

HIGH MAGICK

A GUIDE TO THE SPIRITUAL PRACTICES
THAT SAVED MY LIFE ON DEATH ROW

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sounds true
BOULDER, COLORADO

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WHY LEARN MAGICK?

First of all, you're already doing magick. With every thought, word, and deed you are influencing the world around you and determining what comes your way. Even when I was in solitary confinement waiting to be executed, I could still shape my reality to a large degree. Granted, most people do this unconsciously—they make things happen in their lives without giving it a second thought. The only difference between a magician and your average person on the street is that a magician does magick intentionally. In my opinion, if you're constantly exerting influence on reality, it's a good idea to learn how to do it well.

I think spiritual visionaries have always been powerful practitioners of magick—the prophets of the Old Testament, Jesus, Muhammad, Lao Tzu, and Gautama Buddha, just to name a few. These people devoted their lives to spiritual evolution for the benefit of everyone. When someone asked the Buddha, “What are you? Are you a god, or are you a man?” The Buddha simply replied, “I’m awake.” He meant that he had awakened to how the whole thing works—to the laws of karma and to the fact that reality isn’t just something predetermined that happens to us. He was awake to the knowledge that we can all shape reality and create better environments for ourselves. We can actually *do something* about it.

Call this *something* whatever you'd like. I prefer to call it magick.

Every person on this earth is born with an entire universe of potential in them. Most people never cultivate the seeds of that potential, so

the seeds go to waste and the people go through life wondering what went wrong, or blaming the world for everything that did go wrong. Magick waters those seeds to make that potential stir, grow, and flower.

It accelerates our spiritual and mental development in ways we never could have predicted. Our ability to shape our destiny and the world around us using magick is limited only by our own belief, dedication, and creativity.

Once you begin
experiencing magick,
you will never see life
the same way again.

This book will not cover every technique known to modern magicians. No single book could ever do that. There are hundreds and hundreds of methods of manifesting your desires with magick, and this particular book is my offering to help get you started down the path with some basic practices. Some will appeal to you, others will not. However, I encourage you to try each of them for a short time, in order to find the techniques that most strongly resonate with you. I also encourage you to seek out other authors, practices, techniques, and approaches, because no single magician or text is the ultimate authority.

The goal of this book is to provide you with the opportunity to experience the magick that resides within you—within each and every one of us, without exception. These rituals and practices are merely guidelines—a place to begin. Once you begin experiencing magick, you will never see life the same way again. You'll grow increasingly aware of the currents of energy active all around you, and the interactions between energy and the material realm. And you'll discover that, contrary to what you may have been told, there are no limits.

But I'm not here to tell you what to believe, and I'm not here to convert anyone. That's not my job. My job (if you could call it that) is simply to show you what has worked for me through thick and thin, both today as a free man and during those years that I spent in hell. In that way, I guess you could say it's my job to help. And my hope is that you'll find these practices as useful in your life as I have found them to be in mine.



WHAT MAGICK IS AND WHAT MAGICK ISN'T

Let's start with the title of this book. Why is *magick* spelled with a *k*, and what's so *high* about it?

In this context, magick is spelled with a *k* to differentiate it from parlor tricks and illusions you see on the stage. *Magic* without the *k* refers to David Blaine, Criss Angel, and David Copperfield, entertainers in tuxedos who pull rabbits out of hats and cut scantily clad assistants in half. But *magick* is a specific spiritual tradition—an amalgamation of Gnostic Christianity, esoteric Judaism, Taoist energy practices, and often forms of divination such as the Tarot or the I Ching. *Magick* refers to a path of transformation and evolution with its own set of practices and a long, complicated history.

And this book is about *high* magick because it's mostly about spiritual growth, energetic practices, ceremonies, rituals, and invocations. It's a simple distinction to differentiate it from *low* magick, which focuses primarily on earthly wants and needs. In other places, you'll see these two types of magick called *ritual* magick and *natural* magick (or witchery), respectively. In high magick, you'll find lots of visualization, breath work, energy manipulation, and so on. Low magick, by contrast, uses the inherent natural energies of particular objects (herbs, stones, crystals, etc.) to bring about certain results. These are things these objects do on their own without any help from us.

Another way to categorize magick is in terms of **theurgy** and **thaumaturgy**. Theurgy is the process of aligning ourselves with the source of creation in order to become more like it. In other words, more like God. It's the ultimate form of self-improvement, and what various traditions refer to when they speak of achieving enlightenment, experiencing nirvana, or entering the gates of Heaven. Theurgy means refining your energy until everything that vibrates at a "lower" frequency gradually fades away until you reenter the state of your original condition—the state in which you existed before the Fall spoken of in the biblical story of Eden. On the other hand, thaumaturgy refers to practical magick, which is about improving your life on the material plane.

Some "spiritual" people frown on thaumaturgy as being materialistic and ego driven, which has always struck me as foolish. The physical level of reality is no less sacred or holy than more subtle levels of reality, and it's quite difficult to focus on becoming one with the universe when your stomach is growling or you're concerned about your physical safety. In my view, there's absolutely nothing wrong with doing magick to improve your life on the material plane. There are just as many lessons to be learned from the physical realm as there are from the celestial, astral, or etheric realms. We are here to experience mastery of every aspect of our existence, not to avoid it or escape it. Being poor, sick, and lonely doesn't make us any more holy than being prosperous, healthy, and surrounded by those who love us.

However, I do want to stress that the primary reason for practicing magick is transformation and to become "more than human," to borrow a phrase from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

While we're on the topic of categorization, we might as well talk about black magick and white magick at this point. We all love duality (myself included); we want some things to be right and some things to be wrong. Even though our lives are complicated and multicolored (or shaded with various gradations of gray), we still hold tightly to notions of black and white. Of course, you could say that some acts of magick are entirely "white" (for example, invoking the purest forms of divinity for the highest reasons) and some are clearly "black" (say, causing pointless harm on innocent people), but most acts of magick are somewhere in the middle of the spectrum (say, gathering together enough money to pay the rent or finally gaining a romantic partner).

Some people would say that black magick is anything that attempts to influence other people, but that's a tricky distinction. If that's how we define it, then we're all expert practitioners of black magick—parents attempting to get their children to bed on time; spouses trying to win the argument; every advertisement for the latest movie, car, or fashion craze. Persuading others is just a part of life, but that doesn't make us mages in the black arts.

You can't do magick to affect someone else without changing yourself first. As you'll see later in the practice section, when you invoke a pentagram, what you're actually doing is magnetizing your own aura in order to attract whatever you want to manifest. So bringing in the energy of Jupiter to attract prosperity is a good idea, whereas gathering Saturn energy to hurt someone else means that you're bringing that power into your own aura, and you can't help but absorb some degree of it. It's like putting poison in your mouth so that you can spit it at someone else; more than likely you're going to end up swallowing some of it yourself. Magick means making intelligent choices, and few problems require resorting to maliciousness. For example, you *could* send negative energy toward someone who's been slandering you, or you could simply use magick to protect yourself from their lies.

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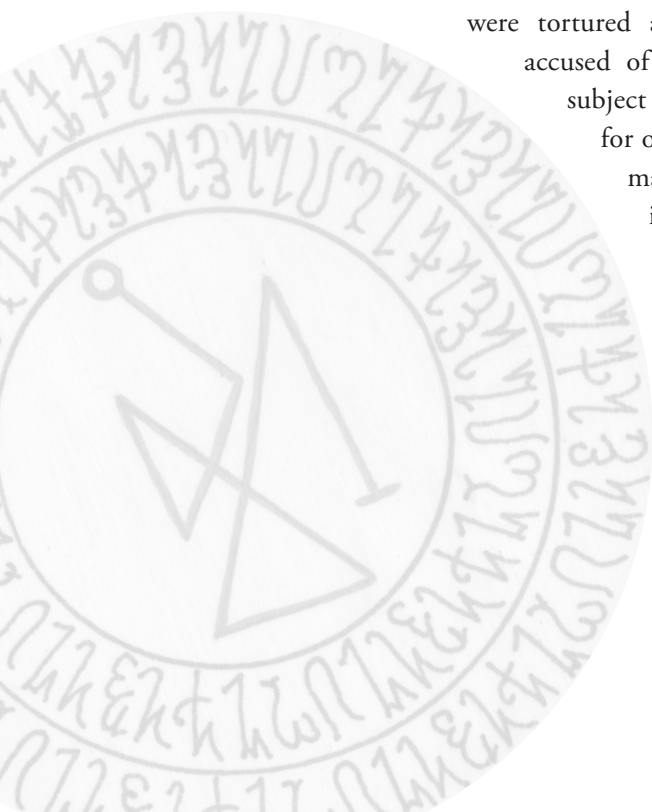
In truth, magick is neither black nor white. Magick is energy, just like gravity or electricity. You could even say that magick is a tool, just like a hammer. Now, you could use a hammer to assault someone and hit them over the head, but you could also use it to build a house in order to give a family much-needed shelter. Personally, I think the latter use is better suited for the tool, but in either case it's the person wielding the hammer who determines its purpose, and it's the same with magick.

Most people have certain ideas about what magick is and what it's not, based entirely on fictional sources. Usually they acquire these ideas from horror movies, fictional novels, or people with severely restricted ideas about Christianity and what Christ was all about. So part of what I'm hoping to do is demystify magick a little bit so that others can experience the same joy and fulfillment that magick has brought me and countless others. In truth, there's nothing dark, scary, or threatening about magick.

I began a social awareness campaign called Magick Revolution when Menton Matthews, David Stoupakis, and I held an art exhibit on the Salem witch trials, in which innocent people

were tortured and executed after being accused of practicing magick. It's a subject that hits close to home for obvious reasons. My love of magick was used against me in the worst way possible.

The prosecutor in my trial employed the incredulous logic that anyone who practices magick must naturally be a Satanist, and anyone who is a Satanist is just itching for the chance to commit horrendous murders. The jury ate it



up. My trial was simply a formality standing between me and the death sentence. So Magick Revolution is an ongoing effort to change the way that people view magick and to introduce them to this incredibly beautiful spiritual tradition that is no more dark or demonic than any other path.

A famous magician once called magick the “yoga of the West.” When we think of yoga, we mostly think of people lying on the floor in unusual and difficult physical poses, but that’s only a small portion of what yoga is all about. In fact, the original goal of yoga poses was to prepare practitioners for more advanced forms of energy work. If your body and mind are healthy, then you’ll live longer, and if you live longer, you have more opportunity to engage in spiritual transformation. The same could be said for Taoism. And like yoga, magick is more than a set of abstract theories and concepts. Magick involves an actual tradition with techniques that are intended to cause definitive changes. Although everyone performs magick regularly without even knowing it, Hermetic Esotericism (a fancy way to talk about magick) is a Western tradition that has never gained the acceptance that yoga has.

Magick is nothing
like you thought it
was going to be.

Magick’s lack of widespread approval is due, in part, to the fact that practitioners of magick in its various forms were seen as a threat to the early Christian church, and that perceived threat continues to this day. Magick is not a path for followers; it is a path for questioners, seekers, and anyone who has trouble settling for dogma and preformulated answers. Magick is for those who feel the desire to peel away the surface of reality and see what lies beneath. Like various persecuted forms of mysticism, magick promotes direct contact with the source of creation. Institutions that are invested in societal control don’t like this, of course, and do what they can to get rid of anyone and anything that might challenge them. Magick doesn’t rely on dogmatic threats and dubious prophecy. If a technique works, then it’s useful and true. If it doesn’t work, you scrap the technique and try something else. In this way, magick is more like Eastern traditions. For example, in the

Kalama Sutta, the Buddha says, “Try this path and see if it works. That’s the only way to tell if something is worthwhile.”

In a discussion about magick, a friend of mine once said, “I want to believe, but I can’t make the leap into actually believing.” I thought that was a profound thing to say—a lot of people feel that way but can’t quite articulate it. I responded as I often do when this topic comes up: Magick isn’t some kind of belief system that you have to subscribe to. It’s a series of techniques, and these techniques work regardless of your belief in them. So I encourage you to try the practices in part II of this book and see for yourself.

Before we go on, I want to circle back and get clear about what magick is, so here’s a simple breakdown for you. Magick is a way of being and seeing that involves particular techniques that perform various functions:

- to manifest our desires
- to shield us from external sources of energy (mostly, negative)
- to activate our internal energy centers
- to attune us to the currents of energy active in our lives, the world, and the larger universe

Magick is both an art and a science. Some techniques are known for providing specific effects, but results vary, as they say. Because every person is unique and their relationship with energy is different, it’s essential to try the practices, really delve into them, pay attention to what happens, experiment, and tweak the practices accordingly. In the beginning, you’ll probably find that magick is nothing like you thought it was going to be. Just try to remain open to the process and move forward with an open heart. One of the surprising things you’ll discover is that magick is sentient. It can make itself known to you, but only if you practice long enough to refine your senses to the point that you can actually receive the messages it’s trying to send.

Someone recently asked me what role love plays in magick. For me, magick is love. Whenever you bring in divine light to manifest one thing or the other in the world, what you're actually doing is pulling in love. This is why real magick is never a dark or scary thing, because the very act of practicing magick brings you into harmony with the Divine, no matter what name you call it. When you practice magick in this way, you become a better person, and that makes the world a better place. Helping other beings is what love looks like in action. And practicing magick in a way that brings more divine energy into your life means that you help everyone you touch. When you send a thoughtform to someone—say, someone close to you who needs healing of some sort—what you're actually sending them is love in the form of divine light. And the reason you do so is to make them whole, to make them happy.

What we normally think of as love is actually nothing more than attachment. In the core of our being, we know that true love is unconditional. True love doesn't waver or disappear if our loved one screws up or goes off the rails. Going forward, it's important that you distinguish attachment from love. The foundation of magic is all about living in harmony with love, manifesting love, and applying that love in the world. In this way, we become copartners with magick in the ongoing act of creation.

Finally, magick is a journey. It's a continuously unfolding path that has no end. You can study and practice magick for the rest of your life and you will still never learn everything that it has to teach you. If you dedicate yourself, you can continue to grow wiser and stronger until the day that you eventually leave your earthly form and graduate to a more refined realm of existence.

The average person is pulled to and fro throughout their entire life by energy currents they can't even perceive, much less exert control over. This continues even after death, and into the process of rebirth. We undergo this process over and over in an attempt to equilibrate and balance our energy. If our life experiences cause us to lean too far one way, then in our next cycle of rebirth we will try to compensate for the imbalance by pulling toward the opposite end of the spectrum. For example, a person who wrestles with being overly selfish in one life may attempt to regain energetic balance by becoming overly generous in their subsequent life.

Magick is a way of achieving that balance in a single lifetime, so that the process of rebirth is under our control. The most powerful magicians become like the Buddhist bodhisattvas—no longer enslaved to the wheel of karma, but capable of choosing when and where to manifest for the highest good. All of our memories and experiences remain intact so that we can apply them going forward, as opposed to forgetting everything and beginning from scratch with each round of rebirth. In magick this is called the Great Work, and it is each magician's job to complete it. Being able to manifest our desires and shape the world around us in this lifetime is seen as an added bonus of the process—not the end-all goal.

Ideally, you have a better understanding now of what magick is and what magick isn't. I'm hoping that something here has ignited some curiosity or even passion in you, and that you're ready to get started.