

APPRENTICES

(Version 1.2 - DRAFT) Master Rhys Terafan Greydragon

Introduction: What is an apprentice and how do you become one? Many people have wondered about this. After Sir Wiglaf produced his "Thoughts on Qualifications of the Peerage", a friend of mine began preparing to take her first apprentice and was thinking in greater detail about apprentices and everything that it means. She wanted a document that codified thoughts on apprentices (similar to what Wiglaf's does for peerage qualifications) and so (in her amazing ability to give me projects) I started this. This document (modeled along the lines of Wiglaf's) is intended to attempt to answer questions like how to go about apprenticing, how laurels view it (and eventually, the equivalent for chivalry and pelicans), expectations one has of their peer/associate, agreements, evaluations, and getting out of a bad situation. This is a compilation of my own thoughts, even as they have been influenced and affected by others, and thoughts of others as they have provided them for me. Nothing in here is official, and should not be taken as such.

Caveat: This document is intended to apply to both genders, both in terms of apprentices and laurels. The use of either gender is strictly for the convenience of the author, with the understanding that the reader is intelligent enough to realize the intent.

What exactly is an apprentice? In a nutshell, an apprentice is a student who is in a relationship with a Master or Mistress of the Laurel. A master (or mistress) is one who has been recognized (by a kingdom) as meeting an "international" standard of excellence in knowledge and performance of technique in a particular art or science. An apprenticeship can take many forms and has different aspects to it. Two important aspects are whether or not the relationship is based in fealty, and whether or not the master is a master of the same art or science that the student is interested in.

Let's start with the fealty issue. In my experience, apprenticeships are predominantly a fealty based relationship. Not that it has to be, but my experience is with apprenticeship that is based on fealty. In my opinion, it is important to have that fealty relationship, because then there is a formalized (oath of) commitment, both on the part of the laurel and on the part of the student. Fealty becomes very personal and for some people, very intense. In this way, the apprentice knows that they can depend on their laurel and that they have a personal relationship, meaning that they can contact the laurel any time, and will probably even have priority in the various demands on a laurel's time. Laurels, as peers, are bound and committed to teach any one, but they usually feel the personal relationship with their apprentices is special and so they give it priority and extra care. Not all laurels require fealty from their apprentices. A friend of mine, Mistress Siobhan O'Neill (from the Midrealm), is one who does not require fealty from her apprentices. However, she does not believe that her relationship with her apprentices is any less committed. Her apprentices are active ones that are committed, and that in turn makes her committed to them.

Fealty is important to me, and because that is my frame of reference (my experience), I feel awkward without it. To me, having that fealty relationship goes deeper than just a relationship for teaching an art or science. There are students and there are apprentices. In my eyes, the relationships are not the same. Both get all the technical knowledge I can share. Both have

maximum opportunity to learn everything they can, and both can even delve into other aspects of being a peer. However, (to me) the apprentice relationship involves a deeper personal relationship (and commitment) and covers all the other aspects of being a peer. The opportunity for frank and honest discussion about peerage, its qualities, requirements, and meanings, is important. Equally important is my willingness to “push” or encourage my apprentices. Because they are my apprentices, I feel that they have made the commitment to learn and improve, and I have no qualms about encouraging them. Everyone needs a push now and then, and I try to provide that for my apprentices. That "comfort with pushing" extends my teaching and guidance into areas other than the specific art without prompting from my apprentices. The relationship we have includes my guiding them towards peerage in any field. My students, on the other hand, want to learn a particular art or craft at their own leisure and I feel less comfortable about pushing them. So, for me, a student relationship is "strictly art", which doesn't mean that other topics won't be touched and taught if they come up, but I'm not (as) concerned about their advancement in other areas. This "ability to push" is the most major difference for me between my apprentices and my students. My apprentices have made the commitment and my students have not (or they are in fealty to someone else).

What is the purpose of being an apprentice? In my opinion, the purpose of being an apprentice is to receive the guidance, mentorship, teaching, encouragement, and honest feedback on the path to becoming a laurel in your own right. For some people, the sole purpose is to have a personal relationship with someone they think is “cool” or someone whose household they want to be in, but they really have no burning desire to master a particular art or science. This purpose (to be in a cool household) is not necessarily bad, but needs to be understood up front because (in my opinion) it is NOT the right thing for an apprentice. In my opinion, there are other appropriate relationships for being in a household, and possibly even being in fealty, without being an apprentice.

What are the duties of the apprentice? This depends on the people involved. There are no real guidelines or rules in this regard. Each teacher-apprentice pair defines the duties on their own. In most cases, however there are three things that are important. Most laurels expect their apprentices to

- a) Have an honest desire to learn, not only a particular craft, but the various peerage attributes, qualities, and attitudes. To ultimately move on from apprenticeship and earn the accolade of a peer, you must know a little about a lot of things, a lot about four or five things, and (as Mistress Siobhan put it) "have one passion that burns in the soul." Learning is the number one duty of an apprentice.
- b) Motivate the laurel to do things and work on projects by providing eagerness and energy, time together and phone calls.
- c) Honestly desire a peerage (eventually), and be willing to work toward it by teaching their chosen craft, sharing their knowledge with others for the enrichment of the kingdom, and applying things learned to their own skills, attitudes, and philosophies.

I think the primary duty for an apprentice is to work and learn. Sometimes this learning process follows a very specific plan, with "assignments" being given to the apprentice by the laurel. This plan is usually designed to start very basic, and gradually work towards the more difficult and complex, with the goal of truly teaching how to master a particular craft. Sometimes students

prefer to wander through whatever particular crafts or aspects of a single craft interest them. In both cases, projects and activities will be demonstrated and discussed with the laurel, with specific comment, feedback, and suggestions for improvement being provided. Both methods work well and it is really up to the laurel and the apprentice on which one to use, or which to use at this particular moment or for this particular craft. Regardless of the method, in the beginning, the student may often be expected to go back and "do it again" because it can be done better, and there are specific things that should be done. As the apprentice gains experience and skill, the number of times they have to "do it again" will become less and less frequent.

Master Wiglaf has another important duty for his apprentices. After he runs into some blithering geek, he grabs his apprentice and vents (at him or her). Things along the lines of "I'm going to set that guy on fire!" Wiglaf then expects his apprentices to smile and nod. "Yes master. He deserves it, master."

What is the “position” of an apprentice? Apprentice is NOT a title. It is a job description. I would personally crush the head of any of my apprentices who walked around claiming they were “Apprentice So-and-So”. To me, apprentice means that you are in a fealty-based relationship pledged to the pursuit of knowledge and excellence (of execution) in a particular art or science, while learning and practicing all the aspects and virtues of the chivalric “ideal” of a peer.

What does the apprentice bring to the relationship? He brings enthusiasm and unbridled passion. He provides motivation and energy. He is the one who calls the laurel and says “Hey, let’s get together on Thursday night and brew!” or “I’m coming over on Sunday afternoon to show you how the chip-carving is going on my oak chest!” Depending on the relationship he can even provide new information or a new way of looking at things. Laurels don’t have the monopoly on knowledge and many times can learn things from their apprentices. This is a good thing, and can certainly be a challenge and motivation for the apprentice to find the “one thing that their laurel didn’t know”. What a great opportunity for both to grow.

What does he gain? He gains a friend and confidante, as well as consistent instruction and patronage. He gains an honest critic, guide, mentor, teacher, and source of encouragement. He gains a safe harbor in which to learn and make mistakes, and an open ground on which to experiment. He may also get somebody who pushes him to (new levels) of activity, because sometimes the laurel is the more energetic person of the pair.

Consistent instruction is an element because you can (and should) get instruction from multiple sources, meaning that pretty much, any peer can and should teach you. But the "consistency" means that your weaknesses are identified and you get a coherent structured program to deal with them.

As previously discussed, patronage is an element that often only occasionally appears in a relationship. Generally, the apprentice screws up, but the patron intervenes and creates a solution where the screw-up becomes a learning experience. The patron also acts to head off the worst of the apprentice's screw-ups.

What does the laurel bring to the relationship? The laurel brings confidence, knowledge, wisdom, understanding, critique, and sometimes prodding. He provides that safe environment and honest evaluation. He provides the frank discussion about peerage as well as the hard correction for things that need improvement. He provides a shield and shelter and allows a mistake to become a learning point.

What does the laurel gain from the relationship? Laurels gain the opportunity to share their expertise, knowledge and wisdom. They have the chance to guide someone in their growth, hopefully to the peerage, and the satisfaction and pride that comes with seeing their apprentice's success. Laurels gain the chance to give unto others and make the Society a better place as a result of it. Laurels also gain the motivation to strive to be a good example, because now someone is looking to them for that example.

How do you become an apprentice? The simple answer is that it begins by you expressing your desire to the appropriate laurel or the laurel approaches you because they think you have expressed an interest in or a desire to learn a certain craft. The complete answer is little more lengthy, and just because you express your desire doesn't mean you will automatically become an apprentice. There should be some (actually LOTS) of discussion about and exploration of all the aspects of the relationship, the expectations (on both sides), the teaching style, and the desired end goal. Some people wind up apprenticed to a laurel that they really don't get along with and who has different core values, and this can be a major problem. Some laurels have very high expectations on the amount of time they expect their apprentices to spend either on their projects, or hanging out doing SCA stuff at the laurel's house, or at events. If this is different than what the apprentice has in mind, then again the end result is a conflict. Terminating a relationship in this type of situation is never very fun and normally hurts both sides. I have a separate section that tries to address how to gracefully terminate a relationship.

Some laurels start out with "students" that later become apprentices. Mistress Siobhan is one who uses that classification for those who have expressed a desire to have an association with her. If she knows the person well already, she may skip the "student" stage and go directly to apprenticing. If she doesn't really know them, she uses the student classification during a trial period. That period lasts for about a year or so. During that time, they interact in a similar fashion to how she interacts with apprentices. Sometimes she nudges and inquires "What are you doing lately?" The trial period gives them time to get to know each other, sample each other's style of communication and conduct, and in general see how well they work together. If Siobhan feels she can be of benefit to the student, and the student is receptive to learning from her, that's an excellent sign. If the student turns out to be a jerk (or worse), either of them can end the association with no hard feelings, no residual problems, and they go onward. If they get along, if everything else seems to be working to mutual benefit and enjoyment, they can make things official. I like this classification, because it also fits with my classification of a student as someone who has not made a fealty commitment to me. Perhaps they are in fealty to someone else, we haven't reached that point yet, or they don't want that commitment, and they merely want to learn what I can teach with no strings attached.

What about being an apprentice to a laurel who does a different art than the one you are interested in? This is OK. While in the ideal world, it is very nice to have a laurel who does the

same art as you do, that doesn't mean it is mandatory or necessary. Very often, there simply are not enough brewing laurels to go around for everyone who wants to be a brewer, nor are there enough woodworking laurels, enameling laurels, or embroidery laurels, etc. Can you learn woodworking from a calligraphy laurel? The answer lies in the motivation of the apprentice. While the calligraphy laurel may not be able to explain that a different type of joinery would be used on that 14th century chest, they can certainly guide you in research and study of period joinery techniques, finishing practices, and assembly methods, and then evaluate your application of those in the current project. They can help you understand how to go about creating a project, from where to start and what resources you should consider, to the end result and the documentation of what you learned during the project (and its research). They can also help you when it comes to mentorship, guidance, and patronage. Are they right person to mentor you on other peerlike qualities? Can they provide guidance to improving your abilities and the direction you are headed with your research and your execution of period techniques and methods? The patronage you receive from a laurel comes in the unique form of a) all the glory and praise (for things done well) are a direct reflection on the apprentice and b) all the bad things and screw ups are a direct reflection on the laurel (and their failure to provide adequate guidance and assistance). Hopefully a laurel can run interference and can turn major mistakes or screw ups into opportunities for learning and growth.

What about long-distance apprenticeship? Are there certain things that make it work or fail? First we need to define a “long-distance apprenticeship”. Not everyone has the same definition, but most can agree on some basics. Certainly an apprentice in a distant kingdom, or even in a distant part of your own kingdom (another state, another country, more than 8 hours drive) is what most would call “long distance”. My personal definition is if I can't drive there on a Friday night (4-6 hours of so), spend the weekend, and drive back on Sunday, then it is long distance. If I am seeing my apprentice a couple of times a month at events, it is probably NOT long distance. If however, it is only a few times a year, then it is probably long distance.

Can it work?? Yes ... IF the laurel and apprentice can stay in touch even though they only get to see each other a few times a year. Some people can handle the long distances and very little personal contact with no problem, while others just cannot, and that is a very important thing to find out BEFORE you enter into this relationship. If either party needs the physical presence of the other on a regular basis, long distance is not going to work. Plus, at least one of the two has to be active enough (as in energetic/pushy/etc...) to maintain regular communication, be it phone, email, or old-fashioned postal mail. The current ability to have daily contact with e-mail and sent digital pictures (or put them on the web) makes long distance relationships much easier for those apprentices who are self-motivated. In my opinion, the single biggest thing that makes them fail is the lack of regular communication, comment, and feedback. Sometimes this is a lack of encouragement and prodding on the part of the laurel.

Are there things that laurels and potential apprentices should talk about before making the relationship formal or official? I believe that are several key items the two individuals should discuss prior to making the relationship official. Most of them are the same basic questions I have tried to address here, but they include:

- What expectations does the potential apprentice have for an apprentice relationship?

- How much time does the apprentice hope to spend with the laurel, both events and non-events?
- How often does the apprentice hope to see the laurel at events? How many events a year?
- What does the apprentice want to get out of the relationship?
- What does the apprentice think the laurel will contribute?
- What will the apprentice think he/she will contribute?
- What are the potential apprentices hopes, goals, and objectives?
- Why does the apprentice think that this laurel is the best laurel to apprentice to?
- What teaching style does the potential apprentice prefer? Specifically assigned projects or meandering through the craft and merely coming back from time to time for comments on the latest project? Is this preference OK with the laurel?

What about the "apprenticing" ceremony? A ceremony is an item that differs from kingdom to kingdom, and even from peer to peer within a given kingdom. Some people like to take apprentices in court. I am not a big fan of taking apprentices in the middle of court. I don't think it is court business, and there is no requirement for the Crowns to be there. Becoming an apprentice is not an award, nor is it a title and so it doesn't belong in court. If there is some other particular reason to do it in court...then I don't have a real problem with it, but I prefer it to be the exception rather than the rule. An example might be if the person just won the Kingdom A&S competition or was awarded a the kingdom A&S award and it will significantly add to the apprentice's glory to do it in Court, then fine.

Some people expect oaths and ceremonies, some don't. I myself would prefer oaths, because the relationship acts as a "training fealty." The student lives in a fealty relationship and then when he or she becomes a peer the oath to the crown is something that is understood and can be dealt with in many different situations. There is usually ceremony at the beginning (the apprenticing), but it may be rare after that. Many people like a very low key, informal, personal relationship. Some laurels, like Master Wiglaf, like to give their apprentices presents from time to time, since this is a form of ceremony and is very period for him.

My own personal feeling (and desire) is that the apprenticing ceremony should last about 10 or 15 minutes, and I think that is too much time to take in court. If you do it shorter out of court, then it may lose some of the impact and meaning for the person entering the apprenticeship.

My own personal thoughts on specifics for a ceremony...

- 1) Appropriate medieval location, i.e. a pavilion with candles, tapestries, etc or some nice secluded grove in the woods or other similarly appropriate setting
- 2) Some discussion by the laurel about being a laurel/peer, including not being perfect, not knowing everything, and continuing to study, learn, and grow.
- 3) Some discussion by the laurel about being an apprentice and the requirements of apprenticeship including diligent work, study and research; attempts to be medieval whenever possible; honest and frank discussion that may involve pointing out weakness or shortcomings in the laurel as well as shortcomings or weaknesses in the apprentice; aspects and meaning of fealty relationship
- 4) Does the person agree to all this and intend to live up to this?

- 5) Does the person have any other ties to be released before entering into this?
- 6) Oaths of fealty
- 7) Presentation of belt and other symbols of the relationship; i.e. household garb, cloaks, hats, etc
- 8) Speech by laurel (to those watching) about all the credit/glory/praise going directly to the apprentice and all problems/issues/shortcomings being directed to laurel, because it is the laurel's failure to provide adequate instruction, guidance, and example.
- 9) Presentation of apprentice to remainder of household and to audience

I think that too many things in the above ceremony have to be removed if you want to do it in court. This would not have the same impact as a special ceremony out of court. By having an appropriate location, set up and ready, it emphasizes to the candidate how important and special this is. If you, the laurel, have taken time to set things up special, then it must be important. (Anybody can take a belt with them to court.) By taking time to discuss peerage aspects and then important apprentice aspects, it reinforces the expectations, responsibilities, and seriousness of becoming an apprentice. By not rushing things, and taking time to explain that all problems are the laurel's fault, it adds a very personal grandeur to the relationship and the ceremony.

Many people want to invite certain individuals. If you regard this as a legal contract, then you may want to have a certain number of witnesses. (Check period law for specific examples.) An important person in the ceremony, for me is my lady, as well as my apprentice's lady. My lady is an important part of the household, and apprentices need to understand their relationship to her as well. (they need to follow her wishes as well as mine). I certainly would not take an apprentice that my lady did not approve of. I would have all of my other apprentices present, for I am adding a brother to their family and they need to witness it. I would invite the Crown's, especially the Queen. She is supposed to foster the Arts and Sciences within the kingdom, and she may want to be a witness.

If my laurel and knight were present, that is great because I am expanding the family. I would also invite other friends and "family". Many of my friends and former teachers may also be helping me teach my apprentice. I would send my apprentice to Mistress Oriane to learn how to do detailed painting and calligraphy. Master Wiglaf can teach him much about peerage qualities and critical thinking. Master Dafydd can teach about creating medieval objects and good methods of maintaining a project diary and doing documentation. I normally wouldn't invite people from my local group or the general populace. One or two might show up, and I wouldn't throw them out, but I don't see any reason why they should be there. The apprentice-to-be might also invite some of his friends though, and this is fine. He can invite pretty much whoever he wants, within reason.

The oaths are pretty much a personal preference. I think it is appropriate to have the apprentice kneel at the laurel's feet, and offers up his folded hands. (Note that this gesture, that of prayer, belonged to fealty FIRST. People praying held their arms out, making a cross, throughout the first millennium. Our prayer-gesture comes from fealty-with our hands, we are offering service to God. --Thanks, Wiglaf for that info!) The laurel places his hands over the apprentice's and they say their oaths. I'd rather use hands for apprenticing, although if an apprentice wanted to use some other symbol (the end of my laurel belt, or a cross) I'd let him place him use it.

The apprentice stands and my lady girds the belt on my apprentice. Other symbols of household membership should use (and include) the apprentice's lady, as they are normally now both associated with the household. Some discussion about the meaning of all the activity of the apprentice and the apprentice is presented to the witnesses.

Some students/apprentices want a very formal arrangement, which includes a formal apprenticeship ceremony and contract, as well as set assignments, at least at first. They want the discipline one gets from a teacher. They like a formal belt ceremony and the giving of gifts to their laurel, because they feel it is an outward manifestation of the commitment they feel in their heart. That's cool, because receiving a belt and giving gifts ARE outward, visible signs (in front of witnesses), that the apprentice is putting his money where his mouth is, and has decided he is willing to go through the journey of self-discovery and self-improvement (regardless of whether or not that journey results in peerage).

What effect does the type of ceremony have on the relationship that will grow thereafter? I think it has a significant impact. A friend of mine, Master Wiglaf, doesn't think it has a huge effect. He does admit there is some impact. If you start off with a solemn, pleasant ceremony, both of you are reminded that this is at times serious. If you just have a big party and everyone gets really loaded, then what kind of standard have you set? I would see the relationship that develops from the oaths and the ceremony as the most important factor, not the ceremony itself.

Are there specific items that laurels and their apprentices should talk about after the relationship is formal or official? Beyond the obvious answer, that "Yes, laurels and their apprentices should talk about all aspects of being a peer, doing their art, virtues and vices, etc.", are the often forgotten or not-thought-about things. I think that perhaps the biggest item that often gets neglected (in all peer/student relationships) is finding out what are the student's hopes, desires, and expectations for their peerage ceremony. This conversation should probably not take place until the end of the first 12 months or so of the relationship. Having this conversation fairly early in the relationship (and continuing to re-visit the topic every year or so) does several things. First, it makes known whether or not the apprentice wants to be surprised whenever the decision is made to elevate them. Second, this information can be discovered long before the elevation is even considered and it eliminates the laurel circle trying to sneak around to find out if the candidate wants a vigil, who else should know so they can be there, etc. It can be a big tip-off if suddenly out of the blue, after 4 or 5 years, conversations about laurelling ceremonies suddenly spring up. Good pieces of information to know (and discuss) are:

- 1) Do they want to be surprised when called into court for the ceremony? Some kingdoms like to surprise the person when they are put on vigil, but then not do the actual elevation ceremony until some later event. This allows the candidate to invite out-of-town or out-of-kingdom friends and family, make special garb, etc. Other kingdoms like to sneak around making all the arrangements beforehand, and then surprise the person, put them on vigil and then elevate them at the same event. There are lots of different ways to do it, but some discussion about all the options will only improve the final outcome.
- 2) Does the student have particular thoughts/preferences about what they would like for their vigil? Some people prefer to be in a nice tent outside, some prefer a cozy room inside, some want an all-night vigil. Other options are being to led a vigil directly from

court versus being placed on vigil by the Crown on Friday evening with only a small ceremony with those available.

- 3) Are there certain items that will add special symbolism and meaning to either the vigil or the elevation? Some would like a place to pray, some want a pitcher of water to wash their face and hands, while others merely prefer that those coming to visit them on vigil have a drink and snack available to them. Some want a hard firm chair with little comfort, while others prefer a little more comfort.

Who should make corrections for things an apprentice does wrong? I like to make the corrections myself. While there are times that it is unrealistic to think that only I should address problems with my apprentices, it is important for me to always know about the issue/concern. Some friends believe that if one of their apprentices says something that gets around to other laurels who have a problem with it...they (the other laurels) should go ahead and tell the apprentice that they don't like what the apprentice said. BUT...they should also tell the laurel. Mistress Siobhan wants to be copied prominently on the email sent to any of her apprentices. She wants her apprentices to know (1) that she has spies everywhere and (2) what an apprentice says can and will be their responsibility to uphold and defend, or to retract and apologize for.

Very few laurels feel that anyone would be interfering in a peer/apprentice relationship if you tell an apprentice that they either "did a good job" or they "screwed up". Part of becoming a peer/better person is to be held accountable for your actions...good or bad. However most laurels absolutely want to know about things their apprentice "screwed up". I take the view that any problems/issues/shortcomings of my apprentices are the result of my failure to provide adequate instruction, guidance, and example. For me this is very important and so I get very maniacal about knowing.

Hopefully, apprentices will someday be peers in their own right and will have to defend themselves and their occasional unpopular stances against their peers. It does not necessarily have to wait until the time they are peers. I think it is a good thing to let them get used to being held responsible for their words and actions NOW, but I also want to know. How an apprentice handles reprimands from either me (their laurel) or from other peers is going to tell me a lot about the character of that apprentice. This personal accountability provides the opportunity to find out how they handle some "heat" if they say something that warrants a reprimand or correction or whatever.

But...as in any critical situation, if I can find something positive to say about the person too, it makes the correction much more constructive. Remember, it's the WORDS or the BEHAVIOR you may object to, not the person themselves.

Mistress Siobhan has extended what she laughingly refers to as "reciprocal beating rights" of her apprentices to several of her cousins (peers) whom she feels would be good role models and mentors for her apprentices. Those peers have the rights and responsibility to either praise or correct any of her apprentices who either do something noteworthy or manage to screw up publicly. Siobhan tries to choose those people who will help guide her apprentices in a positive and constructive fashion, who embody the peerlike virtues in a positive fashion, and try to live them within and without the SCA. The only thing she asks of them is to let her know if they

either praise or criticize her apprentices, so she is aware and can either enhance the praise, or help the apprentice understand why whatever they did ticked people off.

I feel that personal accountability is an excellent method of teaching apprentices what it means to be a peer. The reason is that when you are not a peer, you can generally make comments that are "anonymous", but once you become a peer...you're in a public light and everything you say and do is subject to scrutiny. It's part and parcel of peerage, and KNOWING that can often keep you from shooting off your mouth before you've engaged your higher mental functions first.

How do you (gracefully) get out of a “bad” relationship, or end one that is not working out? This is probably the most difficult to talk about because it usually depends on exactly why things are not working out. Often there are “failures” due to long distance (and subsequent lack of communication and interaction), failures because the laurel has become inactive or dropped out, and sometimes because the personalities (or core values) simply clash. The last is truly the most difficult. In all situations, simple objective honesty is the best start. If you can avoid casting “blame” or “fault” it can usually be done with no hurt feelings. It is important to be able to look someone in the eye (unless doing it on the phone) and say “*I appreciate all you have taught me and the time you have shared with me. However, due to XXX (distance, my personal learning style, my activity level, my values, etc.) I feel that we would be better simply being friends and ending our formal relationship.*” Words along these lines are not accusatory, nor are they blaming, but simply an objective statement. If the two can part with no hard feelings, they can both continue to grow and have fun in the society.

Conclusion. The only real advice I have for someone who wants to be an apprentice is to start asking questions. Any peer who becomes offended because you started asking questions is probably not worth talking to. Most peers, especially laurels, love to talk about their art. The society is about having fun and learning. Even laurels want to have fun, and sharing their fun (the joy they get from their art) can really make it that much more fun for them and those around them.

If you have specific comments about any part of this document, please let me know. Although I had been a laurel over 4 years when I wrote this, there are many other perspectives and points of view that are valuable. I may or may not know them, but may simply be focusing in another direction and not thinking about that particular item. Comments can always be sent to terafan@greydragon.org or just find me at some event and chat with me.

APPENDIX I: CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE

First, credit goes to Wiglaf Wilfriding, KSCA, OL, who was a major part of the genesis for this document, whose "peer document" I used heavily, who came up with the "international standard" definition, and some of the specific thoughts are his.

Oriane d'Avallon, OL, the person who gets me to volunteer to do more work than any other single person. Her encouragement, attention to detail, and willingness to point out my shortcomings, are invaluable.

Siobhan O'Neill, OL, provided an alternate viewpoint to apprenticeship being fealty based. She also helped me with much of the information on who should make corrections when an apprentice does something wrong, and her philosophy of "reciprocal beating rights."

APPENDIX II: DOCUMENT HISTORY

1.0 [4/00] Some basic thoughts (questions and answers) flung down on paper in response to Oriane's initial request for something in writing.

1.1 [12/00] First draft improved with additional information, including an introduction, conclusion, and the sections on correcting apprentices, and things to talk about before and after the relationship is formal. Handed out to various peers for comments and reactions.

1.2 [2/01] A reorganization of the topics so they are in a logical sequence and a clarification of students. Sections added on getting out of a bad relationship, long distance apprentices.

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