

IOT – The Book of the Novice

The Novice

The minimum requirements for admission to the IOT are 6 months' daily recorded work on the following programme, and, if geographically possible, some work with an IOT Group or Temple. During this 6 month period, you are referred to as a Novice, and you have a Mentor, a contact within IOT who supports you in your work.

In some instances, particularly with highly experienced Novices, the Novice and the Mentor may work out an individual training programme. The following programme will form the core of all training programmes.

The sections of the Work are as follows:

Mind Control / Meditation

Magic requires that we cultivate the ability to concentrate our attention to a condition of intense trance. The first stages of this training require motionlessness, breath awareness and regulation, and some ability to stop thoughts.

1. ASANA / STILLNESS

Pick a posture which does not include sleep and hold yourself still. Observe yourself passively whilst doing this.

OBJECTIVE: 15 minutes motionlessness, increasing to 30 minutes. Then proceed to breath control. Practice this on its own, and within other work. Record in the magical diary, as with all subsequent exercises.

2. PRANAYAMA / BREATH AWARENESS & CONTROL

In asana, make the breath gradually deeper and slower. Breathe with full awareness of inhaling, holding, exhaling and holding out.

OBJECTIVE: 15 minutes' continuous awareness of breath, increasing to 30 minutes. Then proceed to thought vigilance.

3. THOUGHT VIGILANCE / PRATYAHARA / NOT THINKING

Cultivate awareness of the stream of thought and attempt to stop it and achieve internal silence.

OBJECTIVES: Persistent awareness of thoughts arising. An experience of stopping the internal monologue, and awareness of how difficult this is.

Magical Trance

The second stage of the training develops intense concentration on arbitrary images and sounds as

a preparation for magical concentration.

4. OBJECT CONCENTRATION

Gaze intently at objects, e.g. a cup, a wall, clouds, fire.

OBJECTIVE: Unwavering, fixed gazing without distraction by thoughts or distortion of the object.

5. SOUND / VOICE CONCENTRATION

Concentration on imagined, 'audialized' sounds. Select a sound of one or a few syllables and repeat in your mind.

OBJECTIVE: Concentration to the point of exclusion of other thoughts.

6. IMAGE CONCENTRATION

Visualize simple, still forms and hold the image steady. Progress to more complex and moving forms.

OBJECTIVE: Persistent ability to hold desired images in mind for as many minutes at a time as possible. No distortion of the image.

7. METAMORPHOSIS / HABIT CHANGING

Change some unimportant feature of your thought or behaviour. Select a minor habit and remove it from your behaviour. Adopt a new behaviour at the same time. The changes should not in themselves be significant, and should be selected with assurance of success.

OBJECTIVES:

a) Success at habit changing. Success at small changes builds the skills for major self transformation – 'the Great Work of Magic'.

b) Two particular states of mind should be cultivated:

- Laughter: Invoke it by 'faking it till you make it'. It is the best antidote to emotional imbalance brought on by magical work.
- Neither-neither: Austin Osman Spare's Non-attachment / Non-desire is the state in which we can work 'without lust of result'. We need to be intent on our aim, yet light in our touch.

Magic

This selection is based on achieving some success at the foregoing sections first. Rituals, Sigils, Divination and Dreamwork are the training topics.

8. BANISHING RITUALS

Acquire a magical weapon and decide on a structure for your ritual. It should contain as minimum:

- a visualized barrier around yourself

- a centring visualized image, like the imaginal form of the magical weapon or your own body-energy centers
- power symbols drawn with the magical weapon
- a brief but intense attempt to stop the internal monologue

OBJECTIVES:

- Preparedness for magical concentration and work
- marking the points of 'leaving' and 'returning' to consensus 'reality'
- protecting the magician against obsession or other uncontrolled mental processes
- psychic self-defense

Master a couple of off-the-peg banishing rituals, then maybe design your own.

9. SIGILS & MANTRAS

Three stages of working with a sigil or mantra are: make up the glyph / sound, forget its conscious significance, and charge it. The form of the sigil / mantra and the original desire it encapsulates must be rigorously banished from normal waking consciousness. The sigil is charged when the mind is stilled through meditation or paralyzed by excitation, such as in intense emotion or sex. The sigil can also be charged when another strong desire arises, which is then sacrificed, the sigil being focused on instead.

OBJECTIVE: Objective results in consensus 'reality' from working sigils. Take care to record your diary entries in a way which does not remind you of the purpose of the sigil.

10. DIVINATION

Develop & record your divination attempts with at least 2 symbolic systems, e.g. runestaves, Tarot spreads, I Ching. Experiment also with skrying techniques such as gazing into a mirror, crystal or flames, and with kinesthetic techniques like dowsing.

OBJECTIVES: Objective knowledge of events and subjective guidance for your magic.

11. DREAMWORK

Keep a record of your dreams, separate from your main magical diary. Record all dreams as soon as possible after waking. It is worth keeping a book and pen by the bed and recording anything that comes to mind when you wake in the night. Move on to selecting a topic to dream about, by intense visualization or the use of sigils. From mastery of this phase, move on to attempts at exteriorization of consciousness.

OBJECTIVE: Access to the dream plane, in the form of lucid dreams and 'out of body' experiences.

The Magical Record

All work of the novice training is to be recorded DAILY in a diary, with your own comments. You may choose to keep your training diary separate from your more personal records. It is suggested that the first time you do new work – e.g. banishing rite – you write it up fully. Thereafter shorter comments can be used, e.g.: „Lesser Pentagram Ritual – getting more fluent now.“

Mentor and Novice

We do not chase Novices up; we are only interested in highly self-motivating people. It is up to YOU to stay in regular contact with your Mentor. If we do not hear from you for a while, we assume you are not currently interested in being a Novice. This doesn't mean that the door is closed, but it is up to you to make the effort and get back in touch.

References

The Novice will find very useful Peter J. Carroll's original training scheme for the IOT ***Liber MMM***. It is contained in ***Liber Null / Psychonaut***, pub. By Weiser. Liber Null is the original manual of the IOT.