

Creating A Magickal Journal

Definition of a Magickal Journal/Book of Shadows (MJ/BOS)

Keep in mind that a fair number of people use the term Book of Shadows and Magickal Journals interchangeably, while some people feel there is a definite difference. Strictly speaking, a Book of Shadows is a place to record spells, events, rituals and correspondences. A Magickal Journal is a place to record feelings, effects, intuition, brainstorming for possible events, etc. However, it's important not to get caught up in the terminology, and for ease of use, I used both interchangeably.

Some examples of more well know BOS/MJ's: The Goodly Spellbook, Coven Oldenwilde, Aradia, Gospel of Witches, Leland, the Four Books of Occult Philosophy, Agrippa, The Equinox, Crowley, the Practice of the Magickal Diary, Crowley.

A place to record results of workings, rituals & spells, it is also a place to record personal reflections on how events/rituals go, long term affects, and possible future changes.

Some other reasons & topics to create the MJ/BOS:

- To track your progress-see how far you've come, what you've learned and how you might apply it in the future
- Use it to create your own book of correspondences (herbs, stones, metals, colors, etc)-compile your own based on what you've used and what worked best for specific situations
- Compile a resource of Deities & Pantheons you've worked with (see what cultures or Pantheons you connect with the best)
- It's very useful if you want to re-create a spell (why re-invent the wheel when you know what works already??)
- Chronicle your growth as it relates to classes, books you've worked with, life lessons, teachers (keeping in mind that not all teachers are "official instructors"- some of our most important lessons come from people who don't realize that they're teaching us at all- lead by example). Also- it's important in order to give credit where it's due.

Also remember that a BOS or MJ can be *electronic* as well. In this new age of technology, I know several people that keep theirs on a computer, thumb drive or zip drive and even on their smart phones. What's important is, if that's what speaks to you or how you're wired, go with that. If inspired or motivated, you could always format it in a special way, create your book, print it out, bind it (or have it bound at a copy shop) and you have instant BOS/MJ!

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Alternatively, I also know musically inclined people who record their workings or information audibly on a digital recorder or into a computer microphone and create their journals that way. This works especially well if you are recording chants or invocations.

Another alternative is to record your workings visually (with a computer camera, handheld video or other device). This works well for established covens & groups or groups that you work with that are far away (think Skype).

Timing of creation

Treat this magickal act like you would any other magickal act. Prepare for it, select your timing based on what resonates with you. (Suggesting not to begin during a Mercury Retrograde). Check into what day of the week would correspond best, what time of day (check into planetary hours), what phase is the moon in? and also prepare yourself in whatever way you would for ritual or ceremony.

A note on void of course moons (v/c)- if doing work during a v/c moon, consider calling on another energy besides the moon for a better effect. However- a v/c moon is especially good for brainstorming and getting ideas (because you aren't restricted by a sign).

It's also important to make sure that you are in a healthy frame of mind (mentally, emotionally) and that you are not ill during its creation because you are in the act of the Creation Process. Our emotional, mental and physical states heavily influence *whatever* we- mundane or magickal.

Questions to ask ourselves besides "what color candle will I use?"

Something to question if your ritual didn't produce the outcome you'd like (and a good thing to include in your BOS/MJ: (From Power Spellcraft for Life)

1. Did I have a clearly defined, simply stated goal?
2. Did I empower my components with energy aligned with my goal?
3. Did I visualize my goal while performing my ceremony?

(because sometimes it's helpful to go back to our BOS/MJ to figure how to improve future workings)

When fine tuning a spell, ritual or ceremony, it is wise to question our reasonings or motivations. Ethics are an incredibly important part of our spiritual path. These questions come from the book, "The Right Questions"

1. Will this choice propel me to an inspiring future or will it keep me stuck in the past?
2. Will this choice bring me long term fulfillment or short-term gratification?

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3. Is what I'm doing helping me stand in my power or please another?
4. Am I looking for what's right or what's wrong? (focus on what you want, not what you don't want)
5. Will this choice add to my life force or will it rob me of my energy? (does it keep you tied to a situation?)
6. Will I use this experience as a catalyst to grow?
7. Does this choice empower me?
8. Is this an act of faith or an act of fear? (Emotionally, am I coming at this from an empowered state or a fearful one?)
9. Am I choosing from my Divinity or my humanity? (am I being selfish or acting with the best interest for all?)

The Witches Pyramid/Four Powers of the Sphinx

A quick note on these guidelines...the pyramid & powers are four foundational rules/guidelines in any work that we do and definitely apply to the MJ/BOS.

To know- This aspect speaks to us of gathering as much information as we can in the way of correspondences, general knowledge, working knowledge and more. To know as much as possible before we begin an endeavor. It is this gathering of knowledge and experience which we build upon for our future magickal work.

To Will- Our will is what drives us, what motivates us, it fuels the fire of our intentions. Our Will on the other hand (capital W) is our "higher will" or higher self that has the larger view on our situation. It is our spiritual will. It is important when doing magickal work that our "little will" doesn't get in the way of our "higher will", less it becomes an ego "want". Keeping the ego in check is important.

To Dare- this takes us out of our comfort zone. We can do all the research of information we can muster, but until we step out and put our intent into action, we remain stagnant. It is the action that moves our intent into manifestation.

To Keep Silent- I like to think of this as the incubation stage. Our intent needs to gestate while it forms before it can manifest. It also returns to the suggestion that you don't share what you're working on with those who don't support what you're doing. You've spent a lot of time on this ritual or ceremony and would like to see it manifest, so why would you share it with someone who will try to point out why it won't work, the idea is stupid, etc? Keep your power to yourself.

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Bibliography

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