

Topaz Spirits

Newsletter Winter 2007

First – a belated HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!!
May 2007 bring you much joy and prosperity with abundant blessings!

This is an exciting time – first, Topaz Spirits has its own domain, so my webpage is now www.topazspirits.com. Check out the fresh new look ... and the great crystals! The look will be migrated to eBay soon but I love the Tibet-like look to it!

This quarter, I would like to talk to you about the things that people do to crystals, some of which make them better and some of which impair their energy. Sometimes, we use an accelerated natural process and sometimes, we mimic that process to make the crystal appear to do what it never was meant to.

The first of these is **cleaning**. Typically, cleaning is the first thing that happens to crystals and there are any number of methods ranging from just soap and water to chemical treatments to remove iron oxide and a host of other coatings. The most common is oxalic acid which removes the iron that coats most of the crystals ... and it removes some of the calcite coating and a few other things. These coatings protect the crystals during their growth in the earth and removing the coating enhances the energy of the underlying quartz. But beware; acid treatments

like this can also change the color of minerals like calcite – that's how many of the odd colors are created! The energy shifts and it's not a bad thing, but it's just good to know.

Oiling and wetting are other common means of making a massive (non-crystalline) mineral look better. It simulates the polishing process so that you can see the colors well. Many things are shown wet for that reason and the seller should tell you that the pictures are of the wet product. It doesn't change the energy in the least, but you should know. Oiling is more of a problem. It can be washed off, so the energy is unaffected, but what it does do is make a rough surface and make it look smooth. It helps to hide mineral deposits like thin coatings of calcite that really stand out on a smoky quartz for instance. Again, oiling and wetting don't change the energy, but it's something to know before you buy so you get the quality you pay for.

Repairing and stabilization are other ways to create a nice crystalline presentation. The big amethyst cathedrals are in fact geodes on a large scale. The outside skin is fragile and often cannot bear the weight of the beautiful crystals, so these are often treated with resin on the outside so that strength is added to support the crystals. The larger the cathedral, the

more likely it is that this will happen. You won't necessarily notice it unless you look and energetically, it doesn't affect the amethyst. Now, sometimes, there are cracks in the cathedral and these are repaired with super glue! Large crystals of any kind may also be fractured in their trip from the earth and these are similarly repaired. Super glue does affect the energies and you can see it easily with an ultraviolet or black light. If the crystal or cathedral seems to be too inexpensive, it never hurts to check to know if you're getting a good deal.

Polishing and tumbling are other popular treatments for chipped, broken or massive (non-crystalline) minerals. These add a beauty and smooth ragged energies from the damage, provided that the crystal is honored. A good polisher will not make a Dow crystal out of one that never was a Dow without the damage, but will faithfully follow the lines of the original crystal. Massive pieces show wonderful color and softer energies when polished – not as jagged or scattered. Polished energy is more regulated and directed.

Cleaving is something that happens in nature and man mimics the process. This is usually done with calcite and fluorite. If you drop a calcite and break it, the shards will be natural rhombohedrons. Fluorite also cleaves

into natural octahedrons. Of course, you can find them in nature, but nearly 100% of the ones sold are cleaved by man, encouraging a break along the natural crystal lattice. The energy in these crystals is excellent as you haven't done anything to them that nature wouldn't have.

The next category is **irradiation**. Within the earth, there is natural radiation from minerals containing uranium, radon and the like. Clear quartz that is exposed to radiation becomes smoky and the more radiation, the darker the smoky. This is a natural process that man has chosen to accelerate. You will still see mostly Arkansas quartz that has been irradiated to the point that it is almost opaque black. When the radiation is concentrated and in short bursts, it is in quantities that are far in excess of what the earth naturally does. These poor crystals are almost lifeless – occasionally they are brought back, but generally, they are just pretty and nothing more. Now, there are dark, dark ones from earth exposure and they do allow energy to flow – you will immediately notice the difference between what the earth created and what man created. The ones man created are better left alone.

Coating to get the popular aura colors is another similar intervention. Precious

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metals like gold, silver and platinum are literally impregnated into the top layers of the crystal using lasers. This mimics a natural process in the earth which allows for the energy of the crystal to naturally blend, however the laser process does not. These aura crystals are pretty and have markedly different energies. Depending on the process, the energies can be shifted slightly or dramatically, so these will be ones that you will have to use your judgment on.

Seeding is another rather insidious intervention by man and it usually happens with things like amber. Amber is sap from ancient trees that has hardened into the amber colored solid that we are familiar with. The outside looks rather weathered and it is a labor of love to carefully polish it and reveal the luster and elegance of the amber. Unfortunately, some of the eBay sellers from the Orient have found that adding things like snakes, scorpions and the like brings a higher price. These things are rare in amber – rare! And the inhabitant usually looks differently – no snake naturally coils and awaits the liquid amber to cover him! What these sellers do is melt down the amber and reshape it – they will take a dead, baby snake and pour the amber over the top – and scorpions, various bugs and other things! There is quite a controversy on eBay about these sellers as there is no

mention about the nature of the product.

Heat treating is yet another way to produce different colors within a crystal. Heat treatment mimics a natural process within the earth – as an example, amethyst that is exposed to high heat loses its color and becomes citrine. Nearly all of the citrine cathedrals, geode sections and roots (single crystals extracted from the cluster) coming from Brazil are heat treated amethyst! Often they contain cacoxinite which is golden-brown naturally, but turns maroon during this process. (There are natural citrines from Brazil and the Congo and many other places – lovely golden ones. Mother Nature works well and these are a joy to work with!) Silver topaz is heat treated to produce lovely shades of blue. Tanzanite is heat treated to deepen the color. There are many others. Reputable dealers will tell you that the crystal is heat treated, but don't be afraid to ask. The energies do shift, similar to the ones in nature, but it is about getting your money's worth. And again, the darker the color, the more treatment it received and the less original energy in the stone.

Man-made stones are the last category. For decades, man has observed how Mother Nature makes her crystals and man has mimicked the

process. Ruby, sapphire, spinel, zircon, diamond and a host of others are all available now for jewelry as well as scientific work. The advantage man-made minerals have is that there are no impurities, thus they are ultra clear and the energy patterns are predictable. Some are used in lasers for a variety of applications. Again, reputable dealers will tell you if the stone is man-made. These stones have energies and they can be very useful for crystal healing and Reiki when you want a very pure energy for a particular treatment. Most of the bismuth available is man-made in the sense that pure bismuth is grown into a crystal under conditions of pressure and heat and the result is the wonderful iridescent display that you are familiar with. So, the choice is yours as to whether or not to work with natural crystals or man-made ... explore the energy differences and judge accordingly.

I hope this all has helped. Please feel free to ask questions and I'll try to get answers to you quickly. And again, visit the revamped website at www.topazspirits.com!!

Meanwhile, stay warm, healthy and enjoy the yin times! Many blessings ...

Jan