



A podcast full of practical magic to nourish your inner life

SHOWNOTES Episode 4

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On the menu today: **Oathing Stones**

This is Episode 4. It's about oathing stones and how they can be used in weddings and in setting personal goals. Stones weave the tapestry of the earth. They symbolize the old, the everlasting, the ancestors. What does it mean to make a oath on a stone connected to the realm of the departed?

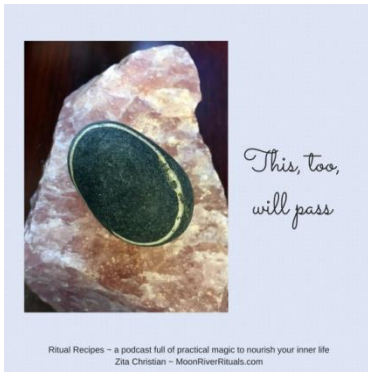
Nuggets from the Show

1. Long, long ago, everyone knew that the spirits of loved ones who had died now guided and protected those still walking the earth. Everyone understood that physical survival in this world depended on spiritual connections to the Other World. A stone that came from the land bridged the worlds of here and beyond. To swear an oath with your hand on a sacred stone forged an invisible link to your ancestors. Break your oath and you break your connection. You risk survival in this world and the next. If your clan knew you'd broken your vow, their support would also be in jeopardy. At best, you'd be shunned. At worst, you'd be driven from the village. If you didn't honor a commitment to your ancestors, how could you be trusted?
2. Stones deemed sacred by the locals exist all over the world.
3. Because we're a mobile society, few of us have set foot on the land of our ancestors. Still, we can feel a connection to them even if we know little or nothing about them. We can still feel an emotional attachment to a place even if it's not where we were born...even if it has no connection to our ancestors.
4. A couple getting married might feel a connection to the university campus where they met, to the vineyard where they had their first date, to the hiking trail where they had their first serious argument that revealed the importance of the relationship, to the beach where they got engaged. Layer the memories and a connection that began as physical becomes emotional and, for some, spiritual.

Connection. Commitment. Continuity. These qualities inspire and strengthen a couple's wedding vows.

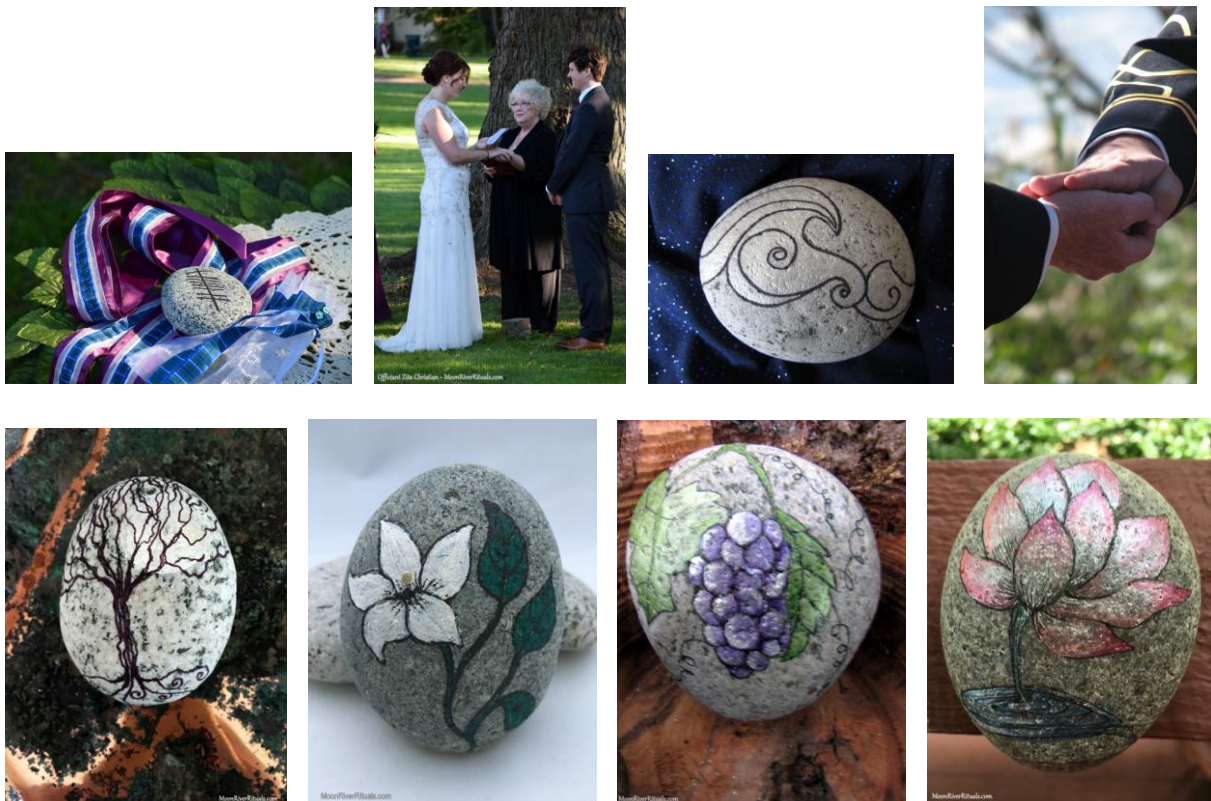
5. Making their vows can take on added symbolism when made on an oathing stone. Plus, doing so is a beautiful way to enrich a nondenominational ceremony or add the "spiritual, not religious" feeling many of today's "unchurched" couples seek.
6. Incorporated into wedding anniversary celebrations, vow renewals, and used at the wedding of the couple's children and grandchildren, an oathing stone has all the markings of a treasured heirloom for generations to come.
7. An oathing stone can add meaning to a "first look."
8. Oathing stones can be decorated with a variety of words and images. You can see a photo of a handfasting cord I made for a Scottish groom from the Douglas clan and an oathing stone I painted with the Celtic symbol (*ogham*) for the word "gra" meaning love.
9. Oathing stones can be used when undertaking a serious project, when kicking a bad habit, when committing to a healthy habit, when a couple wants a commitment ceremony because marriage is not an option.
10. Ordinary stones can be used in simple, everyday rituals. Looking at stones is a lot like looking at clouds and seeing people and animals. Study the markings of the stone. Listen for its message.
11. Footprints carved in stone have long been part of rituals for safe travels and for the designation of leaders.
12. The arch used in many wedding ceremonies echoes the ancient idea of the *omphalos*, the navel of the earth, and that the commitment the couple makes to each other cannot be lost or destroyed.
13. In Tarot cards, the suit of pentacles or coins represents the element of earth, the material world – mountains, trees, stones, the physical riches and abundance of the earth, all that endures the test of time. I think that's why couples like to get married outside. They want to feel the vibration of the natural world. If the weather doesn't cooperate and they can't have the ceremony outside, they can always use an oathing stone in a first look, or hold the stone while they make their wedding vows.
14. Rituals keep us oriented to the natural world and can connect us to our ancestors. That's what oathing stones are all about.

Photos of my daily ritual rocks:



Do you have a special rock? Have you discovered its message?

Here are a few photos of oathing stones. The “Gra” stone is shown with a handfasting cord that blends the wedding colors with the official plaid of the Douglas tartan. That’s me with the bride, Joanna. I’m holding their stone while she makes her vows to the groom, Ben. There’s a photo showing the hands of Patrick and Jim holding their stone together for during their vows. The orange blossom stone was for Thomas and Raffaele who fell in love in the ancient orange garden in Rome. The lotus stone was for Maggie and Jamie, both active military. There’s also a photo of a vineyard stone, a beach stone, and a stone with a tree and silver moon. The fancy stones are painted by my friend Carol Chaput, a fine artist by profession. You’ll find more on my **Etsy shop**. Just go to www.Etsy.com/shop/moonriverrituals





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Mentioned in the podcast:

Celtic Sacred Landscapes by Nigel Pennick