

## Choosing a Name

Look before you leap, in order to have a better chance of not leaping off of a cliff. Let us look at the obvious pitfalls.

In general terms, do not choose a name if.....

1. The name is so common that there will be much confusion. You are in a crowd and someone yells "Hey Diana." Half the crowd turns and stares.
2. The name is unpronounceable by anyone, unless you tell them how to say it, and even then they seldom get it right.
3. The name is the same one as some recent person who fouled it beyond belief. In which case making it a double name (like Billy-Bob) could be a better choice. If not, talk with your leaders to see if it is possible that you, as a new person, can blast through the negativity of someone who has had it long enough for it to stink? (When that name is mentioned, does everyone immediately ask "isn't that the person that did XXX?" If so, if you choose that name, you will have a long uphill crawl before you.)
4. Do the positive aspects offset and/or balance the negative ones? Names (and deities) have both positive and negative aspects.
5. The name is not acceptable to the pantheon under which you are training (for example, Norse gods are distinctly not multi-cultural).

Names are interesting. They should show off the positive aspects of the holder. Names are generally chosen so that you may work towards the ideals of the diety, whose name you will bear the mantle. Seldom are names chosen for a negative reason ( I personally have never heard of one).

Some groups require you to write a name paper. This is a good thing, even if your group does not require it. In researching and writing the paper, you will uncover additional knowledge about the diety to which you are going to be aligned. This is good. If you choose a lesser known diety, then certainly everyone will be curious. If you don't know much about the diety, and someone asks you about the aspects; you will look very... how to say this politely.... Stupid.

Also, print it out and show it to your leaders. They can fill in some places where your search was weak, but more importantly, they can place a second pair of eyes on the paper and see if there are obvious problems.

Show the print out to a close friend. Likely they will only have limited knowledge of the diety, and will ask the simple questions that you should have already discovered AND answered yourself. But if you did not, then this is an excellent time to find the answers.

For example, let's say that you want to be named for a powerful god. You select the name Offler. Offler is the crocodile diety from Discworld. First of all, this is a fictitious place and god. What would

you learn from this coupling; of your future and the pretend aspects Diskworld. What perceived knowledge may you learn from this diety? A crocodile certainly is powerful, but is avoided at all costs. You could become powerful, but not have anyone who is willing to work with you. You get the idea.

So, the bottom line (rough generalizations) is that you should choose a name that you are comfortable with, that your leadership approves as a good choice for your future, that your deities are comfortable with, that everyone else can pronounce, and reflects aspects you wish to dwell upon and use to improve your life.

Some groups allow persons to change names as they go up in rank. Other groups do not normally change names. As well, your public name will be the one that everyone calls you in the greater community. So, if you pick a name, you may be stuck with it for a long time. Choose carefully.

Oh, one last item. Names are power. Names have power. You will have "secret" names and public names. Do not tell anyone your name unless you are willing to allow them to use it. More about this, you will learn from your leaders.