

Gemstones, Malas, Mantras + Japa Meditation

Allison Case

One's destination is never a place but rather a new way of looking at things. – Henry Miller

Upon departing from my Energy Medicine program graduation, I stepped into an artist co-op in Asheville, North Carolina and purchased a mala. I had no knowledge about the history of this jewelry piece I was acquiring to celebrate a long-awaited day; I only knew that my roommate during the final training weekend wore a string of 108 gemstones and I thought the necklace looked like a fashionable accessory someone on a spiritual journey ought to wear. What instantly surprised me was how the mala made me feel when I wore it. I researched the meaning behind the stones and found they carried the energy of compassion, peace and comfort —the same energy I felt when in contact with the mala. This finding led me on a path that included not only an expanded awareness about the energy of gemstones but also the power in a mantra, the possibilities Japa meditation provides and most significantly, a reinforcement about the importance of setting intention in our lives.

The Energy of Gemstones: A High Vibrational Connection

The earth provides us a wide range of healing energies in the form of crystals and gemstones. These healing elements are created from minerals that first

originate from magma. The magma surfaces from the core to the Earth's crust at a varying pace, sometimes over billions of years, and through this migration forms a unique structure. Each stone has a distinctive vibration that is created by the back-and-forth motion of its particles. The individual journey of formation creates the special makeup of each stone (much like our individual journeys that make each of us unique).

From an energetic healing perspective, the human energy body resonates with and attunes to the higher vibrations of the stone's natural energetic properties. If you have picked up a quartz crystal and felt a tingle or surge in your body that is most likely because the energy of the stone was transformed into an electrical charge when it came into contact with the heat of your body.

The healing effects of gemstones are usually subtle and may not be so apparent at first. Keep working with them and over time you most likely will feel the energy they have to provide. If you are new to gemstones, start exploring what stones resonate the most with you by simply following your intuition. The right stones will speak to you. Clear Quartz, Amethyst, Carnelian, Citrine, Rose Quartz, Blue Lace Agate, Black Tourmaline and Smokey Quartz are some of my favorites to start a collection with because this grouping covers many energies, chakras and colors.



Before using your stones, you should clean, charge and set them with an intention. Gemstones can be cleaned of stale energy by setting them in sea salt for a few hours or by running them through sage smoke. After your stone is clean, place it in the light of the moon, the sunlight or by the base of a house plant for a few hours to charge. Once the stone is clean and charged hold it in your hand and set an intention; let the crystal know what you want it to do for you.

Malas: A Tool to Focus the Mind on What You Want More of in Your Life

Our intention creates our reality. – Wayne Dyer

A mala is a string of beads used in meditation to count intentions, mantras, prayers or breaths. It is a tool for focusing the mind. Each mala is created with intention. As an energy practitioner my work involves channeling energy while communicating a message about what a client wants to release followed by what they desire to manifest more of into their life. During an Energy Medicine therapy session, a practitioner is the conduit for the client who ultimately heals themselves. A mala can also be viewed as a conduit to aid in communication of a healing intention.

A full mala contains 108 counting beads plus one guru bead. The larger guru bead (also called the teacher) symbolizes a transformation from darkness to light. It marks the starting and ending point of the mala. The tassel is connected to the end of the guru bead to finish the mala with a final knot. A truly authentic mala is made with one continuous piece of



string. The number 108 has a powerful significance in Eastern culture. To name a few examples there are 108 letters in the Sanskrit alphabet, 108 holy sites in India, 108 acupressure points on the body and 108 energy lines throughout out the body that all converge and connect at the heart chakra.

When creating an intentional healing mala with gemstones, I let my intuition be my guide. I continue to be joyfully surprised when I research the meaning of the final gemstones selected for a custom piece as the healing properties of the stones seem to always pair perfectly with the client's intention.

A mala can be worn as a necklace, wrapped as a bracelet or placed in a special spot in your home as a visual reminder of what you want to manifest in your life. To gain the most benefit from a mala it is used with a mantra in meditation, called Japa meditation.

Mantras and Japa Meditation: Tools for Deeper Self-Realization

What is mantra? Mantra is two words: Man and tra. Man means mind. Tra means the heat of life. Ra means sun. So, mantra is a powerful combination of words which, if recited, takes the vibratory effect of each of your molecules into the infinity of the Cosmos. That is called Mantra. – Yogi Bhajan

Japa is the meditative repetition of a mantra or intentional thought utilizing a mala to count the chant. The sanskrit word Japa translates to English means to mutter. The mantra or intention can be spoken aloud or within the reciter's mind. The meditation is generally performed sitting but can also be done standing or walking.

A mantra, as referenced in Yogi Bhajan's quote, translates to instrument of the mind. It is categorized as part of the 6th limb of yoga, Dharana, known as concentration. A repeated mantra helps keep us in the present moment of now and holding a positive thought. The power of the mantra is in the vibration and resonance that is created through the ritual. The mantra chosen can be whatever word or series of



words feels right for you. Some people prefer to use a Sankrit word such as “OM” or “Tattwam Asi”, which translates to “I am that.” I have observed transformations using mantras from Louise Hays’ book, *You Can Heal Your Life*. Let your intuition guide you.

As with all meditation styles, Japa meditation benefits include lower blood pressure, reduced anxiety, improved sleep, increased focus and a deeper sense of self. I believe that meditation with a mala and mantra increases the speed of manifesting an intention. Our thoughts are very powerful and have a direct connection to what occurs in our lives. Devoting time to this daily ritual has opened up avenues I did not feel possible before working with a mantra during meditation. I have also witnessed my client’s lives changing using Japa meditation. One particular client committed to a daily Japa meditation practice with an intention to heal their cancer and within four months received significantly improved test results pertaining to their cancer markers. The results cannot be medically proven to be related to the meditation practice but in my heart, I believe it to be true (as does my client).

To use a mala in Japa meditation first place your mala in your right hand. Place the mala over your middle finger. The middle finger represents the air. (There is a belief that you should not use your pointer finger to move the mala as that finger represents fire.) Use your thumb to move the beads towards you. The thumb represents universal consciousness. Start at the guru bead and repeat your mantra as you touch each of the 108 beads. When you find your mind wandering bring your thoughts back to your mantra. Continue until you reach the guru bead. Finish with “Namaste” or your word of gratitude. It is believed that you will experience the most benefits from Japa meditation if practiced daily for 40 continuous days. Keep a journal to note the shifts and movements you see as it relates to your intention. The more you use your mala the stronger the energy of the mala will feel. When a mala breaks it is believed that the intention has been brought into your life and it is time to manifest something new. 

A Guided Japa Meditation

Sit in a comfortable position and take a moment to find a mantra that speaks to you. Hold your mala in your right hand with the mala hanging over your middle finger.

Close your eyes. Concentrate on your breath. Feel your belly expand outwards with each inhalation and contract with each exhalation. Imagine your legs sinking deep down into the earth.

Take a few more deep breaths and see your toes slide to the core of the earth. Now tap into the energy at the crown of your head and imagine that energy rising up to the farthest part of the sky. Take a few more deep breaths. Imagine light running from the farthest point in the sky through your body to the core of the earth. Take a few more deep breaths.

Bring your awareness to your heart center and imagine a large ball of white light. Imagine that light expanding outside your body to the edges of the room. Take a few more deep breaths.

Move your focus to your mala in your right hand. Start at the guru bead and repeat your mantra as you touch each of the 108 beads. Use your thumb to shift the beads. Say your mantra and lightly twist the bead toward you then move onto the next bead. Continue the process until you have completed 108 repetitions of your mantra. Keep your mind focused on the mantra. When thoughts arise shift your focus back to the mala and the mala beads.

Finish the meditation with “Namaste” or a closing gratitude of your choice.



Starter Gemstone Collection

Clear Quartz, Amethyst, Carnelian, Citrine, Rose Quartz, Blue Lace Agate, Black Tourmaline and Smokey Quartz are some of my favorite crystals and gemstones to start a collection with because this grouping covers many energies, chakras and colors.

Clear Quartz: an amplifying stone associated with the crown chakra, aids in manifestation and higher spiritual receptiveness.

Amethyst: a protective stone associated with the third eye chakra, helps clear negativity associated with stress and aids intuition and balance.

Blue Lace Agate: an activating stone associated with the throat chakra, enhances communication and expression.

Rose Quartz: a spiritual stone associated with the heart chakra, a stone of the heart that carries the energy of compassion, peace and unconditional love.

Citrine: a protective and empowering stone associated with the solar plexus chakra, helps release unwanted energy and attract joy and success.

Carnelian: a stimulating stone associated with the sacral chakra, increases the energy of creativity, motivation and courage.

Black Tourmaline: a grounding and purifying stone associated with the root chakra, it provides protection from negative energy and a sense of security.

Smokey Quartz: a grounding stone that stimulates and balances all the chakras and helps rid negative energy.



Author Allison Case can be found at www.FourishIntegralHealth.com



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