle can be moved by love. Any blocks and obstacles in forms of bodily disease are good examples of where sending love will work. Invoke Freya and trust the healing process. Laugh a lot.

The third way is to **cooperate** with that which opposes you. This works when that which opposes you is open to communication. Trust the process of cooperation and invoke Odin for right speech. Laugh a lot.

The fourth way is to **lay out a detailed plan** for overcoming your obstacle. You may be in over your head in debt and you know that it may take a few years to get debt-free. Or you may need to develop a talent to succeed in your chosen profession. Set achievable goals and do something every day to overcome that which lies between you and your desired outcome. Invoke Tyr, stay focused and trust in the support of the Universe. Laugh a lot.

The fifth way is to **declare war**. This is the last option for a reason: You risk everything... but sometimes we need to take a risk. Invoke Thor and trust your strength. Use this option only against forces that threaten you and that cannot be reasoned with. This is not a time for laughter - it's a time for thunder.

THE DARK MOTHER ON POWER (THE SUN)

Worldly power is born of fear; Spiritual power is born of faith.

Worldly power is about controlling things and people; Spiritual power is about surrendering to the union between Divine Will and Unconditional Love.

Worldly power struggles against Nature to gain dominion; Spiritual power yields to and cooperates with Nature.

Worldly power fears ruin; Spiritual power sees the seeds of creation in destruction.

Worldly power ends when the person dies; Spiritual power is embraced and taken to the next level at physical death.

The cost of spiritual power is total surrender. Men who are not willing to pay that price sometimes try to leach power from my children. When they notice that ultimate power cannot be theirs, they often try to destroy the physical form of the person possessing that power.

True power delights in innocence and simplicity.

The spiritually powerful person is not afraid to lose face because he has no face to lose.

The sword of a spiritually powerful person is truth – compassion is his shield.

The spiritually powerful person radiates peace and joy; the power hungry person has an aura of greed and oppression.

The spiritually powerful person is inner-motivated and carries her riches inside herself. If she should lose all her earthly possessions in a fire or an earthquake she simply begins again.

THE DARK MOTHER ON HOPE AND FAITH (5 OF CUPS)

Hope is a bridge to the unseen. Hope is not passive; it keeps building that bridge to the unknown, brick by brick. A person who has lost hope is either someone who has abandoned the inner work of bridge building for temporal worldly pleasures, or someone who spends too much time staring into the abyss below.

Know that your hope lights the path for others. The hope of one person can sustain thousands.

Faith is the fortress your soul builds for the self. This is where you dwell in safety so that you are free to go exploring. He who builds his fortress of faith on love builds his fortress on solid ground - he shall not lose faith even if his fortress crumbles.

There are times when your faith and hope are tested. There is only one measure for passing the test: Run a diagnostic of your heart... Do you still love? Do not panic if love and light have gone

from your life - The Dark Mother wraps her cloak of grief around you until your heart is free to love, trust and believe again.

THE DARK MOTHER ON LOVE (ACE OF CUPS)

So you want me to teach you about love? I will make you dwell in truth and simplicity. I will strip away your pride, and although it will hurt like acid stripping the flesh off your bones, it will be worth it. You will stand naked and vulnerable before your beloved and your heart will be free to shine.

Love is known as 'the great mystery' because your earthly journey mostly teaches you what love is not, yet many of you are born knowing that you choose to incarnate on earth to learn to love.

The quest for love is ultimately a quest for freedom through surrender. Questing for love, you learn more about your shackles than anything else. Once you have freed yourself from those shackles - all that stops you from loving - you realise that you are that which you sought outside yourself. This is the aim of the Grail Quest, and this is the true meaning of the Tarot Ace of Cups.

Love is not that feeling that binds you to another person or makes you believe that they are bound to you. Love is the unknown force that gives birth to stars, galaxies and universes. Love is like the wind - you cannot see it, but you can see the effects of the power of love just like you can see and hear the leaves moving in the breeze.

Love is unconditional and sets you free. Every emotion you have is an important signpost on the path of freeing yourself from anything that hinders your full expression of love.

Everything you do as a pure creative expression of yourself, everything you say to express your truth, is an expression of love and is received as such by all of creation. You may not be able to hear the jubilant praise that springs forth from elementals, devas and angels alike... yet all of creation rejoices in songs of praise!

One of the greatest acts of love and service to the Divine that you can undertake is to encourage your fellow man to be true to himself. Compare this to what is commonly known as 'love' and you will understand that romance has very little to do with true love.

Love merges with love and is sufficient unto itself. Love does not merge for the sake of merging but for the act of creating. The act of merging cannot last any more than the sexual embrace that results in pregnancy. The state of bliss that occurs when you merge on the soul level with

another soul always contains the seed of the pain of separation. If it were not for this pain, nothing new would ever be born.

Let there be love! What is stopping you? Your ego's need to be right? Fear that it will not last? Waiting for someone to say 'sorry'? No, no, no... let there be love! Free your soul! The ones that cannot love you in return will cover their eyes and run away when you free yourself, radiant one! When enough of you have freed yourselves, the lost ones will no longer have a place to hide.

THE DARK MOTHER ON GIVING

*"No man is so generous he will jib at accepting
A gift in return for a gift,
No man so rich that it really gives him
Pain to be repaid." -- Havamal*

A healthy sense of Self and healthy personal boundaries are a prerequisite for healthy giving and receiving.

Wanting always to give and finding it difficult to receive is a sign of pride.

Someone who does not know how to express gratitude suffers from illness of both heart and mind.

There are those who will use others for their own ends. Learn to detect these people. Failing to do so may cost you your health... even your life. They will prey on your weaknesses as well as your willingness to give and help. These people cannot be helped. They must be left to their own devices. It is they who have given rise to Vampire myths and legends.

Never go back on your word when you have offered a helping hand. Doing so undermines your self-esteem and affects your health as well as your honour in the world.

When someone asks for your help and you are not sure that you are willing or able to say yes, you are in your full right to ask for some time to think about it. There is no need to make promises you cannot or do not intend to keep. There is no need for 'white lies.'

Learning the joys of both giving and receiving adds years to your life.

THE DARK MOTHER ON WITHHOLDING

There is a subtle form of abuse that has been named 'withholding.' Hell (a state of mind) is made of this stuff - frozen emotions... and emotions frozen specifically as a form of punishment.

When you withhold touch or communication as a form of punishment, you do more damage to yourself than to the one you are trying to punish. You create blocks in your energy field which lead to disease. Learning life's lessons becomes impossible.

Sometimes withholding happens simply because the person has failed to develop any other responses in the face of anger or upset. Sometimes it is more malicious - the person doing the withholding is aware that he or she is using it as a form of punishment.

It is possible to withhold both sex and friendly touch. It is possible to withhold communication. It is possible to turn a cold shoulder... It is possible to stick your head in the sand - do it long enough and suffer the consequences.

The person withholding scorns the other for their uncontrolled passion - they like to take the moral high ground, yet secretly relishing each delicious morsel of passion they have managed to extract. They become untouchable, leaving the other to question what they did wrong, wondering what they did to deserve this... wondering why they are never seen or heard. You are in this dynamic together. You have created it together in order to learn and grow.

If you are the one withholding you need to learn to communicate with the other when he or she has calmed down. Acknowledge the issue at hand, let the other person know that you see them, and reassure them that you will deal with the issue when you are both able to speak about it.

If you are the one living with someone who uses withholding as a pattern of avoidance or even punishment, you need to confront them with it when you are feeling calm and clear headed. Bring up the issue without blame. Describe the pattern and the dynamic you have discerned. If the person is ready to take action, you can continue to patiently work on it. If they are not, you need to be aware that further growth with this person is not possible: Your relationship will be as barren as the heart of the narcissist you are dealing with...

THE DARK MOTHER ON FORGIVENESS

The humble are quick to forgive, but the proud will not lay their burden down.

To forgive is not to condone, nor to forget - the act of forgiveness is putting down the burden, turning to the one who gave it to you and seeing that they are no longer only the person who gave you that burden. You free yourself to see the other with the eyes of unconditional love.

Unforgiveness binds and drains you; forgiveness frees and revitalises you.

The person who will not forgive has a sick heart and cannot learn unconditional love. The person who does not learn unconditional love has to come back to the same lessons many times.

Wisdom and understanding are accumulated in humility. A true understanding of the meaning of forgiveness makes it easier to forgive - this is why the proud cling to their burden.

The forgiving person is on an upward spiral of growth and grace; the unforgiving person is on a downward spiral of bitterness and burdens.

The forgiving person is part of the solution; the unforgiving person is part of the problem.

The forgiving person lights a candle in the darkness that the unforgiving person cursed.

The humble are quick to ask forgiveness; the proud are quick to justify their actions. It is infinitely better to say sorry once too many, than to be right at any cost.

Lay down your burdens today. My children are known for their humility. Feel my love through all of creation, and know that love prevails.

Blessed be!

THE DARK MOTHER ON TRUST

There are those of you so afraid to trust anyone that you choose isolation. You suffer in silence and vow to trust no one but yourself, yet fail to keep your word even to yourself. One day you will see that when you keep your word, you will be able to trust others also. Yes, you will be able to trust again when your own reflection does not terrify you but is met with the steady gaze of truth, valour and compassion.

Distrust is rooted in the false belief that you are spiritually disconnected from your fellow man. From your heart to the heart of your brother, you are connected with a golden thread of love and light. This thread is visible to those who view the world through the eyes of compassion.

There are souls who would not be connected to their fellow man but instead choose to prey on them. These souls are rare and weave in and out of the web of life like parasitic shadows. They cannot be healed or connected to the web. They serve the purpose to illustrate the principle and temporal illusion of evil. On the other side their soul energy is taken apart and recycled. These souls do not evolve like other souls; they are the souls of true psychopaths. Trust is not a part of their soul's vocabulary - neither is love.

Fear neither light nor shadow. Trust in things invisible and eternal. Feed your faith daily and starve your fear. Strengthen your connection to your brothers and sisters through acts of kindness and you will see that this connection is also your best protection. [ALU](#)

THE DARK MOTHER ON AUTHENTICITY

Your authenticity is raw divine power filtered through the crystal clear lens of your being.

To counsel another your lens must be clear.

The World card in the Tarot illustrates a complete return to the Self in the journey of individuation. The first joyous return to the Self is seen in the Sun card but it is not complete. In the World card is complete through recognising how the Self fits into the whole - like a thread in the great tapestry of life. In the space of the Sun card, one is comfortable in one's skin again... free to *be* and not bothered about how one is perceived by others. In the space of the World card all judgment has ceased and all of creation is included in the soul's authentic expression of compassion.

The Judgement card lies between the Sun and the World as a gateway of Divine Calling. When

you hear that trumpet you are ready to accept the calling of divine service - you are no longer here to please yourself... Our truest expression of Self is one of compassionate service for the good of all of mankind.

There is no room for false humility in an authentic person. She knows that she is unlimited perfection in a unique, limited form. She recognises her own limitations as tools for learning. Every time she masters a new tool, she rejoices in the knowledge that this mastery will also benefit others.

The authentic person radiates Divinity and recognises the Divine in others. She may therefore appear threatening to people who are hiding their true self under a mask. The fear energy coming off the mask-wearer is quickly transmuted by the authentic person who recognises the role of the mask-wearer on the great stage of life. She does not carry the fear of another in her own energy field.

Authentic people never fail to recognise each other. Their friendships are untouched by time.

Fear of death is one of the major obstacles to authenticity in the world today. People are trying to consume away their fear and this is why the planet is suffering.

Embrace me, the Goddess of Death, like I embrace you. Do not be afraid. You are all my children.