

# Mary Magdalene's Life Story & Diary

<b>Title</b>	<b>On Forming A Cult</b>
<b>1st Century Person</b>	<b>Mary Magdalene</b>
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## *On Forming a Cult*

We had a cult investigator spend a couple of days with us recently. He sent us a very respectful email and asked to speak with us about our beliefs and so we said yes. David is a Christian minister with a very firm set of his own beliefs, but he wanted to hear about the Divine Love Path, our identities and we shared some interesting discussions. There was no attack or ridicule directed towards us. I have no idea how he will present us to the world, but I respect that what he chooses to do with our vulnerability is a part of the exercise of his free will.

I have many ideas, reflections and fears about this word cult! It seems a convenient way for society's accepted religious formats (which all began as 'cults' themselves) to lump 'everything different' into one category. And 'everything different' certainly exists across a broad spectrum.

The word itself conjures up fear in many, references to cool aid and mass suicide are implied in its very utterance. Its all very dramatic and I constantly wonder at society's obvious penchant for sensationalism, doom and gloom. Of course much harm has been done to many in the name of God and religion but we need to attribute the harm to its true cause and not the effect. The inclination to brand and fear groups that are different has its origins in our personal history.

## **Fear of Cults? or "The Cult of Family"**

I know that there have been very damaging religious movements that have taken away the free will of others. History has documented cult leaders who have encouraged a worship of themselves and discouraged self-love in their followers. Of course many other types of leaders, including politicians, economists and celebrities have done the same. I also know that we are not these types of people.

Some of you have heard me joke about 'the cult of family'. I coined this term because through my experience and observation it is most often families that use guilt and manipulation to control the will of others in their clan. It is most often family members who resist change in the individual as it upsets the status quo of entrenched family relations. I'm not just referring to spiritual change. We know that fathers berated their sons for their long hair in the 60s, that the advent of rock and roll music and free dancing was scandalous for the older generation of the time. Mothers and fathers throughout history have not only sighed and shaken their heads at their off-springs 'wild' or 'immoral' ways but often they have gone to extreme social measures and emotional pressure in attempts to pressure their son or daughter against change.

I'm not suggesting that we should throw out families or their 'values' altogether but I do think we should question the principle that family = sacrifice, or that in order to show that we love we must compromise our own heart's desires or passions. This seems to be a fairly entrenched belief system

in common family life. I also believe that a supposedly 'loving family' that uses unloving words, actions or attempts to control their mother, father, brother or sister through manipulation, guilt, or threat of rejection resembles more the harmful and dangerous 'cults' they are so quick to imply that I am a part of, rather than anything I am currently involved in.

I believe that the fear engendered by the word cult relates not to these afore mentioned damaging movements that have existed in the past but to individuals' fears of being controlled and that the most controlling people in our lives have been not religious leaders or school mistress' but inevitably our families. In my family I felt smothered by the level of expectation placed upon me and I felt I couldn't take a step without full parental approval. Ultimately I felt controlled and my sense of self did not flourish. (My parents' current unloving treatment of me and my partner indicates their demands and desire for control over my life were real). Without a solid sense of whom I was independent of my family I struggled to have integrity to any ideal. I became angry at religion or any organisation that I felt was controlling or required conformity. This was because of the anger and pain I had at always feeling that I needed to conform to my parent's values and desires.

A person with a strong sense of self never fears being controlled and knows that as long as others have a sense of self they cannot be controlled either. Instead of worrying about the alarming instances of 'cults', society would do better to focus on parenting and assisting children and young people to acquire and nourish a healthy sense of themselves.

### **I am not a 'Member'**

I am not a 'member' of a 'cult'. I simply desire to grow in love to at-onement with God and my Soulmate and to love every other person, here or in the spirit world, equally and abundantly. I see that one of the deepest injuries that we carry as humans on the planet today is the deep urge to 'belong', to 'fit in'. We categorise ourselves constantly. We want to create 'belonging'. This wound is reflected everywhere around us, it is in our language, it drives our penchant to have a role or roles.

Our lives are full of 'fitting in' statements:

"I am a mother", "I'm an Australian", "I'm a member of...", "I'm a doctor, a nurse, an accountant", "I'm a cricketer, a vegan, a Christian, a labour man..."

We ask questions "What do you do?" instead of "Who are you?"

And what we really mean is "**Where do you fit?**"

And even more urgently we feel "**Where do I belong?**"

How invested we become in our roles is a measure of how much we seek a sense of 'belonging' to avoid the desperate void within.

The compulsion to fit and categorise is only an avoidance of the deep sense that we carry from childhood – that we are unworthy, that we are alone, that we are different and that is bad.

I am reminded of the words of Gary Zukov and Linda Francis:

*“So long as we reach outward in any way to soften the pain of feeling unworthy, or the terror of not belonging, we bring violence and destruction into our lives, individually and collectively.”*

\*Zukov & Francis (2001) *The Heart of the Soul*, pg. 25

When we create ‘belonging’ for **one set of people**, we create ‘conditions’ for loving, and in doing so we unavoidably create ‘not belonging’ for those who don’t match those criteria. Neediness to be a member or feel superior to others is driven by injuries rooted in our pasts. If we are to heal we must face our own sense of not belonging caused by the pain, abandonment and poor treatment in our childhoods. We must grow the sense of self that we lack.

When I see those people who desire to live this Path creating a preference for others ‘on the Path’, when I see them (or myself) living in fear of how others will view us, using words or attitudes that create an ‘us and them’ mentality, I begin to fear that a cult (not of our making) will form. This brings me pain. One of the largest issues with our attempts to teach Truth in the first century was that people could not go beyond the injury of competition, power and control (all products of unworthiness or greed). This created the “Christianity” that we have seen warring with and excommunicating people throughout history.

There are no chosen people – God loves us *all*, equally. I believe there is only one way to atonement with my Heavenly Parent and that is through living this Path. This does not mean I feel a ‘member’ of an ‘elite.’ Quite the contrary – I feel humbled to have learned the Truth of my existence, I feel inspired to share the wonder with others and I feel deeply that I exist amidst millions of brothers and sisters and I desire to love them equally and to share who I am with them, to be open and genuine with every person regardless of what they believe and what they feel about me.

The way to from a cult is to cultivate an emotion of ‘us and them’, to breed haughtiness or condescension towards ‘others’. This is not my desire, nor Yeshua’s. We seek God and we seek to love. I seek to feel the cause of every emotion of unworthiness, rejection or fear within me – not to placate these feelings by surrounding myself with ‘like-minded’ people. I do relish the company of ‘like-hearted’ people – but these like-hearts are those who seek to love God and others and such seeking does not lead to division or separation.

True belonging is a sense we find within ourselves. For myself it is a knowledge, from God, that I am loveable – no matter what. The absence of this sense, the absence of a sense of self, causes us to seek out ‘our people’, ‘our tribe’, or even just ‘my kind of person!’ This division leads us far away from the loving state of viewing everyone as a brother or a sister.

Our fear of ‘cults’ and the label ‘cult’ really translates to a fear of control and powerlessness. When we heal these wounds we will know that with authentic self-respect and love we can never be controlled or have our true power taken from us.