

Becoming Magic
by Jaq D. Hawkins

One of my all time favorite quotes was made by Donald Michael Kraig:

“Magick is not something you do. Magick is something you are.”

This simple phrase sums up a multitude of individual experiences, all of which come together to contribute to the person that each of us becomes. Whatever we call ourselves: ‘witch’, ‘magician’, etc., we share a common interest in magic as a part of our lives, and in making magic a part of our lives, we make ourselves a part of magic.

Yet there is more to each of us than our magic. There are many facets to each of our lives, and some of them take us into the mundane world. One thing that most of us accept with little questioning, is that we must all make a living one way or another. Not everyone can own an occult shop, write, publish a magazine or run seminars and organize festivals. A lot of magical people make their way in the world with mundane jobs. It can sometimes be difficult to reconcile our magical selves to the everyday routines and requirements for maintaining the lives that we create for ourselves. So, we look for a way to work magic into those daily routines.

We start with the best of intentions, doing daily magical exercises of some kind to help us make magic a part of our regular lives. We carry on for a while, then begin to falter. Job pressures are taking over our conscious thoughts, or other people living in the house, parents, children, spouses or even roommates, make it difficult to concentrate, or even ridicule our beliefs. Soon the twenty minute meditation or daily tarot reading which seemed like so little to commit oneself to has been neglected repeatedly, and we are caught up in the mundane world again. The magic is all but forgotten until time for the next ritual or when we come across the book on magic which we had meant to finish reading.

What we may not realize, is that with each bit of reading, each ritual, each well intentioned daily exercise which we keep or not, we are becoming magic. Becoming magic isn’t something which happens during an initiation or a particular flash of insight, although these things certainly contribute to the collective experiences which cause us to become magic.

From an early age, we make decisions about our interests which, over time, become the basis for the make-up of our personalities. By the time we are old enough to choose a career, or even what classes we will choose in higher education if we choose that road, most of us reading this magazine will have chosen a path which includes some form of magic. There are many paths to magic, but once it has become a part of one’s life, it is likely to remain so to one extent or another.

We could speculate extensively on ‘why’ we choose to make magic a part of our lives, but for now let’s speculate on ‘how’. How did each of us reach a decision in our lives that we would make some form of magic a part of it, and in what way has it actually made a difference to us, or affected our daily lives? More pointedly, how does magic BECOME a part of our daily lives?

How does this happen? I have learned from speaking to people from a variety of magical paths, that most of us come to magic for one of four basic reasons: 1) A lust for power, which with knowledge will most often lead to a more spiritual outlook; 2) A recognition of odd things happening in our lives which we must find a way to explain or control; 3) A family history of magical interest which is passed down to us; or 4) A basic curiosity after hearing of some form of occultism, which leads to further study.

Next we learn. Perhaps through experience, even trial and error. More often through reading or lessons passed from another. So often we find ourselves trying to follow someone else's views of how to learn about magic. Those of us who have spent time in large cities will probably find ourselves going to the library and reading Crowley and Butler, perhaps even simultaneously, or perhaps Waite, Fortune, or Farrar. Then we try to keep up Butler's visualization exercises while trying to work out what Crowley is going on about, and sooner or later we find our interest is following a particular direction, such as Wicca or Ceremonial Magic, which leads to further study in the chosen direction and sometimes into a daily routine which eventually leads to boredom or distraction for the sake of mundane daily survival. We have come full circle. There may be a few steadfast souls who have given themselves a daily magical routine in the early stages and carried it on through a large portion of their lives, but I haven't met them.

However, all this time, something has been happening to us. The bits and pieces of information we collect from our study and experience begin to take effect. Our perceptions of the world around us begin to change in subtle ways. The urban rush hour traffic begins to fall into a perceivable pattern; the rural habits of neighbors we have had for years and even decades suddenly begin to make sense, and the connection with the changing seasons to local superstitions begins to fall into place.. Odd coincidences begin to happen, not just occasionally but quite often. We don't yet understand why, but we see that it is happening. We are in control, we are shaping our lives, and we are able to perceive the magic in our world.

Still, we don't quite know what we are doing to make all of this happen. Things are getting weird! So, we study some more to try and understand what is going on. We meet others of 'our kind' if we haven't done so already, and in many cases, join a group or network to share experiences with others who may understand what we are talking about.

Gradually, we become familiar with the things our chosen companions seem to know all about. We recognize authors and concepts. This is great while we are meeting with our magical companions, but in the morning one still has to go to work. Back to a mundane world...or is it?

Reality is, in essence, perception. Therefore, if we perceive our world to be a mundane one, where a handful of magical people choose to dwell, we live in a mundane world and continue to have trouble reconciling the magic in our lives to the daily grind of survival. However, with a slight shift in attitude, we can choose to see the world as a magical place, where we the magical inhabitants understand the ways of natural forces and it is the mundanes who are a bit out of place.

If we think of magic as natural rather than supernatural, we have a beginning toward this shift. As we pursue our chosen magical paths, we can choose to see our place in the universe as more important than our job description. Magic begins to permeate our thinking processes until we become 'apart from' the mundane world, even as we inhabit it. In training oneself to perceive the magical in everyday situations, one soon learns to act according to the magical perspective. Then, we ARE magic!

“Great” you say, “but how does that affect my life at the office/the quarry/flipping burgers?” It depends on attitude and perspective. Do you get stressed out over a job and wrap it around you twenty-four hours a day, or do you go through the motions because it is your source of survival and then leave it behind at quitting time? Some jobs really do require one's full attention at the time, but we still have the option of leaving it behind at the end of the day.

Do you do a good job out of personal pride in doing all things well, or because it could mean a pay rise and therefore more money to buy mechanical toys? Do you leave work fuming over something someone said to you that day, or do you shed your work persona two steps out the door and take in the magical world outside?

Being magic doesn't have to mean dropping everything three times a day to pour libations to the Sun or any other outward ritual observance. Being magical is an attitude that becomes very much a part of what we are and how we think. When this shift in perspective is mastered, the mundane world, while still real in its own way, becomes far less stressful and distracting to that which is really important...the magic.

In my own work experience, I have often found ways to incorporate magical thoughts into my work routine. For example, many years ago I had a repetitive manual job which left my mind free to wander (not a good idea in hazardous situations) and spent the time contemplating the meaning of one tarot card each day as a way to learn them. Office jobs which require mental attention do not lend themselves to this sort of thing, but the attitude one brings in to the office can very definitely affect one's on the job perspective.

It is a matter of thinking magically, rather than thinking like our robotron co-workers. We have the choice to look at situations from the perspective of their relative importance to the universe, rather than getting caught up in little inter-office power struggles.

Being humans, we are likely to get caught up in mundane situations sometimes. Being magic, we have the choice to recognize it when we do, and to see the situation from a magical perspective. We are apart from the mundane world. We are free spirits. We ARE magic!