

The Art of Magic

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We often hear about the “Art of Magic”. It’s a common phrase, but like so many other common phrases, we rarely look beneath the surface to find its true meaning. If we examine it more closely, however, we see that there are many fundamental and important similarities between Magic and Art; and that Magic is indeed, at its best, an Art.

Both Magic and Art are disciplines. They must be practiced over and over again, and to be committed to mental and physical memory. Both the practice of Magic and the creation of Art are about learning to follow the inner core of one’s being, to listen to and watch the flow of life and power within us and without us. With so many internal and external distractions, this can only be done with sufficient practice and labour.

Both Magic and Art involve sacrifice: sacrificing one’s time, sacrificing leisure, in fact sacrificing whatever is necessary. Life is full of commitments and we all must make the time and space to do any kind of discipline, which by definition means sacrificing something else. We are driven at times by our Will, at times by our Desire, and at times by something Higher, but the drive needs to be strong enough to push us to do practice instead of doing something else which is most likely more immediately gratifying.

And in order for them to be at their full power, both Magic and Art must express something original. A painter learns how to paint like the Old Masters and a musician learns to read music or play all the songs they love, but eventually they must create their own work or reinterpret older work in order to be truly accomplished and contribute to that art form. In the same way, a magician must study the rituals thoroughly and observe the ways in which they were practiced, and then they can introduce their own interpretation and energy into an old ritual, or create an entirely new one. This allows them to express their individual spark, and at the same it keeps the tradition of Magic alive.

Both Magic and Art dedicate a great deal of discipline and labour to tapping into the power of the flow and pulse of life. They both seek to access the consciousness and power of the universe. At times, through these disciplines, we succeed. When we do find that enormous flow and power--what then? What do we do with it once we control it? Or better said, find ourselves in control with it? This is where intention comes in. The higher the intention, the greater we will be able to express that flow through an act of creation.

Why create at all? Creation is increase. Creation is allowing that power and consciousness to emerge through us, and in so doing, increase itself. We become a medium for the Divine to increase, to multiply. Then the Light works through us. The Art of Magic at its highest, true Theurgy, is doing exactly this.

Creation is made through a dance between our hearts and minds. Instinct and feeling without being translated through the tool of thought is formless; thought without feeling is cold and dead. In

Art, it is literally a dance: of the physical body, of a brush across the page, of notes on a score. The dance can be exquisite, rhythmic, discordant, painful or full of suffering. None of that matters: the only thing that matters is the act of creation itself. In Magic, we have the same dance of heart and mind, going back and forth between instinct, feeling, intuition, memory, thought, and understanding. When we find the right balance, we can truly create. The tension of all of these different aspects makes that creation all the more beautiful.



Neither Art nor Magic have a real recipe to follow for success. There are techniques, skills, and laws that need to be learned; there is one’s personal experience and knowledge; there is all sorts of research that can be done. But as every magician and artist knows, every situation is different. The weather, one’s mood, one’s state of body and mind, circumstances of all kinds add up to a different moment in time; and therefore the act of magic, of creation, will always be unpredictable. What this means is that the Art of Magic demands a precision of awareness at all times. We can never rest on our laurels or assume we know exactly how a ritual will turn out, nor be entirely sure of our own intentions. The only way to continue to participate in this holy act of creation is to be fully present in ourselves, and be willing to go into every new act as a beginner, embraced by inner silence.