## Seeker’s Guide

For Finding Covens, Circles and Groups

**Warning Signs:**

1. Most groups do not request payment for training and have a policy against accepting cash payment for same, however there are some exceptions. In most cases, legitimate groups that do require financial contribution will be upfront with such costs and reasons why. Some broader Pagan organizations may ask for donations for materials. This is not the same as charging for training. In addition, some coven leaders may ask you to bring wine, food, candles, or other supplies to a ritual. Again, this is not the same as asking for payment for training.
2. A legitimate group will never coerce you into joining. As coven leaders, we put the burden on the seeker to ask to be trained. We do not recruit, we do not pressure anyone to join our coven, and we do not force anyone into initiation. If you are recruited by a coven or other Pagan group, beware of its legitimacy.
3. A legitimate group will never force you into sex or sexual acts. If someone tells you that you are required to have sex or to engage in a sexual act to qualify for an initiation, report them to the authorities immediately. Legitimate covens will never force non-consensual sex on seekers or initiates.
4. Legitimate groups will almost never offer initiation outright. Traditional covens ask for a year and a day training, which is the traditional length of training for any seeker. Beware of any coven that offers initiation, outright, without getting to know you as a seeker.
5. A legitimate group should not require you to engage in dangerous behaviors. If you are told that in order to belong to a coven or group, you must engage in drug use or use other mind-altering substances that you are not comfortable using, be wary of that coven. Some covens may opt to use Alcohol and drugs sporadically, but this should not be a requirement for joining a coven.
6. A legitimate group (religious) will not typically espouse political beliefs or ideology as part of training and any that do so should be up front with political beliefs and activism before training initiates. In particular, be wary of groups that espouse any –isms (e.g. racial, sexual, etc.), or groups that align with hate groups ideals.

**If you’ve gone through all of the above warning signs, and something still doesn’t feel right, go with your gut. You are the best judge of each situation. Also, when in doubt, reach out to other groups in the area. Check Facebook and our resources on Darksome Moon for legitimate coven listings. Do your research before joining any coven.**

**A Legitimate Coven Will:**

1. If a coven is interested in talking with seekers for training, they will often advertise on sites like Darksome Moon, Facebook or by a website.
2. A legitimate coven will often interview you before inviting you into the covenstead. The safest way to meet is in a local place, where there are other people around.
3. A legitimate coven will be upfront about their expectations, training length, and training plan(s).
4. A legitimate coven will ideally have other members that you can talk with/share experiences with.
5. A legitimate coven will be upfront about their tradition, lineage, and their training path to become a HPS or HP.

**Above all, make sure you are never pressured into joining any coven/group. Go with a group that you jive well with. Don’t be afraid to ask questions and to interview your potential trainers. Check-in with others to validate legitimacy. Trust yourself.**

Good luck, and blessed be!

