



Being a Witch

Many young people want to be a Witch. Unfortunately a lot of them have a very misguided idea of what Witches are really like and what it means to truly be one. I receive a lot of email on this subject and the impression of what we do and believe is disturbing. They see Witches as people with no religious path. People who spend the bulk of their time casting an endless array of spells to make everything in life go their way, with a library of spells for every occasion. This is not the life of a real Witch. Witches are people who are part of a Goddess based religion. They all worship mother earth and follow a code of ethics, "Harm None, Do As You Will".

Being a Witch takes a lot of effort, study and responsibility. Attuning with nature is vital to being a Witch. You can't worship mother earth if you have no connection to her, and worship of the earth is the basis of Witchcraft. Celebrating Sabbats and Esbats (full moon rituals) are the traditional ways to celebrate, honor and truly feel the life force of mother earth. They attune us with her constantly changing cycles.

Celebrating and participating in these rituals don't have to be elaborate ceremonies, the importance is to really experience and feel them. If one doesn't make a strong effort to attune themselves with the earth, they will never understand the path of a Witch or what it's like to truly be one.

Witches find joy, knowledge and enrichment in things that many people take for granted. We don't just celebrate and observe the wonders of our glorious planet on Sabbats, we do it every day. By listening to the song of a bird, or watching them soar in flight, squirrels scampering about, the power and beauty of a thunderstorm, the majesty of a tree, and spending time with the nature of our surroundings. We meditate while sitting under trees, at a lake or even in a public park. No matter where we live, we seek out the nature of our area and spend time connecting with it. These qualities also strengthen our power of observation. Because we take the time to connect with nature, we see a lot more of it than most people do. We notice a new spider web on a bush outside our home or a new birds nest, and even smaller things like the cocoon of a butterfly, a ladybug on a leaf, and the way the dew on grass catches the morning sun. The more time we spend in nature, the more we see, and the stronger our connection to her grows.

Witches also take on the task of getting in touch with themselves. Both the light and dark aspects of are beings are vital to explore. Part of being a Witch is trying to become the best person you can be. This is not possible unless one has the courage to journey within and understand themselves. This can be a very difficult journey, and we all have personal obstacles to overcome, but the benefits of learning who you really are, and working to overcome personal demons far out weighs the pain involved in doing so. We are all a part of mother earth, and to understand her and our connection to all life, we must understand the mysteries of ourselves as well. When things go wrong in our lives or we have bad experiences, we see them as lessons to learn from or challenges to overcome, not a reason to try out a new spell to make the problem go

away. Getting to know oneself is a long and never ending journey. Just as the more time we spend in nature the more of it we see, the same principal applies to getting to know oneself. The deeper we look, the more we find and understand.

Witches take full responsibly for their actions. There is no evil deity in our religion that we can blame for any misdeeds we do, and we know that it will come back to us in some form, be it karma or the three fold law. We carefully consider the ramifications of our actions, and what impact they may have on others. We are constantly working on sharpening and keeping skills that are important to our ways such as meditation and visualization, the tools we use to aid in our connection with the earth, worship, rituals and getting to know ourselves better.

Doing all of this takes a lot of effort. We are everyday people that go to school, have jobs, children, families and all of the mundane responsibilities everyone else has, like paying bills, cleaning and grocery shopping. We are just as busy as everyone else. We make time to connect with nature and ourselves, but we also go beyond that. We also work to do whatever we can to care for the earth, and harm her as little as possible. We strive to do things that make the world we worship a better place. We recycle, pick up litter, plant gardens and trees, put up bird feeders and/or houses, food for squirrels, donate to environmental charities, educate about the truth of our ways when ever we can, and more.

Reading a few books and initiating yourself dose not make you a Witch. Nor does casting spells. Witches read a great deal to understand the various concepts and aspects of the Craft and it's very important to study, but along with this one must also practice what they learn. The most important lessons to be learned will not come from a book, but from the practices and experiences a Witch has during their life. No two Witches will ever have the exact experiences, just as each has their own lessons and challenges to learn from.

Witches also learn from each other and should help each other whenever they can. No Witch, no matter how many years they practice will ever know 'all there is to know'. A Witch who has been practicing longer than someone else does not necessarily make them more knowledgeable. Everyone learns at their own pace, and just because someone hasn't been practicing as long as you doesn't mean you can't learn from them. Remember that a Witch is just a person, and each has their own unique outlook and perspective. Someone who is just beginning to learn our path should be encouraged to ask as many questions as they want, and never have to feel that they are asking a stupid question just because the answer is obvious to you.

Witches also have a responsibility in how they present themselves to others. Almost all of my friends are not Witches and knew absolutely nothing about the truth of our ways until they asked me about them. Whether we like it or not, Witches that are not 'in the broom closet' can find themselves in a position where they represent all Witches when dealing with people who do not know the truth of our ways. One Witch with a pompous attitude can cause a great deal of harm and cast a negative impression on all Witches and our beliefs. Just as someone who is half way through their first book pretending to know everything can. When asked to explain your beliefs to others, keep in mind that you

might be the only Witch this person will ever meet. Your impression and the information you provide can open a window of understanding that can spread from that person to their friends and so on. It can create a bridge of understanding and tolerance.

Being a Witch is not cool, glamorous, chic, trendy or a fad, and our religion is not about gaining power over others by abusing the magickal aspect of it to manipulate everything or everyone to your advantage. It is a joyous religion based on a deep love and respect of the God/dess and mother earth. It's a path where you take total responsibility for your actions. When someone is truly ready to be a Witch, they are choosing a religious path which involves following the 'harm none, do as you will' code of ethics. We are normal everyday people, but feel our lives are enriched in our connection with the God/dess and mother earth. We don't all have fancy tools and robes, and we don't have a dress code.

We each worship in our own way. What counts is the power of our convictions, and being true to ourselves and our ethics.

Being a Witch can be difficult. There are many that don't understand the truth of our ways, and sadly a great deal of people have no interest in trying to. Many Witches have to hide their beliefs out of fear, and those who don't can endure great hardships due to the many stereotypes that cause people to think we are evil. Deciding to follow the path of a Witch should only be done when you are absolutely certain that it is right for you, and you are willing to take on all of the responsibilities that goes along with being one.

If you want to be a Witch, it is vital to understand that Witchcraft is a religion. It is not a hobby to dabble in on occasion, nor a path to choose because of its magickal aspects. It's also not a path that can be learned or explained in a day, or an email. Study our ways carefully and fully. Take time to absorb and understand the information you read. Don't be in a rush to try and learn everything all at once. Practice the information you learn and keep records of them along with your feelings of the experiences you have. If it is truly the path for you...you will know.