

Creating Sigils

A sigil is nothing more or less than a symbol with some kind of magical meaning behind it, for your given definition of magic.

They are often used to express an intention. In our Bower practices, we created a few sigils that, for us, express the intention of welcoming the elements into our own Bower spaces. While we included some of those in the bags we've been giving out to people, sigils - like any form of shorthand or symbol - often mean the most when you create them yourself.

Consider what you want to welcome into your own Bower space for Beltane Night, and how you would want to welcome it. And, if a sigil feels like a good way to do that, we hope this little guide is helpful to you!

Sigils can be drawn in many different forms, including but absolutely not limited to being:

- Carved, sewn, or drawn onto something permanent - maybe a doorway, a token, a piece of clothing
- drawn on paper and burned,
- drawn onto a candle, where you then focus on your intent as the candle melts and your sigil disappears,
- chalked onto the floor,
- Drawn with a finger into the carpet, to eventually disappear under enough footsteps,
- Spread out on the ground in birdseed, or flower seeds, and slowly eaten,
- Or Sarah's personal favourite: drawn onto food and eaten - you could draw it in icing on a cake to be shared among people who've created the sigil together

Some ways of drawing sigils:

Using a sentence:

A really popular way to create sigils is to write out a sentence that sets your intent for something - like "I welcome fire into me", or "I accept myself for who I am", or "I ground myself". It helps to be really clear, and affirmative. You can then play about with the letters (some people like to cross out all the vowels or repeating letters), arrange them in different

ways, abstract them, play with sizes, and overlap them until you get a single symbol. You don't need to follow any particular rules as to how you lay them out, and your single symbol doesn't need to look any particular way - it just has to feel right to you.

Using pictures:

You can also think about your intention in terms of picture representations - maybe plants, animals, natural forces that match your intention. You can use traditional associations, of course, but it matters more that they represent something to YOU. Bears, let's say, are often symbols of strength - like big mama bears, or warriors in bearskins. But maybe the main thing YOU associate with bears is "creatures that will get into a bin no matter what" - so you use an image of a bear in a sigil that says "I am resourceful". Maybe an elemental sigil could be a combination of animals and plants that you associate with that element. Again, you can draw out those plants and animals and then overlap and combine them into one abstract image, if you like.

Using old alphabets, or other languages:

You can, if you like, take old alphabets and play with them - maybe you want to use something like runes, or Ogham letters, and combine them. Maybe you choose to take the literal meanings of the letters, and use them to write out your intention (i.e. how do you spell "Focus" in Ogham script?).

If this sounds like a bit of a daft exercise, consider the meaning behind your name, and consider why your name feels like your *name*, and not just the meaning behind your name. The abstraction between the meaning of your name, and your name itself, can be used as a tool to make sigils as well. It may be easier to focus on a feeling of pure intent when you look at that intent written in another alphabet, or a language you have a strong connection with but perhaps don't speak every day. Maybe you want to use the language your loved ones usually speak to create a sigil about home. Maybe you want to use the language the places around you were named in to create a sigil about the things that live in those places. Maybe you want to use the language your ancestors spoke, to connect to them.

In terms of old alphabets and writing systems, there is plenty of debate as to how historically accurate our modern interpretations of "meanings" behind things like runes and Ogham letters might be. Perhaps you do want to consider a deeper meaning for a particular letter. If you focus on what that letter means to you personally, you'll create something far more useful to you than you would by focusing on what it means to someone

else, however much of an authority of some sort they may or may not be. It could be as simple as “I’m going to use the Ogham letters named after Alder and Willow in my sigil welcoming water, because Alder and Willow often grow near water”.

That said, exploring shared meanings - old or modern - can be a powerful tool in creating sigils intent on connection. So, here are some links to meanings that are ascribed to some of these alphabets:

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anglo-Saxon_runes
- <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Br%C3%A0datharogam>
- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elder_Futhark

Once you have your intent written in your chosen script, or perhaps your chosen language, you can then go through the process of abstracting and melting it together into one single symbol, as before.

Free-association sketching:

One other way to create sigils is just to meditate on your intent.

While you’re meditating, lightly hold a pencil over a sheet of paper, and just allow your hand to do whatever doodles it decides to do.

Afterwards, you can look at the paper, and let your brain’s amazing powers of pattern-recognition pick out shapes you find pleasing, and draw over them to create a sigil. You could simply focus on your intent, or if you prefer, you could follow a guided meditation, which can help your brain wander a bit more freely.

We’ve included a guided meditation on inviting in the elements as part of our Community Bower Ritual, so if you’d like to use sigils to welcome the elements into your Bower space, you’re more than welcome to do some free-association sketching along with that.

How to use your sigil:

This is very much up to you. What you have in front of you, in a sigil you have created, is a concentrated statement of intent. You’ve focused on it, and distilled it into that one image. How would you find that most useful?

Some people like to put it somewhere they’ll see it regularly - as a reminder of that intent.

Some people like to turn it into something that can be destroyed, in a couple of different ways:

- Perhaps by destroying it fairly quickly, (e.g. through burning), and focusing on sending that intent out into the ether while they watch it burn
- Or perhaps by destroying it gradually - so that by the time it's completely gone you may well have forgotten all about it.

Maybe you'd prefer to write your sigil onto a piece of paper, and tuck it away where you'll forget about it until stumbling across it a long time later.

Some people like to find ways to "charge" their sigils before using them. Maybe you choose to sleep with your sigil under your pillow, the night before you use it. Maybe you choose to keep yours in a place with a lot of activity related to its intent - for example, maybe a sigil on creativity spends some time tucked into your pad of sketch paper until you're ready to use it. Maybe your sigil on taking time for yourself spends a while under the cushion of your favourite chair, or under your yoga mat, or in a box of your favourite tea.

Finally, however you create a sigil, and however you use it afterwards - you have given yourself time to focus on your intent, put it into words, and sculpted it into an image meaningful to you.

And that is a powerful thing to do, in its own right.