

Ground and Center: The Fundamental Technique

By Rowan

"Ground and center" is certainly the most fundamental technique in practicing Magick. From my experience, Magick and Ritual are most effective when an individual participates with a stable and focused frame of mind. We call that frame of mind "grounded and centered".

Ritual experiences are both psychic and psychological which means that Ground and Center exercises must be oriented on both levels. The Tree exercise in the OATH student handbook focuses your mind on a concrete image, then guides your psyche to a Grounded and Centered state. The image of the tree evokes feelings and images focused on feelings of stability and connectedness with the Earth. When these feelings and images are focused on, the associated psychic state follows right along. This may take some practice, but with diligence, I'm sure you'll find Ground and Center yourself.

Being grounded means that you have established a firm connection with the physical world. The largest physical object that each of us experiences throughout our entire lives is beneath our feet, the Earth. Focusing on the Earth makes us more aware of the physical world that surrounds us. Awareness of the physical world keeps us from being swept away by the subjective feelings and inner experiences of the moment. Instead, we become able to experience these feelings with a balanced awareness that is both objecting and subjective.

Psychically, a firm connection with the Earth hooks us to the largest psychic battery that we have available to us. The Earth is a storehouse of psychic energy, and when we connect with Her, we channel that energy through us instead of relying solely on our own energy reserves. Grounding properly prevents weakness, headaches, and other possible side effects of energy work.

Centering, although linked with Grounding, is quite a different thing. Centering involves clearing your mind of outside business and focusing on the task at hand. For rituals and magic to be meaningful and effective, you should not be dwelling on what you had for lunch today, or your plans for tomorrow. "Be Here Now" is a phrase that nicely sums up the idea of Centering.

Another important part of Centering is your awareness of yourself; becoming aware of the God/dess that lies within us all. This awareness promotes stability, confidence, and a healthy ability to express your will.

Psychically, Centering allows you to work from a stable foundation, helping to keep you from being magically thrown off balance. The Eastern philosophy of "chi" is a very good way of explaining the psychic aspect of centering. Our physical bodies have a center of gravity that moves and shifts as we move. Likewise, our energy field has a center that corresponds to our center of gravity.

Male and female bodies are shaped differently, and so have different centers of gravity. The center of gravity for a man is usually between the navel and the base of the sternum (solar plexus); whereas, the center of gravity for a woman is usually between the navel and the pelvis. Focusing your mind on this area brings your awareness to the center of your energy field. This allows you to use more of the energy you have available, while still drawing on energy from Mother Earth. There are several good books on increasing the chi, with exercises that are excellent for working on centering.

*One last thing needs to be cleared up. Ground and Center is not the same thing as a Trance state; in fact, the two are **polar opposites**. If you seem to be having trance-like symptoms while trying to Ground and Center, talk to your teacher. These symptoms can include dreamlike visions, or a general feeling of being disconnected from your surroundings as if they were not real.*

If Ground and Center exercises seem to take too long, you may be trying too hard; or you may be achieving Ground and Center without realizing it. If this happens, do something else for awhile and try again. Ground and Center is a skill, like any other, that only gets easier with practice. So practice, practice, practice.