**Casting Circles and Calling Quarters**

The circle is the sacred space in which magick is worked, where Witches can meet with the Goddess and God. The word "circle" may be misleading, though, because what you are creating is a sphere that encompasses all participants and the altar. The magick circle defines the ritual area, holds in personal power and shuts out all distractions and negative energies. You can use objects on the ground to show the boundaries of the circle, such as stones, flowers, branches, candles (my favorite) or crystals. You don't have to use anything to mark the boundaries of the circle, if you don't wish to. Those are just suggestions. The circle is formed with personal power which is felt and visualized as streaming from the body to form what, to me, ends up looking like a bubble made of mist. Some use their athame, or magick knife, to direct this power; others use their hands. Once the energy is flowing through your fingertips or athame, walk the circle clockwise, envisioning the mist (or bubble, or light, or whatever works for you) trailing outward from you to form the sphere. When the circle is completed, shut off the energy by shaking your hand or simply pulling the energy back into yourself. Once the circle is cast, you are ready to call the quarters if you wish. There are many different energies and beings that can be called, summoned or stirred to protect the circle or witness your ritual - from watchtowers to angels to fairies to elementals to element energies. No matter which type of quarter call you use, when working with quarters, envision a door or opening of some kind and visualize the energy or being that will be coming through that door to guard the circle. All quarter energies should be thanked and released in the same manner they were called. I'll give you an example of the type of quarter call I use during New Moon rituals. As I call each quarter, I face that direction and hold out my athame with both hands, feeling the energy from that element flowing into me:

**To the East, I invite the powers of Air**

**To blow out the old and bring in the new on your winds of change**

**To the South, I invite the powers of Fire**

**To burn away regrets and shine your gentle rays upon me for growth**

**To the West, I invite the powers of Water**

**To cleanse me of negativity and purify my thoughts**

**To the North, I invite the powers of Earth**

**Let your renewing strength bury all ills and open new paths before me**

I like to use elemental energies during quarter calls, although I sometimes use angelic energies. Because the New Moon is a time for new beginnings, you'll notice that my quarter calls reflect the type of magick that will be worked inside the circle. Do some research and get to know the energy you will be using. If you use elemental energies, take some time to meditate on each element and figure out its properties and correspondences. When you are finished with your spell or ritual, release the circle exactly opposite of the way you cast it. Pull the circle back into your athame or whatever tool you used in your casting, and release and thank any spirits or elementals you called.

There are literally thousands of ways to call quarters and cast circles. I've just given you an overview, because it's always best to figure out what works for you. I work very well with element energies, but you might have an affinity for something else.