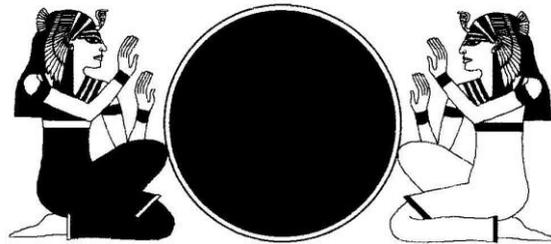


# Temple of the Dark Moon



## Becoming a Wytch

*By Frances Billinghamurst © April 2005*

There are many people today offering advice on how a person becomes a Wytch. Some people believe that a Wytch is born and not made, while others say that anyone can be a Wytch if they so choose. As spiritual beings, we all have the potential of following whatever path we wish, including that of the Craft. Just as being a Christian means (or should mean) adhering to the philosophies and ethics of that faith, as opposed to merely going to Church one in a while, the same can also be said about the Craft. By this I mean that there is more to being a Wytch than crafting a few spells or reading a book.

Unlike orthodox religions such as Christianity, where the philosophies and ethics are recorded in a book (the Bible in this case), with the Craft there are no such book of rules and regulations. While some detractors view this simply because the Craft does not have any ethics, they could not be further from the truth. While there may be no Ten Commandments that oversee how a Wytch should conduct themselves, the majority adhere to the Universal laws, those which govern not only humans, but also the rest of the world and its other inhabitants. The onus is therefore largely placed upon the Wytch to take full responsibility for all their actions, including thoughts as well as deeds - something that can be more daunting in actuality than at first glance, especially to those coming to the Craft from a more orthodox background.

In days gone by, the practices of the Craft were handed down within close family groups, or those who were considered kin. It was largely oral with philosophies and ethics taught by example - when this was not appropriate, the decision was left to the student. Today, despite the numerous amount of material that appears to be available, this can still be perceived as the same. The Craft is largely taught by self knowledge and personal experience. A teacher, whether an author of a book or a leader of a group, can only provide the seeker with the information needed - it is up to the actual seeker to find the answer - which is usually within themselves.

Over the course of time, man-made guidelines have found themselves being incorporated into the teachings of the Craft. Today probably one of the better known guidelines is that of the "Wiccan Rede", where the last two lines state, "*An it harm none, do what thy will*". The actual meaning of this guideline has been the subject of numerous debates over the

years, but most agree that it can be likened to other versions of the "Golden Rule" including the Christian saying, "Do unto others as you would have done unto you".

Other guidelines pertaining to the Craft and how followers should conduct themselves, can be found in other literature, including the "Charge of the Goddess", wherein the Goddess advises that "... there be beauty and strength, power and compassion, honour and humility, mirth and reverence within you". These virtues should be considered by anyone interesting in learning about the Craft and how they should conduct themselves.

The general perception of Wytches and Wytchcraft is usually one surrounding amazing powers which have been obtained through the use of particular ceremonies and spells. However the truth to the practices of Wytchcraft are more mundane than this. The Craft is largely about growing within your own spirituality, realising that we are all part of an interconnected web that surrounds us and the world in which we live. After realisation that we are part of this web, Wytches learn how to weave it which enables us to observe the way in which the natural world operates. After all, the Craft is primarily about working with the natural energies, and learning how to tap into them. But this web is accessible to everyone.

Wytchcraft is a life changing path and one that should not be taken lightly. It changes your perception on the world in which you live and therefore this change does affect all those around you in one way or another. You will find yourself relating to people and circumstances differently and this will not go unnoticed, especially amongst your family and friends. So if you desire to become a Wytch, you should prepare yourself for such changes, because once the study begins, it cannot be undone.

To become a Wytch is to realise the change within yourself, that you have the power to change things about yourself if you really want to. Encountering and understanding the ancient Gods and Goddesses of the Craft takes a lot of time and energy, but it will happen to those who persist with it. The same goes to say about working with magick and connecting with nature.

Ask yourself why you want to become a Wytch? What draws you to this path? There is more to being a Wytch than what is depicted in shows such as "Charmed" and movies like "The Craft" and "Practical Magic". For the most part, the Craft involves a lot of hard work. Patience and dedication are two of the key words and skills that the novice will soon become aware of. A third I believe should be tolerance, especially towards those who do not understand or share your new found spiritual path.

Once your decision is made that the Craft is the path for you, then you have made your first step. There are numerous books available from which you can learn what the practices of becoming a Wytch involve. However you need to put this newly gained knowledge into actuality because the Craft is about actually "walking the walk" as opposed to merely "talking the talk". Groups such as the Temple of the Dark Moon offer courses and workshops, as well as open gatherings (such as the Temple's Full Moon Gatherings) which are specifically designed to assist the novice to gain practical experience.

To the argument as to whether Wytches are born or made, have you ever read something about the Craft and realised that it was explaining everything you already knew? Or that it was like "coming home"? These are probably two main comments I get from students undertaking the Temple's courses. People are drawn to the study of the Craft for some reason or another. Sometimes they do not even know, but a chain of events happens and here they are.

No one is born into a particular religion, or spiritual belief, however we can be born into the family that does follow one. And it is through the regular rites and teachings, the participation and indoctrination of our family that we follow that particular path. If the calling is not a true one, one that we can embrace with every aspect of our soul, then at some point within our lives, we stop following that initial faith. If we are of a spiritual nature, then we investigate other faiths and paths to determine what calls our soul. For some people it is Christianity, while for others it is Buddhism or even Islam. However, for people like myself, it is the Craft.

About the Author:

Frances has been a student of metaphysics and the occult for most of her life, with her formal training having commenced in 1993. She has been initiated into the Alexandrian Wicca tradition, with interests also in ceremonial magick, the Qabalah and traditional Wytchcraft.

After founding the Temple of the Dark Moon in 1999, Frances spent some six years as secretary for the Pagan Alliance Inc (SA) where she worked closely with both the Police and Attorney General with respect to changes in legislation. She has led rituals with Chief Druid, Philip Carr-Gomm, and occult philosophy Ramsay Dukes, as well as presented lectures at various national and international events.

Frances regularly writes for *Insight*, Australia's number one spiritual lifestyle magazine, with her articles also appearing in over 10 separate publications, including *Spellcraft*, *The Cauldron*, *Circle* and the Llewellyn's *Witch's Calendar*. She has further essays in a number of anthologies including *The Faerie Queens*, *Unto Herself: A Devotional Anthology for Independent Goddesses*, and *Memento Mori*.

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