

Gem and Mineral Lore: remedies, magick and folklore

excerpts from the introduction

What is it about stones? How long have they fascinated our species? There is no way to answer this question without an answer derived from one's imagination. I don't know what it is, other than they are unique, they are every color and they stand out from their surroundings. They can be carried and they convey some of their essence to the caress of a finger.

Certainly a village healer, walking through the shade, gathering the herbs which would help her community, would have sensed the innate energy of an unusual stone. As she walked, her gaze downward, looking for shapes and colors which stood out among the soil and the foliage, a stone of a color different than its surroundings, a stone with an unusual shape would have been gathered and kept treasured.

As the spring floods eased into the warming days, mountain-fed streams would have held tumbled stones. Perhaps some of them were gifts of the gods? In most cultures the most revered deities lived high in the mountains and what was brought down to the human levels may well have been sacred and an object of power.

George Frederick Kunz opens the preface to his book with this moving statement:

"The love of precious stones is deeply implanted in the human heart, and the cause of this must be sought not only in their coloring and brilliancy but also in their durability. All the fair colors of flowers and foliage, and even the blue of the sky and the glory of the sunset clouds, only last for a short time, and are subject to continual change, but the sheen and coloration of precious stones are the same today as they were thousands of years ago and will be for thousands of years to come. In a world of change, this permanence has a charm of its own that was early appreciated."

[*The Curious Lore of Precious Stones*]

And it is not only the human species which has been so taken with the world of eye catching stones. More than once I have seen a crow pause to explore a shiny stone and we've seen stones (and marbles which are used to bring fun to our gardens) mysteriously moved by birds and squirrels. One of the most curious of these 'moves' was my discovery on October 19th, 2000, when I found a white marble resting in the hollow of a branch in our apple tree, fifteen feet above the driveway. Obviously, squirrels also enjoy interesting objects.

As one who gardens not as a hobby but as a way of life, I spend much time with stones. I wrote the following for the Garden Journal on November 14th, 2003, having spent several hours toting buckets of rocks from one storage bin to another in a new location:

"What has been most interesting is seeing so many rocks which I recognize. I remember our talking about their color, unusually fine shape, taking pleasure in their beauty and discussing how wonderful this one or that one is. And, at times, the memory of the weather, of the three of us (a man named Vern was helping the two of us) is perfectly vivid in my mind. I have long included the potential of stones and gems to hold memories for us and have worked to leave stories and history woven into the gardens but this was a graphic experience for me in its working. Knowing that the camping square will be sheltered by these bins of rocks, many of them knowing that we love them, consider them beautiful treasures of the Mother... It's quite a wonderful feeling."

- published in *The Hermit's Lantern*, December 1st, 2004 ce

What would our own planet Earth be without rocks and minerals? What would be left of our beautiful Moon if there were no rock? From our earth-bound perspective we know of over two thousand different varieties of minerals but of this long list only about one hundred and fifty are considered relatively common. It would be extremely difficult for you to collect five hundred different specimens.

Kunz was correct. There is a timelessness when gazing at a stone. Civilizations have emerged and vanished in less time than it takes to form many of our favorite crystals!

my own journey

I do not remember *not* being interested in stones. One of the wonders of my childhood was the old writing desk in my grandparents' home. It had a bookcase on the left side which had a framed glass door. In front of the books on the numerous shelves was a collection of natural wonders: a small jar of sand, a stone, a piece of stalactite and other items from the sands and stones my grandparents collected when they drove all the way by auto from central Wisconsin to the Pacific Ocean in California, a trip not easily taken in what I believe was just before World War II.

While in the very early grades, my entrepreneur personality was already functional. I no longer have the slightest clue regarding the beginning of this work, but by the time we left Pine Lawn Farm in 1955 (I was ten at the time) I had already been ordering shells and supplies from a firm called the Florida Supply House from which I handcrafted earrings and even television lamps, so popular in the 1950s! There were regular sales at a country pub about three miles from our family farm.

When still in elementary school my family made the long drive from central Wisconsin to Illinois to visit my father's brother. Of rural folk from an agricultural community of less than a thousand residents, I found Chicago quite amazing. My Uncle Paul and Aunt Lucille took us around and one of the sights we visited was the Chicago Museum of Science and Industry. I brought home a souvenir, a flat box, sectioned and labeled to display about thirty mineral specimens. It was a popular item in its day, often a starting point for other, more fortunate kids who had access to 4-H or the Scouts.

My relationship with stones and rocks was a contributing factor in my love of the Mississippi Valley. My journey west took me to La Crosse, Wisconsin, where I continued my brief career teaching school. I loved looking at the old, stone face of Grandad Bluff through the wall-to-wall windows of my fourth grade classroom. I drove up to the State Park atop the 540 foot bluff dozens of times for the spectacular view, looking across the river to Minnesota, my next home. I felt at home driving up and down the Mississippi River Valley, with its rocky bluffs on either side of the river.

My touring of caves continued in Minnesota and I returned to Crystal Cave in Wisconsin a number of times. Southeastern Minnesota has several vast networks of caves which Mother Nature created out of limestone. In the process I moved to Rochester, Minnesota, where I lived for five years within sight of the Mayo Clinic. By this time I was selling jewelry and occasional hooked rugs and paintings in local arts and crafts fairs and it took no time at all for me to discover the Rochester Lapidary.

At that time it was an amazing institution. A family-owned business, it not only sold everything imaginable for people who cut and polished and tumbled and jeweled with stones, it had a huge warehouse of a room in which we bought loose stones. Large, wooden bins were filled with raw stone at shockingly inexpensive prices, purchased by the pound. What began to open my eyes to the realm of gems and minerals in a way nothing ever had before (even

though Wisconsin and Minnesota had many small, country lapidaries and rock shops) was the private collection the owners kept on display in numerous glass cases. Not only were there cases in the store, itself, of stones which were there only to see (and *not* for sale) but customers were extended the privilege of looking at the remainder of the collection in the adjacent office where a number of additional lit, glass cases held more of their collection. It was like a private museum and increased my love of stones.

My interest in stones took a different turn in 1973 when I visited the Tower of London. The home for the famous Crown Jewels of England since the early 14th century, I did not even know I wanted to see these jewels. My interest was not in cut, faceted precious stones as much as I simply had this love affair with the natural products which emerged from our Mother Earth. But the jewels were there to be seen so I bought my ticket and queued up to await my turn to descend into the secure and darkened display area beneath the parade ground in front of the Waterloo Barracks. I'd never much been impressed with the glitter of faceted gems, although a friend in La Crosse had received a nice diamond - a full carat - which was quite sparkly in the sun and I liked it.

But there I stood, agape, unable to believe the overwhelming beauty of the Crown Jewels. The colors, the prismatic radiance, the mesmerizing effect of their intensity! Just like that my understanding of the human fascination with cut and polished gems was forever changed.

Today stones are part of our lives. Our gardens are filled with stones. We have a 45,000 square foot garden. The only grass is in the Dancing Circle and the visitor explores the labyrinth through myriad pebble paths. Creating such large gardens in a region which has been well-glaciated we unearth numerous stones. The largest ones are honored as decorative watchers for the gardens and line the network of paths. They rest upon the tops of six-inch tall blocks of cement (recycled 'core samples,' actually). The smallest stones (about an inch) we harvest and these are used to 'pave' the paths.

Originally we had rock piles but digging out any errant blackberries or other deep-rooted weeds (planted by the birds eating overhead in the plums) pretty much meant moving the loose stones a couple of times each season. I began building rock bins out of scrap lumber. These worked so well that, in a couple of years, I began replacing them with treated two-by-sixes. Within a few years there were more than a dozen of these rock bins scattered throughout the gardens, an average size of three feet high, six to eight feet long and two or more feet wide. Yet in this winter-wet, temperate climate even this lumber will decompose so I decided to move all of them, one bin at a time, one bucket of rocks at a time, and relocated all of the bins to the perimeter of the 'camping square,' an open space about fifteen by fifteen feet inside the entrance to the wooded area of our gardens which is known as the Memorial Grove.

Most of the rock bins had already been moved when, in December of 2003 ce, in a light rain, I was moving more stones, their color brought out when wet. Carrying bucket upon bucket of rocks in the damp, their colors showed and they seemed to come to life. Having already relocated seven or more bins of rocks (nearly 100 cubic feet each) one bucket at a time, it was always an enjoyable task. Some of the stones I had remembered from earlier times, recalled our showing them to each other to share the joy in their beauty. And I remembered how thrilled Judith Karliss was with the stones she found. Judith loved stones and had her own tumblers, often bringing stones to add to the Stone Circle or for sharing in the Sunday morning Circle conducted by The Rowan Tree.

As if the stones suggested it, I realized that we, too, could find a rock tumbler. I immediately interrupted my work, went into our office in our cottage and found one on eBay

for very little money. We've been tumbling stones ever since.

When people tour our gardens they take home a stone or two as a 'souvenir.' Tumbled stones are regularly added to our Stone Circle after we use them in the healing and prayer work which is part of the Rowan Tree's gathering each Sunday morning. Sometimes a stone will be tucked into an herb shipment.

Each year more than a hundred people tour our gardens and we invite them to take home a tumbled stone. So often they tell us of their fascination with stones as children, or tell how *their* children love and collect stones.

We also have our own specimen collection, the beginnings of which date back to the early 1970s when I was so spoiled by the Rochester Lapidary. One collection is of small specimens, stored in glass bottles and labeled. Larger ones are in larger glass containers. There are agates, cut and polished so their colors and patterns are clearly visible to the eye. An uncut, unpolished 166 carat ruby contrasts with a one carat, cloudy (but affordable!) stone from India and a stunning, lab-grown ruby which, while the product of human intervention, provides a specimen I could not otherwise have at hand when I'm teaching. Without the luxury of the lapidaries of my youth today I turn to eBay and our collection grows.

about this book

I began formally writing about gems and minerals when living and teaching in Minneapolis. My first published work on gems and minerals was for *The Master Book of Herbalism*. That book was published in 1984 and I had finished the manuscript as much as two years prior to that. Although its focus was on herbal medicine my love of stones led me to include them as well.

Over the past thirty years I taught occasional workshops in the use of gems and minerals and, before I finished my time in Los Angeles (I lived and taught there for three years, June 1991 - June 1994) I conducted an extensive series of classes. Those classes and the enthusiasm of the students guaranteed that, when we began publishing our monthly journal, *The Hermit's Lantern*, I included articles on gem and mineral lore. The first gem column was on bloodstone, published in the September, 1994 ce edition of *The Hermit's Lantern*, a monthly journal we publish from our home, *The Hermit's Grove*. My underlying agenda when I teach is to promote a love for the wonder of these stones.

My research library on gems and minerals continues to grow, albeit slowly. When using the internet to try and determine whether the name for this volume you are reading was already in use I found another book I would like to add. I have more stones to study, more columns to write. And each month I turn to our library and to our collection of stones. What I have attempted to write is the book I'd like for my research library. This book would not have come into print without the generous and extensive help of my partner, Gerry Beyerl, who spent many hours poring over books and helping me collect data and many hours going through the draft of the finished work proofreading and checking material.

It is now time for me to bring my present work to a pause. Rarely does a year pass without my discovering a book on gems and minerals which offers me new insight, but in recent years it seems more difficult. We have fifty different titles on our shelves but there is often a lack of consistency and there is often a redundancy. It is time for me to stop and to put the work that I have done into print and then, I can continue.

This is Volume One. My research into gems, stones and minerals continues. I have not included any metals. My intention is to place them into Volume Two. Is there a stone you

believe should have been included? Remember that my work is not yet done. I continue to search for new books, particularly those with historically authentic lore. I know there must be information which is well-researched and accurately documents the use of stones by the indigenous peoples in various countries and cultures.

composition

Gems and minerals are composed of atoms arranged in very specific patterns. Despite their solid appearance and hardness, they represent a balance of magnetic and electrical charges. The different types of atoms represent chemical elements. Did you have to study the Periodic Table when you were in school? I did. There are more elements on it today than there were when I was in school. The elements on the left are metals, those on the right are nonmetals. And then there are those in the middle.

Atoms themselves may be neutral or be positive or negative depending upon the status of their electrons. It is this state of potential attraction which creates bonding. A bond of two or more atoms creates a molecule. Bonding brings together various atoms and molecules of carbon or hydrogen or silver or other elements which creates the minerals. The properties of bonding are able to align the atoms in geometrical patterns as well. In many cases an 'aggregate' of atoms may lead to the formation of a crystal.

Despite our stereotypes, crystals do not have to be flat and shiny. An anhedral crystal may have no flat surface at all. Subhedral crystals may be roughly geometric and euhedral are very angular and geometric.

Minerals have a number of properties which help define them. There is luster, which is used to describe the way they reflect light. A vitreous luster is as shiny as glass. Some lusters are descriptive just by their names: resinous, greasy and pearly are examples of this. Those who study stones seriously also examine the 'streak' of a stone - the color it leaves behind if rubbed on a piece of unglazed porcelain or other specific surface.

Scientists study whether magnetism or radioactivity can be determined. A stone is 'radioactive' if some atoms break apart and 'radiate' outward, able to be detected with equipment. Another property is fluorescence, the ability of the electrons in a mineral to absorb some of the energy when light shines upon them. Phosphorescence is what we call it when there is a delay which takes place. Minerals which are phosphorescent will continue to glow after all the lights are turned off.

Other qualities used to determine the nature and composition of gems and minerals include cleavage. This property is created when the atoms are arranged so that there are planes of weakness formed between layers of atoms. This knowledge allows the gemologist to know how to apply pressure to form a beautiful, faceted stone. Hardness indicates whether the surface of a gem or mineral can be scratched, typically by a diamond which is the hardest of all.

In this book the 'composition' of a stone describes it from a scientific perspective including some of the above information. There are many elements which occur in the majority of stones, such as oxygen and hydrogen. The presence of some elements, particularly metallic elements, often provide color. Some of the stones we love are purely organic in origin, such as amber and jet, or pearl. Petrified wood is quite variable.

Under composition I have often included some of the better known places of origin for the stones. Some stones have quite mysterious, ancient names which date back thousands of years before humans had developed the knowledge to truly identify a stone and frequently identified them according to their superficial appearance.

I believe it useful to understand the composition of the gems and minerals we work with. Many people wish to turn to their intuitive perception, knowing the stone only by how it

'feels' to them. Intuition definitely enhances my own understanding. My approach is similar to my work with herbs. I study all manner of magickal folklore I can find, work with the herb as a live plant, as a dried medicinal herb, explore its taste, come to understand my psychic response to the plant's energy. But I also pay attention to current scientific discovery, adding the latest in studies of the medicinal properties to my knowledge. I compare the research of different countries which provide lists of the chemical compounds found within the complexity of the plant. It is possible to allow science to enhance one's understanding of the underlying magick and to see the two as complimentary.

In the early 1980s I undertook a vast and complicated series of meditative journeys, not that different than shamanic journeying. Having completed more than five years of very intense work at skills as varied as astral travel and out-of-body sensory work, along with extensive daily work with meditation and receptivity skills, I spent time with the collection of stones I had at that time. I would move my mind to a space within the stone, exploring what it would be like from what might seem like a science fiction perspective. The question I posed as the paradigm for my work was this: If I were so small I could move around within the molecular structure of the stone, how would it appear to me?

Understanding the elemental composition and structure of the stones opened a level of intuitive comprehension and insight which is nearly beyond words.

correspondences

Those who study the natural energies of stones, of herbs, even of humans, tend to try and identify their qualities by referring to similar patterns found elsewhere. When one thing corresponds with another it means that there is a similarity in pattern, there is something which may be parallel or some sense of conformity or agreement in patterns which will help us in our understanding. Who assigns correspondences? Humans. And we all know how diverse the opinions of our species can be.

The reference I most appreciated for correspondences is *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones* by George Frederick Kunz. In writing his book, he indicated that he had "the most comprehensive private library" and provides annotation throughout his book, completed around 1913. I believe that Kunz's book is to the study of gem and mineral lore what Mrs. M. Grieve's *A Modern Herbal* (originally published in 1931) is to herbal lore. Each author remains today one of the most valued sources for historically-sound information.

The oldest manuscripts cited by Kunz in chapter ten, "Planetary and Astral Influences of Precious Stones," date back as early as a Venetian manuscript by Camilli Leonardi, *Speculum Lapidum*, published in 1502.

remedial

As a Master Herbalist there are many conditions for which I have complete faith in herbs which might alleviate symptoms. I have an herbal formula which hundreds of people have verified can nip a cold in the bud if taken early. I also know that there are many herbal formulas which may ease countless discomforts. The basis for this knowledge, as fact, is based upon a combination of my thirty years' experience as an herbalist and educator combined with research derived from over 2500 years' evolution of western herbal medicine and contemporary research being done in Germany, China and other countries.

I know of no country in which the use of gems and minerals is being given comparable scientific scrutiny, in which studies are being done, or in which these uses are taken seriously. So what do we do with this information? What would I, personally, do with this information?

To recommend that someone afflicted with epilepsy should forego all medical

treatment and drink a tincture of sapphire each morning and moonstone each evening would be questionable, if not utter folly.

And yet, to recommend that the individual avail herself of the best of contemporary medicine, whatever combination of allopathic and alternative medicine she might personally choose, would be very sensible. And then, in addition, to the above, she might choose to utilize the energy of some of the stones which various authors have said might be beneficial in the treatment of epilepsy.

Would a moonstone tucked between the mattress and box spring be helpful (suggested as a more secure location than beneath one's pillow)? Would it keep someone you love from a seizure during the night? Would wearing a small emerald make any difference to a cancer patient? Would your mother cope better with a small piece of malachite sitting on her nightstand? Would it make a difference in her ability to deal with chemotherapy?

Do we really know? Many of us seek all of the help we might find. Many of us believe that everything which our Creators have given us is touched by the gods, blessed with their love. I have seen many people over many years feel better from working with chosen stones in many ways.

If a young employee knows he must attend a social function and is not socially comfortable, is lacking in conversational skill, should he carry a piece of agate in his pocket? And if it makes a positive difference, is it the agate? Or did simply having it with him change the self-image of himself he had within his mind? And if it makes a difference and elevates him in his employer's eyes, does the manner in which the agate worked make a difference?

You may say it is the natural power or energy of the agate. That paradigm would claim that each of the stones in this book has its own matrix of energy, its own magick and that through using the various stones in meditation, in rituals, through wearing them in jewelry, drinking tinctures in which they have steeped or through sleeping with them, we gain access to the natural energy, the natural magick of the stone to bring about a desired change.

But there are those who believe that the stones are just that: magnificent wonders of the natural world whose molecular arrangements of elemental building blocks form natural gems and stones which are stunning to see and touch. This view maintains that the change takes place only because you expect it to.

Does it matter? If working with a specific stone allows you to better form mental images which improve your digestion, which strengthen your immune system, then this is what I consider magick in its most pure and joyful form.

Earlier in this introduction, I wrote that the purpose of this book is to increase your love of gems and minerals. If you have any of the conditions or afflictions listed later in this book or if you wish to affect your physical being in some way, perhaps adding a stone to your life might be helpful. There is an element of faith in doing this: skepticism will keep almost anything from helping. Faith? Emerald, sapphire and star sapphire.

virtues

According to Webster's, the 'virtue' of a thing is its merit or strength, its beneficial qualities and its power. The words I list as the 'virtues' of a stone are useful in describing the intrinsic energy of the stone. They may provide you with an understanding of the intangible quality of the stone and provide clues to the values that stone might offer you.

magick

Gem and mineral magick implies to empower, alter or manifest an 'image,' for magick is image and image is magick. Lighting incense in front of an 'image' of a divinity is Herbe

Magick. Burning a candle coated with oil of bay leaves as you chant a simple rhyme asking the Universe to bring money into your life is Herbe Magick. Using herbes to treat low self esteem and empower your self-image is a form of Herbe Magick. Leaving herbes in the form of grains and berries on a flat stone at the edge of the woods in memory of your ancestors, holding their images within your heart, is Herbe Magick.

What is magick all about? All of those various systems, from spell books to the pursuit of miracles, involve a desire to change the image of something. I spell the word magick with the 'k,' reflecting a trend which began nearly a century ago to indicate a spiritual discipline, a study which extends well beyond folklore. There are systems of magick which claim to trace their roots back to beliefs and practices which predate the Christian era.

There are many books available which promise the reader pages upon pages of simple spells and formulas, all easy answers guaranteed to mend every difficulty in your life. My personal belief is that now and then one of those simple, folk spells might work, not unlike a miracle, but only if the practitioner had complete and unconditional belief and faith in the practice. And then, the popular phrase, 'be careful what you wish for' might well apply for she who so very much wants something to come along and fix her woes may not have the most clarity in judgement.

The serious study of magick, that work with the 'k,' implies a deeper level of work, a serious and disciplined pursuit. While the outcome at this level may remain the same (one finds a new job, romance enters one's life) the process is different. In magick as a disciplined spiritual path, one studies the nature of reality, the arts of manifestation, the move toward an enlightened knowledge of divinity in order to promote change within the self.

When we wish to see an image of reality change, when we see an image of what the future might be and wish to work toward that goal, when we introduce the natural energy and spiritual power of stones and herbes as we clear our minds of extraneous thought and hold the desired image clearly, we are working magick. Natural magick - the energy of stones or of trees, herbes or weather for that matter, may be considered neutral and available for your usage toward any positive goal. There are those who wish to pursue natural power toward domination over others or to harm those who may have brought displeasure, but that realm of hurtful intent is not part of my work nor of this book.

history & lore

When researching gems and minerals there are many books which have folklore and interesting information about a stone's potential uses to affect one's life as more than jewelry or as a decorative item. The difficulty is that so much of the material emerged late in the 20th century in the vast wave of New Age publishing. I do not discount the properties and potential ascribed to gems and minerals by these authors but I feel that one must distinguish between lore which has historical documentation behind it and information which may be derived by the author's personal spiritual connection with a stone.

Perhaps the best-known and my most valued resource for historical lore would be *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones* by George Frederick Kunz. Mr. Kunz (1856-1932) has a fascinating history. In 1879, only 23 years old, Kunz was appointed a vice-president of the famous Tiffany & Co. jewelers in New York City. He held that position for much of his life. *The Curious Lore of Precious Stones* in its 1913 edition (still reprinted today) describes Kunz as "America's foremost gemmologist." The book describes itself as "the definitive book on this fascinating, traditional gem lore. Ranging over a wide wealth of sources - oral, ancient lapidary manuals from the Middle Ages, Greek and Roman geographical accounts, the Eddas, archeological discoveries in Egypt, the Bible, oriental gem books, travelers' accounts in the primitive world [and] historical documentation of the fated gems of the world."

Although some feel piqued that Kunz may have contributed some of the lore himself, particularly when it comes to denoting birthstone correspondences, so much of his book is fully annotated and it is the basis for the majority of magickal gem and mineral lore today. Kunz wrote a number of books and, by the time I have the next volume of my own Gem and Mineral Lore ready for editing, I hope to have a complete collection of Kunz's works in our library. The other book which offers some excellent (and authentic) historical lore is Crystals, Gems & Minerals Of The Bible by Ruth V. Wright and Robert L. Chadbourne. Originally published in 1970, this book has also remained in print and has been an important resource for many contemporary authors.

working with stones

Now that I've introduced you to how I have approached this book and you may have looked through it and discovered some stones you would like to integrate into the goals of your life, how do you go about it? Many authors recommend 'cleansing' a stone before you do any work with it. Keith Morgan, author of Crystal Magick, recommends that crystals should be cleansed at least once each month. Morgan does this with running water (which could be running from a faucet). He offers a lovely cleansing process in his book. It's a very nice, little book (not even 40 pages) and filled with beautiful concepts.

Personally, I tend more toward Sela Weidemann Randazzo's belief. She maintains that you need do no more than to set the stone aside and let it rest. Her theory is that a stone will 'clear' itself in as little as three hours. I like waiting longer than that but it is genuinely a matter of choice. Rock-Medicine, by Randazzo, has some excellent information on different ways you might explore working with gems and minerals.

This difference of opinion should not create confusion but, rather, offers you the freedom to affirm your own preferences.

distance work

One of the simplest ways of working with gems and minerals is to work with them 'at a distance.' You may wish a passive approach, as simple as setting them upon a bookshelf, using them for display or in decorative ways about your home. A paperweight might be chosen because it is a stone reputed to encourage success in the business world. I have a pair of petrified wood bookends which were simply sawed off their petrified stumps. They are beautiful, complete with their original knotholes. We have some specimens as spheres, a dozen or so on their stands, by the front window. There are stones in many places in our home, each one a reminder, an inspiration, a source of its own natural energy available when the need arises.

In the same manner you may set them about your garden. They are completely weatherproof, the only hazard being with small ones which end up worked right into the soil. Your gardens can be an excellent place for stones reputed to bring blessings to your home and family.

You may also work with stones 'at a distance' in an active manner. The difference is that this approach implies that you hold an active role in any interaction between yourself and the stone. I have a slice from a petrified tree, perhaps eight by twelve inches. This magnificent slab serves as an altar stone and provides the setting for the Baccharat crystal chalice. It is this chalice which holds our herbal elixir which is brought to our lunar and solar cycle ritual work.

There are times I will choose a stone to remind me of a specific goal. It might sit upon my desk or upon my bedside altar. There is distance between the stone and myself, but it

reminds me throughout the day of the active work I am doing to achieve my goal.

Another very simple way to use stones is carrying them with you. A pocket stone can be a great source of comfort or of strength. When you need to connect with the virtues of that stone, you can reach in your pocket or you might hold the stone quietly in your hand.

A stone chosen for its protective attributes might enjoy spending time in your briefcase or purse. Some people will choose a stone with a history of protecting travelers, packed inside their luggage when taking a holiday.

direct work

There are many ways to work with stones in a more direct manner. The most popular is wearing them as jewelry. This allows you to see the stone throughout the day, to caress it with the fingers of your other hand, to touch it to your forehead, your heart, even your lips.

Wearing a stone from a neck chain is also very popular. It becomes a matter of personal preference whether you choose a chain which positions the stone over your heart chakra or one more near the throat.

Gems and minerals are used for earrings, lapel pins, brooches and many other types of jewelry. Women may wear them in their hair. Men may have them set into belt buckles. A small stone could easily be fastened inside one's hat!

Carrying stones in an amulet or medicine pouch is another excellent way to have them with you during much of your day.

There is no real difference between 'direct' or 'indirect.' A stone which sits passively on a bookshelf may be 'indirect' but when you pick it up and contemplate your goal, it is a direct interaction.

intimate work

Gems and minerals are used for divination and scrying. A polished, mirror-like finish may allow you to gaze into your own dreams and desires, finding an answer emerging in your meditation. Using stones to gaze into your inner self is a very intimate process.

For several years when teaching in Minneapolis I explored techniques of combining a variety of gems and minerals placed with a person's chakras, positioned around the body. These were set around the perimeter of a wooden frame which held a pad upon which the person could lie prone, guided through visualization and meditation into healing and into self-discovery. This was a very simple process and allowed individuals to explore their spiritual relationship with a variety of stones as well. Is your meditation different if you have pieces of rose quartz around you than it is when you work with jade or with agate? You may try many different ways of working with stones, limited only by your imagination.

Choosing a variety of mineral which is said to help those with arthritis could lead to having several of them immersed with you in a soaking hot bath. You can sleep with a stone. If it seems to go wandering during the night and will not stay put beneath your pillow, try putting it between the mattress and box spring.

At one time it was not uncommon to ingest stones in powdered form. In a similar technique, perhaps derived from alchemy, some gems were reduced to ash and the ash taken as a medicine. If this seems quite startling and foreign to your way of thinking, I would remind you that you've been ingesting minerals on a near daily basis. Table salt is only one example. The sulfur in sulfa drugs is also right off the chart of elements.

People create tinctures with gems and minerals. You may take a stone or a combination of stones and steep them in wine, alcohol or in water and drink the liquid. Be creative! Just don't swallow the whole stone.

Another very personal way to work with stones is limited to the resinous stones such

as amber and jet. These make a very singular type of incense. If you like incense and wish to integrate a non-combustible stone, you could create your own formula of loose incense. Into the combination of herbs and resinous herbs you could place one or more stones which are there to energize the combustible parts but which are not, themselves, placed upon the incense charcoals.

esoteric uses

I have used stones as 'guardians,' placing them in specific locations within a home to bring the qualities of protection, the virtues of health and wellness.

For those who enjoy the stimulus to their imagination from using magickal wands and other ritual items, these tools can have stones set into them. And then, there's the crystal ball which is no less wonderful than the obsidian ball or the malachite ball.

If you take joy in the wonders and magick of the natural world, then you can use stones in all aspects of your spiritual and magickal work.

There are a number of books which offer suggestions for working with stones. In addition to those by Morgan and Randazzo mentioned at the beginning of this section on working with stones, the more esoteric practitioner might wish to obtain a copy of Michael G. Smith's book, *Crystal Spirit*, which has some amazing illustrations to guide you in making healing rods and other wonderful constructions.

Paul Beyerl

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