



DIANA'S  
GROVE

# Between The Worlds Patterns of Possibility

Diana's Grove Mystery School

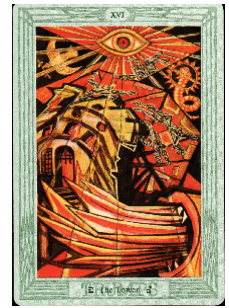
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## The Tower



A Tower is a shrine, an outlook, an overlook, a turret of defense, a way to rise above the ground and see it all. A tower takes us into the sky. It brings us closer to our perceived heaven. It lets us rise above the crowd. It separates us. It isolates us. Isolation is alienation's tool. Alienation is the only sin.

The Tower is the second card in the third or final row of the Tarot's Major Arcana. First, the Devil; then, the Tower. Facing the Devil, masses of hot and cold air meet. Turbulent realities come together. Did you think the Devil would just say "yes?" Did you think he would say, "*Sure. Here's your soul back.*" Did you mean to say... "Give me a full refund and...keep the *change.*"

Change is what the Tower is all about. Change. Big change. Not a *let's rearrange the furniture* kind of change but an *Oh my god, the house is gone* kind of change. For the Tower, this is a life-defining moment. For the lightning, it's all in a day's work.

Lightning strikes the standing structure. It's nothing personal. The storm did not choose its path to inconvenience the Tower or the tower dwellers. Nor will the lightning change its path to

answer the prayers of those who discover they are living in the path of reality's approaching storm. Who builds a tower in such a precarious place? You do. You do and I do. We all do. It is the nature of us *tower builders* to build towers. We build them so we will be dry and safe when the storm comes. We build them so we will be closer to the sky and to the place where the lightning originates. We build them so those we love can find their way home. We build them so we can watch the clouds gather. We build them so we can predict the weather. We build...and we believe in the permanence of that which we build. Do you hear thunder?

We build our Towers with the bricks we make out of our days; well-made bricks; well-made days. All of those days we spend in the library studying nature.... The years we spend alone, consumed by our devotion to the philosophy of community and interpersonal dynamics. The years we work on our relationship with our partners, parents or children by conversing with our therapists and writing in our journals. Towers. Who builds a Tower? I do. You do. We all do. And, then, we face the devil and a storm begins to brew. The lightning strikes.

Awakening. Upheaval. Insight. Life-changing insight. The illusion - that we need a Tower to reach the sky - crumbles. We escape the prison of our own creation. We fall from the heights and, as we do, we discover that the sky goes all the way to the ground. The Gods we seek don't dwell above us, they walk among us. The Goddesses are everywhere. Heaven bends to touch the earth. We need to build the Tower but we don't need the Tower...not forever, anyway. We need to build the Towers that confine us. We need to

be liberated from them. Each card holds a place in the human formula. This one is in the place of being released...from an illusion, from a reality, from a creation that confines us, from a comfort that protects us, from a defense that isolates us, from a truth that no longer serves us.

Alienation: alien - not belonging to. Estranged, foreign, not allied, adverse to, other than, separate from, not a part of.... To make ourselves *other than*, to label another *other than*.

## Sailing the Face of Mystery, Come What May: Crisis as a key to spiritual development

By Matt Guynn

For some time, I have been imagining that worldviews and self-images are like boats or rafts. The ocean, for me, represents unfathomable and incomprehensible Mystery and I like to dream that my self-image, my identity, or my worldview are vessels that permit me to drift out onto the face of the unknown.

Imagine for a moment that we are afloat upon the ocean. Our rafts are our theological beliefs, our spiritual or political worldviews, our self-images. Each of us is constantly adrift on a fleet of rafts: as pagans, Christians, mystics, agnostics, Jews, or Buddhists, as Republicans or Democrats, as women and men and transgender people, as people of any group or worldview. We have inherited a whole flotilla of vessels, and we have built our own little skiffs of self-identity. What are some of the rafts you are floating on?

Even as each boat tosses on the waves, the crew works to reshape its hull, re-sew its sail; to modify parts of its design that no longer serve. Some of us deconstruct or strengthen our rafts along the way. Some of us drift along watching the sky. Some work on repairs or re-design. Each of us makes decisions about what to celebrate as truth, what stories to live by as we float along on our rafts, what self-images we wish to develop, tinkering with all these as we sail along on the

sea, the Ultimate Mystery.

In moments of crisis, forces we don't understand lap up over the cracks in the rafts. For me, this swamping has happened in situations I can't control, in relationships that are troublesome, when fundamental questions won't let me go. My raft turns out to be no longer seaworthy. My self-identity gets capsized by an interpersonal tidal wave or a social hurricane. Or a new vista appears and I suddenly know that I can't get there from here on my current vessel. Sometimes, I don't even know I am floating on a certain raft until the unknown comes up through its cracks.

I think of when I realized that it made no sense for me that God was a man. That raft suddenly wouldn't float for me anymore. Mystery had just lapped up over the raft too many times. I made a Goddess raft then but, once I mused on it for a little while longer, the Divine being solely a woman no longer floated either – somehow the gender of the Divine was bigger than I could keep in a raft...or else I just needed a raft that was bigger. Waves of Mystery kept lapping at me.

Crises of faith, of self-responsibility, of self-determination, are all ways that my raft gets shown for what it is: capsized, weathered, or

damaged. Ever feel as if you are drowning? What tosses your raft off course? When has your raft turned out to be no longer sea-worthy?

For me, spiritual development is about becoming wise in the ways of the sea. Crises, or storms, have some predictable patterns. We can learn to know how they affect us and how to steer our vessels through them. We can learn to build ships that are seaworthy or storm-ready. Sometimes,

storms just toss us around, but the current vessel is still seaworthy. Sometimes storms show that our current vessel simply won't work any longer.

Learning to steer through both storm and calm, repairing damaged rafts, or even redesigning our craft mid-journey – that is to say, becoming an astute crew-member and ship-builder – for me, this is the process of spiritual growth.

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*More about Matt Guynn can be found in our Interview with a Mystery column on page 13*

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## **Musings from Shadows: My Tower is Shattered, but I'm not Falling**

by Jane Holt

The wonder is that I'm still standing. No, the real wonder is that I'm still alive. My tower is shattered. It lies in pieces at my feet, but I'm still standing. What I believed was true yesterday is not longer true today. Who I thought I was and what I believed I would be doing with my life are different today than they were yesterday.

Before my tower crumbled I believed that, if I ever let it fall, if I ever let the world touch me too deeply, if I stopped hanging onto my chosen identities and roles so tightly, if I admitted to my internal paradoxes and contradictions, if I stopped trying to be perfect, if I let go of control...I believed I would fall to my death. I believed that if I stopped holding my tower together, if I dropped my defenses, if my life fell apart, I would die...or at least disappear. Now, I stand here quite bemused and curious. What I expected to happen hasn't happened at all. The tower is gone, scattered all around me, and I'm ok.

As I stoop to inspect a shard, I am distractedly objective. After the end of June I will no longer be living at Diana's Grove. How odd, I think. I never intended that. What an interesting role this shard was once a part of, I think. Now that role is no longer part of my foreseeable future. I had plans

but so, it seems, did my soul, and they were different plans.

I always assumed the danger to my tower was external. I believed that the danger to the structure and security of my life came from the outside. I guarded well against what I saw as external threats. I never saw the gradual internal erosion. I didn't think the explosion would come from within. And, actually, in the end, I didn't explode the tower at all. I simply pushed it over. It had been leaning for a long time.

This has not been an easy process. The decision to leave the Grove has been, and continues to be, a very difficult one. The process, the struggle between my soul and my ego, started well over a year ago. By late last summer I was deeply depressed. I've been depressed before but not this deeply. An anti-depression drug helped and I stepped back from many responsibilities in order to relieve the stress on my system. There was a huge crack in my tower. Actually, more like half the wall was missing. My main task last fall was to begin accepting myself as being simply human; not perfect, not even perfectible. That meant I could no longer try to save the world or even make everything perfect. I could only strive to be

myself. Last summer was the beginning of my tower shattering.

When that first tower split apart I fell for months. Gradually I began to notice the world going by as I fell. I began to notice myself. I fell for a long time. That long fall through the autumn and early winter gave me an opportunity to learn to observe. There wasn't much else I could do. I discovered that grabbing at various things such as old roles and things I thought I knew to be true was painful. The very action of grabbing at things to stop my fall actually accelerated the speed of my fall.

The paradox is that nothing stopped my fall until I stopped trying to stop falling. As I began to accept myself for who I was and am rather than who I thought I should be, my fall began to slow down. There was a moment when I thought the process had stopped. But that was simply the outer tower, the roles I had created to face the world. The inner tower still stood: the roles I created so that I could face myself. There were cracks in those walls as well. As soon as I began to really listen to myself, those cracks began to widen.

The masks I use to face myself are similar to the masks I use to face the world. I am okay if I have your approval. I will be whoever I think you want me to be because if you like me then it will be ok for me to be alive. I tried very hard to fit in. I want so much to belong to something I believe in deeply. I wanted to fit and I wanted to belong. I want to be part of something larger and grander than who I believe I am. If I am an important part of something wonderful than I might also be wonderful. If I was needed by a grand vision than I was needed by life.

I believed that if I was perfect or at the very least struggled to be perfect than I could belong someplace. I tried to be a perfect human. Is perfect human an oxymoron? I'm not sure. I do know that, when I finally started listening to myself, I realized I had to rearrange some of my thinking. I realized to be perfectly human meant that I was perfectly imperfect. My humanness is made up of imperfections, paradoxes, conflicts and contradictions.

I have so much to learn about being human. For me, some of that learning needs to be done away from Diana's Grove. I am leaving because it is the right thing to do for myself. That is what my soul has been telling me for the last year, perhaps longer. I didn't want to hear what my soul was telling me. I stubbornly resisted listening. The thought of leaving Diana's Grove and this community wasn't something I wanted to do. It was something I didn't think I could do. It is something I still don't want to do, but I know that it is the right decision. But what do I do with all these scattered pieces of who I believed I was and what I thought my life was all about?

And what do I do with all these feelings? I may not be falling anymore but I have lots of feelings. I feel naked and vulnerable. I feel tender and aware of how touched I am by the last seven years. I feel scared and very uncertain. I feel light and relieved. I feel unencumbered. I feel heavy with grief at leaving. I feel alone and yet better connected than ever. I feel both euphoric and sad. I feel very human. I cry and I laugh. I'm in mourning and I'm beginning to plan for a different life. I feel very privileged to be alive and surrounded by those who care about me.

I'm still standing. I am alive.

## Astrology - Honing the Hero

by Teri Parsley-Starnes

"Desperate times call for desperate measures." A proverb.

"These are the times that try men's souls." Thomas Paine

The Tower card is shown daily on the nightly news. It is always with us - this destruction, chaos, and crisis. What does your belly tell you to do when the world is in flames? What action or inaction compels you? Do you fling aside all the rationale you have for acting with coolness and clarity? Do you resolve to act more consciously, without rest? Do you find yourself going into survival mode? What does that look like to you? There are as many responses to the Tower as there are individual birth charts. What calls us to act when we face crisis? What are our patterns of action? We are looking at the connection between the Tower and the planet Mars - our ally of action and passion.

I think of the planets as allies. They are archetypes or gods who step into our life stories in order to help, enlighten, and challenge us. They are undeniable parts of our personalities. They are forces to reckon with. Mars and the Sun work together as allies of our heroic mission in life. The Sun represents what we are striving for and Mars represents how we will respond to that calling. Liz Greene calls Mars "the right hand of the Sun." Mars tells the story of our heroic journey, the armor we will wear, the horse we will ride, the challenges we will face, the resources we will discover on the way, and the transformation we will undergo as we confront crisis. And Mars is more than that. Mars is the adrenaline that rises when we are angry or threatened. Mars is the ally that says action must be taken; changes must be made. Mars helps us respond to crisis and Mars is often the cause of crisis.

On the Tower card drawn by Pamela Colman Smith the lightning bolt hitting the tower is an arrow. There is also an arrow in the glyph for the planet Mars, which is the same as the universal symbol for man, a circle with an arrow attached pointing out to the right. The circle represents

wholeness and perfection. The arrow leads us away from the stasis of the circle, which, even if it is perfect, can feel like a prison. The Tower is the circle and Mars is the initiator of change to that structure. I wonder how to work with this ally of destruction. Can I heal the negative patterns of my Mars in order to more consciously use this force for change? Can I embrace the positive patterns of my Mars in order to transform into the hero I am meant to be?

All archetypes have their usefulness. Even the Tower is necessary at times. To heal and embrace Mars I look at the signs that Mars rules. Knowing where a planet feels most comfortable and powerful, the signs of its rulerships, gives information about this ally. Before Pluto was discovered, Mars ruled both Scorpio and Aries; now Pluto shares rulership of Scorpio. These are two very different places for Mars to feel comfortable. In Aries, a cardinal fire sign, Mars takes leadership to build new structures, to tell new stories. In Scorpio, a fixed water sign, Mars surrenders form to take the journey for soul retrieval. Really, these two stations for Mars are the significant turning points in every heroic journey. In the beginning, the hero hears the call and initiates a journey that is unknown. Initially, it is enough to be willing and foolishly brave. Along the way, the time that tries his soul will initiate him into the underworld of shadow and death. This is the realm of Scorpio.

Aries Mars is courageous and Scorpio Mars is passionate. Aries Mars builds and Scorpio Mars tears down. The Towers are built and the Towers are torn down, both by Mars.

What does Mars, the ally, want from us? I see the toxic expressions of Mars all around me on the nightly news and sometimes when I am fearful and angry, I see it in myself. This toxic expression wants to project blame rather than take

responsibility, destroy instead of grieve, hate instead of love. The image of the Tower is an incredibly potent image of power and it is a power that resides in all of us. It tells me that the Mars power is not limited to destruction but is also about the courage to change, to surrender, and to begin again. Before Mars was relegated to being a war god, he was the Roman god of agriculture. Still, I think Mars as an ally wants to be honored again for the cycle of life and death. He wants to remind us of our heroic participation in and responsibility for creation and destruction.

Here is a Martian experiment inspired by Caroline Casey in her book, "Making the Gods Work For You." To honor Mars, choose a Tuesday, the day of the week sacred to Mars, and devote yourself to passion. Act on an issue of importance, grieve with ferocity, laugh with abandon, begin a heroic journey, or strike down the walls of your prison. Give honor to your Mars as a teacher and an awakener. The Tower tells me that no structure, even the bleakest prison of toxic Mars can last forever. In a flash, we can change.

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## My Favorite Places

### The View from the Top of the Hill

by Jane Holt

The view from the top of the hill is wonderful this time of year. It invigorates my soul. It is filled with the vitality of life returning. It changes quickly. Each day evolves out of the day before. The scene is similar, the story familiar. There just seems to be more of everything every day...especially after it rains.

When I started writing this article, the hills on the other side of the valley were dotted with white flowering Dogwood trees surrounded by the pastels of emerging leaves. I didn't get a picture fast enough; the vista has changed. It rained...and life burst out. Now the story is about a million colors of green. The Dogwood trees are still blooming but, now, they are hidden by a canopy of deepening green. The tentativeness of

early spring has given way to the full charging rush of life eager to be alive. The view from the top of the hill is still as wonderful as it was a week ago. It is just different.

I admit our house is really only half way up the hill. We are surrounded by taller hills. But, when I look out from the front room or the dining deck, I feel as if I am surveying the entire world. It feels a bit like the two of wands in the Rider-Waite-Smith Tarot deck. I feel secure and content. The view fills me with a sense of contentment and satisfaction. I sometimes think the view is sufficient to make me happy. Luckily, the view entices me down off my perch; it seduces me into living. It seduces me off the top of the hill into the rich valley below.



## Epiphany Passages: The Tower(s)

by Lorely Lather

I have two framed prints in my home, which I consider to represent the two major cultural epiphanies in my lifetime, so far. I call them cultural epiphanies because they impacted millions of people nearly simultaneously. The first is a photo of the earth taken from outer space in 1969. I laminated it with a texture so that it has a glowing three-dimensional appearance. The second is of an American Bald Eagle, braking his wings to slow his approach to the Twin Towers, burning after the attack on America, September 11, 2001. I framed the Eagle/Towers image in an elegant frame with a suede mat to honor its significance.

An epiphany is an awakening, a grasping that the Sacred is embodied in physical reality. From 1969 to 2001, I held the belief that an image, such as our glowing, pulsing earth, if seen by vast numbers of humanity, would crystallize similar epiphanies for all. The widely varied interpretations of the burning of the Twin Towers deflated my assumption.

Carl Jung's writings suggest that an individual has access to a full scale of awareness as events happen in their lives. For example, if misfortune happens, a person simultaneously feels child-like submission, adolescent denial or revenge, and mature contemplation – seeking a deep spiritual meaning for the occurrence. Jung suggests that an adult has a choice in interpretation. I wrongly assumed that all people would seek to interpret watershed events with mature contemplation.

Being careful not to proclaim my interpretation as an absolute truth beyond my own, I invite you readers to pause here to clarify your personal interpretation of these two images. I do not wish to overlay mine onto yours. Please, read no further until you pause to consider the image of the earth and the image of the Towers burning.

I first saw the image of the earth on a small black-and-white TV while I was in college. It was shown repeatedly for several days; time seemed to stand still, with that image shown so consistently, begging for mature contemplation. In discussion with other college students, I came to

believe the image taught us that we are a small part of an incredible living creation. I realized deeply that the divine force, which created us, actually created the planet, of which we are only a small part. As my concept of the creation expanded, so did my concept of the creator. I sensed the divine nature of the earth and the great mystery of the force beyond it. I was forever changed. I began to feel connected to a greater whole and blessed by the opportunity to live.

In the years after, I was baffled when others merely saw the requirement to recycle waste as their awareness gained from seeing earth's image. And I was dismayed that some people felt the image of the earth was too big to incorporate into their personal lives. They stated helplessness at the scope of it, denying our involvement for its destruction or rebelling against our responsibility for its care.

What epiphany did you gain from earth's image? Jung's writing suggests one can revisit a moment in time and deepen its meaning. When did you see the image of earth from outer space for the first time? Can you revisit it?

I saw the Twin Towers burning on a small black-and-white TV, also. Not wanting to break my normal pace, I pulled a small TV out of the closet to watch the slow-motion horror as I continued to work in my business. This time, too, the image was played for several days over television, causing a seemingly timeless pause for consideration of its meaning. I listened and watched and pondered its meaning. I considered its global ramifications. I felt tremendous sorrow for the people directly involved and pride in the heroic efforts of thousands of individuals. I felt that it would certainly be a turning point for Americans to grow and do better in our relations to others. But, so far, that has yet to happen.

Here again, I ask, without judgment, what epiphany you gained from the image of the Twin Towers burning. Did you pull back, like the eagle, to consider how to best interpret this? Did you see it at a child-like, adolescent or mature level? Many people in my town initially interpreted the

image with child-like fear, and then chose to cuddle that fear. Once again, I was baffled by their reactions.

But it was when I heard a national leader interviewed on TV that I fully realized Jung's meaning that people choose their level of interpretation. The commentator asked, "What were your first thoughts when you saw the photos of the Twin Towers burning?" To me, this question regarded the essence of it, the learning we were meant to get from it. The national leader responded: "Well, we got an enemy." There was an awkward pause and the commentator pushed

for more. The national leader then concluded his insight, saying, "Well, we gotta kill 'em."

Without criticizing the national leader, I will merely state that I saw the Twin Towers burning at a different level. I saw that Americans must change; we must correct the injustice, which precipitated this. We cannot let this event be interpreted in a child-like or adolescent manner. We must revisit this event in our memories to deepen our insight. We must talk to others about it, encouraging them to see past fear. We must grow from this, to save that other, older epiphany awareness of our dearly beloved earth.

## River Currents "When Good Rituals Go Bad"

by River

This month's column is dedicated to our best efforts, our best laid plans, and our best intentions. This is for all the times when we truly meant to support intention and each other in ritual – but something happened that was completely beyond our immediate control, and a perfectly good ritual went bad. Welcome, my friends, to The Tower's guide to ritual arts!

In past columns I've made reference to the priestess' toolkit. That's where I stash away all of my learning, about everything from ritual structure, trance techniques, and working energy, to little tips and tricks about knowing when to make transitions, and how to start a chant. Everything I learn and every piece of feedback I receive goes in this metaphorical box that I stash somewhere in the attic of my brain. But when it comes to working with ritual situations that are inspired by the Tower – I find myself digging deeper into the toolkit for a user's manual to give me some direction on Emergency Ritual Procedures.

### **Emergency Ritual Procedure Number 1: Work it 'til it works!**

Cynthia once passed on some advice to me about priestessing that she learned from Starhawk. When a piece of ritual isn't going as

you had hoped or it's taking a while to catch on – "Work it 'til it works." Nine times out of ten, if I can bear sticking with the ritual until it shifts into something that inspires group connection, it will happen. But there are those times, few and far between, that, no matter what I do, the ritual is going down and I have to make a quick decision to salvage something from it. If all else fails – keep reading the manual!

I asked several members in two of our Mystery School leadership programs to pass along anecdotes of rituals that were hijacked by circumstances beyond their control. I was delighted with the response, and quite impressed by the priestessing skills of the folks caught in these situations. Read on!

### **Emergency Ritual Procedure Number 2: If you can't hide a problem, make it a part of the ritual.**

Canyon wrote to me about a ritual she attended during the "Shaman and the Wolf" year of Mystery School. As a participating priestess, she wasn't responsible for the logistics, but she was responsible for helping to uphold intention. For those of you who haven't been in the Barn at the Grove, during the summer months it becomes the structural center of the community. The Barn is

completely open on one side; during the day you can look out at the trees and, at night, gaze at the stars. But, during a rainstorm, this metal-roofed structure adds a different atmosphere altogether:

"...the plan included an offer to participants in the ritual to speak, each in turn.... Just as the set-up trance began, so did the rain - light at first - but even light rain in the barn is pretty loud. Then, with a dramatic bolt of lightening and a crash of thunder directly overhead, the mother of all thunderstorms loosed itself upon the barn. The din of the pounding rain on the metal roof completely drowned out the voices of those setting up the opportunity and it was clear that anyone who spoke, in response to the priestesses' invitation, would also not be heard. The wind was driving the rain in under the overhang and those on that side of the barn were beginning to get very wet very quickly.

Cynthia and others on the staff (I don't remember who) called all of us "deeper into the cave" and pulled us into a huddled mass around a single candle in the corner of the barn near the sink/fridge. As each participant spoke, in response to the invitation, a staff member would repeat what s/he said, projecting it (with mighty effort!) over the cacophony of the rain on the roof. Rather than making it seem like a present-time response to the storm, the staff blended it right into the ritual, becoming the shamans who spoke the community's words into the storm. It was brilliant!"

This is an excellent example of how to take a situation that is impossible to change, such as a pounding thunderstorm on a metal roof, and fold it into intention. They were working the story of the Shaman and the Wolf – so huddling in a cave with your “pack” or your community would be a perfectly reasonable response. I find that the best way to deal with a situation like this is to state the obvious and work it ‘til it works!

**Emergency Ritual Procedure Number 3:  
Watch for visual cues from the participants and work with your co-facilitators to make necessary shifts.**

Sisalfish offered this story from a ritual that she and her local group facilitated at a Women's

Festival in Texas a couple of years ago. The ritual had a number of “Tower moments,” including this one:

...the woman leading our spiral dance had gotten very upset the year before when the dance got a little wild and fast and some women had to drop out. She was determined the spiral be comfortable for all. What we ended up with was one so slow that it hurt to walk it. You had to kind of start then stop - start then stop. Groups broke away and started dancing on their own and the priestess leading the dance started chastising them. Another priestess and I had to really, really push the spiral dance priestess to adjust the pace, and she was very upset, showed it, and that energy carried over...

When the group gives you obvious cues that they are going in a different direction than you anticipated or hoped, rather than getting angry and upset, ask yourself how you can go with the flow instead of against it, and still support the intention. Ecstatic ritual is, by its very nature, uncontrollable. Often, despite our best efforts to set up the drumming, singing, and space in a specific way – the group will start and end in a completely different place. I feel the best thing I can do in that kind of situation is follow the energy, rather than try to lead it – and wait for my opportunity to take it back when it's appropriate to do so. In Sisalfish's story, the group obviously wanted to go faster and, rather than force the group to stay in the same pattern, they made the right choice by asking the leader to adjust the pace.

I wish I had the space in this particular column to tell all of the stories that I received – I truly appreciate the efforts folks took to send them! But the Emergency Procedures all have the same theme: If ritual is a multi-sensorial prayer, then the best way to engage with it is multi-sensorially. Simply put, use your eyes and ears to get information about what's really happening. Talk to your co-facilitators and see what choices you can make. Is it a situation where you can work it ‘til it works? Or does the plan need to change in the moment? Remember – as priestesses, our greatest tool is discernment.

Cynthia told me that during a particularly difficult

ritual that wasn't going according to plan, Gwennyth Brigit Dwyn, an amazing priestess and one of my mentors, asked the magical question: "Is this really what you want to have happen?" What a gift to be able to ask that in the moment! If the answer is no...then change it. More often

than not, these "Tower" rituals have become my most powerful memories – perhaps because I took the opportunity to stand in my power and make a choice. In those moments, the Tower may crumble – but I won't.

## Anxiety...It's a Good Thing!

by the Seven of Disks

I am the Seven of Disks and I represent the contrast between protection and evolution, the contrast between security and trusting in a natural

process. The snapshots you see of me in various Tarot albums vary widely. Some seem to be in direct contradiction with each other, as are the two displayed here. Well...that's the essence of contrast! The truth about me comes from looking, not at just one image, but at the contrasts between images.



Look at this picture of me from the Rider-Waite-Smith album. Pamela Coleman Smith captured me as a farmer, waiting for my crops to ripen for harvest. I am out in nature, standing alongside my crops, connected to the same elements that influence their growth. If rain comes, they and I, together, will receive the hydration. If the sun shines, my crops and I will, together, receive the benefits of its rays – photosynthesis for them, Vitamin D production for me. If there is drought or flood, we will both be parched or drowned, together.

Because I am connected with the natural source that nourishes my crops, the world around us that brings the sun and nourishing rain, the insects that bite and chew, the drought and flood, I am anxious. As a farmer, I experience enormous fear of failure. Bringing the excellence of all my skills and experience, I plant the crops...but the results

are up to nature. I live the daily anxiety of waiting, not knowing what the outcome will be until the day I gather the harvest.

Do you know this anxiety? Have you planted seeds of dreams in the soil of your life, which have not yet borne fruit? Are you and they both connected to the natural sources of nourishment for dreams? Along with the seedlings of your dreams, do you feel the forces they must weather? Are you anxious for their future, you farmer of what will be?

We farmers could try to avoid that anxiety. I could try to protect my crops by killing insect predators. I could water them in drought and dig drainage ditches in the floods. I could take these healthy, successful crops and protect them from those natural forces...and, thereby, weaken their resistance to those that have damaging effects. I could grow my crops inside, in enormous greenhouses.

Time for the contrast.... Look at this image of me from the Crowley-Harris Thoth album of Tarot snapshots. Instead of thriving, healthy crops, Lady Frieda Harris has captured me as a tree disconnected from its own roots; in full leaf, but dead. Perhaps this is a plant, potted and brought into your house, isolated from the forces of the natural world and, then, forgotten.



You may have brought me inside because I was so healthy, such a successful plant. Perhaps you thought, "I will protect this thriving tree from the drought, from the hail, from the insects! I will shelter this wonderful living thing." As that tree, I appreciate your good intentions. However, although I am protected from the harmful forces of nature, this separation from natural processes also means that I cannot receive the nourishment that would naturally be mine, if I remained outside. It also means I am less able to resist those natural processes that might damage me. If you forget to water me, I will be less able to withstand this indoor drought, because my tap root cannot sink deeper and deeper, in search of the natural moisture in the soil that should be my home. I become dependent upon your protection and, when you forgot to tend me, I die.

Have you ever sought to protect the seedlings of your dreams from foul weather and, with that protection, disconnected them from the natural forces that would sustain them? Has one of your dreams, made dependent solely on your nurture by your best intentions, died as life's daily demands took your attention elsewhere?

Flourishing crops and a dead tree, severed from its roots. The same card but such different images! What is the common ingredient? The Crowley-Harris eight of disks holds part of the answer. The Tower holds the keys.

In the eight of disks, you see the same tree from the seven, or perhaps a cutting from it, that is now rooted and grounded; being sustained by the natural world. At risk from that same natural world, yes, but no longer threatened by the dependence of isolation.

Isolation, alienation, disconnection...these are what the Tower card destroys. You had the best of intentions when you potted that tree and brought it into your house. You sought to protect perfection. You also had the best of intentions when you built your Tower. You sought to touch the divine. Brick by brick, you built your tower from your experience, skills, faith, and passion. Your goal was to protect your life, your dreams,

your passions, your knowledge, your skills, and allow them to lead you up to the heavens.

Once that tower was built, though, you found yourself alone behind its walls. Isolated, alienated, disconnected...like the tree with no roots. And you won't get out of your tower unless you have a reason to. Because it does protect you from those natural forces that parch and flood, that bite and chew on the roots and stems of your life. You won't re-forge your connection with the natural forces that play upon the exterior of your walls until you've experienced the dark side of that rising spire of passion and dreams.

That's where I come in, to help the lost souls in the Tower (you see them falling out, but I saw them, just a moment before, isolated, peering out the windows). As the Seven of Disks, I remind you that your daily doings, when disconnected from the natural pattern, can have no healthy outcome. I'm here to remind you that you truly cannot say, "This life of mine is valuable; therefore I'm going to lock it away. I've worked hard, journeyed long, and figured it all out – passed through Death and faced the Devil, too. I've manifested perfection. Now that I've finally got it right, I want to protect it."

I'm the Seven of Disks and I'm here to remind you that you're really never secure as long as you try to stop the natural process. As you seek to protect your life from the natural influences of All Life, you may find that the isolation of security kills it.

I invite you to try being anxious, like the farmer who waits to see how those natural processes will influence his crops. Yes, sometimes Life causes damage and your harvest is delayed or less than you'd hoped. And, sometimes, Life generates abundance beyond your wildest dreams. The problem remains that you can't predict the outcome.... You're anxious about that, I know. But look at the alternative – that your desire to protect will kill the very thing you value.

In that light, maybe a little anxiety is a good thing!

## Pondering the Tower

by Jennifer Wilson

I've been thinking of the smooth walls of the Tower, the smooth sides of the bricks, as a perfect surface upon which to project our fears, beliefs, delusions, self-deception, truths, dearest dreams, and most firmly held notions. Like a fun-house mirror, it can twist and distort "reality" into a picture that gives us a version of life that isn't quite accurate. Some days the Tower is gleaming and bright, something to be proud of and take pleasure in, admiring our craftsmanship. Just as quickly, a dark day can turn it into an impenetrable fortress that traps us inside, out of touch with others, and blocks our view of anything or anyone else. Some days it can feel like the place we go to reach for the stars and some days it can feel like a millstone around our souls, holding us back and keeping us stuck in the same damn place, day after day. Same tower, different projections....

As for how the Tower was built, well...brick by brick, by Self. But I don't see that there is an alternative! We must build, we must stand somewhere, on something, or for something. We must defend and hold firm, we must construct meaning. *This brick* is my belief that I matter. *This brick* is my belief that I matter less than others, though. *This brick* is my refusal to say I'm sorry when I'm wrong, and *this brick* is my compassion that allows me to be kind and generous to the animals I care about in my life.

Some of us build Towers with doors that cannot be unlocked or, maybe, without a door at all. Some have a welcome mat and some may have a moat and portcullis. Does your Tower have windows? Are they barred or shaded and draped with black? Do you have narrow windows that

allow arrows to be shot but keep others' arrows out? Do you have wide-open picture windows that let the vast panorama be seen and appreciated in its entirety, or small boxes that show only a small piece that is pleasing to your eye? Do you look toward the sunrise or the darker north?

What does your Tower construction say about you?

Then there is that lightning. I'm not so sure that, if we build the Tower, then we also destroy it by allowing the forces that act upon our lives to strike. I think many of us build the best lightning rod in the world and try our best to keep those forces at bay. I think the lightning can bring our Towers down whether we want it to or not. And...I think some of us are like the Sorcerer's Apprentice and conjure the lightning, destroying again and again, when we invite the drama of the storm over and over to keep from feeling numb. We can also yield. When the storm comes and the thunder rolls, we can yield to nature and appreciate the illumination that lightning flashes into the darkest secret corner. We can refuse to let the dark erase the illumination that came, if only for the briefest moment.

We can jump from the Tower or cling and risk perishing in it. We can willingly leave it behind or we can be knocked down, moaning and flailing and cursing fate for visiting this destruction on us.

As with great crisis, yes, it matters how we handle the burning, life-threatening moment of flame and fire and falling stone. But...in the calm, gray light of morning, when we can clearly survey the damage, it also matters what we do next.

*Jennifer will be at the May Mystery School Intensive and plans to work with the archetype of the Tower. If you would like to join her, let us know at [dianasgrove@dianasgrove.com](mailto:dianasgrove@dianasgrove.com)*

## Interview with a Mystery - Matt Guynn

Matt Guynn, fourth-year Mystery and author of this month's newsletter article on "Crisis as a Key to Spiritual Development," is this month's interviewee. Matt had been on the road and was enjoying the beginning of a month at home, and he took time out to let me get to know him better.

*You have three main interests in your life right now – training people in non-violent social change through Training for Change, working with spiritually-based groups like the Grove and Reclaiming, and working in peace education through the Church of the Brethren, where you're a member. How do these paths intersect for you, and how do they diverge?*

I see them connected in different ways. All three are about one of the main things I'm interested in: shifting the world. All three are about tapping what's available to us, at the deepest levels, and bringing it into the realm of action.

In all three, I'm challenged to connect with people on a deep level. To do political work that really changes something and doesn't just degenerate into confrontation for confrontation's sake, I have to figure out how to connect with people at a place of heart and imagination. My hope is that we can connect there, and find new ways and new answers.

In the same way, the work I do in the church depends on moving beyond formula and doctrine to an empowered and creative kind of life, one that isn't just rote, that is true to the tradition but in a new way. The work I do with Church of the Brethren includes training people in conflict and communication skills, training them on ways to intervene in conflicts in church congregations, and working with church congregations that want to work with issues of violence and injustice. Our tradition is Christianity. For me, part of my role as a leader, there, is to call people to rediscover that tradition, and to rediscover it for myself as well. So, for me, it's not about just inheriting a set of beliefs that I have to believe, or inheriting a way I'm supposed to be or act. It's going to the root, to search for the roots of that belief, digging for it, and finding what is the deepest kernel of it, where life resides.

*Your email address is "rootwork" and you often speak of roots and going deep.*

I guess that's another connection these three paths have for me. I'm working to go to the root of what Christianity is, and that's where the Grove work comes in. Cynthia talks about the use of ritual to lay new patterns in our souls. It's like the set of Western myths we work with. They come to us, ready - installed in the Western psyche. They're like mosaic tiles we all work with. We can each rearrange those mosaic tiles in a way that works for us, so we can interact with the stories and find out what's inside ourselves. I want the work I do to be about laying those tiles in a beautiful pattern, painting a few new ones, or finding some unexpected ones inside and incorporating them into the artwork....

That involves tapping into the deepest levels of the traditions, and of ourselves. Like many others, I have found that, often, our own power is locked up inside of us. Tapping it means making that accessible, available. That power comes in the form of dreams and imagination, and from re-examining things that haven't gone well and finding new ways to relate to them. I think going deep lets us become the most liberated beings possible, as individuals. I want to get to that place for myself, and if others are interested, help lead them to their own discovery of that place, too.

*You seem to have faith in tradition – is that unusual for someone who is part of the counterculture?*

Well, I'm not so much interested in what's unusual, or what is counterculture, as I am interested in finding the place where life happens. And in finding the source of many traditions, where that life once was, even if it got left behind in some of the subsequent changes. Like Christianity - at the heart of it, if you go way back, and deep, there's a place in it where life happens. In my understanding of the way of being that

Jesus represented, it was a way that represents a fullness of humanity, not shackled by internal or external oppression, a way that claims wholeness. Jesus claimed that wholeness, and it empowered him to cross social boundaries in ways that were taboo, and to speak to those in authority from his own authority, like the moneylenders or religious leaders of his day.

In my perspective, this kind of fullness of life and inner authority is available to all of us. Jesus was someone who led by empowering others. He broke taboos left and right, in terms of being with women, with those with different ethnic backgrounds, with those who were ill, with those who were rejected as traitors, so much so that he was accused of being a glutton and drunkard. As I see it, at heart, he was empowered, and with his community of disciples – including women and men – he represented a kind of empowerment for the human race.

*So your three paths do intersect, for you, in many ways; do they diverge as well?*

In the intellectual world, the conscious world, yes. Even before I found paganism I had already begun to use feminine language for the divine. Then I started thinking it wasn't totally feminine, any more than it was totally masculine – and that took me out beyond what I could understand. I was in a tradition but I didn't know it – and, for a time, I wasn't finding a lot of support to help me

figure out how to relate to Mystery. Paganism gave me that; leading to discovery, being led to my own discovery. A notion of a playful approach toward the things we don't understand - that was what I needed, and I found it in pagan practice, in Reclaiming and at the Grove.

In my conscious mind, I think: how can I be both these things, pagan and Christian? And how can I be other things that, in consensual reality, are paradoxical, that seem antithetical? But when I go to the dreaming level – the opposites are coming from a similar place, the same place. In the place of dream and imagination, the three things I do, and what I believe, all intersect beautifully.

Coming from the dreaming place, I feel like I'm moving to a place that holds Christianity and Paganism and more...all traditions. I want to find and help open portals and doors into that dreaming place, that intuitive place that reconciles opposites, so that we can use them in our everyday lives. I want to think from both places, intellect and intuition, and pair them, like the Chariot – to make them pull in yoke, to take us further. In my best world, my intellect would help create the conditions where my intuition could roam free.

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## A Cold, Wet, Successful Work Weekend

Thanks from all of us here at the Grove to all of you and your family and friends who came on a cold, wet weekend in April to prepare the Grove for our upcoming events. Despite the weather, the campground was cleared of limbs and downed trees, the altars were attended to, picnic tables were cleaned and sealed, construction work proceeded on our barn rooms to house one of our staff, and fire circles were cleaned out. You planted trees, gardened, moved “stuff” around,

cleared space for a new cabin and shop, configured a new computer for Jane, and did much cooking and eating of wonderful food. And there was a wee bit of time for drumming and hot tubbing! We deeply appreciate the resources of our wonderful community and your willingness to share your skills with us to prepare for the upcoming summer here.

THANKS!

## Dogs of the Month



Sweetie - (Canyon) - Doc

Please note: Canyon is NOT up for adoption! And she's no dog either!

This month is "black dog month" at the Grove.

Sweetie is a large black lab-type dog with a sweet disposition. She came to us from our wonderful vet in Houston, MO. She was dropped off there by the city of Houston, which has no pound or Humane Society. Although she is currently the largest dog we have, she thinks she's small and cute and should be cuddled. She really loves people, gets along well with other dogs (as long as they don't want her food), and was quite fine with some children who visited recently. She needs lots of room and doesn't do well when confined, unless it's in a car or van. She loves to ride. Sweetie would love to have her own person and place. If you, or someone you know, is interested in a large dog, give Sweetie a call.

Doc is one of our saddest and best recovery experiences. He was found badly malnourished with many sores and obvious neglect; he is still recovering physically. Temperamentally, Doc is wonderful. He loves people and holds no hostility or resentment for any former treatment by

humans. He's still very much a puppy - rather adolescently awkward and gangly with large feet to grow into. He has beautiful "beady" black eyes that beg for pats or treats. He loves to play with other dogs. Doc's name comes from the caduceus-shaped white hair mark on his chest. We think Doc is going to be a fairly large dog who would be happy with children and other dogs.

### *Special Thanks!*

A special thanks to Raeona Nichols for being our first official dog sponsor (see box on page 17). And thanks to Gene at Abbott's Imports in Farmington, MO. Gene is Canyon's auto mechanic and he made a contribution to our "dog fund" when Canyon told him about our rescue efforts. We also want to thank Joyce Burrows of Licking, MO. Joyce is the best dog trainer we've met. Five of us travel the 1 ½ hours to Licking every week to work with 5 of the Grove dogs. Those of you who have been to the Grove and met our dogs will understand the miracle of 5 of our dogs heeling, sitting and staying! Joyce is the miracle behind that miracle. Thanks all!

## Alienation is the only sin

by Cynthia Jones

Skippy has kindly offered me her page this month to speak about an issue dear to her heart. Dog rescue at Diana's Grove. I have been asked **why do we do it?** Here's why.

*As spirits of nature, dogs are an aspect of the wild that is ever-present in our lives and constantly at our sides. Nature embodied, how do we treat you? How do we care for you? What is our responsibility to you? Current experts say that dogs domesticated themselves. I believe that is true. Long ago, we accepted the dog's companionship and help. We developed a relationship with a wild creature who thought well enough of us to come to our fire, serve us in the hunt, tend our flocks and allow us to name her pups. In the form of the dog, the wisdom and keen senses of the wild joined us.*

*We needed that wild spirit in our increasingly synthetic, indoor lives. And, now, the wild needs us. In the form of the dogs that we have domesticated, she needs us. In the form of the forests that require our protection, she needs us. In the way we tell nature's story, she needs us.*

Some of you have expressed surprise and concern at the cost of caring for our rescue dogs. Me too! If a dog owner should anticipate an expenditure of \$50 a month and we have 22 dogs...yes! Our rescue work consumes our time, energy and financial resources. You might wonder why we do it. Here is why:

I believe that each one of us is called to do what stands before us to be done. Some of you are called to stand up for your political beliefs. Some of you devote your time and your resources to your spiritual path. Others of you have lives that have asked you to take personal risks for other causes. We are called to care for abandoned dogs because that is what stands before us to be done. We live in an area where people drop their dogs on the road and drive on. Each one of these 22 dogs at the Grove was found in a situation where we had to decide whether we would respond to that abandoned creature or turn our heads and walk on, knowing that the dog we did not take would die a slow, lonely and terrifying

death in the woods that surround us. We choose to take in and care for the dog. And we would love your help in placing those dogs with people who are seeking animal companions.

We don't seek out the dogs that we save. In most cases, they don't seek us out. They simply stand before us, creatures of circumstances, whose fates are coincidentally placed in our hands. At times, we get a phone call. We may have a brief "family meeting" that goes like this: "Who votes to let the pregnant mother die?" Maybe it is the way we present the situation to each other; I don't know. But here we are, twenty-two dogs - actually 97 dogs - later.

We got into our rescue work slowly. At first, our *limit* was 7, then 13. In the past 8 years we have placed over 75 dogs. Rosie in Seattle, Max in Maryland, Barney, Ben and Tito are in Kansas City. 75 is a really small number compared to the noble work that animal shelters do. I have great respect and admiration for those who stand where I do not. But, as I said, all we do is respond to that which stands before us and asks for our help.

In exchange for our time and our care, we get to share our lives with creatures who are committed to personal healing. The dogs that we rescue recover. They forgive. They love and they trust even when their personal experience tells them it is foolish to do either.

A frightened puppy cowers in my arms and believes that he will be safe. The last person who held him placed him on the side of the road and drove off. And, yet, I am forgiven for that sin. I am seen as a solution by a creature whose birth was the result of someone's neglect, a creature whose life was an extension of that neglect. I am compelled to live up to the hope that lives in a lost dog's eyes. That is why I do it. That is why we do it. We do it because it is before us.

We live in a very poor area. There are no low-cost spay and neuter clinics in Bunker. If a pet owner wants to take a dog to a local humane

society, the closest one is 45 minutes away. When seeking a humane alternative to caring for a lost dog, we have called all of the shelters within a three-hour radius, without finding a shelter that grants a dog more than three days of life. With Skippy's help, I titled this piece *Alienation is the only sin*. As I thought about this month, I wanted to talk about a dog's need for companionship, a dog's innate and all-consuming need to be *with...* to be with you, to be with other dogs, to be free in the world around her. But a greater need is the need for food and the care, often medical, that counters neglect. Alienation is the root and heart of that neglect. A dog on the road? Not my problem. Not my fault. It is easy to blame the person who didn't take their dog to a shelter. It is easy to blame the person who didn't have their dog spayed or neutered. It is easy to blame the person who, just one year earlier, didn't spay the abandoned dog's grandmother. Blame is Alienation's pup. Alienation - tell me, how do we fix that dog?

Alienation. We are alienated when we consign the fear and misery of an abandoned animal to another reality. It is easy to blame when we are alienated, when we consider ourselves separate from those who leave a puppy or a pregnant dog on the side of road. Blame is an easy road but it seems to go in a circle. It has no end. Connection, sharing the burden of responsibility, is the only way we will create a solution. There has been a significant decrease in the number of abandoned and euthenized pets in the last ten years. My advice: don't lose yourself in the abyss that holds your problem. Look into the eyes of the need that stands before you. Respond to that which lies before you.

If you are called to Dog Rescue but you don't have the place and space that enables you to respond, consider helping us continue our rescue work. **You can: refer** potential dog owners to us. **You can: sponsor** a Diana's Grove dog until a rightful home has been found.

For \$25 a month (just a little less than a dollar a day) you can sponsor a Diana's Grove Dog. You can sponsor a specific dog or you can sponsor the dog who most needs a sponsor. Two sponsors are needed to cover expenses for each dog. Forty-four sponsors will eliminate the *financial* burden of our Dog Rescue work. If you are interested in sponsoring a specific dog, you can have your own *dog in absentia*. Your family, place of work or study group can sponsor a dog. When that dog is placed, your sponsorship is completed. All help - sponsorships and one time contributions - is greatly appreciated.

April's placements: **Peanut** to John Goewert in St. Louis, via Arden Goewert  
**Chloe** to Nick and Becky in Denver, CO, via Matt Guynn  
**Mister** to Tricia in Lafayette, IN, via Corgie Rescue  
**Mister Pem** to Corgie Rescue in St. Louis

March: **Hagrid**, **Lili**, and **Marcus** all found homes within a week of entering the placement program at the Human Society of Boulder Valley.  
**Penny** is in Omaha at a dog care and placement facility that specializes in fearful dogs. She will be placed in the right loving home.