

The Everlasting Crystal

Fascination with quartz persists even today.



It is told that the children of the Cherokee were given quartz crystals when they were very young. They were taught that the clear, faceted stones were living beings; they were told they must nurture the crystals and learn to communicate with them.

When the children reached adolescence, the elders would creep into where they slept and steal their crystals away, hiding them among the rocks of the fields. When the children awoke, they were told to find the crystal they had grown up with. It is said that the young Cherokees would find their own stones by following the songs of the crystals they had come to know.

We have had a fascination with these geometric rocks throughout history. Crystal shamanism, healing, and even crystal gazing to foresee the future are all ways that people have explored the mysteries of the stones. But in this age of high technology and an almost religious belief in science, people are discovering a new way to blend ancient beliefs with current knowledge. The ancient art of healing with crystals is being practiced with a new twist: Modern-day healers are able to support their claims of the stones' powers with scientific logic.

Current beliefs range from those who see the electrical powers of quartz's silica base to those people who perceive crystals as living beings.

Tony, an employee of Crystal Reflections, a small shop at 1159 Taylor St., says that intuition is an important part of learning about crystals. "So much of crystals is feel; you have to throw out the part of the brain that wants to totally dissect and get everything in black and white. You have to use that part of yourself, plus your intuition — your sense of feel.

"You can go out on a limb with crystals because some people will be convinced they're rocks, and nothing more than rocks. Other people who are equally credible will say that they're living entities; that they're alive and that everything in the universe has a consciousness. Crystals are one of the first formed things on this planet; they've seen it all."

Early believers in the power of crystals believed the rocks were solidified light that served the shaman who used them as bridges to the heavens.

William Holser, a University geology professor, says that crystals are actually formed within the earth's crust. He says that quartz crystals are formed in circulating hydrothermal solutions ranging from 100 to 500 degrees centigrade, and that their formation must occur deep enough so the pressure of the earth's crust keeps the solution from boiling away as it circulates. When conditions are right, a seed crystal will form, and similar atoms will build on it layer by layer until a crystal is formed. Quartz, under the right conditions, forms relatively quickly.

Regardless of its origins, or the relative speed with which a crystal is formed, modern-day crystal therapists and healers believe in the power of the stones. Many believe that the energy absorbed by the stones can be used to balance the human "bio-energetic" system.

According to Tony, different types of quartz crystals have various effects. "Rose quartz is quartz for the heart and emotional issues. Smokey quartz helps you with grounding. Amethyst is a quartz crystal, and the main property of it — it's called a transformer — it helps you hear your higher guidance, helps hook you into

that." He says that rose quartz often is used by massage therapists because it helps ease emotional trauma.

People are drawn to crystals for a multitude of reasons.

One customer of Crystal Reflections, a well-dressed English woman shopping for a stone for her granddaughter, remembers her conversion: "I bought a string of quartz crystals in a store. Then one day I was just lying down meditating so I thought I'd just put these on and see what they'd do. The weight was so terrific I couldn't stand it, so I tossed them off. But I wouldn't have believed that they could be that heavy; they were like a weight on me, and I had this awful feeling. So a little later on I thought, 'Well, who knows where they've been and what they've picked up.' Someone told me to put them in salt for seven days so I did. I took them out and used them. I couldn't believe, they were as light as could be. I wouldn't have believed it if I hadn't done it myself."

Tony says that the crystals can pick up the vibrations of the people around them. "You can really funk out a crystal because it will pick up impressions and thoughts. If you're in a really foul mood and cruise around with your crystal, you'll put the dunks on it. Then you'll hand your crystal to someone, and they'll feel terrible. So you have to be a little careful what you do around crystals. It's nice to be positive around them."

Believers say that there are ways to "cleanse" a crystal, to rid it of negative energy. Methods range from running it under tap water to soaking it in salt water. A really agitated stone can be buried in the earth for 48 hours, where the energy cycling of the earth will cleanse it.

Tony says he got involved with



crystals about two years ago. There was no trauma, no magic; he was merely drawn to them. "I just felt the need to get crystals. No other explanation than that. It was time. I was drawn to them. They attract you. You don't know why you get them; you don't know what they're for. You just start to get them. And slowly they start working, and you'll start to like them, they're like friends."

According to Holser, "Most things that are solid are crystals, formed of crystals: clays, metals, ceramics, minerals, dirt. The main things that aren't are biological. The difference is that a crystal has a regular internal structure on an atomic scale."

Maybe our constant search for perfection is what draws us to the perfect form of the crystal; maybe our need to feel a part of our planet is what makes them attractive. But whatever the reason, more and more people are making the mysterious stones a part of their life.

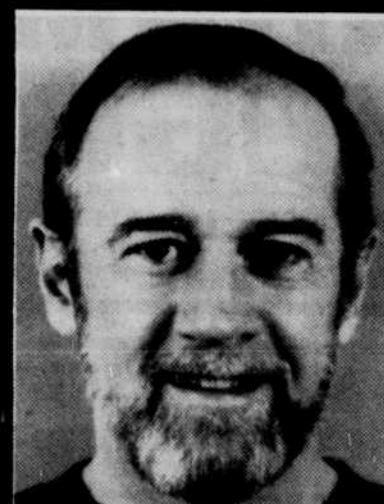
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Photos by
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Rutilated quartz, which has hair-like material inside, can be polished to form a smooth and round surface (left). Two elongated quartz crystals (top right). Arkansas quartz with a "phantom" shadow inside, a characteristic created during the crystal's formation (above).

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