

Beltane to Midsummer - the season of love

by Judy Harrow

Beltane is one of our most sacred festivals. Beltane is lusty, bawdy, even vulgar. Joyous, raunchy Beltane, while the life energy is still rising, and nearing its peak, is the happiest day of our ritual year. Beltane is for lovers. Go on, get sweaty with your sweetie. It's not just permissible, it's an act of worship to the most high Gods.

Is this about sex? You betcha! Is this about procreative sex, the sacred union of male and female to bring forth new life? Sure is! Is this only about procreative sex? Hell, no! All acts of love and pleasure are Her rituals. Procreative heterosex is just one kind of sex. Sex itself is just one happy possibility. Another equally-blessed way to celebrate Spring is to take your favorite niece to ride a carousel.

During happy, flowery May and June, play with your best friends. Too often, in our lives, we give our closest attention to the problem areas. As much as you can, give that a rest. There are other seasons for the heavy confrontations, the working through of old issues, the processing of the process. For now, just take some time to enjoy -- and reinforce -- all those loves and friendships that are working (and possibly dust off a few that have been neglected while you greased various squeaky wheels.)

The spring winds may also move you to offer random acts of kindness and senseless beauty to total strangers. That's fine, follow your bliss. Here are some ways to enjoy love and pleasure during the extravagant late Spring:

- Let love and pleasure overflow from deep within yourself. Spend an evening in long, slow masturbation. Clean and adorn your bedroom as though you were expecting your favorite lover. You may even want to buy new bed-linens. Take a long, slow, scented bath. Anoint yourself with your favorite essential oil or perfume. (**Caution:** always test first for allergies. Many essential oils are corrosive or toxic if applied without dilution in a carrier oil. Try 1:3 in olive oil or canola.) Do exactly what you like, and also experiment to discover more things you like. Do not rush. Try to do this once a week during the season of love.
- Have you noticed that Mother's Day and Father's Day both fall within this season? By all means, celebrate your birth parents and grandparents and enjoy what your children do for you. Many of us also have elders and mentors who are not blood kin, in and out of the Craft. Acknowledge them as well.
- Send a surprise gift to someone you love or respect. They will find it so much more remarkable now, far away from Yule's frenzy.
- Try a trust walk. In this, one person is blindfolded, and then guided by one or more other people. They keep the blindfolded person safe, but that's just the start of what they do. They also guide the person to delightful experiences that do not require sight. This works well as a coven activity, but it's equally intense if done among lovers in their own special place.

- Have sex with your lover(s). Lots of it. Try a new position. Do it on a different piece of furniture. Go to a sex toy store together and giggle a lot. Or go separately and surprise each other with what you bring home. Have sex again. Slower. More. Lovingly bathe and massage each other. Make foreplay an art form. Make love.

Please make your sex both joyful and safe for all parties. Consensus, consideration and respect should never be passed over in the throes of passion.

- Take a child to the zoo, or the circus, or just go fly a kite! It's important for parents, who work so hard to support and teach their children, to also enjoy those kids. Go out and play! This may be even more important for those of us who are not parents. We don't see our nephews, nieces, godkids every day. We need some exposure to the wonder and innocence of childhood.
- Sometime, when you're home before your spouse or lover, greet them with flowers, candles, wine and yourself in a very sexy outfit.
- Is there a friend you've been missing? Perhaps you moved, changed jobs, changed covens? Now you have to make a conscious effort to see each other and, well, you know how busy and stressed most of us are. Pick up the phone. Schedule a get-together if you can. At least, send a note or a card. Let him or her know how you feel.
- In a trusting group, try a "tribal love feast." These are the rules: everyone bring finger food to share (be liberal, chocolate pudding is finger food). Set out the food picnic-style on a cloth on the floor. Recline on cushions. Nobody may put food into their own mouth. Nobody may put food into the same mouth twice. No talking. (The group decides in advance whether this may or may not develop into group sex. It doesn't have to.)
- Work through the Masters and Johnson sensate focus exercises with your lover(s). If you don't know what these are, find out.
- Go to a really good, substantial movie or play with a friend, or a small group. Or agree to read the same substantial book. Afterwards, talk about it. Rediscover your pleasure in the exchange of ideas, the working of another mind.
- Spend some time with close friends and lovers without speaking. Perhaps go for a walk in a beautiful place, stopping frequently to point out lovely sights, textures or sounds. Or listen (and stretch, move and dance) to music without lyrics. Or cook a meal together in silence, feeling into the tastes, smells and textures of the food (choose the menu and shop in advance). Experiment with doing this with one other person at a time, or with your coven or other small and trusted group.

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