

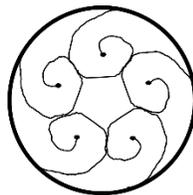
The World of Crystals all around Us

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Greetings! Often we find access to a plethora of gemstones and crystals when visiting shops related to alternative medicine or spirituality. As a budding young geologist, I would simultaneously scoff at 'rock shops' while drooling over rare or exquisite samples found within: covellite, sphene (titanite), huge ammonite fossils, iron-meteorites, or gigantic amethyst lined Brazilian geodes. I now own a wonderful assortment of such crystals, as so many do, including many rocks and minerals I have collected on my research excursions. Here I want to bring our focus from the gem-quality, pretty shop-samples to the world of crystals all around us.

The geosphere of the Earth System is primarily composed of the base mineral ionic group Silicates or $[\text{SiO}_4]^{-4}$ which account for 90% of earth's crust. Most of the average minerals you come into contact with are of this group. In fact, one of the most popular crystal groups that are a hot sale at any shop is the Quartz Point Crystal composed of a pure framework of these ions formed in hydrothermal environments. Quartz is one of the primary minerals in the igneous rocks granite (Bogus Basin, Sawtooth, Seven Devils) and rhyolite (much of the Owyhee Plateau and canyons) where they formed from cooling magma or lava. Yes! That is right, the quartz points and many other silicate-based minerals we might ogle over in a gem store are actually contained in the rocks of earth all around us! Furthermore, quartz is a fairly chemically inactive material on earth surface so when rocks are being eroded down from these landscapes the quartz is often times re-precipitated in the cavities. These become the varieties precious jaspers, agates, and opals depending on the concentration of dissolved ions, temperature of water, and time of formation.

My point here is to illuminate *the crystal world around you* is composed of the same materials you may already work with—although at different concentrations and harmony arrangements. Recently, I have encountered an increase in awareness of the practice known as 'grounding' or 'earthing', which is both an ancient and modern practice. This practice is tapping into the crystal world of a local landscape. Wilson Alvarez, a rewilding advocate, has offered "a culture is a reflection of a landscape". If you are familiar with the Role Playing Game "Magic: The Gathering" this idea is reflected as Mana sourced from Land cards. In other words, connecting with the Earth element of your local landscape provides us with a Mana. If you are *neglecting* this Mana source and are not aware, you may be causing yourself minute harm physically, emotionally, mentally or sexually. I beckon you to familiarize yourself with the World of Crystals you live on! Blessed Be!



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