CIRCLING THE STAR

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(Uncorrected sample)

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I have often said that the Iron Pentacle is a tool of revolution and the Pearl Pentacle is a tool of evolution.

These tools, brought through by Victor Anderson, have helped many people over the years, including myself. Doing the work of the Iron and Pearl Pentacles changed my life, lending me greater balance, resilience, self-knowledge, and a deeper understanding of all the relationships around me.

You see, everything in this world, and in this cosmos, are in relationship. Our patterns of avoidance and habits of pain can keep us from recognizing these relationships. As long as we see ourselves as isolated beings, the world can feel broken, distant, confusing, and cold. Bringing ourselves closer to wholeness enables all of our relationships to flourish.

One day, we awaken and realize that we are connected to each cell in our bodies, each leaf on every tree, and the most distant star our eyes can find in the night sky. And we are connected to every human, too. And together, we can build a world based on mutuality instead of a culture intent on tearing us all apart.
Doing the work of Iron and Pearl helps us liberate ourselves, so we can better work to help others toward liberation as well. And where freedom exists, so do love and justice.

I feel grateful for the work of Iron and Pearl. My whole life is profoundly different, having encountered them. To reclaim Sex, Pride, Self, Power, and Passion is to claim our humanity. To invoke Love, Law, Knowledge, Liberty, and Wisdom is to reach a hand out to every other human alive.

It was my pleasure and honor to have been one of those who passed these powerful tools along to Anthony Rella, who, like any good magician, has made them his own. He has chased their resonances through his psyche and his physical body, and been changed.

Drawing on his years of magical practice and spiritual study, Tony blends his own devotional practice with his training in psychotherapy. The result is a deep understanding, coupled with a dash of poetry. He calls on us to open to states of wonder. To plumb our depths. To be strengthened and renewed.

These tools can change you, too, if you let them.

I hope you do. We have a chance become healthier in spirit, body, and mind.

It is my firm belief that the more people work toward their own healing and wholeness, the better off all of our communities will be.

Tony is weaving a powerful spell in this book. I hope you take it up, take it in, and over time, I hope you make this spell your own. It is a spell of strength, ecstasy, and freedom.

The world needs this.
The world needs you.

T.Thorn Coyle

has been arrested at least four times. Buy her a cup of tea or a good whisky and she'll tell you about it. Author of the alt-history urban fantasy series "The Panther Chronicles," her multiple non-fiction books include "Sigil Magic for Writers, Artists & Other Creatives," and "Evolutionary Witchcraft." Thorn's work appears in many anthologies, magazines, and collections. She has taught magical practice in nine countries, on four continents, and in twenty-five states.

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Atum rose from the vast waters of Nun upon the benben mound, the first principle of being to emerge from chaotic ground. Aching with desire, Atum made love to himself until stars of ejaculate shot from his phallus, touching the waters of Nun and forming the first worlds. From his orgasmic cry and the spit of his mouth came the winds of Shu and the moisture of Tefnut, whose lovemaking birthed the starry expanse of Nut and the fertile, recumbent ground of Geb, whose lovemaking birthed the gods. Thus the children of the gods were gifted the force of creation, the spark of life which is sex and desire.

A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE PENTACLES

The Iron Pentacle is a tool that creates authority within one’s self. The Iron Pentacle is a process of individuation, bringing one’s disparate energies into wholeness, claiming one’s life force and bringing it into service of the personal and transpersonal will. The points of the Pentacle are named Sex, Self, Passion, Pride, and Power.

The Iron and Pearl Pentacles come through the work of poet and mystic Victor Anderson, who with Cora Anderson transmitted teachings and practices to a number of initiates. Their initiates continued to teach and develop the practice of working with the Pentacles within their lineages. These tools
have also become embedded in traditions and covens influenced by, or evolved from, the Anderson Feri Tradition.¹

The energy of the Iron Pentacle runs internally and clockwise. The inner star’s energy runs from Sex to Pride to Self to Power to Passion to Sex, while the clockwise energy runs from Sex to Self to Passion to Pride to Power.² In the body, the Sex point is in the head, Pride in the right foot, Self in the left hand, Power in the right hand, and Passion in the left foot.³ Those of us without some of these appendages may experiment with sensing if our ethereal bodies extend to those limbs, or simply run the energy to the furthest extremity available.

Each point connects to the other point in some way, whether through the inner star or the clockwise circle, and a change in one point affects the rest. While it is a very clean, simple form, working with the Iron Pentacle continues to deepen and become more powerful over time. In early phases of working with it, we claim the energies and work through blockages within the points. As we continue to work, we might begin to look at the lines between the points. A problem with Sex, for instance, might be rectified through working on one’s Passion or Pride.

The Iron Pentacle is an energetic tool. To work with it solely in an intellectual or theoretical way, without practice, limits our capacity to truly understand its potential. We must feel its energy in our body and walk with it in the world to gain the felt sense of when these energies run well and when they are corroded and blocked. Working with it as a tool of manifestation

¹ The Anderson Feri Tradition originate with Victor and Cora Anderson, witches who transmitted and taught their tradition to a number of initiates. These initiates have in turn taught and initiated others into the Anderson lineage, or included aspects of the tradition into differentiated traditions or communities, such as Reclaiming Witchcraft or Morningstar Mystery School. A fuller account of the history of the Iron Pentacle is available in Magic of the Iron Pentacle by Jane Meredith and Gede Parma.
² In the southern hemisphere, some run the outer circle in the counter-clockwise movement, following the difference in the movement of the sun across the horizon in the northern and southern hemispheres.
³ This is how I learned the Pentacle, as though it is in my body facing front. Some run it with the Pentacle facing back, with Self in the right hand and Pride in the left foot, etc.
and embodiment fosters surprising changes in one's life and way of being in the world.\textsuperscript{4}

When Iron energy runs clean, strong, and bright, the Pearl Pentacle forms. Discord and irritation spurred by Iron becomes translucent brilliance, vibrating to a higher resonance: the energies named Love, Law, Knowledge, Liberty, and Wisdom.\textsuperscript{5} Without Iron energy, these energies become stale, oppressive, and brittle. Empty word and gesture, easily said and poorly done. Iron infuses Pearl with the vibrancy and resilience of lived experience.

\begin{itemize}
  \item When we access the fullness of Sex, we fall deeply in Love with the world.
  \item When we stand in healthy Pride, our wants and needs lead us to the deeper patterns of Law.
  \item When we root ourselves in authentic Self, an unshakeable and certain Knowledge emerges.
  \item When we grow strong in our Power, we discover the Liberty of self-authority and responsibility.
  \item When we open ourselves to the depths of Passion, we learn a resilient and cunning Wisdom.
\end{itemize}

As the Iron Pentacle reshapes the Self, the Pearl Pentacle reshapes the Self-in-Relationship, affecting our friendships, partnerships, communities, and cultures. It is akin to the Christian notion of grace, not a thing we “do” so much as what arises as a result of our work in Iron. When first trying to play a singing bowl, the sound is inconsistent and warbly. With practice, we begin to establish the tone. Eventually our hands find the groove with ease and a clear, beautiful note fills the room, cleanses the space, calms the soul.

\textsuperscript{4} Finding a teacher who can energetically support you in working the Pentacles is well advised. Researching your nearest Reclaiming community is one path to finding a teacher, as frequently these communities offer classes on Iron and Pearl. If you want to request teaching from a Feri or Faery initiate, approach with respect.

\textsuperscript{5} Some Feri lines that work with Pearl use “Power” for the point named “Liberty” here, making the Iron to Pearl vibration of Power to Power.
TOOLS FOR SELF-TRANSFORMATION

The Pentacles are magical tools that disrupt rigid and stale patterns in our lives, free up psychic energy, and redirect that energy toward our deeper values and needs. This book will explore the tools primarily in their capacity to transform and refine the Self. There are many laudable concerns and critiques about Self-focused magical workings, fearing that it will lead to self-involvement, disregard of the gods and spirits, and disdain for the needs of others. This is a particular danger when our work becomes too focused on cultivating the ego and not bringing the ego into service.

In this work, the Pentacles are a nexus between psychology and spirituality. These two disciplines are better served when regarded as separate approaches to the human condition, with unique insights and interventions that point toward ways we can fulfill our potential. That said, the roots of “psychology” might be translated as “study of the soul.” The psyche is the retina through which we experience and interpret the world. We can certainly have spiritual practice without a practice of studying our souls, but they work quite well in concert.

Michael Sebastian Lux offers an important distinction between psychology and the “sloppy thinking” he calls “psychologization,” which is to assert “that everything can be reduced to projections of consciousness.” To illustrate this distinction, consider the following: A child grows up with caregivers, perhaps a particularly difficult caregiver that they called “Dad.” The child internalizes an image of “Dad” that becomes powerfully charged and fixed in the psyche. This image was formed from how “Dad” behaved, what unconscious forces were acting through him, what the child understood about the behavior at the time, and whatever life incidents occurred that generated the emotional content and self-beliefs. How the child learns to express or not express feelings, what the child needs to feel safe, how the child relates to their needs—all of these are informed by these inner images. They become parts of the child’s developing Self.

As both child and parent grow, both change. Maybe the parent was irritable and punitive but begins to mellow out as an adult and regret his prior behavior. When the now-adult child is unconscious of the difference between the inner image and the outer reality, they still respond to “Dad” as though he is the internalized “Dad”—perhaps with defensiveness, resentment, or a need to please and seek validation. This extends to people who remind the child of that internalized “Dad”—spouse, bosses, teachers.

To say that “Dad” does not exist in any meaningful way except as a projection of the child’s internalized image—that would be psychologizing. That would let us off the hook of being in relationship to the living people who are our parents, and we would lose much.

Yet we would lose much by neglecting those internalized images as well. Until we begin to work on our relationships with our caregivers, we do not recognize that those images are separate from the actual people, nor do we see how our reactivity co-creates the relationships we do not like. There is no capacity for distance and self-observation.

This extends to magical and spirit work. Some believe that all spirit contact is simply a psychological function, there are no entities “out there.” Noncorporeal beings may interact with us through forms that seem to resemble internalized psychic images, triggering automatic responses and associations. Work on personal psychology helps us to be more flexible and resilient in our relationships and spiritual work, better able to contain that reactivity based in the past and attend to what is happening in the present moment. Internal blocks shape how we experience and interact with the world, and thus shape the world.

Work on the Self is a means to being of better service to the gods, community, and the Earth. Living a life of integrity and alignment with deep values also means experiencing a life of risk and challenge. Service, too, is joyful but demanding. Old wounds, unexpressed desires, denied dreams—unattended, they are like emotional land mines that get activated by unexpected words or circumstances and throw us off-center.

We all have our portion of emotional land mines, and the overculture tells us to “be strong,” “keep it together,” to ignore our vulnerabilities and plow
heroically forward. Denying these weaknesses adds to the stress, and then we turn more and more toward numbing activities or lapses of integrity because “I deserve it for working so hard,” and our pentacles slowly warp without our noticing.

Too often wounding leads to more wounding. Either we hurt others for triggering our emotional land mines, or we hurt ourselves to control scarier pain. Perhaps we are harmed by someone else’s pride, power, passion, or sexual desire, or we are subsumed by another person’s egotistical needs. We may deny these qualities in ourselves and judge others for expressing them.

We are riddled with conflicting messages about how to carry ourselves and warned about the qualities associated with the Iron Pentacle. We are supposed to be sexually desirable without liking sex too much, living authentic lives without making others uncomfortable, managing the stresses in our lives in a way that serves others’ agendas for profit and productivity. These messages simultaneously devalue and overvalue sex, pride, power, passion, and self, fostering cultural complexes. Some teachers illustrate these ambivalent complexes through the Rusted (deflated) and Gilded (inflated) Pentacles. Working with Rusted and Gilded is not essential, but discussing them as absences is useful for connecting with healthy Iron energy.

Bringing presence to our wounded parts generates healing. Rather than acting out pain, the practice enables us to work with it in a new way. Holding the tension of awareness and stuckness generates Pearl energy. All that discomfort and darkness the ego wants to avoid or merge becomes, with practice and presence, the raw material of Pearl. There is always a new depth to plummet, another complex to unbind, new frequencies of Iron and Pearl to discover.

The Iron Pentacle helps us to be cleaner, sharper, and stronger tools in the service of our higher calling. If you are called to serve the gods, how much more effective will you be if your emotional and physical needs are being consistently met, without needing to jump from crisis to crisis? If you

7. Rusted and Gilded pentacles originated from Faery initiate Steven Hewell. According to Sara Amis, Victor Anderson did not like these Pentacles, and ultimately Hewell and his line discarded their use. Others in Feri, Faery, and Reclaiming traditions do work with them.
are a vehicle for spirit communication, how much clearer a channel will you be if you are mindful of your biases and harmful inner voices? If you are an activist for justice, how much longer could you fight if you are having satisfying relationships, great sex, and feeding your soul with art you love?

**READING THIS BOOK: A PRESCRIPTIVE PRACTICE WITH CHOICE**

I have been studying witchcraft since 2005, starting with Reclaiming witchcraft, eventually moving into long-term study with T. Thorn Coyle when she was teaching Anderson Feri and continuing when she separated her teachings into Morningstar Mystery School. During this time, I also became drawn to study of the Kemetic (ancient Egyptian) pantheon.

In my early days with Reclaiming, my teachers River Roberts and Jennifer Byers mapped the Iron Pentacle points to the Western elements—correspondences that helped me to understand and work with the energies. It is as though the Elemental, Iron, and Pearl Pentacles are different resonances of the same core energies. Some compare this to the same notes played an octave apart. The particular associations of Elements to points offer deep teachings. Associating Water with Passion, for example, yields a different experience of the point than the typical association with Fire.

These particular Elemental associations are not essential or universal, and indeed some teachers even map points of the Pearl Pentacle to different points of Iron than what is presented in this book. Rather than get caught up on who has the “correct” teachings, let us consider another possibility.

In his essay “The Real Story on the Chakras,” writer and yogi Hareesh, or Christopher Wallis, interrogates the Western understanding of the chakras as a coherent system of seven energy centers that have consistent associations.⁸ He notes that there are many variations of chakra systems, ranging from five to more than twenty-eight, all depending upon the specific prac-

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tice being enacted. He suggests that none of the chakra systems are more “right” than the others, but that they were created to enact specific changes in human energy bodies. He describes the chakra systems as prescriptive rather than descriptive—that is, one is “prescribed” a particular chakra practice to bring about a specific, intended change.

Hareesh suggests that in a sense we “implant” our energy bodies with these chakras, as opposed to discovering chakras that are already there in each human. This suggests that our subtle bodies are fluid and responsive enough that they would produce appropriate imagery and energy pathways based on the system we implant.

To explore this idea within the framework of the Triple Soul: Sticky One—the animal part of our soul—is playful, imaginative, emotional, and loves working with symbols. When we give it the idea of an energy center known as the “heart chakra,” the animal part responds by creating a functioning symbolic interface. Perhaps it’s an image of a bright green heart, or of a vibrant wheel, something that intuitively makes sense to this part. What might have otherwise been inchoate energies now have a specific form and function. Shining Body—the human or rational part of our soul—intellectually conceptualizes and understands the symbolic language, and is thus able to better communicate with Sticky One. God Soul, Sacred Dove, or Sacred Falcon—the divine part of our soul—too utilizes this symbolic language and energetic experience for communication. Thus we create an internal and communal frame to work with those energetic qualities, such as love, relationship, balance, the color green, and social identity.\(^9\) Infusing the heart chakra with the Air element engenders a particular energetic expression of the chakra, a specific change in personality, but not an essential one. We could try putting Fire or Earth energy in the heart chakra to see what would happen.

\(^9\) These associations are taken from Anodea Judith’s *Eastern Body, Western Mind*. I acknowledge that Hareesh’s article criticizes Judith’s approach as one of the “descriptivist” texts counter to his understanding of the intent of the chakras.
The qualities of the Pentacles may be similar, not intrinsically attached to our body parts or the elements. We might not have a latent “Pentacle” inside of us, but rather working this energy establishes and reifies the coherent internal system that, as a result, changes the Self. The tool brings these energies into a new pattern, burns away blockages, balances them, and focuses them into a clarity and purpose that would not have existed otherwise. Hence the need to run this energy regularly to maintain it, and the need to work on each point to make space for its healthy functioning.

In this book, there are several prescriptive approaches utilized that are not universally practiced by people who work with the Pentacles. These include elemental associations, Kemetic associations, and the connecting junctures between points. Each chapter is organized around a particular set of associations. First, I focus on the Iron point with an elemental association and its relationship with the other Iron points. Then I explore the Pearl resonance.

All of these workings are framed by the stories and energetic supports of certain Kemetic gods that came forward during the writing for this purpose. When I came upon the creation story of Atum, retold above, I marveled at its similarities to the Feri story of the Star goddess making love to herself and birthing the cosmos with desire. In my relationships with Kemetic deities, I experience them to be interested and supportive of this work, and I offer these associations to help frame and deepen your work with the Pentacles. You might be unwilling or unable to work with Kemetic imagery and deities. That is fine. It is not necessary.

A prescriptive practice of this sort creates a specific kind of outcome: For example, a person whose personality has a more watery sense of Passion, for example. You may find, after trying out the associations I offer, that you wish to try different associations. Ultimately, each of us runs our own unique Iron Pentacle, and the work that comes through us as a result will be distinct.
To begin, here is a practice for running the Pentacles:  

To run the Iron Pentacle, stand or lay down with your limbs spread out like a five-pointed star. If your body cannot do this easily or comfortably, find a posture that for you approximates the star. With a breath, imagine sending a root down into the earth, winding down until it connects with the molten core. Breathe, imagining you can pull hot red Iron energy up through your root, gathering it in the cauldron of your center, between your navel and pelvis. 

When your center is full, breathe that Iron energy up into your head. Let it fill your head, noticing how this energy inhabits this point. Call out, “Sex. Sex. Sex.” Breathe the energy down your neck, down the right side of your torso, through your right leg until it fills your right foot. Notice how the energy inhabits your foot. Call out, “Pride. Pride. Pride.”

Breathe the energy back up your leg, across your sex, up through the left side of your torso, through your left arm, into your left hand. Notice how the energy inhabits your hand. Call out, “Self. Self. Self.” Breathe the energy across your arm, through your heart and lungs, into your right hand. Notice how the energy inhabits your hand. Call out, “Power. Power. Power.”

Breathe the energy through your right arm, down your torso into your left leg, down your leg, gathering in your left foot. Notice how the energy inhabits your foot. Call out, “Passion. Passion. Passion.” Breathe the energy back up the left side of your body, up through your neck, back into your head. “Sex.”

Move the energy through this star pattern at least three times. “Sex. Pride. Self. Power. Passion. Sex.” Back in Sex, imagine that God Hirsself draws the circle of Iron energy from Sex to Self to Passion to Pride to Power and back to Sex. Follow the energy through this circle pattern at least three times. “Sex. Self. Passion. Pride. Power. Sex.”

If you are new to the Iron Pentacle, work with this energetic practice daily while you work through this book. Let Iron melt down impediments while you work to integrate the energies into your life.

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10. Other guided descriptions of running the energy of the Iron and Pearl Pentacles are available in Meredith and Parma’s Magic of the Iron Pentacle and Coyle’s Evolutionary Witchcraft.
After you have some practice running the Iron Pentacle, you can try letting the energies resonate up to the Pearl Pentacle. After running the star and circle energy, imagine the energy moving faster, brighter, and hotter between the points, until it moves so fast that you cannot keep up.


Blessed be the Iron and Pearl Pentacles.
CIRCLING THE STAR
WILL BE RELEASED
INTO THE WORLD
14 FEBRUARY, 2018.

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