

# My Child

Shan Jayran

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It's been a long time now that I've been teaching about the wise child. I'm not sure where I got the idea from. I recognised it in Starhawk's books, and in Carl Rogers who I read (*Person to Person*) in 1970 and who profoundly influenced me. But even before that I enthusiastically adopted the 'everyone is beautiful in their own way' of hippie splendour, and plunged into many a painful encounter because of my shining trust.

The wise child is, as I understand it, about the inner, hidden self. Outside I generally appear adult, with adult physique and adult trained manners. I talk, list, organise and achieve everyday tasks because this adult everyday self\* is skilled in such work.

But before I developed this part of me, I was a little child, a baby. As a small child I was by no means lacking in skills, in fact I was bursting with capacity. What I saw/heard/smelt was far more vivid than most of what I sense now. I had little fear or hesitation, charging at experience with great curiosity and delight. I could find intricate fascination in almost anything, for all was new and exciting. I could dream way back in the womb. I could draw on deep wells of energy, and then relax utterly to renew them. I had direct knowledge through instinct so I frequently 'knew' exactly what I needed to do or to learn. I could adapt to colossal



changes, survive ravaging loss, meet challenges with a goblin grin, cleanse myself of frustration by roaring my anger, weep my pains away without shame. My ability to learn was titanic. I was like an elemental force, guided from within, flexible, cheerful, playful and powerful.

Held inside, this part of me lives on, sometimes strangled back, sometimes permitted to act or speak. The wise child is also closer to the first levels of self, the incarnation designer, the inspiration of our being, the archetypal forces and so on. Given the appropriate conditions of welcome, this child, this priest/ess of deep wisdom, can be brought out to play and to counsel us.

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It's no good giving terse adult messages like 'Instruct me as to my career decision about . . .', for what child of three or less will respond to that? Instead, s/he needs colours, toys, flickering lights, poetic singsong, stories. And the answers come in similar form, which need a little skills to interpret their symbols. But more than anything we cannot use such messages unless we respect and trust the self who gives them.

It's no use being snooty and refusing to enter into her/his world — 'Me? Sing childish nonsense over and over or talk to a candle? And if you think there's anything in all those myths and symbols, well!' — because then the wise child won't wish to play with you either. And what's more, we have to trust the ultimate goodness, the benevolence, the profound self-interest at the heart of guidance to do the crazy thing, the difficult,

disruptive thing, the frightening disclosure of vulnerability.

Here is the faith at the core. The central, first self of each one of us is good, beautiful and true. Layers later may be anything but, as my young hippie self got bruised discovering. But in certain conditions such as successful therapy, the sweetness and wisdom surfaces again. I have held stubbornly to this faith through many years of teaching, therapy and personal struggle. I founded a whole Pagan organisation on this basis. Sometimes it was hard to 'keep the faith'.

Now the miracle happens. I birthed my son. He is all I describe above and more. Every day he has shown me this primal nature I have taken on trust for so long.

My work has been vindicated by my motherhood. I now have proof positive in his wriggling, solid little body.

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\* Starhawk calls this 'talking self' in *The Spiral Dance* and *Dreaming the Dark*

