

By (Witchhazel) Hazel &  
(Aisling mac Og) Wil

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## **These are some thoughts, opinions and general guides**

Pagan is an umbrella term that encompasses nearly all non-abrahamaic religions, paths or lifestyles. Being Pagan doesn't even mean that you would participate in a magical Circle or Ritual. Being Pagan further does NOT mean that you are of Wica, an American Eclectic Wiccan, or are a BTW/AE Witch. For that matter in today's Neo-Pagan communities being a Wiccan doesn't even necessarily mean you are a Witch or a practitioner of magick. Other common pagan traditions include: Druidism, Asatru, Odinist, Kemetic, Strega, Greco-Romani, Ceremonial Magick, Dianic, Golden Dawn, Faery "Fae", Native American Shaman and more.

Wiccans and witches do not believe in Satan, nor do they believe in evil. You must have both dark and light, creation and chaos to obtain a good personal balance. This balance is one of the first things you wish to achieve before pursuing any true magickal practice.

Rituals and Circles are how most Pagan traditions celebrate the various changes in nature, the turning of the natural wheel and the solar/lunar cycles. These festivities mostly occur on the 8 sabbats known by various names (Yule, Imbolc, Ostara, Beltane, Litha, Lughnasadh, Mabon and Samhain) and the 12 possible full moons. However, there are also the 12 new moons that hold magickal significance, the esbats as well as many others across a wide spectrum of traditions.

While there are huge possibilities and it would be easy to take these things lightly, ritual and magickal work are serious business. At least they should be approached as such. There should be a good purpose to perform Ritual/Magick Circle, however personal Circles, and gatherings can and should be enjoyed on a lighter scale. As a rule of thumb you may have a Circle without a Ritual, but you can NOT have a Ritual without a Circle. Ritual circles are cast in certain ways for your

protection. You should not and do not need to formally Call the Four Quarters unless you are doing a Ritual Circle, or need extra protection during a personal/group Magickal Circle. If it's not a serious occasion feel free to leave the Quarters, Guardians and Elements out of your day.

Generally you should not be intoxicated or be on any mentally altering substance before entering a Ritual Circle. As mentioned previously, balance and a deep self awareness are a must for ritual work. You should be mentally and physically healthy to practice Magick and/or enter a Ritual/Magickal Circle.

Many people in the USA practice what is called American Eclectic Wicca and/or are American Eclectic Witches. Trad Wica and Trad Witches in the USA usually started out as AE Wiccan/Witches and then became initiated and trained through BTW lineage. Trad and American Eclectic are NOT the same.

**Pagan:** a people or community observing a polytheistic religion; a member of a religious, spiritual, or cultural community based on the reverence of nature or the earth; a person who believes in a higher being(s) that is not a Christian, Jew, or Muslim. Any non-abrahamaic religious belief system or life style.

**Wicca/Wiccan:** a nature-oriented Religion having rituals and practices derived from pre-Christian religious beliefs, which honors both a male and female divine principles.

**Witch:** a person who practices magick; a practitioner of a Nature-based religion founded on ancient beliefs, which honors both a male and female divine principle and includes the practice of magick, healing magick, and divination.

**Trad (BTW):** is the wording used to group a set of Wica traditions originating in the New Forest region of England. These traditions are *Gardnerian Wica* and *Alexandrian Wica*. It is lineage based and initiatory required via cross gender. (Golden Dawn is a Trad as well but not of BTW lineage.)

A common thread in coming to this Path is that No one way is Made to be correct or right (except in BTW Trad). Again, these are My opinions and how I feel and

prefer to do My Path. When I am at events that are not mine I follow the coordinators to the best of my ability.

## Sacred Space

**Sacred Space:** The power of sacred spaces is in a temporary and/or virtual space; normally an invisible component of a personal or community experience. The Circle and energy within it is that experience, and ceases to exist without its sacredness. To dwell in that sacredness requires not only that one perceive it, but to maintain that perception requires discipline, faith and a profound sense of love and respect for the members.

You can create SS anywhere/any time that you will not be disturbed usually during a meditative state of higher consciousness. It is important to understand that sacred space within ones physical world is an iconic parallel to the sacred space that lives within us. This is why we as Pagans see deep meditation as one of the primary tools in achieving wholeness and balance.

**SS for your home:** This can vary from space to space. It is usually maintained as SS once it is created (i.e. a cupboard, side table, shelf, etc.). It should not be terribly accessible or highly trafficked to everyone/anyone as touching and interaction by others can change the energy of the space.

**SS for Magickal use:** Whether indoors or outside, it too should be free of outside influences that can change the energy of the space. Indoors you will usually use your home SS location. Outdoors you will create SS, work your magick and then release the space.

**SS for Ritual:** Indoors or outdoors you create SS, work your Ritual and release the SS (also see creating a Ritual Circle).

**Creating SS:** Must be done with absolute intent. You must have salt, water, fire, incense, your personal items (i.e.: rocks/gems, statues, candle sticks, etc.). You have mentally prepared and you are not physically ill. You have cleansed and charged all personal items prior (this can be done in similar style to creating SS). Add the salt to your water, lite your incense. Sprinkle the salt water onto and

around your SS area (don't drown it as you don't want any potential salt water damage). Then fan the incense around the area. Give your Blessings and state with clear and absolute intent that this is now SS.

Items you will always need for personal/public Ritual work: athame, water, sea salt, incense, lighter/matches, bowl, chalice, two plates, candles (minimum two), maybe a broom as well but an athame can be used in its stead.

You may have other items: statues/pictures, of Deity, broom, Quarter candles, some also have Cross Quarters, wand, sword

### **Altar set-up**

**Altar set-up:** You must have everything that you need for your Ritual on or accessible to the center Altar. *The front of the Altar ALWAYS faces North* top left corner Goddess candle left side chalice/cup (below candle), below chalice bell, offering plate next to cup and bell place wand, next to wand place the water bowl center censor, then below that is the pentacle top right corner God candle right side extra incense (below candle), magickal items for Ritual, "cake" plate, next to that is the athame, next to that is the sea salt dish.

**Underneath the Altar:** would be any individual cups that others may choose to bring for personal use. The offerings or magickal items can be stored there until needed. Sword/broom can be placed there until closing.

If doing an outside Ritual your Alter should be made secure on as level a ground as possible. Also having edges around it would be helpful so that items don't fall/slide off as easily.

### **Rituals vs Gatherings**

A Gathering may have a reason but it doesn't have to be an actual formal Ritual. A Ritual or Magick workings MUST have intent, planning, and have energy raised and released.

You may have a gathering for an Sabbat, Esbat, or just because you want to spend some time with “like minded” people. At any gathering you may/will acknowledge your reason for being together, but unless everyone at that gathering practices as a Witch or is actually of Wica or Wiccan there would be no real need for a Formal Ritual or Circle for any gathering. At a gathering you may have Witches/Wica/Wiccans that may conduct a Ritual (at a public Trad event everything is done as AE because it would have “non-initiates” attending). Not everyone at the gathering would or should be allowed to participate in said Ritual. All would be welcome to watch and learn but not necessarily to enter unless they share the same intent and hopefully path. It is greatly suggested that all within the circle be practitioners. Again, just because you’re Pagan doesn’t necessarily include being a practicing witch or practitioner.

A Ritual or Magickal working whether AE or Trad is done for a Purpose as stated above. It is scripted/practiced, prepared for (fully coordinated), with full intent prior to creating a Circle. It is participated and done by Witches/Wica/Wiccans. Not everyone should randomly participate in a Ritual or Magickal work as they may change the intent of that Act. Also they may not be prepared for and know how to handle and/or release energies during and after said Acts (without this knowledge they Can or could have negative personal “side effects”). Often children under the age of 16 - 18, unless they have been raised in a Practicing family would be allowed in a Ritual or Magickal working. Their energies are often random and are or can be uncontrollable, with detrimental effects to them and said Acts. On another note a Ritual or Magickal Workings can be performed by same gender groups with “Full” effects. In Trad as well as my personal preference they are done with a Male Priest and Female Priestess. Fully coordinated Rituals and Magickal works will vary from group, Sabbat, Esbat, region, etc. Only the initiated BTW “workings” will NOT vary much.

In closing may we add this: A path is a personal journey and a recipe for your wholeness and life success. To be a practitioner means you embark on a journey to find the perfect recipe for yourself. Recipes are tried and proven yes, yet everybody has their own personal favorites. Try much and save what works.