

Considering a Wiccan Apprenticeship

Wicca is, first and foremost, a religion. Many of the books on the Craft downplay this aspect, and instead emphasize spellwork, divination, political action, or ritual. These things are tools, or products, of Witchcraft, but they're not the core of it.

You need not be committed to Wicca as your chosen path in order to begin an apprenticeship. Many people study only so they can learn enough to decide whether Wicca truly suits them. If you aren't at least serious about seeking an answer to this question, you might do better to study in some setting less formal than an apprenticeship. Apprenticeship is hard work, both for the student and for the teacher. Don't go into it on a whim, or because a friend is doing so.

Normally, an apprenticeship takes about a year (traditionally, "a year and a day"). Often it takes longer, if school or a job or family are making heavy demands on your time; rarely does it take less. What's important is not the length of time, but covering the necessary ground. At the end of your apprenticeship, you may seek initiation. But initiation is a separate step, and not necessarily synonymous with graduation from your studies.

A one-year apprenticeship will require about 6 – 8 hours of your time per week. Don't try to spend more time than that; Wicca should be part of a whole and balanced life, not a monomania or a substitute for other achievements. On average, you'll be attending one event per week: lecture, workshop, or ritual. The rest of the time will be spent on homework.

There is no charge for your studies. You may be asked to contribute to the costs of hall rental, munchies, or consumables such as candles and incense, but the teaching itself is offered free of charge. The cost of apprenticeship is not in money, but in effort.

If you have a choice of more than one possible teacher, consider all your options. There are many different Traditions of Wicca. Each teacher has a different teaching style, different skills, and different knowledge. The person you know best or like the best may not be the best teacher for you. Sometimes several teachers work in a group, pooling their resources and knowledge. Ask about this, and any other questions that concern you, before you decide.

If you've already been working on your own for a while, as a self-trained or solitary Witch, you may be hoping to take the "fast track" to initiation. Occasionally this is possible, but very often it is not. No matter how much work you've done previously, you'll find some surprises within your apprenticeship. One-on-one training means that you can work with your teacher to take advantage of your previous experience, but you won't necessarily finish faster. It's not a race, after all.

Still thinking about an apprenticeship? Talk to a potential teacher. Ask questions. Listen carefully to the answers. Then decide. No matter what your choice is, may the gods go with you.

Blessed be.