

Circles in Recovery

The ancients described the annual cycle as a simple circle. It had no beginning, and no ending, and was as uninterrupted as time itself. Most pagan traditions define and protect their sacred space by casting a circle, a magickal and psychological barrier to keep out the distractions and the negativity of the mundane world. For our Pagan Sanctum Recovery meetings we have created a similar safety zone where we can comfortably share our experience, strength and hope in our own terms. Our sanctum (a sacred place free from intrusion) has become an integral part of our long term recovery program.

As we work the steps with the help of our guide and others, we rediscover our inner spirit, and with patience and practice we learn to reconnect with the infinite power that our gods represent. As we grow spiritually, our well being depends less and less on our material world. Our self worth depends more on how well we treat and help others, not how much we have. We no longer give people, places and things the power to dictate our feelings.

When we are ready, we ask our Divine Union to remove our negative attributes. If we do so sincerely, we will overcome our negative programming and infuse ourselves with the joy, the serenity and the happiness that we came into this world with. We find ourselves freed from our illusions of control, our nagging doubts, and our compulsive actions. We no longer crave the substances we once thought would make us whole. In short, we eliminate behaviors that reinforced our Disorder and provided fuel for its survival.

This gift is available to us all if we open our hearts and minds, and surrender the driver's seat to forces that are greater, and more capable, than ourselves.

In a ritual circle we enter a new realm, a dimension that is distinct and apart from our mundane, physical existence. In recovery we create a similar space, a place not a place, a time beyond time. We can speak more freely with each other and our gods, and now we can hear what *everyone* has to say. Our carefully crafted systems of denial wither and die. Our Disorder abhors this place because now we can see it clearly. If we stay long enough our Disorder loses power and momentum. The camouflage our Disorder once enjoyed in our daily lives doesn't work here, and we discover that our Disorder has been lying to us. It is naked and defenseless against the bright, white light we have just stepped into.

Focus on the great gift of the present moment: *now*. The past is a memory, the and tomorrow is only a long sequence of *nows* lined up, one after another. Neglecting what is in front of you by obsessing over tomorrow is one of the best ways to destroy that future. -A.C.