

Psychic Self-Defense 1

Dion Fortune's Psychic Self-Defense was first published in 1930. Even so, it remains one of the most effective guides to this subject ever published. While our understanding may change, higher principles themselves do not change. Our circumstances and the various problems in life come from within. So to do answers and genuine understanding.

Much has to do with ego. We tend to project our own egoistic needs and aversions into the aura, and these projections then come back to us. Thus so-called psychic attacks may be either internally or externally motivated, but in either case compounded by how we respond or react. Some basic protective principles: "Detach and distance yourself as much as you can" from the attacker or negative influence, and do not give in to the attacker's will. But also do not respond in kind. "Keep away from drugs." This includes alcohol and tobacco. Maintain a spiritual focus, but "do not meditate while an episode continues." "Keep to a healthy diet, get plenty of sleep and fresh air, and take physical exercise." The most healthy diet is vegetarian, but even a vegetarian diet may not suffice if one is not healthy in consciousness. And maintain a positive focus with positive activities.

Psychic attack is simply a form of bullying, of imposing energy and will upon another. Any form of bullying, any form of imposition is unconscionable, but it works, it affects a potential victim, only to the extent that that potential victim is vulnerable. Thus psychic self-defense is largely a matter of achieving and maintaining one's own physical, emotional, mental, psychic, and spiritual health. And one the keys to this is not bullying or imposing on others. Thus one must protect oneself, through healthy consciousness, without attacking others or engaging in conflict.

In health, with positive thinking, with self-confidence that is not based in ego, with humility and higher relationship (spiritual focus), comes the strength to face and rise above negative influences.

- Preface

One of the challenges of occult teaching is to provide useful information without providing information that is dangerous. Knowledge and understanding convey power, for good or ill. The higher, deeper teachings are always available to those who are properly qualified, who can intuitively recognize the truth and value and import of those teachings, but those who are not as properly qualified must learn to discern truth and value and import. Dion Fortune's Psychic Self-Defense is one of the relatively few useful texts in this subject area. Those who embrace this knowledge sensibly, with proper motive, will learn and grow. Those who embrace this knowledge selfishly or unwisely, will gain nothing and will continue to suffer.

Much of Dion Fortune's writings come from personal experience. She may not have seen all of the underlying karmic factors, and she may not have been able to place all of her experience in some deeper spiritual framework, but she nonetheless learned a great deal from her personal and practical experience. She developed perception that places all of her experience into a perspective that reveals much of the underlying psychic nature of thoughts and feelings and physical consequences. Her perspective includes psychology and psychism. She realized that everyone is psychically active, that everyone is projecting energy on psychic levels by virtue of thinking and feeling, and that everyone is consequently subject to psychic influences. She realized the prevalence of "teachings" available from unqualified and unenlightened peoples. And she realized just how gullible are most people, especially those in need.

It is a noble sentiment to want to heal or protect oneself and to help others to heal or protect themselves. It is not a noble sentiment to seek apparent advantage over others, to have supposed power over others or to impose on others in any way. Those who abuse their power, those whose thoughts and feelings and psychic projections are inherently harmful to others, necessarily bring such negative energies back onto themselves. And those who are healthy, physically, emotionally, mentally, psychically, and spiritually, are simply not vulnerable. Thus those who suffer from psychic attack have something in their past and present which allows and affords such things.

Ultimately, the keys to psychic self-defense are to learn what practices are harmful, to cease doing whatever is harmful, and to thereby heal oneself. In the meantime, one may need to learn how to protect oneself to some extent, to relieve matters long enough to learn the needed lessons and make the needed adjustments in consciousness. But this is not really possible as long as one is continuing to hurt other people, keeping in mind that it is our thoughts and feelings that do the most damage to others.

The truly enlightened person lives gently but with spiritual strength, without harming people or animals or the environment, without being entangled in external conflict. With growing wisdom, one learns how to do this. One learns how to be effective in the world without becoming entangled.

Part I – Types of Psychic Attacks

1 • Signs of Psychic Attack

“We live in the midst of invisible forces whose effects alone we (tend to) perceive. We move among invisible forms whose actions we very often do not perceive at all, though we may be profoundly affected by them.”

To fully understand what is meant by “psychic attack” one must first understand that these invisible forces are not in themselves either good or evil except in the sense that they are qualified with good or evil intent by whomever or whatever has sent them forth, and that these forces may come from human beings in physical form, from human beings who are not in physical form, from non-human beings, from oneself, or from some combination of sources.

One does not have to be aware of these invisible things in order to be affected or to protect oneself, indeed awareness on psychic levels, without proper training, can be disadvantageous. Indeed, many forms of psychic distress can be traced to people who have ventured into psychic realms without proper training or motive. Ultimately, whatever affects us has either come from ourselves or is the result of our making ourselves vulnerable, but these vulnerabilities may relate to current consciousness and activities, and/or to some extent to previous lives, to unresolved issues.

“We must consider the outward and visible signs of psychic attack before we are in a position to analyze the nature of such attacks and indicate their source of origin. It is a fundamental rule that diagnosis must precede treatment. There are many different kinds of psychic attacks, and the methods that will dispose of one will be ineffectual against another.” True enough, for most people and most circumstances; for very, very few people are truly healthy, and most people are entangled in the circumstances of their lives.

The most prevalent, most common form of psychic effect is internal, driven by our thoughts and feelings, by our fears, by our imagination. These effects can be very similar to those from external sources, and unless one is properly trained, it is difficult to discern the difference. Thus one must first make a distinction between a psychic attack, which is externally driven (albeit necessarily related to one’s own vulnerabilities), and something that looks like a psychic attack but is merely self-imposed.

The most prevalent, most common form of (actual) psychic attack comes more or less directly, from our fellow human beings, either through their ignorance or their malice. It can come from either mental or emotional levels and is generally from both. One should never respond in kind, by attacking the attacker, because that always makes things worse. It is far safer, and much more effective, and much more healthy, to simply defend oneself without attacking anyone, by simply not allowing the imposed energy to have any affect upon us.

Psychic “attack” may also come more indirectly, through the concentration of psychic force upon a place or upon an object. Entering such places or handling such objects can have serious consequences for anyone who is not properly protected in consciousness. Sometimes we are simply averse to certain places or certain objects. This is usually our unconscious alerting us to unseen forces. But if we are healthy, then we are simply not vulnerable. Of course even the healthy can do foolish things, and thereby compromise the aura, so one should learn how to protect the aura at all times.

“A sense of fear and oppression is very characteristic of occult attack, and one of the surest signs that herald it ... An approaching occult influence casts its shadow on consciousness before it makes itself apparent to the non-psychic.” Very true. But while fear can be an indication of danger, it also tends to attract

fearful energies. Thus when one is feeling fearful, or depressed in any way, then one is necessarily much more vulnerable. Thus cause and effect are often inter-related. One can be attacked and become fearful which merely compounds the danger. Or one can be fearful and attract an attack, with similar consequences.

As an attack progresses, one tends to lose energy. If one is truly healthy, then an attack generally has little impact. But most people are not able to ward off these energies, and so they lose vital force and become depressed, which undermines whatever health there may have been. Any activity which results in tiredness suggests a lack of vitality, a lack of energy balance, a lack of proper health, not necessarily a psychic attack. But psychic attacks do generally result in a wearing down of one's vital body, and from there, if not properly treated, the ill-effect can progress to physical and psychological levels.

The effects of a psychic attack and the results of drug addiction are remarkably similar in how the body and consciousness are affected. Moreover, drug addiction, the abuse of any drug, often leads to being psychically attacked. The same is true for emotional and mental illness. Sometimes emotional and mental illness is the result of a prolonged psychic attack. But emotional and mental illness can also lead to being psychically attacked. For those who prey on others, ignorantly or maliciously, usually find those who are already relatively weak in some sense or another.

2 • Analysis of the Nature of Psychic Attack

Much of "the essence of a psychic attack is to be found in the principles and operations of telepathic suggestion." Suggestion in this context refers to three types of influence upon the subconscious mind, namely auto-suggestion, conscious suggestion, and hypnotic suggestion. While "bullying" may affect the conscious mind, the real danger is in its lingering and unrealized effect upon the subconscious.

"Auto-suggestion is given by one's own conscious mind to one's own subconscious mind." Conscious suggestion is conveyed from another to the conscious mind through words. And hypnotic suggestion is conveyed more directly to the subconscious.

Protective mantras are not very effective unless accompanied by focused and sustained visualizations, because the words themselves mean nothing to the subconscious. Similarly, while words can be harmful in themselves, due to the energy conveyed, words accompanied by visualization are more potent. And psychic energy, focused through hypnotism or visualization or other techniques, can be quite very potent.

All forms of non-conscious suggestion are inappropriate, because they tend to circumvent a person's conscious mind, and undermine his or her self-will. The adept is thoroughly trained and conditioned not to impose on other people, consciously or unconsciously. Any form of bullying, manipulation, or imposition is inherently harmful, to the one doing the bullying, and to the one being bullied.

Most forms of suggestion are subversive, and appeal to the subconscious according to the biases (weaknesses) a person may have. Malicious forces look for and find whatever resonates, and then exploit those weaknesses. Thus while one may employ certain protections, the only real protection is to live from strength (healthy consciousness) rather than weakness. The first protection key is purification, of the mind, of the emotions, of the physical and vital bodies. The second protection key is integration, that the whole of the personal should be integrated into a coherent whole, which is then able to be more properly qualified by higher consciousness. A person of qualified and coherent consciousness, who is simply unresponsive to psychic attack, will not become a victim.

Of those who would impose on others are of two types. Those who have some understand of occult principles but lack real quality or wisdom, who exploit the weaknesses of others without realizing how much damage they are doing to themselves. And those who have no such understanding, and are less effective, but suffer nonetheless as their negative energies come back to themselves.

In order to penetrate the defenses of another, consciously or unconsciously, an attacker must have within himself the negative energy to be conveyed. This energy attracts and is reinforced by similar energy from the astral plane. Thus all manner of daemons are attracted and consciously or unconsciously utilized.

And these daemons feed from the attacker even more so than the intended victim.

Typically an attacker utilizes either the self-preservation instinct or the sex instinct (fear) or some form of sympathy of the intended victim or some combination of these. The conscious or unconscious intent is to pierce the aura of the intended victim and insert the "energy" of the attacker. This is facilitated by any form of rapport or close relationship between attacker and victim. This rapport may be from the current incarnation or from some other time and place. And depending on the phase of the moon and other external conditions, an attack may be more or less effective.

The keys to vulnerability are primarily whatever there is in one's aura that resonates with the dark energies and whatever "relationship" may exist with the attacker. A bully is especially effective if he or she is already inside the victim's aura, which often happens in the case of intimate (physical or hypnotic or otherwise sympathetic) relationship.

3 • A Case of Modern Witchcraft

Like metaphysics or psychism per se, witchcraft is not inherently good or evil. It is the ethics and consciousness of the witch that makes the practice either good (selfless, constructive, helpful, encouraging) or evil (selfish, destructive, harmful, imposing, manipulative). Much of the present circumstances can be traced to earlier activities. Those who have previously dabbled in occultism or psychism or witchcraft, without having requisite consciousness for proper training, are usually seriously affected in subsequent lifetimes by the misadventures and harmful practices of earlier times. Much like drug addiction, the effects can be quite severe and long-lasting, and carry over into subsequent lifetimes in the form of emotional or mental or psychic illness.

Moreover, one who has developed some psychic "talent" in the past or present, without requisite quality of consciousness or training, typically now has the ability for harmful psychic practice without the awareness of what one is doing, i.e. with yet little conscience. All of which plays out through the present consciousness (aura).

Those who live in darkness, even in some subtle sense, are fairly easy for the adept to recognize. Animals especially tend to have the ability to sense darkness in human beings. Thankfully, black magicians are never very powerful compared with true adepts, in part because black magic is an inherently self-destructive path and in part because true power comes from a higher place (the soul) (atma-buddhi-manas) that black magicians simply cannot reach. Moreover, the true adept, while inherently powerful, never applies that power for ill, and never imposes upon others.

4 • Projection of the Etheric Body

“... when physical action is produced at a distance by occult means, it is done by employing the etheric double.” The projection of the etheric or energy body is one such means. Another is by induction or manipulation of etheric substance at some distance.

Everyone has an etheric body, but in most cases the etheric body is more or less coincident with the physical body, and “projections” of etheric substance are fairly limited. Emotional and mental forces are much more easily projected; indeed, most people project “energy” on some level more or less continuously, and rather unconsciously. It takes some training to be able to project the etheric body. And it takes even more training to be able to manipulate etheric substance at a distance. Both means are generally considered to be inappropriate unless there is some considerable and compelling circumstances. The properly trained occultist is simply precluded by ethics and training from imposing upon other people. Any projection of energy, at etheric, emotional, or mental levels, should be carefully tempered by motive and permission.

Energy projections that occur unconsciously are unfortunate, and generally lack considerable strength for good or ill. But if reinforced by intention, even unconscious intention, then these projections can be quite harmful, both with regard to the intended victim and with regard to the creator. Artificial entities, demons, are created through the mind coupled with etheric, astral, or mental projection. Once created, these demons take on a life of their own, and if potent enough, can actually draw energy from various sources to sustain themselves. More likely, they are inflicted upon their intended victims and then are depleted. But the “sender” is nonetheless responsible for any created

demons, and the consequences of those demons, whether created and sent forth consciously or otherwise.

Dion Fortune dwells mostly on etheric projections, because they are the more obvious occult manifestations, and more likely to do immediate and physical damage. But astral and mental projections can be worse, but with more subtle consequences. In every case, one is both responsible and accountable for any and all such projections.

The properly trained occultist knows how to create artificial entities, and more importantly, how to destroy them. The proper occultist creates only those artificial entities or projections needed to serve an altruistic purpose, e.g., protection, monitors their activities, limits their independence, and disposes of them when the purpose is accomplished. Disposal is generally through recall and absorption. The danger comes through improper creation of artificial entities or projections, either through willful malicious intention, or through unconscious malicious intention. Thus in addition to proper training, ethics and conscience are extremely important in occult activity.

5 • Vampirism

There are many misconceptions regarding vampirism. Without all the myth, vampirism is simply the taking of energy from another person or lifeform. Vampirism can be very direct in the sense of deliberately taking energy from someone. It can be semi-direct in the sense of emotional abuse or bullying someone, and thereby taking energy. Or it can be indirect in the sense of unconsciously taking energy from someone. It can involve physical or non-physical people, physical or non-physical animals, and other, non-physical lifeforms. For the human being, the rule is simple. One should never take energy from another person or animal. Vampirism is a form of assault, which leaves the victim weakened and even more vulnerable. A healthy person has no need of energy from others. A healthy person simply does not take energy from others. And a healthy person is simply not vulnerable to others conscious or unconscious attempts at taking energy.

Technically, vampirism occurs on etheric levels, though it may be triggered on dense physical, astral (emotional), or mental levels. The etheric or vital body

naturally draws energy from the surrounding ether, from the vital body of the planet. But when two people are in sympathetic relationship, there is a natural sharing of energy. Much of what is called "healing" is simply the sharing of vital energy on etheric levels, where a healthy person contributes the needed energy to the less-healthy person. This "giving" of energy is altruistic. But the "taking" of energy, i.e., without permission, is unconscionable. In this sense, vampirism is the opposite of healing.

In relationship, between human beings, between animals, between humans and animals, where there is mutual respect and consideration there is a natural and healthy sharing of energy. But where one party dominates, there is usually a concomitant taking of energy from the dominated party. Wherever there is a lack of balance between two people, there is potential for taking energy. The trained occultist simply does not take energy from other people. But many people are untrained, or lack sufficient ethics, and so take energy from other people wherever they can, consciously or otherwise.

Some speakers or performers take energy from their audience, leaving those who are vulnerable devitalized to some extent, which is a form of vampirism. Healthy speakers or performers share energy with their audience, leaving them more vitalized. Healthy people do not draw energy from others because they naturally draw energy from the planetary ether. So healthy people can share energy without themselves becoming depleted. Indeed, the role of the spiritual student or properly trained occultist includes the natural sharing of energy, to and for whomever is in need. But the vampire or psychic parasite is one who takes energy not freely given. Much in the way of psychological illness can be traced to vampirism.

Dion Fortune makes a distinction between vampire and parasite, where the vampire takes energy consciously and the parasite does so unconsciously or involuntarily. But the process is quite similar, and the consequences are equally unfortunate. Moreover, protection is also similar. The only real differences between vampirism and parasitism are intention and extent of responsibility. But whether energy is taken consciously or unconsciously, the taker is still fully responsible and fully accountable. The intensity of vampirism is usually but not always more than that of parasitism.

“... true vampirism cannot take place unless there is power to project the etheric double.” In this sense, the vampire has the ability to project the etheric body onto another person and draw energy from that other person’s etheric body. Cannibalism on dense physical or etheric levels is simply an extreme form of vampirism, but is quite rare. More common vampirism occurs through close sympathetic (but dominating) relationship. Less common is a form of vampirism whereby astral entities take energy from human victims. But even this cannot occur unless a person is open or vulnerable.

When a person is injured or suffering illness, including emotional and mental distress, then that person is naturally more open to the astral plane and the entities that live there. But even so, a good-natured person is much less vulnerable than a more poorly-natured person, because the quality or nature of a person’s aura or consciousness attracts similar energies and entities. There are also often karmic factors in vampirism, in the sense that those who have “taken” energy from others will eventually suffer even more so.

Even so, the properly trained occultist is often called upon to protect others and sometimes called upon to dispose of artificial entities preying upon others. Protection is simply a matter of sharing qualified energy and sealing the victim’s aura, then providing a protective shield around the person’s aura. This can be quite effective, but unless the victim learns whatever the implied lessons may be, unless the victim learns to protect himself or herself, through establishing his own healthy aura and healthy consciousness, then the protection afforded will not naturally endure.

Disposition is a much more serious undertaking than protection. It is inherently difficult to dispose of an artificial entity, especially one that was created with considerable intent and intensity. Even so, the properly trained occultist can isolate the entity, cutting it off from its source, then dissolve or absorb the entity within his own aura. Of course this only works well if one knows how to do this properly and if one has considerable strength and purity. Otherwise, the entity may gain the upper hand. Thus disposition should be undertaken only by the fully qualified. And of course, even where an entity is properly disposed, the disposition does not remove the cause, nor balance the karma of the victim, nor change the responsibility or accountability of the creator.

Dion Fortune describes the battlefield form of vampirism, which is not uncommon, whereby soldiers who are killed, who have some occult training but who are not "qualified" are able to prolong their time on the etheric and astral planes through vampirism. This is of course a very unnatural state of affairs, but a battlefield is a place where all manner of unnatural processes are common. But an ethically healthy person who dies does not prey on others. And an ethically healthy person is generally not vulnerable to being preyed upon by others.

6 • Hauntings

One class of hauntings generally refers to the activities of disembodied human beings, but can involve embodied humans and non-human entities as well. Most hauntings relate to people who have died, who do not understand that they are dead, who are earth-bound for a while and trying to interact with those whom they have left behind. Another class of hauntings has to do with the energy or atmosphere or conditions of a particular place, which is a consequence of some psychic activity. And a third class involve ritual or ceremonial hauntings. In any case, the influence would need to be fairly strong in order for most people, who are relatively insensitive, to be troubled.

Most hauntings by non-incarnated people are a matter of influence or interference rather than "attack" ... Dion Fortune wrongly (but commonly) uses the expression "soul" to refer to a person, whoever is causing trouble, when in fact the soul is on a higher plane altogether and not directly responsible for the actions of its reflection on lower levels. It is the disembodied "personality" that is directly involved, not the soul. Souls are never on a level where they can suffer distress. But disembodied "people" often suffer distress on astral levels and much of the so-called hauntings are the result of this distress. For the ignorant dead, it is natural to cling to the living. Indeed, often they are unconsciously encouraged to do so by the living, who cling to the dead. In any event, most hauntings are not malicious. But disembodied humans who have some occult knowledge or training can be quite tenacious and difficult to send on. This is especially true for people who had problems with alcohol or other recreational drugs, who are stuck on etheric and astral levels, unable to move on, and unable to satisfy their urges.

Proper occult practice encourages and affords the dead to pass gently through purgatory and on to higher levels. Attempts to contact the dead or otherwise hold them back are simply counter-productive. Treatment for most hauntings is simply a matter of enabling the earth-bound to realize their dilemma and free themselves.

In the case of atmospheric haunting, the treatment is demagnetization, although it is also helpful simply to avoid such places. A place that is haunted is so by virtue of relatively extreme energy projection, e.g., violent emotions that have magnetized the physical surroundings with psychic energy. This is simply an extension of the phenomena of thought-forms and auras. What a person does, says, feels, and thinks has an effect on the environment or atmosphere of a place. If this behavior is reinforced over time then the effects will linger more or less indefinitely, until finally dissipated or at least until remediated.

But people who are relatively sensitive, and vulnerable, who enter such magnetized (haunted) places will be effected through sympathy or commonality of energy quality. People who are sensitive but not vulnerable will be aware of the atmosphere but not disturbed. People who are connected in some way to the source of the haunting will more likely be particularly affected.

In any event, some places are inherently depressing, and take energy from anyone there who is at all vulnerable (as most people are). Some places have such violent energy that anyone who is there is encouraged by that energy. For example, prisons tend to be dark places in terms of energy and atmosphere, where almost everyone who lives or works there is affected in some way. Graveyards also tend to be inherently (by virtue of energy qualification) depressing places. And of course these conditions are likely to be exacerbated if there are disembodied entities there as well.

Ancient places are more likely to be haunted than modern buildings unless built on ancient places, because ancient places are more likely to have suffered (or benefited) from ceremonial magic or ritualistic haunting, e.g., in the case of religious communities. "The group-mind of a religious community is a very potent thing, and when it is disturbed by the corporate emotion of its members, the forces let loose are not readily dispersed." The rituals of a church can be very potent indeed, with long-lived psychic residue. Similarly, religious

artifacts can be quite potent magnetically and psychically. Ultimately, it is psychic forces that haunt a place, and psychic forces that need to be dissolved or remediated in order for a place to be clear.

7 • The Pathology of Nonhuman Contacts

“There are other forms of life as well as ours whose sphere of evolution impinges upon the earth.” These include all manner of animals and plant-life as well as non-physical (astral) entities comparable to human and animal, such as the various devas, and various elemental lives (in addition to artificial entities). There are in some cases even non-human entities inhabiting human bodies, and human beings inhabiting non-human bodies, but these are unnatural circumstances, arising usually either from dispossession, as someone is forced out of his own body, or appropriation of a discarded form, upon the death of its previous inhabitant.

One should make a distinction between inhuman and nonhuman. A nonhuman entity inhabiting a human form will manifest itself very, very differently than a human being, while someone who merely appears to be inhuman is still human on some level. Thus a man without conscience is still human, while a nonhuman entity living in a human body cannot appear human in any way other than in form. But most contacts with nonhuman entities involve those nonhuman entities in their own, nonhuman forms.

Dion Fortune unfortunately confuses these two, inhuman and nonhuman. She mistakenly attributes inhuman human beings to be nonhuman, citing the circumstances of birth, such as crude coupling or coupling under the influence of alcohol or other drugs, as means for these entities to incarnate in human form. Those circumstances do occur, which attract very crude, but human, entities to birth in human form. Thus children of very crude circumstances may very well be inhuman in the sense of being inherently non-moral and without conscience, but while these are very unfortunate, they are still human beings and are able to function as more or less as human beings. They may very well be strange, and not fall within human behavioral norms or have “normal” human capacities, but they are not genuinely alien. These “inhuman” human beings tend to be closely connected to elemental forces, and so tend to be coarse, destructive, and extremely separative.

The dangers of involvement with inhuman beings are real, but not as dangerous as involvement with nonhuman entities. But in either case, the main danger is that the more normal human being will be corrupted by association with elemental forces. The properly trained and qualified occultist knows better than to experiment with elemental forces or engage nonhuman contacts, except in some cases where there is meaningful collaboration with devas. What Dion Fortune says about elementals is true enough, but she misunderstands the deva kingdom, mostly in failing to recognize the distinctions between devas and elementals. Engagement of elemental lives is inherently dangerous and unnatural. Engagement of deva lives is not inherently dangerous, because the devas are simply not generally receptive to human contact and so it takes considerable skill and training for the human being to be able to work with them. The real danger comes from entanglement in elemental forces, which tend to draw human beings into darkness. Indeed, this is generally how people become black magicians.

8 • The Risks Incidental to Ceremonial Magic

Dion Fortune describes “the nature of the forces of intelligent and organized evil.” To her this is based on theory and doctrine rather than realization, but to the properly trained and qualified occultist there is no theory, there is only what is understood to be true, based on training and experience and realization.

There are two kinds of evil, called negative evil and positive evil. Negative evil is in part simply the inertia inherent in matter, which naturally resists evolutionary pressure (good). It is also a matter of divine evolutionary qualification in the sense that “evil” destroys forms that are no longer needed, releasing the constrained energy back to the reservoir from which it comes. Thus everything that is created for evolution serves its purpose and is then dissolved. Thus there is balance and conservation of energy. In this sense “evil” is quite natural, and indeed necessary. One aspect of negative evil is ignorance, the absence of understanding, which gives rise to all manner of experience and consequences, leading in turn to evolution in consciousness. But ignorance is one thing. Dabbling in the forces of evil is another thing altogether. And it is this dabbling that can lead to the path of self-destruction.

The properly trained and qualified occultist is naturally and relatively altruistic and works with evolutionary forces in the sense of doing whatever he or she is called upon to do to encourage or facilitate growth in consciousness. Those who are selfish tend to attract forces of darkness, and if they align themselves with those forces in any way, they become entangled. Thus the real dangers in "magic" or occult practice have to do with motive. If one is relatively selfless, and considerate toward others, then there are no real dangers. But if one is selfish, and inconsiderate toward others, then there are very real dangers.

Dion Fortune describes positive evil in the framework of the Qabalah, but in fact what she describes is a combination of negative and positive evil. The negative evil is naturally resistive and destructive and serves to balance and stabilize the thrust of evolutionary force. Positive evil is simply negative evil manipulated by self-serving intelligence, which is inherently and ultimately self-destructive. Demons are created and sustained through selfish and self-serving activity. This "evil" arises from darkness and is attracted to anyone who is of similar quality. Thus one key is simply not to get entangled in questionable practices, while the real key is quality of consciousness.

Black magicians prey upon anyone they can. The workings of black magic draw upon the elemental forces of matter, and tempt people who are susceptible by virtue of coarseness, selfishness, and worldliness, all of which resonates more with elemental force than with evolution.

The properly trained and qualified occultist never gets involved with black magic. The properly trained and qualified occultist works with evolutionary forces, all the while taking into consideration the negative evil inherent in matter, without being corrupted by it. Thus ceremonial magic can be used for good or ill. Magic that carefully evokes evolutionary forces is good. Magic that evokes elemental forces or the forces of darkness, either deliberately or carelessly, is inherently evil (destructive). Unfortunately, much in the way of ceremonial magic is in the realm of ignorance rather than wisdom. And the only real protection is quality of consciousness.

With quality of consciousness there is no ignorant or careless dabbling in magic. With quality of consciousness there is no attraction of demons. With quality of consciousness there is no real susceptibility or vulnerability to the forces of

darkness. Yet so many, who lack quality of consciousness, do dabble in ceremonial magic or other inherently selfish occult practices, and get into trouble. Much of what is deemed insanity in the world arises from previous careless and ignorant encounters with the dark forces. The properly trained and qualified occultist always takes precautions, never evokes forces beyond his or her understanding and training and capabilities.

