ANDRIEH VITIMUS

HANDS-ON CHAOS MAGIC

REALITY MANIPULATION THROUGH THE OVAYKI CURRENT

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THE OVAYKI CURRENT

About the Author

Andrieh Vitimus has been a practicing magician for over fifteen years in multiple systems with solid and verifiable results. He holds the highest initiatory rank in Haitian Vodou, that of Houngan asogwe, in the Roots Without End Society. He is a member in good standing of the prestigious Illuminates of Thanateros, North American Section. He has taught metaphysical classes at Alchemy Arts in Chicago for the last six years as the lead presenter and has had several store appearances throughout the

Midwest. He has taught at conventions including Aeonfest, Ancient Ways, Real Witches Ball, ConVocation, and Sirius Rising. Andrieh Vitimus's magical career, however, began with an undergraduate degree in psychology with a strong emphasis on cognitive science. He is an Usui and Karuna Reiki Master Teacher, and is working is becoming a licensed hypnotherapist. Andrieh Vitimus has been published in Konton Magazine, Silver Star, and Witch Vox. He is currently published in the Magick on the Edge anthology, the Manifesting Prosperity anthology, The Pop Culture Anthology, and the Best of Konton Magazine anthology. In addition to his formal training as a Reiki Master and Qi Gong practitioner, Andrieh Vitimus comes from a line of magically inclined individuals whose lineage includes Haitian Vodou priests, Jesuit priests, psychics, and natural healers.

ANDRIEH VITIMUS

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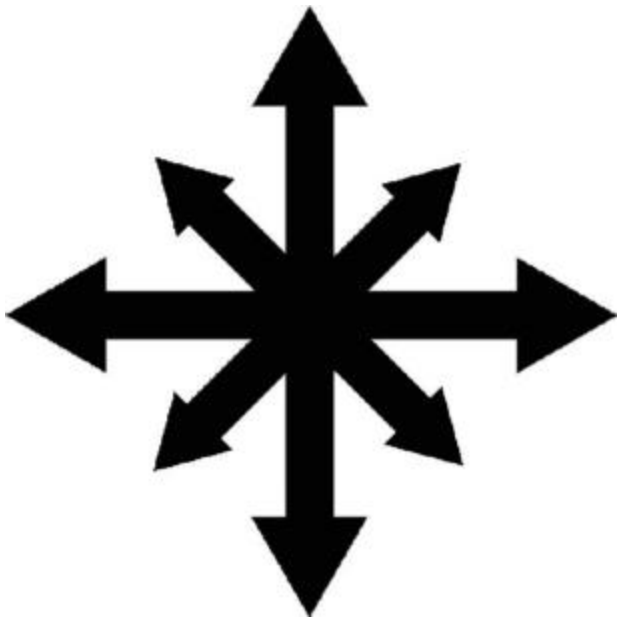

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For those who have helped me, may the gods and goddesses, angels and demons, bless you with everything you desire and more.

For those who have attempted to hold me back, for those who have mistaken my generosity as weakness to be exploited, for those who have hurt me, I let it all go, but ...

I wish you upon yourselves.

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Disclaimer, Warnings, Definitions, and Other Oddities of Writing

First and foremost, I neither claim to be unique nor special in these methodologies. I may not even be that creative, having read so many books on magic. Some of these methodologies maybe covered in other books, inadvertently. I do not think I am right, or that this book is the divine word of magical law. Likewise, I do not think that my word is the end-all and be-all of magical practice. What I offer is opinion, but it is a reasonably educated opinion. It is an opinion that I hope will inspire and in its small way help people do magic.

This book is a process of alchemy for me. It represents some of the hard lessons learned during a multi-year initiation into magic. On one hand, some of those lessons were extremely painful, and the process of this book is the pressure on the coal to start forming a personal diamond. Initiations are very difficult processes, and I was an extremely stubborn agnostic who leaned very heavily toward atheism. Magic was most of what I was in denial about, despite the fact that my entire family is into magic. While many of the exercises in this book may not be quite as traditional as most occult books tend to be, they have worked for me and others in the past.

If you are facing a real initiation, it is my sincere hope that the book will help you in some small way. By "real initiation," I distinctly mean the kind of magical initiation that cannot take place within a magical order, but more so where you alone must face yourself and a host of realizations that probably drastically alter the course of your life. Sometimes, these initiations are not by conscious choice, and I truly hope this book will help some of the people who fall into this category. This is the book that I wished I would have had while learning magic on my own.

So, What Is Magic?

This is a good question, and the first of many you have to answer on your own. In this book, I will present methodologies and example workings that may give you the tools to answer that question for yourself, not via a "book answer," but from your own intuition. Your answer should and probably will be different from mine. Aleister Crowley, in Magick, Book Four: Liber ABA, argued that magic is any intentional act of will (Crowley et al. 1994). This statement is probably a good starting point.

However, I do tend to agree that magicians are born and not made. What I mean by this is that certain individuals seem to have odd coincidences that lead them toward picking up magical training. Why these coincidences happen, I leave to you, the reader, to decide. However, all of the magicians I have talked to have had these coincidences, which have pushed them toward studying magic.

Also, there is a cost to developing and practicing magic. It is not the fantastic cost that Hollywood projects as a world of demons and horrors. Magic includes the rejection of a world of limitations and the acceptance of multiple or infinite possibilities. If taken in this context, magic liquefies the idea of causal progression. The world becomes less and less finitely determined, and the answers seem to become less and less clear. Altering just your perception of an event or action can strain your thinking, since choosing how to view an event can itself become confusing. The process of questioning limits moves a person away from the "automaton" robot (R. A. Wilson 1987). The "automaton" robot is, roughly, the set of habits and conditions that allow us to automatically complete many tasks without thinking about them. Magic can lead to isolation. The general population typically does not accept or is hostile toward magic for a host of reasons that are beyond the scope of this book.

Many books will present various formulae and magic words that "work." Very rarely will these formulae work. Understanding the mechanisms of magic will help you far more than merely reciting an incantation. My book does not present a list of simple spells, although after reading this book, you should be able to get simple spells to work without a problem.

The magician/witch often risks a lot. Shamans risked death for their initiations. Given that the notions of reality are not firm, a magician can

certainly have difficulty retaining sanity, and it is all too easy to get frustrated. Some states of mind are difficult for the conscious mind and ego to accept. Of course, success breeds its own insanity, with the god complex otherwise known as magititus. Magititus is dangerous because the magician believes that he or she is all-powerful and therefore becomes insanely sloppy.

The tradeoff here is that reality is not static. If you don't like something about yourself or your situation, you can change it. If you need something to fall in line, you can make it happen. There are many good and bad reasons to study magic, and what follows is a list of some of them.

GOOD REASONS TO TAKE UP MAGIC

1. For self-transformation or to overcome limitations.

2. It's a calling, it's "in your blood," or you're drawn to it by events in your life.

3. You have a desire to know or to be or to create.

4. You desire to change the now.

5. You are unwilling to be subservient to another master (e.g., fate or god), or you believe in the undiscovered powers of humankind.

BAD REASONS TO TAKE UP MAGIC, WHICH MIGHT HURT YOU

1. To be the bad boy or girl, or to have a rebellious image. Eventually you'll do a BS ritual, and something will listen and make itself known. (You won't be prepared.)

2. To seem powerful and great, as opposed to aspiring and working toward greatness. (See number 1.)

3. To sucker people into buying your books, which include magic you didn't even try. (Pet peeve-had to throw it in.)

Why Does the Book Have the Word "Ovayki" in the Subtitle?

While the book is titled Hands-On Chaos Magic, the word "Ovayki" refers to the intelligence of the book. It is the egregoric presence that manifested as a result of the creation process. The name itself was derived through the methods contained within the book to provide an alternate handle to the entire process that led up to the book, and the process of transforming experiences into distilled, useful information. It is the essence of the book, and a type of hypersigil in itself. This handle magically captures a work of personal alchemy in the process of writing, which involved transforming many difficult experiences into applied and practical knowledge. Those experiences bond together to form Ovayki. The subtitle Reality Manipulation through the Ovayki Current represents the set of training methods that I found most useful to change my internal and external realities, in line with the work of personal alchemy that I needed to do for myself.

What You Will Need for This Book

You definitely will need a journal. A journal gives you a historical progress report, and it gives you direction when rereading your thoughts that occurred during your meditations. Even if I do not state it, each game and exercise was created with the idea that you would co-author the technique with me, and that your own reactions are part of the technique itself. Generally, your journal will be your best friend when you believe you are not making progress, and hopefully your inspiration to keep going.

Access to a library and a computer with an Internet connection would also help where further research is required.

How to Use This Book

Hands-On Chaos Magic is not a book to be read from cover to cover in one sitting. The book teaches the magical lessons through a series of exercises, and it expects you to work through those exercises before progressing to the next exercise. The best way to work with the book is to read a couple pages, journal your experiments with the exercises, and then read a few more pages, doing the exercises and posting any questions you have to the web forum created for the book.

To get the most from this book, you should record your experience with every single exercise and plan to repeat the exercises till you feel comfortable with them.

The web forum for the book will be at http://www.andriehvitimus .com. When you have questions, ask them on the forum, since people on the forum will have been to in-person, extensive trainings and may be able to help.

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Making Time for Magic and Relaxing

The first step toward starting any magical or spiritual practice is to make the time to do it. In America, practice and work both seem like they are something like four-letter curse words, but practice can be fun. Say it with me, "Practice can be FUN." Maybe you laughed at that. Were you even able to say it out loud? Musicians don't become good musicians because they find practicing boring. Instead, every time they get a chance to practice, it is a time to do what they love.

The American culture conditions us to expect instant gratification. Artists do not become good overnight, and likewise, magic is not learned overnight. For each exercise or game, approach it not as a task but as an adventure or a clever game where there isn't a winner or loser and the process is fun. The instant-gratification idea also leads to a results-now mentality, where you place great expectations on yourself to do x. Relax. Throw out any expectations you have, and just relax.

A second major problem is the perception that we do not have the time to cultivate a skill such as magic. Work conditions, social conditions, and the economy do create a culture of worry and stress, including longer work hours, longer commutes, and less free time. With children, a fifty-hour work week, and time for a spouse or friends, it is difficult to schedule time for magic. When I first noviced in the Illuminates of Thanateros North America section, I was working full-time and going to school full-time. Additionally, for many people it often seems like all the time during the day is "owned" by someone else, whether it is at work or supporting their families at home.

The ideas of instant gratification and living to work create unnecessary expectations that keep people from studying magic or practicing visual art, poetry, music, or another type of art form that allows them to express themselves. I believe that magic is one form of expressing ourselves. We are conditioned to believe that the external world-the world of work demands,

time, money, etc.-is more important than the internal world. Rarely do we pay attention to what is going on inside our heads. Even within science and engineering, real mastery of the material-not just gaining enough knowledge to "get by"-takes a lot of time and energy that in a way reflects a love of the subject.

Most of the material in this book can be studied for just thirty minutes a day. Merely thirty minutes a day, that's it. Thirty minutes for a new life. I remember that my train ride while living in Chicago provided the perfect opportunity to meditate or do visualizations. The benefits come not from the one day of bingeing on the training, but from the continuous practice.

If you still think you don't have time, hopefully the exercises will change your outlook on that, but I would challenge you to not get on the Internet or watch television or play video games (or engage in other distractions) for one week. As we will see, making time is an art, but it will pay off.

But before we do magic and call the forces of the universe, before we manipulate reality to our own ends, well before all that jazz, we have to learn how to relax. It can be hard to give yourself the permission to listen to that internal world. The first thing you can do is set up a boundary between the working you and the budding-magician you.

Let's start getting to the games we can play to relax.

Throwing Salt Over Your Shoulder Game (Releasing the Stress)

This is a very simple exercise. Take some salt in your right hand and imagine it eating all your stress. Imagine that the salt just loves to eat the stress, and freely give it to the salt. Feel and visualize the stress flowing into the salt. If you can't visualize the stress going into the salt yet, don't worry, just believe it is working. Keep telling yourself, "The salt is eating my stress." Then, when you feel like the salt cannot take any more of your stress, throw it over your left shoulder. When you throw the salt, you are disconnecting yourself from the stress.

Part of why this exercise works is that you are setting up a good habit of distinguishing between stressed and unstressed states. This simple exercise

tells you to release the stress. This works well after just leaving the office. In any stressful situation, try this routine to feel better. Allow yourself to believe this works. At first, the hardest part of the exercise might be that you feel silly. It's okay to be silly; I do it all the time. After all, laughter heals.

For an extra-strength variant of this exercise, throw the salt into a crossroads. Use large salt crystals and a large handful. Toss it over your left shoulder into the crossroads, and then walk away and without looking back. Choose a crossroads that you don't usually pass through. Once you do this, walk away knowing that you are permanently leaving all of your stress in the crossroads. It's also possible to throw the salt into a stream, which would then take and dissolve the stress as well. This is an old hoodoo recipe (Yronwode 2002).

More Simple Routines with Value-Added Meaning

As the last example shows, by using a physical routine you can tell yourself not to be stressed. Try the salt exercise for a week, each time imagining the salt eating all your stress before you throw it. You'll see that the new routine helps to shift you out of stress mode. Similarly, you can use a physical routine to separate work from home, thus creating a mental space for yourself.

An easy way to create a barrier is to simply walk around your house with some incense and repeat to yourself, "Work is work, home is home." Sage is traditionally a good cleansing herb (Yronwode 2002). You'll find that as you add this to your routine, it gets easier to forget about your work and relax at home. It takes you out of that workspace or stressful space.

When we read fiction books, we try to suspend our disbelief about the world. For a minute, imagine you are in a fiction book, and believe that the new routine will work. Part of you will chuckle at these two exercises, and you might think, how silly. Don't let that voice throw you off. Psychology tells us that if we repeat something enough, it will become automatic. By repeating the routine, the separation between work and home will become automatic after a while.

Of course, other small routines can be used to do the same type of thing. I have a Christian witch friend who would simply wash her hands for an extended period of time right after work. This had an effect similar to that of the salt trick. She said she was washing away work from the day so that she could enjoy her family. This is a simple technique, yet it was quite effective for her.

Any routine or mini-ritual can act as a way for you to de-stress and create a "different" state from the state that caused the stress. This can be as simple as doing some sit-ups, walking around the block, or engaging in any other daily routine. As you are doing the routine, simply keep telling yourself that the stress, worries, or tension are leaving your body. Keep telling yourself that after the routine you are leaving the worries behind, and eventually they will be left behind.

Relax by Deep Breathing

Once you get through that barrier, and convince yourself at an automatic level that work and home are really separated, then what? So far, each exercise has only taken about five minutes or so.

A simple way to start relaxing is to learn how to breathe a little differently. Normally we breathe from our chest, but if you have taken a martial arts class or a theater class, you how know to breathe from your diaphragm. It is relatively simple. As you breathe, just pull the air into your lungs and watch your stomach expand, while feeling the pressure on your back. That is a sure sign that you are breathing more deeply. Don't worry about how long your breath goes in and out, merely breathe deeply. At first, you might notice your breath is not consistent, but try to just focus on getting your deep breathing to be the same in and out. Many books will refer to different breathing techniques, but don't worry about that for now. Just breathe in and out.

There isn't any way for your breathing to be wrong, but just try to breathe deeply and consistently. At first, you may lose concentration on the breathing when certain thoughts pop into your head. Those thoughts might be about stressful events that just won't go away. When a stressful thought pops up, just remember to focus on the breathing. You can deal with whatever issue comes up later. Try to just breathe for five minutes. Set a

timer. Increase the time. While you are breathing, try to minimize your movement and sit in a comfortable chair. This is your time just to breathe.

The Toilet

The toilet might seem like an odd place to think about relaxing, but the act of going to the washroom often is a great release. It is also one of the few places that your boss or co-workers might find it awkward to talk to you or make demands of you.

If it is possible, instead of just going to the bathroom, spend an extra couple of minutes just breathing. This might seem odd, but close your eyes and envision a place that is enjoyable to you.

One of the things I always do while taking a load off is to visualize all my stress leaving my body as my waste does. I will usually take a few minutes to convince myself that indeed, the stress is another waste product, and my body will simply get rid of it with the rest of the waste. I just visualize the stress as black soot that attaches itself in feces or is dissolved in my urine. Both of these exit the body with the stress. This leaves the stress in the toilet. I know it sounds amusing to talk about the magical use of feces, but this really does work. And as with other simple tricks, simply flush the toilet and let the junk wash down the pipes and away from you.

Standing in the Shower

The shower is an excellent place to relax. Instead of getting in and out of the shower in the standard five minutes (or whatever it is), try to stand in the shower for an extended period of time. While you are doing this, envision all your stress and negativity getting washed away by the running water. Try to just breathe deeply as the water is running over you.

The Ofnung (Open Door) Technique; Progressive Relaxation

The Ofnung technique has recently received a new lease on life in occult circles via such books as Space/Time Magic (Ellwood 2005), but the basic premise of this technique is very common to self-hypnosis and is known as progressive relaxation (Simpkins and Simpkins 2000).

The concept is very simple. First, find a comfortable chair to sit in. Then take a deep breath in and out while counting down from one hundred to one. Try to focus on each muscle in the body, relaxing from the toes to the muscles in the foot on up through the body. At each muscle, simply tell yourself to relax while focusing on that muscle group. Try to focus on every muscle, with one muscle group per breath. It might be helpful to imagine that as you breathe in and out, the area of muscle you are trying to relax becomes entirely white (or substitute a different color if it is particularly soothing to you).

In self-hypnosis, the counting is often dropped. In Taoist meditation, you might start from the head and neck and go down. The premise is the same in each case. You are passively trying to relax each muscle, which, in turn, relaxes your entire body.

A more active type of relaxation exercise, which has a similar premise, is also provided in self-hypnosis circles. In this more active variant, start while sitting in a comfortable chair (although this one can be done while standing as well). You can start either with the head or the toes, but try this exercise both ways. If you are starting from the top of the head, tense the top of your forehead as if your eyebrows are going through the top your head and your forehead is pushing deep into your scalp. Do this physical tensing for one full inhalation, and then completely release the muscles in the forehead on exhalation. Move on to the lower half of the face, contort and tense all the muscles on inhalation, and then let them all go. Next, contort and tense the neck and shoulders on inhalation, and then physically let them go on exhalation.

Do this for each muscle group in the body, and make sure that both the inhalation and the exhalation are deep breaths. After doing this for each part of the body, you may need to redo the relaxation technique on certain parts of the body. Computer workers, such as myself, might need to tense and release the neck and shoulders a couple times. I have personally found that a highly effective way to get my body to relax is to combine the tensing and releasing with other techniques. I imagine, through as many senses as I can, that the individual body parts relax while physically releasing the muscle tension. Once the body relaxes, the mind will follow much more easily.

Laughter as the Start of a Cure

Still having problems relaxing? A remarkably simple and effective method of relaxing is just to laugh out loud. For twenty minutes, laugh out loud and see how relaxed you become. At first, this will take a bit of effort. Try to remember a time when you did laugh, and force yourself to fake laugh. Keep laughing, and try to laugh harder and deeper. After a very short while, fake laughter will turn toward uncontrollable laughter. Try it out. How are you doing?

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Breathing

In the last chapter, we talked about some simple relaxation techniques to create a relaxed state. In fact, that relaxed state has a lot to do with both magic and meditation. Meditation, from particularly Taoist (yin) points of view, is about progressively relaxing until you are relaxed enough to focus on your body. But in yang traditions, such as Buddhism, meditation is as much about control as it is about relaxation. Originally, in Liber Null & Psychonaut, Peter Carroll outlined some basic techniques that he believed were core skills to be competent in before being admitted into his order, the Illuminates of Thanateros. There are so many resources on meditation that I cannot begin to cover them all, but these are some techniques that have worked for me. I encourage you to do your own research to discover new techniques and try them.

Controlling Breathing

There are many different types of controlled breathing, and each breathing method can have a different effect upon you, your mood, or even the way your body feels. Breath is a tool. These are fun exercises that are quite enjoyable. If you get frustrated with a technique, try to relax and have fun with it. Just relax, and try again. Some breathing techniques might not work for you. That is perfectly fine as well. Take these merely as example methods, and experiment on your own. You might find a particular pattern of breath work that has a really strong effect on your body. If it works, it is right for you.

Hermetic-Style Breathing

One particular style of breathing that I have read about in Initiation into Hermetics is to take a deep breath, inhale for a count of four, hold that breath for a count of four, and then exhale the breath for a count of four (Bardon 1999). I have tried to do this and can do it for a count of five seconds for each step as well. By deep breath, I mean breathing into the entire back and stomach, just like we did in the relaxation exercises. This breathing

technique seems very useful when done sitting or lying down, but may be a bit more difficult when walking around. Remember, don't stress out if you get the pattern slightly off at first; just keep working on it.

Try working up to thirty minutes or so without breaking the pattern. How do you feel after doing this? How does your body feel?

Hyperventilation

Hyperventilation is not usually thought of as a breathing technique. I do not recommend practicing this type of breathing for more than fifteen minutes. Hyperventilation is very simple: take increasingly shorter inhalations and exhalations while increasing the force and power of each breath. Try to get to the point where it is impossible to really get the air into your system because the breathing is too quick and shallow. How does the hyperventilation affect your mood? Your skin tone? Your heart?

Lamaze Breathing

Lamaze breathing is a technique that is often used when delivering babies. It is designed to help with pain management (and as many a woman will tell you, delivering a baby is painful as hell). The simple pattern of Lamaze breathing is the infamous hee-hee-hooooo phrase (Bevins 2006). Before the hee, a short, deep inhalation is taken. The hee is exhaled in a quick, deep, and aggressive manner. Before the hooooo, however, a long, deep, and slow breath is taken. The hooooo is then exhaled very slowly. If you have the misfortune of having some pain, try this breathing pattern. After doing this for a few minutes, how do you feel? What happens when you use this technique for controlling the pain? How does it affect your mood? What thoughts come to mind? If you have never been pregnant, what pops into your head when trying this technique?

This technique is reportedly based upon an old Qi Gong technique for pain management. I honestly could not confirm definitively whether or not it is from Qi Gong, but such breathing techniques would be common to the art.

Reverse Chi Breathing

Reverse chi breathing is a relatively difficult style of breathing because it inverts the normal breathing process. Some literature refers to reverse chi breathing as chi packing (Yudelove 2000). I can honestly only do reverse chi breathing for about ten to fifteen minutes, but when I do this style of breathing I feel super-energized. Take a deep breath in. Instead of letting the diaphragm (and thus your stomach) expand, force your diaphragm to contract. As you exhale, expand your diaphragm as far as you can. Both the inhalation and exhalation should be deep and steady. The first time I tried this, my breath was both unstable and choppy coming in and out. This is not a natural style of breathing. After some practice, however, this breathing style seems very energetic. According to Chinese Qi Gong, this method of breathing forces tremendous amounts of chi into the body. I have found that this method of breathing works best when standing up.

Fibonacci Breathing

As you start practicing different styles of breathing, it will become very apparent that even the rhythm of breathing and the pattern of breathing alone can have a very strong impact on your state of consciousness, mood, energy levels, and even physiology. Feel free to experiment, devising your own method of breathing that produces certain effects in your body. I personally have two breathing techniques that I have developed that I really enjoy and will share. The first technique is simply to deeply inhale for more than five seconds and then exhale in about half the time in a quick, deep fashion. This is much like a deep inhalation and then a quick sigh. I have found that this breathing style de-stresses me very quickly.

The second technique I have experimented with is breathing in a certain sequence. For the math enthusiasts out there, I started using the Fibonacci numbers to dictate my breathing patterns in two unique ways. The Fibonacci numbers under 100 are 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13, 21, 34, 55, and 89. Now, before you ask what the point of doing this is, I will say that the Fibonacci numbers appear everywhere in nature, from the layout of a pine cone, to the spirals of a galaxy. Any mathematics book on infinite series will include more information on the Fibonacci numbers.

One playful technique I have used is to count the number of breaths. So I inhale deeply and exhale, both for a count of five, and then do this again.

After the first two breaths, I take three five-second in-andout breaths and then hold my breath for five seconds. In the next step, I take five deep breaths in and out, and then hold my breath for five seconds. I am just breathing in the pattern of the Fibonacci series by counting my breath and then taking a break. I can never seem to count past thirty-four in this exercise.

A second technique of using the Fibonacci numbers involves the golden section. The golden section is a ratio that nature seems to use to decide the structure and patterns found in plants, leaves, and even cells. The number phi, <p (0.6180339887 ...), and the number Phi, $ (1.6180339887 ...), are both considered special numbers. (~ is the golden number. The golden number is considered the "divine ratio" and many Renaissance, Moorish, and ancient Greek architects would incorporate the ratio directly into every aspect of their work. Objects closer to the divine ratio are generally perceived to be more beautiful, and the ratio appears in many natural sources.) For me, it has not really been possible to breathe for 0.61 ... intakes, but again, the Fibonacci sequence provides a rational number estimate for cp and $ that gets more accurate as the sequence continues. The approximation is done by dividing the current Fibonacci number by the previous Fibonacci number to estimate ~, and if you are trying to estimate <p, it is the current Fibonacci number divided by the next Fibonacci number. For my breathing ability, the best approximation I can do is either a five-second deep inhalation followed by a three-second deep exhalation, or a three-second deep inhalation followed by a five-second deep exhalation. If you can do the eight-count in and the five-count out or vice versa, by all means try it. I often use this technique to put me into a deep trance state.

There are tons of sequences in nature to try. Play with breathing, and try to come up with some new breathing combinations for yourself or to share. See what effects you can produce in mood, feeling, or even thought, merely by experimenting with your breathing in new and interesting ways. Do the initial experiments for fifteen minutes or so, and assess what is going on. If a breathing experiment creates pain or seems wrong to you, stop doing it. Try a different pattern.

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Body Positions

As you were doing the breathing exercises and developing your own breathing styles, you may have noticed that certain breathing styles tend to be easier in certain body positions. Different body positions can have a major impact on your mood and mindset. Let's try out some playful experiments.

Sitting Still

Try to simply sit still and relax. Begin to breathe deeply, as we talked about, while sitting upright in a chair. Pay attention to the effect. Try not to move. Does paying attention to just your position make it more difficult to hold that position? Hold the position for as long as possible while simply letting go of any thoughts that pop into your head. Try raising your hands and placing them in a prayerlike position. How does this change the effect the position has? Now shift your arms to a crossed position. How does this change how the sitting feels?

A very common meditative position is known as the lotus position. In yoga, this position is known as the padmasana. Wills and Gimbel explain the technique as follows:

"Sit on the floor with the legs straight out in front. Bend the right leg at the knee and, holding the foot, place it at the root of the left thigh so that the heel is near the navel. Now bend the left leg and, holding the left foot, place it over the root of the right thigh again bringing the heel near to the navel. The soles of the feet should be turned up. This posture should be worked at slowly."

In yoga, the hands are placed on the knees with the index finger and thumb forming a circle. In zazen, the hands form the cosmic mudra hand position. The cosmic mudra position is simple. Place both hands in the lap with the right hand on top of the left hand. Turn the palms upward and touch the thumbs together to form a circle. The lotus position is the classic "sitting

meditation" position. For me personally, it is an uncomfortable position because my back will hurt. How does sitting in this position affect you personally?

On your own, take on different sitting positions. There are many different variants of sitting meditation positions that are reputed to cause certain effects. Don't limit yourself to other people's definitions of position. If it is painful to stay in a certain position, consider another one unless it has an effect you are looking for. For me, having fun with these games usually does not mean getting injured.

When you have tried a few different sitting positions, attempt to change your breathing. What effect does different breathing have on different positions?

Standing Still

Instead of sitting, merely try to stand still and breathe. Place your feet apart at shoulders' width, with your knees slightly bent. Just stand, relax, and breathe deeply. Let any thought just slide away. How does merely standing and breathing affect your thinking and mood? Now extend your arms and hold them out for as long as you can. How does this change the feeling? Now posture yourself like Superman ready to take off. How does this affect your mood and thinking? How does it feel to stand on one leg and lean against a building? Lean with your back against the wall, lean backward against a wall at an angle, or with one leg on a chair, try leaning against the back of the chair. Don't just try to mimic positions from martial arts and meditative displays-try to mimic your favorite fictional characters as well. How does keeping your shoulders back and your head up affect standing relaxation? How does letting your shoulders slide forward with your head down affect your mood and thinking? Try to hold a position for up to thirty minutes while simply breathing. If a standing position is painful, again switch to a different position.

Once you have experimented with a few standing positions, try changing the breaths. What is the effect if your breathing style is switched? Does it enhance the effect you found or change it? Have fun with the techniques. It is your body; look at all the wonderful effects it can produce.

Kneeling

Recovering Catholics like me are well acquainted with kneeling. One common position is to kneel on the ground with your hamstrings resting on your lower ankles. Personally, I need a pillow under my knees or this position can be very painful. The hands are placed in the cosmic mudra position described on the previous page. Remember to relax and breathe. Just let any thoughts float away. How does kneeling in this very common meditative position affect you? What happens to the effect if you sit in this position, outstretch your arms, and reach for the horizon? What if you cross your arms? Experiment and try as many combinations of different techniques as you can. As with the other positions, does changing your breathing have an effect? Now, try to kneel with your knees forming a 90-degree angle (i.e., the Catholic kneeling position). What effects does this have?

Lying Still

Of course, lying on your bed is a marvelous way to relax. There are several positions that you can lie in-see how they affect your body. Try placing your arms over your chest and your feet together as if you were a mummy. Simply breathe, relax, and let go of any thoughts that pop into your head. What is the effect of this? Any number of letters, runes, sigils, or shapes can be held in your mind while you are lying down. Experiment and have fun. Remember to stay relaxed, and if a position is painful, try a different position. For each one you attempt, try to stay in that position for at least twenty minutes and write down the effect you notice. Change your pattern of breath. How does that change the impact?

Mudras

Many systems of magic use hand positions as gestures of power. As with the other body positions, think outside the box and be creative. Now, we all know one extended-middle-finger gesture that corresponds to anger and the effect this gesture has on mood. Another common and calmer gesture is to place the hands together with all of the fingertips touching, but no other parts of the hand touching. I have seen people do this naturally when they are deep in thought. This is a simple gesture, but how does practicing it while

sitting in a relaxed position and breathing deeply affect you? How does changing the breathing affect you?

From this position, it's easy to fold your fingers in randomly or interlock other fingers. How does changing the position by interlocking different fingers change the impact? If you find an impact you like, can it be changed or enhanced by altering your breathing?

Try to think outside the box. Be creative and try new hand positions while relaxing. You might discover a new position that produces an interesting state of mind. For a homework assignment, research five or more hand gestures from different sources. In your journal, write down your results and the impact they have.

Random Dance to Discover New Body Positions

Dancing around using random gestures is a way to discover personally powerful new gestures or postures. This works when you are not focusing on any one position. Relax and move your body in random ways. Stop and hold your body in random positions. Write down and describe any positions that seem intuitively important, produce an emotional reaction, bring memories forward, or just put you in a different state of mind (S. Wilson 2004). Try to figure out what impact those positions have on you when you try the positions outside of the random dance. Make sure to try random hand positions and different breathing patterns in the dance as much as possible.

Dancing around randomly is a great way to loosen yourself up and incorporate your whole body into the magic. It helps you to get into your skin, as well as have fun with magic and a type of exercise.

More Playing Around

Going through and finding out what the impact of any position iswhether it's from a book or from your own beautifully creative mindwill give you an intuitive and personal knowledge of how the position affects you. Why take my word or anyone else's word on the matter? Try it for yourself. Your intuition on what works and what doesn't work will be far more powerful. Later on in the book, you can use the positions and breathing that you

discover in more complex rituals. That doesn't mean that your techniques will work for anyone else, since other people will develop their own toys. Only you will know what works for you and how you combine these techniques for the best results.

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Enhancing Your Sensory Perception

We can use our imagination to simulate any of the five senses. In the movie What the BLEEP Do We Know? Dr. Joseph Dispenza states that the mind doesn't know the difference between what is real and what is imagined (Arntz 2004). The same neural pathways fire if we are working with a memory, an imagined situation, or a real situation.

Some people think that they can't visualize things. Let's try a simple exercise. Think about your bedroom for a minute. What does it look like? How does it feel? How does it smell? What sounds come from your memory of your room?

People will encode information and memories with a particular sense. Many books on magic talk about visualizing, but visualization is only one sense. Imagination can work with all of them. The majority of people will use visual, auditory, or tactile senses to primarily encode information (Bandler and Grinder 1975). The imagination for any one sensory system can be built up to greater levels of proficiency and ability. It was probably very easy for you to remember your room and remember different details within your room. At first, certain types of details might have popped into your mind. Perhaps you described the room in terms of what you could feel, such as "a soft room," or in terms of what you could see. If you concentrated, those first details might lead into a different sense. The thoughts might have been a spatial representation of your bedroom, or you might have had a tactile understanding of the room, but you still had some sort of mental construct of your room. In a way, even if you had a preferred way of experiencing the room, you could probably switch to a different sense and fill in the blanks.

Going a little further, sensory imagination can be thought of as a form of mental control and focus. Control and focus are needed to do any ritual.

After relaxation, mental focus is probably the single most important part of any magical system. Let's try some focusing games.

Sight Exercise

Now that we have practiced breathing in our own way, let's combine the breathing experiments with our senses. Pick an object and stare at it. Think about and stare at one object that is inconsequential to you. The mind may begin to wander; acknowledge any thoughts that pop into your mind and let them go. Start out slowly with this exercise. Begin with five or six minutes and work up to about thirty minutes. Try this with different breathing patterns. Then try this with a symbol and then a picture. Just relax, have fun, and write down how long you were able to practice.

Sound Exercise

Relax, sit comfortably, and let any thoughts go. After about ten minutes of breathing, have a partner walk behind you and ring a bell (or use a timer). Try to not think of anything but the sound. Long, continuous sounds are better for this exercise than sharp, short sounds. Focus on only the bell's sound. Singing bowls/bells work well for this meditation, as they are not as jarring, but any repetitive sound could work. A tone generator is also an excellent tool for this exercise. Feel free to experiment with different sounds. What effects do they have on you when you are relaxing? After the novelty of the sound wears off, you may see your mind start to wander. Like the sight exercise, just keep trying to improve the length you can focus only on the sound. Remember to breathe, let the thoughts go out of your mind as you are breathing, and move as little as possible. The point is merely to experience the sound and focus on the sound.

Smell Exercise

Relax and let go of any thoughts you have while keeping your eyes closed. After about ten minutes of breathing and relaxing, have a partner walk behind you and place a scent under your nose. Try to just experience the scent without trying to figure out what it is. After you practice experiencing just one sent, try to mix scents. The goal is to remain relaxed while experiencing the scent. Initially, the novelty of the smell will hold your

mind's attention, but that may wear off after a minute. Try to work up to thirty minutes of focusing on merely the smell, releasing any other thoughts that come into your mind. Relax and have fun.

Touch Exercise

Relax, breathe, and clear your mind with your eyes closed. After you are relaxed, have your partner touch some area of your skin in a nonsexual way. Try to concentrate only on the sensation of being touched. What happens? This is a very pleasant exercise that you can apply in other intimate situations as well. Be creative. For the truly sensuous, try kissing various plants, body parts, stones, books, and any other objects you can think of. The lips are very sensitive in both sexes, and kissing is a connective experience that allows the mind to focus on tactile pleasures. (Warning: playing around with this exercise has been known to cause more intimate, playful, and intense experiences with your desired partner.) Work up to thirty minutes, concentrating only on a physical touch. Think about the sensual possibilities of being able to focus on the sensation. After you have experienced skin-to-skin touch, try different objects like a feather, a rock, or anything else with a unique texture. Remember to experiment and write down your experiences in your journal.

Taste Exercise

Relax with your eyes closed for ten minutes, and then have a partner place some flavor or spice on your tongue. Try not to figure out what the flavor is. Merely experience the sensation. Remember, you are trying to build your focus. Move as little as possible. If memories pop up, let them go and continue with the exercise. Keep trying this with different sensations. After you have experimented with simple flavors, attempt to focus on tasting more complex foods while relaxing and breathing.

Imagining the Sensations

Isolating the senses and trying to focus on any one sensation is in itself a useful technique to start building up the imagination in that sense. Let's go back to the previous exercises. In each game, try to experience the sensation and then, in your mind, re-create the sensation. Try to keep repeating just the

sensation in your mind over and over for twenty to thirty minutes. Try using different but similarly simple sensations, recreating them in your mind after you experience them and then trying to re-create the sensations for an extended period of time.

Attempting to re-create one or two of your senses may be easier to do at first. We shall cover the reasons for this in the next chapter. After you have done the simpler sensations, try experiencing and recreating more complex sensations. For sound, you may work from a musical chord up to part of a melody and then to an entire song. For your visual senses, it might be a good idea to work up from a line to symbols to full pictures and three-dimensional objects, and then maybe finally up to full scenes, like those in a movie, play, or TV show.

Mantra Focusing

Instead of listening to a bell or crystal singing bowl, write down a phrase and repeat it. Again, relax and let any thoughts you might have flow out of your mind. Breathe and try not to move. Make sure the phrase makes no sense to you. If you prefer, try various New Age/metaphysical chants such as Aum, Zazas Zazas, or Nasatanada Zazas. Every religion has some phrase or catch phrase (not in English or another language you know) that you can repeat. Although this seems easy, pay attention to the phrase you are repeating. You may notice that after a time it may start to morph and change. Just take a breath and start over. Record how long you can go before the phrase morphs or before you become mentally distracted. Keep working on this until you can get to about thirty minutes. Remember to relax; there is no race with these exercises. Just keep working at them. You will get better as you do this. After picking some known phrases, try to do this with some random combinations of syllables. Choose the combination of syllables and then repeat that combination. Note in your journal if a combination has a certain effect for you.

As with the other exercises, try to experiment with your breathing while working with the combinations of syllables. Do different thoughts pop into your mind, or do you have different sensations? Does changing your posture change the effect of some of your new syllable combinations?

Building Visual Imagination for Symbols

Sit down in a comfortable position and relax. Breathe deeply. Visualize a line in front of you. The line can be any thickness, length, or color you prefer. Try to hold this line in your mind for as long as possible. This exercise seems very simple on the surface, but as you are trying to visualize the line you may notice that you get distracted or that the line changes. Again, we are trying to build control and focus. See how long you can go without the line changing. This takes practice. I had trouble with this when I started, and I often go back to this exercise when I am losing focus.

After you can focus on the line for thirty minutes or so, try two lines, and then three lines, and then more complex symbols like the infinity sign, a pentagram, runes, or whatever symbol you would like to focus on. Try to stare at the symbol for up to thirty minutes as well. Keep journaling. This exercise does take a bit of practice. Relax, and don't worry about the day-to-day progress; you will see progress in the journal over time.

Kinetic Touch/Gesture Exercise

Motion is also a form of tactile stimulation. The patterns of dance or the martial arts involve a fair amount of focus with remembering each step or move. For instance, in Qi Gong, each form has a different series of events to remember. Although this is not a book on yoga or Qi Gong, the importance of movement in some forms of magic and the concentration needed to do certain combinations of gestures do help the mind focus (and they also help the mind focus in concert with the body).

Pick a simple gesture, such as waving hello. Try it once. Much of the gesture will depend on what position your body is in. As you repeat the gesture, how does it feel? Does the motion change slightly as you are doing it repetitively?

Pick a couple of simple gestures and combine them. Try to start with two simple gestures and then move to more. After doing two simple gestures, do the gestures change? What is your limit of combining gestures together before it gets too difficult to remember or concentrate? Remember to stay relaxed with this.

Try to repeat the same gesture for thirty minutes. After the initial novelty of the situation wears off, you may see your mind potentially changing the gesture slightly. Start very simply, practice for thirty minutes (remembering how the gesture feels as well), and then add complexity to the gesture. Students of the martial arts will recognize that their forms are a series of exact gestures. Try to work up to more complicated and difficult series of gestures. Experiment. Again, this is a process, and this exercise in particular focuses on will over body. Remember to write down each attempt and the aftereffects in your journal. Try to practice some gestures or movements you find via a Google search.

Feel free to move your body in all sorts of ways-random, meaningless gestures. How do these seemingly random movements affect you? Do some gestures have an impact on you? Does a certain gesture change your mood, or does it change your thinking? If you find a gesture like that, make sure to write it down (S. Wilson 2004). Once you do a few experiments with one gesture, experiment and combine sequences of random gestures.

Of course, after this, try to see whether changes in breathing or posture, or even holding a mudra, change the effect of the dance sequence or the random sequences of gestures (if it's possible to hold a mudra or change postures-some gestures can only be completed in a certain posture). Free yourself to experiment. You will have some interesting results; write down the combinations that you find useful.

Combining Senses

Once you have practiced and can effectively re-create complicated sensations in one of the senses, you can then start to recombine the senses. First, start with one sense, and then add a second, different sense (like an image, tactile sense, or taste). Be creative. Try different combinations of senses within your mind. Start with simple combinations, and then move to increasingly more complex combinations.

After you have practiced with two senses, move toward three senses together, and then try four and possibly five.

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6

Using Cognitive Science and NLP in Our Magic

Generally speaking, NLP (neuro-linguistic programming) is a system to study how people encode information and perception into memory and, in some cases, meaning. Neuro refers to neurons, or the five sensory systems through which our bodies receive input. Linguistic refers to how our language models our internal world. Programming is a term from computer science regarding the construction of applications that respond in exact ways to input. NLP sees thoughts and feelings as habitual programs of response to inputted stimuli. The metaphor is that the mind itself is a computer. This particular idea is not entirely new, as both behaviorist and cognitive perspectives in psychology adopt similar ideas that the mind merely responds via habit or conditioning.

NLP has some core assumptions that are slightly different in different books, including NLP: The New Technology of Achievement (Andreas and Faulkner 1994), but they come down to the same ideas.

The first premise is very important. Essentially, this supposition asserts that your experience of the world is not the world. The perception of the world is not the world. Your model and perception of the world is not the world. Many other occult authors have repeatedly pointed out that your perception of the world has an impact on the world you live in. Donald Michael Kraig has an Identify, Objectify, and Banish ritual just to alter perceptions in the world (Kraig 2004). Personally, I have given lectures on changing perceptions as well. The map or model of the world is never the world. This, in practical terms, means that your perception is never the world.

The second general across-the-board idea is that we encode our experiences into memory using the five senses, and the patterns those senses make determine the general meaning of the experiences. Most NLP books will call this the structure of the experience. A related but unlisted correlative

of this tenet is what makes NLP so powerful. For our adventure, that means experiences are made up of information. Changes to the actual, remembered sensory information-or to the order of how the senses are put together-alters the experience you had.

As we have already seen in many of our exercises, there is a lingering and lasting effect. Trance states and relaxation take a minute or two for us to come out of. Neurotransmitters do get released when we attempt meditation or magic. The mind doesn't really know the difference between a memory and a fantasy, and it produces the same neurochemicals whether the experience is from a memory, a fantasy, or an actual experience. In many cases, neurological studies indicate that the brain does not know the difference between the two states of consciousness, although the ego/consciousness assigns a different label to the different states of consciousness, which again refers to the structuring of the experience (Arntz 2004). Taking this a bit further, we come to the conclusion that there is little or no separation between the mind and the body. As author Andy Bradbury would say, "Your mind and your body are indivisible parts of the same system" (2008).

Other assumptions that NLP uses include the following:

- You are always communicating (and the end result gives you the meaning of that verbal or nonverbal communication).

- You must try different things if what you are doing isn't working.

- All failure is merely information you can use to achieve your goal or steer your direction.

- You have the needed internal resources to accomplish any goal (but that doesn't mean you know how to use it, or where to find it inside). This idea is based on the fact that you learn all the time.

- Any experience, talent, or skill one person has can be carefully studied, modeled, and transmitted to a different person by relating one person's map of the world to another person's map of the world.

Usually, more is more in NLP, meaning that the more sensory data and the greater the intensity of those experiences, the greater weight we give them. Given that the brain does not know the difference between a memory and an event, for reality manipulations, the greater amount of sensory information and the intensity of the information will help to convince the brain that even an imagined experience is real. This only works when the sensory information is consistent with the chosen theme for an experience. NLP: The New Technology of Achievement gives an exercise where you apply a soundtrack to an experience and then rerun the experience with a soundtrack that mismatches the experience (Andreas and Faulkner 1994). Try this. Merely by changing the soundtrack, you associate the experience with something incongruent, and you can change and lessen the impact of the experience.

Generally what this means is that we can lessen the effect of negative experiences by making the senses involved with the memory seem less vivid. So make the colors duller or even black and white. Imagine heavy feelings becoming less heavy. Imagine viewing the situation as if it were a movie instead of seeing the situation through your own eyes. Step back from the memory and, if possible, perceive it as a snapshot on the wall. Anything that reduces the sensory weight of an experience can reduce its impact on you. You have to experiment with this to understand it. Take an experience that you believe had a large impact on you in a negative way, and see what you remember about it. Write down the details. Then take an experience that had little impact on you (such as a morning commute), and compare this experience to the negative experience. What happens when you make the more extreme experience look and feel like the everyday one in your memory?

My fellow adventurer, I encouraged you to look up more resources about NLP and the NLP suppositions from an Internet search. Many of these ideas are encapsulated in the games and exercises of this adventure.

Enhancing Positive Experiences

Poll your associates and friends. Gather some experiences that they were really happy for you about. These could be any types of experiences. Choose two experiences from this list. Before starting, relax, breathe, and clear your

head. First, choose an experience that you deem very important and also one that other people may have enthusiasm for, but you personally are neutral toward. Revisit each experience. Record all the sensations you can remember about the positive and important situation. How does this compare with what you can remember from the neutral event?

In your mind's eye, try to add information to the neutral event until it has as much sensory input as the more important event. If you see the neutral event, move yourself from watching the event as an observer to becoming an active participant. As a participant, keep adding details until there is roughly the same amount of details as the more important event. Try to add details in a way that is similar to the types of details you remembered regarding the first event. While relaxing, just add details that seem to make sense for the scene, regardless of the accuracy.

Check the results a few days after the experiment. Relax, clear your mind, and breathe. Try to remember the second experience now. Does the second experience seem to have more information contained in the memory? How do you feel about the second experience? How does the second experience now compare to the first? What details or ideas came about from revisiting and working with the second experience? Of course, if either this experiment or the last experiment didn't work, try a different visualization.

A Quick Modality Introduction: Improving Your NLP (and Magic) Abilities

In NLP, everyone has one or more sensory channels that have a greater impact on his or her encoding of experience than other channels. This is referred to as a modality, and in general people will encode information in one of the five senses. Usually, a person will have one sense that is the primary way he or she incorporates data. Some people will use a primary sense to incorporate their experiences, while other people will switch depending on which situation or type of situation they are in. NLP will switch which sense is used in which situation in order to help people adapt to it.

Many magic books assume a visual orientation. This can be a tremendous problem for people who do not work well with the visual modality. Magic

can be worked from any of the senses. If there are any examples that do not resonate well with you, try to rework them into your preferred sensory modality. For instance, instead of seeing a pentagram, carve and feel it in the air, and listen to the buzzing and whizzing sounds it makes.

From this magician's point of view, it is optimal to develop all the sensory encoding abilities for all the senses. In fact, to develop the ability to use your imagination in all five senses or at least multiple senses is a great empowerment to magic. Your brain will believe the magic is more real. However, each person will use a certain sense more strongly to encapsulate information in the experience. Several exercises in the later parts of the book attempt to work on this exact point. Once you get past yourself, the subconscious mind can be the greatest magician of all (Carroll 1987).

A simple technique for discovering your preferred modality for a given situation is to simply consider the words you use to describe that situation. Words like "I see" and many visual cues indicate a visual modality. Tactile words or "feelings" like "weight," "carve," "hard," etc., indicate a kinetic modality. Verbal words or phrases such as "I hear" or "can you hear what I am saying?" indicate an auditory modality. It is beyond the scope of this book to dive deeper into the details of NLP. However, even by looking at how you describe a situation, you can see that there is a preferred method of encapsulating the memory in one of the five senses. Now, try to pick a memory that is not entirely positive. How do you describe this event? Write down the description. Is there a preferred sense or modality that is tied to the memory? I want you to sit down and rewrite the memory using a totally different sense. If you had at first written out the memory using terms like "the weight," "crushing," etc., which are all tactile and feeling modalities, write out the memory using only verbal cues like "colors," "I see," etc. Rereading the memory, how do you feel about the experience? When you are starting out, though, do try to include details from the sense you are the most comfortable with in your workings.

A Wee Bit of Anchoring/Operant Conditioning

Anchoring is another very useful technique, but really, anchoring is merely a form of conditioning well known to cognitive science, behaviorism, and psychology. The idea is very simple. A gesture, word, scent, or bit of sensory

information can be conditioned to re-create a state of mind, especially if that state of mind leaves a strong enough impression or if an anchor is repeated enough. Our minds don't always remember the event that caused the original link, and it may produce the state of mind outside of the original context.

An example of this would be if someone got hit in the stomach while eating a red berry. Even the sight of a red berry might trigger the pain in the stomach or at least trigger the memory of the experience. (For very traumatic events, or when a person is in an altered state of conscious ness, he or she may not remember the original events at all and what is triggered is only a state of mind.) Realistically, we have many more anchors than we are aware of. Often one situation will trigger an emotional response or a certain state of mind because it has tangential surface details similar to a past experience. Essentially, our subconscious mind can slip back to that mental state and generate it in our current mindset without conscious intervention. Therefore, the subconscious mind acts as if the situation is exactly the same, and in trying to "protect" you, it brings back the emotional/intellectual effect.

Earlier in our adventure, we used some relaxation techniques known as progressive relaxation. Let's go back to those experiences for a minute. Try to redo the open-door exercise, but as you finish the exercise, press the thumb of your right hand to the index finger of your right hand with some pressure. Continue to stay as deeply relaxed as you possibly can, while holding your index finger to your thumb. Now, stand up, wait a few minutes, and then, again using your right hand, press your index finger to your thumb. What is the effect? Any experience or the memory of the experience can be anchored to a symbol, word, gesture, smell, or taste to produce a state of mind.

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Looking at Ourselves

Pattern-Finding Exercise

Before we can know what to banish, let's look at our patterns a little. Over the next week, try to be more conscious of the routine you do on a daily basis to the point of which toothpaste you prefer, which deodorant, etc. Pay attention to any physical patterns or patterns of thought that come up, advertisements or slogans, or anything that was said to you during the week. Write down everything from your routine right after you do the tasks. Verify that you are not skipping the act of writing down any parts of the routine by conferring with your loved ones and colleagues. If you skip something that was part of your routine, make a note of it. After you do this for five days, revisit the items you skipped. Is there any pattern of the things you skipped writing down? Are there habits or patterns of thought in the routine that serve no beneficial purpose to you? Think about how many of the things in the routine are done just because of the routine. Record your thoughts in your journal.

After the five days, attempt to break part of the routine that does not have a physical addition component (for example, cigarettes or coffee). How difficult is this? Write your thoughts in your journal from this experiment. For a really tough routine breaker, try having your cigarettes or coffee or even chocolate at different times or not at all. Again record your thoughts in your journal. If the craving or compulsion is truly difficult to overcome, try to relax and visualize any thoughts that pop into your head (which will probably be "I need x"), imagine pushing those thoughts into a log (or carve the thought onto a log), and then imagine burning the log in a campfire you mentally create in front of you. (How does that campfire look, smell, and feel?) After you throw the log into fire, just allow yourself to relax. Do some of these habits seem to have a life of their own, and how does burning them in the campfire seem to change the power of the habit?

Create another log and fill it with the memories of any disturbing experiences you might have had. Imagine holding this log. What does the

log smell like, what does it look like, and what does it feel like? Imagine the images of the scene getting sucked into your log. Remember how the experience made you feel, how your body felt, and let that get sucked into the log. Let the log absorb anything you remember hearing. Now how does the log feel, look, and smell? Throw this log into the fire. If you get rid of the negative experiences using the log, how do you feel after doing this for a week?

Looking at Your Own Internal Voice

We all have internal voices. What do your voices say to you? Are the voices helpful? Or do they demean you and make you feel that you can't do something? We all have this internal self-talk, which can help or hinder us. Sometimes the negative self-talk is so embedded into our psychological makeup that it can be subconscious. Sometimes a pattern or habit may seem automatic but doesn't make sense. First, be honest with yourself about your own voices. Everyone has negative and positive internal voices. However, the self-defeating voices drain your confidence as well as your emotional well-being. Often, many of these voices will have originated outside of the individual and, like a virus, will infect the person with self-doubt as well as tendencies or desires that are self-defeating. For example, how many people struggle with their body image?

The first step is to go back and listen to your internal voice. Really hear the different voices in a situation. If you find that a voice that is saying something that is discouraging or self-defeating, stop, breathe for a couple minutes in the manner we talked about, and then visualize throwing the thought and that voice into the fire or banish it.

This could simply be a thought that expresses "I will never y" or "I am not x enough." Insert your negative adjective for y or x. These voices are learned habits, and to recognize, stop, and get rid of these voices is also a learned habit that gets easier as you practice. It won't happen overnight, but over time you will see progress. Remember, there isn't a time limit, you are not in a race, and you should relax at each point. Getting stressed over a negative thought only strengthens the thought. Even if you have the thought 1,000 times, maybe the 1,001st banishing will break the habit of the thought. Just keep trying, and remember that this is a journey and a process, not a goal.

Breaking the Psychic Censor

Carlos Castaneda went so far as to write that voices from the outer darkness gave us or put part of their minds into all of us, so that we would be easy prey and ignorant of the "real world" (1972). Well, whether or not there are lizard beings encapsulating us in their predatory embrace is debatable. But there definitely does seem to be a barrier to the spirit world, weirdness, synchronicity, etc. Collectively, we are trained to believe that there is no "magic" and that our thoughts cannot change the "real world." Children are taught that make-believe is bad. Sooner or later, we all stop believing we can dream. We have a psychic censor, which is an internal influence that limits our conception of what is possible regarding magic and spirituality. When you believe something is not possible, it is not.

Banishing those phrases and beliefs the moment they pop up in your mind will start to decondition the negative conditioning that has been strongly reinforced and supported by our cultural environments.

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Conditioning Success

Rewarding Yourself

Many magical texts, including this one, use draconian methods to teach the mind discipline and control. These methods are sometimes effective, but there are other ways to induce results.

Kicking Your Mind's Ass and Then Giving It Candy

The focusing exercises that appeared earlier in our adventure can be difficult. The mind likes being lazy, since we all have a lot to think about. One way to counteract the revolt against this sort of discipline is to bribe yourself. For instance, if you can sit, relax, and be mentally silent for five minutes one day, and then the next day you can work up to six minutes, give yourself a treat. Every time there is improvement, treat yourself. If you really enjoy chocolate, only allow yourself chocolate if you succeed at doing better (although given our society's flawed weight image, perhaps choosing something else is more appropriate). Sex (even self-pleasuring) is another highly effective bribing tool. Any addiction, habit, strong like, etc., you have can be used as a reward to bribe yourself into better performance at first. The most important thing when you are starting out is to begin the habit of daily practice and get yourself to do that however you can.

For the psychology majors reading this, this is a type of behavioral conditioning that works at a low level. Both your conscious and subconscious minds understand this. It is a good idea to switch the "reward" often to different things you like. If you don't switch the reward to different things, you will condition the improvement to the reward and entrench that reward as a needed addiction. Psychology will tell us that the best way to get results is to use intermittent and random rewards of varying strength.

For the first two weeks, reward yourself. This helps to set up a pattern and your mind will adapt to it. After the two weeks, tell yourself that a big

reward is coming. The mechanism of reward is a bit tricky, but two six-sided dice work well for me.

The Dice Game of Training

You will need two different-colored six-sided dice. The rules of this game are very simple. Make yourself a list of rewards. Break the list into two categories: big rewards and small rewards. The things you really want should be on both lists. Have a couple big rewards that are truly jackpot rewards such as a new iPod (provided you can afford one). The jackpot rewards on the big list should be rare-within your means to get but difficult to obtain. The big rewards might be bought stuff or simply things that you do not get to do often that you really enjoy. The small rewards could be things that generate minor enjoyment, such as getting an ice cream cone. Mark and number these two lists and carry them with you. Each morning, pick a combination for the small and large list. So if you had purple and black dice, an example would be to pick two for the purple one and five for the black one. The purple die would represent the small list, and black die would represent the large list.

If during the day you practice an exercise you are working on, and you obtain better results than the day before and complete what you need to get done during the day, you get to roll the die associated with the small list. When you roll the die, if your number matches the number you choose for the small list, you get to have that thing. Now, if you were successful in obtaining an item off the small list, roll your die associated with the big reward list. If your number matches the big reward list number you picked in the morning, randomly select a big reward. It is very important that these are randomly selected-you are only cheating yourself if you're not doing the selection right. You have to tell yourself to do everything you need to get done in the day if you want to reward yourself for both practicing magical studies and being a fully functioning human.

In America, we do not live in a world where we have the option of practicing meditation for twelve hours a day, so we have to be able to survive and prosper in this world as an indication of magical success. Life, work, magic, and play should all be in balance. If you roll a jackpot, go to the store and get the item, or set up the steps to have the experience (if the

jackpot item is a trip, service, or meal). As you are enjoying your reward, keep telling yourself that it is because you have been practicing and are getting better. Do not do this exercise with magical rituals or actual magical rites, only practice and training exercises.

The key is to not allow yourself to have items on either list you made unless you roll the dice. This means that you are successfully balancing things in your life while getting better at practicing as well. This kind of gambler's reward system actually is more inducing and compelling than rewarding yourself for every success. No matter what, however, you should pat yourself on the back every time you see progress. Before I started playing this game, I rewarded myself every time I improved, but this was costing too much money. Randomizing rewards is psychologically a cheaper and more effective way to induce a new habit. When you start doing magical rites for things in this world or for illumination, every success should be celebrated and rewarded. Make a big deal out of your successes and remember them.

Using Setbacks

NLP and psychology both state that there is no failure, only feedback. Martial artists practice all the time for the one time that it really matters. Practicing magic is very similar for me. I practice all the time for the situations when the magic must work, and by "must work" I mean the situations that push you to the breaking point. (Sometimes you have to break to get better, by the way.)

Failures, when you are practicing or doing magic for things you only sort of want, are a kind of feedback. Every time something does not work, think about what happened and come up with positives and negatives to the situation and write them down in your journal. If you think about it, every experience can give you some feedback if you let the experience speak to you. Were you not clear on what you wanted? Was there outside resistance? Was the timing off? Did you not do the things you needed to back up the magic with actions in this world? Carefully examine your ritual experiences and magic experiences to get a sense of what worked tremendously well and what didn't go so well. Try to get some distance from the situation.

Look at what patterns in your life seem to produce better results. It might be as simple as noticing that you practice better at 8 a.m. than at 8 p.m., or that you seem to get better results practicing in a forest than in your room. That is information hidden in the pattern of your journal that you can look at to figure out how to improve your results. In the room example, perhaps a few plants will make it more comfortable. For instance, I always get better results meditating to music than silence. I choose very soothing music, but the silence doesn't quiet down my mind. Now, for challenges, I meditate in silence, since that pattern also displays a weakness. Again, information is information, and you can use every bit to become better at magic.

Using Successful Holographic Affirmations

When you have free time, another trick that is highly effective is to imagine, with all five of the senses, successfully performing rituals and achieving results. This exercise should be done in the daydream level of trance. This is to mentally prime yourself so that you will be successful in your magical acts. Pick random situations and random rituals in the daydream state. Add as much detail as possible to the visualizations, and see yourself succeeding at the rituals and getting real-world results.

Of course, this exercise works just as well for mundane skills and practices. Whatever your goal may be, you can prime yourself by visualizing success in that area before attempting to achieve that goal.

"I Can" Exercise

For a week, in every situation that permits it and once every twenty minutes during the waking day, just say "I can." Obviously, use your discretion and apply this only to things you want to do (saying "I can do it" to somebody who is trying to manipulate you is not going to help you). But for any situation in which you want to do something, say out loud, "I can," and then continue to do this every twenty minutes or so. Does it matter what you think you can do? Nope ... because you can do anything. This exercise is in line with the earlier NLP chapter as well; adding the information of "I can" to any situation will have an impact on the meaning of experiences you have.

How did you feel after a week of doing this exercise? After a month?

Being Honest with Yourself

This chapter marks a turning point in the book. The process of selfexamination will be a consistent tool. Everyone indubitably will lie to themselves at some level; however, you consciously have to try to be honest with yourself. Convincing yourself that you want something you don't want will not improve your life any more than an athlete can help his performance by convincing himself that his rib isn't broken (when it is). We have to acknowledge what limitations we might have. These limitations and difficulties are challenges that want to be overcome, and in overcoming them amazing things become possible.

Just sit and start to think of anything that you want. Ask yourself why you want that thing or experience. Does the desire come from within you, or is it more of a response to advertising? What needs are fulfilled by what you want? What strengths do you have that could help you obtain what you want? What weaknesses hold you back? Ask yourself questions, meditate, and think about what you would need in order to obtain what you want for yourself or others. Before you do any magic, it is critically important to know what's inside yourself, and several of the next chapters will discuss that very topic.

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Energy Manipulation I

Now that we have had some practice focusing and relaxing, let's move on to something more interesting: energy manipulation. Energy manipulation combines visualization, breathing, and in some cases gestures to create effects in healing, influence, or even strength. Let's go over some basics.

Flow Game

Relax. Rub your hands together until you feel them start to tingle (or some other sensation-the important thing to note is that they feel different). It is very important for you to record as much as you can about what the sensation is. Your hands should be red or pink. Separate your hands until you can no longer feel the sensation. It does not matter if they are not separated much, just as long as they are separated. Record the distance between your hands (just estimate it; again, don't worry if it is small or large) in your journal. Write down any impressions you feel. (What is the sensation like? Does there seem to be a direction to the sensation?) Remember, have fun.

After practicing this, begin to track the distance you are measuring between your hands. You may start to feel that there is a consistent direction of flow. You may be able to see a flow, you may "feel it," or you may even hear a current. Note which hand the energy seems to come out of and which one it goes into. Record what your perceptions are of your giving hand and your receiving hand. Repeat this exercise till you can separate your hands as far as your arms can spread and still feel the tingle.

Switch Palm Game

In the previous exercise, there was probably a direction of flow between your hands. If you look back in your journal for the last exercise, after practice you could perceive a difference between your hands. You imagined that one hand was projecting energy and the other hand was receiving energy. You already know what receiving energy and projecting energy means to you. Imagine switching the roles of your hands. Take what was

your receiving hand and imagine what it would be like to project from that hand. You may notice that if you have a lapse of concentration, the direction of flow will reverse; this is natural. Be patient, relax, and regain focus. Remember to have fun with it.

Energy Ball Game

In the last two exercises, you were concentrating on getting the energy out of you and flowing back into you. In this exercise we want to combine both flow games. In this game, place your hands about four inches apart. Instead of having the flow go from one hand to the other hand, imagine that you have a flow pushing out from both hands into the space between them. A good metaphor is if you have two water hoses turned on and spraying water out into a central point. When you stop energy from flowing into the space, you should still be able to feel the edges of the space, perhaps via a little tingle, temperature shift, or other sensation. You may be able to see something in between your hands (if you close your eyes), or you might even feel that the energy in between your hands has weight. Record any sensations you have. Attempt to keep putting more energy in between your hands till you have a "perception" that this "ball" of energy looks bigger or feels bigger, or you know it is larger.

Now that you have a lump of energy in between your hands, we are going to give the energy form. Close your eyes. Feel the unstructured energy lying in your hands. Imagine the energy as very lumpy PlayDoh. Form the protoplasm into a sphere. Visualize and feel the sphere growing harder and more solid. When I do this, I will physically compress my hands around the sphere to compact the energy. Try to add as many different senses as you can until the sphere feels more real to you. Continue to do this until the ball holds its own shape without you actively holding it together. It may take several tries. Record each attempt in your journal; in particular, pay attention to how solid the ball feels or looks. Record the texture of the ball you made, its color, etc. Write down any other information that comes to you. Repeat this exercise with a partner after you have practiced a bit, and see if you can verify that he or she can "sense" the ball in your hands.

Let's take this a little further. Imagine a playground rubber ball or handball. What does a rubber ball feel like? What does it look like? What

does it sound like when it bounces? What texture does it have? What color does it have? Try to write down as many details using as many senses as you can. Create the sphere again and then imagine that the new ball has the details you wrote down. Imagine throwing it in the air and catching it. Try this with a partner or two. If the ball loses its form, just remake it and have fun.

Simple Grounding

This is a very common exercise in energy healing and New Age classes, and it does work. Visualize any pain, anxiety, or negative emotion as some energy within your body. Give this negative emotion a color and a shape.

Visualize yourself forcing that color down through your feet and into the floor (or earth) while you become a white light. See the energy flow out from you into the core of the planet, and then feel the energy return to you without any context of negativity.

At this point, I personally like to combine this visualization with the notion of a waterfall of light. I will imagine what a shower feels like, looks like, and smells like at the perfect temperature and pressure. I will imagine the shower becoming a full waterfall and then a column of light (with all the properties of that waterfall). As this column of light cascades over my body, I see any colors or shapes that I associated with the negativity washing away until I have a body of pure, radiant light.

Before starting or after finishing an energy exercise, this cleansing is a useful habit. I find myself augmenting this technique with the NLP tools and using this idea whenever I am stressed or upset. When you are practicing the energy exercises, try to be as relaxed as you can, and use techniques like this (and, later, banishings) to clear your head as much as possible.

For Each of These Games, Go Forth and PLAY!

Does breathing differently affect the flow or the strength you feel? Does maintaining a certain posture seem to help? When you are sending energy between your hands, try visualizing the flow of energy as a specific color. Does this change the effect? Is there a certain color that, with the energy

flow, seems to have a specific effect? Does visualizing this with a color affect your mood? Try experimenting with this exercise using both breathing techniques and different colors to visualize the flow.

After you have experimented with the color, use some of your phrases that have an effect and do this exercise. Does chanting a mantra or phrase you have found cause the flow to have a different effect? Does holding a certain position change how you perceive the energy?

You are only limited by your imagination with the types of combinations and experiments you can try with this. Make sure to write down any combinations that seem to produce an effect, even if it is not a completely positive effect. Be bold and play.

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Creating Your Own Banishing, and Banishing Examples from Andrieh's Grimoire

Every system of magic and religion I have studied incorporates some method of purifying the individual and a space. Clearing a space of external spirits is a very important part of banishing, but so is clearing the mind. Banishing is generally a way of getting into the mindset for further ritual, but in hoodoo and some African traditions, cleansing rituals are important for witches, shamans, and priests to function in a magical capacity (Yronwode 2002).

From the energy exercises, you might notice that your state of mind does have an impact on the character, feel, look, etc., of the energy you are generating, producing, and directing. You might even have noticed that doing the energy work while in a negative state of mind only adds to that state of mind. In practical terms, banishing is a method of clearing the information out of your mind and priming yourself for the act of doing magic. For me, regular banishing has yielded positive health benefits, a reduction in stress, and a stronger auric presence. Banishing helps in sensory imagination training, and it utilizes all of the energy exercises in a more complex way that leads to larger and more complex rituals. A banishing is another ritual to indicate a change and separation from the normal waking world to the magical world, in the same way we used the salt or other procedures to mark a separation from the work mindset.

Making Your Own Banishing (Some Fast Guidelines)

1. Use what you know, metaphysically as well as in the mundane world. For example, I mentioned the one witch I knew who washed her hands to get rid of "evil" spirits. I like anime, so I use some of those symbols and images, as well as concepts from computer science, physics, movies, fiction, etc.

2. A banishing should ready you to do magic and declare the space you are working in as magical or sacred space. Family members should know that you are now in a sacred space. If you usually have the TV on 24/7, shut it off. Music for the task should be specifically chosen with intention. You should mentally and physically be declaring the space you are working in as a different space from the mundane world.

3. The banishing should help you step into the magical persona via whatever symbols are appropriate to that persona or whatever "ideas" work for it. We will talk a little about the idea of a magical personality in the next chapter.

4. The banishing should be fun.

5. It is helpful to involve as many of the senses as possible (that's not always done, as you will see, but initially it is helpful, since it is easier to link in all of the senses).

6. Banishings should clear your mind of mundane worries, help you focus, and get you mentally ready to do magic.

The exercises in the previous chapters of this book stressed developing your own mappings of posture, breathing, meditation, and simple visualizations for no reason but for practice. As with NLP, banishing will combine these elements.

A banishing ritual for you could be a Qi Gong form, a simple gesture combined with a mantra, or even a scent. A banishing should cleanse your body and mind. Spend a few minutes just writing down things that "cleanse the system." These can be scenes, actions, motions, breathing techniques, or any combination therein. Just relax and write down different ideas. Write down any idea, regardless of what you think of the idea at first. Just let yourself brainstorm. All ideas are good. Put the list of ideas aside for a few days.

After a few days, pick something from your list that you might find enjoyable to try to make into a banishing. First, try to relate the idea to sensory input. For example, let's say the idea for a cleansing or centering

was standing under a waterfall and having anything bothering you wash away. Imagine what being under a waterfall would feel like, what sound(s) you might hear, what you would see, what the water and air would smell like, etc. Clearly, if the idea was to use a supernova explosion to burn away all the undesired emotions and achieve a state of cleansing, different sensations would be involved.

Write down the metaphor using images, scents, feelings, sounds, and tastes that you can image. What state of mind are you trying to achieve with the idea? Do any of those states of mind correspond with the breathing types you have experimented with? Add breathing to the exercise. For the waterfall example, I might breathe as deeply as possible while standing as if the water were pouring right through me. In the supernova example, I might hyperventilate, simulating a buildup of extreme energy until the explosion occurs.

At this point, figure out if a particular posture or series of gestures might help you with the cleansing. A standing posture might be appropriate for the waterfall exercise. Personally, I'd probably like to put my hands up above my head, creating a channel down into me. The goal here is to get the water flowing through me. In the supernova example, I might either stand with my hands over my eyes (since supernovas are really bright) in a very tense position, or stand in a posture to embrace an impact (supernovas explode), which is again tensing all of my muscles. I have used a gesture where I cover my eyes with my fists, elbows pointed downward, and then, as the explosion is starting to emanate from my body, my arms drop to my sides in a rapid, violent fashion, fists still clenched as the explosion continues. Once the explosion is finished, I would then physically let my body go limp. For the waterfall example, a good gesture would be to draw down your hands across your body as the water flows downward, removing any negativity. In your case, is there a posture and series of gestures that seem to get to the core of the idea you are working with?

Try out different combinations of breathing, mantras, gestures, and postures with the idea you are working with. How do these variations combine with different ideas on your list? Which ones seem to work the best and have the most cleansing/centering effect for you? Be creative and play around with the ideas.

Banishing can also be used to set the tone and ambiance for a ritual or to set up a personal mindset. Just know that different banishings are more effective for different situations. Some banishings will seem to go with the mood and flow of a particular ritual more than other banishings you might read about or even create. For instance, the Golden Dawn's Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram might not fit the ambiance needed to invoke Set, the Prince of Darkness. Try out a variety of banishings and experiment. To give you some ideas, here are some of the banishings I have developed.

The Dr. Strangelove, or How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb Banishing

If you are working in a group, clasp hands together in a circle. Visualize a pulsing white ball of light in the middle of the circle or right in front of you. See the white light change to a sliver bomb with an Air Force pilot facing you as the bomb is about to fall. He is wearing a white cowboy hat and sitting on top of the bomb. Watch the bomb start to fall in the center of the group or in front of you. Scream out "Yeeeeeeh haaaaaaaah!" as the bomb and cowboy start to fall toward the floor. As the bomb hits the floor, visualize the start of a thermonuclear explosion being set off right at your feet. Feel the heat and force shock wave spreading through you and filling the entire room. See, feel, and hear the explosive fires consuming any emotional or negative energy in the room.

After an explosion like that, well, there is nothing left.

Spiral Swordplay Banishing

Visualize yourself surrounded by a dark, sticky, weblike substance. Imagine the black web substance impeding your movement and trying to constrain you.

Visualize a sword in your hand (or use an actual sword for this). Visualize the sword as glowing white (or your favorite color). Push energy into the sword using the general energy flow technique we covered earlier in the adventure.

Use the sword from underneath and spiral up through the web. As the sword swings, notice that it leaves a trail of light (of your favorite color) that does not fade. Spin around and spiral upward, leaving a DNA-like double helix of light around you as you travel further through the web. Then proceed to spiral down. Notice that the light does not fade as you cut through the dark web.

Face a direction of your choice and then cut a straight line from the point where the first spiral started. Cut through the web to the top of the spiral. As the web is cut, you will notice huge chunks of the web around you falling away. Continue the strike up and around you to the opposite direction down to the bottom of the spiral.

Turn 90 degrees to the left and repeat the previous step.

Visualize the pure color around you, and then let yourself bask in its light. I personally like doing this using a rainbow, with all the colors swirling around me.

Three-Ring Banishing

This is a really simple banishing that is very good for getting rid of negative thoughts or negative feelings. Imagine three glowing rings moving in different orbits on all sides of you, bouncing off each other and burning with blue flame. Try to add what a blue flame would feel like to you. (Is it hot? Is it cold?) As you are imagining this, record what sound the rings make (if any) as they bounce off each other. Does the flame have a sound, or does the flame have a smell? Take the thoughts that are troublesome and give them form. An annoyance might be imagined as looking and feeling like a black blob or a squidlike thing. Throw the glob into one of the rings so it gets burned up. When things get burned, they generally make a sound, cause a smell, and release more energy (perhaps burning brightly). After you get through annoyances, try to do this with any thoughts. See if you can push your thoughts into the rings until you have a quiet mind.

Burning the Garbage

It's good to come into this exercise with an idea you want to get rid of. This is very similar to the campfire exercise we were working with. Maybe it's something like, "I am ugly" or some other self-loathing comment. Breathe like we have been for a few minutes. After a few minutes of relaxing, visualize a nice campfire or just a barrel fire in front of you. Visualize that unhelpful idea or that desire that makes no sense and throw it into the fire. Feel yourself releasing the idea, want, or desire that you have no use for. Some ideas might take multiple settings to fully get rid of. Relax. Each time you do this, the idea or desire will have less and less impact on you.

I AM

Just intone the phrase "I AM"-forcefully, directly, and with authority-extending your will across the room. Place your arms at your sides and tense your arm and leg muscles while looking straight ahead.

"I AM'>

Do it three times. Envision your aura and power filling the room as you do it. Continue to repeat this as needed till you feel the room filling with your power and will. There is a tremendous amount of power implied by the statement "I AM," since the statement refers back to the Christian name for god. For me, personally, it is an assertion of my own will and my right to do magic because I myself am god of my own universe. Often, I will combine this with imagining and seeing myself as a completely golden being to give the banishing a more solar feeling.

Patronus Charm

The Patronus charm is a banishing from J. K. Rowling's Harry Potter series, particularly important in The Prisoner of Azkaban (2004). The methods I am going to use are heavily adapted, because magic seems to work slightly different in our world than in the Harry Potter world. The first step is to breathe deeply a few times, regardless of what is going on around you. As you relax, switch your breathing to the reverse Taoist breathing described earlier. Simply expand your chest and diaphragm when you are breathing out, and contract your chest, back, and diaphragm when you are breathing in. Feel the chi energies flowing into your body. Ignore anything around you,

and begin to focus solely on an extremely positive memory. Try to bring as many sensory details of the experience into conscious view as you feel your body filling up with energy from the memory and the breathing. When it feels like you cannot pull in any more energy from the breathing and the memory overwhelms you, point your wand toward the target you desire to banish, and on exhalation loudly shout or scream, "Expecto Pa- tronum!" Visualize, feel, and hear the energy in your body rapidly leaving through your wand. At the tip of your wand, see and feel a guardian form rapidly, extending out from you. In the context of Harry Potter, each person has a different Patronus. You will have to experiment and try to find what guardian shape seems to work the best for you. My Patronus is a dragon (a bit of useful trivia).

We can do this without a wand as well, and this is how I usually do this exercise. Start with your arms in front of you, and bring your hands together. Have both palms touching in a tensed position, and draw your hands back to one side of your body. As you are breathing and experiencing your memory, continue to tense your arms as if you are about to release an explosive amount of energy. Try to imagine with all your senses what would be associated with an explosive amount of positive energy. When you are ready, extend your hands forward-palms still connected in a forceful, striking way- while screaming the "Expecto Patronum!" (Which, for the Latin buffs out there, roughly translates to "Summon my guardian!" but Rowling doesn't officially know any occult things, right?) At the end of your extended arms, visualize your Patronus appearing from the energy you have put out. This is the motion from the Kamehameha wave from Goku of Dragon Ball Z. Yes, I was quite serious that anything can be used for magical work.

This banishing has particularly been tested by the BATW methods (listed later in this chapter) against Necronomicon spirits, demons, Choronzon, and other denizens of the otherworld. Personally, I love this banishing because people think it's a joke until I actually perform it.

Pre-made Banishings

For more examples to draw ideas from, do some research on banishing. Try to obtain a copy of and perform the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram, which is a Golden Dawn ritual, and do a search for Peter

Carroll's Gnostic Pentagram Ritual. Both banishings are more complicated than the simple banishings I have presented here, and both will give you some ideas for combining gesture, sound, and symbols. Most of these banishings, as written, do sort of work. Try to combine and add as many sensory details to each banishing as you can. Map out the pre-made banishings to your five senses, and see if they work better.

Banishing a Space or an Entity

Banishing external spaces requires confidence that your banishing works. You can only get that confidence through practice. Entities and spaces can be more or less difficult to banish, depending on the situation, but as you get better at focus, energy work, control, and confidence, banishing will get easier.

The simplest way to banish an area is to perform the banishing while imagining it occurring across a full space. Some banishings like the Patronus charm might be more effective at banishing a presence, but other metaphors will work better depending on the situation. Extend your perception (and energy) to fill the area or room you are working in. Practice is the key, but once the "internal thoughts" are cleaned up, then you can mirror your internal state to the external area. Several exercises in the rest of the book will help you to develop those skills. If you get into a situation where someone is paying you to banish a ghost or poltergeist (I have been paid for this service), you had better have confidence that your banishing works.

BATW Testing

BATW (pronounced "baa-twa") is an acronym for Banishing Against the Wall, and it is about as bad as it sounds. This exercise really gives you a good idea of what I expect if you get a chance to perform regular magical work with me in a group setting. What good is a banishing you cannot rely on under pressure? A banishing should work for you regardless of the external or internal state that you are focused on. The BATW is a method of testing a banishing in a more aggressive and simulates a probable ritual situation. The BATW training is listed here only to give you a taste of what is coming later, so that you keep going forward.

The BATW training is laughably simple but very effective. It can be done with as few as two people or with as many people as needed. A triangle is drawn on the floor. One person stands within that triangle, which I usually place against a wall. The other members in the group stand in a circle, facing the triangle. The members in the circle either evoke a pre-chosen spirit/concept or summon a random entity or concept. The spirit is called forth to annoy the person inside the triangle or otherwise make its presence very well known to the person in the triangle. Depending on the level of skill of the participants and the general intent of the training, the entity may well be called forth to cause damage to the person being tested by the BATW. I have had some very insightful but difficult sessions with this training. The person in the triangle has the simple purpose of banishing the entity. When people agree that the entity is gone, the testing is over. If the person cannot banish the entity and asks the group for help, the entire group will conduct a banishing together to dismiss the entity. Everyone should then sit down and discuss what went right and what went wrong as well as any internal states that complicated the attempt to banish the entity (or evoke the entity).

Depending on the skill of the participants, both circle and triangle maybe considered optional. Evocational techniques will be covered later in the book. In my BATW work, I forced everyone to go through a formal ritual opening of the BATW testing session and a formal closing of the session, followed by intense debriefing sessions. Having opening and closing sessions is a good way to separate the BATW space from normal space in the same way we separated ourselves from our workspace earlier in the adventure.

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Why Is Trance Needed in Magic?

Most of the games in our adventure do in some way generate a trance state. Magic does not always seem to work, but a trance state does seem to be one of the most critical ingredients toward success. Certainly, in some circles, participants will simply mix herbs together and expect results to occur (at least that's the official line). The people who argue for these types of push-button magic are often the same people who do not get results.

Earlier we mentioned the psychic censor. In fact, the habit of disbelieving that change is possible completely saturates the American conditioning process. The fact is, the psychic censor (or the host of other names it is called) limits our conception of what is possible. When you believe something is not possible, it is not. We all have beliefs from our past experiences that hold us back. In the study of hypnosis, we have a critical factor that rejects information that is not in line with what we already believe (Elman 1964). If we cannot automatically shift our beliefs and patterns, how can we make more adaptive changes? Both in the internal world and the external world, we are told "no change." Essentially, our conditioning and the near-conscious parts of the mind are working against us when we try to do magic.

Additionally, most chaos magicians would claim that magic originates in the subconscious. The subconscious does not seem to operate in the way that the conscious mind operates. The conscious mind operates in a scattered from-here-to-there-to-here motion. Unfortunately, the subconscious mind operates at the level of a four- to fiveyear-old, but it has almost infinite power (St. Clair 1978). Four-yearolds have a very short attention span, and generally the subconscious will not act or do anything unless there is a singular point of attention in the conscious mind focusing upon the goal. This singularity in the conscious mind is the mechanism to tell the subconscious mind what is desired (and get it to act). Given the amount of distractions we all have, this extreme focus itself would be a sign of a deeper state of trance.

Introduction to Trance

We shift states of consciousness throughout the day. Our attention shifts from location to location. We daydream, we stop listening in a conversation. Often our minds go through our routines without thinking. Mind viruses (such as phrases or slogans that get stuck in our heads), advertisements, and even a good portion of other people rely on us not thinking and just automatically reacting, often saying yes or agreeing to something that we shouldn't (St. Clair 1978).

Strong emotions, advertisements, and, as we shall see, even beliefs can produce changes in your state of consciousness. A good argument can get you in a certain argumentative trance state where "the blood is flowing." Likewise, great sex can produce a certain euphoric high, and pain will produce a certain state of mind. These different trance states can be manipulated and worked with by the magician, and in fact later on, when we start to do invocation and evocation, it becomes necessary to take on certain states of trance to achieve the desired results.

As you have experienced firsthand, even just a posture or breathing change can have a radical impact on your state of mind. Let's try to start controlling the state of focus we have.

Altered States of Consciousness Exercise

Sometimes we are hyperfocused on one task, but sometimes we drift. Pay attention to your different shifts. When you slide away from a conversation and daydream, make a note of it later in your journal. When you hyperfocus on one thing, make a note of it. Try to begin to consciously control when either happens. Each time you are able to will yourself into either a daydream state or a hyperfocused state, make a note of it. This exercise is good practice whenever you have time to do it.

Trance Generation

In some literature, trance and the term gnosis are the same. Gnosis is a historically problematic term. In Liber Null & Psychonaut, gnosis is described as a singular state of focus (Carroll 1987). Gnostics would

describe the term as a nonverbalized experience of the source or as relating to intuitively derived knowledge of a mystic sort (Pagels 1989). Most magical systems and religions would argue that results-based magic occurs by entering a different state of consciousness. You have to allow the subconscious mind to work. Most of the exercises up to now have been about studying and looking at different trance states generated by different body expressions. Different trance states are really easy to experience, but hard to write about. It's simple-when you aren't rationalizing whether something is real or not, you could very well be in a trance state deep enough for successful magic. If this sounds a lot like the trance states of the shaman, it is closely (if not identically) related.

Dennis R. Wier, in Trance, would say the trance states correspond to brain wave patterns (1996). A very light trance would probably be in the alpha (8 Hz-12 Hz) range, which is similar to a daydream. A solid meditation from breathing control could probably get you down to low alpha and theta (6 Hz-8 Hz) waves. Really letting go would get you down to low theta and delta (3 Hz-6 Hz) range. A heavy trance state would be down in that delta range, with a fair amount of magic taking place right at that 6 Hz frequency, in my experience. From practical experience, how real the imagined set of senses seems can be a good guide for how deep the trance state is and how far the conscious mind has been pushed aside.

Inhibitory Trance States

Inhibitory trance states are the altered states of consciousness that involve quieting the mind to a singular point of consciousness, idea, sigil, or mantra. This usually means restricting motion in some way. Some methods of achieving inhibitory trance states include meditation, asphyxiation, yoga, bondage, pain (it depends on the type-this should be a dull, continuous pain), sleep, chanting/mantras, or using isolation tanks or sensory deprivation.

These are really attempts to block out the world and our own thoughts. The goal is to quiet down the mind until the point is reached where it is possible to have a single focus. In this state, it is possible to communicate with "external forces," the subconscious, the Holy Guardian Angel, or whatever you are trying to contact. We have been practicing many of these techniques in our adventure. There are many more techniques than those

listed. What is thought of as traditional meditation works to increase the ability to enter inhibitory trance states and stay in these trance states longer, assuming that merely being in this type of trance state without conscious thought or movement has traditional mental and physical health benefits. In my practice, daily meditation is a great mental stabilizer, and it definitely helps me improve my mood and decrease my stress.

Specific Example: A Little Death Posture

Peter J. Carroll simplified the death posture down to a motionless inhibitory meditation, but Austin Osman Spare used a particular stance that he called the "death posture." Spare's death posture involves locking both arms behind the head. Each hand grasps the upper arm of the other arm behind the head. The person then stands on his or her tiptoes. Truly physically adept people should try to stand on one leg. This posture is very difficult to hold. Breathing will become difficult, and eventually you will black out, so be careful. Make sure to do this exercise on a floor with adequate padding and pillows. It is at this blacking-out stage that the sigil is launched into the subconscious. Try out Spare's death posture for five minutes or so; it is a highly effective gnosis tool (Spare 2005). The death posture is a physically taxing and demanding exercise. Please be careful with it.

Memory Trance Exercise

As with the energy exercise, focus on a memory associated very closely with one of the following emotions: rage, love (ethereal), fear, lust, sadness, or happiness. Relive the experience and bring all of the emotion of the memory to the forefront. Start to associate the word relating to the emotion with the experience. Allow the emotion to take over; keep reliving the memory, trying to distill the emotion from the memory. Map the experience to your five senses. As with the NLP experiments, remember that generally more is more, so give the experience as much sensory detail as possible until the experience seems as intense as it can get. Add details if necessary. Keep making this brighter and more colorful, experience things as heavier and louder, and make the smells more pronounced. If possible, drop the memory and just try to continue to produce more emotion of the type you started with (anger feeds itself, love brings love, etc.) in the current situation. It's okay if you don't drop the memory right away, but as the emotion takes over it will

get harder to focus on the memory and not the emotion. Just keep going further with the exercise until the emotion takes over and the conscious mind is no longer capable of remembering what started the emotion. I am sure you can imagine times when you were so happy that nothing else mattered, or so angry that you couldn't even think of anything else, or so filled with lust that it was the only sensation you felt. Of course, you could minimize the impact of any one emotion by using the general less-is-less NLP philosophy (usually).

Using the NLP anchoring techniques described earlier, try to anchor an emotion to a certain keyword for that emotion (so that merely repeating the word is sufficient to produce the state of mind). How does breathing or posture affect the emotion produced? Does a mantra change the effect? Experiment and play with the techniques, and also find some new ones.

Excitatory Trance States

An excitatory trance state means an altered state that raises one's energy to an extreme level of ecstasy. This usually means increasing motion. Some types of excitatory gnosis include dancing, drumming, fighting, sex, spinning, ecstatic chanting/shouting, domination, terror, running, and glossolalia.

The goal of excitatory trance states is to oversaturate your mind so that it is overstimulated by body input and must shut down completely in order to deal with the amount of sensory input. Excitatory trance is generally easier to master than inhibitory methods. The idea is simple: run until exhausted. While you are running, dancing, screaming, etc., what happens to your internal voices? Ideally, if you have done any sort of vigorous physical exercise, a point is reached where you are focusing only on the task of running or dancing or engaging in another activity. When the internal voices are quieting down, that's the point at which the magic can really start to happen.

This is far easier to do with excitatory trance, since the exhaustion and overstimulation of the body produces the desired state, whereas in inhibitory styles of trance, the body is locked into position and the mind is quieted

down. Vodou and many shamanic styles of magic use many more excitatory dancing methods.

Chemignosis

Chemignosis can go either into inhibitory or excitatory trance, depending on the drug. Drugs are a useful but dangerous route to trance. There are benefits to them: First, they are a fast route to extreme trance states. Second, they can break some internal barriers to magic. Third, shamans have been using them for thousands of years as tools, and there is a lot of shared knowledge on various drugs and intoxicants.

However, the substances are a dangerous shortcut. The insight gained through substance use is often less repeatable than if you worked up the skills to do so without substances. Additionally, drug trance is uncontrollable and unpredictable. Sometimes an experience will quickly spiral out of control and if that situation happens, magic is no longer possible. Some ethnogens also have deep physiological side effects, including addiction and nerve damage. Psychologically, ethnogens and other drugs are often of a system-shock type, throwing budding magicians into the proverbial deep end before they are ready. I will fully admit the usefulness of substances in some situations, but be careful and be well informed, regardless of the chemical.

Seething

Seething is a Germanic shamanism method of generating gnosis (Fries 1992). Seething is a snake trance, and in my experience it can be either inhibitory or excitatory. In seething, the participant sways back and forth rhythmically until gnosis hits. If this is done as a gentle swaying, it seems more inhibitory in nature. If it is done as a violent shaking, it seems excitatory. I have achieved results using both types of swaying.

Try some swaying-five minutes in gentle breeze-like swaying followed by five minutes of extreme shaking. Does altering your breathing or the direction of the swaying have an effect on the state generated? Write down your insights in your journal.

Now It's Your Turn

Now that we have summarized different trance types, return to your journal. Look for examples that you think are inhibitory and excitatory, and use these techniques to fully quiet down your mind either by mental discipline or sheer exhaustion. As with the different banishing techniques, try to combine tools from your journaling that produce the extreme states of consciousness you have reached, with no goal except to obtain deep trance states and replicate those trance states.

Try to seek out experiences that generate a strong trance state by either inhibitory or excitatory methods. Use the building blocks you already have, and find more. If there are particular methods that you enjoy more than other methods, attempt to figure out why you enjoy some methods more than others. Do you perform repetitive actions in your daily life that seem to put you in a trance state?

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Energy Manipulation II

Now that we have practiced banishing, let's do some more information/energy exercises. Before and after each game, clear your mind and banish.

The Ball Game Variant: Catch

With your partner, match the direction of the energy flow so that your receiving hand is pressed against the producing hand of your partner and vice versa. This is essentially creating an energy circle. Allow the energy to flow between you and your partner for a few minutes so that you become comfortable with each other.

After a few minutes, break the circuit. You should each try to force both hands to output energy. Couple your hands around the sphere as if it is a small sphere. Position your arms so that each person can reach the sphere. Imagine with all five of your senses a rubber playground ball forming between you. Throw the ball up and make sure it can stay cohesive. After that, play catch with the sphere.

Feel free to defy Newtonian physics, throw the ball against the wall, bounce it against the ceiling, or have it trace out irregular paths. (For the few people who need it, this is not dodge ball.) Now, repeat the game, but this time try to use different breathing patterns while you are forming the sphere.

The Ball Game Variant: Inner Taffy

Use the procedure in the last exercise to create a combined energy ball. Once the ball is created, one person should stick his or her fingers into the ball. After the exercise, that person should journal about the experience. The other partner should repeat this process.

After each of you have determined how the ball feels, you should both grab it and start molding it into whatever you desire as if it were a lump of

clay. If you can agree on a new shape to mold the ball into, feel free to be creative. If not, just mold it as desired according to your whim. Abstract creations are great. Record the new "abstract" shape. If you both agreed on a shape, keep working on it until you agree that it is indeed what you were both imagining. For a kick, get a third participant and hand that person the new creation without saying what the shape is (let the person guess).

Start simple. Cones, hearts, clouds, spheres, cylinders, and other simple objects work well. You can then move on to more complex objects like 3-D infinity symbols, chaos stars, hourglasses, cups, swords, and other sigils and symbols.

Elemental Ball Games

Not surprisingly, the energy ball games continue. Up to this point, all of our energy spheres have tended to be neutral energy from within ourselves. This is sometimes referred to as life force or chi (Liang and Wu 1997). With the games we have been playing, we are now going to shift our own energy and create something with a different information pattern from our normal energy. Elemental energy forms the basis of many Hermetic teachings as well as some earth-based religions such as Wicca. Learning to produce the energy patterns without tools allows you to slip right into a ritual and contribute even if you are unfamiliar with the system.

Relax and breathe while sitting for about five minutes. After the five minutes, pick a traditional Persian element: earth, air, fire, or water. Spend a few minutes thinking about the core properties of that element. What pops into your mind when you are thinking about the element? Initiation into Hermetics by Franz Bardon (1999) has some great information on the elements if you are unfamiliar with them. Write down what you believe are the core properties of the element for you. There is no right answer. Try to express each element in terms of the five senses, and try to have details for each sense. Fire for me might be associated with red peppers for taste and warmth for feeling.

Repeat for each element until all four are completed. Spirit is an unusual element, and it is the most ephemeral element. We are going to skip the spirit element. Feel free to experiment with it on your own.

Using your personal correspondences and the core schema of each element, create a sphere of energy. As you are forming the ball and pushing the energy into the ball, imagine that what you hold has all the details you imagined corresponding to that element. Hand the ball to your partner. Do not tell your partner what type of energy sphere you gave him or her. Ask instead. Record what your partner thought it was as opposed to what you thought it was. Right and wrong are irrelevant in this game. You may notice that the sphere feels looks different, sounds different, etc. Later, as you practice, you may get a much better intuition of how to label that difference (i.e., what element it is). Now have your partner produce the ball, and you guess what element the sphere is.

The Switch Elemental Ball Game

In the first elemental ball game, we created a sphere of an element. As a warm-up, repeat that exercise. Now, with a partner, take the sphere and then change it to a different element. When you return it to your partner, have him or her guess which element it is. Most importantly, have your partner note how it is different from when he or she handed you the sphere.

Remember to sense each aspect of the element with all five senses and then change each sensory part of the ball of energy. For instance, for earth, see it as a rock, then as rock melting to lava, and then just a fireball. Of course, the other senses would shift too. This is easier if you break down the conversion process into mental steps for each elemental conversion (there are twelve possible conversions). Since you have sensory details written down for each element, you can sit down in advance and figure out how to shift one to the next. Try to imagine a metaphor for each conversion (just like the earth-to-fire conversion).

Hover Ball Game

Make a sphere of energy. As you create it, will the ball to defy gravity and stay where it is without support. At first, just imagine with all five of your senses that the sphere stays where you put it. After you get the ball to hover, walk ten steps away from it and come back to the ball. If it loses cohesiveness, reduce the distance and repeat until you can get the ball to hover successfully. Keep increasing the distance you can walk away from

the ball and have the ball stay exactly where you told it while remaining intact. After you get to about fifty or more feet away, feel free to go on to the next game. Of course, if you are really a go-getter, keep trying to extend the distance. After each attempt, write down in your journal how far you were able to walk away and still have the ball hover.

Puppy Ball Game

Create a ball that can hover as in the hover ball game. Instead of having the ball remain stationary, try to get the ball to follow you around at a certain height off the ground. Pay attention to the ball as it follows you. After you are sure that the ball is following you, stop paying attention to it. See how long it takes before the ball dissipates. Continue to try to extend the time the ball can follow you without concentration. After you reach ten minutes or so, find a partner and each allow your energy ball to follow the other person. Verify that the other person's ball is still there. See how long you can keep the ball going. Write down your increasing success in your journal.

Moon Ball Game

Create a ball that can follow you as in the puppy ball game. After you are sure that the ball can follow you and not dissipate without concentration, visualize and will it to revolve around you as if it were a moon. The moon can revolve around you at any speed you wish, in either direction or orbit. Once you have the moon revolving around you, give the moon specific details. Will it to have craters, be spiky, gaseous, rock hard, or whatever comes to mind. Play with the moon. After you give it a texture, give the moon a smell and hear it passing by you as it orbits.

After you feel you can do this, partner up and repeat the exercise. Have your partner describe what he or she feels, sees, hears, and smells around you. Write your results from playing both parts in your journal.

Now It's Your Turn

Mix up the breathing exercises with the energy exercises. Are some techniques more effective with certain breathing styles or a certain posture? Do some of the mantras you have practiced have an effect on the energy

balls? Does imagining a sound, scent, or taste change the feeling of a ball? How does your mood affect the feelings of the energy spheres you are creating? Try as many different combinations as you can with posture, gesture, breathing, and these energy exercises. What unique combinations seem to work for you?

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Shards of the Self and the Shadow

When I shine a light on something, I see only the part reflected by the light. When interacting with another person, we often are only showing part of our personality and who we are. In terms of psychology, this is the mask put on for other people. Are we the same people in every situation? In a certain situation, say, at work, it might be disadvantageous to act in a way similar to the way one acts around a lover. In fact, objectively comparing the behavior, language, and gestures of the individual, without any context to explain the difference, might lead an outside observer to conclude that the person has a mental disorder. If the self and ego are one unchanging thing, that is a reasonable conclusion.

What if the different masks are the person, and the idea of a unified "I" isn't exactly correct? The way we react tends to be determined a lot by the role we are in (Haney 1973). What if the aspects we show in any situation are merely a type of suit we can put on, but we become so comfortable in the suit that we forget we can choose the clothes we want to wear? This type of model increases the amount of possibilities infinitely. We are capable of doing anything, and this idea removes the pressure to act in a consistent way in all situations.

The same person can seem wildly different depending on that individual's emotions and current beliefs. In different contexts, people essentially are entirely different people. At any given time, the mirror light of our interaction with other people shines only on a small part of the person. This is what other people see. This is the conscious mind at work. There seems to be only a small set of parts that can be touched by what we consider we are at one time, given that there are no attempts to extend that ability.

Spare wrote that we could bring parts of the subconscious to the conscious mind and that the majority of magic would happen within the subconscious.

At the deepest levels of the subconscious, everything is connected. Magic, according to Spare, is about diving deeper and deeper within until there is no difference between you and the desired effect or connection (Spare 2005).

Searching out new and hidden parts of ourselves gives us more tools in our toy box, allowing us to become and be more. To find and integrate these parts, one must be daring enough to seek within the subconscious mind. Obviously, we could talk about Jung, the Huna, Spare, and others for years. Studying them is never a bad idea, but this is a pragmatic adventure of doing, so we will skip over the fine philosophical details and get to experiencing them.

Ray Bradbury, in Zen in the Art of Writing, states, "Every morning I jump out of bed and step on a landmine. The landmine is me. After the explosion, I spend the rest of the day putting the pieces together. Now, it's your turn. Jump!" (1992, xv). In other words, experience the joy of creation daily and become your own indestructible phoenix.

The Jungian Shadow, the Dark, and the Unknown

Even "good" people occasionally do "bad" things. Many authors tend to describe the source of these hidden urges and behaviors as the shadow. Often it is demonized and despised to the point where people ignore their own dark side. Jung defined the shadow as an archetype to represent that which was hidden or unknown (Jung 1969). Again, for those more well read on Jung than me, this is an operational definition for us to be able to work with the metaphor.

What effect does it have to ignore a part of the psyche, even if it isn't pleasant? The entire field of psychology could be said to have been created to deal with habits, beliefs, and disorders that are not entirely conscious. This means hidden things can and do hurt people. Other scholars have pointed out that the misconception is that the hidden is always painful. In Shadow Dance, David Richo makes the point that not only is it important to deal with the pain hidden in the shadow, but in the shadow there are the elements of evolution (1999). Not only do experiential demons, pain, and issues lurk about, but also hidden abilities, powers, wisdom, and pleasure. Many schools of thought deal with dream teaching and learning from

dreams. Where do dreams come from? Again, it's from the subconscious or the shadow. The inspiration for new styles of magic comes from the subconscious mind.

Does it make sense to demonize the shadow when so many lighter paths are trying to access what is hidden? Better to skip the pretenses, middlemen, and profits ... access and accept the shadow directly to gain and learn its secrets. Heal it where it is wounded in order to become whole, and walk courageously into the dark.

This process is not easy, but even negative issues serve a purpose. They are challenges to the individual practitioner and initiatory trials. Issues in the subconscious will manifest in the real world. Earlier we talked about habits, hooks below the conscious level, and other power-draining beliefs below the threshold of consciousness. In fact, a big part of sigil magic is to implant a seed in the subconscious mind to work your will on the world. This is the positive aspect of the subconscious at work. But be mindful, to do so means you are willing to work with both the good and the bad of the hidden.

The Opposites in the Shadow

The shadow has a very Taoist feel to it. Conscious representations of a role or belief become mirrored in the shadow as an opposite. It seems to always express itself in a desire for what you are not or in regret over the choices you have made (Jung 1969). The nun desires to be a whore. The psychopath desires to be loved. The tycoon searches for meaning. The scholar dreams of being an adventurer. The strongest opponents to homosexuality secretly desire their own sex. In fact, the greater the expression of a position in the physical world, the greater the subconscious desire of the opposite. The action of this, for the majority of people, is entirely automatic and outside of "conscious" choices, and yet it destroys lives (Carroll 1987).

Individuals cannot define themselves as something without some part of the shadow becoming the opposite. If the self is a temporary gestalt of parts, it is reasonable to assume that sometimes these parts will act independently via the subconscious. This could be bad or good. If it is good, we might refer to these parts as helpful spirits or angels; if it is bad, perhaps as demons. Using these words is completely arbitrary, since all of these angels and

demons may originate from within. Parts of the shadow could manifest via a bad choice while drunk, a selfdestructive action when on autopilot, a flash of insight that allows us to solve a problem, or an ecstatic mood on a given day. Trying to use ritual to bring about a result could empower the opposite result if we don't work on ourselves.

Only by seeking out these parts, by retrieving their power or wisdom and assimilating back into the forming adaptable gestalt can this be avoided. Shamans refer to this as retrieving the soul shards. Jung places the idea in the shadow. Modern occultists talk about conquering internal demons.

Why not freely walk from one opposite to the other? Peter Carroll created a grid of emotional opposites. Laughter is the only emotional response that is its own opposite, since laughter can indicate madness, sadness, happiness, amusement, or many feelings all at once (Carroll 1987). Ramsey Dukes mentioned something similar in The Good, the Bad, the Funny by suggesting that dualistic thinking is creating many of the problems of the modern world (Philotunus and Dukes 2002). These hidden parts are just tools in our magical toolbox that we can use, if we are willing to accept the opposite and contradictory parts within ourselves.

Invocation of a Part of the Self: Choosing the Gestalt via Will, Not Habit

We can see our parts as our tools for success. We can bring the parts we need to the forefront. We can change our aura, our presentation, our "appearance" by merely bringing that part to the surface. Remember, a change in perception changes the world, and the memory of a change in perception locks the change down.

Since even parts of the subconscious can act independently, why not invoke them? We can name things mucking inside the subconscious. In some belief systems, one who can name something controls that thing. Being able to name a part helps us to call it forth and use it in a situation, because we now have a handle on that part. Certainly anything we acknowledge as part of us, we can use.

Say I have a psychopathic element inside. I don't like my inner psychopath. I avoid it, but when I am not paying attention, it slips out and

there are consequences. I decide to name this part Ralph, for lack of a better word. (Better to name it something totally unique so you don't confuse yourself.) Now that I have something tangible to talk to, and can call it forth at will, I can even make arrangements with it, kill it off (if needed), or use the deconditioning practices detailed earlier in our adventure. You have to be in control, yet accepting of "Ralph's" needs. Perhaps Ralph is pissed off because you let people walk all over you. The inner psychopath may be able to teach you not to take other people's crap. What if you have an inner angel that is unmanifested? The parts you gain access to add to your power, skill, and ability to experience.

The Shadow Framework and Ritual

If you are familiar with evocation and invocation, the performance of either the group ritual or the individual ritual will be relatively straightforward. If you are not familiar with these two techniques, read a little ahead and come back to this section. This is, however, the right place for this section in the book. Read the section over to get a sense of what is coming, but if you have some understanding with your own methods of how to do basic sorcery, by all means try this out. The solo version of the ritual is actually tougher to perform than the group version, which I have performed several times. This reflects our individual tendencies to ignore parts of ourselves we don't like.

The Solo Ritual Framework

The shadow ritual is a very powerful framework that can be applied with multiple entities to map out different aspects of what is hidden from you. If you are doing this ritual alone, there are a couple of steps that will add to your success. You should have banishing down, especially if you are going to try to do this alone.

First, you should pick an entity of a known sort to guide you into exploring your own shadow. While ultimately this could include and should include positive or lighter entities, the first few times should be completed with darker entities. The reason for this is to confront the parts of the self that are not parts that the average person would want to admit to. These are the parts that will cause the most trouble when enchanting for things you want. As the previous section implied, they have to be found and worked

with, and potentially deals might need to be made with those parts. Darker entities to try this with might include Leviathan, Morrigan, Morgan le Fay, Baron Samadhi, Nox, Set, Kalfou, Lucifer, Kali, Tiamat, Lilith, Hecate, and most "demonic" sorts of entities with a nasty reputation. Trickster entities like Papa Legba, Loki, Eris, or Eshu are indeed good first choices for this ritual as well. Of course, the trickster had better be disposed to helping you (you can find that out in advance). First and foremost, you should be able to work with the entity and should have done so a couple of times. This means that you should have some sort of arrangement and should have done at least evocations with the desired entity, but more preferably invocations with the entity. Since there are infinite shards within the self, using a different entity will show you a different aspect to what is hidden from you.

Once you have chosen the entity, try a divination about the entity to see what you're in for if using the shadow rituals with it. A bad result should be interpreted as a trial. The "god form" will only reflect the part of you that most resonates with it. This will be tremendously helpful to access different parts of yourself at will. A difficult reading should be interpreted in the context of a "difficult self" to deal with. Further research can provide ample techniques of divination.

For the purposes of the ritual, it may be helpful to use a light and legal sacrament.

You will need a small, attractive black vase or container (at least twelve ounces), some chalk or a drawn-out a triangle of art, and some sort of tape recorder or MP3 player or stereo. A triangle of art is a ritualistically prepared containment field for magical operations. We will cover triangles of art and other containment fields for magical operations in the chapters on evocation.

Solution 1 (alcoholic): Get some dark rum and add black food coloring to it.

Solution 2 (non-alcoholic): Brew a tea of mugwort and wormwood mixed together in equal parts in a standard-sized single-cup tea steeper from your local tea store. A single tea-bag-full per cup should be the right dose. Mugwort has the ability to open up spiritual centers, and wormwood is a

mild psychedelic (completely legal). Black food coloring should be added. This should be heavily steeped, then added to the container.

You do not strictly need a sacrament. Water could be used. The addition of a sacrament will make it harder to cheat yourself in the process. Once you have the solution, create a sigilized mantra using the Spare method (read ahead to chapter 16 if you need to) with the intent, "Guide me into exploring the hidden sides of myself." Record the following into a tape recorder or MP3 player:

> It is my will [add a pause here]
>
> To experience the aspects of myself [add a pause here]
>
> That are hidden from me [add a pause here]
>
> Brought forward by my guide, [insert the name of the entity you have been doing the evocations with, and then add a pause here].

Try to be as mysterious and creative as you can with the reading. Eerie music in the background will assist with the ambiance. When you are counting down, try to allow enough time between counts for you to take a deep breath. It might take as much as eight seconds between counts if you breathe very deeply. For this pathworking, it is best if you get into a relaxed and sitting position while listening to the recorded work.

START OF PATHWORKING

For we stand here in the dark, the darkness hides all ... both the good and the bad.... The shadow of the person stands in contrast to the person. That which you hate, that which you fear, that which you don't know, those powers that you haven't seen in yourself are all there and much more hidden in the dark. To accept yourself means to accept that which is hidden in the shadow. To truly accept yourself is to love your shadow, as it is you. Your guide to the shadow permeates your body, every pore and fiber.

As you drink the sacrament, feel [insert the name of the entity you are working with], pulsing throughout your body. You may hear your guide

whisper to you, and your heart may skip a beat. Close your eyes and breathe. Just breathe in and out deeply.

We will count backward from 99 to 0. As you count backward from 99, you feel your entire body become more relaxed. The power of your guide fills you, pulling you deeper and deeper into yourself.

99: You feel [the name of the entity you are working with] dripping down into your feet, grabbing hold. Feel your feet tingling extremely strongly with its power. Your whole body tingles from the power of the sacrament. Your entire body begins to quiver, but you cannot seem to move.

98-90: [Repeat the name of the entity you are working with, and then repeat the sigilized mantra you created earlier.]

89: [Insert the name of the entity you are working with] fills your knees, your hamstrings, your calves. Your back starts to tingle; your tailbone feels on fire. Your arms grow heavy and you cannot move your legs. You feel your skin change. Your surroundings darken and you cannot see anything.

88-70: [Repeat the name of the entity you are working with, and then repeat the sigilized mantra you created earlier.]

69: Your entire body quivers slightly as you feel [insert the name of the entity you are working with] coursing through your body. Your entire spine and your organs seem to tingle with [insert the name of the entity you are working with]'s power. Even with the entity in you, you are completely still.

68-50: [Repeat the name of the entity you are working with, and then repeat the sigilized mantra you created earlier.]

49: The power of [repeat the name of the entity you are working with] fills your entire body, yet your mind remains. You now feel the entity streaming throughout your body, passing through into your brain. Your face twitches and your body, completely relaxed, lets the entity flow throughout your veins and arteries. As the power of [repeat the name of the entity you are working with] seeps into your brain, you are overwhelmed. Your body tingles ever so slightly, and the entity takes control, guiding you ever more into your personal darkness.

48-40: [Repeat the name of the entity you are working with, and then repeat the sigilized mantra you created earlier.]

39: From the waking world into shadow, that which is hidden can now be glimpsed. Travel into your own subconscious. Call out your nemesis and embrace it. By the power of [repeat the name of the entity you are working with], your shadow embraces you.

38-30: [Repeat the name of the entity you are working with, and then repeat the sigilized mantra you created earlier.]

29: As you adjust to the darkness, you see there are reflections within reflections-mirrors reflecting yourself back to you a hundredfold. Even the floor and ceiling are mirrors.

28: You can see that there may be a path through the mirrors, but it is difficult to walk. You feel the reflections staring back at you. As you feel them, they feel you.

27: Each reflection stares back at you. Each reflection looks slightly different and feels a bit off from what you consider to be you, and each one is a revolting, terrifying, beautiful, or enlightening you. All seem incomprehensible in some way, but you know the reflections are you.

26: Each reflection is a mirror of you, and yet not you. They peer into you as you peer into them.

25-10: [Repeat the name of the entity you are working with, and then repeat the sigilized mantra you created earlier.]

10: You know you can't hide from their gazes pressing across your brow. The reflections move and shift, and you can feel the inner tempest spinning, perhaps for the first time. Some laugh at you, some cry.

9-1: [Repeat the name of the entity you are working with, and then repeat the sigilized mantra you created earlier.]

They move together, coalescing into one reflection. The reflection steps out of the mirror and stares right into you. Its gaze penetrates your eyes and

sees through you. It knows you all too well.

You want to flee. Stand. Face it. You tremble with unease.

It knows your secrets, your desires, and your pain. Your shadow knows. You must not run. You must stand and face it. Stand and face it. If it fights, you must hold your ground.

Ask it its name; you have a right to know. Stand with courage and ask it its name. It is you and you are it. You have a right to its name as it has your name. You must stand and face it. It is you. To be afraid is natural, to deny it is to give it control. Talk to yourself, start to befriend your reflection. Stand and face it, for it is you. Learn to love it, as it is you and it hides many beautiful and ugly things.

Stand and talk. You have everything to gain. It has waited for you a long time.

As you stand before yourself, tell yourself over and over that you love yourself and accept yourself.

[Pause for twenty minutes, add eerie music.]

The reflection melds back into the mirror and then, in another second, all the reflections are there. Walk back from darkness to light. You see a clear path through the mirrors now that there is a light. Walk back toward the light, and come back to us now.

Slowly the mirrors stride past you as the entire room gets lighter and lighter. Feel your guide leaving your body piece by piece as the light descends upon you.

Count up from 1 to 30.

1-30: Visualize the light all around you getting brighter and brighter.

Stand up from your chair. Stand up from your chair now and laugh like a madman.

[End of pathworking.]

Once you have the mixture finished, it should be placed in the container and placed in a triangle of art. Make sure you have thoroughly researched the entity (and by "researched," this includes having evoked it separately from this ritual). Sigilize the following intent using the Spare/Carroll method (again read ahead to chapter 16 if you do not know how to do this): "Imbue the following sacrament with the energies of [insert chosen entity] to act as my guide into my own shadow." Use the Ofnung progressive relaxation technique covered in chapter 2 to get into a relaxed state of mind, and then perform a full banishing of your own creation that seems in sync with your chosen entity. Visualize the entity descending over the bottle while you repeat the mantra. Do this while increasing the intensity and speed of the mantra, and while more strongly visualizing the entity over the bottle. If possible, leave your triangle and bottle in the same position and do not banish. Allow the entity to imbue the sacrament. Each evocation should take longer than thirty minutes, and you should be in a deeper level of trance when you are finished with the evocation. You should feel the presence of the entity in the triangle. Give the entity license to depart if it feels that the bottle is properly charged for that day. Obviously, you should have some rapport with the entity.

This evocation should be repeated for seven consecutive days. On the seventh day, the ritual will move toward completion. You should take the imbued container and sit in a comfortable chair. The room should be extremely dark. While still in a trance state from the seventh evocation, you should start the pathworking recorded earlier as the sacrament flows throughout your body. Follow the instructions in the pathworking. After the pathworking, you should perform a full banishing, and you should go out and get some food and/or spend time with a sympathetic friend. This can be a rough ritual. Once you have done this ritual exploring the negative sides of your personality, the guides can be switched to find more positive hidden sides to yourself. Be creative and try it out with as many entities as you see fit.

If you wish to see me do the group variant of the ritual, you have to come to a convention where I am giving a presentation or be invited to a working in whatever town I happen to be in. If the fans want it, I am sure I can do it on the side, whether or not it is formally on the bill for a convention or gathering. I can assure you, it is even more powerful than the solo ritual, and worth the trip.

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Energy Manipulation III

Emotion Ball Game

If you have really been trying out the mudras, breathing, postures, and gestures, you may have some combinations that seem to produce a specific emotion or state of mind. Combining the gesture with re-accessing a memory can produce a very strong emotional state. Now, to refine the exercise a bit, let's throw some NLP kinds of visualizations into the mixture. When visualizing the memory you are trying to use as a base emotion, you can in most cases make that memory more realistic by adding sensory details of as many senses as possible. Keep revisiting the memory with the added sensory details until the emotion completely overcomes you. Allow yourself to become enraged or pine in lust, wallow completely in sadness, or be so happy that it overwhelms you. Keep repeating the memory in your head until there isn't anything in your conscious mind except for the memory.

When you feel like you are overflowing with the emotion, visualize the emotional energy flowing and coalescing into a ball in your hands. Try to do this exercise with a partner, just to get verification. After you have an emotional energy ball, try to get your partner to sense what type of emotion the ball represents. This takes a little practice.

Try to do this with as many emotions as possible. As with the other exercises, try to play with posture, breathing, and gesture. If you have some combinations that seem to enhance or lead into one emotion, by all means try it with that emotion. Is the sphere produced stronger with breathing combinations or posture than if you just did the memory exercise? Try as many combinations as you want to, and keep track of which combination has what mental effect.

Banishing is a very good idea after this exercise. Retry some of the energy ball games previously covered in the adventure, such as the inner taffy ball game, using the emotionally tinged information. What happens?

Mood Alteration

As an astute reader, you will immediately recognize that this exercise marks a transition from mere practice to the manifestation of some practical effects in the material world. The point of the exercise is to use the emotional energy that was generated by the last exercise and directly channel that into other people, thus changing their mood. I strongly recommend that when you are starting with this exercise you should definitely stick to positive emotions. After you start to get the feeling for the exercise, try this with all emotions, but be prepared to banish, and do get permission from your partner.

Have your partner sit down in front of you with his or her back to you, or if you don't have a partner, use a mirror to practice on yourself, and imagine that your image in the mirror is your partner. Using negative emotions on random people is not recommended-some unknowing participants might get slightly annoyed if they find out what you are doing-but that is a decision left to your discretion, or lack thereof.

Place your hands above your partner's shoulders or, if you have some comfort with the person, feel free to place your hands on the shoulders. Just like for the last two exercises, use a memory of an emotion to generate that emotion. You might have a particularly good combination of breathing and posture that augments it. Let the emotion overwhelm you and build till you are ready to explode with that emotion. At that point, you are completely in the thralls of it. Take a deep breath in and then, with a strong exhalation, visualize all that emotion extending out of your hands and into the other person. The feeling should be like a waterfall gushing out of your hands. Keep visualizing and pushing the energy flowing out of your body until there is no more emotion left and you feel "calm" or emotionally spent.

If you choose random partners, try to observe their body language and posture as the energy goes into their system. Is there a noticeable shift? Was the shift consistent with the body language that would be expressed for that particular emotion? If you have partners that you can talk to, ask them for their impression of the experience and what they thought the emotion was. Of course, switch places afterward, and have them pump you full of an emotion and see how this affects you.

Keep trying this exercise with more subtle amounts of the energy. How much energy does it take to create a reaction? How does altering breathing and posture, or even adding gestures, change the patterns, strength, or ability to alter moods?

Sampling and Giving Energy From and To Different Sources

This is a simple technique to sample the energy from different sources. Relax and breathe. I highly recommend that if you take energy from people or even things, you ask them for permission. Clear out your head and totally relax when you are first starting with this series of techniques. Hold your hand out in front of you. Visualize a vortex starting to slowly spin out from your hand. Combine the visualization with imagining the sound of a tornado as well as a feeling of force being drawn into your hand. Some people prefer to visualize a tentacle growing from their hand that sucks energy, but I prefer the less Cthulhu-like route. Feel the vortex slowly pulling the energy into you like a drain. I have found that the stronger and faster you visualize the vortex, the more energy you can take in. With practice, you can get better at this exercise. Likewise, if you find that spinning the vortex one way takes energy in, spinning the vortex the opposite way and visualizing the energy pushing out from your hand will give energy to a source.

Visualize the vortex spinning faster and faster and a tunnel going from the source you are sampling. This vortex would be like a very narrow tornado. Feel the energy flowing from them to you. This takes some practice. The point of this is not to drain a target of its energy but to sample the energy. Try to record the feelings, thoughts, and states of mind that come to you after starting this exercise. What impressions, images, sounds, smells, or feelings do you get from the energy sample? What thoughts does it bring to mind? Only take enough to "understand" Taking more than you need or doing this to someone without permission is usually considered extremely rude from most perspectives, and it is a violation of the other person's individual rights.

Imagine that you are drinking the energy through the straw of the vortex. Record everything in your journal. If you were working with a partner as your source, switch roles; write down in your journal how it felt to be on the giving and taking ends of the process. I am not the conscience police, but be

warned: this leads to Billy Badass Western-style showdowns. In a Western showdown, there are a lot of people who get hurt. Keep that in mind. Secondly, you never know what you are going to pick up with this. Experimenting with this on people could get you sick if the person you are draining from is sick. The technique, however, is a useful building block to sample and use energy from other sources. When I attempt to take something's essence, I usually ask permission and give the same amount of my energy back to the source. Often with entities and people, in a spirit model, this creates a solid friendship. With trees, it starts a great rapport. With a lake, it forms a connection.

The hand method is very obvious, though. Once you can use the hand method reliably, try visualizing the vortex coming out of your stomach instead and pulling the energy in through there or via your mouth. At this stage in the exercise, you should be able to be discrete. As a final experiment, try to use the vortex visualization from your eyes alone.

Once you are able to use the vortex to pull energy, repeat the process trying to push energy or give energy with the vortex. This visualization should produce more of an energy push than you normally would be able to push out. Spin the vortex the other way, or just will it to be a pushing (not a pulling), and push the energy out.

Replicating Energies

Once you have the energy sampling technique down, there is an interesting series of experiments that you can do as you map out how different energies feel. Our brains (according to What the BLEEP Do We Know?) discern no difference between the memory of a thing and the thing itself. The previous emotional energy games suggest that the memory of an emotion can be enough to replicate that emotion (and produce an energy that is transferable from an energy model).

But emotions are not the only concept that can be replicated. Once you have sampled an energy source, use the memory of the "tasting" of the energy source to produce the energy. Try to remember an energy source you have sampled, or review your journal notes. Relax and breathe. At first, use the progressive relaxation and Ofnung meditation to become completely

relaxed. After counting down from 99 to 0 and relaxing, start going over the memory of where you "tasted" an energy source. Bring the memory to the forefront, adding details of all the senses that you can think of that augment and empower the sensory content of the memory itself. Yes, this is an NLP and psychological trick to empower the memory. Just relax and let the details come to you as you need them to. Keep repeating the memory until you are deep in trance.

If you have access to a partner, try to experiment with that person. Recall a source you have sampled and understood and replicate it using the memory trick. Form a ball of that energy. What does your partner pick up?

An interesting side use of this is to replicate the energy of any experience by using the memory trick and adding details to the memory to crystallize and empower it. If you have really enjoyed a conversation you have had, replicate the feeling, states of mind, and thoughts of that exchange. This combination will reproduce the energy of that conversation. With sigil magic and the later visualizations, there will be ample uses for techniques like this. Of course, merely surrounding yourself with the energy and vibrating that energy might be enough to attract it and have more interesting conversations or events. This is a technique alluded to in Taylor Ellwood's Space/Time Magic, but I have independently worked this out. This particular technique will become extremely useful in evocations and invocations, as well as more visualization types of magic.

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Energy Manipulation IV and Practical Shielding Techniques

Energy Manipulation and Shielding

Creating a barrier around you is a prerequisite to evocational work and some forms of shamanic magic, but it can be used for far more than merely a protective bubble. As you are reading, jot down other ideas you have for these shielding techniques.

Large Ball to Shield Game

Make a ball as you have in the past, but continue to feed the ball till it is big enough for you to walk inside. This takes a bit of time, so be patient. Once the ball is large enough to actually cover your whole body, verify the size and strength of the field with a partner, if possible. Step inside the ball. See how it feels, first to cross the boundary into the huge ball, and second to be inside the energy ball. Change the consistency of the ball to be hard and impenetrable. Feel it coalescing to a solid shell around you.

Once you have completed this, destroy the ball and re-create it, but instead of making a ball large enough to step in, just make a bubble around you, again visualizing it as a hard shell. With a partner, continue to check on the bubble. As with other exercises, try not to think about the bubble for increasing lengths of time, and verify with a partner how long the bubble can last before it is no longer present. Keep doing this exercise until the bubble seems to remain intact without losing strength for an extended period of time (over fifteen minutes). Strengthening the barrier is the same as asserting a psychic shield.

If you don't have a partner to test this with, practice this alone for a while. Before you start practicing this exercise, go to a place that is packed with people. After you are confident with your barrier, go back to that crowded place. Do people in that crowded place react differently to you than they did

before? Do they bump into you less? Do they move out of your way more often?

Color, Shape, and Texture Bubble Game

Once you are reasonably sure that you can create a barrier for yourself, give the barrier different aspects in the same way you gave your ball different textures. If you can, practice this with a partner. You can make the "sphere" rubbery, mirrorlike, or golden. Use any combination of texture, color, and density. Practice with different combinations by visualizing your bubble changing from what it normally is to an entirely different impression. You will need to be relaxed and stay focused on the task. Try to spend thirty minutes or more locking the bubble into the new impression.

Practice with the combinations and see if you can get confirmation that people can pick up a subtle difference in your "aura" What is the reaction out in public to different combinations? If you have a partner, have him or her confirm the presence of the bubble and keep checking on the construct at more and more distant intervals. If you don't have a partner, use the reaction of random people in an area you don't know to judge the impact. Does the bubble fade over time? As you practice more often, does the bubble fade less?

Often in simple psychic shielding, simple visualizations are used to empower the "bubble" This is not enough. Try to incorporate all senses and push energy into the bubble to empower it as you are giving the bubble more informational content as well. Feel and visualize the bubble becoming as you will it to. As we shall cover later, a strong shield is a good foundation for multiple paradigms of magic. However, in practice, a shield can be drained of its energy, and it is only as strong as the practitioner's willpower. If you are faced with a situation in which you must defend yourself (in astral wandering or other shamanic techniques), use your shield to deflect attacks, but evoke constructs or spirits to defend you. Evocation will be covered slightly later, in chapter 28.

Elemental Auric Manipulation Game

As with the shield ball game, create a bubble around you. Create the bubble using an elemental component from the Persian system (air, fire, water, and earth). You researched individual components of this system earlier. Try to have a partner describe which element you are trying to emit via your large shield ball. Attempt to do each of the elements. The partner should check to see that the entire ball around you is of that elemental type. At this point, you should reverse roles with your partner. Again, it takes a little time to master the sensitivity parts of this exercise. Remember, this is about having fun. Try to continue forcing energy into the bubble around you by increasing its size and strength. As with the shield ball game, see how long your bubble can remain at full strength before noticeably diminishing in strength. Continue practicing this exercise until the bubble does not seem to diminish for a reasonable length of time (fifteen minutes or more).

Emotional Auric Manipulation Game

Once again, partner up if possible, or test your auric manipulation by walking around in random places. Now take on an extreme emotion via reliving a memory, like we discussed earlier. Fill yourself completely with the emotional energy, using the methods we have before. At home, try to do this with as many emotions as you can. In a workshop, choose one of the emotions we have been working with-lust, love, hate, fear, or rage-or laughter. Create a shield ball around you with the emotional energy, using whichever way is easiest. Verify the strength of the bubble as well as the type of emotion with a partner. Switch roles and repeat. Once each partner can do this exercise, record in your journal how the bubble of emotion makes your partner either want to talk to you or avoid you. As with the shield bubble game, and the elemental auric manipulation game, try to extend the auric change for long periods of time. Once you are pretty sure that you can hold this auric manipulation for an extended period of time, change your internal emotion while leaving the outer auric manipulation intact. Attempt to verify this with a partner, and see if that person can tell what the inner emotion is. Keep going with this exercise, and strengthen the bubble with a partner till you can get a six-foot-or-more concentrated sphere of that type of emotion around you. Once you can do that (verified by a partner), go out to a public place with the auric shifts, and record how people treat you (obviously, one example is to go to a nightclub while excluding lust

into your aura). There will be one more auric section of techniques to try out later in our adventure.

The "No" Effect in Shielding and Bubble Creation

As a culture in America, we are conditioned to say yes. Say yes to buying stuff. Say yes to internal complaining. Say yes to just about everything. One of the strongest and most effective techniques in magic when summoning or otherwise doing work is to say no from your core and mean it. Usually this is said to yourself or a part of you that is afraid of reacting. In fact, "no" can be a powerful reconditioning agent if the strength of will is behind it. So why is this diatribe the last section in the first part of auric manipulation?

Simply put, no one can affect your energy, either by inputting something in your energy pattern or by taking your energy without permission from you. This includes external and internal agents. You are in control of your energy at all times.

At first this might seem ridiculous. But if you have access to a partner, have that person try the vortex exercise on you. Simply cross your arms in a closed position and scream NO inside your head as loud as you can. Can they easily take your energy or does the stream stop? If an internal voice is telling you that you will fail, silently tell that voice NO in the strongest possible way. Does it quiet down? Practice saying no in any situation you are not comfortable with. This cannot be a weak no, but a practiced willful and forceful NO. Try shouting NO out loud a few times. How does it make you feel?

At first, you might feel uncomfortable saying no. Try to envision yourself saying no and being proud of it. Think about the times you could have saved yourself trouble if you had said no.

Later on, when we get to invocation and evocation, there are times that entities will test your strength of will or magical ability by causing you to be afraid or have doubts. NO is your friend, even if you are telling it to yourself. Just keep getting used to saying no and meaning it.

Remember, no one can affect your energy unless they have implicit or direct permission to do so. If you don't like the effect an entity or person is having on you, build a rising crescendo of resistance by repeating NO and meaning it.

As with the other energy and visualization exercises, how does posture, breathing, your state of mind, gestures, and any other combination affect these exercises? Do some combinations make a stronger and more cohesive bubble faster? Do different combinations affect the impact of the exercise? Keep playing and experimenting. From here we move to practical spellcraft in the form of sigils. Time to start enchanting!

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Sigil Magic I:
Sigil Creation

Sigil Magic: The General Principle

Consciously willing to have something very rarely works. The mind loves to play sick games on and with itself. Having the conscious desire often triggers a host of ego complexes revolving around anxiety over failure, self-worth issues, or fear of success (since that would conflict with the psychic censor). Sigil magic instead tries to work the will through the greatest magician-the subconscious-thus bypassing the ego complexes and the mind altogether. How does this process happen? Once people move toward gnosis, they are moving toward less and less conscious control over the process.

Back to Shadowland and the Psychic Censor

We talked about outside influences and external desires. We talked about fear and the shadow. Now all of these issues play directly into sigil magic. For instance, let's say you cast magic to attract a lustful, beautiful blonde bombshell, or a Calvin Klein male underwear model. This is a common example of a mistake, but why? First, those types of models are rare. Second, and even more importantly, those models are illusions carefully constructed by placement, color, mood, and other techniques. Essentially, the desire for such a commodity and social symbol is a desire for a ghost (or, in this case, a carefully crafted corporate succubus/ incubus). As your desire grows, you may go through the needed steps to obtain that "impossible" ghost. This process almost certainly involves buying something. Giving this intent to the subconscious could provoke an obsession.

The deconditioning process from the first part of our adventure is needed precisely because of this. What does it help to do a ritual for a meme-created desire? Not to mention, if you haven't grasped for selftransformation, who's to say your "unmanifest" gestalts won't subconsciously reach out to bring

you the opposite of what you wanted or, even worse, exactly what you wanted?

For example, you cast a sigil spell for a raise in a job you hate. You end up getting fired. Even a novice psychologist can point out the cognitive dissonance. Or in the model we provided, a different part of you galvanized the hate at the ritual point and manifested that alternate desire. Still think the first part of the adventure was a waste of time?

To reiterate, the key to sigil magic is to be specific about what you actually want. The sigil is an encapsulation of your desire, a manifestation of your will, sent into the dark closet of your subconscious mind. In my opinion, it's important to have done the self-work to know what you want as opposed to what someone else wants you to want (so you are sure you want it), not to mention have enough understanding to know where it could go wrong. Paraphrasing Spare, evoking (or enchanting for) something necessitates the existence of its opposite (of failures) (Carroll 1987). Keep that in mind as you go forward.

Desire of Result

Sending things to the subconscious seems like a good idea. By bypassing the neuroses of the ego complex, individuals can purely manifest their will via their subconscious. Great! So why does it not always work? There are many reasons why something doesn't work (e.g., conflicting parts of the self), but the lust of the result is often a contributing factor. Let's say you cast a spell for fast cash. You keep thinking about all the ways you are going to spend that fast cash before you have received it. Now, the sigil might work, but at this point it's unlikely. Why? The issue has become clouded. Is it cash you want, or all the things you have tied to the cash? Essentially, you have hamstrung the subconscious and confused/diluted the intent after the fact. So a second key to sigil magic is to simply forget the intent and then destroy the physical sigil or mantra. Now, this is truly the hardest part of the equation for most magicians, since they wouldn't be casting a spell if they didn't need something. This can go too far as well. In trying to forget the sigil, some magicians become neurotic whenever any thought about a spell pops into their minds. Negative attention is still attention. Focusing on and getting upset about the memory of intent is, in a way, still focusing on the intent.

Take a hint from Zen: let the thought flow in and out, giving it no credence. We will talk more about that in the next chapter.

Want something? Cast the spell and detach.

What Are Sigils Actually?

A sigil is any encapsulation of a desire in the form of a statement of intent that is not immediately recognizable by the conscious mind. This form could be verbal, musical, graphical, olfactory, structured as a sequence of events ... anything is possible. For a street magician, this broad definition opens possibilities and allows for greater flexibility of use.

The Statement of Intent

The statement of intent should be in your native language and boldly state what you want to happen. This is the basis of what the sigils, workings, invocations, evocations, and mantras are made of.

Let's look at some examples:

Example Set 1

Bad: "I would like to win some money at poker tonight."

Good: "It is my will to win money at poker tonight."

Even better: "It is my will to win approximately 66% of the money pool at poker tonight." (Reasonable with a little luck.)

Perhaps a little unreasonable (but that depends on you): "It is my will to win all of the money at poker tonight."

Example Set 2

Bad: "I would like to find a nickel at the corner of Western and Chicago tomorrow."

Still bad but might work: "It is my will to find a nickel at the corner of Western and Chicago tomorrow."

Better: "It is my will to find a nickel on the street within the next two weeks."

Now, the difficulty of the magic often depends on the statement of intent. "I would like" and similar lackluster statements don't inspire the will to do anything. Stand and speak with conviction. It will be successful because it is your will. The difficulty of the task relates to how difficult the task is to manifest. Obviously, in Example Set 2, finding a nickel at the corner of Western and Chicago is very specific, which is good, but it gives little room for the magic to work. If you stood on the corner of Western and Chicago, I am sure that within the day, the nickel would manifest. However, it's more likely that a person would go to the corner of Western and Chicago, walk around and not see a nickel and leave. So that leaves a fifteen-minute window for the magic to manifest. Everything is possible, but success in this spell is not likely. The last nickel intent is good. There is room for the magic to work, as well as a clear desire.

I am sure that many of you have heard the axiom "Magic will take the path of least resistance." Any intent you wish to sigilize and cast must have a path to manifestation or else it will fail, or worse. By giving the magic a little leeway, you give it more paths to manifest. Of course, by not being specific, you might be very surprised at what you actually get. Statements of intent are very much balancing acts, and as you practice more you will get better at picking the right intent, knowing what you really want, and knowing what are acceptable ways for the magic to manifest-all of which you will be able to incorporate into the statements of intent. One example of a bad result of a spell for quick money is to get the inheritance from an uncle you love dearly. Clearly that's a very bad way for the spell to manifest.

After the Sigil is Made, Double-Check with Divination

Once you have your sigil, it is very useful when you are first starting out with this type of magic to double-check if the sigil is correct for what you want to do at that point in time. A simple yes/no answer from a pendulum is a good start; however, I feel a full divination on the matter will be more

helpful. This is not a book on divination; there are several good systems and books on that subject. Personally, I like the tarot, but anything but astrology or palm reading would probably work to verify what the sigil will do. (Astrology and palm reading are more fixed events that do not give you an immediate answer to the question.) It would initially seem that the question to divine should be "Will this sigil work as I have planned?" This is a good yes/no question to ask when using a pendulum or flipping a coin. By changing the question, you can get more information about your process of sigilization and intent. Make the question "What will be the effect of using this sigil?" The divination might turn up interesting side corollaries, benefits, or even "gotchas" that have to be considered.

Spare/Carroll Sigilization

The Spare/Carroll method of sigilization is very easy technically, but in my opinion it contains elements of divination within the sigil itself. The sigil is built directly out of the subconscious, and going into a slight (or greater) trance state while sigilizing the intent seems to assist its reliability.

The process is simple.

Write out your statement of intent. For example:

It is my will to see a blue bird within two weeks.

Drop all the duplicate letters.

The example intent becomes

ITSMYWLOEABURDHNK

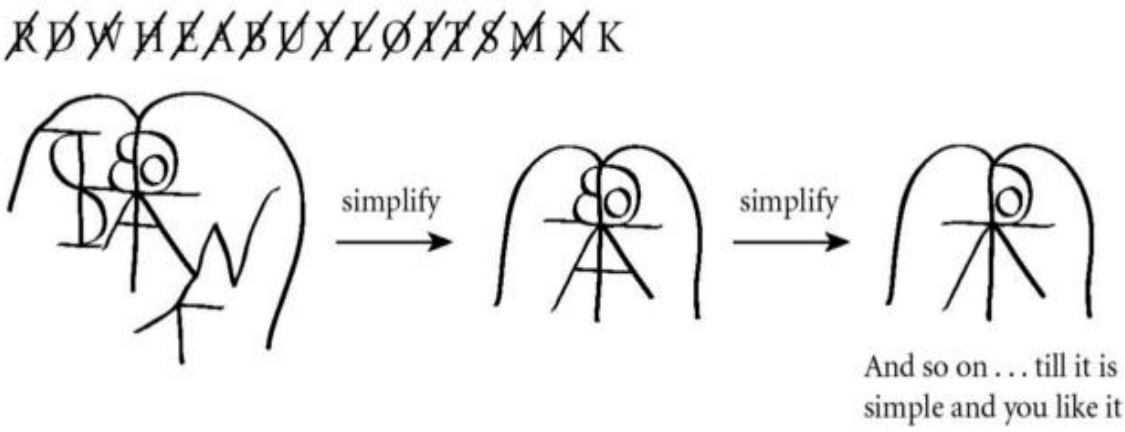
Rearrange the letters so they are not in the same order as the original intent. (This is optional; I just like to do this. Figure out how it works best for you.)

RDWHEABUYLOITSMNK

Copy this new combination of letters to a new sheet of paper.

TO ARTISTIC GLYPH

Use the remaining letters to draw a glyph and create the glyph spell. Now, the letters you have are merely artistic guidelines. You can twist and contort the letters however you need to. If you feel that something should be added to the glyph, add it. If you feel that something should be taken away from the glyph, take it away. As you keep artistically modifying the glyph, try to make it simpler and simpler in design till you get a glyph that is as simple as possible but still appealing to you.



This is an example of sigilizing our intent.

Sigil Exercise

Let's try some of this out, shall we?

Using the Spare/Carroll method, make an artistic glyph and then check it with divination to see what the result of using it will be. The intent should be something that you don't care about either way, that has no emotional attachment. It may even be whimsical.

For example, an intent could be:

It is my intent to see a woman with red shoes.

Outside of some refined fetishists, this intent probably has no emotional effect or desire component.

TO MANTRA FORM

Go back to our working letter set after we dropped the duplicates from the intent ("It is my will to see a blue bird within two weeks") and randomly rearranged the letters. At this point that is:

RDWHEABUYLOITSMNK

Use these remaining letters to verbalize a mantra to create the mantra spell. Those who care about musical tonality may wish to ensure that the verbal mantra flows according to various rules of music. Try to add letters or take them away based on whether or not you like or dislike the mantra. Personally, I tend to duplicate or add vowels.

Character set:

RDWHEABUYLOITSMNK

Mantra 1: HeaBuoYitasmonkdriewl

seems too complex

Simplify: Hea Bow Yita Driel

Well, I like this mantra, but your tastes might vary.

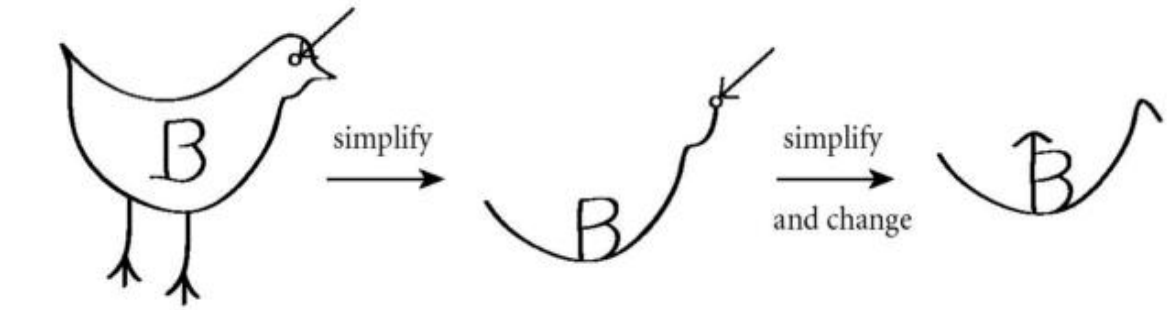
Remember, it is helpful to go into a light trance or even a heavier trance before starting to sigilize any intent.

Mantra Exercise

Using the Spare/Carroll method, make a mantra glyph and then check it with divination to see what the result of using it will be. Again, the intent should be something that you don't care about either way, something that has no emotional attachment and may be whimsical.

Carroll Pictorial Method/ Shamanistic Method of Sigilization

Peter Carroll also talks about a pictorial method of sigilization. It's easy to see how to do that in the following illustration:



See a blue bird
(hence the B and the arrow)

The process is simple. Start with a line drawing or basic sketch that encapsulates your intent. Reduce the lines and shapes to a very simple sigil that you can remember. There is a long history of this type of sigilization. In my humble opinion, cave paintings seem very similar to this method, as cave dwellers graphically depicted what they desired. This brings me to my next sigilization method: automatic drawing.

Automatic Drawing/Writing/Music and Other Automatic Sigils

In honor of the grandfather of chaos magic, here is a method that I sometimes use for spellcraft when I have time. A. 0. Spare was a huge proponent of automatic drawing, and he would often embed hidden spells into his drawings, using the automatic drawing process to allow his subconscious to essentially manifest the spell on the canvas. To be as good at art as Spare was does take some time, but the methodology seems sound even if you are only doodling. Artists, magicians, writers, and some programmers will all claim that they go into a trance state where the task at hand sometimes completely takes over. Clearly this is a form of gnosis, and if you are able to let the trance take over, it is possible to manifest the spell automatically on your chosen medium without the verbal reduction techniques supplied earlier. This technique is not easy to teach, however, and the student is encouraged as always to try this out, but a general framework for doing something like this in any artistic medium could be the following:

1. Become proficient in progressive relaxation meditation.

2. Declare your statement of intent.

3. Start drawing, playing an instrument, or writing while clearing out the thoughts in your head.

4. Do not stop to criticize any creative ideas or desires that come into the conscious mind. Essentially, just play them, code them, draw them, write them down, etc.

5. Keep going until the conscious mind is no longer criticizing, thinking about, or otherwise modifying the ideas that are flowing from the subconscious. Throughout the process, the individual should be trying to go deeper into the "muse" while continuing the meditation.

6. Stop when you feel like the sigil is finished. More than with other forms of sigilization, you have to intuitively know when to stop. That could be thirty minutes or ten hours (there really cannot be a set time, given the nature of the task; when it's done, it's done).

Random Sigils in the Environment

Another fun way to do sigil magic is to declare a statement of intent, and then find a sigil somewhere in the environment that will work for you. In my case, I drive around Chicago repeating my statement of intent (or mantra) until I happen to see a particular piece of graffiti that seems like it will work. I empower that sigil and go with it (I may have had no idea what the sigil originally meant, but for me it now means whatever my intent is). I have also heard of several magicians using random patterns in tree bark, clouds, or even ripples in the dirt as their sigils. Be creative. The glyphs are all around us.

Other Interesting Sigil Ideas

There are a few other interesting ways to make sigils that I want to mention. This is solely for you to see how creative you can be with the sigil-making process. Don't feel limited to Spare's technique. Take the ideas and run with them.

First, use a program to randomly generate a sigil. Kiamagic.com has some interesting tools for this. Start with intent, and generate a sigil from the website. A second interesting sigil technique I have started to practice is to use a Go board, an Othello board, or even a checkerboard to create a sigil (really, any game in which players place chips on a game board can work). Essentially, I concentrate on the intent while playing the game. The end product can produce a nice sigil, which I have used with the methods in the next chapter to get real-world results.

These two methods are just a few examples of how creative you can be with your magic. Explore, experiment, and see what you can come up with. I am sure that there are hundreds of other ways to create sigils; feel free to explore them all.

Symbolic Training

To me (and most relevant to the rest of the book), sigil magic has the added benefit of starting to train the mind to work in a sort of symbolic logic. We do work in symbolic logic all the time, but it's a comfortable symbolic logic that is assumed to be real (and hence the psychic censor works against it). This new type of symbolic logic is more of a subconscious expression than a conscious one. When you practice with pre-made sigils, it will make working with defined systems easier, since you will be working with symbols more often. In fact, if you are using the Spare method of sigilization, you are doing some divination techniques on the spot. It's a way of working with the subconscious mind, training the conscious mind to interact with the subconscious.

The next chapter will cover how to use the sigils you have created or found by empowering them, and it will also cover the pitfalls of sigil magic. Try to create a few sigils and lose the original intent for a while. Make sure they are simply things that don't matter that much. After all, this is practice and play.

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Sigil Magic II:
Sigil Magical Enchantment

Up until this point, we have been covering vast amounts of energy exercises, visualization, NLP, and banishing, but not much practical use. This chapter is the first section that is only about enchanting for things or desires. Most of the chapters previous to this one will have an impact upon this section, and all of your interesting combinations of breathing, posture, gesture, etc., will be relevant.

You have been presented with a basic overview of the necessary pre-work with sigils, including the self-work. You have a sigil that you double-checked with divination, and you are ready to go. Now what?

With the work you have been doing up to now, you already have most of the tools to work with the sigils you have made. In fact, those interesting combinations of energy work, breathing, posture, gesture, and visualization are in fact your gateways to a singular state of consciousness that can allow you to enchant your way to success. So break out your journal, because we are about to get jiggy with the magic.

A Simple Framework for the Fire-and-Forget Sigil Method

- Clear your head or banish via the methods you have developed on your own.

- Use one of the combinations from your journal of memory, breathing, gesture, posture, etc., that seems to correlate with your encapsulated desire, while staring at the sigil or mantra you have made.

- Continue going into deeper and deeper trance states, thinking only about the sigil or mantra you have made until it becomes the all-encompassing focus of your attention and will.

• You should continue until you really can't keep going because you are too far into trance to do any specific motion or style of breathing.

• Banish to end the ritual. For me, this is usually just laughing hysterically.

• Destroy the sigil or mantra, and do not worry about the request anymore. (Forget it.) If you find yourself thinking about the sigil or the process, just relax and let the thought go.

You can physically stare at a sigil on a piece of paper or hold it in your mind as an image (all the practice visualizing pays off). Yes, sigil magic is that easy; however, for the first part of this book, you have been working on visualization, focus, breathing, and the skills needed to make this framework so easy. The two hardest parts of fire-andforget sigil magic are maintaining focus and thought control while pushing your conscious mind down, and forgetting the sigil itself.

Throughout the first part of the book, we have been discussing different methods of focus and mental control that should aid in your sigil-magic adventures. When you are first starting out, choose things that do not matter to you.

Now, for every sigil you cast, you have to record the results you get from the working (which is a bit odd, so you have to forget the sigil or mantra and pay attention to odd synchronicities that seem to remind you of the original intent). As you practice, celebrate any successes you get by telling yourself how good you are.

If you are just starting out with sigils, a useful technique is to cast them for things that have a relatively high probability of happening without magical intervention, but go into a deep trance while casting for them anyway. Keep with this process and slowly start moving to events that have a lower probability of success. Try to silence any objection that may occur, and enthusiastically state to yourself that the event occurred due to your magic. In fact, if you are using the reward system discussed earlier, do reward yourself. For any sigil you cast, continue to do this and raise your internal voice over any internal objections that success was a result of your

magic. This process tends to weaken your personal resistance to magic, making magical workings easier for you in the long run, and it helps you be comfortable with casting sigil magic. As you consciously move to events with less probability of success, treat them exactly the same as the highly probable events. In each case, focus on the sigil and maintain the singularity of focus.

The Wank Method from Grant Morrison as a Case Study

Grant Morrison popularized this method of sigil casting, and it is probably one of the best-known methods of sigil casting on the Internet (Morrison 2000). It's a very simple process: masturbate while concentrating on the sigil or chanting the mantra until orgasm is achieved. This is an extremely simple procedure and, mostly in Internet circles, people state, "Look how simple sigil magic is." Unfortunately, there are a couple reasons why this method doesn't always work or doesn't seem to work as efficiently after a while.

First, the quality of the orgasm matters. For this style of sigil casting to work, the orgasm has to be a complete rip-roaring, tear-your clothes-off affair. Certainly, while it is possible to achieve that, how many people actually do have this type of rip-roaring experience with each masturbation session? Remember, it has to be almost a complete absorption into the trance state. Sure, sex does produce a wild mix of euphoria, trance, and an altered state of consciousness, but it is fantastic sex that really does the trick.

Second, if you limit yourself to any one style of trance generation, from sex to meditation, it may become more difficult to produce any meaningful results from that type of method. So in the wank method, masturbation just doesn't have the same trance-generating effect. Your conscious mind just becomes acclimated to the effect and used to it. This can happen with any sort of method to get into trance.

Third, the stigma of masturbation might lead to some thoughts of embarrassment or self-criticism. This underlying embarrassment might not surface, but if it's there, is it helping you manifest your desire? As with other shadow issues, it is acting as an impediment to what you want, not to mention that these types of issues and feelings keep you from obtaining that rip-roaring orgasm where you cannot think about anything but the moment.

For men, ejaculation is not the same as a riproaring orgasm. The underlying associations that you have while using methods of going into altered states of consciousness do matter, and they can affect the outcome of the spell work you are doing.

A little later, when we talk about layering after the evocation and invocation chapters, the wank method becomes far more interesting and effective for use in combination-style rituals.

Subtle Correlations and States of Mind

While for some people it may seem obvious, it has been my experience that like attracts like, even in sigil magic. Throughout parts of the book, we have been working on cataloging different interesting combinations of breathing, gesture, posture, and the effects they have on your state of mind. Now, if you find an interesting combination that seems to produce an angry effect, is this the type of correlation that you want to make when casting a love spell?

Most magicians who practice for a while make this obvious connection and are at times matching the state of mind produced by a breath pattern or gesture with the desired result of the sigil. It is not often spelled out in many of the occult books you can buy, but personally I have found that the results work better if you match these up.

Obviously, some forms of trance do not lead to any particular emotional content or state of mind other than a deep trance state, and they can be used with any type of sigil work you want to do, but some most certainly have personal connotations that should be taken into account. Try to make use as many correspondences as you can between what you want and the different techniques that you yourself have developed.

Physical Props: Assisting Your Work with Mood and Ambiance

From here through evocation and invocation, mood and ambiance will help your rituals have a greater effect. You can control and set up a mood to get you in the right frame of mind for a particular ritual. Now, if you are doing a sigil to get a job, it might be worthwhile to do the ritual while wearing a suit or having pictures of money (or money itself) all around you.

There are lots of games that you can play to help your sigil magic process. For instance, burning incense that corresponds to the same general influence as the spell helps set the mood. Likewise, using the same color light that corresponds to the general purpose of the intent is helpful for visualizing the sigil in the same color as the planetary influence (only an example). Embedding the sigil into art that has a lot of relevant correspondences for you can help you with the process. Any mental correspondences that make sense to you for the intent you are casting can be visualized or chanted. If they can be added to physical props, you can certainly place them on the wall in front of you (if they are pictures) or around you in some way so you can use the visual cues to help augment the correspondences. These additional props will help your mood and belief that something will happen.

Where can you find correspondences? First, different systems will have different scent, color, and symbol correspondences. Choose ones that seem right for you. If lavender smells like success to you, then that's what you use when you are doing a success ritual. Further research can give you a host of correspondences for spells. The Magician's Companion by Bill Whitcomb (1993) is also a good starting point. If your intuition tells you to use something different, by all means follow that, but researching correspondences can give you some ideas.

Gestural or Sequence-Based Sigils

Again, earlier in our adventure there were some practice exercises related to spontaneous gesture. An interesting take on sigils that I often use is to change a drawn sigil into a gestural process-for example, a dance. This takes a bit of practice and intuition, but if the sigil is simple enough, it can be converted to dance steps. If the sigil is too complicated, try to simplify it.

Dancing out a sigil (or even walking out the sigil) on the ground takes a little practice, and you have to memorize the sigil beforehand. The easiest way I have found to do this is to add direction to the drawing of the sigil (perhaps using an arrow) so that the sigil has to be drawn in a certain sequence. Adding this direction gives you a sequence to follow while repeating the sigil on the ground. You have to adapt the number of steps in each direction depending on how large you want the sigil on the ground to

be drawn. If you are outside, you can scratch the sigil in the dirt to give you a reminder of where to step.

A second way I will do gesture sigils is to draw the sigil repeatedly in the air, visualizing it glowing and becoming more powerful, while possibly chanting a mantra (or using any other means to go into gnosis).

It can be possible to make "sigils" out of sheer random gestures as well. However, for this you have to scry out or think about what each gesture means in relation to what you are trying to cast for. The possibilities are endless.

In each case, the gesture should be repeated until a deeper trance state occurs, either from fatigue or a type of body trance where you simply are not thinking (I often experience this with tai chi).

The Problem of Trance

While we have covered different types of trance generation and how they interact with sigils, the problem is that some of these methods do not generate enough trance to achieve the single point of focus. Often, when I am personally doing straight sigil work, I will combine gestural sigils or correspondences, a visual sigil, and a mantra sigil that are all interrelated. I will tend to combine these different aspects to further go into a much deeper trance. Generally if you cannot reach a deeper trance state, your sigil enchantment will be less likely to produce a result. Try to combine dancing, mantra, etc., or meditation, relaxation, and breathing techniques in ways that "get you there." Experiment with different combinations of trance generation techniques and your own correspondences in the previous exercises. Remember, what matters is the result.

The fire-and-forget sigilization techniques from Spare are by no means the only uses for sigils. As I said earlier, these are great techniques to learn in order to start working with sigils. We will now move onto some different uses of sigils that are still highly effective enchantment techniques.

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Sigil Magic III: Scrying Sigils

We can use intuition alone to determine a sigil with a little practice. Scrying is one of the more difficult forms of divination, but it is a useful technique for gathering sigils and mantras. Many online resources will break up the scrying process into different methods depending on which sense you are using, but scrying for the use of obtaining words, symbols, and gestures of power can be done with any of the senses.

Glossolalia

Glossolalia is one of the most common ways to try to discover mantras and words of power. It is the random speech of the crazy person or the religious believer speaking in tongues. Often, I will incorporate glossolalia in the beginning part of a working to find the mantra to work with in later parts of the ritual.

First, banish and state your intent. Start off by using one of the relaxation techniques that were discussed in the beginning chapters of the book or a combination of gesture, posture, and breathing that you yourself made. Speak random gibberish. Keep speaking random gibberish until the random gibberish is flowing without you having to think of what syllables to say next. If you can think of what next to say, your conscious mind is still interfering. Take your time and keep going with this. Using glossolalia can result in a significant trance state by itself. When you seem to get stuck on a phrase, you have the word or phrase of power you were looking for. If you struggle to find the next syllable, speed the mutterings up, because you are thinking too much. It's okay to repeat the same syllable over and over.

What effects do different postures and breathing have on the glossolalia? The first few times you try to get a verbal power word or mantra, use some form of divination to check your results. If the divination shows a positive result, thank and praise yourself for getting a mantra consistent with your

intent. Using the partial random reward system we talked about earlier might also be a good way to practice. The subconscious mind will get the message, and your conscious mind will remember being rewarded for successful results. Every little bit will help you achieve better results.

Whispering Wind

We can also let the environment provide the mantra, word of power, or phrase. Try this technique in an extremely crowded place at first. Relax and state your intent to yourself. Proceed to do a type of relaxation exercise, and try not to focus on anything in particular. Keep relaxing. If you are in a crowded place, you will hear lots of conversations all around you. Your mind will try very hard at first to hear specific conversations. If the room is crowded enough, this will be almost impossible, but let your mind keep trying to do it. Focus on those conversations while trying to pay attention to more and more conversations at the same time. This should be disorienting. Keep breathing and progressively relaxing. Eventually, you should be relaxed enough (and correspondingly in a mild trance state) that you can hear all the words together from the crowd. Let this state go on, but if a phrase or sound sticks in your head while you are listening in trance, write it down. When you feel you have enough phrases, you have your mantra.

This exercise can be repeated either with no people around, such as in a forest (which I personally enjoy doing), or in the hustle and bustle of a big city while the cars go by (although the mantra generated might be very different). The trick you are practicing is to hear but not recognize. The sensory input is still present, but the interpretation of it is different. This sleight of mind, as Peter Carroll states, is often the trick for many magical operations (1992). This exercise also serves as a good initial introduction to hearing spirits in ritual. The idea, again, is to push aside the internal critic and just let what pops into your head come out of your mouth. Don't worry, we will be practicing more when we get to evocation.

Scrying Sigils and the Medium Used

Scrying often involves looking at a still mirror, pool of water (or other liquid), or any still surface, such as a crystal. The verbal examples of using intuition for enchantment purposes illustrate the process. Scrying as a

divination technique is a very difficult art, but it is an art I find personally fulfilling. For me, scrying sigils and symbols is slightly easier than using scrying for divination. The process is very similar, however.

Banish, clear your head, and then state what you are trying to find. One method for doing this is to first relax completely, as we did in the earlier chapters of the book. The Ofnung and self-hypnosis exercises can work great. Just keep relaxing and releasing thoughts that come into your mind while staring deeply into your chosen medium. At first, while staring at the medium, your perception might pick up on little waves or details of the mirror. Keep staring, releasing thoughts, and relaxing. The best description for the process that I have read is called "seeing," from the Carlos Castaneda book journey to Ixtlan (1972). In the book, Castaneda mentions the need to scan an area with eyes crossed, meaning out of focus. Focus and perception are products of conscious awareness. Keep staring and relaxing; eventually some shape or symbol might form in the medium. If you are completely relaxed yet have trouble letting this shape go, this is the symbol you were looking for. Ideally, as you become more relaxed and your mind slows down, it will be more communicative of your subconscious mind at deeper levels.

Once you have the symbol, when you are first doing this, doublecheck the symbol you receive from your scrying session with a secondary divination system. You will eventually be confident enough in the process that a second divination is not needed. If a divination confirms that you correctly scryed a sigil to use in a working, reward yourself. Make sure you give yourself praise, which will help you train for more frequent success in the future, until you have almost complete confidence in your sigil-scrying ability.

Another way I have done scrying work is to do scrying of sigils right after sexual acts. The post-"sex" state is very receptive, and the endorphin release adds to the body relaxation. But for me personally, any state that produces a body high with lots of relaxation will work. Often, after intense experiences, I can close my eyes and get sigils of entities that I want to work with. After you practice to the point where getting good results is expected, scrying merely with your eyes closed (or using that darkness as the reflective surface) can be quite effective. Again, this will be discussed more in the evocation chapter, but it's a teaser to let you know what is coming.

In some cases, the medium you scry with may matter. Try the process on different mediums such as a glass of water, wine, or blood; a lake; crystals; mirrors; or even just by closing your eyes. How does the medium affect your personal scrying process? Test out scrying using different postures, breathing techniques, and perhaps even a mantra.

Scrying Sigils in Other Senses

It is possible to scry sigils in other senses besides hearing and sight. Some of the gesture exercises and the random dancing from Chaos Ritual (S. Wilson 2004) have produced some interesting kinetic sigils for me. At one time, I had a student in my magical classes who was a dancer. She could breeze through and intuitively come up with sigils that were kinetic by randomly dancing at different tempos. The key, again, is to relax, to move, and to take note of the pattern when it develops.

I do personally note that when I try to relax and just move to find a pattern, it often looks very tai chi-ish because that is the body meditation that I use the most.

For smell and taste, I challenge you to come up with intriguing methodologies to "discover" internal linkages.

When you are starting out, it is useful to separate the scrying process to find a sigil from the direct casting of a spell. After you are confident in your scrying, you can move from scrying to casting in the same ritual without skipping a beat. When I work with sigils in this manner, I will scry and then go further into trance, simply holding or repeating the pattern the sigil represents until I get to the point when I have a singularity of focus. Of course, developing scrying techniques in one particular sense tends to develop "psychic" ability in that sense. Actually feeling presences is a different process, and we will cover this later.

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Sigil Magic IV: Sigil Anchors

Anchoring, Conditioning, and Sigils

Spare's method of sigilization can be used in more methods than merely the fire-and-forget method. Earlier in our adventure, we glanced over the concept of anchoring. Anchoring is a method of rooting a state of mind (for our purposes) to a gesture or word. We can link a state of mind to any mantra, sigil, gesture, or combination. This is a rather old idea in psychology called operant conditioning. Once a sigil, gesture, or mantra is properly anchored, it is sufficient to reproduce the state of mind that it was anchored to. Equally important is the idea neurologists have that only the conscious part of your brain can really tell the difference between a remembered state (or, in this case, anchored state), a fantasy state, and an actual experience (Arntz 2004). So if you had an anchor to a happy state, you could push yourself to be happy.

The process of creating an anchor to a sigil or mantra is relatively simple. First, use the Spare method to create a sigil or a mantra. The more creative and adventurous readers can create a gesture or even imagine a combination of smells. Once you have the sigil, the process is very similar to the sigil-casting exercises, except that you are focusing on the sigil while allowing the state of mind to completely take over.

Now, at first, experiment with the combinations of breath, posture, gesture, etc., that seem to lead toward certain states of mind. If you haven't really experimented with those combinations, I strongly suggest that you go back and do the work before reading this chapter. Those exercises will make more sense. At first, the stronger emotions will be easier to anchor with sigils, but other states of mind are equally possible to anchor.

Reliving a memory until the emotion takes over, as we did in the energy exercises, is a good starting point. In the previous exercise, we added details

to the memory until the emotion from the memory was overpowering. In addition, we chose memories that seemed to be strongly tied to one emotion. Now, anchoring is a simple addition. We go through the same process of reliving a memory while staring at our sigil, smelling our olfactory correspondence, speaking or singing our mantra, or moving in a certain way. If you can get into a deeper trance state while taking on the state of mind completely, a solid anchor will most likely be created. Testing the anchor is easy. Simply put the anchor sigil away for a day and then bring it out and use the sigil. Most likely, the sigil or mantra will produce some of the effects of the desired state of mind.

Unlike with the fire-and-forget method, it is actually extremely advantageous to repeat the anchoring process until the link created fully pulls forward any state of mind that you desire. For example, I have found it particularly useful to connect an anchor for a relaxed state of mind to a word of power. This allows me to go into deeper trance states much more quickly, and each time I use the anchor, I try to relax deeper and more fully, which makes the anchor more personally powerful for me.

Don't believe me? Repeat the elemental auric energy exercises. This time, create an anchor to your type of Persian elemental energy and create your own elemental symbols. After you create the anchor, use it to see the impact of concentrating on the anchor alone and test it with a partner.

The more you use the anchor, the better it will become, even when you are using your body to produce energy of a specific type. Playing with emotions like this can obviously be a significant advantage if you can use a well-practiced anchor to rapidly shift the emotional energy in your aura.

More Occult Uses-This Isn't Just Psychology

Although we have not yet covered invocation and evocation of spirits formally, some of the previous exercises are good training for those skills. Pulling a state of mind forward is generally a type of invocation, while projecting out energy of a certain type could be considered a type of evocation. Anchoring will work well with these concepts. Any ritual, performance, encounter, etc., that you experience can be remembered, added to, or manipulated while in a trance state and then anchored in the manner

previously described. Later energy exercises will work more explicitly with this concept, but for now, try to remember meeting someone for the first time, especially if it was an extraordinarily good encounter. Try to anchor that experience with a sigil while working with the memory in order to get the core details as vivid as possible (the core details being the details that, when focused on, increase the intensity of the experience). Now try this: for an entire day, project out this energy of "incredible encounters," especially toward anyone that you meet for the first time. What is the other person's reaction? Do you experience more extraordinarily good encounters by trying this? As a tweak to this, experiment by visualizing the sigil (and logistically, sigils do work well for this) over the person you are meeting as you are talking to him or her. What is the effect?

When we get to invocation and evocation, both processes can be anchored to allow for much quicker evocations and invocations (or even possessions). That is where the real fun begins.

Visualization and States of Mind

While we have covered some visualization games, there are a few more games we are going to play involving visualization. On some occasions, merely visualizing the desired outcome of an event while in a trance state is sufficient enough to manifest it (R. A. Wilson 1987). Let's say we have an anchor to a relaxed, confident state. We have used this anchor at job interviews, when meeting a new potential mate, and at sales sessions. By going into a deep trance state and using the anchor, or perhaps the tools used to create the anchor, we could then simply visualize ourselves in a situation where a relaxed confidence is helpful. Each time, repeat the visualization and change the details of it, but not the underlying type of experience. For example, you could visualize yourself at a job interview with a relaxed confidence and then change the details of the company or fictional people you are interviewing with. Eventually, if you repeat this enough, you will condition yourself to have a relaxed confidence at every job interview. If your anchor includes invoked spiritual elements, you can condition yourself to be in a state of partial invocation for particular experiences.

A lesson from cognitive science is that we can string these types of conditions together to form more useful patterns of behavior. In fact, it is

very possible to accidentally condition naturally unrelated events. Advertisements often try to make correlations between a product and more primal desires. A classic example of this conditioning/anchoring process is in the film A Clockwork Orange, where Alex is conditioned against violence at the same time he is conditioned against Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. We started the book with methods of deconditioning, including some simple NLP exercises, energy work, and banishings. If you accidentally condition a link you don't want, pull forward the experience and remove all of your sensory information while concentrating on the link. Usually this means duller, darker, farther away, and less perceivable-less of what you are feeling.

Scrying Sigils, Anchoring, and the Alphabet of Desire

Spare had an interesting idea about gathering sigils from the subconscious to represent different aspects of the self and pull them forward. Peter Carroll and Stephen Mace further explained the concept. Peter Carroll compiled this into what he referred to as the alphabet of desire (1987). Stephen Mace further explained how to actually go about doing this in Stealing the Fire from Heaven (1984). I am going to offer a slightly different take on the alphabet of desire, which is an extremely useful process for individual sorcery. Earlier in our adventure, in the shadow ritual and framework, we explored different parts of ourselves. This chapter represents a way to map those parts.

Ultimately, the alphabet of desire could be seen as a personal alphabet of sigils or mantras to produce desired states of mind and enter them at will by using the different personal keys to your subconscious. Of course, I have heard that Peter Carroll actually used the alphabet to write journals, which would be quite interesting. There is a fair amount of disagreement as to how large or small an alphabet like this should be, but I leave that as an exercise for you, the reader. The idea that sigils and mantras evoke certain states of mind seems similar to the ideas expressed about anchoring mantras and sigils to a particular state of mind. The key difference, however, is that ultimately the sigils themselves should come from the subconscious mind. At this point, I have to ask you, have you practiced the sigil-scrying techniques? If you have not yet practiced them, please try a few.

If you are using the various combinations of breathing, gesture, and memory reliving, it should be possible to scry out a sigil or mantra that would represent a specific "state of consciousness." The "gotcha" with the process is that if you are only using one memory, it is possible that the sigil would only represent the memory used in the generation process. However, if you take the additional step to create a sigilized anchor and then anchor that symbol to multiple memories, you may be able to avoid this problem. After the anchor is suitably embedded in multiple memories, you can use that multi-linked anchor to produce a more generalized "state of consciousness" in the area you are looking for. Having linked your sigil to various memories, you could try to scry a sigil that represents the general state (if you intuitively think you need to do this). If you have triggered your multiple-linked anchor, this should be easy, since the subconscious mind should understand that you are looking for a sigil that represents the core idea, emotion, or state of mind. I cannot tell you how may different ways you will need to anchor a sigil to get a universal link sigil (within your personal microsom). This sigil will be part of your personal alphabet of desire, and you should check the sigils your subconscious gives you in this process with a divination. The alphabet of desire sigils buried in the subconscious mind are keys to easily telling the subconscious mind exactly what you want. For example, if you want more love in your life, you could use the alphabet character for love to invoke it into your life without worrying about the specifics.

Of course, using the earlier shadow ritual framework, it would be possible to explore the parts of yourself while in that deep state of trance and, in a more shamanic method, ask for the mapping sigil to those parts. You might have to bribe yourself, but it can be well worth the experience. Again, make sure to use divination to check what you give yourself, and reward yourself when the divination comes back in a positive manner. This should again tell your subconscious mind you really do want the keys to the castle, as it were.

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Resonance Sorcery and Material Bases: An Introduction to Talisman Work

In the previous chapters, we looked at how to scry, form, and cast sigils. In this chapter, we will build upon our sigil workings. In traditional sigil magic, a sigil was created and shot off into the universe. In the anchoring style of sigil magic, we used sigils to draw forward specific mental states. Now, we are going to use both methods, along with physical material bases, in our spell work. In this chapter, I will offer only an opinion from practical experience, since no one agrees on the specific mechanism, but I offer a way of thinking about this that makes sense to me, and hopefully it can help you.

Physical Materials and Sorcery

There are multiple books and webpages that list the correspondences of various plants, herbs, candles, and minerals. Some of these books and sites are contradictory about what some of these materials do. What's worse is that many of these sources only mention mixing the plants or minerals and as a side note mention that a spell worker must pray, push energy into, or work with the mixture. Most of these books and webpages follow the "instant spell recipe." Other people and sources assume that you can get results merely from the power of the plants alone. Underlying the attitude in many of these resources is that the gifted and special practitioner will be able to get results.

"Gifted" is a particularly troublesome word. First, it implies magical ability or insight from birth. From my personal experience, using materials such as candles and incense is one of the easier routes to do enchantment, if the practitioner has some baseline understanding of magical theory and energy work. For us, all of the previous chapters are that baseline understanding.

Hidden in between the lines of hoodoo and some of the spell work literature are a couple of secrets. First, multiple books will say it is the power of prayer that makes the hoodoo work. Essentially, it is the power of directed belief. There is still a process of clearing your mind and then using prayer to generate a trance state (and produce energy). Using sigils, some of the energy techniques, and focusing, we can charge the herbs with states of mind while mixing the herbs, staring at candles, etc.

On the flip side of the equation, it doesn't jibe with my personal experience that the root and herb part of rootwork magic has no effect. A way to think about the interaction between material, spell work, and energy is to think of it like a container. A glass bowl might be the best type of container for one type of liquid, whereas a metal bowl might well be a better container for a different type of liquid. In a way, especially with resonance-type magic, the container can have a major impact on how long something remains "magical," and how easy it is to push the energy you want into the container.

First, if you do your research on herbs, minerals, and base combinations, you can make your life a little easier when you are starting to use them. However, you must ultimately pick out the herbs by smell, since so many herbs and oils have similar uses (Yronwode 2002). Again, intuition and experimentation are your real friends, and the correspon dence tables are merely loose guideposts. You are not stuck without the specific materials you need; you can substitute based on intuition.

Now, before I go any further, there are two basic underlying principles in these types of magic that seem to work together. I refer to these principles as resonance and sympathetic magic. Later on, we will layer different techniques and paradigms, but these two ideas consistently come up. We will cover sympathetic concepts in the next chapter. But what is resonance?

Depending on your model, there are multiple ways to explain this concept. From a spirit model, resonance magic is about attracting the "right" kind of spirit helpers. From an energy model, it is about waves of energy streaming out from the source. From an information model, resonance could be thought of as starting a localized information pattern that acts as a wave. Simply stated, resonance works on the principle that like attracts like. So if you put

out a vibe or charge a powder with lustful energy or information, it attracts lustful things to you or the powder.

Making an Herbal Talisman

Well, after mentioning the lust vibe, I got in a certain mood. Go to http://www.luckymojo.com and look at the listing of plants. Pick some plants that seem in right relation to lust and love, and pick an odd number of ingredients. If you are working with a favored love/lust god or goddess, by all means pick a number of ingredients consistent with that entity.

In the previous chapter, we talked about creating components for your personal alphabet of desire. If you haven't yet done a lust sigil of desire, go back and try to create one using the anchors to multiple different memories of lust, or scry one out while in a heightened lust state. Here, the beauty of sigil magic comes through, since you could simply create a new mantra to find a sigil while putting yourself deeply into the throes of lust with your anchor. Once you have the lust alphabet component, clear your mind and combine your physical materials into a powder. Crush the herbs or use a mortar and pestle if needed. Now, use your alphabet of desire glyph for lust and a mantra for lust to entirely take on the lust state of mind, while imagining a group of people of your preferred gender crowding around you. For me, this would be women, and I would visualize all sorts of women around me. For this exercise, it is important to visualize all sorts of members your preferred sexual partner gender around you. At this point, we can use the energy flow exercise to visualize and feel that energy flowing quickly into your powder. Again, try to do this for at least thirty minutes, but you most certainly can go longer. Place the powder (now charged) into a small red bag. Do not banish after you are done, but center yourself. Put the bag down and leave it sit for a few hours.

After a few hours, how does the bag feel? Hand it to a friend. What impression does your friend get? After this, take the powder with you when you go out in public. Do people treat you differently? How does your powder feel after a while?

Now repeat this exercise with lust and love states of mind, but choose herbs relating to spells that cause a break up of a relationship or strife. How

does the powder feel in this exercise? Does your friend get a different impression? Do people treat you differently out in public? Is there a change in your experiment by using a different container for the energy?

Of course, you can repeat this exercise with almost any mantra, memory, type of energy, sigil, or even an entity later on, when we cover evocation. A personal favorite of mine is to combine this style of mixing herbs for prosperity with an evocation of Jupiterian planetary intelligences and use that powder incense as the prosperity talisman in itself.

Charging herbs in this fashion is the basic premise of charging incense, bath salts, or oils with a particular state of mind. In some systems of magic, charging these substances helps or is the primary mode of spell work. In my opinion, it is the beginning of talisman work.

To summarize this general idea, use the general correspondences from a Google search or luckymojo.com. Try to find general corre spondences for the general area of magic and use herbs or oils that you think are in line with your intent. Use your intuition as you are smelling, looking at, and feeling the herbs. If you are using oil, make sure to smell it. Involve your senses so you can get intuitive answers about herbs, oils, or any other material base you are trying to pick. The correspondences in Catherine Yronwode's books or other herb books are useful. As you experiment with more and more herbs, you may disagree with the correspondences from books, or your personal correspondences may seem to work better. For you, your experience trumps all. Use those prewritten materials as guideposts to your own work.

Of course, you must use common sense when you are selecting material bases to create a certain resonance. If you are mixing herbs that cause skin problems, you might not want to use them in a mixture that is for a bath. Toxic herbs probably should not be part of a tonic, and you might not want to use stones that cannot burn for incense. Stones don't taste very good without large quantities of spices, either.

Overpowering or Re-engineering an Implanted Resonance

Hoodoo and rootwork books rarely consider the effect of the interplay of multiple magical systems on folk magic. In my experience, ritual magic and folk magic overlap. Draja Mickaharic noted in his book Magical Techniques (2002) that the cleanest spiritual place he has seen was an ammonia processing plant (ammonia is a strong spiritual astringent). Likewise, he notes that the worst place he felt, with the worst spirits, was a coal processing plant. Of course, with the dust and smoke, I might also feed the surroundings with aggravation energy, but the ammonia plant is equally aggravating to people, and, assuming Mickaharic is telling the truth, it lends credence to the effect that herbs or even chemicals can have.

To take a step back slightly, if a recipient of an herbal pack (otherwise known as a trick) is conditioned to believe that hoodoo spells and rootwork work unconditionally, his or her subconscious mind will manifest that reality. However, as magicians, we don't have to accept that anything that is not advantageous to us will work unconditionally. Of course, we don't have to accept that advantageous things will work unconditionally either, but I usually like to train myself to accept that advantageous things working is a good idea.

In hoodoo and rootwork, the idea of a trick or curse is a very common occurrence. For now, I am only going to cover the resonance style of these tricks. These can include hiding bottles in other people's yards, sprinkling powders under their beds, or even dressing their door with toxic oil. The premise, of course, is to set up a resonance that attracts unwanted things or is used in a beneficial way to attract good things. Just like in the lust packet we made, the base acts as the container for the prayer/energy/spell. Let's try this experiment.

Overpowering Resonance: Experiment 2

Go to an abandoned building that you can get access to, or even a parking lot. I personally wouldn't do this in my house. Create the material base, tied to a negative state of mind with herbs that you have discovered through reading, a Google search, or experimentation that seem to match a particular negative state of mind. Essentially, pick ingredients that would make a good container for the negative energies. As with the lust example earlier, put the trick down and leave it alone for a couple hours. How does that trick make

you feel when you hold it? Give it to a friend to hold. What is his or her impression? Is it a similar state of mind to what you were intending? As an aside, I should specify that your mixture could be as simple as a rock with certain oil spread across it. Make sure to banish after touching the trick.

Now use the energy exercise and take on a state of mind that would be essentially opposite to the state of mind you had when you created the initial talisman. So, if you created the talisman to reflect despair, go back in your mind and think about memories with hope, and let the bright-eyed, optimistic hope overwhelm you. Use the simple energy flow game to push the energy into the ingredients. Keep pushing the energy while maintaining your state of mind till you believe that the ingredients are more in tune with your new state of mind. Record how long it takes. Let the ingredients sit for a few hours. Do they feel the same? Hand the ingredients to a friend. What does he or she think?

Once you have done this, repeat the experiment with herbs or ingredients neutral to the initial emotion or state of mind. Does this change the length of time you believe it took to change the "impression" something gives off? Does it change how strong the impression is when you come back to the mixture or after you have charged the material with the opposite state of mind? What if you started with herbs or ingredients that seemed to oppose the initial charging but favor the opposite charging? Does this affect the impression at any time? Does one set of mixtures seem to hold longer than the other?

After you have tried these three experiments, remake the initial mixture of herbs or ingredients and take on the same state of mind you did in the first experiment. Completely charge the mixture for a similar length of time to the first experiment until it leaves a similar impression to the first experiment's mixture. Place the mixture in a pouch and then on the floor. Using a banishing that you created, banish space around the area where the trick is placed. How does that change the impression of the talisman? Likewise, do multiple banishings have an impact on the impression that the talisman gives off?

If you have access to a vacant building, abandoned factory, or other associated negative place (preferably in a rundown part of town), repeat the

experiment and leave the trick there. See what impression you get over the pouch, and then banish over the pouch. When you return the next day, what impression do you get? Return to the trick every day, and perform only one banishing over the item, until you feel that the resonance of the trick as been neutralized. However, you are not allowed to pick up the trick. Was this more difficult than doing the banishing in your house? Why do you think it would be different? This is a very realistic situation with a trick. You may not know exactly where the material base is, but you might feel something is there. Make sure when you are away from the trick to banish again before continuing your day.

How does the proximity to the negative pouch affect you? What happens as you get closer to the source of the resonance? When you are trying this experiment, make sure to banish before you go to the site, and after you walk away. Try to notice how you feel as you get closer to the trick and how you feel after you walk a bit farther away. Try to concentrate on the effect the trick has depending on how far away you are from it. Sometimes the trick feels stronger when you come back after performing your banishing. What's going on there? Remember, like attracts like, and like energies and spirits may have, in your absence, coalesced around the trick. Just keep banishing until you feel it is neutralized.

Try to repeat this exercise using a positive material base and a negative state of mind at the same location. Abandoned buildings tend to be somewhat derelict. They attract all sorts of interesting animals and characters. Use common sense, and be careful. In fact, such a trick might have ample "like" energy or information patterns to attract to it, whereas a positively charged and biased material base might not. Try to attempt this in different isolated locations. What happens when you try it in a forest? (Try different parts of the forest with different impressions and different states of mind.) What happens when you try it next to a river? Experiment and see what happens with the resonance in areas with wholly different purposes and feelings.

Washes and Baths, Powders and Gesture

So far, we have been experimenting with different combinations of states of mind and herbal/ingredient mixtures. The point of the last exercise was to

give you a sense of the interplay between the herbs and the purpose of the spell. We can use this idea of resonance for our enchantment purposes, as well as to create talisman-like products. Again, you have to do your homework on the Internet and visit a library to get lists of herbs and ingredients and, using the previous methods, fig ure out which combination seems to hold the energy the best for your intent. Experiment and have fun.

We can also use baths, washes, and powders in a positive way. I cannot see any sane person taking a bath with an herbal wash that had a negative charge (unless you lied about it), but powders, baths, and washes all can work the same way. Once you have a list of ingredients that corresponds to the intent you have, match up that intent with a state of mind, emotion, or set of memories. You might have even created a mantra and possibly a sigil. You can then empower the ingredients by using the methods we have already discussed and can visualize the sigil over the mixture, chant the mantra, and take on the state of mind while pushing the energy out into the mixture. This is simple enough. If you were to throw the mixture on the floor, it probably would have an effect on the area (do check this out with a friend); however, we can do more.

In practical terms, floor washes, baths, and even powders (or mojo bags) have to be applied to a space. This is a great opportunity to make the application a ritual act in itself and empower the process further.

Most floor washes either are clearing something out of a space or bringing something into a space. Likewise, baths and powders are supposed to push things away or pull things in. A cleansing floor wash, for example, would be used to push negativity away. So you charge it with various positive emotions. Using all of our five senses, we can make the application of the wash even more powerful. In this example, I might imagine the negativity in my house as black ooze. And then I imagine, with as many of my senses as possible, that it does not return to any area I put the wash in. I might even imagine it sloshing away, and perhaps even feel the movement of this ooze running away from where I put the mixture down (in this case, probably with a mop). Given this metaphor, I would obviously want to start from a corner and then work throughout the house, so that the last place where I apply the wash would be right by the door. I wouldn't want the black ooze to occupy any place in my house, so I would make sure that it is all forced out by

leaving no place for it to go. Similarly, if I were cleaning negativity from myself, I would wash from the top of my head down and away from myself. The water rolls right down off me, so that's how I would use my five senses to augment and empower the cleansing. Of course, I could use a mantra and visualized sigil to keep the right state of mind going while the negativity was pushed out of my house or away from me.

If I were drawing something in, I clearly would start at the door and work inward. Again, this is just common sense. If I want money to flow into my house, I have to imagine the money flowing in from the outside to every corner of my house. You are only limited by your imagination, but applications like this are why we were practicing our visualization skills. If you can imagine a metaphor that seems to explain what you want to happen, you can use all of your senses to strengthen the application of your mixtures. Just think about how the wash or bath could work. If you are pulling in things like lust, what might you imagine when applying the mixture? Again, you have to do your own homework here. The metaphor and experimentation with resonance should help you to get the magic to work.

Remember, there are huge amounts of pre-made spells for this, and you should and can use those as guidelines. This is not a book on folk magic or hoodoo, but the goal of this chapter is to understand the type of hoodoo spells known as resonance spells. Other magicians I personally know have referred to this as "contagion sympathetic magic."

Cost vs. Time, the Supermarket, and More Postmodern Goodness

If you really start to dig into sorcery and hoodoo, you can tell that some ingredients are downright expensive. You might have the idea for a set of ingredients and, having experimented with it, you personally know it provides the base foundation for your work. The problem is that the mixture costs $50 to make. A magician well versed in wealth magic might regularly be able to afford such a nice mixture to experiment with. Most of my readers, however, might find this a little steep.

The purpose of this chapter is to get you to experiment with physical bases and how they seem to hold an "impression" Now, some mixtures might not be quite as good as other mixtures you discover, but really,

anything can hold an impression. The question is whether something holds that impression with ease and how long it holds the impression. Expensive or high-quality materials might be easier to work with, improving this process. Generally, it is my experience that even the worst materials can hold an impression or magical charge for a long while if I am willing to spend more time to create that impression. In this way, there is sometimes (but not always) a cost-versustime equation.

A mojo bag with exactly the right components might be relatively easy to charge and work with. A stone from a river might not be quite so easy to work with, but it will get the job done. If you can explain why something works, it probably will. Improvise and work with magicdon't get locked into exactly what any one book tells you to do. One of my favorite talismans is in fact a purple plastic gun that is charged with solar energy. Sure, it took some effort to charge it; sure, a metal gun might have worked more easily; but do I really want a real metal gun for magical work? (That would be no for so many reasons.)

If you get into sorcery of this sort, try out your experiments, and then for fun limit yourself to what you can find in the grocery store with relative ease. Can you find all the necessary magical components at a grocery store? (It's really fun to see what you can get in a grocery store.)

Entities, Incense, Material Bases, and More Fun

We have purposely not discussed entities or more ceremonial magical operations. Physical bases within the idea of resonance magic can work as "storage" for energy. Often, in more ritualistic settings, incense, oils, or offerings will be used that help a bigger working. We can charge these materials in the same way we were working with them before, by using the energy flow exercise while maintaining a state of mind congruent with the bigger ritual. In this way, we can add to the power of a working. The incense or materials that will be consumed can act as batteries to help a longer ritual. For offerings, we can empower everyday items with energy and make a more attractive offering for a spirit, entity, etc.

Later on, we will see that even consumable "herbs" like this can be charged with a state of mind so that the vibrations help piece together more

complicated workings.

One Last Note on Culture, the Subconscious, and Tricks

In some cultures, merely having materials placed in a person's house is enough to "cause" an effect. Who is really causing the effect here? When people have been conditioned to believe that a certain combination of herbs will cause them misfortune, it is easy to see how their subconscious minds will manifest that causal relationship. The keys to this spell have been drilled into their heads for a long time, and the subconscious understands what has to occur. Now, various books talk about how some African Americans have said that hoodoo doesn't work on white people. This is in quite a few books, but I am hardly ready to believe that this has anything to do with skin color. I would be more willing to believe that it is due to culture. In a different culture, merely seeing the herbs in your house means you have to pick them up and throw them away. When you start to fully charge your hoodoo work, in the way I have described or in other ways (like strongly prayed psalms), the hoodoo seems to work across the board for many people, regardless of skin color. Of course, if you had cultural reference points for a person, you may be able to get good results by merely playing off of superstitions from his or her culture. In eastern European tradition, that might be the Evil Eye or a similar gesture. Of course, that means a lot of research and work to understand the culture, but hey, I am a consummate scholar.

Instant Magic Game

Go buy a folk magic book, instant spellbook, or hoodoo book for the correspondences, or go to luckymojo.com. Mix up some herbs and try to get the spell to work as listed. You can change the amount of time to set up the spell, adding more repetitions or changing the words so that it is possible for you to get into a deep trance state, but do try to understand why the spell had the herbs it did in it (i.e., research the herbs), and what the limerick or rhyme (or prayer) implies. Try to understand what the information and energy being sent out to the "Universe" is at each step of the spell, and amplify that "information stream" until the spell does seem to produce results. If you feel up to it, for fun, write to the authors and explain to them your "improvements" on their spells, if you have some (in most cases, if you are getting into a deep trance state, you will have a lot of improvements to talk

about). What kind of results do you get from fully charging even instant spells (in deep trance states)? We will go over this more in the next chapter.

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Basic Sympathetic Magic

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If you read various books about Vodou or even hoodoo, in some cases there are many references to voodoo dolls and doll magic. This is a relatively small part of Vodou that "Hollywood" has inflated to epic proportions. However, the magic theory behind the voodoo dolls is a very old process known as sympathetic magic (Hall 1992). There can be multiple interpretations for how this process works, and after you read my practical opinions, it is a useful exercise to try to explain it yourself.

Doll magic, for example, is on the surface very simple. You name the doll after the person you wish to affect. Do things to the doll while in a trance state or while saying prayers over the doll, and those things happen to said person. It's as simple as that, at least according to some books. Most books use combinations of herbs to augment the strength of what the general intent of the doll magic is. However, there is a lot going on under the surface.

First, you are supposed to get something personal from the person and embed that into the doll. This can be clothing, blood, body hair, anything directly from him or her. Second, the herbs and colors used in the doll's creation have an impact on how the doll affects the person. This second point should not be surprising, given the resonance magic chapter. We didn't cover colors in the resonance chapter, but in previous exercises we most certainly explored the use of color to create certain states of mind. The personal artifact you obtain, whether it is hair, nails, blood, or something else, is referred to as the magical link.

The Magical Link

A magical link is a link between the base you are manipulating and the real-world target. Essentially, the stronger the link you have, the easier it is to manipulate the target. One way to look at the magical link is to think about the strength of the link compared to how directly connected it is to the source you are trying to affect. For instance, blood would be very directly

connected to your source target, since it has the subject's unique DNA as well as cells and body chemistry. It was at one time part of your subject's body. Hair might also be a strong direct link, since it was directly tied to the subject's body, but not as intimately as blood was. Likewise, sexual fluids are a powerful link. A social security number can be a link as well, but this is an artificial symbol applied to a person. Similarly, a name is an artificial symbol applied to a person, and there can be more than one person with the same given name. Even an image of a person can be a link, but how direct is the image of a person compared to having the blood of a person?

Anything that identifies a target can be a link. But the strength of the link depends on how unique it is to that individual and how well the magician can relate to the link. Certainly, I could give you a coded string of letters such as AGAGTIA, which could be part of the DNA codex of the individual. This would involve pages and pages of information and is ultimately a very unique link (except for twins), but the information itself is not that easy to relate to. Likewise, depending on how you personally work with numbers, a social security number or unique identification badge number (in countries other than the United States), might be difficult to work with. In each of these cases, as with a person's name, the link is expressed in a symbolic logic (DNA codex, numbers, or an alphabet) instead of something that was part of the person. Even your memory of a person is a link that you can bring up to the surface and use. Additionally, something that a person owned for a while, or something he or she treasures can most certainly be a link.

In general, as stated, the closer the link is to the actual person, the stronger the link is. Fresh blood is generally considered to be the strongest. Obtaining people's actual blood, or even breaking into their homes to steal something of value seems, in modern times, a bit difficult, not to mention a wee bit illegal.

Different unique aspects of the person or target can be combined to strengthen the link you have. For example, if you know the name of the person and have a firsthand experience with that person, you can use the memory of that experience to augment and strengthen the link you have to him or her.

Let's try some linking to ourselves to see how it feels.

Picture Magic Games

Take a photograph of yourself, or use one from a recent point in time. Take a few minutes to breathe and relax. Perform a banishing. Proclaim the name of the person in the picture (your name), and treat the picture as if it is you. State out loud that the picture is you, and then repeat to yourself that the picture is you while staring intently at the picture. Now, for the first game, create an energy ball of elemental energy just like you did in the first set of energy exercises. While staring at the picture and repeating the phrase, condense the ball of elemental energy into the picture. What happens? Does this make you feel anything? How does this seem to affect you? Repeat the exercise with the different elemental forces.

Now try to repeat the exercise using spheres of emotional energy. What effect does this seem to have? Does it affect your mood? Try the exercise with several different emotional energies and record what the impact is.

Finally, redo the games and, instead of a ball, try to create a straight, continuous stream of emotional or elemental energy while staring at the picture and repeating to yourself that the picture is you. For each type of energy you use, what effect does the process have on you?

After you are finished with the experimentation, banish by laughter and clear your head. Put the picture away and relax for a while.

Try the energy experiment again, this time using only a mental picture-visualize it appearing on the table in front of you, or wherever you are working. How does this change the feeling?

Blood, Spittle, and Sexual Fluid Games

Now, for this exercise, get some sterile lancets from a store. Get a rock or piece of clean wood. Use rubbing alcohol to sterilize the rock or the wood. Carefully lance your finger and place a few drops of your blood onto the stone or the wood. Now repeat the games you did with the picture, only this time use the bloodstained piece of wood or stone. Remember to name the stone or piece of wood, and state that it is you. Repeat that the stone or piece

of wood is you while doing the same exercise you did with the slightly bloodied picture.

Via your preferred method of excitation (but do the work alone for this), excite yourself to produce sexual fluids. Anoint the stone or piece of wood with the fluids and try the preceding exercises. Write down all the effects. Then try the same series of experiments with only spittle. How does this affect you? Which body fluid seems to have the strongest effect when you use this exercise? Do they all feel the same, or do some fluids seem to have a different effect? Try this again with fingernail or toenail clippings, or some of your hair. How does this make the link feel as you are pushing energy through?

Names, Candles, Dolls, and Symbols Games

Often, in hoodoo and folk magic styles of sorcery, a person uses only the name of the other person to produce an effect. So, let's try some more experimental games. Write your name on a piece of paper seven times, and repeat the first set of picture experiments. Remember to name the piece of paper as you and keep repeating that the piece of paper is you. Try the different energy exercises. Make sure, as with the other experiments, to not let your hands directly touch each other. How does this make you feel? What impact does it have? Does changing the number of times you write your name on the paper change how it feels? Try the same thing with a nickname, title, or even a social security number. Which things seem to have the greatest effect when doing the energy stuff? Can you suggest some reasons why? Now try the same series of events with a candle. If you choose, you can look up different candle color correspondences and try them out, but for practice, a simple white candle will be sufficient. Luckymojo.com has the correspondences you need. Simply carve the candle with your name, and announce that the candle is you (and repeat that in your head) while doing the energy games with the candle.

If you feel up to it, make a doll of yourself, give it your name, imagine that it is you, and try the same series of experiments. How does this feel as you use it?

Many books will simply tell you to this and that, but they do not really instill an underlying understanding. Doing the games and exercises provides a practical and low-level experiential knowledge that will have a direct impact on how you think regarding magic. The point of these first exercises is to allow you to experiment and figure out what works best for you.

Partner Exercises

For the next series of games, you will need a victi ... I mean partner. There are a couple reasonable safety guidelines that are good to employ. First, know the person you are doing this with somewhat well. These exercises are supposed to be learning opportunities, but they can be abused. Second, confine any emotional energy work to positive emotions at first. This is just to keep everyone feeling good about the process. Third, set a specific time and day to practice, and decide which person will be transmitting and which person will be receiving. Do opening and closing banishings.

The roles of receiver and transmitter should switch every other session. The receiver simply sits and deeply relaxes, and then lets any sensations that come to him or her just flow in. The transmitter performs the link games, and then you both compare notes after the session. Typically, a steady-stream approach will usually work best.

For example, here is how a sample session could go. The two people could be in different rooms. They will start at the agreed-upon time, and proceed for an agreed-upon amount of time. Both people will banish. One person will take a picture of the other person, and declare and name the picture as the person, while the other person simply deeply relaxes. The transmitter will pick an elemental or emotional energy to push into the picture while repeating to himself or herself or out loud that the picture is the person. Whatever elemental or emotional energy was used should not be shared until the after stage. The receiver will simply relax deeply and see what happens to his or her mood and state of mind. If you are the transmitter, you should try to see if you feel connected to the other person. How does this feel? What is the sensation like? Is there a visual component to the picture that seems to develop, or perhaps just a strong intuition? If you are the receiver, do any images or other sensations pop into your mind? Does it

feel like something is connected to you? What is that sensation? How does it seem to affect your state of mind? Do images pop into your head?

After the allotted time, each person should stand up and banish. They should then meet up for coffee or food (I personally like coffee; as an aside, if you ever want to talk to me at a festival, just offer me something tasty to drink). While they are using the coffee/food time to ground, both participants should share their perceptions of the experiment.

From here, both participants should repeat the experiments with the body fluids, candles, dolls, and even different symbol links (such as a name). After you have tried the experiment with those different physical foci, try to just do the experiment visualizing the image of the other person while focusing the energy into the visualization. How does this affect the process?

Perceptual Augmentation of the Link

Of course, we can combine link components to form a stronger physical focus. Any combination is possible, from items that belonged to the person, symbols, unique names for the person, or just unique quirks about the person. In my own experimentation and practice, though, I noticed something that you might have too. First, there is a certain feeling, intuition, and vision that seems to pop into our minds as we are being connected to someone in this way. This will be entirely different for each person, but we know something is going on. Equally, there is a certain sensation when reaching out via a physical talisman or visualization that seems to occur when we are transmitting the information/energy. The trick is to recognize what the feeling/image/sound key is that seems to indicate a successful link. For me, connecting feels like a process of breaking through space until there is a certain "eureka" moment when I just know the link is working. This sensation of connecting and being connected are both states of mind.

In our experimentation so far, we have been playing a lot with states of mind. This is no different. We can augment (increase or diminish) our side of the link by tweaking our perception of the sensation we are feeling. It is fully possible that different links for different purposes will feel completely unlike each other, but after practicing all of the various emotions and elemental information energies, it does become easier to feel where there is a link and

have a general idea of what that link feels like. If each link does feel different, just pick one that feels pleasant to work with for these ideas.

From here, pay closer and closer attention to the sensation while you are practicing. As with some of the memory exercises we did earlier, try to turn up the intensity of the sensation by adding sensory details. If the connection to feeling is one of breaking through space, as it is for me, add the imagined feeling of air flowing past you. The eureka moment is a very guttural feeling, so I just add sensations of the loud internal YES. For me, the connection feels like something in the back of my neck trying to burrow in. If I don't want it to, I just make the feeling go away. If I do want to let it go in, I simply increase the feeling of the burrowing in and add a sensation and visual component, such as feeling like mud, or not feeling solid (so that it is easier for the energy or information to meld into me personally). Remember, in each case, add strong, information-rich sensations to make the perceptual component of the link more powerful and rich, or take away information from the sensation to make the link less perceptually powerful. Each person's perception of a magical link is going to be radically different.

Experiment with the process. See if a partner feels that there is more energy or information coming through as you tweak your end of the transmission. Often, I visualize and feel the energy barreling through a vortex. Likewise, as you tweak your end of the receiving, see if your partner believes that there is more energy that can be pushed through. How does changing your perception of the link change the impression your partner gets (if it does)? How does altering both perceptual aspects of the link affect the link? Remember to banish to start and formally banish to end the sessions.

Repeating attempts to enhance the link to one person may create an underlying link to that person outside of merely sympathetic magic. Make sure to use the reconditioning techniques to weaken that connection if you want it to weaken. This underlying link is why magic for or against other family members is stronger or why linking to a former or current lover (or friend) is easier.

Reversing a Link

So far, we have been treating the magical link as a one-way process. This metaphor is not completely right. Magical links are usually twoway processes for the majority of operations, including aggressive operations. Describing a psychic connection as a cord is a very popular New Age concept and one that makes the metaphor simple. A conduit is a better way to explain this. Even though the primary stream of information or energy is going one way, the receiver can in fact use the connection as a starting point to send information/energy.

Let's try an exercise. Find a partner again. This time, each partner should try this as both the receiver and the sender. The sender should use the combination of images, words, and physical materials that caused the strongest magical link. The receiver should at first be passive. He or she should then imagine what it would be like to transmit the energy and information across the link with as many of the five senses as possible. I usually will use all of my senses, imagine the connection, and imagine the energy coming into my system. I imagine the physical connection, and then I imagine the energy in my system slowing down until it stops. Then, I just imagine the energy starting to reverse. Use your memory of the way a sending link feels to augment the metaphor.

Try this again while trying to imagine that the connection, as you perceive it, has the qualities of both the sending part and the receiving part. How does this affect your experience and your partner's experience of the exercise? Repeat it with different energies for each person. How does the co-broadcasting seem to affect things? First try this in one way, where the co-broadcasting is cooperative, and then try it in another way, where you are trying to force the link to have a single direction by blocking the receiving feelings or sensations.

What You Do to the Object, You Do to the Person

With all of this very detailed information about the magical link, there hasn't been much talk about actually performing sympathetic magic. Understanding the link, however, gives a magician a lot of leeway to send information and resonances through the link. Often, traditional sympathetic magic might use a doll stuffed with herbs, a candle dressed with herbs, or a picture and incense. In each case, traditional folk magic will use the herbs to

create the proper resonance around the person and then cause some other intent to happen to him or her (that intent is whatever you do to the doll). From some traditional points of view, spirits get attracted to the target and carry out the effect (either good or bad) after the material base is used in this way. We played around with a little resonance stuff in the previous chapter. You can combine the things you learned from that chapter to make a material base to form a magical link to someone else. As with the resonance magic, choose the herbs, minerals, colors, etc., that seem to fit with your intent. If you did some of the experimentation in the previous chapter, you should be able to create some mixtures that correspond to what you are trying to bring about and, by focusing on the link, cause that resonance to flow over to the other person.

For candle spells, that resonance and intent is often enough. Try it: carve someone's name into a candle, dress it with the appropriate oils as determined by using the resonance ideas from the previous chapter, concentrate on establishing the link, and keep repeating the intent. At this point, I strongly recommend sigilizing the intent into a mantra. This probably will work with the picture and any of the links between people. Of course, with dolls and puppets you have the extra step in which you can do something to the doll and thus the person. This is gestural information.

Given what we talked about previously, if you make a doll with the herbs you've determined to be appropriate and embed some sort of link, which we have been discussing, the process is the same. In each case, naming the doll or picture as the person and then understanding how to make the link allows the magic to flow. In puppet magic, you can repeat the steps with a candle and focus on the same type of intent, except that when you finally hit a deeper trance state, you carry out on the doll the physical actions that you would want to carry out on the person. The stronger you perceive your established link to be, the easier it is for you to do the magic involving the link.

When you are beaming that information directly into the other people's subconscious minds and then they manifest the outcome, call ing information, spirits, or energy around them to carry out the intent is helpful. In a way, you are changing their information pattern to incorporate the new programming. Any other creative explanation to detail what is going on is a

matter I allow you to endlessly debate on your own, but I will debate it for coffee or a nice drink. It really is just as simple as sending the intent over the link.

Place-Based Sympathetic Techniques

Of course, person-to-person links are by far not the only links that are possible. It is fully possible to create a magical link to a place. Although the place can't call you up and compare notes, it is very possible to create a link between yourself and a place. Usually, a link might be a stone from the place or some other unique item. Really, your intuition can help you determine what to take from the original site (out of respect, do ask). Now, this process is very much similar to creating a link to a person, although the object is the link. Clearly, the strength of the link will depend on your ability to increase it. This is similar to the process with a person. In this case, memories of the location are a good sensory addition to the link. Now, a link like this to a place can be two-way, but it is up to you as the magician to make the link work two ways. A place is rarely going to be sentient enough to push information toward you (although there are exceptions), but you can certainly use the link to pull energy and information from a place as well as push energy and information into a place.

The methodology is very similar to what we did with people, except that the link is now a stone or artifact from the place. Getting confirmation for this type of experimentation will be a little more difficult, because you need to have someone at the other location. Relax, receive impressions or sensations from the artifact while in a trance state, and try to augment the strength of the link by augmenting the feeling of being linked, just like we did in the earlier exercises. In this case, imagine the artifact connected to a place via a conduit and use all of the senses you can to increase the amount of energy and information flow coming from that place through the conduit. I like to imagine a silver hose connecting the artifact with the original place. With as many of the senses as you can, imagine the other place on the other end of the conduit. How does imagining that place on the other end of the conduit make you feel? Try to increase the flow through the conduit as much as possible.

After you have acted as a receiver (more like a vacuum), try to get a magically inclined person to be a friend in the area you are connecting with at the time you are trying to connect with it. Have your friend simply sit in the area you are working with while meditating and relaxing. On your end, use the artifact to transmit energy and information to the area you are trying to connect with. Again, try to use your memory of what a strong connection feels like to augment the flow of information and energy to the other area. Visualize the conduit pushing energy and information to that area, and then increase the conduit to the greatest extent you can by applying the memory of the strong connection. Try to push as much energy and information as you can through the conduit. Adding vortex imagery never hurts this process (and in fact this is how I do this particular trick). Do this for a half an hour at a stretch. Confirm with your friend any difference they pick up in the feeling of the area or things that pop into their head. This exercise is a little tricky to get down, since sometimes your friend might not get a change in feeling or intuition. Keep practicing the personto-person exercises, and eventually they will feel something (provided they themselves are magically inclined).

While this exercise might not seem not useful for results at first, I guarantee that a little further into this chapter we will use the training and ideas we got from this exercise to do results-oriented magic.

Anchor Points; Temporal Points of Anchor

Let's go back to the first picture example that we tried. In that example, you looked at a picture of yourself taken at nearly the current point in time and made a link to yourself in the present. In this exercise, I want you to specifically find a picture of you as a baby or at least at a radically different age than you are now. Now I want you to use the different techniques of linking to the picture, just like we did before. Does the link feel the same? After you have tried it, try to remember the state of mind, body, and emotion that you were experiencing while in that picture. Can you receive information from that state? Does the energy or information stream feel the same?

Try working with pictures of you from different times. These pictures represent people very different from who you are right now.Does giving yourself love energy when you needed it in the past help you right now?

Think Outside the Box of Links

Now that we have experimented with tremendous amounts of physical bases with different substances to create the original link, try to create a link by merely visualizing the person you wish to affect. This is a moment of truth regarding whether or not you really practiced the visualization exercises. If you have trouble with this exercise, just go back and try to work through some of the visualization exercises again. It will get easier. Let's try to create a link to ourselves again. The easiest way to do this is to visualize yourself on a piece of paper, much like seeing your own picture. Once you have a solid visualization of yourself, make sure to name yourself as yourself in the way we did with the physical links. After you have named yourself, attempt to receive and then transmit information to yourself. How does not having a physical medium affect the strength of the link you created?

Next, try to augment the link by using the memory of what you believed was the strongest link. Create the sensation that this visualized link is just as strong. When you do this, try to mimic the sensations of that strongly linked state where it felt like there was a tremendous amount of information or energy flowing back to you from the link. This is the same type of memory game as the ones we were playing with the earlier sympathetic links.

Once you have tried to create the link with merely the visualization, find a partner and try to redo the experiment. As with the other experiments with partners, try to schedule a set time. One person should relax while the other person tries to transmit. Try this for thirty minutes and then, on another day, switch the roles to experience how the link feels using just visualizations. Feel free to attempt to change the visualization of the other person from a visualized picture to a complete 3-D model. Add any unique details about the person to the visualization. How does this affect the strength of the link to the other person? Of course, while in a trance state, you could visualize doing something to the 3-D model of the person, provided that you have made sure the link is strong.

Thinking about someone strongly is a type of link that you can enhance or diminish using techniques similar to those we have covered. A lover might feel like an extremely strong link whereas your boss or an acquaintance might not. These interpersonal connections are easily manipulated, just as

we were doing with our experiments. If you think about how your relationships with people feel in relation to how strong the links feel, it is possible to change the dynamic of a link between yourself and another person by changing the perceived strength of the connection with other information (even if that link is a very weak acquaintance link). I have not yet mastered this technique to do this on the fly with people I am first conversing with, but it is possible.

Pick a random person. Stare at that person while trying to create a link, just as we have been practicing. Have the intent to do something that you do not at first care about (such as turning that person's head). Feel and visualize transmitting that information to the person until he or she does what you are asking. Phrase this intent in a strong, imperative, and positive manner, such as "Turn your head." I simply repeat the intent as loud as possible within my head and visualize this as a stream of information spinning out from me to the other person. Of course, you must be in a relaxed and mentally centered mindset to get this to work (meaning that this won't work unless, in your head, you are repeating only this intent toward another person). I first saw this technique in Phil Hine's Condensed Chaos (1995), but I have seen it in many occult books published as early as 1920. Of course, as you practice this, you can do more and more interesting commands, but at first try to have people do simple things you do not really care about. After you have practiced that step a bit and can get a relatively high success rate, think about the sensations you receive from the link. You may receive sensations similar to those of other types of magical links that we have been discussing.

For fun, once you feel you have a link and the other person does what you are requesting, attempt to use your memory of a strong magical link to augment the on-the-spot link you have with the person. Again, I personally will use vortex visualizations (a funnel from me to them), the feeling of a strong link, and whatever else seems relevant to make the links stronger. Other people like to use tentacles, a string of binary bits, or even cords. For this exercise, whatever visualization seems to work for you is right. Techniques such as the Moon Glance from Peter Carroll seem to work in a similar manner (Carroll 1992). How does enhancing the link affect the results you are able to get with transmitting the command? Now, just as a word of advice, staring at people directly makes them nervous (and that actually works against the technique, because when people get nervous, they

close up), so you have to learn to be clever if you are going to practice and use these ideas. Of course, doing this sort of thing on strangers might be ethically challenged but your ethics are your own.

Simple Results-Oriented Techniques

There have been a lot of pages of exercises to try to help you get a very intuitive understanding of the magical link. Usually, the better and more powerfully that you can imagine the sensations from the link, the easier it is to get your magic to work. With a strong enough link, I have found that many of the so-called "psychic" powers, such telepathy, are possible. In my opinion, a link can be to a place, person, situation, entity, time, etc. The concept of linking to entities will become very important in the invocation section beginning with chapter 25.

Previously in our adventure, we did a tremendous amount of exercises with states of mind, taking on emotions, even using our emotions to generate an emotional response in another person. Generally, almost everything that most magicians want has to in some way deal with other people. Combining the idea of the magical link with some of the energy exercises and states of mind discussed earlier opens up some interesting possibilities. First of all, we already used the energy exercises earlier to shift someone's emotional mood, so using this over a magical link is a good starting point for results-oriented magic. As with the energy exercises, relax, banish, and then pull forward a particular emotional state. Let this state overwhelm you, and then use the techniques to create a magical link with a target. How does the other person's mood shift? How does the strength of the link affect your ability to create a certain mood?

In another exercise, we used the memory of an intriguing conversation (with a sigil link) to replicate similar conversations in our immediate environment. This is another great technique to try with a magical link, to influence a conversation to generate energy and information patterns similar to a previous conversation. This exercise seems to work better if you have created an alphabet of desire sigil that links to the general pattern of the conversation you are looking to replicate. (Basically, you want to have a general idea of where you want the conversation to go-for example, a steamy conversation, an intellectually stimulating conversation, etc.) But the

technique is remarkably similar to what we were doing with the emotional energy games.

You have a linked sigil that represents "archetypal" conversation energy. Using that sigil or mantra in the back of your head, you bring forward that information/energy stream and direct it toward another person via the magical link, just as we were doing in the previous exercises (except that now we are just sending a particular information stream/energy across the link). If you have a partner in trying some of this stuff out, try to do this with active conversation with that person and also at times when you are not directly chatting. Often when I have done this exercise, people have had daydreams or thought they needed to talk to me about x, and it's often been consistent with the information I was sending out. Again, for this to work, you have to clear your head and really let the linked alphabet of desire sigil (or memory of a productive conversation) come fully to the forefront and occupy a singularity of focus on that information (an applied gnosis).

Sigil Magic and Using the Link (Let's Get Down to Results, Shall We?)

We briefly discussed using the different states of mind and then sending the energy of those states of mind through a link that you have, but there is no reason you couldn't use a sigil or mantra that encapsulates the intent and use the link to vibrate/send the encapsulated desire to the other person. As we have seen, the link can be a blessed candle, a doll, a picture, a name, or even a visualization.

After all those training exercises, let's try some work for real-world results. Encapsulate your desire into a sigil or mantra. Relax, banish, and center just like we did earlier. Speak your statement of intent. Create and enhance the magical link you are working with by using the perception and memory games we have been playing. Visualize/feel/sense that you are holding that link while performing your mantra and/or staring at your sigil. Continue with the mantra and/or sigil while performing and obtaining some sort of altered state of consciousness via the host of methods we have discussed earlier. Adding a visualization of what you want to happen to the other person or carrying out a gesture to a physical link often adds to the working. Finish by banishing in your preferred method, which will break the link that was established during your spell work.

This simple sigil ritual is very similar to the work we were doing with straight sigil magic, except for the addition of paying close attention to the strength of the magical link and trying to maintain the strength of that link. This step alone, for me personally, seems to add much more specific direction to the sigil workings. Now, this method is not just for controlling other people, as many might think. As with any sigil magic, anything is possible. I have used this type of magic with healing work (physical and emotional), protection work, cleansing, and many other sorts of positive outcomes.

Invocation and Evocation Along with the Sympathetic Styles of Magic

Although right now we are limiting our methods with the magical link to sigils and sympathetic magic, it is very possible to take on alien states of mind via invocation (which we will cover) and send those energies through a magical link, or do an evocation (which we will cover) and send a spirit to someone else by using the magical link. This is something to keep in mind when you are doing both invocational and evocational work.

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Basic Magical Tools

Basic Magical Tools

Before we talk about spirits, let's talk about magical tools a bit. Every paradigm and system will have a different set of tools to work with to get the desired result. To cover all of the different tools would be a ridiculous effort, but we can cover how to sanctify and empower objects using the techniques we already have learned.

Whole books could be written on the subject of artifact creation, and this should be considered only a basic primer to get us started. As you work more with the objects you create, new and inventive ways to work with physical objects will come to you.

Depending on the system, a tool might be a chalice, an athame, a bell, a wand, a staff, a rock, or even a dried pile of feces (and no, that wasn't a joke). Anything can be a tool. The symbolic meaning (and often the practical use) of the tool in many ways dictates how the tool should be empowered. Let's start off with some exercises. Again, it's impossible to describe the underlying process of creating a tool within every possible system and model, but these experiments will attempt to get you familiar with the process.

The first hurdle in developing a magical tool is what to make a tool out of. The first question to ask yourself is what type of magic are you going to be doing with the tool? While multipurpose tools are very compact, most people find it more difficult to reuse tools. If you have a general theme of magical work you are thinking about exploring for a while, such as love, prosperity, or vengeance, that theme will guide your subconscious mind toward a specific tool or class of tools.

Your Ideal Tool for the Job

Relax, clear you head by banishing, and sit in a comfortable position. Let yourself slide into a trance state while deeply relaxing, and think about what types of workings you are going to do (remember to keep a general category in mind). See yourself doing the workings entirely and feel the workings being done. What do they smell like? What is the temperature? Add as many sensory details as possible. What tools seem to come to mind as you are seeing yourself walking through multiple rituals with the same purpose?

Focus on the one tool that seems the most important in your meditation. If any thoughts come to mind regarding the impracticality of your item, let those thoughts go and try to relax to a deeper level until there is no internal critic. Use a mantra and a sigil to help get into a deep enough trance state. Take some time (thirty minutes at least) to study the tool. Come out of the meditation, and write down as many details about the tool as you can possibly remember. Drawing a picture of the tool or describing it is not a bad idea. Write down all the details, even the details that seem impractical or unworkable. Continue describing and drawing the tool until you think you have a good grasp on what you were seeing in the visualizations.

It's quite possible that no physical tool came to mind, and that you received a gesture or hand mudra for the work. However, your hands might have some markings. Pay attention to the fine details in your meditations because a tattooed body could be a great magical tool.

Often, if people have a lot of magical training under their belts, the tools that come to mind will be analogous to traditional tools. Their subconscious minds understand those systems of magic, and bring those "expected" images forward. This is perfectly acceptable, but if you want to try to do some more experimental stuff, ask yourself to provide answers outside of systems you already know (which may or may not be possible).

Once you have the description of the potential tool written down and drawn, put the description away for a few days. When you look at the description again, see how you can make the tool you saw, but be practical. For example, a human skull might be an impressive magical tool, but they are horribly difficult to acquire. Monkey skulls are much cheaper and easier to acquire. A fake human skull made out of plaster may be much cheaper to acquire, and a skull candle or a plastic skull (depending on the working) is

even less expensive. A fully automated staff that moves and transforms in an anime style is indeed cool, but quite impractical given current reality and technological constraints (however, if you can make one, please, by all means, send me one). Likewise, a lightsaber has some technological implementation problems. However, the core of the tool is what we want to access.

Relax and clear your head. Focus in on the tool again. This time, look at the details of the tool and try to reduce the complexity to the minimum you feel comfortable with to do the series of workings. Relax, but focus on practicality. Many forms of motion, or beams of energy, can be incorporated into how you use the tool itself. Keep reducing the complexity of the tool till you feel like it is at the minimum level of complexity and you still feel like it can "do the job." Keep telling yourself that you intend on making the tool in the physical world and that the tool must be bound by the working rules in that world for its creation. Write down all the descriptions of the tool in its simplified format. The simplified "core" tool probably seems a lot more doable. Once you have a simplified description, do a divination to see if you can work with the tool you are thinking of building. Don't limit yourself; a tool could be as simple as a large rock, or as complicated as a laptop.

Once you have the essential description of the tool, add the diagrams. Plan out how to actually make or find the physical tool. First and foremost, an object that is given or found makes a good base for a magical tool because it is already "special" This notion could also be encompassed if you have to make a sacrifice (like saving money) to acquire the tool. If you have put this much work into developing a magical tool, it has the tendency to appear. Certainly, you can take everyday items that you already have and make magical tools, but you have to imbue those tools with a sense of specialness. We can speed up this process by using a sigilized mantra spell, as we were demonstrating in earlier chapters. If you want to use the tool for a specific type of working, make sure to use a similar state of mind and energy.

Some of the more fantastical elements of the original tool idea can be incorporated into the essential tool by using art. You can draw and paint the fantastical elements of the original on the tool you have found. Artistic expression is a way to imbue items with specialness.

The first time I did this, I saw myself with headphones, staring at what I thought was a PDA. I was looking at images on the PDA, while listening to loud music in a forest. The screen of the tool had a huge vortex spiraling out if it, bolts of lightning around it, and spirits appearing out of thin air. Of course, special effects were not the core idea of what I was trying to tell myself. The core idea was a small, portable device that would be used with inhibitory body gnosis while tuning out outside sounds. I didn't get a PDA, but I have an iPod Video that I do use for this sort of purpose, often for self-healing work (which was my original intent). It was the core of the idea that I had. My tool's name, Iggy, came from a passing joke someone else made, and it stuck (although my iPod has the full name of Iggy, the Techno-Shamanic Wonder).

The earlier meditations give you insight and direction on how to use the tool as well. In a pre-made system, that is handed to you. These might include states of mind, energy work, even visualizations or a certain series of motions to use with the tool. In essence, the tool itself is a link back to the ideas about how to use the tool to get results.

Charging the Tool

Regardless of whether or not you are pulling the tool from your subconscious mind or using a tool from a more traditional system, there are some underlying ways to work with and strengthen the tool. We have covered some techniques that can work. Before you charge a tool, you have to understand how the tool is going to be used. First, what does the tool correlate with? In Wicca, a wand might correlate with the Persian element of fire. Charging the tool would be as simple as repeating the exercise where we made spheres of fire energy. This time we would simply continuously push the "fire state" into the tool. Repeat this for the tool continuously for thirty minutes a day. After a while, do other people start to notice something different about the tool? Now, if it was a tool we had made for prosperity workings, we could imagine what prosperity felt like for us in all five senses and then push the energy into the tool, just like we did when we were making different energy spheres. If you have already developed and linked in an alphabet of desire sigil for a particular area of interest, that sigil (and any corresponding mantra) can pull forward that state of consciousness to push into the tool.

Although we have the sigil that links to that state of consciousness, we can certainly add gestural motions (similar to how the tool will be used) or body motions (such as seething), breathing experimentation that maps to the state of mind trying to be produced, and incense (or oils) that for you correspond to the state of mind. Anything that generates a deeper trance state that is in line with that state of consciousness can be added to the charging ritual for a tool. Keep in mind that a charging ritual for a tool could be as simple as getting the herbs needed to empower the tool and washing the tool with the corresponding herbs. A second charging could be as simple as giving life force energy to the tool, possibly in the form of blood.

For this method of charging to work, we must understand at an intuitive level how a tool will be used. For elemental systems, this means having a personal understanding of what each element is, and using that personal understanding to generate the force needed. Some systems use tools specifically keyed to one entity or one specific concept. Tools are used in so many different applications that you may just push your energy into the tool, or you might have to figure out how to map a sequence of memories that "represent" what the tool would do. Any established system of magic will usually have detailed instructions on how to charge or develop a tool within the system. If you do the rituals by the book at first, you can register the effect the rituals have on your consciousness and then rework the original rituals to something more personal and something you can effectively use at any time to really empower a tool. Your brain does not know the difference between a ritual state and a "real" experience. Focus in on the memory(s), bring forward the state of mind, and imagine it flowing into the tool. We have been practicing this with all the energy exercises.

I personally believe that if you are going to use a tool, you should charge it. There are several reasons for this that I will go into.

The Benefits of Using a Tool

Within a system, it is well known that tools serve as a focus for ritual work. Most systems will swear up and down that you need all of these tools. It has rarely been my experience that you need all of the tools, but I can't tell you what balance of tools you personally will actually need. The props get a

person out of the "everyday" state and into the "I am doing magic" state. As suggested earlier, this is a critical step in downplaying the psychic censor.

Many of the techniques I am presenting suggest another benefit for using tools that even a master magician can benefit from. Tools can serve as energy batteries. While the people themselves might not be able to generate the "energetic" force for a particular working at the time they need the energy, they can continuously charge tools (possi ble with evocations) until there is enough energy for the desired effect, and then release that energy at the ritual. This is exactly what was going on with the shadow framework. In that example, we were charging a liquid (the tool in this case), so that when we actually swallowed it, we were imbuing the energies and information of a spirit. That spirit had been condensed into the liquid due to the repetitive nature of the charging. A more potent connection to the entity is possible. In my article, "Guerilla Conditional Lynch Pin Magick," which appears in Konton Magazine 3.1, I explore this possibility of condensing rituals into containers with sudden releases.

Using a tool as an energy bank has a couple of neat benefits that I personally like. First, it makes getting results in an actual ritual easier because charging the tool is a lot like a training exercise. Essentially, this loads a lot of the work of a ritual into a non-results-oriented setting. This is a good step because it removes the pressure to succeed, and I truly believe that when you are starting out, you need to do everything in your power to make the rituals work and get results. This will condition you so that you get results. Because the tools are so "aligned" with the energies and resonate better with the symbolic logic of whatever system you are working with, it becomes easier to have something happen in ritual.

Second, if there is an "energy bank," you can draw the energy from the tool itself, instead of expending your own energy for a given task. For instance, burning charged incense can release the energy contained. When you get really good at drawing energy from your tools in this manner, you can preload specific tools made for rituals that allow you to do more complicated workings, or workings that you believe will take more energy, since it is possible to break the rituals into steps. Later on, we will discuss this aspect of magical work a little more.

Third, charged tools like these can often form the physical basis of servitors, entities, and thoughtforms. In a way, if you are going to tie a physical base to a servitor (which we will talk about later), it is paramount to understand how to actually charge the base and make it sacred.

Physically Feeding a Talisman or Tool

In some cases and some systems, tools are fed physical food that prayers were said over. This is especially true of Afro-Caribbean systems of magic. Often, rum or a specific food is used to appease and get the blessing of a deity. But more than that, food, herbs, and prayers are often offered to the musical instrument, fetish, or physical base of an entity. Specific African and Caribbean systems aside, there is certain logic to this. When we experimented with the resonance and the sympathetic aspects of magic, certain fluids or combinations of herbs may have produced better results for a particular experiment. In themselves, herbs and various food artifacts do have some energy if you are working within that model. Obviously, human beings convert the stored chemical energy of food into useable energy. Indeed, sexual fluids and blood are often used as means to charge a fetish doll, or a tool you yourself have created. Both fluids do have life force energy in them.

This isn't to say how exactly a tool or talisman feeds off the energy in food, but who is to say general tools can't use an alternate method (outside of digestion) to pull the energy out of the food? I could use the life force argument again, but I leave that as an exercise for you, the reader, to decide for yourself. Of course, we don't need to know how this works in a detailed process, only to understand that it does work. From here, like the resonance magic, we can use certain types of food or herbs with the desired feeling to charge our tools and talismans, but the exact combination is one that you will have to figure out on your own. Now, in hoodoo, and most Afro-Caribbean systems, there are exact recipes you can use for certain tools. With tools tied to specific entities (generally known as fetishes), this is a tremendously easy and useful technique. However, in some of those cases, the prayers said over the physical offerings and the specific processes of finding the food are very important. Can you think of some ideas for tools that are fed energy from only physical sources (and not just blood or sexual fluids, although certainly try that as well)?

The Limitations of Using a Tool

The biggest limitation of using a tool is that you cannot always bring the tool with you. Reliance on the tool means you must have that crutch when you need to do something, and if you could do a magical operation without the tool, it becomes less important to have it. This is often the "critique" of tool use you see on the Internet. In practical terms, it is correct that if you rely exclusively on a tool to produce magical results, you will be in serious trouble if you have to produce a magical result without that tool. The classic case of a situation where you need to produce a result is "luggage lost in the airport." You need your luggage, and the magic has to work. Now, I have personally had lots of moments where I needed to produce a result without any tools. One time, I had to do a quick spell so my car would pass an emissions test (it should have failed). In this case, I merely cleared my head, picked a mantra from my internal glossolalia, and visualized my car passing the test. This was after many years of magical work, however, and after finetuning my visualization and spot-trance ability. Besides, I have always been good in a crisis, magically speaking. In this situation, however, if I had needed a tool as a crutch to do the work, I would have been in trouble. This is a very strong argument to try to wean yourself off being dependent on tools as much as you can. My personal take is that as you do magic, toolless ways of doing things will come to you. Many of the trance and energy manipulation exercises lead down this road.

This critique is not an argument against using tools. The energy battery, as well as staged working examples, suggest that there is more going on than merely the ability to produce results with or without a tool. In the resonance experiments, herbs were used as the tool for spell work. At least in my experiments, herb and mineral mixtures that seemed to work when linked to a purpose did hold a resonance longer than substances that were not linked to that purpose. In the case of energy batteries, I have used bottles to store pre-made spells that I did multiple workings over, which then get released. These spells had more power than what I could have produced in one sitting. Really, as is the theme of the book, the sky is the limit on what you can try. As you evolve, you will be able to produce results without the crutches, and your tools might evolve as well.

Generality of a Tool

The final topic in this chapter that I am going to address is how specific or general a tool should be. In some systems, a tool such as a wand is used for every evocation or invocation. In other systems, a tool might have a specific purpose such as summoning a certain entity. In general, the specifics of a tool depend on how it will be used. Now, in the earlier example where you were meditating on a general type of working, the intended tool you were thinking of probably could be reused. Sometimes, when I do this meditation regarding a particular working, I will use a tool that can only be used one time. It is important to understand and keep reminding yourself that any physical artifact can be a tool, just like any extreme mental state or memory can be a magical tool that can be used to get results. Sure, I have used common tools like the herbs, but I have also used uncommon tools in spell work, such as gasoline-filled light bulbs, a physical gun (shooting sigils at legal and safe ranges, a la William Burroughs), electromagnets, hydrochloric acid, and a lot more.

When I started to place spells into bottles and then redo the spells over the bottles several times, I would break a bottle to release the spell. This has a pleasant dramatic effect for me. Additionally, many hoodoo or folk magic spells use herbs or candles only one time. While it might not seem like it, these are magical tools, and you can charge them before using them, just like any other tool you intend on using in a ritual.

This might seem counterproductive, but remember that the point of a magical operation is to get the results you desire. If your intuition comes up with a way to do that, and you get successful results, does it matter? (Before answering this, remember that breaking some tools might cost a lot of money or cause other problems.)

Now It's Your Turn

Think about a few intents that you want to try to manifest in your life. First, do some research on candles and candle magic. Use any correspondence from any system that appeals to you. Do a simple sigil spell focusing on the sigil and mantra while the candle burns. Now in a different intent, charge the candle with the general energy you associate with that intent. So, for some extra cash, charge the candle with prosperity as you understand it. Do your sigil ritual and mantra with the candle. Now try this process with a third

intent, but this time charge the candle with the general energy several times before doing the sigil operation. Which worked the best? Which ritual felt the easiest and the most natural at the end?

Now think about how you could use a laptop as a tool, or how you could use trading-card games, kid's games, a spatula, or even peanutbutter-and-jelly sigil spells you eat. You are only limited by what you can imagine. Experiment and play!

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Divination Energy Games

This is the first chapter dedicated primarily to divination systems and, in particular, the exercises that focus on the information/energy-based components to divination systems. The technical mechanics of any one divination system can be found easily by using any search engine on the web. Of course, books will give more of a nuanced and systematic approach to doing divinations of a particular chosen sort. Before starting these exercises, pick a category-based divination system. Good choices are tarot cards, the I Ching, or runes. I am defining a category-based divination system as a system that interprets events by breaking down the response to a question into a finite set of responses, which serve to "categorize" Divination systems that have a finite set of responses divide the universe into a cosmology corresponding to the finite divisions and use those divisions to make predictions. Other systems, such as scrying or pyromancy (and others) are far more intuitive, but, while they are extremely useful, they will not be helpful with the following exercises.

Improving Your Divinations, One Trance at a Time

Once you have been working with a divination system for a bit and understand its technical mechanics, how can you improve your results? The books and resources mostly ignore the importance of trance while working with divination currents. My associate, Josh Wetzel, author of The Paradigmal Pirate (2001), gave me a practical answer to this that I will share. Obviously, banish and state your will to correctly answer the question at hand (without stating the question). The first step is obtaining a deep trance state before divining. To get around any influence from the psychic censor and any internal resistance we might have, we can sigilize the question we want to ask into a mantra and/or sigil and then save the original question for later. From here, we can use the various methods of going into a trance state with the addition of chanting the mantra, staring at the sigil, or both. This should continue until a deeper trance state is obtained with the singular point of consciousness on the mantra and sigil. At this point, perform your divination and record the results, but don't interpret it. When I first started

trying divinations, I would allow a day or two between sigilizing the question and the divination, and would also allow another day or two before interpreting the results.

There are several reasons why this assists with the reading. One way to think about divination is that it taps the information or energy patterns around a person or situation. Clearly, a divination is usually not the final answer to a question, but a snapshot of the outcomes based on current possibilities. This critical difference is very important. If most divination systems are based on taking snapshots of the currents around people, an individual focusing on one outcome could skew the reading by projecting onto it what he or she wanted, since those currents are surrounding that person. This effect would give a false reading (since the divination system would only pick up on the most prominent currents).

Working Through Classification-Based Divination Systems as Systems of Energy

Every system of divination that categorizes the possible outcomes into a set number of outcomes, either explicitly or implicitly, separates the "universe" of possibilities into tidy folders that a person can deal with. In any divination system, these categories have certain general descriptions that correspond to the system. Another way to look at each part (card, hexagram, odu, or rune) is as a description of an information or energy current in the universe. When we described a system of divination as a system of currents, it implies that through imagination and effort we can directly experience all separate currents, regardless of whether or not the patterns associated with those currents are in our lives at the moment. What that means is that we can essentially sample the energy (or information, if you prefer) of each card, rune, odu, etc.

Doing this type of work has a lot of benefits for magical work. First, experiencing and working with each current in a divination system provides material to the subconscious that allows for a much better intuitive understanding of any reading based upon that system. Second, if you have a personal understanding of each of the currents, your readings will get better. Eventually, the physical tool might not be needed, since you can tap the currents while you are in trance.

If you get multiple books on the same divination system, the descriptions will be drastically different. With tarot cards, different pictures will produce different interpretations. These differences are just part of the metaphysical world. You have to do a little additional work to sort out an individualized understanding of the divination system you are working with.

I have to note that many of the ideas in this section will seem like gross simplifications, since we are going across very different systems. When we sit down and actually work with the techniques on the different divination systems, they do work (albeit differently, depending on the system). The reason for me that these techniques have worked is because of the assumption that a divination system is a system of working with categorized currents present in the universe. If the divination system does not use a set of defined rules, these techniques will not work. In this way, the techniques become less about working with a particular divination system, and instead about working with different energy patterns (or information patterns). When we worked with the Persian-based elemental energy system, we were already doing this. Indeed, at least with the tarot cards, the elemental system is built in (the I Ching uses an Eastern division of the elements). In fact, one could use the Persian system of elements to divine general currents involving a situation. This may not be specific enough to be helpful, but it is possible. With the tarot, this generally means that we are just breaking up the elemental system we worked with earlier into finer gradients to experience.

Many systems besides the tarot have different underlying ways to divide up the universe. A way to think about this is to think of each part of the divination system as a building block to the universe. Depending on the culture, how those blocks are organized in a set will change radically, but the idea that they are blocks pretty much applies across the board. Now let's take the I Ching for a second. The I Ching breaks things into the yin-yang in opposition, then four elements (the original Chinese elements), then eight elements, then sixty-four elements, which comprise the hexagrams used in readings. Even the Elder Futhark (the runes), with twenty-four runes, seems to present different "forces" in opposition. In each system, the amount of each current present could be considered what is manifested right now. I am not going to go into the specifics of each system-that is a homework assignment for you before going on. Choose one particular system. Not only do you need to academically understand each part of the divination system,

you have to have an idea of how the different parts of the system interact intellectually. Almost every system of categorized currents places these currents in opposition to one another. So a hugely "positive" card in the system is balanced by a "negative" card. Fire by water, gods by demons, light by dark, etc.

Once we have finished the research, we are ready to start intuitively training our minds. First and foremost, try to compare multiple sources of information for the divination source you are working with. In the I Ching, for example, choose a hexagram to work with (or whatever basic unit is in the system). First, reread each source of information of the hexagram, rune, card, or odu you are looking at. Spend some time meditating just on the hexagram, rune, card, odu, etc. Write down any insights you have about this component. Keep repeatedly meditating on the particular component until you feel like you have an understanding about the principle expressed by the card, rune, odu, hexagram, etc. For some systems, there are corresponding physical gestures attached to the component. Do the gestures. What impact do they have on your body and state of mind? Try to write down your own personal description and interpretation of the current you are working with.

After you have written down your own description of the component of the divination system, meditate and think about the experiences in your life that seem particularly keyed to your personal description of the divination component. For the example of the I Ching, you would think about your life and meditate on which experiences seem to resonate with the hexagram that you are working with. Try to write down as many memories that seem to resonate with the hexagram as you can. Again, that's using only the I Ching as an example. It would be the same with the Elder Futhark or the odu or whatever it is.

Meditate on your list of memories, and try to re-experience each one. What states of mind, body reactions, emotions, shifts in posture, or ideas come to mind as you are thinking about the memory? In your journal, write down everything that pops into your head regarding your state of mind. After you have gone through each of the memories for one component of the divination system, try to find commonalities in your state of mind for each memory. Is there a pattern to the states of mind you are associating with that divinatory aspect?

Once we have this general state of mind, let's try to take on that state of mind while repeatedly staring at the tarot card, rune, odu, hexagram, etc. This is very similar to what we did with the alphabet of desire exercises, and we are trying to make a link between the generalized state of mind produced by multiple related memories and the divination block we are working with. Fully let yourself go into experiencing that state while repeating the name of the card and staring at the symbol. Experiment with both breathing and posture to see if you can augment the feeling that the compiled list of attributes seems to generate. After the exercise, we will put the cards down and see what the impact is of looking at a particular segment of the divination system without going into a trance state. What impact does it have? As with the other exercises, attempt this exercise multiple times until it seems like there is a strong link to the card, rune, odu, etc.

Using tarot for an example, let's say you are using the Ace of Wands card. You will first research what the Ace of Wands is about from multiple sources. Then, when you feel comfortable, you will write out your own definition. From here, you will meditate and think about memories that seem to match that description. Once you have the memories, using many of the techniques exposed earlier in this book, you will re-experience the memories, writing down how each memory affects your emotional state, how your body feels, even how it affects your posture. Write down every detail of how the memory seems to affect you. Once all the memories have been gone through, you will then look for similarities in emotion, state of mind, body posture, ideas, etc., that affect all the memories for the Ace of Wands. Once you have the different aspects that contribute to your state of mind tabulated, you will try to simply let that experience totally overwhelm you while repeating "Ace of Wands" and staring at the Ace of Wands card. You can repeat this step until you have linked it strongly to certain aspects of your experience.

Be warned: some divination components have more negative associations. Be sure to completely clear your head and banish before and after working with any divination component in this manner. After you have gotten through all of the parts of the divination system in this way (and I can tell you, when you do this, you will get better at divination for that system), try to look through all the parts of the system again. Spend some time writing down which parts of the divination system seem to be in opposition, which

parts of the system seem to support each other, which are similar to each other, and any other insights you have. You are trying to look at each of the different parts of the system using your experience of the parts.

Replicating and Perceiving Divinatory Information Streams

Once we have intimately mapped a part of the divination system to a state of mind, there are a lot of tricks we can do. First and foremost, we can use that state of mind with any of the energy exercises, with sorcery (resonance or sympathetic magic), with sigil magic, or with auric manipulation (the bubble exercises). Let's try a few exercises.

First, try to fully take on the state of mind of the part of the divination system you are working with, and use the energy ball exercise to make an energy ball while you are fully allowing that state of mind to dominate your consciousness. How does the sphere feel in your hand? Give the sphere to a partner if you can. Don't tell your partner what you are giving him or her, just ask for whatever impressions come to mind. While I bet that your partner might not exactly get what part of the divination system you are giving, he or she will probably list some of the correct attributes of that particular aspect of the system. If you practice this simple exercise, it becomes possible, with pretty good accuracy, to figure out what part of the divination system you are being handed. Because each person will have a a slightly different interpretation of what these categories will mean, it's often useful to practice with different partners (if you can). The end result is to get an intuitive understanding of how to produce and perceive divinatory informed energies.

As I have mentioned before, there are a lot more experiments we can do with this process. For instance, what happens when you flood the area around you with your interpretation of a divinatory current so that it surrounds you like a bubble (auric manipulation)? In addition to projecting an emotion or sigilized intent around you in a bubble, you can also project out the aspect of the particular divination system around you. Keep repeating this experiment a number of times, and note how your experiences change around you. Try different experiments, and see how projecting the different divination aspects leads to different experiences.

If you can work to perceive the "information" from an energy ball around you, you can perceive patterns around you and intuitively organize them into the divination components you are working with. However, life is not always as clear as these exercises, so there may well be multiple different divinatory threads around you. I leave this as an exercise for your intuition.

Sorcery-Based Games, Physical Talisman Work, and Experiments from Divinatory Systems

Manifesting a result in line with a general divinatory current could be a useful trick. Many people have trouble with sigil magic approaches because they often cannot divorce the original intent from the actual working. Additionally, in choosing a statement of intent, there are many missteps they can make. An intent can ask for a result that is so specific that it prevents the magic from manifesting, or so general that it manifests in a way that was not at all what the person wanted. Manifesting a result in a divination system is merely a manifestation of a current. This can be a really useful idea. Let's say I try to use a sigil to manifest a lover. Indeed, while I might not put them into words, I might have very specific ideas about the lover I want; however, those ideas might be poisoned by a notion of the "perfect" lover that perhaps is counterproductive to what I need. Instead of concentrating on a specific intent, manifesting a current related to the Lovers tarot card abstracts away the specifics (so the expectations we have can't as easily interfere with the process), but has certain connotations related to what is specifically wanted. A working to manifest a lover might well succeed with sigil magic, but the actual long-term current might be something far different from what the magician really wanted.

There are a lot of ways that we can use this idea to manifest results, including simple candle magic, sigil magic, and later, when we cover it, evocative magic. I will give you a few examples, but you, the reader, will have to move past the examples to your own workings.

First, we spent a tremendous amount of time and energy on both resonance and sympathetic magic. It is pretty clear how those combine with sigil magic in a way that creates a synergy between certain combinations of herbs, minerals, and intents (that you had to work out on your own). Similarly, we can attempt to manifest a particular divinatory current by

combining herbs, crystals, or other physical bases that we believe are related to that current.

For example, let's say we want to manifest the tarot current of Three of Cups. Generally, this is considered "abundance," and most readings tie it to emotional ideas (because of the cups association), but you could certainly see abundance in any particular arena (DuQuette 2003). For this example, we are working with financial currents. Using the preceding energy example, we might take a green candle anointed with money drawing oil and inscribe some representation for ourselves into the candle. Then, using the image of the tarot card as a focus, fully generate the Three of Cups state of mind, while pushing that information and energy into the candle. I would sigilize an intent of "Manifest a Three of Cups current in my financial affairs" into a mantra I could chant while doing the other steps I listed. In my own experimentation, I like to use sassafras, sandalwood, patchouli, dragon's blood, High John root, and some abre camino (if there is a perception of blocks in the path of financial success) combined into an incense, but I will add things and change this mixture depending on what I intuitively think should be included. This just works for me. Sometimes I will make an incense more keyed to planetary influence, particularly Jupiterian influence. From here, recognizing that the Three of Cups is overflowing abundance, I might choose to do this with the candle for half of its burn time (this should be more than thirty minutes so that singularity of trance can be achieved) and then burn the second half of the candle with the Six of Disks tarot card, which is a stable material success card.

Of course, this example is given to clarify the process. You must experiment with different combinations of herbs, colored candles, mantras, and symbols. The same example could work with hexagrams, runes, odu, etc., and this combination of tools (the candle and herbs) could be individually developed or taken from a book to manifest a divinatory current in a sympathetic way around another individual or place. Try it out. Retry all the sympathetic magic and resonance examples using your preferred divinatory current.

Another example of how we could use this is with simple sigil magic. We could create a sigilized intent and mantra, and then generate a deep trance state by sliding into a particular current, while repeating the mantra and

staring at the sigil. Now, a person might ask why we would use a "divinatory" current with a specific intent. Think again about the example with the lover. Sure, we might manifest a lover, but not a continuing current of love. This adds contextual information with the state of mind produced to inform the subconscious about what we are specifically looking for within a certain current of experiences. This can be a powerful way to cast sigil magic, and as we shall see in the invocation chapters, the idea will repeat itself once we start working with entities. Of course, using a divinatory current with an entity will limit the exchange with that spirit to be more in line with the current we are producing. That will be something we will explore a little later.

A divinatory current can be used in any way you can imagine. For example, it can resonate out to attract prosperity to you (or change your mindset so you can look for that), or it can be used for sigil magic and sorcery. These are the fundamental ideas; devise and play with your own techniques.

Your homework: Think about some novel ways to generate divinatory currents, and try them out. If you feel comfortable, post them to the corresponding website supporting this book, http://www.andrieh vitimus.com.

Personal Systems of Divination (Neuromancy via Categories)

In this chapter, we have talked a lot about how many divination systems break up the universe into categories of possibilities, and we even explored producing the currents associated with those categories by using our memories as a conduit to produce "information/energy" streams of those currents. Interestingly enough, external systems of divination do have a fair amount of power, but using and implementing them takes a bit of training for your subconscious. However, there might be another way we could work out a divination system using the alphabet of desire.

The alphabet of desire, which we covered a bit earlier, is a way to coalesce different related memories into an abstracted but powerful "core state," which we are trying to achieve. These core states are generated directly from our experiences. Although in some cases this might be limited

(since you are dependent upon having experiences to produce these states), there is no reason why you could not study the alphabet of desire as opposite states of consciousness. This is exactly what Peter Carroll does in Liber Null & Psychonaut (1987). He goes into rather extensive detail, mapping out different emotional/magical states. This process of looking at opposites and mapping them can form a personal system of divination if applied to perception, because like any other system of divination, it classifies "reality" into categories of "pure experience." While the alphabet of desire is usually used to manifest an outcome in line with a certain state, the opposites themselves could also be seen as the possibilities around a person.

First, for this to work, you, as the magician, must have worked to develop your alphabet of desire to include both positive and negative states of mind, and you should try to map out general core ideas that form your experience. My alphabet of desire does not have as many parts as Carroll's, but it does seem to represent my experience, and that is the important part. Some techniques for developing singular parts of the alphabet of desire were provided, but only you will know when you have completed a mapping that you are comfortable with that has a size you are comfortable with. Once you have this mapping, the alphabet of desire represents your universe broken up into blocks of experience.

What if we mark each stone with one part of the alphabet of desire and then pick a stone for a particular question (while in a trace state, of course), in order to understand the answer to the question in a way that corresponds directly to our internal mapping? We could then use the same logic to ask further questions of our own subconscious. This is a relatively simple divination technique that is individually based but highly effective (at least for me personally).

Of course, it is possible to go much further in developing an individually centered divination system based on your alphabet of desire, but much of the effort in the process would be to look at the ways the subcomponents of the alphabet of desire seem to play out for you. It would be impossible for me to give you a meaningful way to "interconnect" parts of your subconscious, since it is your subconscious mind. Study other divination systems, let them seep into your thinking and then, like the tool-based meditation we did earlier, see what you yourself process and produce. Just have the

determination to work with the ideas until you finish. (You never know-the process might produce a stunningly awesome new system, even if it is only for yourself.)

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More Energy Games and Visualization Exercises

Planetary Ball Game

This is one of my favorite visualization/energy practices. This exercise builds off the moon ball game. Just as you did for the moon ball game, make a sphere that revolves around you like a moon. Give the sphere whatever characteristics you desire. After the first moon is built, add a second sphere (a planet). Once this is achieved, build a third orbital ball, and then a fourth, and so on. While concentrating on five revolving spheres with all five of my senses, I will slip into a trance state. An interesting variant of this exercise that adds practicality is to consciously control the planets instead of setting them up in an automatic orbit. You can have each of the balls draw out part of a sigil together with one ball following the next ball in a sequence. Keep doing this until the globes automatically are tracing out the sigil At first, try to have them all draw out the same sigil in your imagination, until the sigil seems to be carved into the air in front of you.

For a more difficult variation, have each sphere draw the sigil separately. There is no way for me to do this and not slip into a deep trance. If you can do this and remain perfectly lucid, you are a superhuman. In that case, try it with ten to fifteen planets until you reach a point where the conscious mind has reached its threshold of control. As with the other energy exercises, try to use all the senses in building this. See if you can make the exercise more potent by combining the exercise with certain breathing, gestures, even particular incense.

This exercise can be very useful for improving your focus when multiple things are going on around you, and it can help you maintain that level of focus as you concentrate on your purpose. In evocation, having good focus on the task at hand will be extremely helpful, despite the motions an entity is making.

Auric Intent Manipulation, or Glamorie

This is a very nice and useful technique that creates a subtle, directed pattern in your energy field, which changes the way you appear to the subconscious minds of those around you. Glamories can be used to increase your attractiveness, to make others perceive you as someone they should like and trust, to make a show of dominance or impressiveness, and to create just about any other effect or perception that you wish. For this to work, it is helpful to combine mundane efforts with your desired intent. To appear more successful, put on nicer clothes. To appear more attractive, you'll have to wear sexier clothes. You can create short-acting glamories for specific situations, as well as long-standing glamories, which become semi-permanent parts of your energy field. You can have several of these nice little manipulations running at once and, with practice, you can control which ones are active at any given time.

First, decide what type of glamorie you are going to create, and make a statement of purpose. Keep it short and simple, and make sure that you can believe it. It is critically important that before you try to broadcast an intent, you believe it. So if you are going to work on broadcasting a confidence intent, you should be able to generate a "state of mind" that is intensely internally confident. Likewise, if you want to broadcast a sexy auric presence, you have to be able to take on a state of mind where that feeling of sexiness is the single point of consciousness. Associate some simple imagery with your statement, including an appropriate color or very simple shape or sigil and a feeling or texture. Try to embed as much sensory data as possible. As with the other exercises, experiment with different types of trance generation while doing the exercise. Cleanse yourself by visualizing yourself under a rushing waterfall (which we covered earlier), and allow the powerful rushing water to drive out any issues. This prepares your field to accept the manipulation. Next, hold your hands about a foot apart, and start a loop current of energy running between them. Make sure that this stays in motion throughout the exercise, and also make sure it is mostly your energy. Begin chanting or vibrating your statement of purpose while taking on that singular state of consciousness, visualizing your imagery, and charging the energy between your hands with it. Make the swirling loop of energy divide itself into little particles with each shout, murmur, or whisper of the intended message. Make your tone of voice match your intent. Keep it circulating,

and continue chanting and visualizing until the energy has been completely transformed into a swirling mass of subtle, message-sending particles. When it is complete, allow the glamorie between your hands to swirl throughout your energy field, combining with the rest of your energy. Let it become a part of your energy field. It should have a very subtle feel, and most of the time it should be unnoticeable except for its effects. Learn to recognize the feel of glamories in your energy field, and practice activating and deactivating them at will by visualizing their sigils and speaking a command. The field and activation will become stronger and more pronounced the more you practice, and as you are shifting your own auric presence, it becomes more natural and automatic.

As with the emotional auric manipulation game, getting your aura and the field around you to expand with intensity will help you produce the desired results with the glamorie (a weak field will not cut it). This example can be combined with straight sigil magic and intent, but as suggested earlier, you could combine this with a divinatory current and later on add "bits" of the vibration pattern of other entities.

Animator Game

This is the final variant of the taffy game. As with the taffy game, make a ball of energy. Give the ball a shape as per the other methods. The shape has to be something that would normally be able to move around. This can be an animal, a car, or anything capable of moving and interacting with the environment. Try making a statue, for instance. Once you have a beautiful statue, animate it. Try to get it to walk around. Remember, use all five of your senses if possible. Have the animated statue walk up to someone else and have that person verify its presence.

Here are some hints:

1. If you can think it, your creation can do it.

2. If the creation uses too much energy, you might have to give it a bit more. Take it slow, this exercise is great practice for building servitors, for sensing and imagining moving forms, and for focus.

3. Teach it things you know and can do well that are kinetic in nature.

4. This is hard to verify, but it will get easier to interact with entities and increase visualization skills.

5. Remember that the creation is not in any way bound by Newtonian physics or any other physical science.

6. Remember to concentrate hard on this and go into an altered state of consciousness as you concentrate on the statue more and more.

7. Have fun.

Congratulations! This is your first prototype servitor, or golem. Try to see what effect your state of consciousness (i.e., your breathing, gesture, mindset, emotions) has on the golem. Experiment with all the different states you have detailed in your journal as well as the divinatory currents we discussed in the previous chapter.

How does changing your state of mind change the process involved and the final effects? Try to do this with an extremely deep trance state and see how the creation feels different.

Puppet Game

Now that you have a walking statue, redo the animator game. In this case, however, keep going with the exercise. After you can get your creation to walk around, see if you can train it to do simple tricks such as hopping on one leg or dancing a jig. Using your five senses, imagine your creation doing interesting tricks. Do the same action over and over. There are some tricks that seem to make this easier. First, this is about intense focus and having this "energy" thoughtform repeat what you want it to do in your visualization (or, if you are trying to physically shape and move the servitor, a tactile exercise). Once it has one particular trick ingrained, see if you can verify that trick. Then try to get the creation to do something new and interesting, and tell it to repeat that. Continue until you are satisfied with the results. Remember, you should focus in on the puppet, to the exclusion of everything else around you. This level of focus is critically important and should be combined with increasing levels of trance state. Remember to include all

five senses in the creation process if you can, and get into a trance while working with the puppet. We have spent much time on different states of mind, and you should have some good trance generation rituals or procedures in your notes. Feel free to experiment and have fun with them.

Using Other Energy and Information for the Puppet Game

Repeat the last exercise by making the original statue out of emotional energy. On your own, feel free to use any range of emotions. Banish afterward. Verify with a partner. With this, be sure to use all the training we have practiced to really go into a particular state of mind. Try to use the alphabet of desire for the emotion you are trying to build, and use breathing, gesture, etc., to really produce the state of mind and project it into the energy pool you are building for this puppet.

Emotion is often contagious. Frequently, you can see the emotion of one person spreading and reflecting in another person. This almost seems to start a chain reaction. This exercise requires a group of two or more people. Create a ball of emotional gnosis/energy. Increase the size and weight of the ball, and form it into a movable, walking shape. Solidify the shape of the emotional energy by using as many of your five senses in your imagination as you can, and descend into a trance state. The group should decide on the form that they want the energy to take. Send the form to each participant. The puppet should send some of its energy into each person to produce a feeling of that type of energy in the participant. Instruct the puppet to gather up the emotional energy that is produced by this act. The puppet should go to each participant at least twice. Record all the details about the form of the puppet and the feelings you have while you are working with it. After the puppet has gone around to all of the participants twice, the participants should dissolve and absorb the energy of the puppet. Follow the absorption with a banishing. How much stronger did the puppet feel after going around the group twice versus merely after the initial visualization? This exercise creates another pseudo-servitor/ thoughtform.

In one workshop, we made our puppet out of laughter, and it had the form of a three-foot-tall gingerbread man. We actually had the gingerbread man walk around the store and try to get people to laugh. It was successful in two out of three cases. The third case was a friend who recently had a friend die,

and we instructed our puppet to give all its energy to our friend (which did improve her mood).

Of course, you could try doing this with a specific sigilized intent, divinatory construct, elemental energies, or any other state of mind you can imagine and see what happens.

Shape-Changing Game

This exercise continues where we left off when broadcasting an emotion, intent, or a form. Instead of concentrating on an intent or emotion, we are concentrating on a specific form while broadcasting a state of mind. Instead of making a small puppet that moves around, we are going to shape and hold the bubble around us with the intent to create a form-fitting body suit.

We have been playing many games with the auric shell or the shield bubble, and in many of our exercises we are able to elicit different reactions from the public. We worked from the elemental system in the bubble games, to emotional content, to a full-blown intent. This exercise is probably the final example in this type of manipulation, and I leave it to your imagination to see its full potential. Be creative. As it is, it's a wonderful way to confuse and have fun with clairvoyant people. In this chapter, we have created puppets, and the exercise leads to the creation of some basic servitors. What if we combine what we know?

Start this exercise by banishing.

Pick an inhuman form or at least a person that looks very different, whom you wish to masquerade as. This person could be benign like an angelic being of light, dark like a demon, heroic like an elf from The Lord of the Rings, funny like an anime character, or any other combination that you enjoy. Feel free to steal the form from anywhere. Write down everything about that form. If you have artistic talent, draw a picture of the form. Write down in detail the emotional response the form creates in other people. As with invocation, the more clearly you understand the form, the more detail you can put into this exercise.

Once you are finished, create a shield ball around you. This is your clay to work with, just as in all the energy ball manipulation games. Think of the kind of energy the form you are trying to become would give off. Feed that energy into the bubble of the corresponding emotional type. For example, angels are usually associated with love, demons with fear. Try to map the form you are shaping to the emotional vibration that you take on with your memories. Shape the taffy into that form and feed it more energy, giving the bubble around you details of the form you are shaping. This will seem almost like an alien overlay on top of who you are, almost like a superimposed image. Have fun with this. When you are pretty sure that you have a solidified form, verify with a partner. Do not tell your partner what it is you are trying to represent, and see what he or she picks up on.

Once you have the form created and can manipulate it, try to keep the form intact for extended periods of time without concentration, and try to strengthen the bubble. Once you have the form as complete as you would like it, go out into the public and see how people react to your new auric presence. Again, try to create the bubble with different aspects, and then shape it to a form that seems to meet your intent. Repeat the glamories exercise while taking on a form that is conducive to the expression of that glamorie, or repeat the exercise with elemental energies, or any other energy that you believe you can generate from a state of mind.

When we start invoking to possession, and other forms of deep invocation, this technique will be extremely useful.

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Invocation Theory

After twenty-four chapters, we are finally getting to spirits and invoking them. First, all spirits can lie, and they will do so if it fits within their plans. Let me repeat: all spirits can and do lie, including whatever notion of god you might have, whether or not he, she, or it exists outside of your own mind.

Before we talk about invoking spirits, we have to talk about what spirits are. This, like the question "What is magic?" is something I neither can nor will definitively answer. From the psychological perspective, obviously, spirits are components of the self or even archetypal parts of the mind. One interpretation from the energy model suggests that they are pools of energy. From the information model, they are external sources of information. And the spirit model assumes that they are external entities. Distinguishing between what is and is not a spirit is very difficult to do in practice, and while I encourage you to think about what a spirit is from every model you can think of, the discussion is largely academic. When you are pulling a spirit forward or into you, it is, for all intents and purposes, very real, and it can cause very real effects to your psyche and even observable reality.

Regardless of what makes a spirit valid, for the sake of discussion let's assume that the invocation of an entity causes a shift into a certain state of consciousness that fits with the entity. This concept is not too difficult to accept, since if this were not the case, there would be little reason to invoke any spirits in the first place.

What Is Invocation?

For some people, this might be an obvious question, but many books use the terms invocation and evocation interchangeably in a confusing way. For the purpose of this adventure, we will say that invocation is bringing forth a spirit, concept, or state of consciousness into the forefront of the mind. Essentially, it is pulling an entity into your mind (or potentially your body) as opposed to summoning said denizen to your presence. Initially, this is a

good definition to follow regarding what invocation is, but as with many of the ideas in this adventure, such a clear-cut answer will get more muddled as we go on.

What does it mean to pull something into the forefront of the mind? Throughout the exercises and games we have been working with in this book, we have been taking on different states of consciousness and using those states to cleanse ourselves or to cast sigils or sympathetic magic. Now, much earlier in the book, we played around with bringing different parts of the self to the forefront as well as generating different energies by using correspondences we made through different types of exercises. The bringing forth of different states of consciousness, glamories, and some of the energy exercises was directly related to invocation training, and it will apply to what we are doing here.

Essentially, in each case, you shifted your focus to a very clear altered state, and you used that focus on that state to generate energy or the mental force you needed to work magic. Those were invocations of memories and parts of yourself. This is just a perceived extra step of pulling an "external" entity into your mind, but in practice it will feel and look a lot like pulling memories and parts of yourself forward. We already have been practicing it, so be confident that it will work.

Research, Reading, and Homework

Once we step away from purely internal states to "external" entities, we have to do a little homework. In most systems of magic or even spirituality, there are usually some form of entities. For a successful invocation, you must first understand the entity and be able to describe it. The idea is not to get every detail exactly right, but instead to provide a context for your mind to grasp.

Some basic questions to ask are: What is the entity I am researching? What type of creature is it (human or mythical)? What correspondences does the entity have? If the entity has a physical form, what does it look like? If I met the entity on the street, what would the entity smell, look, feel, and sound like? Does it have planetary correspondences, elemental correspondences, or something else I can think about? What type of

personality does the entity have? Try to ask and answer as many questions about the entity as you can.

For most entities that are relatively well known from books or from traditions, a web search will provide a fair amount of information to get you started. Try to find myths or stories that feature the entity you are researching, and read that material.

Often, the information about any one entity is contradictory, but what you want to understand is its general temperament general nature. This process can be very difficult for some entities (who can shapechange or are tricksterlike). Try to categorize the information you have about an entity into a few general trends, and describe the entity using your own words and sense of what it is like. Often, you can find some sort of visual glyph that represents the entity (whether it is a rune set, veve, sigil, etc.). Again, Google will be your friend initially.

Now, take a long look at those general trends. Take some time and meditate on them. Try to translate each general trend into either a state of mind you have already discovered or straight sensory information. Try to map the general ideas you pick up into states of mind you can understand. This means mapping the ideas into the sense. Relate these ideas to feelings, your body, smells, tastes, sounds, and images. Basically, try to map the trends into various sensory data and mind states. If you can make a direct correspondence with some of the alphabet of desire, by all means try that.

The more information you can have about an entity, the better you can understand whether it is lying about who or what it is. Some entities will lie to you, and you have to know when they are lying based on your experiences with them and knowledge of them. In fact, many entities will lie even about who they are, especially the ones that just "show up" in the course of magical practice, particularly when you are using systems like the Ouija board.

"I Have Introduced Myself. You Have Introduced Yourself. This Is a Very Good Conversation."

This quote is from the movie The Last Samurai and is spoken by the samurai Katsumoto. It is spoken as Nathan Algren is speaking to the samurai leader for the first time, and is just making contact while being a prisoner in a culture that is radically different from the Western culture he was used to. Ultimately, Nathan and Katsumoto have much in common despite cultural differences, and they work together. This is a good metaphor for communicating with spirits. We are certainly prisoners (although we are also liberated) by having a body. Spirits, even if they exist only in our minds (which I am not saying is the case), exist in a very different state than we do, as we are constrained by a body. In many ways, the initial contact between a person and an "entity" is as awkward as the conversation between Nathan Algren, an American, and Katsumoto, his samurai captor. Many times, an initial invocation can be very much an awkward situation. In practical terms, it seems far more useful to try to have a conversation before a more formal invocation. This assumes that an entity can have a conversation, but if you are just starting out with invocation, I highly recommend using entities that can communicate in a human fashion.

How does one have a conversation with an entity? Before starting the conversation, try to write down or describe an appropriate setting in which to have the conversation. For a Japanese entity, this may be in a traditional shrine. For an African entity, this might be in a jungle or desert, depending on which environment the entity is associated with. The ideal setting depends on the entity. For example, Papa Legba might prefer to have a conversation at a crossroads at dawn, whereas Set might like a pyramid in the desert at midnight. Sit down and really think about where a good location is for the conversation to occur, and write down details about that location.

A second really nice gesture is to find something the entity likes, such as incense, food, liquor, or other offerings, and have that available. Simply and respectfully offering the entity these things before starting can help ease you into the conversation. Think of it as a gift to a guest who is visiting for the first time. In some systems, it would show weakness to offer a gift, so do understand at least the main ideas of what you are working with.

First, we have to clear our heads of any mental chatter. We can't possibly hear another "voice" if we are stuck on our own voices. We have to banish, and then we have to quiet down the mind. Once the mind is still and the

body is relaxed, simply state your intent to have a conversation with the entity. At this point, just stare at the glyph or picture of the entity. If you have a mantra or song you found, repeat it or use the one you created. If you have done the homework and tried to map the entity to a personal mental state and your five senses, try to create that state of mind while chanting and staring. Keep going deeper into the mantra while staring at the glyph and internally generating the state of mind. When you get to the point where you feel you are going into a deeper trance, just close your eyes and visualize the surroundings you described, with the entity there waiting to talk.

If you start questioning whether or not it is real, you simply haven't reached a deep enough trance state. Keep going. Remember, a communication does not need to be verbal. It can be through images, feelings, memories, or even insight. Once you know you can communicate, it is only polite to address the entity by name and tell it who you are. From there, just attempt to communicate and stay with the conversation as long as possible. In your first conversation with someone you just met, would you ask for something major? In most cases, you probably would just try to get to know the other person, which is the right mindset to have when you are first contacting an entity. Books and the Internet might give a false impression of the entity, and it might come across differently for you than it will for others. A personal impression and interpretation is far more valuable than the book descriptions. Of course, the book descriptions should be thought of as guidelines or like a cookbook. That initial research provides a context for checking whether a spirit is even in the right "ballpark" You should ask a lot of questions, be skeptical, and use your research to look for inconsistencies in the claims. Of course, your well-tuned divination techniques will also give you insight into what the subconscious mind feels about the entity. It is always wise to check any experiences with spirits using divinatory means in order to get a sense of the context of the conversation.

The flip side of this equation is that if you really have been doing the self-work, banishing, and energy work, it is easier to just know that something is off. These precursory exercises give you some tools to do something about the situation. You know you can get rid of something that may not be what you expected and that you can decondition those effects away. Usually, when you are first approaching an invocation of a "spirit," you will have some leanings that are not entirely conscious. You might be pulled in one direction

or toward one spirit. This pulling might be a guide or friend. This was certainly the case for me with Papa Legba (who I consider a good friend). Initially, err on the side of caution and use divination, intuition, and analysis to figure out where to go. Results are also a good litmus test.

Most entities will be willing to have a conversation if you go through the effort. If they are inside your head, it's still communication. You might not jibe well with one entity, and you might leave other workings with a lot more information. If the entity communicates how to invoke it in a more powerful way, pay attention (it is inviting you to do so). Either way, you have framed the contact in the guise of initial conversation, so take notes regarding the experience. This brings our full communication abilities into play and provides a relatively "safe" framework as well. If the conversation starts going badly or there is a bad feeling, simply break out of the visualization and banish (banishing by laughter is a great one for that). Generally, if you are starting out with invocation, choose more traditionally known positive spirits such as helpful god forms or angels-or Cthulhu (just kidding).

When you are deep enough in trance not to question whether or not a conversation is real, your mind will treat it as real, so treat the situation with respect. Essentially, you have to get to the level of trance where your psychic censor is not interfering. This generally means that same "singularity" of focus where you are not questioning the validity of the experience, which we talked about earlier. A conversation frames the encounter in such a way that there is an implied distance between you and the entity. This is a good idea until you have some understanding of what the entity is about.

Generating the State of Mind and Connection

The initial conversation with an entity can often give you a pretty good "impression" about it. This might not entirely be verbal or visual information. In fact, the conversation may be entirely comprised of symbols, feelings, a set of images, or even just knowing that the information was transferred. Either way, if the conversation works, you will have something personal to compare and contrast with your notes. See what additional information you get while having the conversation. A conversation implies a connection between you and the "force" you are invoking, and an exchange

of information (which can use any of the five senses). In fact, greater levels of invocation could be seen as increasing the amount of information or connection that is occurring between your conscious attention and what you are pulling forward.

An entity will communicate with you in the way that you can best understand. This may be a straight conversation or a conversation of metaphors. Once you have had a successful conversation, you may have to tweak the process of going into the conversation by using your five senses and imagination to make the conversation seem more powerful. In some systems, however, there is a progression of things that must be invoked. For example, in Vodou, Papa Legba must be called before any other mystery (in Vodou, the entities known as the lwa are referred to as mysteries). If you have done some research on the system, those precursory preconditions will be obvious. You will have to decide for yourself if you agree with the preconditions (which also implies that you know what they are). However, as we have learned, it is very possible to invoke states of mind, memories, and experiences themselves with practical magical effects.

Now, we had some experience with increasing the flow of energy and connection between two points when we were working with the sympathetic magic techniques. In the sympathetic magic chapter, we were trying to get an increasing energy or information flow between two physical links. In this case, it is a "nonphysical" point that we are trying to link to. Some of the same exercises involved with being a receiver definitely apply, in that you are linking and then pulling in. Take a moment to review chapter 21. Now, of course, a caveat is that you may indeed be generating this between different parts of the same brain, but so what?

One technique to use once you have done the homework about a specific entity is to take a photo/painting of the entity you are trying to invoke, and try to create a give-and-take between you and the picture. Imagine the picture is a link to the entity. Push energy into the picture using the more dominant sending hand, imagining it has to go beyond the picture (I usually imagine that the entity is off in space somewhere, and the energy link goes out there). Use your receiving hand too, and imagine a response from the entity. This method does seem to help communication with the entity and it will help you to "resonate" with it more easily. Try it. How does it make you

feel? If you do this with an entity a few times, does it get easier or more effective?

The memory of a successful conversation or energy cycling is a great starting point for additional conversations and deeper invocations, but now that we've had a conversation, we really have to mention that invocation doesn't mean the same thing in each ritual.

Different Layers of Invocation

There are many different layers of invocation. On one level, invocation can be thought of as tapping the vibration pattern of an entity. In ceremonial magic, a person uses the various god names to vibrate as god with the authority of god. The magician is usually still consciously there, however. Many acts of sorcery call for a similar mimicking or tapping of the energy of an entity. To reiterate: we can mimic and then resonate an entity out from us by focusing on the sensory information we get through the process of working with it. You already tried to map an entity to the five senses and states of mind. In possession rites, the purpose is to displace the "consciousness" of the individual with an alien consciousness.

On the surface, these two facets of invocation seem very different, and that is partially true, but it is a matter of how resonant the person is with the entity at that point in time and how much control the "ego" still has. In sorcery, the goal is to become extremely resonant while still in control of the energies. In possession, the goal is to push down the ego or "I," till there is another "I" that emerges. We will cover possession a little later, but after a conversation, what comes next?

A Basic Invocation Framework

It is my opinion that the initial conversation with the entity is the toughest part of invocation. The reason for this is that there is at first no connection, but once you have had a good conversation, there is a connection between you and the entity contained within your mind. In chapter 21, many techniques were presented to try to work with the connection that such a memory of vision can provide. Essentially, there is a relationship, a

connection that you can empower in a relatively quick manner, although at first it might only be a little like flirting with the spirit.

There is a general pattern to the invocation process. First, a mental clearing takes place. Second, the statement of intent is spoken (or even just willed). Third, the person obtains a trance state deep enough to stop questioning whether or not an entity is present. Fourth, the person resonates by focusing solely on the entity and imagining progressively less and less "difference" between themselves and the entity involved and then continues with what the magic is supposed to do. Lastly, the deep resonance with the entity is broken by a banishing.

Arguably, this simple framework underlies invocation and, as the relationship between the magician and the spirit is strengthened (implying a greater link), it becomes easier and easier to pull forward an entity or state of mind directly to the forefront of the mind, because there is less and less internal resistance to the entity. With a few entities, I can slip into a comfortably invoked state without words, sigils, or rituals within a couple minutes. I have a strong relationship with them, and the strength of the link makes this possible. Ultimately, chanting, sigils, and rituals are extremely useful ornamentation to the process (especially at first).

The following are a few sample rituals to illustrate the process, but if we really think intuitively about what the sympathetic magic, states of mind, and previous chapters of our adventure mean, we see that the memory of any successful and powerful invocation is, in fact, an experience we can go back to and manipulate to trigger greater and more successful invocations. Think about how we used memory before, and then, after you have practiced invocation a bit, just try to meditate and deeply remember. Concentrate on an invocation that was highly successful. What is the effect? Let yourself concentrate on the feelings and sensations of the extremely successful invocation. How is the experience?

Practical Examples: Invoking via Third -+ Second -± First Person

A simple way to invoke is to address the entity from different perspectives that go from the most detached to the most personal. In the conversation method, we were sticking with the second person framework.

Generally, the first step is to try to research the entity in the same way that you would have for the conversation method. Try to think about the entity in terms of "memories" or sensations you can imagine, with those sensations becoming more overwhelming at each step. This usually starts with reciting what the entity has done and is good at in a very thankful, awe-inspiring way, using the third person. At this stage, you should visualize the entity standing away from you, or even on the horizon.

For example, let's take Loki. Of course, this is my interpretation of Loki.

First we would banish, and then we would state our intent (which, for Loki, could be to not take ourselves so seriously). After stating our intent, we might say something like the following:

> Loki, the great trickster of the gods would trick all of the gods. He fathered the great serpent, Odin's steed, and the Fenris Wolf. He was friend and foe to Thor. He initiated Baldr to the Underworld. He was the turner of the wheel of time, the turner of the Aeons.

I often go on and on, stating what Loki did in the most positive way. Those of you who know Loki and love Loki might state the things in a humorous way. Now, at this point, we would be allowing the memories and sensations that we had corresponding to Loki to start rising up in us. Of course, we would be visualizing the picture we have of Loki out on the horizon. We might be using alternate methods of trance generation, such as the death posture, or in this case dancing, to start going deeper and deeper into a trance state.

From here we would directly address the entity/part of self, replacing "he" or other third-person pronouns, with "you," effectively making the recitation into discourse. We might visualize the entity walking up right next to us as we are addressing it directly, as if we were having a conversation. At the same time, we would allow ourselves to go further into a trance state, allowing the memories and sensations we had corresponding to Loki to overtake us.

We might say something like the following:

> Loki, you are the great trickster of the gods, who tricks all of the gods. You fathered the great serpent, Odin's steed, and the Fenris Wolf. You are the friend and foe to Thor. You initiated Baldr to the Underworld. You are the turner of the wheel of time, the turner of the Aeons.

At this point, we can converse with the entity as we did before, but we should stay in this second state until the sensations that we are working with have completely overtaken our conscious mind, implying greater and greater levels of trance. We should be able to see, hear, feel, and even smell Loki next to us. Usually, I will imagine that I can feel his breath coursing over my body.

You could visualize the entity walking into you and sharing the same space that you occupy. See you and the entity merging. See and feel yourself morphing into the entity until you are that entity, just like we did in the shapeshifting exercise. What does it look like? How does it feel? What thoughts come into your mind? At this point, you should see, hear, smell, taste, and be the entity you were calling down. Now change the speech to the first person, and speak the words as the entity itself.

For example:

> I, Loki, am the great trickster of the gods, who tricks all of the gods. I fathered the great serpent, Odin's steed, and the Fenris Wolf. I am the friend and foe to Thor. I initiated Baldr to the Underworld. I am the turner of the wheel of time, the turner of the Aeons.

As you are going through these steps, it might be increasingly difficult to get the words out because your mind is shifting to a very alien consciousness. That's great. If you are in such a deep state of trance that your thinking processes can't get out the right words (or any words), you probably are at the right state of consciousness for the invocation to work. Often, it is helpful to repeat "I am [insert the name of the entity you are working with]," since you are replacing your "I" with a different "I."

Similarly, you could use the same technique with angels or "benign" god forms at first, but I guarantee that Loki is "interesting" Speeding up the process by working with dance is one of the mental steps I go through for a

Vodou possession. I have personally found that stillness works with angelic forces. It can and probably will work differently for you.

The process of invocation can be further simplified by merely using a sigil and a mantra with the intent to invoke a spirit. This is actually how I usually do invocations. The 3-2-1 method really illustrates for me the process of invocation via the different degrees of closeness. At first, the entity is distant, but as I shift my consciousness closer and closer to the entity through the process, it becomes easier and easier to do the invocation. Essentially, the connection becomes stronger and stronger until a direct merging of energy is possible. After you attempt the 3-2-1 method, then try an invocation with just a sigilized mantra and your preferred method of going into trance.

Emulation

A second route to invocation that I have used is to emulate a task or deed of an entity while going deep into a trance state. This can take the form of a ritual performance or an emulation of the types of feelings the entity causes, along with mimicry of its actions via a ritualistic scene or play. Some ceremonial rituals and shamanic sessions will use this technique. In the shamanic sense, if you want to invoke a bear, you act like a bear and have the intent for the great bear to come down. As with any repetitive set of gestures, if you keep doing the gesture imitation you perceive as the spirit's actions, producing the sensory information you have mapped for an entity, eventually a deep enough trance state will occur that allows the entity to seep in and overtake your ego.

Practical Ritual Example: Ganesh Invocation (Dancing the Obstacles Away)

This is a ritual I have performed several times. This ritual was inspired by Phil Hine. In the process of doing the ritual for classes, I discovered that Ganesh likes milk and peanuts as an offering. However, that might be something that only works for me.

Mood: The room was set up only with candlelight from a gold candle and a rainbow candle on top of a covered file cabinet. A statue of Ganesh was

next to the candles, and Nag Champa incense was burned.

1. Opening of the space: twenty-three rings of the bell (because twenty-three is a lucky number). This step is optional; I just felt like ringing the bell a bunch of times. Bells do induce a relaxed state, and the key point of this is that if you aren't having fun in doing magic, you should stop.

2. Banish.

3. Statement of intent: "It is our will to invoke Ganesh and dance our obstacles away."

4. Visualize obstacles in your life while in glossolalia (random speech). Stay in glossolalia till one phrase sticks in your mind and you are repeating it. This is a "mantra" of the obstacles.

Optional: When everyone has started dancing, the ritual celebrant can start some high-energy techno to give the dance a rhythm and feed into the ritual. (The ritual we performed did have the music at this point, and it was fantastic.)

5. At this point, start dancing. Visualize a small vermilion (redorange) and green sphere in your belly. Continue to repeat the mantra, but start to think about happy things.

6. Keep dancing; visualize and feel the warmth. Feel the ball growing, encompassing you entirely. Continue to repeat the mantra. Think about happy things.

7. See the light and warmth change and take form around you, slowly becoming Ganesh.

8. After you have taken on the form of Ganesh (full invocation through dancing), stop chanting the mantra and instead shout, "I am Ganesh!" Dance and allow the happy vibes to overwhelm you.

9. Visualize the obstacles in your life in the center of the room, and dance into the ground all the obstacles between you and what you

desire. Ganesh has the head of an elephant, so this can be a brutal, crushing down into the ground of any obstacles you might have.

10. After all the obstacles are beaten down, sit upright on the floor and think about your life without those obstacles. The people who are too tired to continue dancing, but who are still blocked by obstacles, are encouraged to lie flat and visualize themselves dancing and stepping on all of the obstacles until they are gone. At that point, those people should sit up.

11. Banish with laughter when everyone is sitting upright.

In practice, this ritual shows several of the concepts that we worked on previously, but you can feel free to tweak the ritual or use the ideas as you see fit.

Tool Usage and Invocation

If you have read other grimoires and books on magic (and if you haven't, I most certainly hope you will), you will notice that tools or long speeches are frequently used as part of the invocation. From a shamanic perspective, tools are often used as links to the spirit world and entryways into trance. In Vodou, a rattle is often used to call the mysteries down into a priest or priestess. In chapter 22, I mentioned that anything can be a link to an energy source or even a state of mind within the person, and I even gave a technique to find tools that will work with individual purposes. The same can be done with entities to ease the process of invocation.

Why, then, would we use tools if we can directly connect to an entity? At first, the use of tools adds to the symbolic mix that something is happening to help bring about the invocation. Additionally, from an energy perspective, it is possible to empower the tools (as we did previously) to help with the invocation. This technique is far more useful in evocation, as we will see, but if a tool is empowered and resonating like a certain entity, it will be easier for a person who has never worked with a particular entity to connect with it.

The use of tools in this manner does create a certain distance between the magician and the spirit. It provides a specific and limited context for an invocation. Essentially, it is a way to condition yourself to allow an invocation only when you have the physical tools in the appropriate setting. Once you have had the conversation with the entity, or a couple of conversations with it, ask it for an idea for a tool that can act as a link to it. Some tools will seem to help with a specific entity more than other tools, but you can certainly force the issue with items that don't quite fit. When we surveyed the tool from our subconscious, we created a tool that could be used in a general class of workings. Having a conversation with an entity is a fantastic way to get ideas for tools to work directly with the entity. The spirit has to put together pieces and tool parts from what is already in your head. Try it. After talking to the entity, try to make a tool in line with the "logic" the entity gives you, and one that doesn't really seem to fit. Now, when an entity talks to you, it must communicate with you through your subconscious or at least be filtered through the subconscious. This information has to then be interpreted by your conscious mind via the five senses so you can then put the tool together. The tools that you come with might not work for anyone but you, but for you they are personally keyed. In a way, they are a personal key to work with the entity. Ironically enough, if you study the entity after you have made contact, you may see similar "items" in the mythology or practical techniques other people have used.

If you are working with a known entity, your research will probably turn up many tools that you could use with that entity. At first, you might be tempted to ask what the point is of having that distance from a spirit.

We started our discussion with "All spirits can and do lie." Even spirits that are merely parts of yourself can and do lie. A deep relationship with a spirit implies that you can easily invoke the spirit and that it has a greater level of influence over your subconscious and possibly your observable actions. This can be a good or bad thing, depending on the spirit and what you need at that point in your life. However, even a "positive" spirit might have an agenda that is "counterproductive" to your personal well being. One great metaphor for this is chocolate. Lots of people like chocolate, but if you eat too much chocolate you can get very sick from it. Of course, there are some things that you probably would want to invoke and then walk away from without a real permanent connection. While some people would

believe that getting possessed by Nyarlathotep from the Cthulhuean set of entities is a fun way to spend a Saturday night, chances are good that you would not want to always have that entity in the back of your head all the time. The limiting use of tools in this sense can create a healthy distance from the entity in question. The greatest challenge when working with spirits from within or without is that it is all too easy to get obsessed with the spirit. Spirits may promise the world, but delivering it is a whole different matter. We will talk more about this in the next chapter. In this case, limiting the invocation with the use of tools is one way to keep it safer.

A simple way to condition yourself to do this is to hold a specific item whenever you are talking to or invoking an entity or concept. Whenever you want to work with an entity and have the safe distance, make using and having the tool a prerequisite for the magical work. Keep telling yourself that if you don't have the tool, you can't invoke the spirit or have a conversation with the spirit. This is a self-limiting behavior and habit, but as I mentioned, that could be a good idea.

In medieval grimoires where the magicians are clearly afraid of what they are summoning, techniques involving physical tools and the necessity for having them are clearly stated in a way to make it seem like the rituals won't work without them. This is a clever bit of psychology in the grimoires. Some of the spirits in the medieval grimoires can be vampiric. Having a clear "this is ritual, this is not" mechanism is a good way to keep the processes separate. I personally have done Goetic work-summoning demonic spirits-without all the tools. The spirits will come, but the tools, difficulty of the rituals, and specialness of the tools themselves help to provide an alternate context from normal reality to work with various spirits while limiting their "invocation" to those alternate contexts. Conditioning yourself like this helps to make magic "safer" when working with spirits, although it does limit the communication and information streams you can get from an invocation. This might seem like something that you would not want, but is it wise to be well connected to a potentially hostile spirit?

The tools that you have developed yourself allow you to create that special space while you are deconditioning yourself from the barriers to magical success. The process of doing magic and allowing yourself to succeed will start deconditioning those parts. Let's try an experiment. Pick

two entities you have not worked with before but might like to. Do all the needed homework on each entity, and have a conversation with each of them. Ask one of the entities to help you with a tool to facilitate invocation, and just try to work directly with the other. Don't work with one entity more than the other entity. Create the tool for the one entity, and then work with it only when you are holding the tool, wearing the tool, smelling the tool, etc. Work with the other entity directly. Are the invocations with the tool stronger than the ones without the tool? What happens after the fact? Is it easier to disconnect from the tool-based invocation process? How does each invocation feel? What comes to mind? Obviously, there are two different entities involved, so the feeling should be a little different.

After you have tried this experiment, try the experiment with an entity you have a working relationship with. Choose an entity that is more humanlike in its communication, and clearly explain that you are trying to intuitively understand the process of how tool-based invocation feels versus non-tool-based invocation. The process probably will feel very different for any person who tries this exercise, and whether or not you like using tools for invocational work will ultimately be your choice as you develop your own systems of magic.

Why Are We Invoking Entities at All, Again?

Given that we can directly call forth states of mind, and that we were mapping entities to states of mind, a legitimate question is why should we invoke entities at all? It's a question that, ultimately, you'll have to answer for yourself. Notice that entity work begins in chapter 30 of this book and that most of the techniques I have relayed can be used with straight sorcery work, as opposed to working with entities. At one time, I might have pushed the idea that straight sorcery work with energy was all that is really needed and that the exchange with a spirit and the possibility of a spirit lying was not worth the effort. I can see why someone would come to that conclusion, but I have changed my position on this point.

First, let me again stress that I am defining spirit or entity as anything that can be, will be, or has been conceptualized into a form that I can communicate with. This basically means that anything can be invoked and

brought to the forefront of the mind. This idea is one that we will see over and over as our adventure continues from here.

From my personal perspective, and that of other occult authors such as Ramsey Dukes, as well as most of psychology, we are social beings. The greatest part of a human being's learning process, change, and even growth seems to come from the interaction between people. The majority of the brain is physically set up to handle communication channels. From a purely neurological perspective, we are using more of our built-in tools when we communicate with something. Indeed, it is a natural way to work out details and discuss something. Essentially, our brains are hardwired to conceptualize things into forms that we can work with.

In later chapters, we will start conceptualizing and building entities. In earlier chapters we were working with different aspects of ourselves, and it is only a simple step to name those parts within us and then start working with them as if they were people outside of us. By doing this, we use more of our natural communication and understanding abilities.

Even an internal entity, such as a part of the self, can provide a very alien perspective on a problem. If external entities exist, invocation will most certainly provide a very different perspective on an event or occurrence. This perspective can provide many additional details about a problem, as if you had looked at the same scene from a different angle. Keep in mind the metaphor of blind men feeling an elephant. They can each only describe one small piece of the elephant by touching the different parts. None of the blind men themselves can see or picture the entire elephant.

When considered as external information/energy sources, entities, especially entities that have worked with many people, have a wealth of information that perhaps you could not access without their help. From personal experience, I can say that I have learned a tremendous amount of magical operations directly from what I consider spirits. Whether or not these are mental constructs within myself that are teaching my conscious mind or whether they actually exist is largely irrelevant. Either way, the process of invoking and communicating with spiritual entities has produced good practical results for me. Results are the ultimate litmus test for continuing work.

In the next chapter, we will talk more about advanced invocations and deconditioning the effects of an invocation gone wrong.

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Invocation Theory II: The Advanced Stuff

Where We Left Off

In the last chapter, we covered the basics of how to do an invocation using all the techniques we discussed previously in the adventure. Now I am going to reintegrate some points I made in the last chapter before continuing.

First, the memory of a successful invocation is enough to do a new invocation. Let's try another experiment. Go back to your journal. Try to pick a breathing style and posture that seems to generate the greatest level of trance state for you. If you think there is a posture that seems to fit with what you know about an entity, go into the posture. Relax and center yourself. Close your eyes. From here, try to remember the successful invocation of a spirit. What did you see? What did you feel? What did you hear, smell, or taste? Try to remember every little detail from the first-person point of view as if you are actually back at that time. For each sight, make the vision as vibrant as possible. For all the sounds, make the tones seem to fit together perfectly. Imagine how intense the sounds were. Imagine how intense the smells were. Allow the feelings in your body to completely overwhelm you. How was the experience?

Now remember our basic NLP tutorial from chapter 6. We can (usually) intensify any experience by adding more vibrant sensory data to the memory of an experience (Andreas and Faulkner 1994). Ultimately, your perception must filter the experience of an invocation. This means that you can create more compelling invocations even from mediocre invocation experiences by going into a trance state and intensifying the sensory information from the memory of those experiences. We have done this with other memories. The process is no different.

To go back a minute to the idea of relationships and interconnections with spirits, we can see that as a relationship develops, it will get easier to

communicate with and invoke them. In the same way that we were working with sympathetic magic, we can use the techniques presented earlier to open wide the links to spirits while working with them. A spirit may or may not decide to open the link on its end (depending on what you are working with), so there may be a process of gaining a spirit's perceived trust. However, in 99.999% of the cases, the biggest barrier to working with any spirit is in the person summoning the spirit.

Setting Aside the Ego Part

The single hardest aspect of deep invocation or possession is the dissociative process. Possession is really a bad word for the process; I prefer the Voudonic term being ridden or deep invocation. In America, possession has the connotations of demonic influence, and flashy movies such as The Exorcist certainly have strongly linked the concept to a fearful state. In the West, we simply aren't raised in a culture in which we are trained to accept not being "in control." However, most of this adventure should clarify that being "in control" is much more of what we pay attention to than it is controlling all of our impulses. In essence, the idea of the ego is a story we make up to give continuity to our experience, and it is more likely the events that we pay most attention to.

The idea of being "in control" of the self is an ingrained illusion of individuality as well as one of the tenets of ceremonial magic. For the sake of argument, let's assume (and you can debate this on your own) that control sometimes acts as an impediment to magical operations. Let's think about what control means for a while. Throughout the day, we shift into different states of consciousness. In fact, at some time we may be engrossed in a memory, reading a book (such as this one), or talking with someone. At these times, we might not be paying attention to our surroundings at all. I am sure you can think of a time where an emotion, memory, or situation flooded your senses and greatly colored your perception. I have had moments like this where I can admit that perhaps I was not so much in control.

The majority of exercises in this book attempt to bring a person willfully into a state of alpha-wave trance. Essentially, this is a state where the ego, or continuous story, fails to function correctly. The critic is overwhelmed, and then the magic can work. The final step in this process is shaking the hard

idea of the "I" and allowing another entity to take over. Think back to our adventure when we were working with different aspects of the self.

Go back to your journal. If you really think about it, is the "I" the same person as when you are remembering those experiments, or is the "I" far, far more fluid and dynamic? If it's more fluid and dynamic, even the idea of the "I" is a convenient illusion to help with the consistent story.

Admittedly, deep invocation is not for everyone, but it is an extremely effective technique for results-driven magic. If you personally get to know me, I will tell you about my favorite entities. Most of us in America are not from cultures that implicitly trust these entities or trust any entity enough to allow it control. Before I continue, I have to point out that you can deeply invoke anything you can conceptualize into a form. This includes getting ridden by the lwa or other spirits, or deeply invoking a Goetic spirit, demons, or even angels. For a while now, I have wanted to do a Jesus possession rite (as per the Gnostic idea of Jesus).

A large part of the process is getting into a sufficiently deep trance state in which dissociation is possible. Essentially, we come back to the singularity of mind. From here, trust is often the determining factor. Very good magicians/shamans can get possessed by things they don't know well, but they will generally have absolute trust in their own personal ability to force the spirits out of them and to break a trance state, even when the spirits have control over their bodies. We will cover a couple techniques that I have used in order to get possessed by something and still stay relatively safe. Generally, your relationship with the entity, the situation, your well-being, and the people you have around you at the time will determine whether or not you feel it is okay to let yourself go. The amount of trust you have in the entity or the people around you will determine how much of a possession is possible after training and working magically.

Yes, all spirits can lie, just like all people can lie, but if you have a solid relationship based on earned trust, you can be relatively sure that the entity does have your best interests at heart. One way to think about possession is to realize that, as with most of the things we have been covering, it is a state of mind. Through the exercises we have been working on, we know how to change a state of mind.

The Window: Moving Toward Possession

Let's try a simple thought experiment that might help you with going deeper into invocation. Remember a time, if you will, that you were on autopilot. I am sure you can remember a time that, while driving or walking, you were not paying attention to all the details around you. Your consciousness was wandering around, but your body knew automatically what to do.

Now I want you to imagine for a minute the sensation of seeing through your eyes while feeling that the body around you is a human suit. Imagine that the suit is extremely comfortable. Allow yourself to be fully immersed in happy memories, or concentrate on an alphabet of desire link of happiness. Imagine the sensation while fully being in a happy, comfortable mood, looking through that suit and temporarily not being able to control it without a great deal of effort. Keep coming back to the happy memories while being unable to move the suit. Keep breathing, becoming more relaxed and allowing yourself to just let go.

This feeling of being "there, but not there" is one we often have when the autopilot is engaged. It is the same feeling that occurs in a deep invocation. Deep invocation is much like relaxing into the autopilot state and allowing the body (including speech) to do what it's automatically going to do. The biggest problem with deep invocation is that thoughts, actions, speech, and states of mind occur that are not linearly congruent with what the ego is expecting of itself. Essentially, we struggle to maintain the "I" concept in a congruent story, because there is not a deep enough trance state and the "I" is the toughest and most aggressive defender of its turf.

There are a couple of simple exercises to help with this. First, for a couple weeks, continuously refer to yourself as "we" or, even better, "the we collective," whenever you can. Stare at yourself in a mirror and meditate while repeating "We love we." Try to go into deeper trance states while doing this simple meditation. This is horribly annoying to some magicians, but it does work at first. Take on happy memories while you are doing this. This exercise is so simple, but what you are telling yourself is that the "I" is much more of a collective. If the "I" is a collective, then why can't an outside "entity" temporarily join the collective?

From here, try to do things that you normally wouldn't do. Try to meditate on the experience and find a part of yourself that does like the experience. In chapter 13, we were focusing on different parts of the self that perhaps the "I" does not like. Nonetheless, they are still there. Let's go back to those parts of our adventure and redo those exercises. This time, however, we are going to try again to convince ourselves that the "I" is a convenient lie that helps with the mundane world but is not fully conducive to exploring parts of ourselves.

Convincing yourself that "I" is a relatively mythological creation, and being comfortable with the "we love we," should ease the transition to deeper and deeper invocations. The final step to practice for a very deep invocation is the idea of being in the human suit, watching, but not really being there. In this way, your body reacts and moves, and you observe almost as if from a distinct window, allowing your body to move on its own.

The First Deep Invocation

I do recommend that you have a partner for the first couple of times you try these experiments. This exercise will be very similar to any other invocation. In fact, if you have been doing invocations for a while, it will be very similar to those invocations. Ritually, the invocation should take place in the way you feel most comfortable, with a spirit that you feel you have a solid rapport with.

Now generate a deep trance state while doing the invocation or even recalling the memory of a successful invocation. When you feel you are in a deep trance state, and the states of mind associated with the entity are fully in the front of your mind, then allow yourself to see yourself as that human suit while you are simply watching your body move on autopilot. Completely relax and allow yourself to go for an amusement park ride in your human suit.

If you stop yourself after you know the entity is most certainly in your head, that is the "I" struggling to maintain control. Keep working on the exercises in the previous chapter, and make sure to generate deeper levels of trance. If you can, completely allow your body to go on autopilot while you

watch. Congratulations on your first deep invocation. It will be a great tool later to get possessed by other things.

Auric Shapeshifting and Invocation

A couple chapters back, I described a game involving auric shapeshifting. Let's go back and make a bubble around us that has a particular form, just like we did in the previous working with auric shapeshift ing. Again, we are creating a bubble around us and then using our will to give the bubble form. Once you can reasonably create a bubble around you that has and can hold the form of the entity, then you can move past "faking it" and use the techniques of invocation to bring the entity inside you.

When we have the outer aura similar to an entity's aura, and the inner state of mind projecting corresponding resonances similar to an entity or from the memory of a successful invocation, it is relatively easy to invoke the entity. Now, when I do this, I consciously try to hold the outer "visualization" while doing the invocation until I can no longer hold the outer visualization, since I don't really know who I am at that point. Deep enough gnosis must be achieved for the dissociative effect.

There is an internal method that I sometimes use to make the possession grow even stronger. Visualize yourself not as a solid being, but as a mesh of finely woven, glowing threads with your image on the outside. At this point, you are outside of that "entity" auric suit around you. Visualize the entity you are invoking as an overlay that fits perfectly with your auric suit. You and the entity are sharing the same space, with a bunch of threads moving about inside the shell. Remember, you are combining this visualization with a mantra and resonating (or thinking about previous invocations).

See that entity also as being a mesh of finely woven glowing threads of a different color. Spend the time visualizing each thread of the entity you are meshing with overlaying your threads. Essentially, while you are chanting and/or dancing, you are visualizing the entity thread by thread, covering your threads until you cannot keep the visualization and chanting going (because you don't really remember who you are per se, and because you are fully invested in the entity). This visualization trick has helped me go into pretty deep possessions, since the visualization is complicated enough to

occupy the conscious mind and, from my perspective, is energetically suppressing my energy pattern and allowing that pattern to completely shift toward the entity's.

The Dangers of Invocation

You should be aware of several dangers with invocation. Invocation generally puts you into a different, alien state of consciousness. An alternate state of consciousness is only temporary, unless you keep coming back to that state. Think about it: if an entity has a greater level of direct access to your subconscious, it is easier for the entity to manipulate you. Even if the entity is wholly internal, it may increasingly try to gain manipulative control. Essentially, it replaces the structure of the "I" to gear the "I" toward feeding it. This type of obsession is slightly more common than people think. After an invocation, an entity is part of you. Whether or not it exists outside of your mind, you have a memory of that entity. A strong enough impression with an entity can become a compulsion, just like any other strong emotive reaction. If the compulsion/habit is adaptive toward your success/happiness, it can be a good self-change technique. If the compulsion acts against you or has little benefit to you, it becomes pathological.

Every entity, whether it is internal or external, wants to be fed. Some entities might come to the conclusion that they can take more and more, to the detriment of the individual. Ultimately, this has the effect of drying up the person, because a happy, stable magician can generally produce more energy for spiritual work. Now, in my life, I once did a possession rite with a group of people. They wanted the main participant to be possessed by four Titanlike forces, including Tiamat. This was going to be accomplished through BDSM needle play and intense chanting. I was the main operator to get the participant possessed. Now, I did warn the person three times on different occasions that I thought the ritual might be a little much for him (of course, he did not listen, or else I would not have a story). In the ritual, he most certainly did get possessed, since I am a good magician. However, the real interesting part of the story is that months later, when people were talking about the ritual at a campfire, the person got up and walked away from the campfire. He did not remember getting up. He did not remember how long he was gone or what he did. I heard this account secondhand, but it is not the first time I heard of something like this happening. Essentially and

unsurprisingly, the memory of a possession with ample contextual clues is enough to cause another possession. We have seen this as a consistent theme in the book.

When a memory or internal construct competes with the will for control of the "I," there is a problem. Some entities have been fed a lot of energy from many people over the years. In addition to the mental discipline we were developing, there is a simple counter for this sort of thing. Remember, if we can turn down the sensory input from a thought or vision, we can reframe it and make the experience matter less and less. Just like any internal voice or habit, we can turn down the amount of sensory information that we have tied to an entity. It may be necessary to cut a tie to an entity entirely, if the relationship proves caustic for you. Of course, banishing, centering, and meditating regularly can help with this. Those techniques of banishing, as well as making something less interesting to the mind (duller, farther away, flat, etc.), are found in the earlier chapters of the book.

Changing the Self with Invocation

While invocation has its downsides, it also has a ton of positive sides. First, there are a lot of benefits to "not" being you for a little while. That shift in perspective can cause you to see more options and solutions. Additionally, if the invocation is successful, it offers you a chance to change parts of yourself that might not entirely be in your conscious control.

Depending on your point of view, you are either bringing a hidden pattern of the subconscious to the forefront or embedding an alien pattern into the brain. I tend to think of entities as external and internal combinations, but I will of course change that belief if it means I will get more solid results in my personal practice. This alien pattern can be useful. None of us are perfect. We all have maladapted patterns that are hard for us to break. Hypnosis tends to try to change those patterns, and invocation takes another step. First, you are usually asking to change something in yourself, and second, you are asking an entity for help to keep it changed so that there is no backsliding. Essentially, you are asking an external agent to change the pattern and help you keep it changed.

Additionally, if you are doing further magical operations and you have invoked another force, it is the "force" that is carrying out the magic from that point. This, as Peter Carroll notes, is a sleight of mind. You've tricked yourself. In addition to tricking yourself, you have this nice external construct (or an internal one) working to produce the result from then on out.

The greatest benefit of invocation to me, however, has been the knowledge transfer that occurs. I can honestly say that I have learned tremendous amounts of magical techniques and knowledge by invoking entities and asking/offering them the right things to get that knowledge. Once I mastered the techniques of invocation, I found that the information transfer is much faster than studying the material. Of course, studying the material related to what you are learning from an entity, while at the same time doing the invocational knowledge transfers, generates the greatest level of success in remembering the techniques. This knowledge is filtered through the subconscious, meaning that what bubbles to the surface will be uniquely yours.

More than once, I have been in situations that required an interesting magical working, and I just happened to know how to do the working. If entities are a combination of internal and external forces, perhaps they would be willing to share the external memory of magical techniques. Don't believe me? Develop a relationship with a spirit, and then do a deep invocation rite with the intent to learn magical techniques dealing with the entity's sphere of influence. Have fun and see what happens over a couple of invocations like this, and what kinds of techniques you develop after the sessions.

Empowering Other Workings (Sigil Workings or Sorcery)

Invocation can be used as a precursor to further magical work. Before I dive into the mechanics of this a bit, let me discuss why this can work. Invocation generally does increase the level of trance as you slide out of yourself into an alternate persona. Additionally, this allows a certain sleight of mind to take place. (It is not me doing the magic, it's the spirit.) We have a lot of conditioning, even in the West, to believe that "spirits" can do stuff. Another way to think about this is that you are bringing in a guiding energy toward the process. For example, a love spell with Lilith would be very much unlike a love spell with Aphrodite. The two entities are wildly different in myths

and the energy invoked would vary greatly. The type of lover you would be drawing to yourself would be far different in each case, even if every other part of the ritual were exactly the same. This provides a context to the energy you are sending out in order to achieve your goal. In the same way that we map divinatory energies to provide contextual information for a goal, we can invoke an entity to provide more of a resonance context for a working-without really being so specific that the result can't manifest.

Often, in many traditions, entities are invoked or evoked at the start to provide internal shielding, strength, and protection for other work. Usually, the protective spirits are considered "higher spirits," and they seem to vibrate in ways that are at odds with what you are summoning in later parts of a ritual. Generally, this technique tries to empower the aura and presence of magicians so that no "influence" of another force can penetrate into their minds. Standard ceremonial magic uses this technique often. Essentially, the invoked force acts as another safeguard. This is more sleight of mind. (Certainly a god can get results, whereas lowly me can't.) Or so we are conditioned to believe.

Of course, another really good point is that if the entities are external-and I am not saying that they are-you will have a spiritual force empowering and working to achieve the goal. This comes into play much more in evocation.

In the practical sense, possession rituals for sorcery using sigils or requests generally require two or more people to get reliable results. First, one person has to get possessed. The second person has to make the request of the entity or present the sigil to be carried out.

However, for all the other workings, the invocation is just another step tacked on before the actual sigil working/sorcery/evocation (which we will cover in chapter 28). A simple sigil magic working would be to banish, invoke the power you are working with until a deep trance is achieved, and then empower a sigil with a mantra. In the next chapter, we will cover a few more examples of this. If you have been doing the other techniques, just add invocation to the start of the mix.

One interesting thing about invocation is that they can be stacked in sequence to produce greater levels of trance and increasing levels of energy.

There are several explanations for why this occurs. Try to think of a few invocations based on trance states, energy, etc. You can stack different powers to create a certain resonance associated with your goal.

Summoning of Usui Sensei: An Unorthodox Invocation Subject

Some of this ritual will seem odd, but it is adapted for the hotels' no candles/no incense rule. It is respectful to meditate and try to contact Usui Sensei, the founder of Reiki, for permission before doing the ritual. It is polite and shows you are serious, which is typical of Japanese culture.

Requirements: A string of Christmas lights, an oil diffuser, and some pleasant-smelling oil.

Statement of Intent: "It is our will to invoke Usui Sensei so that way he may reach out and instruct us in Reiki."

Procedure:

Banish by the preferred method.

The participants should stand around a circle of lights, and the person designated as the vessel should sit in the middle of the circle.

The participants should then join hands around the circle in a very solemn and respectful manner. They should will healing/white/good intent and energies (love and laughter) to fill the circle. As they are doing this, they should start to sway slightly, visualizing Usui Sensei coming forth to "ride" the vessel. For simplicity, it would be helpful if everyone were swaying in the same manner, left to right in this case. This may appear as Usui Sensei descending on and over the vessel or as his visage floating over the vessel. While swaying and visualizing Usui Sensei descending, all participants should create a mantra of "Usui, come grant us healing knowledge."

When the vessel knows that Usui Sensei has descended onto him or her and is properly invoked, the vessel will stand and then walk over to each participant and Usui then will "touch" each one in an appropriate manner. Usui may say something to them as he wills or as the situation requires. Usui will most likely pull an individual into the circle to speak with that person.

As each person is pulled into the circle or is "touched," everyone else will continue to chant and will the healing/ light/good-energy intentions into the circle. As one person enters into the circle, the others should adjust their position again to clasp hands.

The vessel will again sit down after all participants have been "touched" After all participants have entered into the circle or after they have been touched in some way, everyone should thank Usui Sensei and ask him to leave the vessel. This should be accomplished by chanting, "Thank you, Usui Sensei. The vessel has much to do today. Please depart, but communicate with me in dreams, so I may learn."

When Usui has departed, the vessel will stand up. At this point, everyone should laugh boldly and firmly (in other words, banish by laughter).

Each time we have done this ritual, it has been a strong healing ritual for everyone involved.

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Invocational Energy Work, Group Work, and Talisman Work

In the last couple of chapters, we covered invocation from a somewhat standard point of view. Before we cover evocations, there are a couple of fun exercises that we can try out, which will help our evocations. Invocation may result in a spiritual entity entering the body and seizing control, but we register that as a state of mind. I draw a distinction between deep invocation and regular invocation, but this line is far less clear in practice. When doing these exercises, however, you have to be in a deep enough trance state to let it happen, but have enough mental composure to stay focused on what you are doing.

Let's think about an entity, spirit, or concept as a principle, and invocation as a shift in the information content of a person's energy. In some ways, this can mean that entities can act like resonance for the magician. It is easier to do this sort of experimentation if you have a relationship with an entity and have mastered the methods of energy manipulation beforehand. As stated before, an entity could be external or internal, but in either case, you should have a connection to the entity before trying these exercises.

The Imaginary Best Friend Approach

One of the easiest ways to create an entity is to simply imagine that it is there. A basic technique is to go into trance and talk to an inanimate object, attributing some skill to it, or visualize and talk to a made-up image in your head. Going into a trance state will help increase the impact of these exercises.

Try this for a couple of months: Buy a statue you believe is attractive. A small statue that doesn't take too much room is perfectly acceptable. Place the statue out in the open. If you have lost something, go into a trance state and thank the statue for coming into your life to find the lost object. You can of course try this game with other simple tasks and other statues, but be

consistent in your requests to the statue. If you asked the statue to locate a lost object, thank the statue when the object shows up. What kinds of results do you get?

One way to get better results is to obsessively write down every time you ask your statue to perform the task and then be disciplined enough to write down when the task was completed. Writing down the results like this is a bit difficult, since if you have not been deconditioning your psychic censor, it will work against you. Try not to have feelings either way about the successes or failures of the statue. Think of this merely as a statistic for future reference. Make sure to praise the statue whenever the simple task is completed. Over time, what is the pattern of results?

Ironically, if we treat an statue as something more than merely a statue, the subconscious starts to believe it and empower the statue itself without conscious intervention. (Of course, you could try this exercise with other artifacts such as paintings, pictures, or candle holders. The procedure is the same. For instance, with a picture you have on the wall, you merely walk up to the picture and ask the picture to find the missing object.) After you have tried this for a couple of months, decide on a name for the statue (if you didn't already give it a name much earlier in the process), and hand it to a magically inclined or sensitive friend. Ask your friend what he or she thinks about the statue without any precursory knowledge, and write down the reaction.

In this case, the form of the physical statue probably dictates a lot of the interaction between the magician and the statue itself. Most probably, the subconscious mind was quite adept at filling in the blanks and empowering that statue. The statue might even seem to have developed a personality all on its own (in line with the form of the statue you chose). Of course, you could have fun with this and pick a form that would produce a certain emotional or mental state of mind.

Now, I am sure we all have heard stories that objects can seem to develop a personality in and of themselves. This is especially true with more complex objects like a computer or a car. Based on the preceding experiments, is it a wise idea to always curse out a computer for not working? Try praising the computer for all the times it does work, and keep

track of the number of glitches the computer has after it starts getting praised (of course, giving your friendly, overworked IT staff some coffee and being nice to them might help them make sure the computer works more efficiently as well).

Invocation Energy Sphere Games

We have done lot of work with energy spheres and different states of mind. We rubbed our hands together in the flow game and created a flow between our hands. After that, we cupped our hands and visualized one of the hands being closed off to create a sphere of energy. Throughout the adventure, we played with different memories and mental constructs and then checked out how the energy had changed. We are going to do the same thing again with this exercise. It is extremely important to remember to cleanse yourself and banish before and after the exercise. Read through the entire exercise, so you can get a flow of the steps before doing it.

The memory of an invocation is often enough to re-invoke an entity, as long as the entity is thought about hard enough in an altered state of consciousness, and each detail of the original invocation is remembered (across all the senses if possible). In some of the other exercises, if a memory contained dull sensory information and we wanted to experience that state of mind in a more powerful way, we would just heighten, enhance, and empower the sensory data contained in the memory and imagine the memory occurring in the original person in real time. Try to fully relax and clear your mind before remembering an invocation you have done in the past. Now spend a few minutes remembering the invocation, adding sensory data until you feel that you are in the same state of mind that you were in at that time. Allow the memory of the first invocation to fully overwhelm your mind and senses. In your journal, write down your perceptions. Now let the memory of this previous invocation come over you, and repeat it as close as you can to its completion. Describe this invocation. Does it affect you more powerfully?

Practice this step a few times. After you have done this, try remembering each detail of the invocation, each sense-what you saw, what you heard, what you felt, what you smelled. How does the invocation feel now?

Now that we have a suitably powerful memory of the invoked state, it will be easier to do the exercise. While a partner is not needed for this, it may be helpful to have one for verification purposes. After clearing your heads, relaxing, and banishing, go back to the memory of the invoked entity. Again, bring the memory from the first-person point of view back into the focus of your mind. Try to remember each detail and empower each detail. Remember, we only have our minds to interpret how deep an invocation is, so by enhancing the sensory information of the invocation while keeping it in the present time, we strengthen it.

For this to work, you want the entity invoked, but not fully in possession. Take your hands, rub them together, and start the energy flow between them. Create an energy sphere, and hand that to your partner in crime (if you have one). Your partner should write down his or her impressions. Write down your impressions of the sphere that was in your hands as well.

As you sink deeper and deeper into an invoked state, your energy will resonate more and more closely with the entity in question, un til you are "in sync" with that consciousness. The energy sphere will reflect the change. The problem, however, is that the interpretation of an entity and how it translates into sensory data might be different for each person. This means that you can get different impressions both from invoking the same entity, and from holding a sphere of energy resonating with a specific entity.

Keeping Your Focus

The trick with some of these exercises is to keep that singularity of focus on creating an energy resonance similar to that of the entity. The best possible time to do this is right before the entity has total control but is deeply invoked. Essentially, you want the entity to completely dominate your thinking, except for the will to push out energy while the entity is inside. Depending on the entity and the system you are working with, this can be difficult (such as in the African traditional religions, where the entities want to take possession and it feels so good to let them) or relatively easy (as with many of the angelic forces associated with the Kabala).

For me, it is easier to do this when I have some experience with the entity. Some entities feel like they take possession in a flash when they are invoked,

others seem to flow in like a stream. Knowing how it feels when you invoke an entity will assist you in doing this exercise.

Invocational Transference

When you created the spheres of energy that resonated with the information of a particular entity, the spheres themselves probably had a noticeable effect on your partner. Being exposed to energy spheres that are colored by a certain entity is sometimes enough to cause that information to spread through another person, causing an invocation. An entity can be as contagious as the emotions we demonstrated.

These ideas lead to certain interesting experiments that we can try. First, if a sphere of the energy can affect the sensations in another person, it should be possible to cause the energy to shift in another person to be resonant with an entity (thus causing an invocation of an entity he or she may have had no previous connection with). Of course, the other person should be relaxed and open to the experience.

Let's start with both parties in this exercise clearing their heads, relaxing, and banishing. One person should have a good relationship with an entity, while the other person should not have a relationship with the entity. In practical terms, it is helpful for participants to make offerings to the entity involved (at least at first, to help establish a rapport with the entity). As you get better with the technique, this additional step probably will not be needed. I recommend asking the spirit involved before doing this, at least when you are first starting to try this out. Most entities probably will be okay with this if there is a reason to do this type of work (so have a reason for the receiver to have the evocation done). An entity might not want to do this because it would hurt the person who is receiving the transference. That's a fair concern, so do have that conversation first, unless you don't care if you hurt the other person.

The person who has the relationship with the entity should fully invoke the entity. If that person has gotten the memory-to-invocation trick down, those techniques can be used to further empower the invocation. He or she should allow the entity to come as close as possible to possession. This is similar to the sphere exercise earlier in the chapter, but magicians should

generally continue until they feel like every single pore in their bodies is the entity and it's a real struggle to avoid complete possession.

At the same time, the second person should just be obtaining a deep trance state via whatever means is deemed appropriate to the working. That person should be attempting an empty-minded trance state where an invocation is possible. Essentially, this will work best if both parties are in a deep trance state.

Once the person doing the invocation is at the point where he or she is at the verge of total possession, that individual will want to imagine projecting all that energy into the second person. Do this with physical contact. Sometimes I will use the shoulders, sometimes I will directly touch the third eye, and doing this with a deep kiss is phenomenal, but do what feels natural at the moment. Imagine the sensations, visions, and sensory data having completely filled you up, completely exiting your hands (or other body part) and surging into the other person, as if a lightning bolt were arching out of your body and flooding the other person's body. Use all five of your senses to imagine that bolt. Doing this should leave you somewhat exhausted. At the same time, imagine pulling up energy from the earth (and we worked with earth energies earlier, so use those correspondences), flooding your whole body with the sensation.

This is a lot like creating a high-pressure container of energy and then releasing all the pressure at once. The energy has no other place to go, since you are pulling more energy up through your feet and rapidly pumping it into the other person. See what happens to your partner. My brother, who is also a magician, referred to this as "shotgunning" an entity, and that's an accurate term if you think about shotgunning a beer.

After the other person is affected, you can juice up the ritual by continuing to "evoke" (which we will consider in the next chapter) the entity over the person. Make sure to banish and then write down your experiences in your journal.

I modeled this technique on my own experience of doing this sort of thing when I am told to do it or when there is a need to it. In Silver Star Magazine, Animapurasit detailed the outcome of a ritual we did at the Real Witches

Ball (2006). In this ritual, he became fully possessed by Papa Legba. He had no experience with Vodou before that event. After coming out of the edge of my possession with Papa Legba, which I did not remember, I shotgunned all the energy and information directly into his third eye. For those who work with Vodou, yes, I was told to do that as part of the ritual, and it had a profound outcome.

Practical Talismanic Work: Finding a Talisman for an Entity and Charging It

We can find a talisman for an entity to further empower our work with it in the same way we were asking our subconscious mind for tools to work with general trends. If you have had some successful communications with an entity, you can ask it directly for some ideas for tools that will enable you to work with the entity more powerfully. This might not be needed for invocation, but every bit helps. For evocation, you should be able to get some sort of physical manifestation, and the greater the energy, the more possible this will be.

We can condition ourselves to only allow the invocation while the tool is present. We previously covered why this might be a good idea (and why it might be a bad idea). In evocational work, however, the talisman you develop can act as a stored battery of energy to jumpstart the evocation (which we will cover in the next chapter).

In practical terms, invoke the entity fully with the intent to ask it for a tool to empower your workings together. Once you have the idea for the tool, then the fun really begins, since you have to make it. At each step of the physical creation process, we can charge the tool. So clear your head, relax, and banish. Take on the memory of the invoked entity until it overwhelms your conscious mind, and imagine pushing that energy into the tool. Make sure to put the tool down and banish after you are done. This is exactly the same idea as making the energy spheres, except that this time you are pushing the energy into a physical tool. If the talisman requires power tools, knives, or other dangerous objects, charge the talisman after building the tool (don't try to charge a tool while working with power tools, please). Deep trance states and dangerous tools such as power tools probably are not safely compatible.

You can repeat the exercise as many times as you need. As you do this, you may find that the tool becomes much more powerful. Merely touching the tool may even create a partial invocation.

Using the same thinking process, we can easily empower herbs, candles, and other temporary talismans with the energy of an entity that gets released when burned. This is very much in line with the sorcery ideas we discussed earlier. Let's assume you have a particular intent in mind for using the energies of a particular entity to guide the process. Some of the books are confusing, and perhaps you can't figure out what would work right. The entity itself can give you the advice you need regarding what to include, if you talk to it. Try to think out some simple candle-burning rituals that could use the projected energy of an entity. See what you can come up with. Remember, anything can be invoked and worked with in this way, from traditional entities to cartoon characters, porn stars, concepts, and even entities we create for ourselves.

Group Work, Circles of Power

As an aside, before we can go further, I have to talk about some example group exercises. Later on in our adventure, we will discuss group workings in more detail. There has to be some trust between members of the group to really get this to work, but these exercises will demonstrate concepts even in groups that are formed relatively spontaneously.

Let's try an exercise. Everyone should position themselves around the edges of a circle so that all participants are in physical hand-tohand contact with the participants next to them. Everyone should clear their heads, relax, and then banish by their preferred method.

After everyone is in a relaxed state of mind, each person in the group should clasp hands, forming a circle. Agree in advance as to a direction the energy should flow between participants. Let the energy completely "flow through you," in one hand and out the other, in the designated direction through the entire group. You have to actively imagine the energy coming in one hand and then going out the other. If you relax and focus, the group will help each other get the energy flowing.

Now, let the flow go for a couple minutes and keep relaxing. Two hands touching is a physical link for the energy to flow. Try to relax and focus on the sensations of the energy flowing between the people. Try to increase the amount of energy you believe is flowing through you by increasing and adding sensory details. If adding certain details reduces the strength of your sensation, add the sort of details that make the sensation the strongest. When doing this part of the exercise, have each person in sequence try to augment the perceived energy flow by adding sensory data to the experience in real time. This is very similar to the other exercises we have done. Add visual components and see the energy flow from the person before you and observe the energy exiting you. Add verbal data such as a whooshing sound, and let the feelings completely overtake you. Swaying (in the direction of the energy flow) often helps people let more energy flow. For the purposes of this exercise, pay attention to the links before and after you in the chain. Each person should note what happens down the chain when one person enhances the link in each direction.

Once you have done this precursory exercise, there are a couple of variations that demonstrate underlying principles of group work. First, pick a facilitator for the group. Everyone should do the preceding exercise again. This time, once the energy is cycling around the group at a nice rate, the facilitator should imagine being a brick wall that no energy can go through. Earlier in our adventure, we had a great "no" exercise that will work wonders with this. Energerically, one way the facilitator could be like a brick wall is to silently concentrate on the word no and visualize a wall of force. A second way to do this is to go opposite to the flow of the group. So, in the middle of the group work, a person would push energy with the hand that was supposed to be receiving energy. What effects do you feel when this happens?

After everyone has discussed what they felt, they should try the group flow again. This time, the facilitator should not completely shut off the energy flow, but should reduce the amount of sensory data that he or she perceives while doing the energy flow. So, for example, a person might take away the visual data and the verbal data and "tone down" any kinetic data by making the sensations duller. They might switch the kinetic data to more visual data and then make all the visualizations dull and boring. What impacts do the participants experience when the facilitator does this? Take

some time to write down your impressions. Make sure to banish after each time you break the energy flow or the circuit is broken.

In most cases, the strength of the circuit is determined in part by each participant. This is relatively difficult to measure quantitatively, since a psychic energy detector has not been invented yet. However, when you are next to different people who have been doing this sort of thing for varying amounts of time, what differences do you notice in the experience? If there is a break in the circuit, the entire circuit stops. Now, in ritual, there is rarely just one interconnection like this in a chain. A better metaphor is that everyone is interconnected (but even that may not be true). One individual person may not cause a break in the chain-because the energy can flow between people-but the energy does have to flow around that blockage. We will discuss this more a little later in our adventure, but if you are doing group work, consider the implications if one person is not with the program.

Group Elemental, Emotional Circuit

That first simple exercise opens up so many possibilities. Again pick a facilitator. This time, we are going to repeat the same flow exercise, but we are going to add some variations that we are already familiar with. It is important to banish before and after the practice.

Let's repeat the last exercise. Get a good energy flow between all participants in the chosen direction. In the last variant, we had one person reduce the flow in and out of himself or herself. For this version, the facilitator should go back into his or her journal and remember the personal correspondences for an elemental energy. One element should be chosen but not disclosed until the end of the practice session. After the circuit has really gotten going for participants, the facilitator should take on all the aspects of the elemental energy they are resonating and fully perceive that element. This is the same process we used when we were creating elemental energy spheres. This is a little more complex, since there is flow of information and energy between participants. The facilitator should try to imagine that the energy going out from his or her broadcasting hand matches the details of the chosen elements. All the participants should continue to just let the flow cycle through. Now, how does adding an elemental component change the experience for each participant in the chain? Try the exercise again, this time

with two people broadcasting the same elemental energy and then continuing the chain. Try the same experiment with two different elemental energies. How does that affect the experience? In each case, everyone else should continue to just cycle the energy.

Once you have repeated the exercise a few times with an elemental force, repeat it with an emotion. Do this with a positive emotion, and remember to banish after doing the exercise. The participants on either side of the facilitator should just cycle the energy around, with the facilitator projecting an unknown but positive emotion.

This exercise can become difficult when there is a group of people who all know what they are doing. When people shift their energy in a fashion like this, each person in the chain will react to the shifting energy and resist. A metaphor for this would be giving someone a Skittles candy, which that person thinks is an M&M candy. Less experienced practitioners might not be familiar with either type of candy, so they have the beautiful beginner mind and will merely run with whatever happens. It's important for each member to relax, keep the flow going, and not "judge" what is happening. In some groups, for these exercises to work, it may be necessary to combine the flow with a meaningless mantra to cause people to go into greater levels of trance where there is no need to judge the experience.

As a final part to this, try the group circle with both the emotional and elemental energies, with each participant knowing what the emotion is and mapping the state of mind to that energy type. What is the effect on the exercise?

Practical Group Invocation: An Example of Group Contagion

There is a lot of group theory encapsulated in the previous exercises. You can learn the metaphysical theories and concepts more intuitively by doing the exercises-this is true for many of the exercises in our adventure. Every time I have done these exercises with a group of people who can sufficiently relax (and trust me enough not to react), there clearly is a difference in the group while we are practicing the exercises. The informational content associated with those energies is often contagious in the same way emotion is contagious. If the participants don't consciously (or subconsciously) resist,

the information in the energy seems to replicate across all of the people. The information attached to the energy flow was generated by remembering the sights, sounds, feelings, tastes, and smells that the magician associated with that particular energy. As an aside, this contagion factor is another practical reason why we banish, clear our minds, and center before doing group work.

The invocation methods that we have covered in our adventure basically involve using sensory data to resonate as the entity in question. This, like the elemental and emotional exercises, is a state of mind in the same way that an emotion-or even expressing an elemental energy-is a state of mind. Does this mean that if one person had invoked an entity in the context of this exercise, the other people start to mimic the energy and thus start the invocation process?

Everyone should clear their minds, relax, and banish. The facilitator should invoke a benign entity (the definition of "benign" differs greatly from group to group) while everyone else starts getting the flow going. Ideally, for the practice experience, the entity should be one that the rest of the participants have not had that much experience with. The chosen entity should not be announced ahead of time. Yes, this takes a measure of trust. The reason that the entity is not announced ahead of time is to avoid the expectation effect. The participants will learn more by experiencing and not expecting any certain result. (This is so they can't tailor the experience to suit their preconceived notions.)

After all the participants have the flow going at a good clip around the circle and are in a trance state, the facilitator (who at this point should be near possession or at least should be strongly resonating with the entity) will enter the circle and just let the energy flow while continuing to focus on staying in an invoked state of mind.

In practical terms, the facilitator is doing a full invocation and then shotgunning and continually generating the vibe of the entity. It's the same technique we mentioned earlier in the chapter.

How does the energy of an entity being injected into the flow of the group change the experience for each participant? What impressions do the people in the chain get when one person is pushing that informationally tinged

energy out into the group? Try this with a couple of different entities if you want to have fun with the group.

After you have done the exercise with no knowledge of what the entity is, redo the exercise with everyone knowing what the entity is and having had experience working with the chosen entity (this could be achieved by doing the exercise a couple of times until everyone has an idea of what the entity is about). For this, do have a group intent in mind. Create a mantra to chant while doing this exercise using the sigil techniques, relax, remember a past invocation, and get down to business as a group. If the participants are able, physically break the chain and continue the invocation individually just to feel the difference once the invocation has been started.

How does this experience feel different from the previous exercises? Was the group invocation done in this fashion perceived differently than the individual invocations? In a practical sense, I have often used this when introducing new members of a group to the group egregore or patron deity of a coven. This idea can also be used to cast group sigils. Usually this can be achieved simply by increasing the flow between participants until it is more like a typhoon than a trickle.

These exercises reiterate that any state of mind, including an invoked state, could be contagious. For receptive participants, this effect can be quite powerful. Even if people are not totally open to it-if they are in public places, for instance-the information/energy can enter through the subconscious and bubble up, causing a powerful effect. This can be used for a "good" or "bad" effect, depending on your personal moral code.

Ritualistic Resonance Components: Stacking Invocations

As this is the last section in this part of the practice exercises on invocation, I should mention again that it is possible to stack invocations. This is a relatively common technique. First, from an energy point of view, you could "bring to the surface" the energy of a divination component and then invoke an entity. In fact, fully taking on an emotional state before doing an entity invocation would be a way of stacking invocations. The possibilities are endless with the states of consciousness you could stack.

There are a lot of reasons for doing this type of stacking, depending on what your intent is. One example is to temper the character of one of the entities involved in the operation. For example, you might invoke a hunter god with a deeply sexual being (or wealth-oriented entity). In another example, you might invoke an entity to protect you and restrict the invocational effects of another entity. Say you needed to destroy an ill-adapted part of your personality but didn't want to destroy your entire personality. This allows the one entity to "destroy" the problem areas, while the other being is containing the destruction of the problem areas. A third entity might be invoked to build replacements for the parts that are being destroyed.

In any case, stacking invocations will push a person deep into trance. As more presences bombard the conscious mind, the conscious mind will no longer be able to stay in control, allowing real magic to occur.

Practical Example: Michael/Leviathan Vortex of Self-Love

We will cover evocation in the next chapter; however, the evocation in this ritual is merely a step to ease the final invocation. In essence, this ritual attempts to create an internal vortex in a person, which destroys addictions and other parts of the personality that prevent fluidity and maximum personality adaptation, using opposite archetypal entities. In this case, the two entities are the archangel Michael and Leviathan. Michael represents fire, light, the highest heights, and the searing heat, while Leviathan represents the dark, wet, and cold depths. In addition, in Christian mythology these two will fight each other, and it is Michael who keeps Leviathan in check. So putting them into the same space definitely is "interesting"

Statement of Intent: I destroy the addictions that limit self-fluidity and feed self-hate, and replace them with self-love.

Procedure:

Banish by your preferred method.

Evoke Venus into the space. (For men, Pan, a strong god of masculinity, would also work. I have done it both ways, being somewhat mentally hermaphroditic.) This is done by a long, spontaneous benefaction to the goddess of love over a visualized chaos sphere while sprinkling rose petals on the floor. Concentrate on the core elements to construct the benefaction (what love is, what lust is, what beauty is, etc.).

Invoke the archangel Michael while slowly spinning in a clockwise manner. Visualize the angel coming down into you. Michael has a large flaming sword, he is usually pictured as being quite beautiful, he embodies light and heat, and he is considered almost the finest of the angels. He is also known as "the Sword of Justice." While spinning, visualize an internal vortex beginning in a clockwise manner. (I concentrate on the core ideas and sensory links I have to the angel and spontaneously create a benefaction.)

Start spinning faster.

Invoke Leviathan while spinning in a clockwise manner. Leviathan is the serpent (dragon) that will devour the earth if left unchecked. Leviathan is the monster at the darkest and coldest depths of the ocean, the embodiment of darkness, and one of the last monsters to be killed in Armageddon. Since we have mapped Leviathan to states of mind, we can then summon Leviathan into ourselves.

Spin faster and faster...

Scream out, "I am Leviathan, I am Michael! I am Leviathan, I am Michael! I am Leviathan, I am Michael!" Keep doing this while spinning.

Spin faster till you fall to the floor, unable to stand up. While spinning, visualize an internal vortex destroying tethers that limit selffluidity and self-hatred, the vortex correspondingly burning and freezing parts of the self that will not become fluid.

After entities have conjoined into you via the vortex, invoke Venus into yourself (which should be a little easier, since the first step was an evocation into the space). At this point for me, it is pretty well impossible to do anything but scream out "Venus, come into me!" over and over ... until

Venus (or Pan) is inside of you. Visualize yourself with the flowing green robes of luminescence (or simply as a half-goat faun). Focus on replacing the parts that need replacing with intense self love. After you invoke Venus, repeat "I love me" with increasing intensity until you hyperventilate. At hyperventilation, breathe deeply for a while, allowing the complete self to fill every pore of your body. Banish with laughter. You can substitute other god forms and opposing archetypes in this ritual to extend its usefulness as you see fit. Play and have fun.

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Evocation

For chapters and chapters, we have discussed states of mind and taking on "forces" outside of the self. In this chapter, we are going to talk about evocation. Evocation means projecting an entity out into a space. A really good evocation can and should have partial physical manifestation. At first this is a daunting challenge, but because of the previous exercises in the adventure, the deck is stacked in your favor for this to happen sooner. Now, when we invoke a spirit or concept, we are trying, often, to make changes to our own perception. Essentially, we are trying to change our internal universe when we invoke. Usually, evocation is done to change the external universe. There is often a very fine line between invocation and evocation. As we go through some opinions on evocation, the line will become even less clear.

In its simplest form, evocation usually contains some sort of protection ritual/gesture for the operator and a focus point, which is often also a containment field in which to invoke the entity. Hoodoo traditions and some schools of sorcery will use a spirit circle for this while using bathing as the cleansing/protection ritual. Ceremonial magic will use a circle with various names of god inscribed around it with a highly charged triangle (which acts to contain whatever you are summoning). You would stand in the circle of protection. The triangle would be in front of and outside of the circle, pointing toward the circle. This is described in more depth later on.

Some traditions will place limits on what should be invoked or evoked, but I myself have violated those rules. For example, there are times when an angelic evocation will be exactly what I need to do, and other times when I have to invoke a demonic entity to make the changes I need to make. When we were talking about projecting emotional (or divinatory) energies over a candle, over a sympathetic link, etc., we were essentially doing a type of evocation.

The Focus Point

We have been training for evocation with many of our games. Different traditions have different methods of setting up where and how to actually evoke a spirit. Palo Monte uses an iron pot. Some folk magic traditions refer to it as a spirit circle. Even a Wiccan altar can be a focus point. To say there are variations would be an understatement.

The focus point, as the name suggests, is the point or constrained area that you are projecting the energy into for the evocation. This small area focuses the energy you are generating. There are a few good reasons to do this. When we channeled energy into a sphere, it was much easier to perceive and work with it as something tangible. This might be just a mental trick, but it is highly effective for most people. Similarly, the constructed space gives the mind a concentrated area to work with. The smaller and contained space might resonate enough with an entity or concept that it can manifest.

In some workings, creating and maintaining a barrier between you and the energy is a good idea. The information and energy is in a constrained, safe space so that you can call forth the entity, and tell it what you need it to do. Goetic work is a system in which this mentality is common. However, I have also used a constrained space, in this case a sheet of paper that had symbolic constraints written around the edges. I created the paper to have a sympathetic link with a person, to do heal ing work by evoking various angels into the paper. The healing work was not for me, it was for someone else, and I did not want the backflow of that person's sickness to affect me in any way. It was also a great place for me to focus.

The focus point for an evocation is usually part of a symbolic universe, or it contains the symbolic universe itself. So, for instance, in ceremonial magic you may have a triangle with the syllables Mi-ChiEl in each corner. Working within a system will give you the symbolic logic within that particular system, but you empower each of the symbols or talismans using the method we used to empower talismans in the last few chapters. Now, clearly you could do this with song, dance, etc., or in the context of our adventure, you could vibrate an energy pattern in yourself and then push that into the symbol or talisman. This is a method of empowering the symbolic universe. It helps at first to make you believe that what happens in the symbolic universe also happens in the material universe. Empowering each component in the symbolic universe helps to empower the focus point to affect the

material universe. Just as with any other talisman, the focus point or altar can act as a battery for the magical operation. This is one reason why ritual magic takes such care with creating its own tools (at least if you talk to older magical practitioners, they take such care to make their own tools). By manipulating the symbolic universe, you manipulate the physical universe (which is a major concept in magic).

Of course, in some cases, the focus point or altar design is not available, or the knowledge is only available for such a high cost that alternative methods have to be sought out. We have touched on a couple alternate ideas for developing focus points or containment fields for any work we might want to do. Remember when we first dove into our subconscious mind to find a tool for a general area of workings? A second time, we had conversations with entities and asked them for a tool to better work with them. In many ways, the focus point is a tool in itself (and, as I mentioned, it can be configured in many ways). Now we are starting to move forward, as we did with the divination energies, working with a set of symbols and thus a symbolic universe that is entirely unique to the person doing magic. This magic is often quite successful. When you are using a pre-made system, you have to embed the symbols of the system into your mind. It's impossible to tell you what that altar or focus point will look like, because your subconscious mind has to provide the answer. Specific focus points for specific intents often will make the rituals go better. As you do more research, you will find that the subconscious gets better and better at pulling answers that make sense.

As we did in the previous chapter, relax, clear your mind, and banish. If you are trying to evoke within a specific system you know, but you are trying to get a containment or focus point within that system, talk to one of the entities you know within the system (which we also covered) and ask it to give you insights. If you are working relatively blind-in a system you do not know well-sigilize an intent to find a focus point for a specific evocation into a mantra and possibly a sigil, and use those tools as you are generating a trance state. Try to take on a state of mind close to what you think you might need in the ritual by using states that are close to what you are looking for. Use all of your senses, as we have been doing, to try to imagine what the focus point will be while you are in the trance state. Of course, for time and efficacy, it is helpful to get a unique focus point for a whole class of

workings, but the exact symbols you decide on might be very different for each working, since every magical working should be different and tailored to the exact situation at hand. As you are coming out of trance, make sure to write down all the details of the focus point you brought to the main part of your mind. This technique, while a little time consuming, does seem to produce very good results for me when I do specific evocations using focus points (or altar setups) that I derive in this manner. Of course, I have read a lot, and a lot of the "ideas" I pull look like personalized versions of more traditional systems, which is perfectly acceptable.

The Protective Bubble and Symbols

There are a couple reasons for the protective circle. As with the containment field, we may not want the energy we are projecting to come back to affect us. The circle, herb rub, or protective invocation keeps the energies we are projecting separate from us. This idea is not just for negative work. In a practical sense, if you are doing any sort of evocation, we want the information contained so the energy used in the evocation is not seeping back to us. Through all the invocational work we did, we know that being exposed to an entity's information stream might help cause an invocation. This is neither good nor bad, but having the entity invoked might not be conducive to the specific working at hand. This is especially true when you might need an entity to do something, but you need not be completely exposed to an entity's information/energy to get it. Anything can be evoked, from concepts, entities in books, and random spirits you find, to comic book characters, etc.

There is a strong argument that, in advanced practices, such protective rituals are not needed. There may be some truth to this argument, and we will go over it a little later. The symbols that produce the protective barrier can be empowered in the same way that we were empowering other symbols. First, you have to know what the symbol means intellectually. Once you know what the symbol means, you can map that understanding to physical sensations such as the memories of sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste, in the same way we did for the elemental energy games, the emotional energy games, the divinational energy games, and when we were resonating like an entity. From here, you can produce energy to resonate with the

symbol, herb mixture, oil, talisman, etc., thus empowering and strengthening the protective aspects of this side of ritual.

Circle and Triangle: Example Framework

Let's come out of theory land and get some practical tools to work with. A simple method of evocation for spirits is to use a protective circle around yourself and a triangle for the focus point. In Goetic rituals, this is often considered the minimum level of protection. However, the circle and triangle work with almost any magical endeavor.

As with any magical work, you should relax, clear your mind, and banish to start the ceremony. At this point, you should state your intent, which probably will be "Evoke x to do y."

Draw an equilateral triangle in front of yourself, and then a circle around yourself. Usually, the triangle is drawn to the East, but for the way we are working with symbols, this is only relevant if you believe it is. The circle and triangle are usually drawn before the initial banishing. There is an endless amount of variations on this theme. In The Lesser Key of Solomon, the protective circle is inscribed with various Hebrew symbols and the ouroboros. It is quite beautiful, but extremely difficult to draw. This is a very complicated circle. I myself have used a double circle. The outer circle surrounds an inner circle, with some space between them. I will then place concepts or sigils (from my own mind) that I want to use to empower the protective aspects of the circle.

Both the circle and the triangle are relatively meaningless in and of themselves. We can write down anything we want to around the circle or triangle, but it is the power that we give the circle and triangle that gives them protective elements and adds to the strength of an evocation. Circles that are very difficult to construct take an extreme amount of dedicated focus on the circle itself. As we have been experimenting throughout the book, if you are thinking hard enough about something while in a trance state, you are indeed empowering it.

Let's look at a simpler way to empower our tools. Start with the circle. Before doing this, make sure to clear your head. Now, each symbol, concept,

or entity you are working with for protection can be invoked. If you really want to have a strong circle of protection, you should have at some time invoked each concept or entity you selected to work with. If you have invoked the concept, you have a deeper understanding and a memory of the experience. That memory can be used to empower the circle. In the previous chapter, we worked with invoking an entity and then projecting that entity's resonance into a tool, another person, or an energy sphere. Think of the circle as just another talisman, invoke the protection entity or concept, and project that energy into the circle, just like we did with the talismans before. I personally will vibrate the name of the entity or concept while taking on the mental traits to project out. This acts to further anchor the states of mind with the concept or entity I am working with.

After this, you should empower the triangle using the same idea. The triangle likewise will be empowered with whatever symbolic logic, entities, or concepts you are choosing to work with. Now, again, you should map the entity or concept to sensory data and then project the energy out.

Now Evoke, Evoke

We now have an empowered circle and an empowered triangle. You could, if you so choose, recite the names of god in Enochian and command the spirit into the triangle. That is indeed one way to do evocations, but what are you really doing when you are reciting long incantations in another language? First of all, as you are doing incantations in another (often made-up) language, your mind, which consciously does not understand the language, starts to lose control. Trust me, even if you say the Lord's Prayer a bunch of times in a row, you will slip into a trance. The incantation is made up of information that seems like it should make sense, but it doesn't. In the event that you are using English, the incantation convinces you that you have the authority to do this working. Either technique helps to push the psychic censor out of the way. Second, as you are doing the incantation, you are supposed to be focusing on the triangle and visualizing the entity appearing. So, you are forcing yourself into a trance state, assuming the authority to make the ritual work, and then focusing energy into the focus point, which in this case is a triangle.

Understanding these principles will greatly help you do an actual evocation. Many books merely talk about visualizing an entity in the triangle. Once you have convinced yourself that you can do the working, you are basically using energy to invite an entity into the triangle, and you are using trance to not get in the way of the experience. Of course, there are other explanations that you, the reader, can devise on your own. We have been working on magic throughout this book. If you think you need the long incantations to have the authority to do a working, by all means use them. We have worked with many different methods to achieve a trance state. Use the method that you believe most resonates with an entity. Chanting a mantra sigilized from a simple intent, while obtaining a trance state with one or more of the various methods we discussed, will often be sufficient to evoke a concept or entity. Essentially, in your journal, you already have tremendous information on generating states of consciousness via a myriad of different methods.

We can ask an entity to pop data into our heads using any or all of our senses. This will greatly assist the power of a working. Keep in mind that even thinking hard enough about an entity while in a trance state is probably enough to either attract the entity or resonate in line with the entity. This is a partial invocation again. This partial invocation is often why the protection is there in the first place.

We interact with entities primarily using our minds. We can communicate with entities and establish a connection, even if it is a temporary one. If you explore this idea of the connection further, you may even be able to get direct information from the entity to assist in the evocation or future evocations, or direct information regarding how to do a technique. If this sounds at least partially like invocation, it is. Again, I have to warn you, there are entities you may not want a direct, constant connection with, but the difference between evocation and invocation is a matter of the degree of projection. There is still a link, even if it is a temporary link.

My suggestion is to take an initial evocation of an entity as another form of having a conversation. Even with entities that you generally want to boss around or entities that are subcomponents of your psyche, honey will generally draw more flies than vinegar. Use a tone that is firm and controlled, but fair. Ultimately, you want to be in control, but you really

don't want to seem completely unreasonable either. Approached this way, the entity often will be willing to work with you in a much more reasonable manner. This is usually the case, but not always. Sometimes, you'll get additional information regarding how to summon the entity more forcefully and still have to struggle with an entity. Once you do have more information, often from increasing the amount of sensory data you have available to map an entity, you can get more interesting effects from future evocations.

Even before you do the first evocation, though, you can stack the deck in your favor by researching an entity. For any entity you can possibly think of that is generally known or present in books, there are tremendous resources you can find on the web. Pictures are easy to find, but you can also find correspondences to things you might already know. Entities, in their descriptions, might have ties to certain emotional states, or they might be linked to a Persian element. Some people will even post their experiences with entities on the Internet. Although their experience might be different from yours, you can work with it as a gateway for your own evocations. With the previous exercises, you might even have a physical gesture or breathing pattern that can fit the entity. The description will give you clues about the sensory information to project, even in the first evocation, as well as gestures that will possibly help. All of the methods we worked on to generate different trance states apply, just like they do in invocation. Try to see which gestures or breathing styles might help you generate a state more conducive to the entity, so that you are projecting energy more in line with that entity. A fiery elemental spirit will feel right home if you are generating your interpretation of fire energy. You would do this by using your five senses to generate fire energy and project that energy. At the same time, you could chant a mantra until you hyperventilate, which would conclude the summoning. As with the invocation, you already have all the pieces to make the evocation work. Go for physical manifestation or weird physical effects as your measure of "success," in addition to getting real-world results (the two are actually correlated).

To reiterate, you have banished, empowered your rudimentary circle and triangle, and started to project energy out while using all your senses to know that the entity is present. Once you can communicate with the spirit, then the fun begins. Communication might be as simple as feeling the presence of an entity and then telling it what you want done (possibly

encapsulated into a mantra or sigil). In a group setting, there may be someone acting as a seer who is doing more of the communication with an entity. You yourself might be willing to converse and get information. Once you are in a sufficient trance state, thoughts, images, voices, and feelings will pop into your head. This is essentially how an entity will communicate. Not all entities will communicate through verbal means, nor can every magician communicate effectively with an entity through verbal means. This is perfectly okay. Just communicate to the entity through words, sigils, pictures, or even feelings what you want them to do for you, but keep clear and absolute focus on what you want.

Occasionally an entity may demand something from you before it will be willing to work on your behalf. In some systems, this is a test to see how much it can milk from you. Entities may make unreasonable demands. Remember, you must stay in control of the ritual, even if the solution is to merely dismiss the spirit and banish. Do not agree to anything you are not comfortable with doing. Be firm, be confident, and tell the spirit you won't do that. In most workings, it is a wise idea to have the maximum amount of concessions you are willing to offer and the time frame that you want results in before you start the ritual. In other systems, you are expected to make sacrifices.

Both the time frame and the results for the time frame are important. Remember, whether or not it is a spirit, more difficult statements of intent will make it tougher for the entity to succeed, but you could demand partial results or a physical sign that it is working on the situation before the complete results are achieved. In other systems, if you don't make an offering, the spirits won't work for you at all. For those systems, make the offering before even talking. Realistically, this is the same fine point we covered in the invocation chapters as well. Do the research on the entity you are invoking and the system. While the methods might be simplified, still understand that these things can affect you, both while you are in ritual and after the ritual. I do wholeheartedly recommend offering something reasonable in exchange for the services after the successful completion of what you asked for.

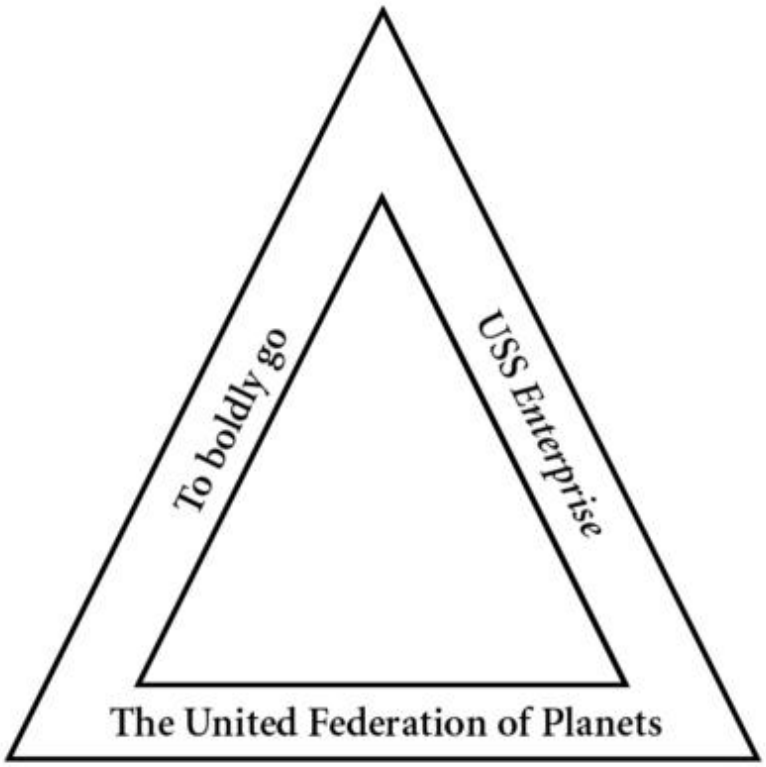
The caveat of communication with an evoked entity is exactly the same as it was when we started the invocation chapter. Every spirit can lie, so you

have to be careful and think about how to react to what you are told. After you are done communicating and have relayed your request, then nicely tell the spirit that it may go and thank it. Finish off by banishing by laughing from the gut like a madman, and in case that doesn't bring everyone back to normal, use one of the banishings you developed earlier, contained in your journal.

Practical Evocation: An Evocation of Mr. Spock

First, relax a bit-this is a fun example. What traits does Mr. Spock have? (Yes, I do mean the Mr. Spock from Star Trek.) The group I was working with generally agreed upon his pointy ears, his complete devotion to logic, his heroic nature ("The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few, or the one"), and his funky Star Trek uniform. Mr. Spock also displayed empathic and psycho-manipulative abilities beyond those of the normal Vulcans in the series; he was half human, and he struggled with his own emotions on several occasions. Thus, in the mythology that is Star Trek, he understood how emotions can get the best of people, and he also understood the need for logic in relation to those emotional responses.

Our intent was to evoke Mr. Spock to help us have logical and reasoned responses to situations that had strongly negative connotations and to situations in the future in which those emotional reactions would not achieve the desired goal. We drew out a triangle like the following on a piece of paper:



We didn't have a Mr. Spock image, but everyone in the class knew what Mr. Spock looked like.

Each of the descriptions of Mr. Spock was translated into states of mind, images, and other sensory information. Given that Mr. Spock is a fictional character in a two-dimensional moving picture, we decided to color some of the edges of the triangle as green (since Mr. Spock has green blood), and we lit some frankincense to add some sensory smells to the ritual. Then we banished and centered.

Mr. Spock is generally thought of as a logical and noble hero, so when we tried to evoke him, we determined that a fully drawn circle was unnecessary. However, all of the participants enflamed their auric shells with protective blue flames in addition to the banishing. This can be accomplished merely by using the techniques we covered in the energy part of our adventure and then using all five senses to know that the protective barrier around you is a completely safe bubble of blue flame. Had we decided that a formal circle was needed, all of the participants would have stood in the circle and then the triangle would have been outside the circle. The circle could be made

with herbs (corresponding to a particular protection state) or more likely just drawn with chalk, and it might be empowered with states of mind conducive to protection like love, light, names of god, concepts, or anything else you feel is protective. We were pushing energy into the circle in the same way we did with the herbs in the resonance section and the talisman section of chapter 20, and with many of the energy manipulation games.

The triangle was empowered by repeating the words on each side of the triangle several times and using the flow game to push energy into the edges of the triangle. This was not meant as a binding of the triangle (we like Mr. Spock), but it was meant to contain the energy so something could happen.

Since we had thought about what Mr. Spock's attributes meant, we were ready to go. We chanted 10 Spock," which is loosely translated as "Hail Spock," while progressively using our understanding of the mental states associated with Mr. Spock to project energy into the triangle. We kept going until near hyperventilation, and all the parties were standing around the triangle. Most of the people at the ritual could completely sense that something was in the triangle. Some people could "see" Mr. Spock, some people could "hear" him, and some people "felt" him. Having done this a couple times, I had the fortune of hearing him, and he promptly told me that the ritual was "illogical" the first time we had done it. However, I mentally told him that using human imagination to achieve changes in perception and improve our internal mental states was an extremely logical thing for humans to do, and surely he could understand the power of imagination, being half human. He told me that was indeed logical, and it made sense for us to approach him in this way, given that explanation. When I told him what we needed and were asking of him, he more than graciously agreed to help.

From here, we thanked Mr. Spock profusely and then gave him the sign (fingers separated in a V) and exclaimed, "Live long and prosper!" This phrase of course is Mr. Spock's way of saying goodbye (essentially we gave him his license to depart).

A few weeks after I did this ritual in a group for the first time, most of the participants told me a situation had arisen that probably should have caused an extreme, negative mental state, but the minute the news came to them, they became entirely calm, collected, and most of all logical in finding a way

to reason through the situation. I myself, having experienced some bad news, started to slip into a depression, but then I became extremely logical about why depression was completely illogical. Sounds like how a famous Star Trek character might argue the point.

What Can Be Evoked?

Now, although we were talking about evoking an entity or spirit, it is possible to evoke anything, as the preceding example shows. Evocation is essentially a projection of energy that has information. In the previous example, we chose spirits. I have evoked Mr. Spock, but also various Pokemon, Darth Vader, Harry Potter, Dr. Quantum, Goku, Tetsuo, Akira, Paris Hilton, Pinhead, Doctor Who, and a host of other pop culture icons. Don't feel like you have to limit yourself to "traditional" entities. In addition, I have evoked the concept of love, planetary essences, neurochemicals, intellectual concepts, etc.... As long as you, personally, can attach sensory data to a concept, you can evoke that concept in the same way we have been doing.

The same is obviously true for invocation. When we talk about making our own entities, anything you can give a form to can be evoked or invoked. We will talk a lot more about evoking constructed entities a little later.

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Evocation Level II:
I Got the Powerup Mushroom

Your Aura as the Circle

After a few tries with evocation using the circle and empowering it, let's try another technique. First, we have previously done some experimentation with "shifting" the feeling of our psychic shield. We used variations with auric shifting for many different uses. Both the direct work with the aura and banishing has the effect of strengthening your aura. Many magicians on the Internet will claim that a formal circle is not needed in magical operations (particularly Goetic work). However, other paradigms will use a cleansing bath, protection talismans, oils, etc. In each case, these techniques might not be needed. Some magicians will claim that your aura does act as your personal protection. From my experience, there is some validity to that idea.

We have been practicing shifting the aura and flooding the bubble around us with various types of energy. In the shapeshifting exercise, we started to play around with the aura as something we can meld and work with. In many banishing and cleansing rituals, there is a component to strengthen the aura. In our practice examples, we worked on creating a bubble or psychic shield around ourselves. We flooded it with different types of energy. The psychic shield in some ways will mimic the type of energy we project into it.

One way to look at the psychic shield is that each working or exercise we do to strengthen it adds another layer to your personal barrier. Another way to look at the personal shielding in magical work is that it is your ability to reject a state of mind that might be counterproductive. What I mean by this is that your ability to shift states of mind can control your state of mind despite deep trance. If you have a well-developed ability to say no and mean it, which is something we practiced, an entity really cannot attach to you or affect you. The real problem when entities attach to people is not that they will hurt them. (Not all entities will hurt people, and some really do have well-meaning intentions.) The problem is that the open link allows the

entities or concepts to influence people's subconscious without their knowledge. During invocations, clearly these individuals know that the entities can and might influence them (which is often the point). The potential is there for an entity to influence someone doing an evocation.

In some ways, containment fields let the subconscious mind know that the entity created cannot latch on and control your behavior outside of the ritual constraints. In some ways it is a sleight of mind and a limiting belief (although in this case it is a good belief). It is a method to train and teach the subconscious mind not to allow the entity to have influence over you outside of the working. The subconscious mind really does not have a sense of where you end and an "external" or evoked concept begins. The illusion of the ego creates that sense of start and end based on your experience.

In practical terms, redoing the "no" exercises, banishing, and redoing the shielding exercises will help to strengthen your will until a formal evocation circle or protective talismans are not needed. In addition, you can visualize and feel the bubble you have created as an extremely intense sphere of blue flames, as is traditional in ceremonial magic. Another technique is to get into a trance state for a good twenty to thirty minutes and just visualize a rock-hard bubble around you that deflects anything coming toward you. Doing this visualization one time might have a small impact. Doing these types of visualizations a hundred or a thousand times will make a huge impact that you will be able to feel when you do a magical working.

Again, I want to stress the lesson we learned with the "no" game. An entity, concept, person, or even situation cannot change or take your energy unless you allow that process to affect you. You can tell yourself NO and mean it, especially when you are reacting in a counterproductive way. The counterproductive state of mind could be debilitating fear in front of something you have evoked, or in front of an attractive female (or male) that you would like to ask out. Ultimately, when you say no to a reaction and maintain control, it is unlikely that an entity would be able to penetrate into your head. Of course, in many cases, we want what we are calling forth to have some link with us, but discretionary use of "NO" will stop it when it gets out of hand.

Without a circle, we do have to make sure to cleanse ourselves after a working. This is almost always achieved with a banishing, but an herbal bath, smudging, etc., could also achieve the result. Not everyone takes this extra step, but even if you personally have a well-developed auric shell, the residue of a working could resonate on the outer edges of the auric shell. As with other techniques, this could be a good idea or a bad idea, depending on what you are trying to do.

Stacking Invocations and Evocations

In many magical operations, invocation is used with evocation. Stacking invocations helps with an evocation in several ways. First, stacking invocations builds deeper and deeper levels of trance state. Second, performing an invocation sidesteps the psychic censor, since it is not the magician doing the summoning, it is the other entity. We covered that point earlier. In addition, invoking a power before the start of an evocation floods the aura with the entity's energy. It gives the magician some sense that another entity will protect him or her. Whether or not there is an entity protecting the magician at that point in time doesn't matter, because the subconscious mind believes it.

In a very practical way, this allows you, as the magician, to temper and control an evoked concept in a different way. When we performed sigil magic, we used an example of evoking a divinatory energy to guide the manifestation of a sigil. Likewise, you can invoke a concept or entity to temper the choices that an evoked entity will make while working on your behalf. This is not a direct tempering, but more happens with the resonances set up by your invocation and then evocation. Of course, you could invoke a state of mind, an emotion, a memory, a divinatory state, or any combination therein without an entity and then perform the evocation. This is very similar to what we were doing when we stacked an invocation with sigil magic. Essentially, we are taking on a state of consciousness (or energy pattern or combination of patterns), and then projecting and imagining a different state of consciousness (or energy pattern) in the evoked space while in a deep enough trance state to not question whether or not it is real. When you come down to it, most evocations can be reduced to that basic concept (with a lot of fun trappings). Of course, some of the success of an evocation will depend on what type of relationship you have with the part of yourself, the

concept, or the spirit you are calling forth. It is quite possible that that state of consciousness might object.

Are All of the Protection Aspects Necessary?

The questions of how much protection is necessary and how much equipment is needed are best left for you, the reader, to answer. To spur on the discussion, however, once you have a relationship with a spirit, it may be possible to merely evoke it in a single point without any containment. I have done this type of work with some success. Think about the energy balls: once they were willed together, they stayed together. If you were to do an invocation, project the energy, and then condense the energy into a form conducive for an entity, what would the result be? What if you then proceeded to continue charging the created form with the information and energy of the entity (a.k.a. the sensory data we associated with that entity)? Would that produce results as an evocation? Try it out, and write down what you think.

Different Containment Fields

Although it is beyond the scope of this adventure, almost anything can be used as a focus point (or containment field), from a four-dimensional cube (tesseract) to a transmutation circle from the anime series Fullmetal Alchemist. If we think of the "containment" field as a focus point for the ritual, even an altar can be the "field" The important idea is not the particular symbol, but the meaning that the symbol has for you. I find that a triangle is simple and does the job.

At times, the containment field is not bound and truly is only a focus point. This is the method of evocation I usually use when I am calling a friendly spirit in for assistance with a candle spell or herbal spell. In these types of workings, I actually enjoy using a spirit circle that is uncharged, since it is for a friendly spirit.

If we shift our view of the focus point slightly, it will open more possibilities. What if the containment field were a geometric design that could channel multiple evocations into one central location, and that geometric focus point were actually part of the ritual? Buddhist mandalas

can act this way. The containment field can act as an amplification and support of a working. Try doing a working with a focus point that is in the pattern of a crop circle, or do a focus point using a more complex pattern. I have done workings in which the focus point was at the center of a Fibonacci spiral, and within the spirit circle I had placed a full Fibonacci curve.

One can merely watch Fullmetal Alchemist to get some ideas on the use of geometric patterns. Does it matter that it's a fictional paradigm?

Practical Containment Field Example: Spirit Trap

This is a technique to make a sorcerer's trap for spirits you don't want bothering you but might want to have serve you for a little while. Of course, for this to work, you have to assume that the spirits are real for the duration of the ritual. Let's say you have a problem, and you have attributed this problem to a spirit bothering you (or you make yourself believe that the problem is due to a spirit bothering you-often that belief is enough to make this ritual work).

At first, this ritual framework is a highly effective tool, but it does play with the idea of what a "containment" field is. In this example, you need a glass bottle with a cap. I have found that the bottles from Pier 1 work well, but a wine bottle will also work if you save the cork. You should paint the bottle with symbols of protection or spirits that you have a relationship with, which will act on your behalf. I will often sigilize an intent such as "Let no force pass through this bottle" Now, you could combine a sigil with an herbal rub that you have found correspondences with (containing protective or blocking herbs) to enhance the containment idea of the bottle.

At this point, I will charge the bottle with the cap closed, focusing by imagining that I am projecting the energy into the glass and cap itself (not the inside of the bottle). One way I do this is to chant the sigilized mantra while staring at the sigil and pushing energy into the glass itself. I may combine this with rapid breathing and then visualize the glass as "glowing" or feel that the glass itself will become heavier. This feeling may be entirely different for you, but the important aspect is to focus on the bottle and imagine pushing energy (as we have practiced with the flow game) directly into the glass itself. If you are working with spiritual entities, or other

protective symbols, the procedure is the same. You have to charge the glass with the entity's or symbol's essence. We practiced doing this in a number of different forms in the invocation chapter.

After I have the protective sigils on the bottle, I will paint the bottle a solid color to cover up the protective seals on it and make it look like a normal bottle. It is possible to use the bottle even when you have an entity bothering you but can't scry out a name because it is resisting being controlled.

The working from here is relatively simple. Clear your mind and relax (but don't banish). After you are relaxed and in a trance state, charge some rum (or another alcoholic beverage that has a high alcohol content) with your energy by sitting and using the energy flow exercise. Pour about a shot of the energy-charged rum into the bottle, and keep the cap off of the bottle. It is very important to stay in a trance state while doing this. Place the bottle in front of you within arm's reach. If you feel uncomfortable with the strength of your aura, draw a circle around yourself with chalk or some other powder (and charge the circle) before placing the bottle in front of you. If you are using a circle, the bottle should be placed outside the circle.

At this point, you should still be in a deep trance state where you are not questioning the validity of the experience. Offer the charged rum as an offering to buy off the spirit. Extol out loud how great the spirit is and how you couldn't possibly defend yourself. Claim you are making a sacrifice to get a moment of peace. You have to let your thoughts reflect a state of mind that is generally submissive and truly make an offering. Sometimes you have to add your personal blood to the rum mixture to really get the desired results. Use your intuition during a meditative state while thinking about making offerings to the spirit involved. Intuitively, you might feel like you have to add a few more herbs to the bottle to make the spirit happier. Remember, the key is the submissive mental state and a willingness to make the spirit happier.

At this point, continue while you are in a trance state to extol the virtues of the spirit you believe is tormenting or bothering you. Keep uttering praise until you can imagine through all your senses that the presence has arrived. Keep extolling the virtues of the spirit while offering the rum (and other

ingredients) as an offering for a moment's peace. Try to piece together a clear feeling, form, or even a smell for the spirit. Since before this point you might not have been able to get a clear impression, try to add as many sensory details to the spirit as possible, until you have a clear idea and link to the spirit. Imagine, see, feel, hear, and even smell the spirit going into the bottle to get its offering. Imagine that it is like a fly going into the bottle as you continue to praise the spirit for the fine job it has done tormenting you. As soon as you sense that the spirit is in the bottle, cap the bottle. Repeat the protective elements you did earlier to make the bottle a containment field. Once the cap is on the bottle, you have a focus point to communicate with. I will often seal the bottle with wax while doing my sealing incantations and energy work. I have also used straight brute force and willed spirits into the bottle using the five senses to imagine whipping them into it. This takes a little more practice, but it is possible.

At this point, you are in a much better position to negotiate. Seal the bottle with wax, and if you used an herbal rub for the bottle, re-rub the bottle with the herbs. My experience with this technique is that at first the spirit is rather pissed off, and you can definitely get that vibe. You can tell the spirit that you won't let it out of the bottle until it promises to work for you and gives you a name or sigil that you can use to control it. If you are choosing to go that route, tell the entity that you are going to put the bottle away for a month and then talk to the entity after it has had some time to calm down. After a month, demand a name or sigil to control the entity. Try to negotiate with the spirit, since honey will generally get more results than vinegar. Even if this is a part of yourself, if the spirit believes that you won't destroy it and will feed it, it generally will be willing to negotiate, but the implied threat that you could destroy it has to be there. Of course, if you are completely abusive, it may retaliate. If the spirit is still uncooperative, allow it to stew in the bottle for even longer, repeating the bottle-sealing mantra you recited earlier.

If you don't really want to work with the spirit, throw the bottle (make sure it is a strong bottle, and well bound and sealed with wax) into a moving river or salt water (both have associations with cleans ing negativity) away from your house. If the spirit gets out, it is still in areas associated with cleansing. Merely toss the spirit into the water and walk away without

looking back. Understand that whatever problem you had is now completely gone.

You can convince yourself that any psychological issue is caused by a spirit. Most of the time, the only way we know a spirit is involved is generally through our perceptions. By extolling the spirit, even if it is a part of ourselves, we are giving the issue the power to take form (and thus allowing our subconscious mind to give the problem form). If it is a "real" spirit, we can trap it, and if it wasn't a real spirit but we stayed in trance throughout the exercise, it is a "real" spirit to us, so we can trap it. We allow our minds to give it form and then work with the construct.

Generally, after a long enough time, I have found that most spirits are willing to negotiate. Sometimes I have thought initially that the issue was completely internal, but I shifted my belief about a situation so I could move the issue into this model and work with it externally. Likewise, on other occasions, I have had something that I thought was an external issue and changed my belief about the situation so that it was just an internal issue that I could work on using some of earlier exercises. Remember, the goal is results and using whatever achieves those results.

After you have done this a few times, you can try to do this by merely visualizing a bottle and then throwing that visualized bottle into a river with the entrapped "spirit" inside.

Practical Example: Elemental Working

In many sources, the pentagram is the symbol that is used to convey the connection of the elemental forces of the world. However, an alternate way to display this is as a wheel (pictured in the following illustration).

Now, if you notice the figure above, each element has a part in the mandala. The symbols for each of the elements correspond to the sides with the graphical representations of those elements. The top of the circle is earth. The right side of the circle is air. The bottom of the circle is fire, and the left side of the circle is water. The bars that connect the elements contain different symbolic representations from different systems for each element. Through our exercises, you may have made personal symbols for each element that you could use.

I prefer this representation of the elements, since it allows me to do more interesting ritual designs with those elemental forces. First, I will trace out the lines, adding energy and empowering the "circle" lines and straight lines. My goal is to create a containment system while pushing the energy into the diagram. The containment system is not to bind the energies, but to have a place so all the energies can congeal into a solid spell. So in a way, this is a very complicated focus point I am working with (however, you will see why

symbolically it works well for me). In a pinch, I have found that only the outer circle and inner "beams" to the inner circle are needed to work with the symbol, but drawing out the entire circle is often very meditative and beautiful.

When I draw out the full elemental cross, I will leave the inner circle with eight parts off the wheel and replace this with a sigil inside the inner circle that incorporates my desire (as we did in the sigil chapter). I will create a mantra to represent that desire as well. When I have experimented with this, I will sometimes replace the elemental symbols with the symbols I created for the elemental kings, also listed in The Magician's Companion (Whitcomb 1993). You can substitute whatever elemental powers will work for you (from demonic prince to angelic prince to god forms). Keep in mind that different substitutions will have very different feelings in the ritual itself.

At each part of the circle, I will perform a full evocation of each elemental king, requesting that he carry out my desire encapsulated into the sigil. I have used this method to charge talismans as well (telling the entities to empower my talisman). The way I like to think of this style of working is that the "desired result" is supported by the pillar of each of the elements. For the purposes of the ritual, the circle represents the universe. To congeal the energies, I will finish off by staring at the central sigil and chanting my mantra, pushing energy at my sigil until I feel that the energies congeal and birth my spell. When I feel the spell is done, I will ask the elemental powers to carry out my will, thank them, and give them license to depart. I will then banish.

You might correctly point out that you do not need to summon spirits and command or request them to carry out the intent inscribed in the center of the diagram. You practiced producing energy of each elemental type and could project that energy for each direction instead of performing an evocation. Additionally, you could do this ritual with a group of participants. This is symbolically very close to the idea of casting a circle, but instead the constrained universe is much smaller. I personally find it easier to see and work with.

This is not a traditional method of working with the elements; however, it has worked for me in the past and does give you, the reader, some ideas to

expand your magical techniques. The idea of presenting this is not so that you will copy my ritual exactly, but to open the door to possibilities. In this ritual, my logic was that the elemental energies would rush in and support the center intent with multiple linked evocations. Of course, this logic could be applied to many different systems. A planetary working might use each of the planetary energies or entities drawn in a star to support an intent. Really, if you can conceive of a diagram that channels the working in the way you want the working to go, and you get results from that diagram, it is correct for you. Any metaphor you can come up with to describe how a magical operation might work is a valid subject to test. Results again trump all (if you can repeat the results, it is right for you).

Sympathetic Magic and Evocation

In the sympathetic magic and link chapters of our adventure, we projected different energies through a link to see what the impact would be. Additionally, we used sympathetic links to cast sigil magic or to influence another individual. We can also use a sympathetic link with evocation.

While the sympathetic link does act like a two-way communication stream, once the link is established through the methods we practiced earlier, we can limit the stream of the link to basically one direction. In a way, the methods are similar to what we were doing with evocation. In evocation, we had a link to a spirit, but via the protections set up in ritual space, we projected out that energy without having energy "seep" back to us. Likewise, if the link was enclosed within a containment field with protections (even if it was just an aura hardening), we could project energy into the link without that energy seeping back to us. Even with healing work, this provides for a much more efficient use of energy.

Carrying the idea a step further, if we already have the needed focus points and area to contain the energy, we could just perform a full evocation over a sympathetic link and instruct the spirit to carry out the desired intent, using the link as the target to the situation, person, place, or idea. Once the link is established, we are essentially surrounding the end target of the link with the information and energy of an intelligence that doesn't seep back to us due to the containment setup. I will often do this style of working with a circle as my containment field. At the end of the ritual, I will usually

visualize and imagine my energy forcefully pushing the entity and energy down into the link (as we did with the flow games, but this time more directed). When I am actually touching the circle, I will see, feel, and imagine that the link is completely severed by seeing, feeling, and imagining my energy spread across the circle like a thick disk, in the same way that we practiced strengthening our aura (as well as making the various statues). I have pushed the entity down through the link and have effectively banished the spirit circle. At this point, I will close off with a banishing by laughter or by some other means.

In a way, this idea is very similar to what we have already done with the added steps of placing the ritual in a containment field. Of course, we don't necessarily have to use an entity. Any projected energy will work once you have the link established and empowered. "Shotgunning" the energy down the sympathetic link just helps to finish off the ritual and adds a good, final spike to it. As another aside, we could do multiple evocations and then push the mixture of evoked spirits in a containment field down the sympathetic link. You could use the techniques to work sympathetically on yourself or on a part of yourself that you have mapped out and wish to work on. I leave how to do that as an exercise for you to figure out (of course, remembering the "Shards of the Self" chapter will help you). Remember, you can have a sympathetic link to a situation, to yourself, to a person, or even to an idea. I encourage you to experiment and play.

Push/Pull, Invoke/Evoke Group Work

The idea is relatively simple. One person invokes a spirit while all other members evoke the spirit into the same space as the person invoking the spirit. This technique is a very common way to do invocation rites.

Neither component of this technique is very different from other parts of our adventure. However, this technique does put together the components in a slightly different way. Essentially, instead of a bottle, triangle, or complex diagram, the person doing the invocation is essentially binding the spirit inside, so that the spirit can talk or work through him or her. Now, in paradigms such as Vodou, there is a culture that supports and promotes the idea of possession. Aspiring groups of magicians can use this technique to

help cause someone to have a deep invocation with any spirit or concept, even if that concept may be relatively foreign to the individual.

This type of pushing-and-pulling exercise makes perfect sense from an energy point of view. As a person is taking an internal mental state in line with the pattern of the energies, the other participants are trying to force this pattern down into the person at a rate much higher than that individual might be able to pull the force into himself or herself. If the person invoking the spirit can completely relax and go into a trance state, that person can resonate with a particular entity. For most workings, this would just boil down to a group of magicians doing an evocation using the principles discussed so far in our adventure, with one person doing an invocation. Of course, the line between these two is blurry, so creative ritual designers are free to experiment.

A creative group of magicians can use this idea to empower spells for a group in a similar way to the way we were discussing with the diagrams. An idea I have tried several times when I was working with a group of five or more was to have each party summon a different elemental king, with the fifth person acting as the conduit of the spell work. The fifth person chants a mantra while staring at a sigil for the group intent. This person acts like the triangle or diagram of focus for the ritual and redirects the energy out to the "universe" The four other people evoke an elemental king over the person (we have done this with elemental angels, elemental dragons, infernal powers, and even with just the elemental forces themselves). Any remaining people should direct general energy toward the person acting as the containment field. Of course, you can combine this idea into a multitude of workings and different techniques.

After the Fact: Deconditioning Unwanted Connections

As an aside, it should be very clearly noted that some methods of evocation could create a connection (and part of the evocation is creating a connection for communication). Usually banishing is enough to break a connection, but in some cases banishing may have to be followed up with some fast deconditioning techniques (which we covered earlier) if a person gets obsessed with a particular ritual. Remember, the memory of a working might be enough to vibrate that energy (and thus form a mental connection with a

spirit). In some cases, this would be a good thing, but in some cases this could be disastrous. Keep this in mind. Dull the scene, mute the feelings, and make the voices speak in monotone. Essentially, make the memory of the ritual contain less sensory information.

In this, the spirit is technically gone and banished per se; however, the mind of the magician reaches back out in an inappropriate and sometimes uncontrolled manner. Another way to think of this is that once you have done a magical working, the forces called up are part of you from that point forward. This is similar to the Tiamat example we discussed in chapter 26. A connection is a connection.

A Final Word

My rituals may not work for you. They are only examples to give you ideas on how to create your own rituals and your own techniques. Ultimately, things you think up yourself will work better and more effectively for you, since they have a greater connection to how you think and how you work.

As I keep saying, honey draws more flies than vinegar. If you have relationships with the spirits you work with, they will often be up for experimentation because you have that relationship with a spirit, and it realizes you are trying to learn "magic" in a very nondogmatic way. In this case, it is like you and a friend are experimenting together. Additionally, evoking a spirit and brutally forcing it to capitulate might get results, but if the spirit is an external agent ... well, would you like to be treated like a slave? Hell, even if it's a construct, would you like to be treated that way? Even if the spirit is an internal component, slaves have a tendency to rebel at the worst and most personally vulnerable time. For comparison, well-treated business partners usually can work out their differences. This includes subcontractors (such as the so-called "lesser" spirits). Treating a spirit with respect, when possible, only establishes a better working relationship. Of course, the flip side of that is that even in the business world, showing weakness will sometimes lead to counterproductive results.

Some spirits might tell you no, they want no part of these types of experimentation. More often than not, when you communicate with entities, they will be okay with the experimentation. However, if you mention this to

other people, they will try to interject elements of fear, dogma, and strict controls, which may make you question your intuition.

At first, I did a type of working regarding quantum possibilities, and I involved fictional characters from What the BLEEP Do We Know? I wrote about this in an article called "Quantum Selves" for the Magic on the Edge anthology (Vitimus 2007). One day, Papa Legba asked me if he could join in, because it looked like fun. It's possible that had I tried to do this with no pre-established relationship, the ritual with this spirit might not have worked the way I wanted it to work. A relationship can go both ways in experimentation and exploration. Maybe the spirits themselves would like to evolve, both in what they experience and in the methods they use to have those experiences.

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Creating Entities with Energy and Information

Earlier in our adventure, we made little puppets out of general life force energy, and then we made a puppet out of emotional energy. The emotional puppets did indeed seem to have a contagious effect, causing an emotion in other people. In this chapter, we will cover a couple more ways to build artificial entities using different techniques from the previous chapter.

When we created the puppets earlier, we were, in essence, creating very simple entities. These entities had extremely short lifespans and very narrow purposes. As with many metaphysical techniques, there are thousands of ways to create artificial entities, and I can give you only some options that have worked for me. Budding off parts of yourself has the additional benefit that you, the magician, can work to directly empower parts of yourself. The result itself is far more interconnected to you. This particular style of information/energy servitor creation will create artificial spirits far less connected to you. Sometimes it is a very good thing for these spirits to be less connected to you, especially in negative or riskier efforts.

Your First Created Entity

Simple one-purpose entities often get surprisingly good results for many tasks. A simple framework that you should try is to generate a state of mind congruent with the task and then project the energy out into a sphere. This again goes back to gestures, breathing, memory work, etc. Anything that generates a particular desired state of consciousness at the strongest level can be used. From here, you can work and shape the energy into whatever form is desired, assuming that the chosen form of the creation will give the entity some ability to carry out the task. Often at this point, magicians will use a sigilized mantra and sigil intent to bind the energy they produced together while shaping the energy into the desired form. This gives the creation intent and form. I personally like the idea of tactile shaping and

visualizing the energy coming into a specific form, but it should be clear that other magicians might only choose to use their minds for the task.

Most books will say that a servitor should have a time limit for success, but in the examples I gave, the tasks are much more repetitive and simple. In examples such as these, keeping the simple servitors around seems like a more efficient use of time and effort. Besides, a servitor that can do one really simple thing with great results is very useful. Once the servitor is created, the magician usually then sends it out into the world to achieve the desired results.

One of the tricks to creating servitors is to know what form to give them. This is something that, again, you could scry from your subconscious. Ideally, the form should be something that makes sense for the task you are creating. For money-drawing servitors, I might choose something like an octopus, since they have suckers to pick up the money and bring it to me. For other tasks, I might use very different forms. For me, an entity to create "joyful" feelings in a room might be a small teddy bear with balloons, but for other people it might be a rabbit. Really, magicians are limited only by their imagination and their ability to explain how a form would be able to do the task.

Secondly, a big question is what kinds of information best fit the desired task. This question, as well as the form of the question, takes some thought before going into ritual. If we can use any energy to create a base pool to work with, we can push energy linked to any possible state of consciousness, including invoked spirits, concepts, divinatory constructs, etc. At first, keep the different combinations of energies simple, perhaps just an emotional or divinatory energy (only one), and work from that point to apply the form and intent for the servitor.

A third question to consider is how much energy a servitor will need. A more difficult task will require a more developed and powerful servitor. This is not always true, but usually this is the case. Creating a servitor to acquire a few million dollars might be a fun project, but how the millions will manifest is the real question. If you have that kind of money, and understand investment strategy, chances are that the magic to do this will be relatively easy. However, if you are working at McDonald's at minimum wage,

generating that kind of wealth will be difficult. As with sigil magic, if the current conditions make the outcome of the request dubious, it makes overcoming the current conditions even more difficult.

Once the servitor is created and formed via the shaping method, I prefer to go into a full-out evocation of the newly created servitor. To me, this empowers and strengthens the ties that hold the servitor together. Phil Hine uses a rather theatrical air burst launching, and I have seen many dramatic methods to send a servitor out into the world. I have also in a pinch created the servitor, and basically told it to go and carry out what I needed done (usually with a sense of immediacy because it is in a pinch).

Magicians can form a simple servitor from the produced energy and instruct the creation to go out into the world to carry out the task, usually with a time limit. Then, as a final instruction, they tell the servitor to "reabsorb" back into them in a way similar to the method we discussed in the previous chapter.

Practical Servitor: Messenger Bird

This is how to evoke and create a very simple servitor that I have used on a few occasions. Create a sigilized name for your messenger and a glyph. A possible intent is, "Tell person x message y, and keep bringing the message to him until he responds directly to me."

Relax your mind and banish. Create a pool of energy in the way we have been doing. It is often helpful to use the mantra you created while you are creating the pool of energy in your hands. Sculpt that energy into your favorite bird. I personally like the raven, so my servitor looked like a raven. It may help to do a couple divinations to see if you have enough energy to get someone else to take action on the message, and of course the divination might include different types of information that must be included in the servitor or the message. The divination offers another chance for you to confer with what your subconscious says you really want in this situation.

Once you have a bird formed, visualize, feel, and even smell the sigil you created on the chest of the bird. Imagine that this sigil is part of the servitor, and that the sigil (along with the name) binds it together. Of course, to really

produce and push enough correct and specific energy, you will need to have that singularity of focus that a deep trance state allows. Although we encapsulated a message into the very essence of the servitor (its name and glyph), a message sent in this fashion can contain far more information than merely a "call me." In fact, rarely will your true desire be "call me." Your states of mind are again the key to contextualize the message delivered.

If you want an ex-girlfriend or ex-boyfriend to call you and possibly reopen the door to a reflaming of the relationship, make sure of what underlying information patterns you want to attach to the message. In this case, you would want to feed energy into the servitor, in order to go back and relive experiences where you and the significant other were "blissfully" together. Another option is to include energy tinged with memories of you and the significant other in the heat of orgasm. These two contexts change the message and action greatly. In one case, the message has the underlying theme of reopening a romance as a friendship. In the second case, the message has a more visceral, lusting feel.

The context of the message might also determine the amount and type of energy that you need to include with the servitor to have the desired result. It also provides a context for how the communications should go. If this is about getting laid and your ex-girlfriend or exboyfriend is really mad at you for some reason, it might take more informationally tinged energy to push those thoughts to the forefront. Essentially, remember that states of mind (like emotions) are essentially viral. This means that once the person starts going back to those emotions in relation to you, this will overcome the internal inertia (being mad at you) to recontact. At this point for this type of work, I will have instructed the servitor to dissolve into its energies. (Essentially, if you want someone to contact you in this manner, I would assume after success in this type of work, you might want the other person to keep you in mind for a little while.) For other servitors, you will want to tell them to absorb back into you after completing their tasks, so you get that energy back.

I have used this type of servitor for other reasons than merely to get an ex-girlfriend to contact me. (Since I have not yet had an ex-boyfriend, I haven't tried this with an ex-boyfriend.) Of course, the underlying "context" of the information contained was very different. There have been times when I

dreamed something that was highly relevant and specific to a friend whose contact information I had lost, and decided to send that information through a servitor with the appropriate context. Inevitably, people would e-mail me or call me and say they were thinking about me and wondering if something was up.

Now, this servitor isn't mentioned in the book so that all adventurers can get their ex-boyfriends or ex-girlfriends back. Of course, if you want to do that, you are perfectly free to try it. This servitor experiment was included to demonstrate the process and the effect information context can have on the reception of a message, as well as to provide more ideas on the use of "mental states" in magic.

Envisioning a Form while in Different Types of Trance

In practical terms, many of the minute details of "how" an entity goes about doing something are encompassed by the form. There is a certain logic to an entity, like the octopus example. I have a servitor that is primarily protective and is like a turtle, and when I need it, it transforms into a turtle-like armor, because in my internal logic "turtle" shells are hard and protective. Clearly, you might have a very different internal thinking process. Generally, if you can imagine the process of how a servitor would carry out its tasks, while understanding what states of mind will give it the best chance for carrying out those tasks, you can abstract away the minute details. The subconscious mind will fill in those blanks for you based on what your goal is and what "form" you have chosen for the entity.

But wait, now we are coming back somewhat to what we were doing in the last chapter. Phil Hine, in his book Condensed Chaos (1995), uses a method of creating a flowchart that comprises the essential operations and choices an entity can make. While going deeper and deeper into a trance state, it is probably not consciously possible to remember all the details of the flowchart, but your subconscious mind does remember and will encapsulate the chart into the creation process. In fact, much of the "way" a servitor works can be thought out and conceptualized before the working starts. When you start to go into a deep enough trance, while pushing the energy, the subconscious knows all of the pre-work you have linked to the process and, in a way, seems to download that to the container you have

made for it via the ritual and visualization. Of course, other people will have vastly different interpretations, but without a strong use of trance, interesting flowcharts and personality analysis can provide only limited insight. For an example use of flowcharts and algorithms, here is one working I have done.

Practical Technique: Viral Laughter Matrix Inhibitory Servitor Launch

Let's assume it is possible to create an entity as an equation (or series of equations) or even as an algorithm (for the computer scientists out there). An algorithm is a series of exact steps toward a particular goal. It is a very exact recipe. Phil Hine breaks this style of entity creation into a flowchart (1995). The key is to break down the entity into a series of small decisions and then execute the list of decisions. Phil Hine's method is simple but not unique. Break the tasks into a series: If this condition applies, then do this. If this other condition applies, then do this. Then make a list of the conditional statements. The key is to make the decisions so simple that they can be answered by a yes/no question or a multiple-choice question.

Given that you have an entity's purpose, break that purpose into these steps. Then combine the steps into a large flowchart. The flowchart maps how the entity will react to any one set of conditions. For instance, let's take a servitor created to get people to laugh.

How would you break the task of getting someone to laugh into tiny steps? I might break this down into the following series of questions and answers (before drawing a flowchart). I will refer to this as an execution plan.

Is the person laughing? (Yes or no.)

If yes, you have achieved success. If no, move to next step.

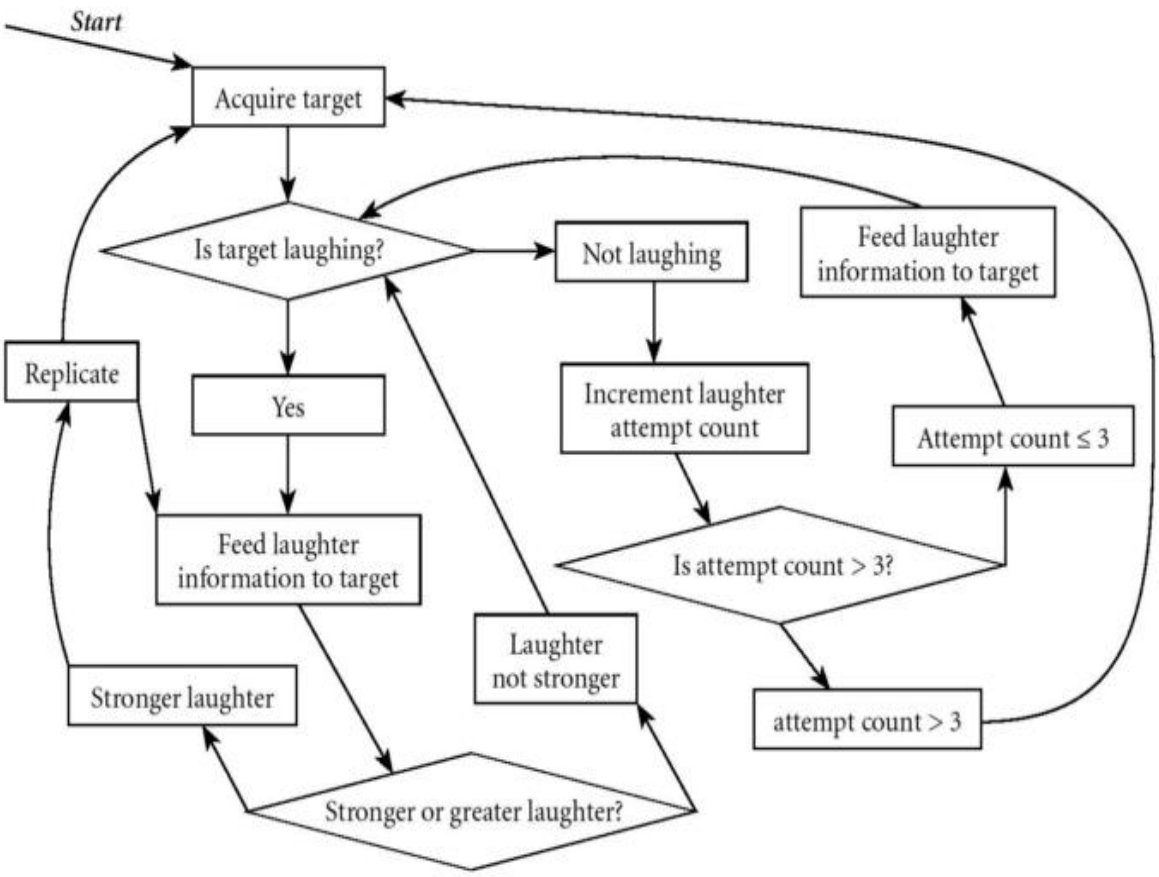
Access the personal memory information streams of the intended target. Do you have a humorous memory you are trying to bring to the conscious mind? If not, find a humorous memory.

Are the memory streams protected? (In other words, is the person willfully blocking the servitor?)

If no, access the memory stream of a funny occurrence and feed information to conscious mind.

Did the person laugh? If yes, you have achieved success and can stop. If no, replicate yourself and make a copy of the memory you are trying to push into the conscious mind. The replicated self and the current self start the execution plan with the same humorous memory. If the memory streams are protected, replicate the self. The replicated self targets a new random person in the close vicinity (laughter is contagious, and one person in the vicinity laughing helps lower the resistance to laughter). Repeat the execution on a new target. Replicate the self. The replicated self attempts to re-access the memory files to cause laughter. The current self repeats the execution plan.

To a computer scientist or someone familiar with the concept, this plan is simplistic and possibly not technically correct, but it does illustrate the point. This is just a series of simple steps that a computer can run. Even DNA is a type of execution plan (although it is a complex set of instructions). Servitors essentially can be given a very specific set of information or, in this case, a very simple but exact process to follow. Graphically, the instruction set that was just described can be constructed into a flowchart for better understanding. Here is an example flowchart for the execution plan.



Look carefully at the flowchart. In a way, it looks like a glyph or sigil if you drop the words. By using the reduction technique discussed earlier, you can create a sigil from the flowchart itself that encapsulates the information execution plan in a way that bypasses the conscious mind and the psychic censor. Making a flowchart is an individual process, and different people will produce different flowcharts for the same process or idea. Each person will, of course, break down a task into different series of steps as well. Again, experimentation is the key here. There is no right way to break down a task into minute steps, only the ways that work for you.

Once the experimenter has the encapsulation sigil, the process of launching the sigil is very similar to other methods we discussed earlier. Essentially, the magician has to go into trance and execute the plan in the universe. Any type of gnosis/launch procedure will work, but the visualization should tap into the idea that the servitor is being released into the information streams of the multiverse (there maybe more than one

universe). Sometimes, I will encapsulate the execution plan into a sigilized mantra/name in addition to the flowchart synchronization.

One visualization/trance combination I have used successfully with these ideas was the notion of the film The Matrix, with Keanu Reeves, particularly the idea of a digitized surrounding and information streams. Before doing the working, I will memorize the sigil I will be working with. I will take note of the physical surroundings in which the ritual is to take place, such as the furniture. Then I will use meditation and inhibitory gnosis to go into a deep state of trance. For added effect, I suggest using a light and sound machine to help generate the trance. The added techno-mantic flair adds tremendous mood to this type of working. As the trance state deepens, I will start to visualize the flashes from my physical surroundings deconstructing from solid to flickering into a series of binary streams of information or random unknowable characters that retain the basic textures of the furniture. Or, in the case of the bursting light, its a burst of binary numbers (or random small shapes). The effect is similar to the effect generated when Neo discovers he is the One and sees everything as merely a digital outline. Of course, even the digital textures of the furniture or light are merely contextual information. I will at this point increase the amount and flow of the binary numbers (or random small symbols), reducing the contextual information and receiving only information in a digital fashion. Next, I will visualize the encapsulated sigil as a solid glyph of my preferred color. With the background as pure information, I will allow the sigil to become digital in the same fashion as I had done before, and allow it to continue to stand out but appear as a digital construct. Then I continue the visualization, increasing the flow of information until the sigil is one with the surrounding information pattern. At this point, I will come out of trance and end the ritual by banishing by laughter. The full ritual/meditation usually takes me a good hour of inhibitory gnosis to work with the visualized patterns and feel where I need to be. When the servitor is indistinguishable from the other information streams, I assume that it is executing.

Of course, if you are an inventive reader, you can twist this methodology as you see fit. I myself have gone so far as to actually encapsulate desires into fully functioning computer programs. For example, a second useful way to transform the information of the execution plan that I have used is to translate the execution plan into a binary stream using an ASCII translation

and Perl scripting. Basically, with digitized text, all letters have a corresponding number value. I translate all the letters into a binary stream. From there, I break this binary stream into groups of binary numbers. Sometimes I will use planetary numbers to form the size of the groupings or a random number less than ten (just to make it easier later). From here, I will take each binary group and translate that straight into a set of ten-digit numbers. I will then take each pair of numbers in sequence and use that and graph paper (or a program, although I am not the best at graphics programming) and draw out the sigil via the coordinate points provided by taking each pair of numbers. From here, the complexity of the created sigil is reduced until I am happy with the design. The entire sigil process in this case is done in a sort of gnosis focused only on the task of the binary manipulations. Of course this is only one idea from a magician who has fairly extensive computer science knowledge; you are encouraged to develop your own ideas.

In this example, there is no way I could have possibly remembered the intricate logic of a full program while in a deep trance state. However, the creation is linked to the process of creating it, which means that the creation is linked to the information and energy that went into the preparation. Now, of course, it is a little ironic that I included a long servitor chapter on getting people to laugh (which, mind you, I have tried). Using a servitor in this manner is probably a huge waste of time; however, you could use the ideas for things more valuable for you personally.

Again, one explanation for how this works is that states of mind can be contagious. So if the servitor is replicating within the confines of the other person, the information pattern may spread through that person until the conscious mind manifests the state of mind. Once the conscious mind begins to "experience" that state of mind, it can then (with extra effort) snowball into that state of mind. If you think about it, people can also get caught in "thought" loops that also seem contagious and link to different states of mind. For reference, again, remember that the body itself can generate a state of mind. So many possibilities, so little time.

Physical Bases

Personally, I have found that physical bases for thoughtforms greatly enhance their ability to produce physical results. Tying a servitor to a physical base greatly blurs the line between what is a talisman and what is an entity, and a creative magician can use the same base either way. For me, it makes it easier to tie created entities that work with "world" processes to the physical world. Tying the spirit partially to a physical form tends to increase the longevity of the servitor. Usually, you have to destroy the base to destroy the servitor if it is tied to a physical item.

So how would you tie a servitor to a physical base? The answer again lies squarely in the subconscious mind and your intuition, but there are a few methods I have used. First, we covered attaching an external spirit to a particular "physical" talisman and creating the talisman by querying the subconscious mind for the details. Clearly, we could use the same techniques with an entity we have created. Linking the entity in this fashion will achieve the desired goal if the servitor is not a one-time entity. This can be done after the fact as I am suggesting or right in the creation process.

For instance, let's take the example of the messenger servitor again. In this example, let's abstract the idea of a single messenger servitor into something more permanent, so that the servitor can give any person a message and then return to the magician when the message has been delivered and acted upon. Instead of linking the servitor to a physical object after the fact, let's say you find a bird statue. Now, you could look for a bird statue that resembles what you believe it should look like, or you could accept that your servitor looks like the statue. The physical base could just be a rock, a Coke can, or anything that makes sense to you. In the initial creation process, you form the energy, but this time form the energy around the physical base. (I will often paint the sigil on the physical base or somehow mark the physical base.) Since this is a more general creation, you might not want to "muck" it up with information from specific states of consciousness, but you might want to add mercurial vibrations or even imagine what different conversations about different topics might feel and sound like. Throughout the creation process, the servitor is tied to the physical base. For this particular servitor, you can hold the physical base and do a ritual evoking the spirit with the context of the message and then the message itself. Essentially, you give the servitor a lump of informationally tinged energy

and tell it to deliver it to a person. When it returns, you would cleanse the messenger of the other message, and then it would be ready to use again.

An informal example of using the physical bases was the imaginary best friend approach in chapter 27. Clearly, we subconsciously tie the results to the statue.

Time Limits and Reabsorbing the Servitor

For practical purposes, time limits are a great idea. Although some occult authors will claim that magic will happen in its own course, without a set time for manifestation of the desired result, there is no way to really confirm success or failure of the attempt. In the beginning of your magical work, that feedback is critical. If a servitor gets results within the desired time, it sends a message to the subconscious mind that physical reality and the conscious mind were in sync enough to produce the desired result. Essentially, the magician has correctly assumed that conditions were right for the push, and was unified in himself or herself to make the magical push to cause a change to occur.

Failure to achieve the desired result within the time frame gives the budding magician a lot of feedback, and it can cause him or her to look within and outside of himself or herself for feedback. Maybe there were internal issues that needed to be worked on before the result could be achieved. Perhaps more energy or a different ritual operation was needed to give the magic a way to open the necessary door, or perhaps the magician didn't take the physical steps necessary for a servitor (or any magic) to get the desired results.

Smarter servitors will work more like a continuous effort to align those doors than merely a one-shot deal. The time limit still applies, though. Let's say you give a servitor one month to find something for you. Now, if you set this time limit, you have assumptions that finding that particular item or experience is possible within that month. If the servitor doesn't produce results, you should not assume that something was wrong with you, only that some detail in the process was off. Maybe, the item or experience with the specific requirements was not available. Perhaps, the something did manifest, but you were not able to recognize that it had manifested. Either

way, "there is no failure, only feedback" (Andreas and Faulkner 1994). After the time limit, the servitor should be reabsorbed to help with the feedback process, and any physical anchors should be destroyed.

By the same token, once a servitor is finished with the task assigned to it, usually the magician will want to reabsorb the servitor in the same way we did in the last chapter. There are several good reasons for this. First, once a servitor completes a task, it has a limited cognitive ability and self-awareness for what its purpose was. Some human beings are sometimes intelligent enough to adapt and move on to a different task after they have finished one task. A servitor may not be able to adapt. It may just "burn itself out," or it may just try to mimic the task given for other people. Sure, a love-drawing servitor might be great for a single guy, but this can wreak havoc on a happy couple if the servitor doesn't understand the difference. While the servitor might not work for you, it might gracefully wreak havoc in another situation. It's really just good housecleaning.

Building servitors in this way means that the servitor is not as linked to the magician as in the previous chapter. However, treading slightly back into the book for a minute, let's assume that such a servitor still is a link to the magician. First of all, a servitor will want to live. Given that it is semi-intelligent, it most probably will want to "exist" This is especially true if the servitor has been around for a while. In this way, a simple servitor will probably go back to where it knows it can get energy and feeding. That's right, the creator. Now, unless a magician is very aware of his or her own mental states, a servitor who still has a link to the magician might well try to "create" states of mind congruent to what its purpose was, in order to gather more energy for itself. It is possible to be manipulated by one's own creations that are trying to survive. A magician might be weak and tired as a result of this, or may seek out patterns that are undesirable. Reabsorbing the servitors is one way to avoid this process.

To go back to earlier parts of the book, certain thought processes that seem to be "self-repeating" might also act like servitors. Think about that one for a minute.

States of Mind, States of Reality?

It might appear that because I am talking about states of mind, I purely associate these techniques with working with other people and influencing them. To close out this chapter, I want to take a step back from that assumption. For me, creating servitors in these ways has worked in situations that aren't solely influencing other people.

For a minute, and just a minute, try to expand possible explanations of how this can work without direct influence over other people. If everything is a weave of interconnected information and energy, and there is something more than the tangible universe, then these servitors can alter the informational patterns around a magician within the chaotic threads of the multiverse. Sending the "information" out attracts similar informational patterns and energy to the magician in the ebb and flow of information and energy. Even quantum physics doesn't seem to fully understand all the rules of the game. You could explain it by saying you are making subtle choices that are different and more productive, and that might explain situations well enough until the universe, chaoswhatever you want to call it-throws a monkey wrench into that equation (which it always seems to do). Although influencing other people is an effective method of enchantment, I have often achieved results from enchantments that did not use influencing other people as the means of manifestation.

Another way to approach it is to ignore the explanation altogether, accept that there is probably an infinite number of explanations, and just go for the results. I like that approach a lot.

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Giving Form to Concepts and Ideas

In the last couple chapters, we worked with increasingly more complex and arguably more powerful methods of entity creation and mutation. In this chapter, I want to take one last step forward and talk about what is considered the law of personification. Any concept, any issue (personal or otherwise) or set of ideas, and any phenomenon can be personified into a form that can be worked with directly. Remember, our brains are set up for communicating with other people or peoplelike things (basically things that can communicate). This means that we can create an entity for any situation in our lives; for natural phenomena like our personal neurotransmitters, molecules, or the planets; for each card in the tarot; or for any other concept we can think of (Ellwood 2007). Working with a created form allows us to gain greater access to our own minds. Likewise, any internal voice, habit, or bad experience, and even pain or pleasure, can be conceptualized into a form and worked with. In bits and pieces, this is exactly what we have been doing before now. In fact, anything that you can conceive or that exists can be given an alternate form and worked with through many of the principles in this book.

This chapter will be entirely practical, but I do recommend staying within your microcosm at first. Personifying prejudice in the world and then destroying it might seem like a good idea, but remember that some of the examples in the last chapter were about copying an "informational" pattern by the process of evocation. All that would be destroyed (or dismissed) is the energy you created, and hopefully you would get rid of some of your own personal prejudice. (Although, if enough people removed prejudice from their personal universe, it might go away.) Use the concepts you want to work with, and let the demons and angels you personify be your own.

Working with Positive Forms

Start out with the situation, issue, or desire that that you want to work on. Write down the issue in a positive manner. So if you have a knee problem, you wouldn't give form to the knee issue, you would give an alternate form to the entire knee. In a second example, for a job issue, you should phrase the issue as finding gainful employment or if it is a specific job you are interested in, work with the job directly as a whole as opposed to the problems with getting a particular job. In general, you want to try to signify the entire core of the idea or thing you want to work with. Then you want to sigilize this into a mantra of the situation, thing, or concept you want to work with.

Before you start doing this, relax deeply and write down anything that comes to mind when you are thinking about the situation, thing, or concept you are working with. Just keep going, writing down every single thing that comes to mind while you are thinking about the concept, until you can't think of any more to write down.

Once you have completed the list, rewrite the list in three columns. The first column will be factual data. Things like specific places, dates, times, specific names, or other factual data should go in this column. In the second column, write down examples of sensory data, i.e., sights, sounds, smells, tastes, or touches. After copying down the sensory data set, try to make the list as descriptive and adjective-like as possible. Now, in the last column, list abstract words you wrote down describing feelings or concepts (such as "balance," "love," or "hate").

Now let's take a closer look at the feelings and abstract parts of this list. For each item on the list, see if there are related classes or families of ideas. For instance, you should group joy and happiness together. Pick one word to represent the family or category of items. Try to reduce the number of abstract concepts to as few as you can. If you have more than three or four general concepts, this may be too complex for the work you will be doing later on.

On a new sheet of paper, take each category of abstract concepts or emotions and try to remember a memory with those emotions or physical sensations. Basically, we want to translate the abstract "concept" or emotion into tangible sensations through the use of memories, images, sounds,

feelings, or any combination therein. In some cases, through our adventure, you will already have mappings of some of these abstract ideas to states of mind, and you might even have an alphabet of desire sigil or mantra. All of those correspondences from when we were first training can be reused here. If you come across an abstract concept that you have not explored in your journals, feel free to go back and try to map that concept to sensory data just like we have been doing in the other energy exercises.

Once each abstract concept is translated into one or more of the five senses (which will tell us how to experience each concept) or into an alphabet of desire sigils and mantras, we can then move to the next step. We should translate these abstract words into a series of memories and tangible experiences using the five senses, even if the experiences are fictional or created. The creation of the sensations you relate to the word is the key to using the word in magic. If, in the process of translating these abstract concepts into sensory data and memories, we get some concrete terms, we can copy those over to the sensory data column if they seem like adjectives. For instance, let's say you have love as a general concept, and then you break love down into a list of things like pink carnations, sweet jasmine, soft cuddles, and long walks on the beach. You would then transfer "pink," "sweet," "soft," and "long" to the list of sensory data.

Take the column of sensory data, including sensory data translated from the column of abstract concepts. Rip up a sheet of paper into smaller pieces or get some note cards. Take each piece of paper and write one bit of sensory data on it (or write an alphabet of desire, if you have one). Clearly, a bit of sensory data could be something like pink, in the preceding example. This should not be a memory, but it should be descriptive (although not descriptive in any particular manner yet).

At this point, you will need to take a break and gather some art or writing supplies of your preferred media. When I have demonstrated this technique, I have used crayons, colored pencils, pens, and water color paints, which were all cheap supplies.

From here, we are going to help our subconscious minds give us the alternate form for the situation, natural occurrence, or any other phenomenon we are modeling. Let's go back to the shortened list of abstract concepts. If

you have mapped the list to sensory data and memories, these words relate directly to states of consciousness. This is very similar to the various energy games we have been playing throughout the adventure.

Spread out the art supplies and writing materials so you can easily reach them. Place all the adjectives on pieces of paper in front you. Start by relaxing, clearing your mind, and banishing in your preferred style. State your intent as we did before, which was something akin to obtaining a personified form related to x (which represents the situation or concept you are trying to put into an alternate form). From here, start chanting the mantra we created earlier.

Try to chant in a controlled, almost monotone, voice. You are going for a more inhibitory trance state. As the chanting continues, start cycling through memories associated with the list of concepts you are working with. Really let yourself experience those memories. As you slide deeper and deeper into those memories, just stare at the pieces of paper in front of you. Move the papers around (each with different adjectives) in any fashion you see fit, until you believe that they make sense. If some pieces of paper do not intuitively fit, crumple them up and toss them aside. Continue to chant, move the pieces of paper around, and go back to your memories until you get a clear picture of what the alternate form might look like, smell like, taste like, feel like, and sound like. Try to get a clear impression of the form.

Once you have that clear impression, keep chanting and draw, paint, or verbally describe the creation. You may scry a sigil in the art process as well. After you are finished artistically describing your creation (through writing, speech, or visual art), laugh heartily and banish the states of mind you have taken on. A strongly musical person might describe the creation as a melody, and a strongly olfactory person might even choose to sense the creation as a combination of smells. This is perfectly acceptable. Try to keep going with the artistic process until you feel that you have a good link to the impression you are getting. It may be a good idea to write down as many details as possible of the impression that are not verbal or visual. So if your subconscious mind has given you smells or tastes associated with the form, by all means write those down.

Once you have a description, picture, or sigil, you have a link to the alternate form that you can work with. The name of the conceptualized form is the mantra you were speaking before. If you think about it, this is an anchor to what your subconscious gave you. This form is unique to you yourself, and even if two people are working with the same concept or idea, the form should be radically different. Once you have this link, you can use all the techniques of evocation, having a conversation, and invocation to learn more about the idea, natural phenomenon, or situation. The possibilities are endless.

For clarity, however, let's take the situation of getting a new job at a specific company. At first, it may seem like we are only doing NLP work with this conceptualization, but this "fictional" example might present some ideas outside of the NLP framework. First, we banish and then begin to evoke the "form" using some of the techniques in this adventure. Based on what we did in the creation process, we already know what states of mind should be combined and what sequence of memories we should use for the evocation. So we start going through the cycle of memories, chanting the name of the conceptualized form while projecting energy into a containment field of our choosing. From our previous experiments, we know that the energy being pushed out into the containment field has the information that is close to the form we are evoking.

From here, strongly visualize the form in the containment field fully animated and speaking (and if you have a drawing, placing it in the containment field will help). This combination should continue until a suitably deep trance state to have a conversation is obtained.

This representation of an entity is not entirely "in your head." The alternate form for the situation might tell you to wear a certain color tie to improve your chances (because someone in the hiring process loves that color), or it might inform you of where you are in the queue. This actually happened to me once. I used this technique for a specific job, and I was told that there was one person I interviewed with that did not like me. This person would create problems (and I did get her name). Armed with this information, I influenced the head person to ignore her input. Likewise, I could have worked directly with the conceptualized form, making sacrifices

to the form in energy and praise, to remove that person's influence from the situation (or to have the other people ignore her input).

Depending on what the original situation is, it may not be possible to completely alter what the form does. For instance, if you were trying to get a better understanding of the sun, this is more purely internal, since while you maybe able to alter the composition of the sun-and if you can do this with verifiable proof, please contact me directly because I would love to talk-it is more likely that you could change your understanding of sun. In another case, conceptualizing another person's physical body or body part could provide a powerful link for reality manipulation, which could be either healing or not so nice. Feeding the form suitable informationally tainted energies has often produced the desired healing or not-so-nice result. Likewise, a body part that is damaged or infected may just need a cleansing. Working with the form, instead of the original "body part," is another technique to slide past the psychic censor. It may be possible to infect another form with the energies of an external entity or even a servitor or viral creation (which can use the created form as a good link for the internal and external components).

As with any other entity, feeding the form will change the nature of the situation, at least for you. However, there may be more variables than simply consulting with an external entity. Of course, this can be used for self-change like the other techniques, but it has produced results with situations that are not completely internal.

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, you can also conceptualize external entities using techniques like this. This allows you to work with the external "force" but have a personal and unique conceptualization that will work with you. Persephone as a punk-rock gothic babe is my favorite.

Working with Negative Forms

In a previous chapter, we were trying to work with more positive forms, or at least the whole picture. It is certainly possible to work with negative aspects of situations, ideas, concepts, memories, etc. We covered some of these techniques previously. Pushing energy that is informationally tainted with the appropriate energy for what you want out of the situation, form, memory,

etc., can help to change your perspective on the situation, but it can also have effects in the physical world.

Often when you are doing self-work, you will notice that negative forms have features you despise, or they will converse with you in a hostile manner. For all intents and purposes, this is an entropic part of the situation or idea (in other words, this is an internal demon or maladapted part of the self), but it doesn't always have to be completely personal. For instance, I have had very good luck in conceptualizing a disease in another person as a form, and then blasting the disease away with high-energy protons. (Okay, I used Reiki protons to blast the disease away.) If you think about it, it is possible to do the opposite as well. In other cases, the negative form could be given different energies and willed into a more appealing form by repeatedly morphing the old form into a form created with the desirable aspects.

In other situations, simply conversing with the created form is enough to change the form's disposition toward you. There is an NLP trick that states that any voice-or in this case, internal form you can create-has some positive intent. Since the variables are slightly more complex, this may not be entirely true, but it's worth trying to ask repeatedly what the positive intent is. A diseased form might tell you, "Hey, you don't rest enough, and that's why I'm here." Promising to rest more with healing intentions might fully remove the disease right away. Working from that positive intent, or finding a common ground with the form means that you have a common point of access. Discussion can occur while you are in trance. If you completely hate the form or what it stands for, and you project that state, there isn't any sort of compromise you can reach. Usually, if you feed the form energy with information that is in line with your result, and if you are completely accepting of its presence, you can make progress. More than one religion and philosophy has stated that full acceptance (not just lip service) is the most successful starting point (in this case for productive conversations).

As a personal example, I have used negative forms created in this way. Often, I will call them up and then use a viral servitor (like I talked about earlier) to virally infect and change the part. This has been highly effective, if a bit tiring at times (self-change is). It is somewhat important to note that these negative forms may at first be hostile toward you. If you are evoking

them, you should use a strong containment field since, if the ritual gets out of hand, the form will be greatly empowered (all that energy, and now they are free). Likewise, the subconscious will receive the message that there is little you can do to stop these "conceptualized forms." Take the precautions and treat these creations with respect. Conceptualized into forms inside your mind, they will want to live, and if you don't keep control, they will do what they have to in order to survive.

You might note that the end product of this process is very similar to what you can obtain by simply scrying an impression of an entity for a particular situation, and that is correct. These methods are presented only as an aid to help in the conceptualization process, and repeating this type of work has made that process much more intuitive for me (where I don't need the NLP-style training wheels), but this has been a useful technique to get people started.

It's All in My Head ... or Is It?

These ideas of conceptualized forms might seem like straight NLP, but this section will suggest a few uses that expand well past the general NLP scope. Suppose you create a conceptualized form for an illness you have, like a flu. You call up the conceptualized form and have a little chat. In this case, you summon it up and offer to buy it off with energy, or offer sacrifices if it will leave you and go to x person (who you are having trouble with). Is this any different from what shamans would do? It will be more surprising when the other person does get sick.

Another example I have of this is a friend who used a similar technique (although more intuitive) with a car. She talked to the car and told it not to let anyone buy it until she could afford it. She forgot about doing that, and the car didn't sell for months. She had to go back and tell the car to let itself be sold, now that it had a personality.

If the forms are created primarily inside the mind of the magician, there is no reason that they must stay there just like any other servitor. If someone reads about the form of another magician and starts to work with it, does this mean that the form becomes an external entity? What is the process that occurs with this?

The Simpler Method

Now, the first method I presented at the beginning of the chapter helps to prime the conscious and subconscious minds to produce what you want. It is simpler to banish, state your intent, and go into a trance state using your preferred method, with the intent to find a personified form for what you are looking for. I will add a mantra or gestural sigil and then dive into the rest of the ritual. The shadow framework was another example of a process for finding temporary forms. Once you become more adept at different techniques, magic for this type of work can be simple. In our adventure, we practiced scrying, sigils, trance states, banishing, visualization, and more to help make more complicated magic easy. All of those prerequisite techniques can be combined into pretty simple, highly effective rituals, but like any other art, you have to practice each technique.

Self-Change Using Artificial Forms

Much earlier in our adventure, we talked about the different parts of the self. In chapter 13 of the book, we experimented with going inward to find "parts" of the self that resonated with other external entities. That was a limited view of what we could do with the process. We could easily give concepts sensory information and invoke the concepts themselves to retrieve a part of ourselves that resonated with the concept. In fact, a lot of our adventure was about taking on different states of consciousness. Each of those different states of consciousness can resonate with a different part within the self. The shadow framework was given early on because it works with almost everything else that has been presented.

The aspects of you that come out of the shadow rituals are a lot like personified forms, but they are personifications of internal constructs. Initially, we mentioned that we were only trying to have a conversation with a different part of the self that resonated with an external entity. In a first meeting of that part, that is a useful goal, as confronting a hidden part of yourself is never that easy. However, after the first time meeting a part of yourself that resonates with a concept or entity, it should be possible to get far more information via all the methods of magic we have been discussing. You could have a conversation with that impression, evoke it, and even invoke it.

The mere act of forming these gestalts starts to change the makeup of the subconscious mind in many ways, and it definitely changes our perception of the internal issue. Often, this is a way to change unhelpful subconscious patterns. We are asking the subconscious mind to provide combinations of parts that may not always go together. This seems to open up new possibilities as well as increase creativity. Internal links are being formed between the parts of the individual, and the subconscious mind is being encouraged to form those links as the person practices more.

The process of looking at these gestalts is a lot like looking at a very small part of the self from a different angle. Often, we are looking at parts of the whole that we ignore to begin with. Remember the parable of the elephant and the blind men trying to discern what it is they are feeling. None of the blind man can feel the entire elephant at one time, so they have no context for "the whole elephant." What if the self is formless and infinite? We might be like the blind man who can only perceive a small piece of the puzzle. Likewise, feeling the same part of the elephant in a different way would produce very different information. Looking at the different parts as separate from the perceived whole is enough to change our perspective on any one part within the self. The experience will change the conscious mind. The different perspective can open up new streams of information and possibilities, which can help us become more adaptive and successful in our magic.

Once you have the unique link, I recommend having a conversation just like we did with other external entities. With external entities, we may have had incense for offerings, maybe even a mantra/name and sigil. In general, we attempted a get-to-know-you conversation. In the case of a temporary combination of parts (or a servitor), the distance isn't there, because it is you. Now, you could pretend the distance was there and repeat the general conversation method. If you were using this technique to pull forward internal issues, you might have to try a few other methods. In the case of maladapted patterns and negativeself voices, we can interpret those patterns as internal entities. We can ask the subconscious mind to give us a link and form. With that, we already know how to evoke or invoke things, and talk.

First, we must re-assert the idea that we and the voice are "one" The part of the self might be echoing a very "you are x" tone. This internal voice

might say all sorts of hostile things, but you, as the magician, have to keep control of the situation. First, after you have done the invocation, force the voice, which may seem outside of your head, to speak through your throat. After you force the voice to talk from within your body, force it to speak with the "we" pronoun when referring to you both. This is a simple NLP trick from NLP: The New Technology of Achievement (Andreas and Faulkner 1994). In this case, the part of yourself will usually have some positive intent once you get it to calm down, and both you and that part agree that you are "we"

In the case of this exercise, we will assume that every combination and part of the self will want to be acknowledged, assimilated, and reintegrated. Darker aspects of the self are not necessarily bad. In fact, primal and base elements of the self are needed for survival (especially in times of extreme testing). Those darker elements of the self can be some of the most aggressive in their protection of the entire self.

Ideally, we would want to invoke this part of ourselves until we were completely comfortable with it. We need to be comfortable with this aspect of ourselves before we can effectively use it as if it were just another servitor. If this book were entirely focused on NLP, we would stop at the point of being comfortable with having integrated that internal part. Once we are comfortable with the part, we have developed a kind of relationship with that internal part. To use the demonic metaphor, we have a pact with this internal part. In the conversations with the internal part, you can ask it to give you a certain form while in a trance state. Once you have made this part an ally, sending it out via an evocation to do things for the good of the whole you is perfectly acceptable and effective.

Evolution, Destruction, Enhancement of the Part

Other authors present different techniques for dealing with different parts of the self. Donald Michael Kraig recommends a technique he calls Identify, Objectify, and Banish (2004). The basic premise of the technique is to identify a problem within your personality, construct a form or a visual representation, and then banish this part from you. While identifying and constructing the form of the internal part is done before a ritual setting, the banishing part is done as a formal ritual where the part is called forward into

a triangle and then formally banished (usually with the power of god behind the magician). Once the part is banished, then it should be possible for the magician to grow beyond the banished internal limitation. At least in theory, this is how it should work; however, nature hates a vacuum.

In some cases, there may indeed be parts of yourself that are truly horrifying to the waking mind. In those cases, it might be a good idea to use a variant of Kraig's technique. Bad and traumatic experiences can give rise to internal limitations that can cripple an individual. In this case, we are asking the subconscious mind to give us a link to "the limitation" as a part within the self. Now, Kraig originally talks about identifying the limitation and then devising a representation for that limitation. One method of doing this is to directly get the information and form from the subconscious like we did in earlier examples. We could also ascribe the limitation to a particular created impression, but we should understand how the limitation affects us. In a way, the limitation is being interpreted as an internal spirit. We know entities by how they affect our senses. The same statement applies to this part of the self. How does it affect you? What happens as a result of this part? What do you see, what do you feel or hear? What memories most strongly resonate with the limitation? How do they affect you? If you produce the limitation by using all of the sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and feelings associated with the memories where you understand that a limitation was clearly working against what you wanted from a situation, you can make this part of yourself seem more real and tangible. If it seems more real and tangible, you will be able to more effectively work with this part of yourself.

Having a link to this part will help with the process. One way to do this is to try to relax and banish. State your intent to find a unique link (just like we have been doing) to the problem area. Then let the sensory data stream of these negative experiences overwhelm you until you get into a solid trance state (although not a happy trance stateto stay in an emotionally negative trance state takes discipline, but it is absolutely necessary). Keep thinking about these memories until you can map out a sigil or mantra that will call up the parts of yourself. It is often helpful to do this after you have evoked friendly concepts or entities into the space (to help you get into a better state of mind). Now you have a unique link to the parts of the self that are causing

the problems, and you have created how it will look. This is more than enough to do an evocation.

Usually one experience will be linked to several others, so we could describe this as a pattern of response. Earlier, in chapter 10, this is exactly how we described self-limiting beliefs. Now we are just taking the approach that it is an internal part of the self. In practical terms, any containment field will work, but I will describe the general procedure using the triangle-and-circle method. First, empower your circle with joy and then empower your triangle or containment field with joy. This is done in exactly the same way we have been doing the work throughout the book. Create correspondences to what joy translates to, as far as memories as well as various sensory inputs, and project that energy around the edges of the triangle. For most people, joy is an effective "holding" energy for a limitation, since if they were happy about the limitation, they would not be doing the ritual. You could as easily charge the triangle with god names, angels, or any other power you believe can hold these parts of yourself.

As with the other forms of evocation, try to have a conversation with the part. While it is still you, it is separate from you when it is in the triangle. It will take willpower to face this part as well as to really converse with it. As with the other technique, try to push positive energies into this part (a way to alchemically change its behavior). If you start to see an improvement in the demeanor of the interaction you are having, keep pushing energy into this part, since you will eventually be able to have a civil conversation. The process of "pushing" positive energy toward something is a way of accepting the part, which will help you get over the limitation. Try to make a deal with this part, but if the part is very unresponsive, you can move on to another technique.

Kraig's banishing is one method. In this, you just tell the part that it is no longer welcome in you and you forcefully use "higher" powers to get rid of it. Where does the part go? It's out of you, but is it then released into the ether or something? I will often use a second evocation to forcefully change that part by asking a second spirit, concept, or other part of the self to change the resonance and information pattern of the damaged part. This means a second evocation, or multiple evocations, until I am successful in "transmuting" the damaged part. I have done workings in which the part was

just too toxic and selfdestructive to be transmuted. All of the entities involved, including myself, opted to destroy that part entirely. I personally come from a somewhat abusive childhood. In a situation such as that, the easiest course of action is to ask the "other" entities you have evoked to assist you with getting rid of the bad part and replacing it with more adaptive energies. Once the part is in the containment field (the triangle), you really can try anything. I have tried to infect myself with spiritual retroviruses (to change my own pattern), used Reiki to wash away the issues, summoned archangels to heal the issues, used astral weapons to cut away issues, etc. In the end, this is a more extreme and final take on Kraig's banishing. Destroying a part of yourself is a last resort. As the magician, you have to rebuild it with something, most preferably with something of your own choosing.

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Advanced Practicum on Entity Creation

There are probably hundreds of thousands more ways to create an entity than what we have covered. In this chapter of the book, we will cover more advanced servitor and entity topics. If this chapter does not make sense right away, try to create a few servitors and see if that changes your perception. This chapter represents more of a variety of different ideas regarding entity creation, splicing, and combination to give you, the advanced reader, some ideas for further experimentation in the adventure.

Praise and Feeding

In the previous chapter, it was implied that servitors (even viral ones) will use or attach themselves to energy to achieve a result, even if it is the mental energy within a person. Short-term, one-time creations more or less use the oomph from the creation process. However, long-term servitors seem to act more and more like external entities, except that ideally they should only have your interests at heart.

To get continued results, the servitor will need to be continually fed like an external entity. Often, just strongly acknowledging the servitor in an earnest and compelling fashion will achieve this. When my parking servitor gets me rock-star parking, I will lavish thanks and praise on the parking servitor, even going so far as to say, "Mr. Parking Servitor, you da man" over and over, while visualizing the sigil and pushing energy into the servitor. In fact, this idea of feeding after results is a useful technique for any familiar, spirit, or creation.

If a servitor consistently gets results, it should be retained. Servitors tied to a physical base can take strength from that base, which serves as a de facto link between you and the creation. We already learned how to send energy down a link. In some religions, the physical base is the spirit or creation, but this explanation is quite misleading for practicing occultists.

Artificially, if the servitor is getting results, we can pump up its strength by feeding and pushing energy down the link of the base (or into the base, if you prefer). Pushing the same combination of energy that was used in the creation process into the servitor is a very desirable goal. Before you repeat the creation ritual for the servitor (which you could do), remember that if you can remember the creation ritual while in a trance state, you can achieve the same state of mind of that memory and project that energy outward just like we were doing earlier. It is always a good idea to feed your creations after achieving results. This is standard positive reinforcement. Results equal food for the servitor.

If you want to experiment, you can try to feed the servitor different energy from what you gave your creation initially. Doing this will slightly alter the entity and its general demeanor over time, because the informational content of the servitor will change. If you try this, which I hope you will, you might realize that it shifts toward the informational patterns you feed it. This same idea holds true for familiartype entities you run across (and work with), a good percentage of the dead (if you work with them), and almost any spirit that has a one-toone relationship with you. Likewise, as suggested earlier, if you break off part of yourself and consistently feed that part different types of energy, you can alter that part of yourself and shift the information pattern in that part. For example, one technique I have done is to iso late and break off a part of myself that has tremendous fear and then evoke that part just to feed it lots of love and safety energy. It really works.

Evocation Is Often Enough

A lot of the processes I outlined to create servitors, while useful exercises, can be a bit tedious. If you have developed a general state of mind, have learned the methods to generate that state of mind, have given the entity a name and/or sigil, and have linked in a form, smell, sound, etc., for the entity, before you start the process, your subconscious mind can (and will) bind together the energy and information, and form the details into a cohesive whole entity.

Simply performing the one evocation (adding your own details to make it fun and enjoyable, of course) will be enough to create the entity and even tie it to a physical object, if you desire. Again, the majority of the work will be

encapsulated in the subconscious and dumped into the servitor in the process (provided that you establish a deep enough trance to make it work).

Take, for example, a character you have written a short story about. This character has a well-formed look, hopefully a well-defined personality, and various abilities. This information is contained in both your subconscious and conscious minds. From here, you could get a small statue to represent your "fictional character" and then perform an evocation of that creation. Both your subconscious mind and your conscious mind are well acquainted with this fictional creation (visual art can work this way as well). The process of ritual reframes the context of where this creation exists. It doesn't only exist in that story, it exists within your magical universe. A ritual for this could be as simple as a hypnosis session, or as complex as using reverse chi breathing while staring at the statue and repeating its name until you hit that deep enough trance state that it exists outside of your story. Of course, the ritual could also be a fun and involved process to birth your hero or villain into this world.

If one of my own creations is going to stick around for a while, regardless of what it is, I like to design a personality for it. A personality makes the creations a little more interesting and fun for me to work with, and in some cases more controllable. A created entity might develop its own personality that I could not predict. Instead, I tend to build that into the creations.

Invocation and Further Informational Transference

If you have a long-term servitor, there are other techniques you can use to "tweak" your creation. In some of the exercises, we were willing new information into the servitor, but it is equally possible to invoke your own creation and demonstrate the knowledge or download the information to the servitor through the use of sigils and trance (just like any other invocation).

The most useful information I have taught any of my servitors was how to feed themselves. In this case, I will invoke the servitor and bring its attributes to the forefront of my consciousness, just like we did with external entities before. Once I have the creation invoked, I will demonstrate the techniques of taking energy from things or places, just like we did with the energy game techniques much earlier. From here, I will evoke the spirit and

then test to see whether it can draw energy from another person or other external source. If I feel that the servitor understands the lesson, then I know that it can now feed itself. From here, I usually will use positive reinforcement to teach it the importance of taking only what it needs.

As a practical bit of psychology, it may be more effective to have servitors perform actions and then continue the "positive reinforcement" strategy by feeding them when they produce results. This operant conditioning produces great results. I tend to make my servitors have built-in personality imperatives that truly and deeply love me, making it possible for them to feed themselves and really desire the praise, all the while gaining strength.

You can teach a creation to do anything you know how to do. In fact, you can transfer any information from one spirit to another by using yourself as the crucible, or by asking another spirit to instruct your new creation. If the price is right, it might agree. If you think about it, you could do this by invoking the servitor into yourself, and then invoking a second entity with the intent to "train" your creation (stacked invocations). Of course, this comes with risks, since you never know what that external entity might teach your servitor.

Combination Entities; Combining Entities into One Newer Whole

Earlier in our adventure, we were using stacked invocations and evocations as a method of spellcasting. For a moment, I want to partially challenge the "spirits as whole" idea. The idea of spirits, as we have discussed, is extremely contentious and difficult to define. However, if the personality, sensations, images, and intuitions that spirits bring are primarily informational, it is possible to create external gestalt conceptions in the same way we created temporary gestalts within ourselves. This results in things like Dionysus-Babalon, mixed angelic/demonic beings, and other mixtures that might suit magicians.

If those beings are external informational sources, stacking evocations in the same area (or invoking the beings into yourself) may create a different informational pattern and a unique combination of the two or more entities involved. Each entity can be summoned and worked with independently, but

the combination of energies leads to something different from either of the preceding singular combinations.

For example, suppose you evoke two entities into the same containment field. From here you use a sigil and an ecstatically chanted sigilized mantra, and you visualize each entity in the triangle fusing together to form a new entity. Through imagination and will, you deliberately hold the new entity together in your mind and then scry out a sigil and name for the combined state. As a second part of the working, you summon forth the combination entity by itself and something with the right characteristics shows right up. Given some of the experiments with energy and broadcasting the informational patterns of entities in the adventure so far, this should not be so surprising. Now, whether the combined entity is an entirely new entity or whether it represents the fusion of two different entities is a question I leave for you to discuss.

In a way, this type of work mirrors the very way our language and thinking processes work. When we refer to a car, generally we know at some level that the car contains a "transmission," but more often than not the label of "car" is sufficient for our use in language. Likewise, a combined entity might be more in line with a purpose that we have, and the sigil/name is like the car example. At some level, we might know that a car has a transmission and wheels, but it isn't something that we concentrate on unless something is not working correctly. Likewise, we can talk about the spirit of a forest, the spirit of a tree, or the spirit of a leaf and mean entirely different things that are fundamentally comprised of the same elements.

The physical-world constraints may not apply to the conceptual work of spirits. If you can conceive and create a "link" to a combination entity, it does exist within your reality. If it gets the results you are interested in, perhaps it is a good method. Certainly, I haven't figured out how to physically merge with someone else to become a mutated human being, but that's not to say that I haven't mentally tried this. Of course, clever magicians might see capabilities to combine parts of themselves with external agents and then reabsorb the combination (thus completely mutating those parts of themselves in the process).

Practical Experiments: Planetary Intelligences and Spirits Combined

As a practical example of this combination idea, I have worked with planetary intelligences and spirits in an innovative way. In the particular system of Henry Agrippa, planetary intelligences are the "evolutionary side of the planetary resonance" (Agrippa 2006). The spirits are the shadow issues associated with any planetary resonance.

If we go back in our adventure, there are examples of evocation. For me, this practical work rests in the design of the containment field and in using the containment field to "channel the energies" to a certain point. Like the example of the elemental workings, the containment field can be an aid to the working.

In the first set of experiments, I used merely a triangle. In the Agrippa system, the planetary intelligence is considered to have dominion over the spirit side of a planet (Agrippa 2006). I would evoke the intelligence into the triangle and then evoke the spirit. Whenever I was working with a partner, and we did a simultaneous evocation, it was indeed a rough ritual for the person evoking the more difficult spirit, because it resonated with the negative side of the planetary energies. This type of work is quite informative, since you really recognize where you have shadow issues with shadow sides of the planets.

First, I would sigilize an intent into a mantra to create a combined intelligence-and-spirit planetary being of the particular planet I wanted to work with. In each case I tried this with, I would summon the intelligence and then the spirit into the triangle (in the experiments, the order was very important). Then I personally would visualize, will, and feel these becoming one "force" while I ecstatically chanted the mantra I created. This was a forceful willing of the parts together. If we use the energy-work model, it was literally pushing them together with all the "energetic" force I could muster. After there was no more resistance and I felt there was only one presence in the containment field, I would scry a combination sigil and a new form for the creation. This type of combination entity got good results for me, so I continued the experimentation.

In my experience, I have found that I could use an initial Mass of Chaos, as published in Liber Null & Psychonaut, to push chaotic energy into the containment field (Carroll 1987). This initial chaotic energy seemed to

provide a mutational solvent to allow the spirit and intelligence to merge together with less resistance. It set the tone for greater and easier mutation. Likewise, I was able to combine multiple "planetary intelligences" in this manner (although combining only planetary intelligences was much easier than combining intelligence and spirit).

Going further in the experimentation, I would create temporary combinations of planetary energies and then add a third combination of spirits and intelligences, then a fourth, and so on. Between each combination, I would add a number of recitations and energy from the Mass of Chaos to add solvent. The combinations seemed infinitely wonderful, and they produced solid results. My author associate and friend Taylor Ellwood worked with one of the created planetary gestalts in this way with a lot of success.

For me, the combined entities were a lot more direct and useful in self-evolutionary methods than merely working with the neutral planetary force. This kind of combination is theoretically possible with any informational source (I have tried this with Goetic, elemental, and other odd combinations that people can ask me about in person). In each case, the combination entity seemed to be performing as desired.

Separation Entities: Breaking a Complicated Entity into Smaller Parts

But the process has to work both ways. If you can summon the spirit of a forest, you can summon the spirit of a tree, or even the spirit of a rock. Clearly, a large spirit might be too general for you to get the results you want. Instead, we might want to break down the spirit into components. When we invoke a spirit, it's fully possible that there might be parts of the entity that we don't like. In some religions, in fact, there is a notion of "paths" or different emanations of a god form. This is very similar to the idea of breaking up an entity. For instance, Venus can be a seductress, a tease, a manipulator, or even a sexual lover. If we wanted to refer only to the part that was geared toward the seductress, we could do that.

One method I have used for this is to invoke the spirit that I am trying to work with, and then ask to work with the part of that spirit (via a sigilized mantra) for a sigil and name for that part of the spirit. Of course, you can be

far more aggressive with some spirits, calling them into a triangle and imagining ripping them apart into components. If you know what part you are looking for, you can use divination, sigil magic, and intense, full-sensory imagination to evoke something in a triangle and separate out that piece of the entity. I will tend to use the idea of entities as a collection of threads, and then I will take out the threads that have the pattern I am looking for (usually, I will ask the entity to let me copy the informational content). One way to do this, however, is to visualize the form of the evoked entity and then see the part of it that you want to work with as a different color. Visualize this part of the spirit growing brighter as you work with the sigil and mantra for the component. Once the parts are extremely bright and in the color you chose for those parts, visualize, feel, and see the colored parts separating from the entity, and feel the presence of two entities before you. Let me tell you that when you practice this, it might be a situation of your willpower versus their willpower, if you don't have a previous arrangement. Some occult books of a more vampiric sort recommend this style of entity work, or at least this style of entity vampirism. You could do it, but man, if someone did this to me, I would be highly pissed off. But your actions are your own.

Another interesting technique I have tried is to combine different parts of entities into new gestalts in the same way we were combining different parts of ourselves. I leave the exact process of doing this as an exercise for you. This is like creating chimeras out of different energy patterns from different parts of previous entities. It is like entity alchemy, which I have done so much of that it might form a completely different book. The methods are not so different from broadcasting the informational patterns of an entity that you have invoked. Think about that. Ideally, you would do this if there were something in you that is lacking, so you have to go outside yourself to find the components. Likewise, integrating the parts of a different entity into yourself can produce a useful mutation. Keep in mind that other people most certainly will use the entity in its original unified state, and perhaps you are just filtering different informational patterns out of the energy that you yourself are tapping into (after having generated that energy in the course of a ritual). We will talk a little more about this idea later in this chapter.

Practical Example: Weaving Techniques of Servitor Design

When I first started magic, I could not really explain how I was weaving the servitors together, but now I can explain how I made them. I still use and love several of the creations that I made using this methodology, but I warn you, fellow adventurer, that these servitors take a fair amount of time to create. A good portion of the details can be replicated in an astral temple, which is how I actually created my servitors. We will cover the basics of astral work in the next chapter.

In the work of Carlos Castaneda (1972), there are several instances of human auras looking like a mesh of interlocked energy threads bound up at the top and the bottom. I often see entities as interwoven patterns of threads that are somewhat repetitive or even fractal in nature. This metaphor has always stuck with me, and when I was doing far more astral work, it was generally the primary means I used to see entities. But this metaphor provides a very powerful method for working with them.

What if you created a servitor by empowering physical threads? In a way, this is similar to the process of weaving a tapestry. I offer this method of entity creation only to encourage you to develop your own techniques and possibly even share them with me. If you have a certain combination of informationally tainted energy that you want a servitor to have, you can weave a mesh with the entity, taking the time to really bind the different energies together. If you really think about the process, this is horribly tedious in the way that making a traditional Japanese sword is a tedious process, but the result usually will be a masterpiece. This would not be a good process to go through for a servitor that was intended for a one-time use.

In practical terms, there is a lot of homework you have to do before you can start. Before beginning, you have to know what purpose your entity will have (just like we have been doing). This purpose is often more general than a specific intent. For instance, I have created an entity that was for protection. Another entity created in this fashion was created to basically steal other people's familiars that bothered me. In this case, you should develop a personality for the servitor. If you don't own a book on basic psychology, I highly recommend you get one. Write down how the servitor would react to different situations, and describe its personality. Be as detailed as possible. Think about how many different situations you can put

the servitor in and, based on your developing understanding and clarification of the creation's personality, how it might react. Secondly, you have to scry or sigilize a name (or binding mantra or sigil). Remember, this link could also be a smell or gesture (although for this particular technique, a gesture would be difficult). You will also need to know what the entity will look like-what form it will have when you are all finished. Again, go into a trance state and ask yourself. Usually when you start working on something like this, the details just seem to fall in line. The personality should fit the purpose, and the way the entity looks should also fit the purpose.

Given the personality you envision and the purpose, you can kind of figure out which energy patterns you have to include in the creation process. It's a good idea to brainstorm and write out what energy patterns you need to include. For instance, having worked with angelic beings for several years, I have a general angelic schema for how I understand the common "pattern" between angels. In essence, I have abstracted away the personality details and tried to understand what "angelic" means to me. I believed that my protection entity should have some angelic features. I found a way to map that general "angelic" definition to a certain set of ideas, feelings, and experiences, which I could then map to different body sensations, images, sounds ... basically, sensory data. This is exactly like what we were doing before. But I also wanted my creation to be able to protect me or others. So I included the information pattern of self-sacrifice (meaning that it should do anything it has to in order to protect me), mapping this concept to physical sensations, memories, and states of mind. As you are brainstorming about what information/energy patterns to include in your budding creation, you most certainly can use divination techniques to see if the package is fitting together.

Once you have a list of the "energies" you are including in the creation, you have to decide how much of each "pattern" you are going to include. For every single entry on the list you settle on, you should be able to map the word or concept to sensory data or memories, or even an alphabet of desire sigil. We have done most of this process before. Again, I can't tell you exactly what you need to include for your project, but you can ask your subconscious via divination and all the techniques we've covered about having conversations. If you have guides you really trust, you can ask for their assistance and help as well.

For each "information" pattern that you list, you want to try to associate a combination of colors, a fractal or color pattern, or just a solid color. When I have done this in the physical world, as opposed to the astral world, my experience has been that it is much easier to associate each item on the list I created with a solid color. Once you have the list, get a small bit of yarn for each color that you need. You have to use your intuition concerning how big you want your final creation to be-this will determine how much yarn you will need. If you have a complicated form, you may have to get some metalwork or woodwork to provide some sort of support for the creation. Really, that is something you will have to determine. If you know, in general, how much and how big you want the final physical product to be, you can then estimate how many pieces of yarn you need. Look at how much of each type of energy you want to have for your creation, and that percentage roughly indicates how many pieces of each color of yarn you will need. When I have done this physically, I just use the best-guess estimation process. Usually, I will either make a personal life form or something that does not require a "structure" With astral work, obviously, I can't use yarn, but each thread usually reflects a greater attention to the detail of the exact pattern I sense should be applied.

I personally love working with herbs and oils. Through divination, intuition, and having conversations with myself, I will make corre spondences from each item on my list and apply them to combinations of herbs and oils. If you really were doing the previous exercises and have a well-detailed journal, you might already have these correspondences. This isn't completely necessary, but the final product for me has been much stronger when I take this step. If the correspondences are primarily herbal, I will make a wash. Personally, I will usually sing to the herbs as I am making the wash. That's just an odd bit of trivia about my magical work. However, you should somehow push your energy into the herbs or oil. From here, I will completely oil, or soak, each piece of yarn with the right correspondences that I linked to the original list of what should be included. I have included my blood in the creation process, often later imbuing the creation with the intent "You shall listen to only me," using the strong link of the blood to make sure there is no confusion.

These processes might sound horribly complicated, but the methods simply combine techniques discussed earlier in our adventure. As you are

soaking or oiling each piece of yarn, you want to take on the state of mind that the piece of yarn links to and push as much informationally tainted energy into the piece of yarn as possible. Usually, oiling and soaking the yarn will make it more receptive to holding more energy of the specific type you are pushing into that piece of yarn. We covered the techniques of projecting energy into temporary talismans and physical talismans a bit earlier in our adventure.

Once you have each strand oiled, soaked, and charged, the process of weaving the servitor into physical reality takes place. I will typically place all the yarn together into roughly the shape that the form of the entity will eventually take. I usually will put the sigil for my creation in some place around the yarn or right underneath it (so I can easily see it). Of course, take the time to clear your mind and go into a trance state. Once you have the "yarn threads" together, you can visualize and feel the presence of the form you have chosen for your entity over the yarn while chanting the name of the entity. If you can, visualize the sigil over the form and the yarn. For effect, magical completeness, and symmetry, you may wish to light a candle anointed with the different oils used in the creation process, or an incense that mixes all the herbs used in the soaking process (of course, do not burn toxic herbs). This will further bind the creation together, and it will further help the working come together as a complete whole.

As you are chanting, you are physically pushing energy into your creation while knotting every piece of yarn to each other piece of yarn. Essentially, you are weaving the entity together, physically and metaphysically. If there is an underlying skeletal structure needed to create the form of the entity, you would also tie each part of yarn to that skeletal structure. This is done while chanting and visualizing the form of the entity over the process. You can listen and hear the entity and imagine the personality that you gave it, bubbling up more and more to the surface as you are weaving. It may take more than one sitting to finish the binding-together process. It is helpful to feel and imagine that you start with yarn and a light overlay of the form, and you move to not seeing or, if you prefer, feeling the yarn at all and imagining only the entity before you.

When you are finished knotting the yarn together, evoke (using your five senses) the fully finished creation, now complete with a personality. You

should imagine that the yarn creation fully becomes the entity. Visualize the sigil over the creation, and have a "conversation" expressing what you presently want to your creation to do, using all five of your senses (or as many as possible). Divination at several steps should be used to check on the progress of the creation and its capabilities. You might have to add something or tweak the entity during the creation process as your subconscious mind gives you more details about the work. You should be in a deep enough trance state that you see and feel the entity present over any other "sensory" cues. After this process, I recommend setting aside the creation for a couple days (as a sort of jelling period) and doing a full conversation/evocation ritual with the creation. In this evocation procedure, you are again reintegrating the current immediate request and explaining to the creation that it will be fed more energy or praise as a reward only if it produces results. This additional conditioning will leverage the personality that you built into the intent for the creation to continuously produce the desired results (and that's after building the love impetus into the creation).

From here, you may wish to artistically cover the yarn weave or incorporate this "core" weave to be part of a much nicer artistic statue. This is up to you, as the individual working the magic. There are some good Internet sites describing different types of knots and how to do this style of knotwork. I personally like making a big mesh, and you can get intensely creative with the pattern of knots. At first, I would use divination to check to see if there was something the entity needed to know that I did not include in the process to produce the desired and consistent results. Usually, I have seen startling results pretty quickly after this type of work, and the creations do evolve and get much better at producing those results.

The purpose of this long series of techniques was again not so that fellow adventurers can directly copy me. Of course, you may feel free to copy my methodologies and add to them. The real purpose is to tangibly illustrate the process of working from a metaphor to a completed project, using the techniques we have been developing for ourselves. I started with the metaphor of threads making up "spirits," and then used that metaphor to create an entity. Now, the trick here was to break down each step of the process into a technique or series of techniques that you could understand and use with the other techniques you already understand and use. This process is very reminiscent of the NLP idea of breaking your goal into

manageable steps and the object-oriented computer-science idea of using repeatable building blocks. I hope you will take a moment and share your creation with me.

Seed Crystals from Established Entities and Rebirthing Your Own Seed Crystals

Let's go back to the idea of external entities. We were previously mutating them, recombining them, and doing naughty things generally frowned upon by more religious types, but these ideas are well justified by experience, results, and experimentation. When we summon an entity, it has been my experience that the entity follows the general ideas we have of it, but as we develop a relationship with it, our methods of interacting and the ways it interacts with us change and shift. In some cases, the entity may reveal "greater" mysteries. The relationship of magician to entity seems to form a third aspect of the process, which at least affects the magician. Also, some systems even encourage or have methods for doing very bad things to the entities, including destroying them and vampirically feeding off them; and yet when someone new comes to one of those systems, an entity will show up as if nothing happened.

For a minute let's look at The Lesser Key of Solomon. In The Lesser Key of Solomon, there are many spirits. There are methods for binding a spirit to a bottle, for torturing a spirit, and so forth. In the same moment that the spirit is getting bound in one setting, it is mathematically probable that someone in another setting is having a good time chatting with the entity and receiving what he or she asked for. The fact that these two workings occur at the same time and neither has an effect on the other has always been extremely interesting to me.

In my experience, there has always seemed to be a difference between what I consider known entities and more individualist entities, although this can be a matter of perspective, as anything else may be. Entities that are present in books seem to replicate or respawn from a mythological basis. I have found that random phantoms-such as some of the spirits that gather around Ouija boards-might not have this ability. A useful metaphor to explain this is to use the logic of tempering crystals or solids. In chemistry we see that solids will crystallize in a way that mirrors an established crystal

pattern if one is avail able. For example, if you want to create a specific kind of chocolate, often you will add flakes to the chocolate that actually help to hold the chocolate together better, because the chocolate forms crystals like the original crystals. Hardeners added to wax, and carbon (along with a host of other elements) added to steel, are used in a similar manner to provide a crystalline base for molecules to latch onto and form a different structure. The addition of a pattern of crystallization changes the principles of how the solid reacts. In the novel Cat's Cradle by Kurt Vonnegut (1963), a scientist invents a water crystal that will cause water to freeze at 109 degrees Fahrenheit. Energy metaphorically might work in a similar way.

Let's say we summon forth a spirit into a containment field. We are generating lots of energy and projecting that energy, which is similar to but not exactly the same as that of the original entity. For a minute, we can assume that an entity does not have to exist in the same sense of conscious time where there is a chain of cause and effect. As we summon the new entity, the connection is made to the original entity, and the raised energy is slightly shifted toward the energy pattern of the original entity in the way chocolate crystals are added to melted chocolate. At this point, ideally, there is enough energy for manifestation to occur (melted chocolate), and then the entity appears. When we were working with our energy, we could taint the energy we were projecting with informational content. Likewise, an external entity probably can taint the energy built up in a triangle with an informational stream consistent with its matrix with very little effort, since the barriers between us and the spiritual worlds (even if they are only in our minds) get temporarily removed in successful rituals. The information/energy patterns, as we have seen, have been remarkably contagious. An alternate explanation of the invocational process is that our internal energy patterns resonate with the entity. In essence, it is as if making a connection to an entity allows us to "temper" ourselves in the ritual, thus becoming the entity. This is a purely informationally patterned view of entities and one that accounts for the two-at-once phenomenon.

Now, in Goetic work, we will open physical seals, meaning we have an open connection to that information pattern. The nature of the entity may very well shift, as the relationship with the entity does change. Arguably what is shifting is the information-tainted energy that the magician has built up through the process of ritual.

The metaphor can really apply to any god form or externally known entity, and if announced, it can apply to created servitors and egregores as well. In some cases, the informational content of the seed crystals forms a more robust pattern, but the consciousness of the magician or priest will have an impact on the final crystal pattern.

This idea of a seed crystal can go both ways. Since people can have interconnections between parts of themselves, there is no reason to assume that creations resonant with a seed crystal will not have a link back to the mother ship, as it were. These talismans are the gods of the system. In some systems, the talismans are initially consecrated with a blood sacrifice of an animal to the spirit within the talisman. There is a fair amount of energy released in the process. One way to look at this process is not to see all the energy going back to the original spirit; in fact, in my perception of the experience, the lion's share of the portion goes to the localized seed crystal, which then forms a potent talisman for the believer. In a way, it's a very potent magical shortcut to empower the seed crystal (the person's talisman) quickly. As more sacrifices of prayer, blood, and food are made to these talismans, the believer's talisman becomes stronger and stronger, having been fed a good deal of energy that is close enough for the seed crystal to use. This seed crystal is patterned after the original god form, but it is separate from that god form. Because the information is linked, there is a link between the talisman, which is independent, and the god form.

Of course, a religion will have a standardized set of herbs and prayers, but often it is only within the sect or house that the herbs are used and prayers are the same. Additionally, the skill of the priests or priestesses to connect to the informational pattern of the former crystal seed; their skill at energy manipulation and magical work; their knowledge of the patterns, prayers, and rituals within and around any god form; and their own unique energy will all affect the creation. This means that, ultimately, the informational patterns of talismans that represent the same god or force will be slightly different and contain mutations, since there is an interaction with every person in the chain of talismans that were created. Of course, the entities still seem to come and work with people outside of various initiatory systems, so a budding magician can question and come to his or her own conclusions about why that is.

As a quick aside, I do believe in honoring, practicing, and working in the original systems when that option is available to me, as they are very beautiful. I will say that correctly and ethically run initiatory religion systems provide a support network that operates or should operate like an extended family or tribe. This is something that I personally find extremely appealing and needed in modern times to combat the growing destruction of anything that could be considered a family. Unfortunately, many initiatory religions currently operate more on the pyramid idea of generating money and power for the priest involved than the idea of a tribe.

Creating Your Own Seed Matrix

We can create entities that can work in similar ways to the preceding examples if we carry the metaphor down to the specific details of magical work. This is not nearly as difficult as it may seem. First, you need to have a robust, well-defined entity. This can be an entity that you have created or an entity that is known to others. A good way to think about this is that we will take or replicate a small piece of the entity we work with (which is partially mutated by the process of ritual) and use that as the seed crystal to birth a new, similar entity. Through my experimentation, I've determined that the seed crystals are best tied to physical talismans, and I would recommend magical links between the two physical seed crystals. Usually, this is done as a one-way stream feeding energy back to the creation crystal, but as we discovered through our experiments with the magical link, there is no reason this has to be a one-way current. Often, the informational pattern of the entity or creation involved will prevent this from being misused (especially if it is built into the creation).

When we link a creation or an external entity to a physical object and we have worked with the entity as the object, we can push more energy into it. This empowers the spirit and our personal seed crystal.

From here, all the methods we have discussed in the book so far come into play. We can query the entity or creation through a conversation about what herbs or oils would be good for the ritual. We can then map the entity or creation to certain states of mind (which should have been done long before now), projecting them to empower and make ready the second base. We can then ask the duplicate entity to lend some of its energy to crystallize a

second base (this also creates a magical link between the entity and the second base). Finally, we can augment, create, and tweak a magical link between the two physical bases by some of the very techniques we used earlier in the adventure.

In practice, we can tie the entity to a second base. We just need to push energy while we are in the same state of mind as the first ritual by intensely taking on the memory of that first ritual and then projecting that over both seed crystals. We could use a sigil or barbaric speaking (speech in a made-up or alternate language) from the first seed crystal to evoke the entity over the base. Since you probably already have a unique sigil for the entity, this can actually be applied to the second base as well. Linking the two physical talismans probably will take another step. When I would do this, I would link them together by having them touch each other for a while as I was in a trance state. Then, I would separate them but envision a cord with energy and information running between them. I would also invoke the creation or entity involved to further push myself into a state of mind conducive to the entity. Then, I would ask the entity for help to connect the parts of itself (making it see the parts as pieces of a greater whole). Ideally, you would want to keep the ritual of creating new seed crystals the same each time to produce as similar a resonance as possible between each linked physical talisman. This technique will produce a pyramid-like linking structure, where each of components goes through a certain node. There are probably a million other ways to carry out the process of this one idea, and I look forward to hearing from you about your innovative techniques.

The practical example of this will indeed be this book. Before I hand you the practical seed-crystal design for the book (which looks far more like a neural network than a pyramid, with more lateral and nonlat- eral interconnections than a pyramid), I want you to post some of your magical adventures using the systems outlined in this book. That is one of the necessary sacrifices. Check out the webpage for the book, and see the information on how to receive and what the seed crystal will actually do for you (it does something extraordinarily fun-it doesn't just make me rich and powerful).

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Beginning Astral Work

Introductory Astral Work Exercise

First, you should have practiced the visualization and energy work discussed previously in our adventure. Mental control and visualization will be critical to successful astral work and, as you progress, energy work will assist you a great deal in getting results from astral workings.

Now sit on the floor, relax, breathe, and clear your head. Sit and continue to clear your head until you have entered into a slight trance. Banish by your preferred method. Evoke a protective servitor or entity into your space to protect your physical body. Banishing and evocation were also covered earlier in our adventure.

Sigilize a mantra with the intent, "It is my will to separate my consciousness from my body temporarily." Once the protection entity is in your space, stand up and start spinning. Chant the mantra until you hit the point of extreme dizziness, where you fall to the ground nearly unconscious. Try to increase the velocity of the spinning as you are going further into the working until you fall. As you fall down to the floor (please do this with appropriate padding, as concrete floors will approach fast when you are falling), know with as many of your five senses as possible that you are separated from your body. You are spinning yourself out from your body consciousness. Visualize yourself staring at your body from outside of it. When you are ready to (or forced to because you cannot hold the trance), visualize your own self-image over your body and try to reattach it to your body. Try to at first wiggle your toes and fingers, and then move a leg or arm. Finally, get up and walk around.

This exercise takes practice, but once you have successfully jumped out of your body in this manner, you may find that you no longer need to spin-just concentrating on moving your self-image away from your body and looking at the room may be sufficient. Relaxing your body will still be a necessary step. This technique is known as "spinning out your double." It has appeared

in more than a few sources, but here it is important to realize that the process of stepping outside of yourself might take some practice.

Try to continue to separate your consciousness from your physical body until you can get to a good twenty minutes or more outside of your body, and separating you from your body comes relatively naturally. Some people may interpret the sensations like a movie or a collection of images. That is perfectly acceptable.

Building an Astral Temple

As you are gaining skill in the first exercise, you might be tempted to skip the banishing or the protective evocation. You might even decide that you can walk around your neighborhood as an astral visage. This adventure, however, does not go into details about astral work. I cannot at first recommend wandering. In the astral space, your thoughts can cause and bring unwanted spirits (or obsessions), since your thoughts more easily control the visualizations and information around you. You will attract entities in line with your thoughts, and the surroundings in the astral space will also mirror your thoughts and moods. Additionally, your thoughts and mood have much more control over the astral environment than they do in the physical world. In this case, it's better to start going to a place where you are safe and protected.

Now, the safest place I can think of to start doing astral work is a place that you build for yourself. The process of building an astral temple is covered in numerous books and websites, but I will give you the methodology I use for myself. The critical part of building an astral temple occurs before you ever spin out the double or enter the astral plane.

First, as the experimenter, you should think about what type of work you will be doing in the astral temple. Now, a person primarily interested in angelic work might design a small temple built out of white clouds, with beaming light everywhere. Another person might prefer to do earth-based magic and might use a cavelike temple. Figure out what types of magic you actually like to do. If you like working with anime characters and large robot servitors, your astral temple should look a lot different from the temple of

someone who is traversing old grimoires looking for the darkest denizen of the deep pits.

You will need to write down the thematic ideas of how your temple is decorated. At first, recommend a black-walled room with minimal equipment and perhaps a glowing chaos sphere or a pentagram on the floor. The five-sense visualization exercises are strongly related to this process. You should try to write down, draw, or otherwise describe every aspect of your temple in excruciating detail. By writing about your temple, drawing it out, or even providing scents to describe it, you are mentally creating it. It is not always important to remember the exact details when you finally get to the temple, because your subconscious mind has those details. The more details that you can give your temple, the more real it will feel to your mind. For me, this is especially true when I give the temple nonvisual sensory data (of course, I first answer the question of what the astral construct looks like).

Show another person the writing and/or diagrams of the temple. Tell that person you are working on background information for a story or sketches for an animation. See if the individual can clearly get a vibe, or "see" or "feel" the temple. Test the idea on a couple of people; see if they get a great feeling from the sketches and writing. It is a good sign if the temple can stir the imaginations in other people and cause them to have a reaction. When you get to the point where people can almost touch and see the temple, then it is just about ready for you to visit. Of course, it's easy to get wrapped up in continuously designing a temple and then not doing any work to go there and make it. Again, when starting out, try to keep the temple minimal.

I have good luck describing my temple in a light trance state, so I can just write and draw the temple out from some ideas or sketched notes. Essentially, you are using some of the automatic drawing/writing techniques to map out your temple.

In the process of setting out to build an astral temple, you should keep track of your dreams. You could well have dreams in your temple, as you have spent enormous amounts of effort to write about it. If you happen to have those dreams, it is a good sign.

Before trying to go to a new astral construct, I will also spend several hours reviewing all my notes from any previous visits to constructed spaces. I will also create a verbal name and sigil for the astral construct before trying to travel there. These serve as anchors to the process of visiting the temple. When you are first starting out, a good intent to sigilize is simply "Visit my astral temple." Of course, before visiting the space, you could do a ritual where you attempt to find the name of the temple in a method similar to the Ganesh ritual, with the random speech while in gnosis. I will then redraw my sketches and the sigil clearly on a wall or on the floor. This sigil then serves as a link to the astral construct, so that it is easier to create and access the temple.

After you have spent hours thinking about your temple and your mind is filled with images and ideas about it, it is time to move on to visiting the space for the first time. Now, like most things in this book, the temple is a process, not an instant success ritual. Initial successes might be slow, but just keep trying.

First, separate your consciousness from your body, by using either the spinning method or your preferred means. Instead of staring at your own body, start to visualize yourself in the temple space you have written about. If you are using the spinning method, sigilizing the intent "It is my will to visit my astral temple" into a mantra may be helpful as a replacement for the introductory mantra. At first, you might only be able to get flashes of what your temple will look like, and you might not be able to pull the temple into your imagination in its full glory. The better your imagination skills are across all five senses, the better you will be at creating the temple.

For each section in the temple that seems unfinished, you should add different sensory details while imagining the space to make it seem more real. While in that trance state, you might not remember all the details you wrote down. You might invent new ones on the spot, but your imagination should try to make every aspect of the temple seem more embedded with sensory information. I usually visualize and feel the sigil of the temple on a floor or wall and imagine that it has deep purple flames with associated crackling tonal sounds (insert your favorite color here-purple is my favorite color). I will repeat this until I don't have to work at visualizing or hearing the temple sigil anymore; it is automatically there every time I go to the

temple. This gives me a solid link to get back to the construct. Often, I will burn a specific pleasing and unique incense combination while working on the temple to provide an additional olfactory anchor to it.

It is a good idea to work on one aspect of the temple until that part of the temple is so ingrained in your thinking that it is automatically in the temple when you visit it. Then move to the next aspect of the temple. I will keep doing workings and visualizations of the temple while in that separated state of consciousness until every detail of the temple is solid in my imagination. The more information you can create, the more real you can make the temple seem to you, and that will make it more empowered for your workings.

Once you have all the temple details set, then you must decide which items you will need inside it. Traditional ceremonial magic requires a wand, chalice, sword, robes, pentacles, and other assorted props. You should not feel limited or forced to use those concepts, but you should understand how the items you place in your temple assist your magic outside of the temple. Remember to keep the number of items at a reasonable level. In deeper trance states, you simply won't be able to remember what you have there to rely on, but you can go into your temple knowing ahead of time which specific tools you will need for an astral working. Going back to the anime temple described earlier, a tool could be a mega-hyper-computer with a transdimensional teleporter attached.

As with each detail of the temple, each tool created in astral space has to be molded, created, and used until you can use it in your astral temple with little or no extra effort. As you get better at this, you will be able to do it on the fly. A very similar methodology can be used for the temple items as for the temple itself. Describe the item in excruciating detail, as if you were a master craftsman designing a tool for yourself, and then share the description with friends, in the context of fiction or art. If they can get a feel for the item in a really clear way, then it is time to bring forth the item into your astral temple.

Practicing in Your Temple

It's time to start getting used to practicing in your temple. Go back to the energy exercises in the earlier chapters of the book. While not moving any

parts of your body, practice the various energy exercises in your temple. Try to get results similar to those that you were achieving in the real world. The exercises probably will feel different in the astral temple as opposed to the physical world. Of course, you can add special effects while you are doing the exercises in your temple. Once you have mastered the energy exercises in your temple, start practicing banishing in your created space, without losing concentration or getting jolted out of your temple.

The First Ritual Working in Your Temple

At this point, try to do an evocational working. Review the tools you need for an evocation, and try to do a magical working in a style of magic you are very familiar with, using only the tools in your temple. Now, since this is an astral space as opposed to a real space, spirits can clearly manifest. For the first working, choose an entity you have both created and used several times, or an entity you have a great working relationship with. Fully write out the ritual you will be performing before going into your astral space. Try to keep the ritual as simple as you can. If it is possible, redo a simple ritual you have done in the physical world, and note any results you get from the astral temple.

Using your astrally created tools, and with as many senses as possible, imagine going through the motions of the ritual in your astral space. At each step, understand and concentrate on the sensory information you are reproducing while paying attention to the energy you are generating in your astral space. Earlier in the book we talked about tactile/gestural imagination. Try to feel the motions of going through the ritual while visualizing, hearing, and sensing the effects. Be sure to banish and then come out of your astral temple. Note any body sensations you get from the experience. Keep trying different rituals in that astral state, and see what happens.

After you get the hang of evocation while in your temple, you should create a permanent guardian for your astral complex. This entity should keep anything out while you are gone and while you are doing workings. Strictly speaking, this is not needed, but it will be helpful once you open the temple to other people.

Empowering Your Astral Items with Magic, and Astral-to-Material-World Bleeding

While in your temple, try empowering your astral items using some of the energy techniques we discussed earlier. I have found that they will become more useful in that space. Once you have worked with the items in your astral temple for a little bit, try calling the items to you in the physical space, and know with all five of your senses that they are in your presence.

Start performing physical rituals with items created in the astral realm. Of course, you have to imagine that you are holding an item. While in trance, use your five senses to know that the item is real (even though you created it). If any voices tell you that it's not real, you are not deep enough in trance. When you start creating entities in your astral temple, you will find that you can evoke them into physical space through traditional methods and have them get the results you need.

As you work with your temple and your nice creations, you can imbue them with perceived magical abilities through ritual and focus. Once they seem to have the magical abilities you desire in the astral construct, use them in the physical world to manifest similar abilities. You should be able to do this with practice. What happens when you imagine that you have the astral item on you?

Shape-changing and Invocation

Astral spaces don't exactly fit the same set of rules as the material world. As you progress in your astral work, realize that you can change your astral temple as you see fit. You can create new items or change items as needed. In addition to the items, however, you can change your own representation of yourself in your astral temple to any visage you desire.

For a start, change the color of your skin while doing work. Match the color of your skin to the mood you associate with the ritual. Give yourself different hair, clawed hands, or an entirely different look. It is helpful to write or draw out what you want to change in yourself before attempting to do experiments in your temple. As time goes on, you will be able to do this on the fly as well. Make small changes that you can accomplish each time

while you are practicing, and work toward increasingly complex representations of yourself. Changing yourself in your astral space may produce subtle changes in your perception of yourself in the material world. For some people this is tremendously easy, but for other people it takes a bit of practice. This is very similar to the auric shapeshifting exercise we did. The difficulty is to keep going with the imagined changes while staying in your astral temple.

Keep practicing the shape-changing in your astral temple until you imagine looking like other people who are radically different from yourself. Take baby steps in the process. Once you have mastered changing your human form, pick other nonhumanoid forms to try to change yourself into. These can be mythological beings, animals, or even plant forms. The point of these exercises is to weaken the mind's reliance on a static physical form as a crutch within the astral construct. Loki from the Norse pantheon is of course a great shapeshifter. Papa Legba from Vodou has numerous paths. Most trickster-type spirits can help you learn shapeshifting, depending on which pantheon of spirits you like to work with.

Invocation in the astral space is slightly difficult, since there is a lot to concentrate on. First you are imagining a space, and then you are imagining an entity coming into you at the same time. The shapeshifting practice, however, will help you with the invocation process, because you can imagine yourself as the form of the entity before invoking it. It is wise to start doing this with spirits with whom you have working relationships and whom you trust. It is also a wise idea to make sure you evoke a protective spirit to break you out of trance if the process starts going into a negative place. We covered entity creation extensively earlier.

Start with calling forth the entity into your astral complex as if it were a standard evocation. Once you know via your five senses that the entity is present, step forth into the same space as the entity. Allow yourself to feel the energy of the entity flowing through you and vice versa, since you are in the same space. The first time you try this, it may shock you out of your astral temple altogether. I have always had intense physical sensations as a result of these workings. Be absolutely sure to banish afterward, since it's fully possible that your mind will drag the spirit back with you to this world in the process of getting jolted back to your body. Try to share your space

with different entities in your temple experiments, and make sure you banish after each attempt. I find that information will flow across to me from the spirits when I am sharing space with them.

When it is clear that you can hold yourself in your astral temple and share the space (along with information and energy) with another entity, then it is time to take the next step. Invoke the entity while you are in the astral temple. If the entity in question is a willing participant in the process, and you have been practicing the shapeshifting exercises in your astral temple, you should be able to lock yourself and the entity together in a deep invocation where you are sharing the same space and the same form in your created astral temple. Do this a few times. You will definitely find yourself becoming better at possession (deep invocation) rites in the physical world. Once you can share the same space and form as another entity, go do some things as the combination. In some ways, you are forming a temporary gestalt entity of you and the entity together. Remember to banish after attempting such combinations. Any successful combination of space and form of this nature in your astral temple will alter your perception in some ways (often in radical ways). Information from the entity will bleed into your subconscious, so please be careful.

Learning to Shield and Defend

Continuously strive to translate your work in your temple to material-world results or self-evolution. Often as you get better at working with entities and concepts within your astral space, you will be able to receive more information, and possibly training, from them. Eventually, you should seek out some sort of training in astral self-defense. Psychic defense, emotional control, and thought control take on far more importance when you are wandering around the astral "plane" Even if these concepts are merely in your head, they can still hurt you. Since you can attract spirits to yourself, it is critical to practice emo tional control and thought control before wandering out of your astral temple.

The bubble exercises can serve as basic shielding exercises, which you should practice within your astral temple before wandering out. Even the energy ball exercises can be weapons in the astral domains. Familiar servitors and spirits can protect you, but if you decide to wander and you

have gotten this far in working with your astral temple, you should learn how to defend yourself.

To me, the astral plane is a lot like the Matrix that Neo works in. Your physical body should not constrain you, and I tend to use a very cinematic method of defending myself when I am wandering. Remember, while your physical body may be limited, you are not limited in the astral plane. As Morpheus said in The Matrix, "Do you think that's air you're breathing?" In fact, take cues from pop culture magic, and use Neo and Morpheus. They are not bad fictional entities to evoke and learn from. Personally, I watch a lot of anime, and I try to replicate some of the anime martial arts moves and special effect techniques in my astral temple in order to defend myself. The key to defending yourself is the force of will you place in your intent to force an entity away from you, or to forcefully destroy the entity. Martial artists will find that their skills give them a background in specific moves to channel their will on the astral plane. Shamans who shapeshift into animal forms should at least figure out how to use the animals' natural defenses to defend themselves in their astral work. In fact, just pulling yourself out of the astral space is usually enough to end any confrontation, but confrontations are often a test of worth for several entities before they will teach or work with you in any way.

Generally, a simple rule of thumb with astral work is that if a presence or situation generates a certain emotional response, using the opposite emotional response will be a suitable defense. As with the other energy exercises, let the memory, alphabet of desire, or state of mind completely overwhelm you (while you retain the astral vision). If you project out that informationally colored energy while in the astral vision, it will be an attack. This does not always work, but in most encounters it will be an effective tool of self-defense. This is not a book on astral combat or even astral work; however, at least strengthen your aura (through the bubble exercises) before wandering out of your temple. In situations and encounters you are uncomfortable with, the goal at first is to simply get enough distance from the spirit or entity in question to safely come out of trance. Once you get back to the physical world, your job is to not obsess over the experience. You might note that you can make astral items to help you defend yourself and channel your will. I myself have a propensity for laser blasters and lightsabers.

Walking Out of the Temple

As stated, this is not a full book on the methods of astral work or astral walking, but I have had good results visiting entities in their own realms. There are two effective hints I will give you from my experience. First, if you are working in your temple, an evoked entity can guide you on the astral plane or the area of ideas and concepts in which that entity seems to dwell. Essentially, an entity's astral constructions will mirror the entity itself. Evoking a Cenobite, from Clive Barker's Hellraiser, or a Goetic spirit as a guide might lead to a set of gruesome and troublesome visions. Of course, you personally might like those types of surroundings. Evoking an angelic presence would probably lead to a very different type of journey. Of course, all of these things can merely be visions from your own subconscious, but that does not make it any less powerful or dangerous. The real danger isn't that you will die; the most realistic risks are dangerous obsessions over a vision or scene you cannot clear out of your head. Before you ask any spirit to guide you, and before you even contemplate visiting said concept or entity in its conceptual settings (which again could just be pulled from your subconscious), you should have worked with the spirit, and you should have some sort of arrangement, either written or via a bond of trust. This is really just common sense, as people would normally be hesitant to enter into a stranger's house.

Of course, try to match the entity to the concepts you are trying to explore. Usually after the entity is evoked, I will simply visualize myself holding on to the entity as it flies/runs/dematerializes away. At first this will take some practice, since you might only get a glimpse of other areas and then lose concentration. The new area may have a radically different feel. I don't recommend having a servitor used in this capacity (although it's possible), because the servitor is too close to you personally. Part of the reason for doing this sort of work is to expand your perceptions and consciousness.

Another technique is to invoke the spirit and act as a combined gestalt entity exploring different regions. Once you master the shapeshifting and invocation within your astral temple, this is a highly effective technique. The beauty of this is that it allows the entity in question to influence your perceptions of events to make sure that the events are interpreted in ways consistent with the exploration of concepts in the astral walk. This also

happens to be the bad side of this technique. Once you can hold the form and the same space as the entity while moving around your astral temple, you probably have enough skill to go exploring with the entity in question.

Once you have been to a place, or a conceptualized dreamscape, you can go back to that space by using your memory in the same way we used memories to generate energy before. Relax and then remember where you were, with as many details as you possibly can, and then visualize it around you. Now you can use interesting techniques, such as creating servitors/entities and transferring your consciousness to them using the techniques of melting with the servitor in your astral temple just like we were doing earlier in the chapter. This can have the benefit of not appearing to be you. I leave the details of this as an exercise for you.

More Astral Bleeding into the Physical World, or Vice Versa

In addition to using items from the astral world in the physical world, it is possible to start to bring talismans from the physical world into the astral world. In fact, if you do the previous exercises in the book, you might be able see your talismans or treasured items when you spin out and look around. Try it. Put an item that you have used while you have done magic in a location where you can easily find it. Once you try to spin out the double, look at that item. Does it look different after you spin out the double? For me, the answer has always been yes. In fact, you might notice that in the astral plane, an item such as a pentagram necklace-or, in my case, my chaos star ring-is with you when you do work on the astral plane, even without any conscious or magical effort to force it to function in your astral complex. This item is so attuned to you that it seems to come with you into the astral complex as almost part of you.

One way of pulling physical items that have meaning into the astral space is to use similar methods to what we have been discussing earlier in this adventure. While meditating in your astral complex, simply visualize the item in the astral location. Give the item weight, texture, appearance, sounds, and even feeling. Try to match the feeling of the item in the physical world to your astral simulation of the item. If the item has distinguishing glyphs or sigils, make sure to apply those sigils in the astral vision of the item. Make any items, glyphs, or sigils glow with power in the astral complex through

using all five of your senses. You can also push energy into your astral representation of your physical talisman. Use the item or artifact in astral workings in the same way you would use the item in the physical world. After a couple of rituals with the item in the astral complex, it should be easy to pull the item into astral space. As the last step of your working, visualize holding the item, and then visualize it over the physical representation of the item right after coming into your body. Try to visualize yourself holding the item as you come back into your body. In the same way you would spend a few minutes re-cementing your self-image to your body, spend time cementing the visualized item to the physical item. Keep visualizing the "astral" image over the physical item until you feel it is completely reattached to the physical item. There is no push-button way to explain how long this will take. Simply use your intuition. See how the item feels to you in the physical world after using it in the astral world. Generally, while it might not feel charged in the same way as an item charged by a physical ritual, I have found that the item in question will have more magical resonance.

Likewise, astrally constructed items can be linked and cemented to physical talismans through repeated visualizations. It is helpful to find or make a physical item that is similar to the astral item. Additionally, carve any glyphs or sigils that the astral item has into the physical item. Once you have that, the item should take on a magical feel in the physical world. Once you intuitively feel that you have cemented the astral item to the physical item enough times, try using the physical item in a ritual or two. How did the item feel?

Of course, as you continue with the experimentation, you might find that the astral item and the physical item it is linked to might have very little in common, but that the linking process still works fine. Experiment away. Likewise, evoked spirits in your astral complex might give you items that have an astral presence that you can then link and use in the physical world. The process of binding the item can be very similar.

An Example Astral Working: Some Sympathetic Magical Ideas

Now that you have practiced all of these steps to start learning astral magic, what can you do in your temple? The answer is simply anything, if you are

capable of holding the visualization for it and can produce the energy for it. Keep in mind that some tasks will be far more difficult to achieve. For instance, I still have not won more than two dollars in the lottery!

However, I have had good luck using my astral temple to practice sympathetic magic. Sympathetic magic is the type of magic used with voodoo dolls. The principle is simple: establish a link to a person or place. At this point, depending on the type of ritual, carry about different actions you mean to do to the person while imagining with as many of your senses as possible that the doll is the person. Typically, you have to get into a deep enough trance state. From here, use various herbs, pins, and energy work on the doll, which will often resonate out and affect the person in the real world. Earlier in our adventure, we covered this extensively.

In the astral complex, the process is very similar, except that you spend the time building the astral doll of the person. Unlike the puppet example, the astral doll of a person can look exactly like him or her. Unique quirks or motions of the person should be included while creating the astral doll of the person in your astral space. Again, the point is to include as many details as possible in your astral construct, so that you believe your astral construct is the person. Like other similar astral tools, this can be built over time or, in this case, in a single session. Once you have the astral construct, you can do things to it that should have some resonance with the real person. Now, again, the better you know the person, the better you will be able to make an astral doll that links to him or her. The stronger the link you have with the person, the easier it will be to do this sort of working. Again, I mostly use this technique in healing, but it is only limited by your imagination.

From here, just repeat any of the ideas in the sympathetic magic chapter to your astral visage of the person. If you want to evoke an entity into this visage, go right ahead. For Reiki healing, send the energy. If you want to cast a sigil magic spell at a person, his or her astral visage is a sympathetic link, and you can imagine it right in front of you.

Refocusing Consciousness InwardOther Temples Exist Even in Your Body and within the Bodies of Others

As an important note, while you are improving your visualization skills and astral walking skills, it is also possible to travel within or into another temple, which could be another consciousness, your own body, or even a physical place. Taylor Ellwood, in his book Inner Alchemy, talks a lot about using and journeying inward to meet neural transmitters (Ellwood 2007). It is possible to journey into your body and talk to any single part of it, from your ailing knee to your very DNA. Your interpretation of these concepts might not be the same as a micro-camera pushed down your veins, but you still can get good results.

Try this exercise. Pick a part of your body you would like to talk to. Meditate until you can reach some stillness. Then visualize yourself walking down your arm or up your leg as a small micro-you. Let yourself conceptualize the body part into a form you can talk to, and listen to the name that conceptualized body part gives you. Ask it what it needs and try to either give that energy to it in the visualization or make the changes it is asking for in your life. Attempt this several times with the same body part. Does it start to feel better? Thinking about the body in this way opens the entire body to be an infinitely complex astral-like world to explore that is literally right at your fingertips. Of course, equally interesting is exploring the world of another person, or a tree, or even a rock. Truly, you are only limited by your imagination and willingness to keep trying things till you get the results you desire.

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Art and the Stories We Tell

Now that we have dipped our feet into a bit of astral magic, let's reexamine the relationship between fiction, visual art, music, and other creative arts. Obviously, I am a writer, but I do draw. When I have interviewed creative performers, such as musicians, dancers, and performance artists, there are similar themes to what I am trying to say in this section. Why do people create art of any sort? Sometimes art creates meaning; sometimes art of different forms can evoke an emotion or transmit an idea. Many of these things relate to creating a state of mind of some sort in the viewers themselves.

In the fluidity of astral space, the mind is free to create visualizations around a perceived meaning or intuitive cues. Because we have been doing several empowering exercises in our astral temple, our minds have much more flexibility for evocative power. When you try to cast sigil magic, or evoke while in the astral state and have results in the physical world, what does it say about the connection of these astral constructs to the physical world?

In practical terms, revisiting the astral temple over and over makes it easier to visualize, feel, smell, and even hear. In a way, the imagined temple gains greater and greater "reality" within the mind of the magician. This is a similar pattern to what we saw while working with entities (in creating larger and larger links). Again, this is why we were building our sensory imagination and our ability to stay in a trance state. In the terms of our astral work, this means staying within the vision and senses of the mind.

When we read an engaging piece of fiction, stare at art, watch a moving performance, or listen to a moving song, it can seem like an overwhelming sensory experience. In fact, a really good creative production can stick with you almost like an emotionally powerful infection of the imagination. For some individuals, this might even seem like an obsession. One can look at the Harry Potter series to see people who live, breathe, and consume this story. They might have Harry Potter pens, underwear, etc. A magician

summoning the worst demon might consider such an obsession as unhealthy. Check your favorite story or movie. Doesn't it seem to set your imagination on fire? Even a porn movie, if that is your favorite genre, really gets the imagination going. A person might dream about the novel or movie. The images and sensations created around the story become almost burned into the subconscious and conscious minds. The conscious mind can pull forth the images quickly and strongly.

My personal process of writing fiction feels a lot like my process for developing astral spaces. I don't think that is an accident. When I sit down to write, it is a very visual and feeling process. The story seems to create itself as I go deeper and deeper into the world and worldview of the characters. J. R. R. Tolkien once said he created the entire Lord of the Rings series around the different languages. For him, the languages seemed to evoke and produce the story. He was, of course, a linguist by trade, and that dominated his thinking.

If you choose to go on interesting astral excursions for entertainment, and not results, you will be entertained. Spirits and your mind are great at "giving" you what you want inside your mind, but this hardly means that they will "do" anything to better your life here. The problem with this is the obsessive nature that these visions and visita tions can produce. In the astral world, you can be the hero of a magnificent epic. You can fly with aliens. It can be a lot more pleasing than "this world." Equally, the astral space must be interpreted through the perceptions of the viewer. Whether or not these constructs exist, something will fill in the gaps of the created space and be willing to produce quite vivid experiences that have little to do with the real world. Many authors, myself included, do at times seem obsessed with their own stories till they can finish them. The stories hold their imagination in a sort of grip, demanding to be told.

Let's take a step back, and do a couple more astral exercises to complicate the issue slightly.

Practical Astral Work: Starting Group Work

Clearly, for astral work, I was leaning toward a very orphic way of learning. In a way, I was instructing you to ask friendly spirits who are "congruent

with you" to help you learn. This will of course introduce their biases into the equation within your mind, but to write about the finer points of astral work would be a book in itself. Truthfully, I learned a fair amount via direct interaction with different spirits.

However, there are a few experiments that work well in a group setting without the use of a spirit to take you to other realms. Create an astral construct that has a sigil, which acts as a link to that "space" This is exactly what we did in the last chapter. Now, do not describe that astral temple to your fellow adventurers. After they have experimented with their own astral constructs, give them the sigil you have created, explain that it is a link to an astral space, and invite them to visit the space. If they have been following the methods in the previous chapter, ask them to describe what they feel, see, hear, taste, and smell. Compare notes. While the descriptions might not be exactly similar, see if there are common thematic elements. As you play around with this, create forms and servitors that hang out in the space, and tell the other participants that you made a change. See how that change is interpreted.

If some of the adventurers work together, they could create an astral temple and try experiments like the energy exercises, where one person is broadcasting energy and the rest are picking up and trying to describe that energy. Likewise, a group could try to create an energy circuit for training purposes. The key is verification at every step. However, the purpose of this exercise is not to provide exact guidelines for astral work, it is only to provide a means for the magician to gain intuitive knowledge about the interplay of the astral with imagination.

If you do this, you might notice that there are thematic similarities in the feel, description, and perhaps purpose of the described astral construct that just cannot be "waived away" by chance. If there is something to the notion of other worlds being external sources of information interpreted through perception, and it is not just created in the minds of magicians, perhaps authors and artists can tap that world in somewhat safer ways.

Certainly, there are some quantum physicists who would agree with the other-world theories (Arntz 2004). Whether or not these "astral" constructs existed before the artist, writer, magician, or imaginative child created them

in the physical world (channeling them from their existence previous to the experience) is irrelevant. After they are created, they seem to have some investment outside of the mind of the creator that other people may be able to access. As stated in the beginning of our discussion, even the act of creating or viewing a piece of art or fiction may be evocative of a set of ideas or emotions.

Media as Evocative Experience

Whether or not we refer to our brain holographically, using NLP terms or other descriptions, doesn't matter. We create "fictional" or perceptual-based continuities all the time. We like an a - b c continuity in our lives that supports and augments the sense of safe, linear time, and we are preconditioned to accept often faulty logic if it seems to fit a certain pattern of continuity.

We construct stories for ourselves all the time. The various forms of media often provide an outlet for that creative impulse, but are these totally innocuous supplications to the impulse? The entire field of marketing is basically focused on crafting appealing illusions to lure the imagination in toward a kind of obsession on certain states of mind that eventually lead to a course of action (usually a purchase). Is there that much difference between constructed media, which provides the illusion of sensory data, and the kinds of sensory data we create around an astral construct (even one that may be pre-existing)?

Some modern occultists maintain the notion that magic equals media at this point, and certainly the purpose of various media is to create different states of mind within the population, but like anything else, when you motion to tell the universe what its rules are, it will throw something out there to confuse the issue (Louv 2005).

Practical Magic in the Creative Arts

Practical magic, in the context of creative arts, is a bit of a mismatched statement, but let's define "practical" in the sense that it evokes or elicits a state of mind within the viewer, or in this case consumer, of the artistic

endeavor. Let's try some experiments combining the techniques in our adventure with the production of some form of media transmission.

Now, in this process, I have to admit, our American culture will judge things on "objective" criteria of excellence that happen to be set by various creative experts who make up the rules as they go along. The irony of that never ceases to amaze me, but people will generally like creative productions that elicit an emotional state in them that they are comfortable with or even addicted to. Generally, people will seek out works of fiction, art, music, etc., that reflect some state of mind they enjoy or must experience. Remember, depression is a state of mind that many people seek out themselves, because they are so used to that state. When you receive criticism, ignore the like-or-dislike quality of the criticism, and instead focus on the emotional, informational content. These "emotional" criticisms are verification of success. This isn't a large step from what we have already been doing, but it is a slight tweaking of what we pay attention to while creating the art.

Create a form, just like we did in the last chapter, that personifies a specific emotion or state of mind. Now, in this case, write a story, paint a picture (or draw one), or otherwise craft an artistic work that relates back to the exact form you created. Using the flow game, attempt to push informationally tainted energy that corresponds to the desired emotion into the creation during and after your process of creating the picture, poem, performance, etc. Try to spend some time on the creative endeavor and, as always, go deeper into trance as you are pushing energy into the creation.

When other people view, read, or hear the creation, what is their response? How does it affect their mood? Now try to repeat the exercise with a created form relating to something you want the audience to do. How does the act of experiencing something that is embedded with a sort of compulsion or request affect the audience? (For more interesting studies, research some marketing techniques, and use the intuitive understanding you get from this process to augment your attempts. A full discussion of those techniques is beyond the scope of this adventure, but I encourage you to experiment with them.)

The Creative Impulse and Subjugation

If the purpose of art is to convey and elicit a state of consciousness from the consumption of art, then the art of marketing and most media links a state of consciousness to a desired outcome. This is a gross simplification, but generally it holds true, even when the linking mechanisms are subtle and well hidden. A story or piece of art offers the audience a chance to feed the imagination while allowing that imagination to be carefully manipulated. Marketing creates a story (not always verbal) that links a set of ideas and states of mind to a product. By linking sex or some other need to a product, a marketer only has to trigger the links for that need and frame your product as either the tool to acquire that need or a substitute for that need. Ironically, if people fully and completely bought into the idea, they might actually manifest a result in line with that stream of conditioning. Unfortunately, we are still conditioned to believe that magic is not "possible," as we discussed earlier. A full treatise on marketing technologies in relation to the occult is beyond the scope of this adventure (but may be part of a different Andrieh adventure); however, this brings us somewhat back to the beginning of the book. We started with reconditioning those chains and looking for patterns that were not from the individuals themselves.

The imagination is often more powerful than merely the facts. An idea backed by emotional responses can be seductive enough to enslave many to its cause, whether that idea is a spirit, a piece of art, a cause, or a concept. The majority of people seem content to give away their imagination and creative power. Often, this manifests in letting other forces (advertising, religion, ideas, spirits, whatever) decide what they should do and what they can have and be. This is the power of imagination. It can free us or be our worst prison. Chances are that if you let someone or something take control of your mind, that person or thing probably doesn't have your best interests at heart. Regardless of how we refer to them, all spirits and even ideas can and do lie if it is in their best interests. Some will lie just for fun.

Religion and Myth as Emotive Agents

Before the modern age, where fiction and media have replaced storytelling, religion and the spiritual world seemed to occupy our collective "imaginations" Certainly, a Jungian would point out that those archetypal stories and personas are reflected in our modern artistic creations.

Religion and myths are on one hand inherently political (since they dictate the moral compass of a culture), but they are also emotive. The idea of the Christian God in the Old Testament was a frightful image of a father who, when you disobeyed, would vigorously remind you and test you. Those stories are quite emotive, and in the hands of a skilled orator they become more and more emotive, producing an innate fear of disobedience. This is a myth tied to an emotion with a buy-in hook (Believe in Christ or face this wrath). The idea of god, or myths, or any religious operations, is to provide a sense of meaning to our lives. The ultimate joke may be that the meaning of our lives is whatever we assign to it.

If people didn't want their imaginations, creative power, and ideas to be supplied for them, there would not be suppliers (who do so for a fee). People want to believe in something, and it is far, far easier to be told what to imagine and what will bring them joy instead of determining that themselves. However, even the most radically magical people maintain a linear story of the events of their lives. One event fits within a continuity of previous events. This is a fundamental story of how life flows. The "search" for meaning seems to be an evolutionary consequence of consciousness itself. The impulse for "meaning" can be a powerful tool in itself.

Creating Your Fictional Life

If the search for meaning is an impetus that seems inherent in people, then that impetus can be harvested for magical results. Some magicians would say that they are consumers of experiences that are outside the scope of general reality. Certainly, Peter Carroll argues for the expression of a magical self that is very antinomian (1992). In this adventure, extreme experiences are also needed to provide memorybased sensory data streams to work with. Often, the stories of magicians and shamans are the stuff of fiction itself, even in the modern age. (Despite the fact that odd occurrences are not talked about freely, almost every magician has had weird occurrences or other unexplainable events at some time in his or her career.) If magicians have not experienced those events, they can still tell compelling stories about themselves. The story itself can provide the framework for the mean ing of the events. Ironically, if you sit down and do this, it is remarkably easy to discover the meaning you have applied to any set of events.

Now, through various mechanisms described in this adventure, we can use energy, sigils, and other tricks to rework memories (thus changing ourselves), but how many people have sat down and wrote the story of the events, placing them in a series? This series of events would probably display a "pattern" of thematic elements. In our model, it might even resonate with a few repetitive states of mind. Events that previously seemed unrelated become much more related in the telling and constructing of a story. Keep in mind that the story only has to be compelling to the creator, not to the audience (this is for the creator). By "story," I mean a series of creative productions. So a story could be a multi-piece art series, a series of musical compositions, or a series of performance-art presentations.

This kind of personal mythology displays certain threads of causal behavior within the subconscious mind. If you sit down and read your own story, and then detach from it (change the tense or name), the thematic elements will pop out glaringly. What you choose to include in the creation is a choice based on what you feel is important (which might not be entirely conscious). The meaning sets the tone and possibly a fair amount of interpretation for all future events. Isn't this the by-product of causality on imagination? Now, eating a poisonous berry and then realizing that it makes you sick is a good survival tactic for a species. People in the modern age, however, make associative jumps in understanding that extend beyond what a good survival tactic is. For instance, they may make the jump to the idea that any berry is poisonous. These chains of associations can make people believe that they have limited choices in a situation. These patterns of meaning are often not wholly obvious to the conscious mind, but the process of creating the story (in fiction, which is my preferred means) gives a person the chance to look at the system-wide patterns. Trying the same basic thing and expecting different results is insanity. Stated another way, resonating with similar mental states probably makes it more difficult to find experiences that lead to different states of mind in the external world. (This is because reality and our minds can be fed the information patterns and can replicate them in a synergetic way where one can influence the other.)

Fear not, fellow adventurer, because a story is just a story. If we don't like the story as stated, we can change the memory of the individual events. NLP attempts to do some of this in practice. Taken a step further, we can look at the themes (or general states of mind that the stories relate to), and we can

then change the thematic elements. For example, instead of having a theme that deals with the idea of the defeated and broken protagonist, I might substitute a theme dealing with initiatory trials in relation to stealing and developing power (i.e., the events were part of a much greater future that will manifest).

Rewriting the story is not enough to induce the desired changes in meaning. Chances are, when you wrote the first story, you were quite emotionally invested in that account of the story. If push comes to shove, most people would probably give up their "religion" before they would give up their own story with associated "correct" meanings. This means that for this to be a productive idea, the magician has to provide investment in that alternate story. In practical terms, we can pick out the events of a story, go back to the memories, and associate them with entirely different "emotional content" relating to the different themes we are developing within our lives. Each memory mentioned in the story would be a starting place for self-change. In our adventure, we have simple methods for doing this. Basically, we would go back to the memory and use one of our emotional anchors with all of our senses while in a trance state to change the emotional content, factual details, or perceived meaning of any event.

As each event is changed, the story is rewritten. Different events may be included in the creation. At this point, we need to absolutely believe that this new combination of events is the "real" or accurate portrayal of events. I personally have created a sigilized intent and mantra empowering the new story as the "correct story" while visualizing and walking through the new series of events. This has helped me add "credibility" to the new story. Once the new story is established, try to cast enchantments, sigil magic, and other workings in line with the new thematic elements. Is it easier to enchant for the things you want when they are "in line with the story"? To carry this idea further, accept that the story is fanatically correct (if you need help with what a fanatically correct state is, study some of the more fundamental variants of various religions), and then cast enchantments. How does this change your manifestation ability while within the new set of themes?

For a kick, write a third story (or more stories) with entirely different thematic elements and thus correspondingly different "emotional" content for each event. Accept this new story as fanatically and absolutely correct for

as long as you can. At this point, cast workings and operations within the thematic context of the story of your own life. Throughout the entire period of experimentation, journaling will become very important.

Once you are done with all the stories for a set period of your life, you might need to have a book published or do a gallery showing of your work. We can compare our journals and see what the impact of investing in a different story was on the tone of voice, content, or even the events a person chooses to pay attention to.

Of course, I am a writer, so I choose to describe this process in terms of text, and there are tangible benefits for me when I write this out or try to express the story in a series of images, drawings, or even animations. Other adventurers might do this solely within the context of deep meditation, memory, and the astral world they are creating.

Long-Term Goal Setting and Stories

A story usually progresses through a series of logical steps. In NLP: The New Technology of Achievement, there are exercises that suggest a process of goal achievement (Andreas and Faulkner 1994). First, you visualize the end goal you are thinking about. If you don't feel good about the goal, perhaps there are parts of it that are not congruent with the current thematic elements of your story. Check the goal with divination at this point, since you should feel really good about it. If it is a goal you believe you need to accomplish, you should be able to shift to a positive feeling. If you have trouble with the goal or with feeling good about the goal, do some self-searching before you embark down the path. Write down each step from the goal backwards to the present. Try to make each step as small as possible, within reason (obviously, listing the exact physical steps you have to take to achieve a goal might be a little obsessive-compulsive).

When you have compiled this set of steps, look at each step you have created as a guidepost. You could break down the progression from one step to another step into smaller steps, until you are absolutely sure you could achieve each step toward your goal. Working backward encourages the conscious mind to be honest about what is achievable in each step. Reaching the end results through steps looks remarkably like a story of linear

continuity. You could check any step of the process you are intuitively uncomfortable with by using divination and meditation. Performing a divination is equally useful when you reach a step where you feel stuck. The steps are not the end-all and be-all; they are guideposts. Anyone who has hiked in a forest knows that sometimes a trail is blocked and one must walk around an obstacle. Now, as magicians, we can change ourselves or remove the external blockage through various means covered earlier in the adventure. If our steps are too small, they may not provide us with the flexibility to adapt and keep moving forward.

Now, if we as magicians sit down and write out all the goals we have, we can see that achieving any one major goal will mean sacrificing other potential goals (because there is a limitation of time available to any one person). Part of the fun is to weigh competing goals against the time it would take to complete any one goal. (We can do this through intuition, divination, and intense self-work.) In some ways, the themes we choose to accept might dictate the importance of certain goals at that moment. At first, this might seem like a purely psychological tech nique, but we have more tools to ease the transition through each plot element in the story we are developing. Simply put, we have a plan for a long-term goal, so the magic we will be doing will be more focused on smaller and easier-to-manifest results, increasing the probability of success at each step. All the techniques we have already discussed become linked to performing and striving for much smaller pushes in the right direction of the successful completion of a long-term project. Of course, you can get a huge result with one working, but this idea combines the notion of working in the physical world and working with magic to get the desired results, while conditioning the self to make the needed steps, both physically and metaphysically. It is possible to do a great enchantment to pass a test, but it's probably still more likely (given the constraints of the story that academics condition in us) that you will do better if you have a plan that involves studying.

By looking at that end goal as the ending of the story, we can look at each step in the process as an outline for producing an award-winning novel of our life. That story and creation is ultimately the reward of the process itself, and it can only be given and received by ourselves. We can take each step in the plan and invest it with the desired informational energy content by controlling our moods and thinking. When we do this, we are extremely

likely to get the results we have been working toward. This technique is a kind of binding to a particular goal or story. We are willfully putting on blinders to move forward in a story we are creating by and for ourselves. If we willfully let the "excitement" and "joy" of the end goal infect us, we can joyfully and willfully take each step.

For this to work-and it does work-you must strive to make each step a fun adventure in itself. That is largely a story about each step. If you can stay happy and have fun at each step, the story will surely manifest eventually. This process does imply, however, that achieving a goal of note is a sacrifice of time, energy, and will. I will go so far as to relate each magical operation to a long-term goal while I am striving for that huge goal. This is a bit "obsessive," but if you don't strive for some balance, it's easy to burn out on the process (so you have to build things like relaxation into the process). If at any point, you stop feeling that it's fun, you need to go have some fun and possibly get away from the end goal for a short time.

Events will occur that may not have been part of the original outline. No story would be complete without unexpected plot twists in both good and bad directions, but we can decide how those events fit into the story and the meaning we gave the story in the first place. Of course, if they thematically don't fit, we can apply meaning that leads to a more favorable story (or change the thematic elements within ourselves).

Sometimes, the events of the story might skip over steps or come faster than you expected. Once the subconscious mind understands that you are committed to a greater goal, you might just get it sooner than you expect. Magic is. In this, you are becoming the goal, but as with any other story or perspective we can tell, it is only a temporary change.

Obviously, I can't tell you what goals to choose, but I do think that the process of magical development we have discussed will help you clarify what you want and enable you to achieve it. I do recommend that if you set yourself up for a goal-oriented process like this, do have a secondary goal in line for when you finish the first (otherwise, you might feel a bit lost after finishing the first goal).

Fiction, Manifested Reality, and Astral Whammies

As stated, creating a story of the events you want to manifest with suitable imaginative investment often is enough to bring about those results. Part of the issue is imaginative investment and buying the "dogma" of your own story. If you have been experimenting with the story techniques we've discussed, you might find this much easier, especially if the "new" story about what you want is consistent with the internal themes currently present in your chosen story. One way to do astral magic within your astral temple is to get into a deep enough trance and then invest enough emotive-imaginative force to support the story you are creating by imagining it with your five senses enfolding in front of you and allowing yourself to feel fantastic about it. This is a powerful technique, but sometimes it doesn't work, especially when the internal story is not consistent with the story being created.

One idea I have been experimenting with is to link symbolic forms representing real-world events or processes (like those we have created), feed these forms into astral constructs, and then manipulate both the forms and astral constructs into a "conceived story within my mind," which I then physically write down or draw out. So far the results have been promising. Piecing together the specifics of the technique is an exercise for you to do on your own. Or, if you want, talk to me in person at seminars, in classes, or over coffee. My metaphorical stories will be entirely different from yours, but you have some suggested Lego blocks to build your own story in your own way.

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Cycles of Moving

In the beginning of the book, I said that this adventure was the result of a rather extreme initiation into techniques and procedures of magic. This is the book that would have made my life a lot easier during the initial stages of that process.

But now that you have gone so far in the adventure, there is one thing that I should mention: magical initiations never end, and my initiation into magic continues every day.

For me, magic is a process that does not end. I know other people who try to put it away on a shelf, but eventually it gets pulled down and demands attention. It is a journey and not an end state.

Grounding in Results, Taking a Shot of Humble Pie

Many people will claim fantastic mystical powers, but changing your own life to have more of what you want (which in turn will change others' lives around you), changing yourself to alter your own patterns and limitations, and directly altering the world around you in tangible ways are all litmus tests against unfounded fantasies. Ultimately, the individual mostly decides what success is. A. 0. Spare retreated from the world to concentrate on art. He was poor, but he did produce some stunningly evocative paintings. Was this success? Only A. O. Spare would know the answer for himself. Everyone else offering opinions is expressing value judgments based on their own internal criteria.

The realities that I might want to manifest should and can be different from any reality that any other adventurer might want, and that is perfectly acceptable. "Reality" as a whole doesn't seem to care. We come back to the first chapters on deconditioning external influences and banishing. There are many techniques in this adventure, but really there is only one reader reading this right now. Know yourself and do what works for you by experimenting with different ideas.

In some cases, success is far worse than failure. Equally problematic to mere fantasy is the overwhelming desire to "control, manipulate, and destroy," which is associated with the state called magititus. This is the state when magicians enter hubris, disregard their own practice, and slip into a sort of fantasy world. In other cases, magicians might indeed practice like they should, but they disregard any "consequences" In this adventure, I have said very little about ethics, leaving you, the reader, to decide for yourself. However, actions do produce reactions. If you are going around cursing people all the time, someone might get upset and do something about it (or a group of people might do something about it). That is just common sense. Likewise, if you always go around helping people with magic, it won't be in the best interest of some individual, thing, or group, and that person, thing, or group might do something about it. Given the contents of your personal story, however, that event can be a tremendous part of the story. It's all too easy to slip down the rabbit hole till you believe yourself immortal, all-powerful, etc. Of course, there are those people who slip so far into the magical processes that they are unable to function in "consensual reality." This is a real risk of successful magical operations, since the process helps to destroy that notion of limited reality, which is a lot like the safety on a gun. If we remove the safety, we can hurt ourselves (but in my opinion, the other option is far worse).

Real-world results help ground you in the here and now. If you get too arrogant, just take a knife, give yourself a very small prick or very small cut (of course don't seriously hurt yourself), and will yourself to not bleed. If you don't bleed, congratulations: you really are that powerful, and by all means please contact me, since I will have a lot to ask you at your convenience. However, it probably will hurt a fair amount when you make the small cut (again be safe), and you probably will bleed, meaning that you are at least in a human body just like everyone else. Arrogance is just another limiting story. Choosing to stay stuck in that arrogant, ego-protecting story is a limiting belief that actually restricts your flexibility and ability to learn. But any story that we get stuck in can be limiting, and it can stop the process of magic. It's at these times that, for me, something weird seems to push the issue, break the stasis, and then start things moving forward again. The process of magic itself seems to do that when you

practice enough. Rewrite the story often till you acquire the flexibility to be anything.

Another Goal of the Book

Outside of the personal alchemy involved in writing the book, my hope is that this book will help each and every person out there do magic. I now offer you a challenge. Pick up any other book of magic or spells and get them to work. Have a friend pick the spellbook and then get results. Sit in a totally alien paradigm and be able to contribute on demand by understanding how the "components" map out your own senses. Then push out energy that matches your fellow magicians, who know a lot more about their systems. Go to a Catholic church and help make the mass really have oomph, and then go to a Wiccan ceremony and really call down the Goddess. If you can conceive of it, you can do it.

It doesn't matter if you are a Buddhist, Christian, Wiccan, Vodoui- sant, Goetia magician, or energy worker-the core idea of this book is that you can choose the methods you deem most appropriate (even a psalm), but the words are not enough. There is no poof, shazam solution that works. There is no easy path toward successful magic, despite what people will sell out there. However, if you can achieve the correct state of mind in a deep trance state, the words with the empowered visualization just might work, and with practice you can get them to work. The book represents my personal experience and opinions on some basic fundamentals of magical work that have been useful for me to document. Applying different ritual trappings and elements is often a matter of style and taste. Of course, some spirits and some people might have some opinions on the taste and style used, but the underlying principles contained in this adventure will help people better connect and make those rituals work. In some ways, this adventure is merely my story on this process, but it is a story I have at least tested. Of course, everyone may eventually develop their own story, which I hope they will do.

Fellow adventurer, I salute you! May your magic be as wondrous and fun as you can possibly imagine.

Thus ends my first act of personal written alchemy; may it virally spawn many fruitful changes in you and everyone you encounter.

The Introduction of Your Story

Please post your experiments on www.andriehvitimus.com. The space that follows is for your story-may it produce what you truly desire.

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