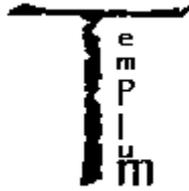


A WORD TO THE WISE

Advice we would have given ourselves at the start of our magical work.



Edited by Frater FP

A WORD TO THE WISE

Advice we would have given ourselves when we first began.

You have just begun to find out that there is more to life than meets the eye. Although you do not really appreciate it yet, a whole other world is about to open before you – a lifetime of enquiry, study and work which will uncover the mysteries of the Universe in which you live.

Perhaps you will become a Mystic, a Bhuddist, a Shaman, Sorcerer or Witch. Maybe you will join other groups of occultists and take part in strange rituals in cellars and atop wild hilltops. You might even become an expert on Alchemy, Meditation, or a healer of local renown. Who knows? Certainly not you, not yet, anyway.

And then ... as you sit there, with the future before you, a strange shimmering portal opens up, and out steps a figure ... which you instantly recognise as yourself, but older, and, you immediately sense, far wiser, far more experienced. The figure looks at you and smiles, "Yes. I am you. But I am you in the future. Now, here's some advice that you may need – I haven't long, so here's the important stuff ..."

~~~

This is the scenario that presented itself as the seed idea for this booklet. Suppose one could go back and give oneself the most important advice from all the experience that you had gained? This wasn't the intention of the book, as such advice would be fairly useless to oneself and introduce lots of temporal paradoxes, and the rest, but as a thought exercise it would generate an answer to the question, "What is it, personally, I have learnt?"

This question was asked of those I knew and respected, particularly those with some great deal of experience. The answers and their responses have been collated here, as my personal contribution to the celebrations of the Millennium.

~~~

My editorial comments and introductions are given in italics, and then the submissions have been reproduced as given in plain text. Contributors names and brief contact details where given have been boxed below the submission.



Frater FP

We start with this submission, which includes useful advice to everyone perplexed by the path when first they start the journey:

If you have something to say, you'll never get any feedback if you don't actually say it. You'll learn by asking questions. It isn't wrong to wonder. Don't be afraid of sounding stupid. Everyone else is just as perplexed by life as you. Every single thing you do will affect every other thing you do; there is no part of your life that isn't connected to every other part of your life. You define yourself in the smallest acts, and in every single moment. Don't wait for a great big grand finale to find out who you are because you are who you are every day. Time CAN heal the most bitter wounds, so get on with it.

Oh, yeah, and "wear sunscreen." ;-)

Lesa Whyte

"Now she is mourned, and her self rejoices."

Hmmm.....I'm not concerned about credit or contributing, I'm really just fascinated by your question. Since I feel I'm still relatively early on in my work, and considering that everything I've done since starting on my path has been vital to the learning process, it's really difficult to say.

What I say now is likely to change in 5, 10, 15, and 20 years.

You have not only a mind & spirit, but also emotions & a body. Fly high, but first make a solid place on the ground. Stay put long enough to memorise & regurgitate the 37,000 clichés necessary for a Ph.D., or be sure to learn a trade that you can practice in order to earn a living into old age. Idealism is lovely, but will never pay the rent. Don't yearn for higher & deeper practices, but rejoice in beginnings, cultivate "Beginner's Mind" & be diligent & stepwise in accomplishing preliminaries. Join an Order & progress through the grades & curricula in company with like-minded others: in isolation lurks danger. There is no job description in this society for the position of Shaman. You will always be both needed & shunned if that is your vocation. Relax: you've been doing this for lifetimes. Rejoice in remembered Wisdom. As Lord Shiva told Parvati, 'Concentrate on the fire in the beginning, and so continuing, avoid the embers in the end.

Yours for the Great Work, Frater Abdiel S.A.

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Here goes:

1. Don't sell that Dremel tool - one day you'll need it to make Goetic and Enochian equipment.
2. Get Crowley's Liber ABA as soon as possible
3. Start doing ritual now, instead of reading about it for 6 years.
4. Throw that damn paperback Necronomicon away.

:P

Love is the law, love under will.

Avaryce

Daleth teaches Kabbalah and is the most Thelemic person I know. I don't know if that's always a good thing, but it makes for essential reading:

'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law' (Liber Legis I:40) - You are entirely responsible for your life from the moment you read this. Don't wait until you can swim before you go in the water! Work out what you want and go and get it. If *you* don't live your life, others will all too happily live it for you.

'To understand is to forgive'. With yourself and others, work to understand. Your present and future are in your hands. Trust yourself without reservation, and work on yourself to make that trust ever more reliable.

Too often you judge yourself by your aspirations, and others by their deeds. Try doing the opposite and see how your views change.

Never let your respect, love, or need for, or psychological or physical dependence upon *anyone* make you support an action of theirs that you would not support in the abstract; nor let your contempt or abhorrence of, or disinterest in another disable you from supporting that which you would support in the abstract. 'Good' and 'Evil' to not depend on the person who does them, but on how they support or undermine the world *you* are in the process of creating.

Happiness is a bodily sensation responding to the awareness, not a mental one responding to the body's experience - you are happy when you are aware of your body at work (rest or play). Conversely, when you are unhappy, you will refuse to be aware of your body (it would spoil your imaginary belief in your own self-importance).

'To thine own self be true'. Live at all times to the highest aspiration you have. Work to make your aspiration higher and make your actions follow. Do it now - tomorrow rarely comes, and when it does, it comes too late.

'Fear is the Little Death'. 'Fear not at all; fear neither men nor Fates, nor gods, nor anything. Money fear not, nor laughter of the folk folly, nor any other power in heaven or upon the earth or under the earth. Nu is your refuge as Hadit your light; and I am the strength, force, vigour, of your arms'. (Liber Legis III:17)

Guess that's it.

Daleth

KT is a correspondent of mine in the States, and has always impressed me with her ability to strip advice down to its bare bones. For example:

Throw everything away. It's going to be taken from you anyway, and it will save you a lot of pain. Every relationship, every thing, every belief, every memory, every emotion will be corrupted utterly until you have no choice but to throw them away. So just dump them all, including yourself, and get it over with. Whatever is real will be restored to you unbidden. Whatever doesn't wasn't real to begin with. This includes the negative painful stuff, which often wasn't supposed to be yours in the first place. If you can look back and laugh about it tomorrow, why wait 'til tomorrow? Bury your dead in unmarked graves and walk on; memorialization invites revisitation, which is as a dog to its vomit and the trespass of going back on the path. The thing you can't change is the very thing you must; if it exists (or doesn't), it can be changed. Everything you need, or will need, you already possess: fold, unfold, refold, measure, measure, count, divide.

ALL in ALL, hand in hand, Strength,
93/743/77/14
MAGEN
777 Redeemed (34:GAL) from Poverty (34:DL)

KT

Very short, but...

You will always think you know better than the advice offered by those who have gone before you. You seldom, if ever, will.

Mark A Preston BSc, FIAP

From a local newly-found friend and colleague, who specialises in making concoctions distilled from plants and fungi:

Experience as much as you can, within and without. The key to unlocking your full potential is casting off societies rules and finding your true moral and religious centre, but always remember 'Parameters not Perimeters'. Rules are made for a reason, but many are also made to be broken - knowing which rules, how and when, requires knowledge which can only be obtained by following them. Be prepared to bend a knee. Make few pacts, but keep them.

Hamal

Here's the advice of a Pagan Priestess that I transcribed as she isn't on e-mail, or the Internet, and she doesn't have DVD or cable either. What she does have is a cute German accent and a lifetime of straightforward Witchcraft knowledge ...

Make the best of the beginning. Don't rush and don't be surprised if surprises happen. Things will happen, but not in the way you expect them – if you wait for answers and be aware you will find that the Universe listens after all. Use Music from the beginning; this will otherwise be a late discovery as an excellent way of invoking the Gods (especially Pan – you'll like him!). Go for walks, talk to Trees and listen to Nature. But most of all, enjoy the awe which will eventually be replaced by experience.

Jasinth

I recently finished reading John Greer's books, "Inside a Magical Lodge," "Paths of Wisdom," and "Circles of Power," which are excellent guides to the Western Tradition. He writes:

Here's my attempt at a one-paragraph piece of basic advice to myself, for the day I stumbled on my first book on high magic and stood there staring at wonder:

"This is the Path of the Great Work, the work you were born to do, the thing you've been wanting all along but didn't know where or how to find. The operative word, though, is work. If you want to walk an ordinary path, you need to start moving your feet and keep them moving; if you want to walk this Path, you need to learn the basic practices of the Art, do them, and keep on doing them, and you need to study the teachings of the Path and keep on studying them. You can become everything you've dreamed of being, but only by study and practice, carried on over the months and years to come.

The way is open, but you must walk it by your own efforts."

John Michael Greer

Your question asks what advice I would give myself if I could go back 15 years. For any advice I might give to have any value, I would have to go back at least 40 years. At that point, I began 'trespassing' on what my parish priest called 'forbidden ground'. This is the advice I would give myself, if I could:

Begin slowly, breathe in every word, every sigh, every thought. Make it a part of you before you continue to the next word, sigh or thought. Don't be in such a hurry. When you give in to the rush of excitement with breathless anticipation, you miss some very important things. Enjoy the journey, for it is, after all, only a journey. Your search is never-ending. Your joy in it is ever-growing. Although you will learn to wish "Blessed Be" to many friends, today I say to you, "Namaste!"

Patricia della Piana, aka Delia the Crone, aka Olwen Isca of Boston,
Massachusetts and Clearwater, Florida

Age 61 as the millennium closes

I was lucky enough to meet Pete Carroll some years ago and he's been generous enough to send this contribution, which made me smile ...

Enchant Long and Divine Short. Do NOT wake the Elder Gods. The HGA does not naturally exist, you can make one if you want, but I do not advise this (sorry for that mistake). Keep taking notes and making records constantly, do your homework properly. "DO WHATEVER YOU CAN GET AWAY WITH", CONSTITUTES THE WHOLE OF THE LAW FOR ALL TIME. Wild and crazy erisian bedmates, black robes and emotion curdling rites may well prove amusing till middle age, but then you will probably want to do something a little quieter.

Pete Carroll.

Another author, Nema is the proponent of the Ma'at system of Magick which is a refreshing take and development of Thelemic principles ...

Enjoy your sense of wonder. Thrill to new vistas of comprehension and understanding, but remember that no conclusions are final. Don't disparage your earlier selves with their narrower views and fewer experiences, but develop compassion for them, and for all other selves. Learn early from your Initiation Ordeals that you can anticipate and avoid them, firstly, by recognising their approach and secondly by voluntarily changing/removing that which they're designed to blast away. Listen to the universe and learn to read the omens and signs it gives you. Remember that Magick is the grandest illusion of all, but just because something is illusory does not mean that it's not important. Find your will in every situation, and do it. Keep your word true and honest by not giving it too often. Show is better than tell; if you must lead, do so by example. Enjoy!

Nema/Maggie

This advice gets to me every time I read it, and is in my view the best one-word answer to the question ...

What advice would you give yourself if you could go back in time and slip yourself a paragraph of written advice at the point you started the esoteric path?

Open.

Turtle

Goldfinch has managed to synthesise some twenty years of experience into his brief advice, which reflects his Thelemic background ...

I'd throw the following lines of advice to myself back through a time warp.

1. The symbolism neophyte ritual of the GD contains the whole of the system.
2. Learn the nature, content and structure of the elements thoroughly.
3. Know thyself, be what thou art, do what thou wilt.
4. if you can't laugh at yourself you've lost it.

93.

Goldfinch

Also from a Thelemic angle, Michael Staley is editor of Starfire, an excellent Thelemic journal, and confidant of Kenneth Grant. He writes to himself ...

It's always best to start magical and mystical work sooner rather than later. Study and practice must proceed together; armchair magicians are a contradiction in terms. Initiation is not something conferred on you by some enlightened being, but is distilled from your own magical and mystical working, and nothing else can provide it. Start with simple things – in terms of ritual, the lesser Pentagram and Hexagram Rituals are excellent to begin with. Practice daily; work on a sporadic basis, when you feel like it, is much less effective; a few minutes daily is better than a few hours once a week or month. Spend six months on these alone, getting a feel for them. At first your performance will be halting and clumsy, but soon your own “version” of these rites will emerge. At the same time, take the trouble to learn meditation – in particular dharana, or concentration, whereby you can visualise a certain shape – such as a red triangle – and concentrate on it for as long as you can. Visualisation is the heart of ritual magic, and time spent honing it is time well spent. When you feel you have made good progress with these simple rituals, branch out to more complex ones. Hard though it may seem, you must develop at your own pace; insight will then arise naturally.

(Although Kenneth Grant is busy preparing “Snakewand” for publication next year, Michael says he is sure he would endorse this angle of advice).

Michael Staley

Hey. In a nutshell: you think this whole magick and mysticism bit is purely intellectual interest right now. It will rapidly be far more than that. You're going to go through some rather profound shocks of being. Some of them will give you more joy and wonder than you ever thought Universe would throw your way; others will hurt you, badly enough that in the midst of the worst you'll be thanking God you never had much in the way of suicidal tendencies. The wonder outweighs the pain, though--more and more so as time rolls on. When you realise that 'this whole thing' is becoming more than just intellectual interest, you will wonder 'Is all this hoo-haa worth it?' The answer is an uncompromising 'YES!' Kick back and enjoy the ride.

Gar

I saw your posts on usenet, and I've decided to chip in. The background for my paragraph is as follows: Years ago I finally attached a name to the beliefs I'd held all my life. That name was Celtic Witchcraft. Exuberated by this new knowledge, I spent a few months that, in effect, were wasted. I learned nothing, I did nothing.

Therefore, I give the following advice to the next generation:

Think. Always think. Don't just observe what happens, or even why; But think actively and reflect on anything you deem worthy of thought. Let's say you're walking in a forest, and a falling leaf suddenly catches your attention. You might go looking for other falling leaves and look at them, and this may indeed be a worthwhile course of action. But what good will it do you if you don't take the time to sit down and consider the thing you are looking for? A falling leaf is a falling leaf, and a second falling leaf might be identical to the first in almost every way. By studying the first instance of an event, you increase your chance of spotting a dissimilarity in the second instance, thusly giving you an observation to build on. One might sit endlessly by a road, watching cars stop and pass without ever learning that they stop because of the read light. Without contemplation, observation is void.

Bjørn Andersen

Ben runs a bookshop specialising in esoteric literature. I've included his website address for those searching for a good source of such material:

Ask yourself what you are really looking for. Ask yourself why you feel you do not have it now. Is it truly not there now? Beware of projecting your desires upon others. Ask yourself why others may want you to project your desires upon them. Be yourself, be careful about wearing masks and be careful of others wearing masks. Trust yourself and beware of being persuaded against that which you really know is right.

On the other hand, take no notice of this as you have to work through it all anyway, no one can teach you these things, you must learn them. Try not to hurt others though.

Ben Fernee, Caduceus Books

Email ben@cadu.demon.co.uk

Web pages <http://www.io.com/~albion/caduceus/>

Web pages <http://www.cadu.demon.co.uk/>

This, from the well-known and Internet-frequent Bill Heindrick, speaks for itself:

93

>What advice would you give yourself if you could go back in time and slip
>yourself a paragraph of written advice at the point you started the esoteric
>path?

None. Unsolicited advice in such matters is pretty much useless at best and a distraction otherwise.

However, if I had a spate of weakness and felt compelled to advise, I would say: "The essence is in the questions, never in the answers".

93 93/93

Bill Heindrick

OK. First, you're always going to think you know what it's all about - you'll always be wrong. Your consciousness, identity, attachments and beliefs are what make you, so you can't know where you're going to be next - but it will always be bigger, better and brighter if you work at it. Don't be put off by others, or what you don't understand. Things can become clear by being brave enough to try them. What's the worst that can happen? Feel the fear and do it anyway, as you will read one day. This is the most important thing you can do on the planet, don't give up to begin with, or you'll never know it. When you get down, look around and think - what's the alternative? Spend more time doing nothing but experiencing simple things; the drops of rain on a leaf, the sound of a child laughing. Oh, and don't bother wasting time talking overly to others - the worker is always hidden in the workshop.

In the Great Work

Frater FP

Frater FP

<http://www.templum.com>

Cogitatione sui secumque colloquio firmitatem petere.

A Site for Enquiring Minds.

What I would tell myself if I could send a message back down the time-stream:

Ask the Universe why you are here. Really mean it.

Then interpret every subsequent experience as part of the answer.

Oh – and learn to surrender – totally.

PS. Have as much fun as possible because you may experience much pain and confusion as the result of the above.

PPS. On a more personal note; sex really isn't that important!

Brina

Donald Kraig is author of one of the best modern books on Magick, entitled "Modern Magick, Eleven Lessons in the High Magickal Arts". This is his submission:

When I became involved in the study of occultism, there were lots of archaic books, frequently filled with factual errors or fantasies described as fact, and a small number of good titles. I looked through everything and tried to find patterns. This was encouraged by the mid-19th century philosophy that all spiritual systems were based on the same ideas and techniques. Therefore we could easily find the links between the systems. The highest level of this is found in Crowley's book, 777. But the fact is, that book is only a map based on the Kabalistic Tree of Life. If something didn't fit easily it was simply omitted. What I have come to realise is that Thelema is not The Golden Dawn and they are not Theosophy and they are not Chaos Magick and they are not Christianity and they are not Buddhism and they are not Tantra. Unfortunately, many people think they are. And now, with the huge number of books being published on occultism, people are going from book to book, from group to group, without ever getting a good foundation in any system. The result has been that many good people have left occult studies simply because it all doesn't work together and there is too much to learn. If I were able to go back I would pick one traditional system and learn it thoroughly. Then I would study other systems and add to what I knew. In this way I would eventually come up with a unique system that worked for me and I would have an understanding of how things work together. Inevitably, all magical systems are individual.

Donald Michael Kraig

On a slightly more humorous note, how about ...

Get up all the money you can and invest it in the IPO of a small Seattle-based company called "Microsoft". Keep rolling over the profits as much as possible. Your subsequent spiritual development will then be completely subsidised and you can stop worrying about mundane matters, like bill-paying.

PS -- Having a wonderful time. Wish you were here.

Tom Schuler

Quite possibly the note would read: "The most important magical weapon is an industrial strength bs-detector."

JAMES W. REVAK - San Diego, CA, USA

I have no idea what the sentiment behind this advice was, but it might just be useful to others as well ...

Take the goddamned gun you'll need it.

umbral_echo

One that you might want to consider....

If it feels wrong, it MAY BE!!!

Oaktree

And finally, there's no simpler advice than this ...

Get on with it already.

Will

My thanks to all the contributors for this booklet, who gave freely their own advice to themselves, distilled from their experience at the close of the 20th century. I trust that our collective efforts will continue to make the 21st century a truly magical one.

Having read through all of the submissions, I also realised that my own submission could be simplified. What could I have said to myself that would have hastened my magical progress and yet at the same time been obvious? What could have saved me from many dead-ends of enquiry and given me food for thought under all circumstances? This is it:

If you feel fear, hatred, envy, or any negative emotion towards any one person, situation or object, look inside, and you will find the source and target of that emotion within yourself. Learn. If you feel love, respect, honour or any positive emotion towards any one person, situation or object, look inside, and you will find the source and target of that emotion within yourself. Learn.

In the Great Work

Frater FP

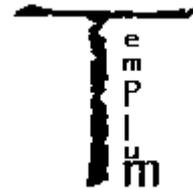
<http://www.templum.com>

Cognitacione sui secumque colloquio firmitatem petere.

A Site for Enquiring Minds.

CONTRIBUTORS LIST

Lesya Whyte	Gar
Frater Abdiel S.A.	Bjørn Andersen
Avaryce	Ben Fernee
Daleth	Bill Heindrick
KT	Frater FP
Mark A Preston	Brina
Hamal	Donald Michael Kraig
Jasinth	Tom Schuler
John Michael Greer	James W. Revak
Patricia della Piana	Umbral Echo
Pete Carroll	Oaktree
Nema	Will
Turtle	
Goldfinch	
Michael Staley	



Templum Site at <http://www.templum.com>