

Myth, Magic and Community

Welcome You

to Mystery School

and

to Diana's Grove

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A Guide to Finding What You Need in this Handbook

At Diana's Grove, our approaches to Myth, Magic and Community blend the practical with the philosophical. Often it's hard to separate one from the other. Our philosophies inform our practice; our practices, individually and as a community, form our philosophy.

And – if you are looking for the skinny on what to do when, and how, too much philosophy can complicate your search, so –

The philosophical underpinnings of Mystery School (for those drawn to the "why" of things) are printed without borders.

While the nuts and bolts (for those drawn to the "what" of things) are bordered for easier scanning.

The First Thing to Do

As Mystery School begins

the first thing to do is...

Read your registration packet, which will be mailed in late December or early January. It will tell you about this year's new adventure.

And watch your email for messages from *NeedtoKnow*, the email magician that is eager to help.

Meet *NeedtoKnow*

NeedtoKnow (Need to Know) is an apprentice to Mercury/ Hermes, the messenger of the Gods and Goddesses. *NeedtoKnow* (unlike his mentor) is a serious fellow. And he is quite timely. Watch your email in early January for his announcement of the beginning of Mystery School.

He will tell you all kinds of important things: how to post your introduction to Interact, our web-based community center; and how to join the email discussion lists and classes. He will announce the monthly story and the workbook and our quarterly online magazine - and tell you how to get that material. *NeedtoKnow* doesn't speak often; his emails are short and simple. And he is a speaker - not a listener. You can't send a message back to us through *NeedtoKnow*, but there are lots of other ways to contact us. Read on! Email addresses, phone numbers – all the ways to speak, Mystery to Mystery, follow ...

Interact

Interact is our web-based community center, a program that allows us to share work from the monthly packets and online classes. Think of Interact as a sort of Mystery School home-base that includes the bios and photos of community members, information about upcoming and past events, links to the packets, *Moon Shadows* and the magazine, and other resources that help create and strengthen our online community.

Helpful information on how to get started with Interact will be emailed to you by *NeedtoKnow*, so watch your email for his initial instructions. If you have questions or problems with Interact, call us at 573.689.2400, or email techsupport@dianasgrove.com.

Technical Support

Call or email us at techsupport@dianasgrove.com or at **573.689.2400**

Let us know:

- ✧ the kind of difficulty you are having
- ✧ how to reach you
- ✧ your phone number
- ✧ suggested times to call

If you have a **registration question**: register@dianasgrove.com

And for **general questions and/or comments**: info@dianasgrove.com

Myth

“A myth is a story that has never happened and is always happening.”

- Howard Sasportas

Myth...a myth is a story that transcends its author. It belongs to everyone who tells it or hears it. A myth is a story told by a culture. It is a story told by a generation or for generations. A myth, then, is a story that is richer than any one person's imagination. It has more meaning than can be captured by any one person's interpretation. No single telling does it justice. A myth is universal; it is about all of us. It is personal; it is about you.

“Myths are nodules of collective intelligence, open-ended blueprints of the journey that is ours.” - Jean Houston

Why Mythology?

"Facts don't change people; stories do."

- Author unknown

In Mystery School, we work with stories from different cultures. We work with stories that transcend time. We retell stories that have been told for hundreds of years; we tell stories that were told thousands of years ago and are still relevant to us. They are still about us.

We spend a year immersed in the archetypes of myth, story, ballad, the seasons, and our own stories – the stories of our births, our journeys. As we do, we tell a new story about ourselves and the possibilities within each of us.

We need to tell stories so we can find new conclusions – ones that support life and growth.

"Mythology" is a word that we apply to past religions and past truths. In common language, it applies to other people's gods, not our own. But in Mystery School, *myth* doesn't mean *fiction* – instead, it refers to a larger-than-life truth.

If a ballad is sung for 400 years, it has captured a truth that is greater than its time. Ballads, fairy tales, legends – they are all myths. They belong to a culture and a time; and they belong to us as we live them, every day.

Myths are the great stories we live by, even if we haven't heard them. They create the archetypes, the patterns that we embrace as the blueprint for how things are, and for who we really are.

Archetype means "original pattern". Myth is the home of the archetypes. Myths give the archetypes a place to live, rooms to walk through, a closet full of cultures to dress in, a variety of personal histories and personalities to use as decoration. Myths give the archetypes daily life dramas and interactions - a hall of mirrors that lets us see them and lets them see themselves. The archetypes, the Gods, Goddesses and the mortals who live in myth, are the keepers of the blueprints that tell us what and how life is.

If we are going to enter the subconscious, let's rearrange the furniture there – and "story" our lives differently.

Myths let us peek into our own psyche and walk around in the subconscious of the collective mind. They let us interact with beliefs that we didn't know we had. Myths tell us how women really are and how men really are. They tell us about the nature of nature and about the secret life of divinity. If we are going to enter the subconscious of the collective mind of our culture, then let's rearrange the furniture. Let's make some changes while we are there. Because if we can tell a story differently, we can "story" our own lives differently.

These forgotten stories live in our subconscious, they tell themselves over and over again in our dreams. You can find traces of them in our language and in our collective psyche. We need to retell them because somewhere deep inside, we believe them. That is why we need to re-hear these stories. We need to hear them differently. We need to find new conclusions, ones that support life and growth.

We need to retell these stories to find new conclusions – ones that support life and growth

And so the stories that we tell at Mystery School have no villains. Neither men nor women are helpless; neither is at fault. Neither men nor women are portrayed as weak, deceptive or deceived. Now, that requires a lot of retelling. You might wonder if a story without a villain is boring. It isn't. In fact, after 6,000 years of blame, it is blame that's growing boring. We have given all of the power to the bad guy for far too long. Sure, we make mistakes, we trip ourselves up. We try to renege on the promises we make to life and life tells us that won't work. We fall in love with magic and the beauty of nature when we promised we wouldn't. But still... there are no bad guys. We can recreate these stories. We can replace misogyny with respect, add healing and take out blame.

Through myth we can re-story ourselves; that is what Mystery School is all about.

Respect means to *re-see*, to see again. When we re-spect a person, when we re-see someone.... When we re-see a belief or a truth, it gives us insight. We have no common word for re-hear, but we do have a word for re-hearing a story. When we *re-story*, we restore. Through myth we can restore ourselves. We can restore our relationship with the world and each other. That is what Mystery School is all about.

The Monthly Story and Workbook

Each month, this packet will tell you the story; each month you, too, will tell the story.

Some of the stories we re-tell may be thousands of years old; but they change based on our interactions as a community. Cynthea and our other storytellers write the story after each Mystery School weekend – look for *NeedtoKnow* to notify you when a new story and workbook are available, on Interact, around the middle of each month.

To get your packet on the Web, follow *NeedtoKnow*'s instructions, which will be sent to you by email.

If you prefer getting the packet by email, there is no additional charge. Just email patricia@dianasgrove.com. She will explain the options to you. Unless otherwise requested, packets are sent as Adobe Acrobat PDF files. You will need Adobe Acrobat, a free program that you can download from our Mystery School website, to open the packet.

Moon Shadows: for Solitary Work at the New and Full Moon – and more!

The *Moon Shadows* book is a personal journal, packed full of the stories of the seasons, opportunities for consulting the oracle of your choice, ritual work to align you with the phases of the Moon, and plenty of space for recording your own growth and magical intentions. *Moon Shadows* both deepens and lays the foundation for the personal work available in the monthly packets and workbooks. *Moon Shadows* goes to print in late December; if you register by December 20 you are assured a copy of *Moon Shadows*. What additional copies we have will be sent to Mysteries registering after December 20 on a first come, first served basis until we run out.

Between the Worlds: a magazine for Mysteries, and those not yet Mysteries

Between the Worlds is Diana's Grove's online magazine, published at the cross-quarters: Candlemas (February), Beltane (May), Lammas (August), and Samhain (October). It features monthly columns on a seasonal theme, guest writers, and interviews – all designed to deepen and expand on the Mystery School experience, and to introduce the program to others. We've found the magazine to be an amazing addition to our other online offerings – professional, thought-provoking and visually stunning. Watch your email for an announcement from *NeedtoKnow* telling you a new edition is available online.

If the computer isn't for you and you would like to have the magazine, story and workbook mailed to you, let us know. For an additional fee, we can usually arrange to send the material to you. If you want to take advantage of this option, email patricia@dianasgrove.com or call and tell us – 573.689.2400.

Magic

Tools for change are transformation's resources.

We honor the unknown, the unknowable, and the quest to discover. Our spiritual practice is dedicated to developing healthy communities and relationships. *Magic, for us, is aligning ourselves with life-sustaining practices so we can invoke within ourselves the ability to act according to our deepest values and live our dreams into reality.*

The Archetypal Realm

by Cynthea Jones

Magic: To co-create reality with the archetypes.

At the edge of our perceptions we glimpse a world beyond our world: the place where myths are made, where improbable dreamers dream impossible dreams into being. *Archetype* means “original pattern”. One of the pure ideas or realities of which all existence is an imitation. The pre-existent form of all things. The essence. The archetypal realm is the place of all imaginings that precede actuality. It is the place of dreams, a realm we visit nightly in our sleep. It is the homeland of the muses, those archetypes of musical or artistic inspiration who seek out artists and fill them with vision and genius.

The archetypal realm is the home of the great characters of immortal literature. It is where they come from and where they return to when their day is done and they want to rest. Then they change costume and persona and enter a different century through the mind of another writer.

How do we find the great patterns of possibility personified in the stories we tell?

This Olympus of consciousness is inhabited by Goddesses and Gods, the archetypes represented by the passing seasons and the stars. This is the place where the spirits of Fire, Water, Earth and Air live now that they have become mythical.

The archetypal realm is where the priestess, priest, Hierophant or shaman went in centuries past to meet the deities and discover the pattern of the hunt or the purpose of life. Magic: to co-create reality with the archetypes. How do we reach them? How do we find the great patterns of possibility personified in the stories that they tell?

The shaman created a place Between the Worlds, a place where the two could meet. Between the Worlds, we create a place to re-connect with the original essences of all that is and capture the magic of all that can be. The root of the word “religion” means “re-linking”. The place Between the Worlds is where we re-link with the archetypes.

The place Between the Worlds is where we re-link with the archetypes.

When we enter this realm, we step into a world governed by an entirely different set of laws. In the realm of the archetypes, we can weave our future with the Sisters of Fate. We can direct the winds and rains by dancing with the elementals, and spin the great spiral of time forward to create the future and backwards to recreate the past. When we can bring the realities of the archetypal world into our own world, it is called a miracle by some and transformation by others. It is called *magic*.

Ritual is a container for magic. *It is a format, a process, a spell in action. At Diana's Grove, we consider the ritual to be the time we spend together and not just the time that follows casting a circle. That time - the time after we cast the circle - is a ritual within a ritual, a circle within the circle.*

Ritual at Diana's Grove

by River Roberts

For us, ritual is an opportunity to connect by stepping into and embodying the sacred. And what is sacred? We find the sacred in our bodies, our voices, our interactions and our values. We find the sacred by connecting to something larger than just us—be that community, divinity, or our expanded selves. We find the sacred by understanding and honoring everyone's right to choose their own relationship with the deeper mysteries of life, death, and rebirth. Our rituals are often a mixture of song, movement, rhythm, and sacred play that serve to invoke that unique and individual connection, while celebrating the opportunity to share that connection within a community of fellow seekers.

We practice an ecstatic, Earth-based ritual tradition. *Ecstatic* means entering into sacred space with your entire body. Our unique ritual style invites and welcomes participation from everyone present. *Earth-based* means life-based. Although there are many different flavors and shades of earth-based traditions, the one thing that they have in common is that they honor the elements that make up all life. In a ritual

We practice an ecstatic, Earth-based spiritual tradition.

at Diana's Grove, you will find that our elemental invocations acknowledge that Air, Fire, Water, and Earth are already present. We are already breathing, so Air doesn't need to be summoned. Our goal instead becomes to strengthen our relationship to the breath of life or the winds of change. Our ritual practice invites us to open to the lifeforce around us, rather than calling upon it to manifest.

The elements themselves are constantly changing, adapting, and shifting form as they come into contact with one another. In turn, our ritual style is constantly changing, adapting, and shifting form as it comes into contact with new people and new ideas. Every year we change our ritual format to accommodate the story of the year, as well as the community interactions that will build and create the Mystery School community for that year. Ecstatic ritual in an Earth-based tradition is a living, breathing thing that thrives on variety. An ecosystem has more opportunity to flourish when several different species come together and interact. We find that ritual responds in much the same way.

Rituals lay new patterns in the soul, new pathways in the mind. If magic is the art of changing consciousness at will, the goal of our rituals is to enable you to shape your own consciousness according to your will. – Cynthea Jones

Drawing upon mythology and archetype, our ritual style allows us to choose the patterns we wish to lay in the mosaic of our own lives. These stories become both our teachers and our mirrors as we strive to identify and embody our core values. Mythology, ecstatic connection, the elements of life, and the opportunity for personal and spiritual growth are all pieces of the larger pattern that calls us into sacred space with other members of our vibrant and varied community. In essence, we come together to do ritual to reveal the deepest mysteries of all: the magic of group dynamics and the secrets of healthy interaction, and we strive to become the world-changers we cannot help but discover ourselves to be.

Personal and Professional Growth
Magic: The art of changing consciousness at will.
(It takes a lot of will to change consciousness.)

Personal growth is Mystery School's essential intention. Mystery School began as a leadership training program, as a journey into the mysteries of creating healthy groups and accountable leaders for magical and personal growth work. Growth is the way living things respond to life. We regenerate, we heal, and we change in response to the world around us...that is growth. If magic isn't growth-producing, it isn't magic. Isn't magic the act of invoking wholeness, connection and wonder? Doesn't magic strive to change something into what it essentially *is*? If that's magic, then magic is personal growth.

Leadership is the art of being fully present **and effective** *for the intention of serving a group*. As Mystery School grew, we discovered that some Mysteries wanted to use the material for personal rather than professional applications – not necessarily for leadership training, but for personal growth. As the *personal* is the core of all professional growth, the personal growth aspect of the work is essential to our leadership programs, which focus on integrating the personal work so we can better understand and serve a group.

Mystery School is a program for *personal* development. It begins with the intention to learn about yourself...for your own purposes, your own goals. Leadership commitment begins with the intention to learn about yourself *for the purpose of serving a larger goal*.

What Does "Priestess" Mean at the Grove?

Applying personal growth to professional development.
Why do we call our Leadership Training the Priestess Path?

A Priestess, according to the 1928 Webster's New International Dictionary, is: *One who officiates sacred rites*. This describes one aspect of Priestessing - but what rite does a priestess officiate? A ritual? No. Life. Life is the *sacred rite* that a Priestess is called to officiate. Life, growth, personal interaction, communication, all of the intricate exchanges that are required in the journey of becoming. Living, working and creating together – these provide the focus of our Priestess Training.

In our community, *Priestess* is not a gender-specific word. Men, as well as women, might choose this word; no one is asked to take any name or title, nor are they denied it. Priestess - this word can be used to describe an individual's relationship with the Divine. We respect this definition, but we use this word to describe the work that we do rather than what we are.

If you are called to Priestess and you accept that challenge, the very nature of your work will ask you to discover your talents - to refine the skills required to effectively serve your group. If you wish to be an empowering leader, your work will challenge you to develop an acute awareness of the impact you make on those you serve. And - Priestessing isn't only about those talents, skills or tools; it is about the desire, willingness and ability to serve a group and an intention.

Elementally Speaking: The Priestess Arts

Air - Communication

Speak for yourself and about yourself. Use “I statements.” Talk about your experience as *your experience* and not as *the way things are* or *the way the world is*. Most of all, please don’t express your point of view about the Grove as *the way the Grove is*. You are welcome to express your opinions about our work, but don’t speak as if your opinions represent us. Here is why.... While anything you say about what we believe, do, value and respect is an accurate representation of *your opinion*, it may not be an accurate representation of what *we* believe or do.

Fire - Spiritual Tradition

Be able to lead others to their own discovery. Know the difference between teaching, preaching, and facilitating. Although preaching can be very effective, and has given rise to great spiritual movements, it is contradictory to our style. We ask that our Priestesses learn the art of leading others to their *own* experience of the divine. We attempt to create an environment in which each person can have their own experience of divine wisdom rather than have that wisdom delivered to them. A rule that we respect in ritual and in presentation is “*Never tell someone what they think, what they feel, or The Truth.*”

Water – Group Dynamics

Act as healer. Talk directly to people about your concern before you make your concern an issue for yourself or in the community. Be aware of when it is appropriate to bring up a concern. Have the emotional discipline to create an appropriate place to discuss an issue. Once you have brought an issue into the community, be willing to work for solution or resolution. Be aware of the group and the work, even when a personal issue is actively present for you. Most of all - know what healthy process is and uphold it relentlessly.

Earth - Relentless Support

Understand the nature of support. Be a part of the physical and spiritual work. Act as if you are responsible for the world that you stand in and the earth that you stand on. Take appropriate action; respond to details with an awareness of the overview and the needs of the group.

If you see it, do it. Help with the dishes in a way that makes others want to join you. If you see a cigarette butt on the ground, pick it up. Wash the coffee cups if everyone else has gone to Morning Session. Treat the staff as if you, too, are staff. Ask yourself “What more can I do to make this event successful, comfortable, and safe?” And when you get the answer, act on it.

If you are choosing to act as Priestess, come to each Diana’s Grove intensive or open gathering as if you are a part of the professional staff that is committed to creating a safe, empowering and sacred experience for the people who come. Let that intention shape your actions, your breakfast conversation, your interactions with the kitchen staff, your interactions with others at the gathering, and your interactions with the neighbor who drives in to look for a lost dog or to ask directions.

IPP, the Initiatory Priestess Path

A program that supports those who are on the Priestess Path

IPP is for those who want to deepen their leadership work by using the Mystery School principles and ideas. It is for those who want to focus on professional skills and refinements during a weekend. It is for those who want to do their personal work within the context of creating an experience for others.

Joining IPP

As preparation for the Initiatory Priestess Program, we strongly recommend that you have attended 10 Mystery School events. We want you to know our approach to leadership before you join a group committed to using that approach. When you join IPP, we will ask you to focus on serving the group and the community during the time you are here. If you are among those Mysteries who cannot come to at least four weekends each year, talk to us. Your commitment is the most important consideration, and there may be other patterns of participation that will create an effective program for you.

If you have questions about or an interest in the Initiatory Priestess Program, write us! Send an email to pamela@dianasgrove.com or patricia@dianasgrove.com.

Rites of Passage

What is the Rites of Passage Program?

Rites Team members serve as staff for the year. Learning and demonstrating the skills that we teach are the criteria for being accepted onto a Rites Team. We take skill and community involvement into account as each year's team is formed.

If you have attended Mystery School regularly for 2 years and are interested in the Rites of Passage Program, talk to us. IPP is the first step in the process. If you are in IPP, and would like to be considered for Rites in the year to come, let's discuss your goals and intentions as you plan the coming year.

If you want a Rites year to be a part of your future Mystery School work, let us know. We will plot and plan with you as you move toward that goal. Plan to attend many Mystery School intensives, and then move into IPP. While in IPP, develop your skills in ritual arts, group dynamics, and small group facilitation. Put ideas into practice. Be open to hearing how you and your work impact the group. Hunger for more than you can get by just playing with ideas. Be willing to dedicate your skills to the community we serve. Be willing to discover what you don't know and to stand on your growing edge as a leader, facilitator and presenter. Allow life and the community to teach you...about your work, and yourself.

Special Services at the Grove

We are blessed with professional bodyworkers, taroists, astrologers, drummers, and ritualists who offer their services and opportunities for private coaching during our intensives. If you would like a tarot reading, a discussion of your astrological chart, a private session on drum or trance, or a renewing massage, those offering these services will be describing their offerings at each intensive's opening session.

Using the Grove for Your Personal Camping

If you want to come to the Grove during non-event times – mid-week or on a weekend - you are welcome. You can enjoy the land. If a cabin is available, you are welcome to use it. Bring a friend. Bring your family. Walk the Labyrinth, relax in the barn, enjoy the campground, swim in the creek.

Meals aren't available, but the barn has a refrigerator. The Grove can offer you the easiest camping experience possible. Safe, private, completely yours - call for available dates and to arrange your personal get-away.

Community

Common Unity

Self in relationship to other selves

In service to each other, we all are free.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead

"The primary concern here is the world we create collectively, for when we commit to bringing our deepest selves to the table, we are transformed by the act of creating something together that we cannot create alone." Peter Block

The Art of Being an Individual in Community by Cynthea Jones

Dion Fortune defined Magic as ***the art of changing consciousness at will***. Here is an idea that I find just as magical...*the only consciousness that any of us can change is our own*. What do we change from? What do we change into? We change from being who we were told we should be, or who we were told we could or couldn't be, into the person *that we choose to be*. The work that we offer at the Grove is based on our belief in the spiraling process of self-discovery and self-creation. That process can be called individuation.

The work we offer is based on our belief in individuation - the spiraling process of self-discovery and self-creation.

Individuation, becoming an individual - there are natural steps in the process of becoming, steps that lead us into the maze of becoming more fully who we are. Self-awareness, self-honesty, clear communication, self-responsibility, realizing that we impact each other, being responsible for that impact, accepting the challenge to become who we choose to be: these are the aspects of personal growth that are essential to our *magical* work.

As we become more fully who we are, we move beyond ourselves into a relationship with a greater whole. That whole might be a community. It might be a political movement. It might be an experience of transcendence, of opening to the mystery of wonder. As each of us becomes more fully who we are, the world around us is richer. The world within us is richer.

As we grow, we notice that we live in a world with others. We are interactive and interdependent. We learn through exchange, we grow through give and take, through speaking and listening. That's community - the recognition that relationships have value, that we are richer because of our relationships, because of each other

As you work and relate in the Grove community, the interpersonal skills you acquire will touch all aspects of your life.

Mystery School works consciously and intentionally to honor each individual. Then we go further, working to build a healthy, interactive community based on personal choice and respectful interaction. As we interact with each other, as we work together, exchange points of view, and get to know ourselves and each other more intimately, the layers of experience that have made us who we are begin to unravel. Patterns and assumptions that shape our actions and interactions begin to surface. Now, here is the magical part... we have the opportunity to more consciously claim the beliefs that support us and to change the ones that limit us. We have the opportunity to live old patterns to new conclusions.

Working together gives us the opportunity to develop the art of interaction, the art of relating. Working intentionally with others not only *enables* us to develop interpersonal skills, it *requires* us to develop them. As we do, as you do, your skill will impact all of your relationships. At home, at work, the skills that you acquire at the Grove will touch all aspects of your life.

In Mystery school, small group gatherings are a ritual of speaking and listening. The relationships that we build are the foundation that enables us to do deep personal and magical work. The work we do is built on five cornerstones that provide relentless support to the work you do – the work we do together.

The Cornerstones of Healthy Community

By Jennifer Wilson

The Cornerstones were first introduced by Cynthea in 1999 in the opening Mystery School packet, and are as relevant today as they were then. Cynthea used this metaphor to illustrate their use: “Like constructing a building, when the foundation is solid and intentionally laid, it will support amazing height and weight. If the foundation is weak the building will require constant repair. Little adjustments here and there; the roof always leaks, the windows require effort to open and close. And so—the cornerstones.”

What determines how well those cornerstones are laid? What creates the stability and strength that we want in our foundation? What makes the cornerstones able to bear our collective weight as we press on them, as we stand and reach for healthy community? We do.

What creates the stability and strength we want in our community? We do.

The Cornerstones of Diana’s Grove are:

Choice ~ “We have the ability to choose our relationship to reality, even if we cannot always choose our reality,” Cynthea wrote in 1999.

We constantly exercise Choice when living in healthy community. We choose our ideas, beliefs and feelings about each other; we choose our words, our actions and reactions, and the stories that we tell ourselves to make meaning out of our actions, and the actions of others.

I think a quote by Viktor Frankl illustrates this concept: “The last of the human freedoms is to choose one’s attitudes.” If everything were to be taken from us, if we were to be imprisoned and trapped beyond our ability to escape we would still, up to the end, retain the freedom of choice.

Thinking Well of Self ~ In her 1999 essay on the Cornerstones, Cynthea wrote, “What if for one year, in your interactions with this [community], you were to build your relationships on this cornerstone: that you are a worthwhile being in the process of becoming whole, and so is everyone else?”

The cornerstone of Thinking Well of Self is based on the notion that we all have essential worth, simply because we exist.

The cornerstone of Thinking Well of Self is based on the notion that we all have essential worth, simply because we exist. If we are to think well of the group, we must first think well of ourselves. Another way to look at this Cornerstone is to think of it as extending to ourselves the same generosity of spirit we extend to someone we love. Imagine what you would say to a best friend or a child who made a mistake. Do you believe that you deserve the same gentleness and forgiveness you would offer them? Can you value your own heart and spirit as much as you value the hearts and spirits of those you love?

The Cornerstones of Healthy Community (continued)

Thinking Well of Others ~ This cornerstone, which is based on a Quaker concept, does not invite us to engage in group denial and pretend that everyone is wonderful all the time. It is a choice to be willing to believe in people's good intentions first, and find out more when we perceive something different. It is a choice to promote the well-being of the group and act with respect.

Thinking Well of Others allows conversations about difficulties, without inviting blame to the table automatically -

Can you feel the difference between thinking well as a starting point for direct communication, and thinking well as an invitation to gloss over problems and pretend that everything is rosy and perfect? We are not asked to deny that we feel hurt when we believe someone has insulted us. Rather, this Cornerstone is an entry point into conversation about difficulties that may arise between you and me, without inviting blame to the table automatically. If we discover that something disrespectful did take place, then thinking well allows us to

hold the space necessary for healing and resolution to happen without holding grudges or seeking revenge. *Starting* with thinking well allows us to *return* to thinking well.

Stewardship of Self ~ From the experiences of Buckminster Fuller comes the premise that we are not the owners of ourselves, but custodians who are charged with the duty to steward ourselves throughout our lifetimes as best we can, as one would care for a loved one. Inherent in this premise is the idea that we have talents that belong to the world, and that if we keep them to ourselves and don't share them or develop them, then we are betraying not only ourselves, but also the world into which we were born.

Sacred Wound ~ "Change begins with wounding; creation begins with wounding. The egg is wounded by the sperm and life begins," writes Cynthea. When we sacrifice the way we cling to our wounds, in order to be in service to something larger, and to make it possible to open ourselves to a grander story and restore ourselves to wholeness, we make those wounds sacred.

When we sacrifice the way in which we've been wounded in order to serve something larger, we make our wounds sacred.

Why would we want to devote ourselves with deep dedication to the hurts, real or perceived, that we've all encountered in life? In fact, we don't. Rather, we want to devote ourselves to sacrificing these wounds. To *sacrifice* means *to surrender something for the sake of something else*. This Cornerstone serves as a reminder that we all have been wounded in our lifetimes, and as a call to surrender attachment to our wounds for the sake of becoming whole.

These are the Cornerstones, the very foundation, of our Community. May we build well together.

Agreements at Diana's Grove: Our Ground Rules

We have found that the individual - ahhh, sad but true - must give up some of the freedoms of aloneness for the pleasure of being with others. So that the group can be safe, we have agreements; we have boundaries. These boundaries don't extend beyond the borders of Diana's Grove. They are not recommendations for your personal life or judgments about your personal choices. They define our needs during your time here. We have found that these agreements enable us to work deeply and creatively together.

We may not all have the same values, but we have an agreement to respect individual values. We may not have the same philosophy, but we agree to respect individual philosophies. In a year devoted to self-creation, we add the complexities of creating a self who lives in a world with others. Therefore, we step into the complex work of discovering and creating ourselves in relationship to other selves. These Ground Rules enable us to meet that goal.

By reading them, you will know what this community expects from you during our time together. Please review them. If any of these agreements require explanation, please write or call us. We will be glad to discuss them with you. They are tools for creating a paradigm for healthy interaction.

Our Agreements and Ground Rules

Take care of yourself. Do what is right for you. Say "no" to any suggestion or request that is harmful to you. If you are in a small group and the facilitator suggests that you sit on the floor and you need to sit in a chair...then ask for or get yourself a chair. If apple juice is passed out in a ritual and you are on an apple-free low-sugar diet, say "no thank you." No one will be offended - nor will you be judged or left out.

We will always support you in taking care of yourself. If any suggestions made in ritual or in the packets are wrong for you, then don't use them. The Mystery School work is designed to take you to your growing edge, that place just beyond comfort, but you are always the one in control of what you do and don't do in that place. Act in your own best interest.

Ask for what you need. Staff is always available. If you need an extra blanket, let us know. We can't provide all that you might want during a weekend, but we will make every attempt to assure that your basic needs are covered. Help us by letting us know what you need.

At the intensives, we form into Circles of Support. Your Circle of Support facilitator represents our staff. That person can help you find what you need. Consider them to be your staff liaison. If you need emotional help, let our staff know. If you have physical needs regarding transportation, bedding or diet, let your Circle of Support Facilitator know. Our goal is to give you all the assistance you need to take care of yourself.

Be here and join in the work. Through your participation, others in the group will get to know you. For that reason, we ask that you participate in the work offered. The relationship that we create with each other is the magic of the Mystery School community. That relationship is developed by the work we do together. So...for Mystery School Intensives, please choose weekends that you can attend from Friday at 4:30 p.m. until 1:00 Sunday.

Daily Living

Sleep and nap in the sleeping spaces and not in the great room or barn. Here's why.... when you sleep or nap in the communal meeting areas, these spaces aren't available for common use. Although you might not mind if other folks come in and use the space, they won't feel free to talk and relax while you doze.

In the bunkhouse and cabins, the first priority is sleeping. Just as the common areas are for gathering and talking, cabins and bedrooms are for sleeping. The Great Room, Front Room, Barn, deck and hot tub are all places to interact. So - don't sleep in the hot tub and don't bond noisily in the cabins. . .

Quiet hours in the house are from midnight to 7:00 am. These are *quiet hours*, not *silent hours* - talking is fine. In the early morning, please keep an awareness of the volume of your voice. Mornings can be hard on non-morning folks! This request is for those who need to sleep at night or who need a little coffee before socializing in the morning.

Sleeping in Community.... Ohh, snores, doors, mice and barking dogs. If you need a good night's sleep and are not used to having 6 roommates, earplugs are available.

Composting outhouses. Just add a scoop of sawdust or ash equal to your "deposit."

Showers - The shower room in the house has two showers. On the door to the shower room you can indicate your preference for: "Women Only," "Men Only," "People Only" or "Me Only." The sign refers to the room, not the shower stall! Use the signs to indicate your shower room need, but don't be surprised if someone knocks to see if the request on the door is current. If someone asks "Women Only?" and it is, just say "Yes."

Hot Tub. Warm comfort, at the top of the hill and next to the deck. It will be hot at night after ritual and often in the day. It is wood-heated so we can't just set the thermostat. Here is what to do:

Shower before entering the hot tub - there is a shower on the deck near the kitchen. It's functional in summer; shower in the house before hot tubbing when it's cold - even if you showered just before dinner. For us to keep the tub chem-free, you need to be squeaky clean. Check the thermometer before you get in. 104° is recommended (warmer than this and folks with health concerns can't join you). If the water is too hot, ask one of our staff to turn on the hose. It cools down quickly. The hot tub is clothing-optional.

The Dogs. Please don't feed them. They are bad dogs and will lie to you about their need for your dinner. Look at their waistlines and not into their luminous, loving, ever-so-hungry eyes. They will steal the food off your plate and the candy bar out of your bag in a flash. Bad dogs ...

Clothing-Optional: What it Means

What does “clothing-optional” mean? It means that those with whom you are sharing space are more casual about being clothed than they are in the “real” world. The shop doesn’t have dressing rooms. Most people just change right there. Do you have to? Absolutely not. If you want to take an outfit to the cabin and try it on, do. But don’t be surprised if a co-shopper changes into a ribbon-strap tie-dye dress in the middle of the shop.

Please be dressed at the barn - it is very close to the entrance. Please be dressed at meals. Although the campground and creek are clothing-optional, in Missouri all of the creeks are public waterways. If our neighbors come down the creek to fish, please respect the local conventions and put on a t-shirt. We also ask that you be aware of the comfort and concerns of your campground neighbors regarding nudity. We have found the key to community is respect for the needs and concerns of others.

You are welcome to wear a bathing suit in the hot tub, and most of your fellow tubbers will be naked. Most folks wear a towel to the hot tub and nothing in it. In hot weather, some of the group will take their clothes off during the active, energy-raising part of a ritual. Very likely, more people will remain dressed. You will never be pressured to undress. In mixed-gender events, the majority of individuals are clothed. But you may need to grant others the right to disrobe. Clothing-optional situations require more respect for boundaries and more sensitivity to others. Is the clothing-optional environment worth the complex emotional and social reality that it invokes? Yes.

Here’s why.... It isn’t shameful to have a body. It isn’t shameful to be naked. Aging doesn’t need to be hidden. Nakedness doesn’t belong exclusively to the young and the beautiful. Real people take their clothes off and that’s okay. If ritual lays patterns in the soul, then this ritual of self-acceptance is key to our living philosophy. Sure, it might not be comfortable to be in a ritual with naked people, but it is safe. It is a discomfort that, when endured, can enable us to be more accepting of ourselves and of others.

Setting Personal and Sexual Boundaries

Nudity does not imply sexual intention. A hug isn’t an invitation. A man in a dress may not be gay. Women...well in the Ozarks just because she has a chain saw on her key ring doesn’t mean she’s a dyke. Married doesn’t mean monogamous and single doesn’t mean interested.

So - what to do? Freedom requires more boundaries – not less. It requires more respect and less assumption. Trust develops when you are more sensitive to how you touch another person and how long a hug is comfortable for the one you are hugging.

If you really want to know - ask. If you really want to be friends, be prepared to hear what the other person needs from you in order to be comfortable.

Falling in love at Mystery School or coming with your partner. Yes, such magic happens. We ask that if you are seized by Pan or shot by Eros, find a nice private place in the woods or fields. History has shown us that passion can be more distracting than snoring in "community housing."

Confidentiality

What happens during a weekend is personal. You are welcome to talk about what we do here and your feelings about the weekend; but please don't share information about the deep work of any other group member. Talk about yourself -- talk about you did, what you felt, what you experienced. When another individual in the group touches you deeply or initiates your experience, you are free to share what happened to you or for you, but please be careful and respectful regarding the other person's role in your tale.

Confidentiality is a way for us to be safe together in deep personal spaces and know that our soul's work won't be trivialized. Confidentiality agreements, spoken or implied, are misused when they become a mandate for silence. Confidentiality is misused when it encourages a group to talk about a person who isn't present or to process a situation that involves other people. We ask that confidentially not be used to create a situation where only one side of a story is told.

Here is why.... If you want to talk to members of the group about your issues with another person or your perception of a disturbing interaction without including the person who is the focus of your concern, there is no opportunity for healing or resolution. When a portion of the community can't address their issues or talk openly about a situation that is causing their concern, healing is denied to all. "Confidentiality" should never prevent direct dialogue.

In order to gain your confidence, we want you to know that our staff and Rites Team have agreed to "act as healers." If they are aware of an issue, they will bring it to the people who are responsible and can take action to resolve it. If you bring up an issue, here is what will happen -

First, they will talk to you about their concern. Nothing will be said without your knowledge. With your knowledge, our staff will respectfully bring the issue, concern or conflict to the appropriate place for resolution, or support you in doing so. If the issue is wet socks, it is likely that we will just offer you dry socks. Socks, a change in housing, an extra blanket; these issues are the simple ones. If a more personal or interpersonal misunderstanding or dissatisfaction is shared, we will arrange an appropriate time for clarification and conversation. We are committed to respecting each individual in any conflict or misunderstanding, and to doing the work necessary to create individual safety and healthy group process.

Our goal is to assure that a problem is solved and that healing and resolution aren't denied because a complaint or an issue is "confidential." If something is affecting and consuming a large portion of the community, it isn't confidential. When an issue is consuming a group but that group isn't free to address their concerns with the people involved, it isn't a confidential issue but a dysfunctional process. When that happens, and it does, the whole community is hurt. The essence of confidentiality is abused.

Direct dialogue, with or without a mediator, is an essential value within our group. We have skilled mediators on staff. We ask that confidentiality not be used as a contract to talk about people rather than to them, or as a pact to assure that only one side of a situation is known.

Speaking and Working in Community

It is fine to be yourself; in fact each person's individuality is what makes our group so rich. It is fine to have an opinion that differs from ours and from other group members'.

When each of us can share our experience, belief and point of view, we can all learn from each other. Such a simple idea; how does it become so complex and, at times, combustible?

I can listen when you talk about yourself. If you share your reality as your reality and allow me to have a different experience of reality, I can listen. If you tell me that your experience, point of view or opinion is "the truth," it will be harder for me to listen if my experience differs from yours. And the chances are... my experience differs from yours. So that Mystery School can be a home for many truths, we ask you to talk about your experience as *your* experience. You might even consider it to be a discipline in honesty.

Share your experience as your experience rather than as the group's experience. "I loved it" is more honest than "We loved it." It is also more personal, revealing and authentic.

"I" and Conflict Resolution

Interactions are roomier when we speak for ourselves and about our own feelings and beliefs. Tell me about your experience. Tell me how you feel or how you felt when I did or said something. But please, don't tell me what I intended. Tell me what you heard me say, but don't tell me what I meant when I said it.

When a conflict arises, those on our staff are skilled in conflict mediation. We will create an opportunity for you to talk directly about your issues with the other person involved. We will assure that you and the person you are addressing both have an opportunity to speak and to be heard.

Dynamics that affect the group are discussed in the group. Issues that arise in a group, or are presented to a group, are addressed within that group. We believe it is important to state the obvious and acknowledge difficulties and tensions that affect the whole.

Community Service is a part of each weekend. It is a part of our philosophy, of our essential belief about community and life. When we all do the work that daily life creates, it is a far healthier reality than one in which *other people*, often invisible people, do all of the mundane work. We consider community service to be a political action, a statement about equality that, we find, does change consciousness. We treat those who labor differently, when we are the ones who labor.

During a weekend, Circles of Support each take a dish-washing shift in the kitchen. During a week-long event, each Circle generally takes on daily a task as well. It might be watering the plants or gathering the recycling. We find that working together is as important to creating community as playing together.

Life in a Cyber-Community: Email Lists and How to Use Them

The Mystery email list serves the same purpose as the Mystery School intensive morning session discussion. It is a place to talk about the story, workbook or Mystery School work. Share your insights; question the concepts. As you do, your email name will claim a personality. **You** will take shape. By what you say, you will tell us who you are. Those who have never met you will get to know you. It's magic. Through conversation, we deepen our relationship with each other; we become an on-line community.

Introductions: Meet the Mysteries

There is more about introducing yourself in the registration packet, which will be mailed to you in late December or early January. To create your introduction:

- ☆ choose a digital photo or image to represent you
- ☆ write your introduction
- ☆ then step into the community by posting the photo or image, and the introduction, on Interact. *NeedtoKnow* will send you an email in early January and tell you how to post your introduction.

Here is what you might want to share:

- ☆ your name
- ☆ where you live
- ☆ your spiritual tradition
- ☆ why you are in Mystery School
- ☆ your special interests

Things you might want to add:

- ☆ your email address so other mysteries can write to you directly
- ☆ if you offer classes, workshops or rituals in your area, tell us about them
- ☆ if you would like a link to your website, add it to your introduction

A picture is worth a thousand words. The post that invites you to introduce yourself will tell you how to include a picture.

What to Expect from the Mystery List

The Mystery List begins after the other lists have started. This list is the place to discuss the monthly story and workbook, and the questions and growth they bring up. **Registering for Mystery School subscribes you to this list.** If you prefer *not* to be on the Mystery List, the opening post will tell you how to unsubscribe yourself from the list. Need help unsubscribing? Email Lists@dianasgrove.com.

In January, there will be lots and lots of posts. Everyone is excited about getting to know each other. There will be lots of mistakes. People are learning to use email and our lists. Folks will reply to the list when they mean to reply to the person. Folks will get lost and post their introduction on the Mystery List. You will get lots of single line affirmations and agreements.

**January is a good time to learn to use your delete key.
No, it isn't rude to delete. Really. Everybody does it.**

After January, most people settle in. Things will be running smoothly. You can expect 5 to 7 posts a day, more on the weekends. Most of them will focus on the Mystery School work as requested.

It is fine to read the posts even if you don't write. And, of course, we love to hear from you. The lists are vital when we make them vital. They are vital when you talk. So...if you are so called, jump into the conversation. And you need have no guilt if you just enjoy reading.

Each year, the conversations on this list defy expectation: the depth of thought, the richness of insight, the variety of points of view, the intentional, respectful and respect-filled dialogue. We hope you will participate in this magic to the extent that you feel comfortable and are called.

Mystery School Email Lists and Classes

Our email discussion lists, along with the packets, form the heart of our Mystery School work. Our online community is strong and vital – we hope you'll participate! Lists and classes offer ways to explore personal interests, expand on your understanding of the work, discuss approaches to earth-based spirituality, and build community. Information on these lists and classes is in your registration packet, which will be mailed to you in late December or early January. We offer you a choice of lists, not so you will have more email but so you can decide how much email you want. *NeedtoKnow* will contact you early in January and let you know how to join.

If you are in Mystery School and want to join a list after the list has begun, the *how to join* posts from *NeedtoKnow* will be archived on Interact, our web-based community center.

How does a *class* differ from the other lists? A class will offer information for discussion that is not offered in the monthly packet material or in the Book of Shadows. The class will not have "assignments," but it will offer you skill-building and thought-provoking challenges. As you share the work you do in response to the challenges, the class comes to life. In these classes, you won't receive grades, personal evaluations or critiques of your work from the list facilitator. You *will* have the opportunity to exercise your mind and your imagination, and share your work with others.

The Magical Art of Email Discussions

If we, as Mysteries, have one thing in common, it is **not** that we are all Witches, Pagans, Christians or Non-Christians. We aren't all vegetarian and we don't all eat meat. We didn't all vote for the same party in the last election. I know...it's hard to believe, but it's true. And...guess what...not everyone loves dogs. So, what do we have in common? A willingness to come together and practice the art of respect.

Mystery School asks each of us to bring respect to the email discussions and to the Grove when we come. Bring respect for different points of view, for different ways of seeing the world. The vision that is at the center of Mystery School is this: we gather together to speak and listen. We are made richer by diversity.

Diversity doesn't mean that we all have *the same* diverse opinion; it means we have *different* opinions, *different* beliefs. We make different choices. Online and at the Grove, we ask that you **try on the possibility that you can respect the speaker without agreeing with the speech.** Practice hearing ideas that are different from yours without feeling a need to change the speaker or yourself. As we treat each other with respect, we embody one of the ways that our "small group of thoughtful and committed citizens" can change the world.

Self-referencing: Email is a great opportunity to practice talking about yourself. It is easy to hear that you are having an experience that is different from mine. It is easy to hear what you believe, even when your beliefs differ from mine. It is more challenging to hear that how you feel is how "we" feel. No, "we" don't expect "you" to always say "I", but if a discussion heats up, a staff person might call or write to help you explore the possibility that a change in pronouns could enable better communication with people whose experience and point of view differ from yours.

What do the Mysteries have in common? A willingness to practice the art of respect – to respect the speaker, even when we don't agree with the speech

Fire and Flames: Even with the best of intentions, email can be a combustible media. It can take days to clean up one little misunderstanding, particularly when that "misunderstanding" was sent to 75 people. Each list has one or more staff facilitators. Their job is to assure that email conversations remain in keeping with our guidelines.

If a difference of opinion leads to hurt feelings, the facilitators will attempt to resolve the misunderstanding. She or he will address issues that come up. Just like in a group, if something is said on email that affects the well-being of the group, we will respond to you personally, and then on the list as well. Here is why. If we don't the issue or concern might be resolved, but the rest of the readers won't know that the issue has been addressed.

It can be hard to realize that you are talking to 75 people when you are home alone at your computer. It can be hard to know how to talk on email in this community. Many email chat and discussion groups are fine with verbal banter – or seem to be. We aren't. We want our email discussions to have the same level respect and caring that is present during a weekend here. We want to create a place where email dialogue can be empowering and emotionally safe.

Email Agreements

Intention

- ☆ **To deepen** the Mystery School work and experience
- ☆ **To create** community
- ☆ **To dialogue** about our lives, our challenges, our ideas and our adventures

Responding to Posts

- ☆ **Push "reply" and your post will go to the list.** You are talking to everyone.
- ☆ **If you want to talk to an individual,** delete the list name and add their name.

Guidelines

- ☆ **Respect for other religions.** There are Christians, Catholics, Pagans, Buddhists, Witches, Jews and Agnostics in your email community.
- ☆ **In controversial discussions,** we often gather together around a point of view or a perception. Please, no email "rumbles", even when two opposing positions arise.
- ☆ **Respond to opinions with your opinion,** not an evaluation of the person posting.

Requests from our email community

Please don't send:

- ☆ Form letters such as public polls or surveys
- ☆ Chain letters
- ☆ Virus warnings
- ☆ Internet jokes or urban legends

It is fine to tell a joke, just don't forward a joke. That way, we can honor the requests we've received from many Mysteries who ask us to limit the number of posts, and to keep these email groups focused on the list's subject.

One of the ways that our email community differs from other on-line groups is that many of the people know each other. We see each other face-to-face during the year. Our intention is to build community through dialogue. That requires a different approach to the email conversation, and, like other Mystery School work, it requires awareness.

- ☆ Think before you speak...always wise advice. Just remember...you may be all alone at your desk, but you are talking to lots of people.
- ☆ Use a subject line that lets folks know what you are writing about. We can all follow "threads" of discussion, but only if we each use the same subject line.
- ☆ Look at the address before you push "send" to see if you are talking to who you think you are talking to.
- ☆ Consider how your post will impact others. How will your impact impact you?

Mystery

What is a Mystery?

**Mystery: A profound secret,
Something wholly unknown or unknowable;
An enigma; something that has not been, or cannot be, explained; hence, something
that is beyond human comprehension.**

**What is a Mystery?
You are.
You are a Mystery.**

What are the Mysteries?

Birth, growth, life, love, passion, divinity, death. The slow and wondrous process of becoming.
The way life initiates us, challenges us, to discover our own beauty, strength, and
wisdom...these are the Mysteries.

The Mysteries are all things that, even when explained, can never be understood or consigned
to reason. They are the moments of transcendent awe when we are touched by the divine and
discover ourselves to be at one with the world. Boundaries of separateness dissolve. For one
brief moment, we stand in eternity.

Can we teach this? No, but together, we can celebrate our wonder.

**A Mystery...the unknown and the unknowable
You are a Mystery. Life is a Mystery.**

**But...
coming to the Grove shouldn't be a Mystery.
*Read the following pages and it won't be...***

The Rhythm of the Year

In the early months we create our foundation. We will meet each other and form this year's Mystery School community. Each intensive is designed to introduce you to our approach to personal growth, ritual, group dynamics, and the art of self-creation.

We believe that the key to doing deep personal or magical work in a group is trust and safety. So that we, as a community, can get to know each other and develop trust, we ask that you pick Mystery School intensives that you can fully attend. When you want to be more autonomous, less involved, add an Open Gathering (rather than a Mystery Intensive) to your schedule.

Here's why: If you arrive late or leave early, others won't have the opportunity to get to know you. If you don't join in the work, you remain a mysterious Mystery. Our shared experience enables us to get to know each other. It is hard to be honest and open with people who remain outside of the group interactions. As our individual relationships deepen, the whole group and our work together also deepen. You are the gift that you bring to each gathering; we ask you to share that gift generously.

Shy or exuberant, introvert or extrovert - come just as you are. The opening afternoon and evening, and the closing morning (Friday night and Sunday morning on a 3-day intensive) are designed for us to get to know each other, so it is important to be there. Plan to weave yourself into the community with the work we do together.

Mid-year, things shift. The foundation is laid. We know each other, and the mythic work is more familiar. Generally, the May Mystery School Intensive is the first turning point in the year. The Grove will welcome many distant Mysteries who attend only once. An aspect of the seasonal story comes to life, but the greater story of this week is Creating Community.

Joseph Campbell said, *"To separate ourselves from the whole is to cut our options and erect the walls of our own prison."* We have a week to be the community that we seek. What enables us to work together? What drives us to feel our uniqueness through dissension? What enables us to find it through cooperation? These are world problems that we grapple with as a microcosm.

In **Summer** the Mystery School community dances on the foundation that has been laid. Following the May Intensive, Mysteries take a greater role in creating and offering the rituals. Our year may offer women's gatherings, and intensives focused on tarot, astrology and other oracular arts.

The **August Priestess Intensive** is the second turning point of the year. This weekend is dedicated to the Priestess' Arts. We open our community and dedicate ourselves to service.

September - We reach out and share our work with others. Mystery School offers gatherings and workshops that take us into the deep, rich realms of community and personal discovery.

October often brings us a week-long intensive exploring the dark time of the year, and, additionally, the October Open Mystery School - our yearly **Rites of Passage** weekend. November offers **the November Mystery School closing weekend**, which concludes the year. The end gives birth to a beginning.

What is a Mystery School Intensive like?

A long drive...it is hard to step out of the present and into the past without making a significant journey. When the pavement ends, you are almost there. Down a country road, a low water bridge goes through a creek, just keep coming. Up the hill; the dogs will greet you with great enthusiasm.

We will email you to tell you when you should plan to arrive – **generally we specify 3:00pm or later**. The weekend begins with the opening session, Creating Community, and your email will specify that beginning time. Like all Mystery School work, this session will tell the story, introduce the weekend's theme, begin the work and introduce us to each other. This session will conclude by inviting you to join us as we conspire about the evening ritual. Intention, chant; this ritual preview is designed to enable you to be more comfortable with and fully involved in the evening's work.

After Opening Session, **Circles of Support** - a time to meet other Mysteries in a small group setting. Then, an excellent, welcome home dinner.

Each intensive offers a number of optional offerings – you'll learn about the options at the Opening Session, so you can make choices ...

Friday evening's ritual generally begins at 8:15 with *Slipping into Dreamtime*, a gentle transition from time to timelessness. At 8:30 we will ground and cast the circle for the weekend. Ritual ends about 10:00. Then, dessert and to bed for some; others might want to drum, gather around the fire, or gaze at the stars while relaxing in a steaming hot tub.

On Saturday, **optional offerings**, often involving movement, are usually available for early risers, at 8:00. You'll learn, at the opening session, about all the intensive's optional offerings, so you can choose! At 9:00, **Circles of Support** meet (sometimes with breakfast and coffee). **Morning Session**, or other offerings, take place at 10:30. The "Other Offerings" are a choice of sessions for mind, body or spirit that will take you more deeply into the morning's work, and are followed by lunch. Saturday afternoon gives you time to take a walk, relax with friends, visit puppies, or take a nap...but ohh – there are choices, hard choices that will vie for your few free hours. Saturday afternoon may offer leadership training, work on priestessing skills and/ or personal growth. You'll find out what is on the menu when you arrive for the opening session, and can plan accordingly.

Then, around 4:30 or so, **Ritual Conspiracy**, where we will make plans for the evening ritual. For us, a ritual is a multi-sensorial prayer that lays patterns in the soul. The ritual begins at 8:15 or 8:30. Once again, dessert at 10:00.

Sunday morning brings offerings on movement and opportunities to further work with the themes of the weekend. Build new structures of self. Engage with life at a new level. The offerings conclude with sessions to help you integrate and take what you have experienced back into your life at home. The closing session is at 11:30. Lunch is served at 1:00. You can pack a lunch for the road or stay and enjoy friends and conversations a little longer.

Be it 3 days or 4, this basic pattern applies – the opening afternoon and evening are structured the same way at every intensive, as is the closing day, with all the days between offering a menu of experiences and choices.

Comings and Goings: Rides and Staying With Us

Getting here...rides and the airport

Let us know 10 days in advance if you need a ride from the airport.

Email us at rides@dianasgrove.com.

We will arrange a ride-share. A community member will contact you directly. It might take until the Wednesday before an event to coordinate final travel plans and make arrangements, but fear not - if we can't arrange a ride, a Diana's Grove staff person will pick you up.

If you are flying in, plan to arrive at the St. Louis airport in the morning. Your ride will want to pick you up by 11:30am so they can get here by 2:30pm. Plan your flight out again for after 6:00pm on Sunday. Mystery School ends at 1:00 and we are **3 hours** from the St. Louis airport.

Arriving: Plan to arrive after 3:00 on the opening day of the Intensive. We will welcome you and help you get settled for the weekend. If you aren't greeted by a staff member when you arrive, just come up to the main house at the top of the hill and make yourself at home. Housing information is on the table just inside the door of the main house. Check that list for your bed. Be sure to check to the list to see if it specifies your bunk is a top or a bottom. More than half the people who come here need a bottom bunk and simple math will tell you what that means. Each cabin will have a listing of the people in that cabin and their bunk needs. So - check *that* list to see if you have the greatest need and therefore a bottom bunk. If you have an unexpected bottom bunk need like a sprained ankle or a broken leg - do let us know before you arrive. We will take your situation into consideration as we assign housing.

If the creek is high when you arrive, if you can see only water and no bridge, or if you have any concerns about crossing the bridge - **wait**. A sign will be at the bridge. Someone will be there within the hour. We're coming! It may take a bit of time before we can get you safely in and out. And remember - rain is common; floods are not. Water over the bridge is not unusual, and is generally navigable; altogether, we only had one high-water adventure last year.

Arriving early - Staying late

We regret that we are not able to accommodate early arrivals. The forces of nature and the food that we serve require last minute preparations. The cabins and the kitchen, not to mention the staff, aren't ready for early guests. We find that the intensity of our last-minute preparation doesn't allow us to welcome you in the way that we want. Although you may be coming with a wonderful willingness to help, the final countdown before an event is not a good time for us to train new helpers. Salem has very reasonable motels and a charming ice cream shop that serves breakfast and lunch.

Need to stay over? An extra night of bed, dinner and breakfast is \$25. If you stay, you will discover that the event is over. The cook goes to bed. The staff falls into stunned silence. Meals are co-created. Work exchange can be arranged for the handy and helpful. Plan to hunt and forage for breakfast.

The Food

Our philosophy, and how to meet your own dietary needs

We are dedicated to excellent coffee, real cream and butter.

Our food is equal to or better than that at a well-priced restaurant. The selection and quantity are generous. We prepare for a wide variety of needs. Our menu is designed, by necessity, for the preferences of a large group.

Our goal is to ensure that everyone can fill his or her basic dietary needs with delicious, fresh and well-prepared food.

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with delicious, fresh and well-prepared food. If you are a vegetarian, we do serve meat. And if you are a meat eater, we do serve hummus and tabouli. If you are vegan, we have plenty of green salads and fruit. If rice is a key part of your diet, we can fix it for you. The registration packet asks about dietary preferences, needs and intolerances. If those change during the year, let us know.

We do not have the wonderful health food options that are so plentiful in large cities. If you want things of this nature, please bring them with you. We are fortunate to have an organic garden and gardener just down the road so, in the summer, fresh-picked, organic vegetables are part of the daily fare. We have found that, when we purchase sugar-free staples, their use is so minimal that we have to throw them away. You are welcome to bring your own for the weekend.

We make our menu predictable so you will know what to expect, and what to bring for yourself.

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Always Available: Tea - caffeinated and herbal. Iced tea in summer. Coffee - caf and decaf. Seasonal fruit: apples, bananas, grapes and oranges. Breakfast bars - Nutra Grain and Nature's

Valley. Half-and-half, 2% and skim milk, rice or soy milk, juice, yogurt - with fruit and plain. Plain yogurt is in the kitchen in a large container - let us know if you want it.

At every dinner: Green Salad and plain rice – almost always organic brown.

Supper, the opening night of the intensive:

soup, pasta, salad and, often, homemade bread. When soup is a main dish, we will have a dairy-free vegetarian option available; if the vegetarian soup is offered as a side dish, the vegetarian soup won't always be dairy-free. A green salad made with leaf lettuce or spring greens - never iceberg - with a choice of homemade dressings. The homemade bread may be white or wheat bread, corn bread, biscuits or muffins.

Breakfast: Hunt and forage. Some of you are up at 6:00 and others grab an apple and yogurt on the way into Morning Session or Circles of Support. We have found that making breakfast a self-serve meal gives you all a way to meet your individual needs. Here is what is available:

Toast and jelly, cream cheese, cheese and peanut butter
Cereals of the common kind - corn flakes, Cheerios, Raisin Bran
Yogurt, cottage cheese, fruit, English muffins or bagels, and often a baked fruit bread
Breakfast bars and hard-boiled eggs

Lunch: Bread or croissants, sandwich fixings with vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. Lunch may include turkey, beef or ham but will always include a meat alternative. If we are serving meat for dinner, we might have pasta, rather than sandwiches, for lunch. Vegetarian choices include: lettuce, tomato, cucumber, egg salad, hummus, cheese. Usually there is an extra “salad” like tuna salad. We often have a vegetarian (but not always dairy-free) offering: macaroni and cheese, curried rice, tabouli. If a casserole isn't served, you can expect soup.

Dinner: Now that's up to the cook. We like to work with the specialties and favorites of the cooking staff. The size of the group also determines what we can prepare for you. There will always be a vegetarian offering. There may be meat. Consider it an optional but plentiful "side dish." We have no "hidden meat" in the food. Typical winter dinners are lasagna, spaghetti with red sauce and artichoke sauce, or eggplant parmesan. In the summer you can expect grilled chicken, fresh steamed vegetables, or corn on the cob. Always salad, and often garlic bread.

Typical winter dinners are lasagna, spaghetti with red sauce and artichoke sauce, or eggplant parmesan; in the summer, grilled chicken as well as vegetarian options.

If you like – and your dietary needs dictate - bring the food you need, and eat what you like from what we serve.

Sounds great but you just can't eat it. Here is what you can do. Bring the food you need and eat what you like from what we serve. You can keep your food near the dining area, in our refrigerator if we have room, or in an ice chest (if you are flying in we can provide you with one) and supplement your choices with your personally-packed preferences.

Our famous desserts.... Yes, they have sugar. Some of you might prefer sugar-free desserts, but it would break too many hearts. We will have fresh fruit available at the dessert table. Frozen fruit in the winter, yes, but you can have strawberries or peaches with or without the cream.

Housing

For Mystery School Intensives and Open Gatherings

Housing is included in the price of an event so, if you aren't coming, please let us know. It is likely that a friend of yours will want your bed.

Cabins are shared. They hold 4 to 8 people. We have women-only and men-only housing. Mixed-gender housing is often available for those who come as a couple. If you come as a couple, you will likely be housed with another couple.

We have one or two private cabins, Dreamweaving and the Treehouse. When available, you can rent the cabin of your choice for an additional \$50 for the weekend and \$75 for the week.

Please let us know about your housing needs before your arrival so we can make plans to accommodate them

The cabins are rustic. Bunk beds, mattresses and heat - they are primitive. None of the cabins, not even the ones that we live in, have bathrooms. But there is a bathroom in the house. We have wonderful showers, but they aren't next to your bedroom. There are state-of-the-art composting facilities...yes - state-of-the-art.

Hot and Cold. In some of the cabins, the temperature will only rise to 50 degrees on a cold winter's night. To be safe, plan for cool, not warm, sleeping temperatures. **Bring a warm sleeping bag** - one that is rated for below 40 degrees.

Housing is assigned - first according to needs, then according to preference. Women only, bottom bunks, electricity for c-pap machines, allergies, couples who want to be together, friends who want to be together, those who need easy access to a bathroom -- the needs and requests are many and varied. We do the best we can to give you the housing that you need and want.

The cabins will be full. If you want to be alone, you are welcome to tent.

Please let us know your housing needs when you register – it is much more difficult, and may be impossible, to meet your housing needs if we don't know about them until you get here.

What to Bring:

*This book. Keep it handy.
It will be your guide to the Grove during an intensive.*

Personal: Sleeping bag, pillow, towel, slippers to wear to the hot tub, personal toiletries - we provide shampoo and conditioner in the showers (30 bottles of personal products do make a crowd), a flashlight, good walking shoes, shoes you can wear into the creek in the summer, warm clothing so you can go outside, cool clothing so you can go outside.

Magical: your drum, tarot cards, a journal, ritual wear for Saturday night if you want, but only if you want. What is ritual wear? From a robe decorated with stars and moons to tie-dye to glitter on your cheek...if it makes you feel magical and mysterious, it's ritual wear.

Vending, Buying, Borrowing.

*Here is the simple answer: yes, Yes!! and no.
Now...here are the details.*

Vending: If you want to vend a service or a product at an intensive, you can. You need to provide your own vending space. If you are offering a service such as body work, you need to provide your own work area. In the summer, plan to bring a tent. In the winter, the inside space is so "well used" that even Diana's Grove can't vend at Diana's Grove events.

The vending fee is 10% of your gross sales. You are responsible for your merchandise. Please...don't put your shop in our shop. It will cause great confusion and may result in lost merchandise. We have some very unusual and creative buying procedures. We will never know if someone purchased an item from you and paid us.

Our Shop: It's in the Barn

Buying: Please do!! We really appreciate it!! Books, tapes, magical wear, drums, silk scarves; hand-dyed cotton, silk and rayon clothing. Books - we can order most metaphysical books for you. There is a list of recommended books on our website - dianasgrove.com. If you order from our site or go to Amazon through our site, your purchase supports us (thank you!).

Borrowing: Please don't. Unfortunately, when you borrow an item from the shop, it goes from "new" to "used" without ever leaving the Grove. We can't afford to lend you clothing. If you want to borrow something magical for a ritual, ask another Mystery. It's almost certain that you can find the perfect scarf or that touch of red within the community rather than within the shop.

Drums: We have a great selection of frame drums and tambourines for sale and even more to play. The drum of your dreams might be available, or we can order it for you.

The Final Un-mysteries

Rules of Diana's Grove

- ☆ **Diana's Grove is drug- and alcohol-free.** This is one of those boundaries that we don't expect you to take home. We don't have judgments about the use of recreational drugs and alcohol; but the intensity and mythic nature of our work require that altered states be naturally achieved.
- ☆ **Smokers** - Smoke in designated outside areas and be responsible for cigarette butts. There is no smoking in the house, cabins, outhouses, or in the dining area. Please don't smoke during ritual or during workshop presentations, or while walking the Labyrinth.
- ☆ Really, really sorry - **No Pets.** Our dogs won't negotiate. Our pets don't like pets!!

Please help us live responsibly...rinse your cans and bottles and put them in the recycling bin, which is generally outside the Front Room door of the Main House.

That's it...3 *rules*, 1 *request*.
Lots and lots of agreements.
See the Community section of this book for those

The "Fine Print"

Registrations, Changes, Transfers and Refunds for those who register *by event*.

Weekends and week-long Intensives

3 day weekends: \$225 - \$275

4 day weekends: \$250 - \$300

Weeks (8 to 9 days): \$550 - \$600

All prices are on a sliding scale; pay the amount that is right for you.

What about a change of plans?

Cancellation, Refund and Transfer

Cancel more than 7 days before the event: you can transfer the full amount to any other weekend within the same year (paying any difference in the cost for that event); or, we will give you **a refund less \$25**.

If you **cancel in the last 7 days before the event**, you're in the no-refund, no-transfer zone. If you don't come and don't call, we don't transfer or give you a credit.

If you have a friend who wants your space, you can give it to them. But that only applies to a friend who isn't already registered. We can't give your friend your place and then refund your friend for her or his registration.

Here's why we can't transfer (or refund) if you cancel in the last 7 days before the event -

We've spent your money.

We've hired the cooks, ordered the groceries, and told late callers that they won't have a bed. The staff has designed the weekend and you are a part of the plan.

So – "no refunds" might be hard to hear, but here is the good news:

You helped create the event!

Even if you can't attend, you were part of making the week or weekend happen for people you might never have met.

When you registered, you become a part of the fabric that formed the weekend. You were a part of the commitment that enabled an experience to happen for all who do attend. You were a part and you still are. You matter. Sometimes, the only thing harder than thinking that you don't make a difference is realizing that you do.

End of the Year Adjustments

Cancellations and transfers for those of you using
A Mystery School Payment Plan:

MPP (Monthly Payment Plan) and Pay-all-at-once payment plans

With these plans, pick the Mystery School Intensives and/or Open Retreats and workshops that you want to attend. **Indicate** the amount on your Payment Plan form.

If you have a change of plans...

The weekends that you circle tell us your *plans*, and you can change them! Give us a call **a week in advance**, and you can **transfer** your registration to any other event.

Here is the fine print: With this plan, you are agreeing to pay a specific amount... If you cancel less than seven days in advance, we can't transfer your amount except in emergency situations. Even in emergency situations, we can't re-figure your monthly payment if you change your mind about the number of weekends you will attend. We can't refund or transfer an unused balance to the next year.

Here's why:

We have counted you in. Your commitment, thank the Goddess, has enabled us to hire our staff, make improvements and sign contracts. In other words, based on your commitment, we make commitments; we've spent your money.

Thanks for considering these options

These payment plans and your advance registration sustain Mystery School and the Grove. By using them, you help us plan the year.

Your commitment and attendance are greatly appreciated.