

business offices. With some people you can take the gradual approach—this helps you to see if she or he wears the pentacle on a regular basis, as this can help you determine whether that person does wear it for a specific reason. This can also help him or her to get more familiar with you, so that they feel no shock if you lean over the counter and say, “Hey, I noticed that lovely pentacle. Are you Pagan?” Some people do suffer shyness about inquiring into religious belief; I’ve had coworkers and friends “suspect” my religious beliefs, but they have been afraid to ask me for up to a year after our initial acquaintance. The person on the receiving end of the question might have a shy streak as well. In my early, overeager days, I actually marched up to a woman working in a coffeeshop and asked her point-blank whether she practiced Wicca. She told me a few years later that I scared her half to death when I asked her that; she feared I intended to proselytize to her.

Some Caveats

I used to think that Pagans used a code to greet each other. A few years in the community taught me otherwise. While Pagans, particularly Wiccans, do have a certain ritual lingo, they do not necessarily carry the jargon outside the circle. This lesson came home to me during a wait for a doctor’s appointment. I noticed a couple in the waiting room who both wore lovely pentacles. I looked at them and said, I thought appropriately, “Merry meet.” Both looked at me and said nothing. So I tried again. “Merry meet!” They continued to stare. I finally tried a new tack: “I really like your pentacles, it’s a shame I wore my goddess today instead. Do you happen to be Pagan?”

This they responded to with an, “Uh, yeah, we’re interested in that stuff. We’re exploring.” As beginners, however, they did not know what I thought was commonly accepted speech.

Some Pagans perceive certain phrases differently than others; while many people consider “Merry meet” and “Blessed be” phrases of greeting and departure, others consider these phrases