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UUID: 8F59F969-B77B-CC9D-451D-10A200F31BA2

Recommended Citation:

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Perfect Love and Perfect Trust

by Dagda, November 2010, originally posted on <http://worthyadvisor.wordpress.com> 

It's the time of year that always reminds me about when I left my old coven. I get pretty introspective this time of year, and I do a lot of looking back on where I was and where I've come from. It's only been the last two or three years that it hasn't punched me in the gut or made me want to hide under the covers. What I have been doing is learning from the experience. Learning what is and is not ok in a coven. Learning what is and is not ok about spiritual teaching and being a spiritual teacher. Discovering that the things I learned from the coven weren't all bad. And forgiving myself for the times that I didn't stand up for others, but acknowledging that I know now when it's really necessary to do so.

I was reading the [LiveJournal entries that I made in 2005](#)  when I first moved to California earlier this evening, and I'm amazed how far I've come in the last five years. I have an amazing and beautiful wife, good friends, an emerging coven, my third degree (my prediction was correct), I'm making magick again, and I'll be going to seminary next year. It surprises me to read that, knowing where I am now. It also makes me sad that something that was good and influenced my spiritual life became so bad and ugly. But now, in my practice, I can help those who have been there because I know. I've felt that helplessness, that feeling that I was never, and would never be good enough to please him.

Michael, my former coven leader broke the most important tenant of our vows and initiation: Perfect Love and Perfect Trust.

What do I mean by "Perfect Love and Perfect Trust"? In the [Open Source Alexandrian initiation](#), "Perfect Love and Perfect Trust" are the passwords to get into the circle. When I was revising the initiation for our own use, I left these words in because I felt that it was one of the most important parts of the ritual. You are entering the circle with the expectation that you will be fully accepted as you are, now, at this point in time. There will be no ridicule, no embarrassment. You are loved as an equal. You are also entering the circle with the expectation that what is said there is sacred and confidential. That what happens in a given circle will not go past the boundaries of that circle, unless you allow it. You also enter with the expectation that you will get support and care as a member of the coven. Perfect love and perfect trust are really the foundations of being in a coven. Without it, the coven falls apart.

But this oath, this expectation, is what occurs in our coven. In our private rituals, we are safe, because we have made the agreement to do so.

This doesn't always happen. There can be times where it isn't, as in my former coven. The last few times I actually circled with them, it felt weird, as if I was in a washing machine that was unbalanced. It even felt as jarring. And it wasn't just jarring for me, but for everyone in the circle. Micheal, of course, blamed me and his partner for this unbalance, but it was the mistrust and abuse that we got at his hands that really made it bad. I have felt this a few times since I've started circling and going to more pagan events here, and I've always not gone back.

Magick, the deep, personal growth type of magick, is a very intimate experience. There is a lot of magick I wouldn't even consider doing without people I trust implicitly. There have been some public rituals that I've questioned because of the nature of magick involved. What bothers me is that a lot of people go in expecting that all witches and pagans follow the Perfect Love and Perfect Trust rule. Especially in public rituals and open circles. But this isn't always the case. What I've learned, though, is that when something doesn't feel right, it's time to leave. Sometimes it's time to run. You don't have to go back to circles that aren't serving you, even if you've gotten initiation from them.

Perfect Love and Perfect Trust is a mutual agreement. If it is not returned, you are allowed to go. You are breaking no oaths and you are not betraying anyone by being true to yourself.

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