

The Combination Lock Principle

by Anton Szandor LaVey

Magic is like a combination lock. If each tumbler falls into place, the lock will open. Seldom are any two locks the same. Their physical appearance might be identical, but the combination of numbers necessary to open each is different. So it is with both individual magical working and those who attempt them. Goals may appear identical in nature, and magicians similar in training and outward characteristics, but their similarity stops.

No one can teach another a combination that is his own, for it would not work. Each person possesses his own inclinations, his own Gestalt, and so he must ascertain what works best for him. There is nothing intrinsically esoteric about any combination which will lead to an ultimately successful working unless one considers the keeping of the secret combination esoteric, for it is literally that. If the truth is to be known, Greater (ceremonial) magic is simply a means of formalizing acts which in and of themselves would elicit no attention were they to be carried out without ritualistic trappings. Hence a ritual chamber is necessary to make the practitioner feel like a magician, intensifying awareness of his own potential (if any exists). Once one understands his potential, reinforcement supplied by the trappings of a ritual chamber can be superfluous. It's only then when one can get down to brass tacks: the Combination.

Spatial concepts contribute three dimensions to the Combination. The fourth dimension exists in time. If the other three dimensions are placed in correct combination, then the fourth dimension, hence in each instance the spatial or physical boundaries of three dimensions must be present in suitable combination to effect said phenomena. Every occurrence happens somewhere. It is that "somewhere," in combination with the magician serving as a catalyst, which makes the untoward occur. "Somewheres" need not be specialized enclosures in the obvious sense, but can be fields, cliffs, streets, woods and rivers, as well as structures.

Just as a rainbow is composed of harmonics of light, it is "somewhere" relative to our vantage point; though were we to enter into its apparent field, it would no longer visibly exist. The only way to see a rainbow is from afar -- yet it still exists. The fable of the rainbow, with its pot of gold waiting at its base, is the story of man's delusion and disappointment. The magician must realize that his search does not end at the base of the rainbow -- he must bypass it for the "somewhere" over the rainbow. There are no curricula for such a search. The combination needed for a controlled working might place the magician not only in diverse places, but in diverse positions and acts. He might need to read a certain book at a certain time in a certain place. Each acts to drop a tumbler in the combination lock.

How does one go about discovering these combinations? One doesn't. The discover him if he is responsive to their appearance. Sensitivity is essential. The harder one looks, the less he will find. "Seek and ye shall find" is a platitude as half truthful as "the truth

will make you free." One can seek until he drops and pass up the answers many times if he hasn't the sensitivity to recognize them when confronted by them. The "truth" can be screamed from a thousand rooftops, and unless it is convenient to hear it will fall on deaf ears.

The most profound acts of magic just seem to "happen." That is because the sets of circumstances which bring them about go unrecognized. Recognition is the key. How can one recognize such combinations when blind to even the most obvious motivations and actions? Or threatened by the accomplishments of another, when one's ego must be strong and secure to become a mage?

Choosing not to recognize is good practice for letting important things pass you by. Peace of mind might be attained, but accomplishment will be missing. If one's ultimate peace of mind rests upon the fulfillment of certain goals, the peace of mind accrued by desensitivity to the obvious is tragically fleeting. The ultimate letdown, which is bound to occur, will make one even more prone to ignorance. Then, contradictory though it may seem, ignorance will become one's sole intellectual and emotional salvation. Parallels in the foregoing statement, as related to organized religion, should be amply evident.

Note:

This is an essay from Anton LaVey's book *The Devil's Notebook*. If you appreciate this work then please show support by purchasing the book at the link below.

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