

The Global Goddess Oracle Spring Equinox 2015

Welcome to the Season of Balance!

How many times do you wish there were more hours in a day because you just don't have enough time to get it all done? I cannot count how many times. This is a sign we are trying to do too much. We need to find balance in our lives. We need to experience life one day at a time. We need to find pleasure in the little things because they are the important things. We don't notice the feel of the floor under our feet unless it is ice cold. We need to experience life at the most primal. We need to feel, taste, hear, see, and smell life every day. As many of you know I have been sick and in the hospital. This has been the longest I have ever been sick and at times it has been scary. Not being able to breath brings life into perspective. I was able to see what was important and not so important. So take a moment wherever you are and look around. Engage your senses in your surroundings. Be a part of the world around you.



This is the time of new beginnings as we see flowers begin to bloom around us. The weather in most of the country is beginning to warm. Here in Florida it has been in the 80s for more than a week. Our spring usually only lasts a week or two before we are back into summertime weather. Since I have been confined inside I have not been able to see the subtle changes in the yard. The blueberry bushes are budding and will be a treat for the rabbits if we don't get out there first. We also had two dove babies make an appearance along with a new black snake. I look forward to getting well enough to go outside or at least walk across the room without being out of breath. One thing I have been doing is watching the progress of the eagles at Berry College in Georgia. This is a link to the article and live feed camera <http://www.berry.edu/eaglecam/>.



So this spring I ask all of you to get involved in the world around you. Spend time doing something new. It could be something you have been wanting to do but you thought you didn't have enough time to start or it could be as simple as walking every day. Just remember to start small. You wouldn't try to run a marathon without warming up first. Be kind to yourself. You are important to the world.

Blessings of the Season,
Dawn

Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas is a High Priestess and Elder of The Apple Branch, a Dianic Tradition. She is the editor and book reviewer for the Oracle and was the Treasurer for The Global Goddess, a non-profit organization. She recently graduated from the University of Florida fulfilling a lifelong goal of completing her college education. She has been published in several magazines for her paper crafting designs. She is the owner of Belladonna's Garden and makes homemade soaps. She is an avid gardener and lives in Florida with husband.

Her Blog: <http://becomingbelladonna.blogspot.com/>

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Poetry

Blodeuwedd by Hayley Arrington

They say you were created by men
A woman not of the Earth
Without worldly kin
But I know the story of your birth

And I'll tell it my own way.

I say it's all a lie
Words placed by medieval monks
(With lusts all their own)
Hoping they'd not fry
In Hell, or up against trunks.
So, too afraid to bone,
They wrote lies upon their vellum.

But the truth can be read
And I see your face there
No longer with your look of dread
I've laid it out, all bare.

To set the scene, it was a day quite fair
There were flowers everywhere:
Which of them was the emmenagogue
When your mother chose the season,
Crawling through bracken and bog,
To ensure that YOU were the reason

For her lying in?

Were you born 'neath the silver circle
Owls screeching as they fly?
You became a magician's gift
Didn't hear her lullaby.

Presented as a wife
You looked a perfect couple.

But your days were filled with strife
Your new life was about to crumple.

Tricking a man, or two,
Into thinking they're a god
Isn't that hard when they knew
It all along.

So, Flower-Face
Your flowers bloom at night
You are an owl, the night's your place,
They cursed you, as is their right.

Your punishment, they say,
For behaving in the way
That all bored housewives do,
Or at least long to.

I call you the Goddess of women's destinies
Of ones whose lives are a mess
Of ones whose lives are blessed
It doesn't matter who.
Of owl magic, transformation;
You are not a punishment
Or a way to trick fate
You are the Initiator
A good enough reason to hate
Or fear a woman made of flowers
A woman full of powers.

Hope by Katy Ravensong



Hope is
the tenacious,
fragile-appearing
flower
that
pushes
its way
through
the fissures
of the rock
where it is
perfectly
obvious
that
no life
can
survive.
Yet it does!

GODDESS by Katy Ravensong

I am earth.

I am air.

I am water.

I am fire.

I am the witch in the willows.

I am the willows in the glen.

I am the sprite of the forest.

I am the goddess of the sea.

I am the hawk, the raven, the sparrow,

The field mouse and the butterfly.

I am the rain gently falling

And the moon softly shining down.

I am the rose that grows by the wayside

And the orchid in the jungle heat.

I am predator and victim

And the feather that floats on the wind.

I care not for mortal labels

Such as Christian or Pagan or Jew.

For all came from me

And to me all shall return.

I am of all and in all.

I am you and you are me.

Open yourself to my knowledge.

My child, eternity lives in you.

Full Circle by Katy Ravensong

Everything
eventually
comes
full circle.

Life is
but a cycle
of
sowing
and
reaping.

the fallow times
are but
preparation
for
more seeds
to be
planted.

The circle
becomes
a spiral.

The spiral
brings us
ever closer
to the
Divine.

Hand to hand,
heart to heart,
we grow,
we expand,
we reach
towards
our soul's
purpose.

Beginnings by Deanne Quarrie



so much still hidden
unrevealed
tender
held close
uncurling slowly
surely
revealing
layer after layer
of what might be
will be
yielding
strong
vital
alive
opening
unfolding
becoming

Photography and Poetry by Deanne Quarrie

Intrepid Spring by Deanne Quarrie

At the highest point on the tree, you stretch,
reaching for the sun.

Your pink petals elegant in their grace, you
stand alone.

Bravest of all, for leaves have yet to come to
offer shade

Branches bare except for furry buds that will
soon follow in imitation of your daring first
move.

Intrepid flower of Spring, I feel like you in my
yearning for the Sun!



Photography and Poetry by Deanne Quarrie

News of Spring by Raine Shakti



I have news for you

In the western gallery, a painting is in progress
The sunset tinting the sky in shades of pink, blue, and orange
Providing nature's best mood lighting

On center stage, the aerobatics team, Canadian Geese, flies low
Drifting, darting, thrilling the crowds
Their flight to the north signaling a return to warmer weather

In the shadows, bare trees stand sentinel
Over a lonely marker surrounded by snowy isolation
The dead it names now forgotten

Deep in the valley, a ribbon of ice shines
Winding, wending through the hills
Its melting edges a harbinger of spring

In the concert hall that is our world, an orchestra plays on
Trilling song birds and honking geese the melody
Dropping ice and crunching snow the beat

Over the horizon, the evening's main attraction rises
The quarter moon lounging in the sky
Her palest gold barely breaking through the haze

Deep below the frozen earth, life is awakening
Signaling through buds and melting snow
The return of warmth

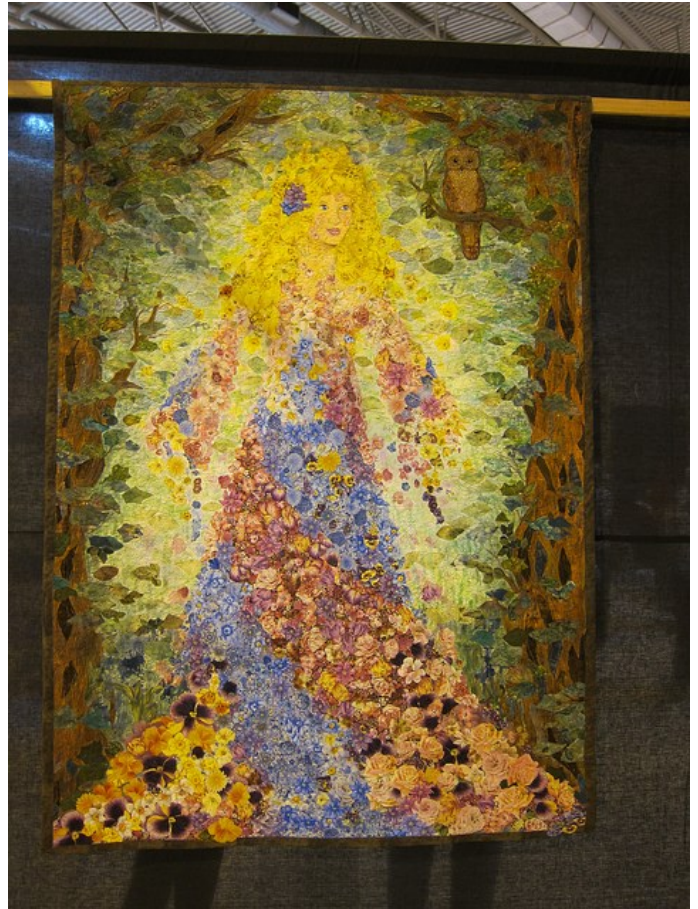
This is my news

Raine Shakti is a writer, spiritual artist, and a Doctorate of Ministry candidate at Ocean Seminary College. She works professionally in the communications and training field and her best professional experiences are when she is able to empower people. She has spent the last four years reclaiming her life and her inner warrior. Part of this journey was becoming an ordained priestess with the Fellowship of Isis. Her Matron deities are Nephthys who has helped her become a true virgin woman, the Morrigan who has taught her what it means to be sovereign and Yemaya who has taught her the strength in having a loving heart. To read more about Raine visit her site at <http://www.boudicarising.com>.

Articles and Stories

Blodeuwedd: The Celtic Lilith, The Hidden Goddess by Hayley Arrington

I write this in the tradition of rewriting myth in the way that women have always done. Women are myth writers by nature, but sometimes we have to return again and again to a story that is bogged down by centuries of misinterpretation. For me, myth is scripture and I try to read it with a spiritual heart. I name Lilith in my title because she shares with Blodeuwedd the characteristic of the first wife who, eventually, is deemed an inappropriate choice and is expelled, in Lilith's case, or transfigured, in Blodeuwedd's, because they sought what they wanted for themselves. Interestingly, they both are created from Earth, Lilith from the soil, and Blodeuwedd from flowers, and also share an association with the owl. Personally, I have worked with Blodeuwedd for over a year and a half. She is a Goddess who can show you things you may not necessarily want to be shown, but she will accompany you in many wondrous ways. Discovering her has been a rediscovery of Goddess and of myself.



Blodeuwedd as Otherworldly Wife

Blodeuwedd's story was first written down from oral sources in the Middle Ages by Christian monks. Although filled with many wonderful glimmerings of Celtic magic and religion, this myth was necessarily expunged of what we can presume was much of its original meaning and mystery and filtered through the Medieval Christian mindset of its chroniclers.

Blodeuwedd is not called a Goddess in the myth in which she appears, *Math Son of Mathonwy*, fourth branch from the Welsh *The Mabinogian*. In fact, none of the characters found in it are named Deity within the text, even those figures who scholars have confirmed what we already knew: Arianrhod and her divine children Dylan and Lleu are indeed Goddess and Gods. In the written tale, Arianrhod is a cruel mother who disowns her children at birth and seems to make it her life's mission to destroy her son Lleu's life. She refuses to name him, arm him, and allow him to wed. With the help of his equally divine uncle, Gwydion, Lleu attains all three by way of trickery. It is in this last injunction where Blodeuwedd makes herself known. In the myth as written, Blodeuwedd is crafted from flowers and breathed into life by Gwydion and Math, great renowned magicians. She is not mortal, but of the Otherworld, and so is a suitable wife for Lleu who was told by his mother that he would never marry a

mortal woman. Blodeuwedd is purely Otherworldly. In the myth, she is given no choice but to become Lleu's wife. What results is a catastrophe for all involved, but most especially for Blodeuwedd.

Blodeuwedd meets and falls in love with another and, together they plot to bring about Lleu's death. It is here where Blodeuwedd's reputation of deceiver and all round bad woman and wife comes into play and confuses her divine role of Initiatrix.

Blodeuwedd as Goddess

Blodeuwedd and her lover seemingly accomplished the death of her husband, Lleu, ensuring his transformation into an eagle whose flesh rots and feeds a massive sow below the tree on which he rests. Lleu's fate is discovered by Gwydion who is able to transform and heal him back into his physical form. What is not made totally clear in the myth is that Lleu ascends into Godhood through his ritual death. Lleu literally descends into death and feeds the Death Goddess who is the Great Sow, an animal long associated with the Underworld in Celtic myth. This sow is intimately connected with Blodeuwedd. They are the same. Blodeuwedd is Lleu's initiator into the mysteries of death and rebirth.

Continuing in the myth, Gwydion, after restoring Lleu, then sets his vindictive sights on Blodeuwedd, transforming her into an owl. Blodeuwedd is intimately connected with owls and owl magic. The owl is viewed differently in Celtic myth than it is elsewhere, particularly in Classical myth. I believe its biggest association in Celtic myth, which is that of deception, simply comes from a misunderstanding of Blodeuwedd's role in her myth. The surface explanation is that she is a deceiver who plotted to kill her husband and in punishment was transfigured into an owl, shunned even by other birds. In actuality, her actions directly brought about the transcendence of Lleu into Godhood. I think that Blodeuwedd, like other Celtic Goddesses, is a shapeshifter, and so was not cursed into becoming an owl, but rather chose that form for that period of time, perhaps even so she could rest after all the divine work she had just finished accomplishing.

If we venture from the primary myth, *Math, Son of Mathonwy*, we find Blodeuwedd in the Taliesin-attributed poem found within the *Cad Goddeu*:

Not of mother, nor of father was my creation.
I was made from the ninefold elements:
From fruit-trees, from paradisaal fruit;
From primroses and hillflowers,
From blossom of the trees and bushes;
From the roots of the earth I was made;
From the bloom of the nettle;
From water of the ninth wave.
Math enchanted me before I was made immortal;
Gwydion created me by his magic wand;
From Emrys and Euron, from Mabon and Modron,
From five fifties of magicians and masters like Math was I made.
I was made by the master in his highest ecstasy;
By the wisest of druids I was made before the world began.

(trans. By Caitlin Matthews)

This poem clearly shows her Otherworldliness and ancient divinity and, for me, reads like a prayer. When I evoke her presence in a ritual setting, or simply seek her out, I call to her, "Not of mother, nor of father was Your creation. You were made from the ninefold elements . . .' Blodeuwedd, hear my call and be with me."

Correspondences with Blodeuwedd:

- ~New/ Dark Moon
- ~Owls and Owl Magic including shadow work, divination, and seeing what is beyond reach
- ~Rebirth, initiation, shapeshifting
- ~Facets of the Otherworld and Underworld, connecting with spirits and divinity within
- ~Flowers of all kinds, but particularly those first of the season in spring

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Jones, Gwyn, and Thomas Jones. *The Mabinogian*. 1949. London: Everyman, 1993. Print.
Matthews, Caitlin. *The Elements of the Celtic Tradition*. Dorset: Element, 1989. Print.

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Spring by Deanne Quarrie

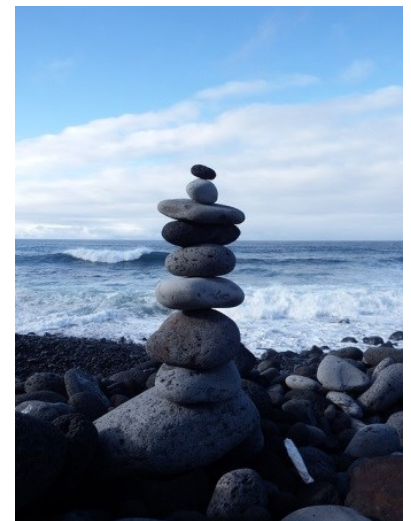
We celebrate the Spring Equinox as a reflection of the birthing time of the year. We have made it through the winter's cold and ice, experienced the warming of the Earth and the flood waters that prepared for the birth of all that is new. Seeds are germinating and beginning to sprout. We see that around us, depending on where we live.



Here in Texas the red buds are in bloom and some of the trees have their fresh green leaves opening up at the tips. Just seeing these indicators, brings an internal feeling of birth. My heart expands in joy when I see my first red bud tree in bloom – the first buttercup opening to the sun!

This is the time that the Goddess makes herself known by birthing all into existence. She first creates day and night and on this day they are equal, only to rise and fall as the year changes. Then She creates the stars, the heavens, the green things upon the earth, the animals and us – all Her children. All of us glistening in Her birth waters, ready to dance in Her rhythms.

I see the creation of day and night in equal portions coming first, as a lesson for all that follows; balance, a moment of equilibrium, manifesting everything else. We attempt to have that place of balance in our lives, but know from experience it never stays exactly in the center. All we can do is hope to bring it back as we move between states. It is like the pendulum, swinging back and forth from one side to the center then to the other side, but always seeking center.



We do this in our lives. We move from emotional times of happiness and joy, to anger, to sadness and in between, we find center. It is this place where we connect with ourselves – become still for a moment, one with all. It is from this place that we spring forward, renewed and rested. We seek center when we pray. We seek center when we work our magic. We seek center when we begin our rites. This is the place of balance in ourselves, for it is from here we that we manifest.

Another aspect of spring is celebrating the child within. So often we get caught up in the heavy aspects of life and forget to have silly fun. Laughter and light are all part of the Season of Spring. In the rituals I offer to women for the Spring Equinox, we all become children again – love, laughter, carefree hearts – these are what spring is all about. We get out the hula hoops, the jump ropes, the jacks – you remember playing jacks? We dance the hokey pokey and frolic together as we did when life was easier, when life was play.

Spring is the time of the Kore, the Maiden. Persephone returns from the Underworld, where she spends the dark half of the year caring for the departed, while her mother, Demeter, mourns her loss.

In Her sadness, Demeter calls a halt to the growth of all new life. The trees become barren, reflecting her sadness. At the emergence of spring, Kore returns and brings with her all the aspects of the young maiden in flower. The Maiden Goddess of Spring is reborn from the Earth. She emerges from the confines of winter, bursting with flower and budding greenery.

Her mother is overjoyed. It is this spirit of reunion and renewal that we feel when we ourselves discover spring! The leap of our hearts, the urges to make new everything around us, garden planning, a magnificent breath of fresh air to our souls!

Hail Kore, Child of Spring!

Persephone by Mary B. Kelly

Deanne Quarrie. D. Min. is a Priestess of The Goddess. She is the author of five books. She is the founder of the Apple Branch and Beyond the Ninth Wave where she teaches courses in Feminist Dianic Witchcraft, European Witchcraft and Druidic Shamanism. She mentors those who wish to serve others in their communities. She is also an Adjunct Professor at Ocean Seminary College and is the founder of Global Goddess, a worldwide organization open to all women who honor some form of the divine feminine.



Book Reviews

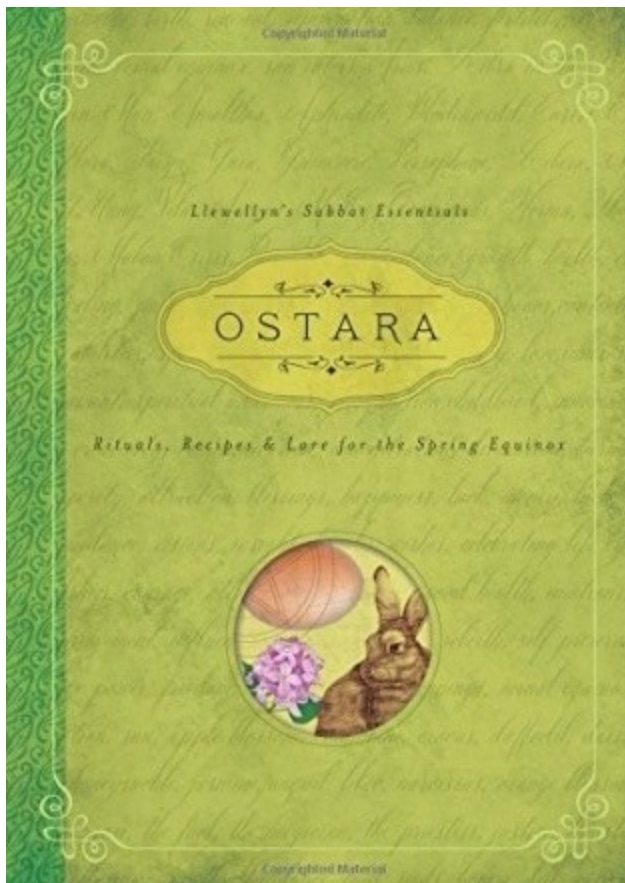
Ostara by Kerri Connor

Review by Dawn Thomas

Publisher: Llewellyn Publications

Release date: January 8, 2015

208 pages



This book is a part of the Sabbat Essentials and begins with a tour through the wheel of the year. The author also explains the difference hemispheres.

The book is divided into six chapters.

The first chapter is called Old Ways. She describes how the equinox is calculated. She also includes a timeline for the connection of Eostre with hares and shows how a tradition was born. She continues this chapter with descriptions of sacred sites that mark the Equinox. She includes the Celts, Druids, Malta, Mayans and Angkor Wat. The author also includes the relationship between Ostara and other holidays and deities that are honored by various religions. She also describes how Ostara was thought to be the celebration of the New Year.

The second chapter is New Ways. The author describes the newness of the season, the symbols of spring, and seasonal activities. She mentions kite flying is a perfect activity to honor the season. Other activities involve

eggs like egg rolls, hunts and races. She continues the chapter by detailing the different ways Pagans celebrate Ostara.

The third chapter is Spells and Divination. There are many types of spells from simple candle spells to rituals. She includes divinations with eggs, flowers, and leaves. She also talks about the use of Tarot cards, readings, and spreads.

The fourth chapter is Recipes and Crafts. I enjoy learning about different foods and drinks associated with Sabbats especially if it is a new recipe or a twist on an old one. For me, I cannot wait to try the recipes with honey: honey cake, honey ginger carrots and honey lime scallops. The next section of the chapter addressed crafts. There are examples of eggshell plant pots and terrariums. She also gives suggestions for colors to decorate.

The fifth chapter is Prayers and Invocations. The first recommendation is to meditate and she provides several meditations for the reader to use. This is especially helpful to those new to meditation. This section is followed by prayers and invocations to work with different deities.

The sixth chapter is Rituals of Celebration. She begins this chapter with the purpose of ritual for Ostara. She then provides examples of a ritual for a large group and one for two people. For people that find it difficult to write rituals, these examples will come in handy and may help them write future rituals.

The back of the book has correspondences related to Ostara, and suggestions for further reading. She provides references for books and online sources. This gives the reader a multitude of options in finding additional information.

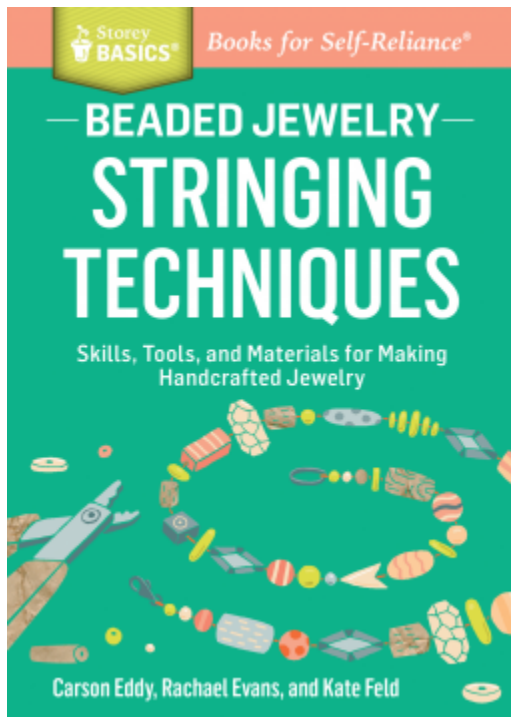
Beaded Jewelry Stringing Techniques by Carson Eddy Rachael Evans and Kate Feld

Review by Dawn Thomas

Storey Basics Series

Storey Publishing, LLC

88 Pages



As a budding beader I was excited to find the Storey Basics series. I have been beading for many years but have only completed simplistic projects. This book involves stringing beads onto stringing material. Each chapter has tech tips. The book has many ideas for creating assorted pieces from necklaces to bracelets and more.

The authors go into great detail on beading materials in the first chapter. The location of the bead hole depends on various positions or their uses. The deciding factors are shape and how the bead hangs. The authors describe the different types of glass beads. Another section describes the different gemstones and their qualities. The following section describes the types and qualities of metal beads, findings and clasps. I was not aware of the different cultures and traditions of making metal beads. Another section discusses beads made of natural materials like wood, bone, and horn.

Chapter two discusses the different materials used for stringing from nylon to natural materials. Chapter three explains the differences in findings and clasps. I must admit I was unaware of many of these terms. It is nice to put names to some of the things in my bead box. Chapter four lists a variety of tools that should be in every jewelry maker's toolbox. There are assorted pliers and cutters. There are also specialty tools including calipers, measuring tapes and boards.

Chapter five explains the importance of planning out jewelry projects and tips for making jewelry as gifts. There is also a list showing the number of different bead sizes needed for specific lengths. This is extremely important to make sure you have enough beads for your project. The last chapter puts it all together. Now you can complete your first beading project or the one you started but never finished.

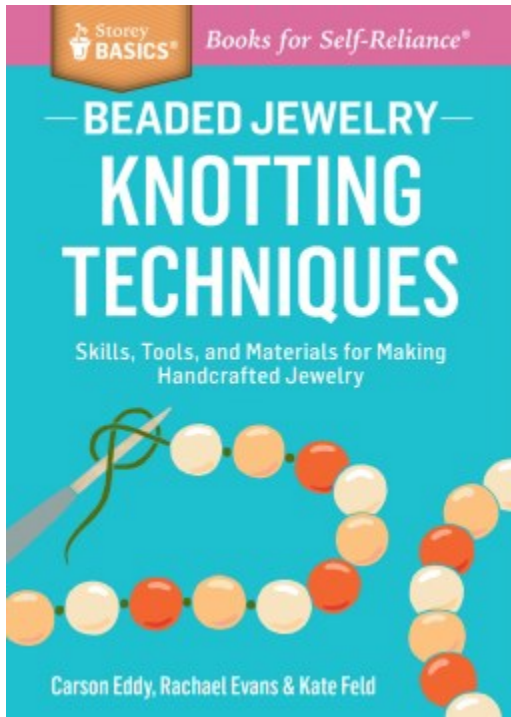
Beaded Jewelry Knotting Techniques by Carson Eddy Rachael Evans and Kate Feld

Review by Dawn Thomas

Storey Basics Series

Storey Publishing, LLC

88 Pages



This is the second book I read in the Storey Basics Beaded Jewelry series. I learned quite a bit in the first book and the information continues into this installment. The first chapter gives details on how to tie proper knots in nylon, silk and other cord material. The authors make recommendations on specific types of cords depending on beads and use. This book is a valuable addition to anyone interesting in improving their knot techniques.

The second chapter covers ends and clasps. This includes basket and side-closing bead tips, bullion and different crimp findings. There are recommendations on specific clasps depending on the type of jewelry, bead and use.

As in the first book, chapter three details the type of tools needed for knotting. The authors recommend common tools but also specialized knotting tools that may or not be in your current toolbox. They also recommend inspecting your tools for wear or damage. Using these tools will make it easier for you to complete a project.

Chapter four describes the different types of knots. Different knots are required depending on the material used. I really appreciate the tech tips in the chapter since I have a tendency of working too tightly. I was not aware of all the different types of knots. I thought a knot was a knot was a knot but I was wrong. The authors continue to instruct on the proper techniques to attach bead tips to cover knots. In chapter three the authors talk about tools but they go into more detail on how to use the tools to create the proper knot. Next they show how to create the same knots but without the tools.

The last chapter is dedicated to the types, quality and care of pearls. The authors cover the history of pearls, the different varieties and locations found. I found the chapter particularly interesting since pearls are one of my favorites. I was not aware of the names for the numerous shapes. The authors also include proper treatment and care of pearls.

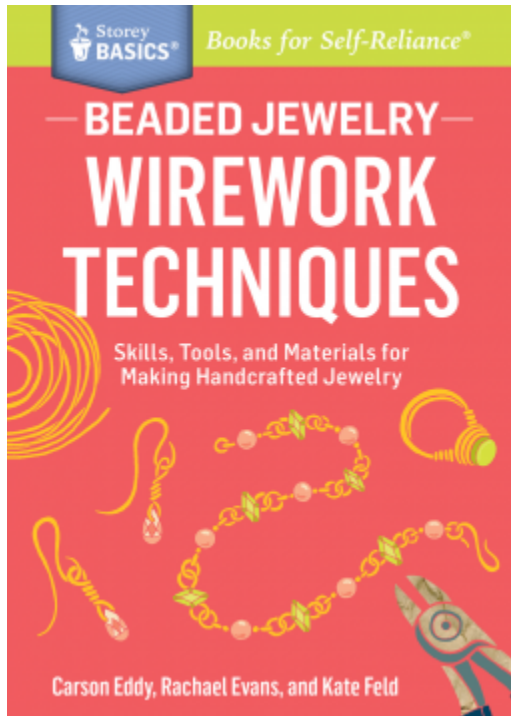
Beaded Jewelry Wirework Techniques by Carson Eddy Rachael Evans and Kate Feld

Review by Dawn Thomas

Storey Basics Series

Storey Publishing, LLC

89 Pages



This is the third book in the series I have read. The other two included stringwork and knotwork. Working with wire is a natural progression when making jewelry. There are several projects I wanted to make but did not know how to begin. This book provided me the knowledge I need to begin and the confidence to finish.

Chapter one covers the basics on wire. The authors start with the history of wirework going back to the Egyptians around 6000 BCE. There are different types of wire and gauges.

In chapter two the authors discuss the different types of chains and composition. Jewelers use chain as accents, extenders or the foundation of a jewelry piece. There is certainly a variety of types of chain including single, links, rollo, Figaro, belcher and bar.

Chapter three tells you everything you need to know about findings. These include clasps, earrings and an assortment of other metal items. There is a description on each type of finding. The most common type of clasp is the lobster claw but others range from simplistic clasps to more complex barrels and hooks. A detailed description of the different types of ear wires is also included.

Chapter four continues with the proper tools needed when working with wire. These include common tools along with specialty tools like shapers, blocks, jigs and polishing products. Chapter five details the different techniques working with wire. The assortment includes wraps, jump rings, split rings and links. There are many ways to wrap wire and it is dizzying to think of all of them. The images are easy to follow and make the process less intimidating. At the end of the book is an appendix listing the different types of metals.

Regular Features & Columns

From Belladonna's Garden: Violet by Dawn Thomas



"That which above all yields the sweetest smell
in the air is the violet."

—Sir Francis Bacon

For this issue I was drawn to the violet. I have to say I selected the violet because of its cute and sunny face. It is the promise of spring right around the corner. But unbeknownst to me the violet was trying to tell me something. Many of you know I have been ill and in the hospital with bacterial pneumonia. I am finally turning the bend and feel I am getting better. It has been a hard climb back and a few times I thought I would be going back to the hospital. Today I opened a few of my herb books so I could begin working with the violet and what I found could have knocked me over. Violets are used for respiratory conditions!

Violets (*Viola odorata* L)

Other names: common violet, sweet violet, blue violet, wild violet, viola, bioleta, and violette.

Family name: *Violaceae*

Characteristics

The species name *odorata* refers to the intense aroma the violet produces. Violets are originally from Europe where they are found under trees in forests. The variety here in Florida like full sun and thrive in any soil. The colors of the flowers range from the traditional purple to white depending on the variety. The plants grow in small clumps with flowers on long stems that have a hook shape. The violet is a perennial plant that can grow to about 6 inches tall. The flowers have five petals. After the flowers die off the tiny seeds are in small pods. In France, Germany and Holland, it is known as the Flower of March because of its blooming period.



Culinary Uses

Violets can be made into ices, jams, syrups, cakes and wines. They can be added to soups and salads. They can also be candied for a sweet treat. There are two ways to make candied violets (probably more than that but I only know two).

Candied Violets (egg-white version)

Ingredients

Violet flowers with stems
1 egg white (room temperature)
Confectionery sugar

Directions:

Wash flowers very gently and allow to dry on paper towels or wire rack. Use a fine brush to paint each flower with the egg white. Cover each flower completely. Since this step is messy, you may want to do this over a covered countertop for easy cleanup. Sprinkle the sugar over the petals. Make sure each is well covered with sugar. Cut off stems with scissors. Allow the sugar to set on the flowers for at least 24 hours.

Candied Violets (sugar and water version – no egg-white)

Ingredients

Violet flowers with stems
1-1/2 cups water
1 cup granulated sugar
1/4 tsp almond extract or 1 tsp rosewater (optional)
Confectionery sugar (to sprinkle)

Directions:

Wash flowers very gently and allow to dry on paper towels or wire rack. Heat sugar and water until sugar is completely dissolved. With tweezers, dip each flower in the sugar mixture. Make sure each flower is well covered with sugar mixture. Using scissors, cut off stems. Set on waxed paper or covered surface and let dry in a cool place.

Medicinal Uses

Violets have been used medicinally since ancient times. The Greeks used it as a cardio tonic for gout. It was also used externally for stomach pain and to heal wounds. Currently violets are mainly used for its mucilage properties. It has a soothing, antitussive and anti-inflammatory properties. It is used in numerous respiratory conditions including bronchitis, cough, fever, cold, flu, and asthma. The roots,



flowers and leaves can be used to make teas, decoctions and infusions. The dried roots are best for bronchitis and the flowers are best coughs and colds. Because of my recent illness, I have been taking 40 drops of violet tincture in 2 ounces of water 2-3 times a day between meals.

Violets are also good for digestive tract concerns. For example, a spoonful of dried flowers in a cup of water is good for constipation and gastritis.

Violet flowers are rich in quercetin and rutin flavonoids. Quercetin is a plant pigment and has antioxidant and anti-inflammatory effects. It is used for treating circulatory and respiratory problems along with different types of inflammation. A few studies believe it can improve athletic performance. Rutin is found in some fruits and vegetables and is believed to strengthen blood vessels and prevent strokes. It can also be used to ease bruising.

Caution Note: Quercetin should not be taken if a person is also taking blood thinners and corticosteroids as it could lead to heart palpitations.



Violet Ointment

Ingredients

- 2 ounces lard
- Handful of fresh leaves

Directions

Heat the lard in a pan over medium heat. I have a small slow cooker that I use for my herbal needs. When the lard becomes liquid add the fresh leaves. Slow boil for 60 minutes then remove from heat. Strain the leaves out and pour in dark containers and store in a dry cool area. Use a cloth to apply the ointment to painful area.

Violet Salve



Ingredients

- Olive oil (enough to cover the leaves in the pot)
- 4 tablespoons beeswax
- Handful of fresh leaves
- Tincture of benzoin: one ounce per quart of salve (optional)

In a large pot simmer the fresh leaves in olive oil for about 20 minutes. In a separate pan melt the beeswax. When the oil and wax are the same temperature, pour the wax into the oil. Stir together. Strain and pour into containers. Store in a cool dry place.

Folklore, Mythology and Magical Uses

In a Roman myth, the first violet sprang from the blood of Attis who killed himself for Cybele. Jupiter changed his lover Io into a cow to protect her from Juno. Wherever the cow travelled violets sprouted so she would have food to eat. Another version involves Zeus and Hera but in this version it is Hera that changes Io into a cow. Zeus then changed her into a violet. It is said Napoleon gave violets to Josephine every year for their anniversary.

Magical properties of the violet include protection, love, lust, luck, wishes, peace, and healing. Violets are thought to bring luck to a person that carries them. They are also associated with love and new beginnings and appropriate for weddings and births. If you gather the first violet in the spring a wish will be granted. Violets were carried in ancient times to calm nerves and keep peace. They also aid in prophetic dreams and visions and stimulate creativity. The leaves provide protection from evil. Violet leaves worn in a green sachet will help heal wounds and prevent the wounds from getting worse.

Spells/Charms

Heal a Heart Charm: To overcome sadness from unrequited love, carry a waxed or pressed violet close to your heart.

Open Heart Spell: Violets are associated with love and new beginnings. To make sure your heart is open to receive love hold a violet in the palm of your hand and say:

*"Let my heart be ready to fly,
Soaring high without any fear.
When the time is right for me,
My heart will be ready and near."*

Peace Charm: To have a peaceful negotiation place dried leaves in a green pouch and wear in a pocket or carry in a purse.

Peace Spell: Living violets are said to bring peace to both the living and the dead. Plant them wherever you want to be surrounded by tranquility saying,

*"Where these flowers are sown,
Bring some peace.
Where the flowers bloom
Stress will ever cease."*

As a craft, violets can be pressed and retain their vibrant colors. To create a wreath tie violet stems together and wear it on the head.

Photography by Dawn Thomas

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Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas is a High Priestess and Elder of The Apple Branch, a Dianic Tradition. She is the editor and book reviewer for the Oracle and was the Treasurer for The Global Goddess, a non-profit organization. She recently graduated from the University of Florida fulfilling a lifelong goal of completing her college education. She has been published in several magazines for her paper crafting designs. She is the owner of Belladonna's Garden and makes homemade soaps. She is an avid gardener and lives in Florida with husband.

Her Blog: <http://becomingbelladonna.blogspot.com/>

Treasures of the Cailleach's Apron by Deanne Quarrie

I would like to talk a bit about energy balancing using gemstones and crystals. A good basic set to begin doing this work are the seven chakra stones and four larger crystal points. This wonderful gift can be offered to others with just you doing the work alone or as a group practice. I love it when several of us do it together for each other. I suggest choosing the stones by their colors at first. Later you can become more specific with the properties of individual stones.

The idea is not to heal a specific ailment but rather to create an energy balance and healthy flow throughout the body so that blockages and obstructions can move on out and allow for the body to naturally heal itself.

So have your friend lie down on whatever surface you have that will be comfortable. You may have a massage table, a bed, or a yoga mat or comforter on the floor. It is always nice to have dimmed lights, a candle burning and some soft relaxing music playing. Be careful with scents as you don't always know what others can tolerate.

I am going to describe this as a group practice but you can always improvise to do alone. Let's say there are three of you (for me the perfect number). You, to direct energy from top to bottom or bottom to top and one on each side for energy flow side to side. Once the person you are working on is comfortable and you are ready to go, stand in a circle, basically where each will be standing or kneeling during the healing. Create a nice bubble of protection and light around yourselves and your patient. Set the tone of relaxation, keeping your voices quiet and soft. Say a few words of prayer or call upon a goddess, if you like to assist you in this work. You can state your purpose and ask for guidance.

Next place these stones (as a beginning – you can always intuitively select more as well) – the seven chakra stones: a red one at the base chakra (at the pubic bone), and orange one at the sacral center (just below the navel), a yellow one mid waist for the solar plexus, a green or pink one at the heart, a turquoise or light blue stone at the throat chakra, an indigo blue stone (or an amethyst) on the third eye and an amethyst (or a clear quartz crystal) directly on the mat at the top of the head.





Place your four crystals, one at the head, pointing toward the head and one at the feet, pointing toward the feet. Then one on either side, again pointed toward the body. Do all of this quietly without conversation unless it is to ask your patient if they are comfortable. I have twenty or thirty very small crystal points that I often place all around the body as well! But these are extra!

Now the work begins. The technique I like to use is simplified polarity therapy, in that energy is directed in a cross flow across the body, done by those standing or kneeling at the sides and then you can send energy from the head to the feet or from the feet to the head, depending on how you feel it is needed. You would work

independently and those at the sides work as a team. They will want to cross the body. Here is an example: place one hand on the hip and then one hand on the opposite shoulder. The other person does the same from her side. This creates two cross-patterns at once. Touch points in the crossover work would be feet, knees, hips and shoulders. Those on the sides work together moving their hands at the same time. A rhythm will be developed in this quite easily.

To begin, you want to open yourself to receive energy, for it is not your energy that you will work with but that given to you. You become the channel and direct the energy. Don't worry if you don't feel it – just ask for it and open to it and then mentally see it coming in, moving to where you direct it. I like to bring it to my heart first and cover it up in love! Then send it out to my hands. There are two places you want to seek this energy, first through the ground from the Earth, the cool soothing energy of the Mother. Then reach out mentally into the universe above you and bring in the warm healing energy of the sun. See and feel these energies swirling inside you, increasing in their power as they come together.

Then begin. Go where your instinct tells you to go. Always be very careful to ask if you may touch their body or if they would prefer your hands to be just above them. Either way works just as well.

Also never touch any personal area on the body. Stay above or below the breasts and never below the pubic bone. Consciously see the energy moving in your patient – sense where it is needed. You will be working at the head and feet. At the head you can cover the ears, the face (careful of breathing), touch the back of the head by cupping it and also just sending energy straight down the body to the feet. At the feet you work with the soles of the feet, the ankles



and the arches as well as sending it directly up to the head.

It is important to make each movement easy and soft, nothing fast or jerking. Check in occasionally to ask how she is feeling. I would say to allow perhaps 30 minutes for this. When you are done, quietly sit down and allow your patient to relax for a few minutes and not get up too quickly. Once she is up and alert, offer a nice refreshing glass of water. Once you have done this a few times you will feel like a pro and you will know just what is needed! It is one of the most loving things you can offer a friend.

Once you are done and everyone is gone, energetically clean all your stones and carefully put them away.



Deanne Quarrie, D. Min. is a Priestess of The Goddess. She is the author of five books. She is the founder of the Apple Branch and Beyond the Ninth Wave where she teaches courses in Druidism, Celtic Shamanism, and Feminist Dianic Wicca and mentors those who wish to serve others in their communities. Deanne is also an Adjunct Professor at Ocean Seminary College and is the founder of Global Goddess, a worldwide organization open to all women who honor some form of the divine feminine.

Pagan Every Day Megalesia by Barbara Ardinger, PhD

April 4th

The rites of Cybele were so bloody that Roman citizens weren't allowed to participate. "So great is the aversion of the Romans," writes Dionysus of Halicarnassus, "to all undue display...lacking in decorum" that a more sedate festival, the Megalesia, was instituted. But by 161 B.C.E. (only forty years after Cybele's black stone and her *galli* arrived in Rome), Megalesian banquets had become so extravagant that the senate decreed a limit to how much a host could spend. The serving of foreign wines was forbidden. Silver dishes could not weigh more than 120 pounds.

The Roman Megalesia opened with a ritual at the temple of the Magna Mater (Cybele), where the priests offered the goddess a dish of simple herbs. This was because, as Ovid wrote, ancient people drank only pure milk and ate only "the herbs that the earth bore of its free will."

Reader, are you a vegetarian? I once had a friend who refused to eat anything with eyes. She was not happy the day she encountered potato eyes. I had another friend who refused to eat anything with a central nervous system. When I brought this up at lunch with pagan friends one day, someone remarked that plants react to stimuli and trees perhaps "talk" to each other.

I'm an omnivore. I have been a vegetarian. For days at a time. But no matter what kind of "-vore" we are, let's be vegetarians today. Go to your garden or the nearest farmers' market and select every green herb that appeals to you. Get red and purple ones, too. Invite your friends and get out a really big salad bowl. Add other veggies, some nuts or seeds, some sprouts, maybe edible flowers. Toss your salad with the best balsamic vinegar and oil you can find. Enjoy your simple banquet.

Pagan Every Day: Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her new book, Secret Lives is a novel of magical realism about elderly women, younger women, good men, and mythological characters including the Green Man and the Norns gone mad in a modern world. Her earlier books are Finding New Goddesses, Quicksilver Moon, Goddess Meditations, and Practicing the Presence of the Goddess. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don't want to embarrass themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of Finding New Goddesses, just send Barbara an email at bawriting@earthlink.net

Pagan Every Day Cerealia by Barbara Ardinger, PhD

April 12th

The eight-day Cerealia, which featured games and other plebeian pleasures, began as the Megalesia ended (which makes me wonder when the Romans got any work done). Ceres, later identified with the Greek Demeter, was originally a southern Italian grain goddess.

About 10,000 B.C.E, hunter-gatherers in the Near East begin using sickles with bone handles and flint blades to harvest grain. Marija Gimbutas tells us that a food-producing economy was established in the Aegean basin between 8000 and 7000. By 6500, Greece and other western Mediterranean lands supported a "full-fledged Neolithic economy" with domesticated sheep, goats, cattle, pigs, pigeons, and dogs. Neolithic peoples cultivated wheat, barley, vetch, lentils, peas, and flax. These were settled but not sedentary cultures. The Sesklo (northern Greece) and the Starcevo (the Balkans, Romania, and Hungary) cultures had agriculture by 6500. By 5500, farmers in central Europe were growing wheat, barley, rye, mullet, oats, peas, lentils, opium poppies, and flax.

There were farming villages in Egypt by about 5000. A thousand years later, people in Turkestan had domesticated grapes, and the Chinese were cultivating rice. After 3000, olives were being raised in Crete, and maize was being cultivated in the Americas. The olive tree was taken to Italy by colonizing Greeks about 600 B.C.E. and 250 B.C.E, the Romans were introducing farming throughout their empire with ox-drawn plows, irrigation, crop rotation, and the selective breeding of plants.

Even with the growth of city-states in the European Renaissance, Western civilization was largely agricultural until the Industrial Age (late eighteenth century); a majority of soldiers drafted in World War II were farm boys. Today, it is only with the rise of agribusiness that twelve thousand years of agricultural history is being plowed under.

*Pagan Every Day: Finding the Extraordinary in Our Ordinary Lives (RedWheel/Weiser, 2006), a unique daybook of daily meditations, stories, and activities. Her new book, **Secret Lives** is a novel of magical realism about elderly women, younger women, good men, and mythological characters including the Green Man and the Norns gone mad in a modern world. Her earlier books are Finding New Goddesses, Quicksilver Moon, Goddess Meditations, and Practicing the Presence of the Goddess. Her day job is freelance editing for people who don't want to embarrass themselves in print. Barbara lives in southern California. To purchase a signed copy of Finding New Goddesses, just send Barbara an email at bawriting@earthlink.net*

Moon Schedule Spring Equinox to Beltane

By Dawn "Belladonna" Thomas

(Times are Eastern Time)

New Moon – March 20th: 5:36 a.m.

2nd Quarter – March 27th: 3:43 a.m.

Full "Wind" Moon – April 4th: 8:06 a.m.

4th Quarter – April 11th: 11:44 p.m.

New Moon – April 19th: 2:57 p.m.

2nd Quarter – April 25th: 7:55 p.m.

Moon Void of Course Schedule

Date	Starts	Ends
March 20 th	5:36 a.m.	6:28 a.m.
March 21 st	6:51 p.m.	March 22 nd 6:40 a.m.
March 23 rd	10:25 a.m.	March 24 th 9:23 a.m.
March 26 th	8:35 a.m.	3:45 p.m.
March 28 th	9:58 p.m.	March 29 th 1:48 a.m.
March 30 th	9:57 a.m.	March 31 st 2:12 p.m.
April 2 nd	5:01 a.m.	April 3 rd 3:07 a.m.
April 4 th	11:59 a.m.	April 5 th 3:04 p.m.
April 7 th	4:42 p.m.	April 8 th 1:08 a.m.
April 9 th	1:42 p.m.	April 10 th 8:47 a.m.
April 12 th	4:15 a.m.	1:44 p.m.
April 14 th	3:45 p.m.	4:12 p.m.
April 15 th	5:37 p.m.	April 16 th 5:00 p.m.
April 18 th	2:57 p.m.	5:31 p.m.
April 19 th	7:07 p.m.	April 20 th 7:28 p.m.
April 22 nd	1:38 a.m.	April 23 rd 12:25 a.m.

April 24 th	1:04 p.m.	April 25 th 9:13 a.m.
April 27 th	10:12 a.m.	9:07 p.m.
April 30 th	8:23 a.m.	10:03 a.m.

Planting Days

March: 22nd, 23rd

April: 6th, 7th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 15th, 16th, 19th, 20th, 23rd, 24th

Harvesting Days

March: None

April: 8th, 9th, 13th, 14th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th



Ask Your Mama by Mama Donna Henes

Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more.

*Ask Your Mama™

Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Spirituality and Didn't Know Who to Ask™

By

©Mama Donna Henes, Urban Shaman

A Question of Mercury in Retrograde

Dear Mama Donna,

For years I have been hearing warnings about Mercury in Retrograde, but I am not sure I understand what that means or why I should be careful. All I know is that all sorts of weird, awful things are supposed to happen. Can you please explain this phenomenon to this astrology neophyte?

Confused and wary in Wisconsin

Dear Confused,

Mercury in retrograde has a very bad rap. I should know. As a Virgo (which is ruled by Mercury) I am usually affected quite profoundly. But over the years I have learned a thing or two about how to survive in one piece, and how to use this potentially frustrating phase in a fruitful manner.

When Mercury is moving direct, our minds tend to work on a functional/forward level. Our actions match our intentions. Our energy is invested in more assertive decision-making and action with less emphasis on retrospection and reflection.

However, we are constantly picking up on unconscious intuitive information, which will surface — if we let it — during the retrograde cycle. And this is a very good thing. We need time to rest and assimilate all the information that we are bombarded with in our techno, multitasking world. A time for our inner wisdom to manifest and guide us to reorganize, rethink, reevaluate, redo, and reboot. This is a crucial and healthy part of the organic, natural flow of life.

The clock and dollar orientation that our culture calls *the real world* is comprised of schedules, deadlines, and to do lists, which don't often accommodate a cycle of introspective reflection and reevaluation. This is why this period can be so brutal for some of us — especially those of us with determined steely goals and agendas.

Mercury, as most of us know, tends to play havoc with the smooth functioning of the technology upon which we depend for our achievements and communication. It also tends to mix up face to face communications and the best laid plans of wo/men. The results are interruptions, snafus, misunderstandings, and mix-ups which interfere with the simplest of projects.

During Mercury in Retrograde, we will need more caution, more care, and a pinch more elbow grease to get things done. This is not a good time to launch or initiate new projects. In trying to do so, we will be pushing off, symbolically, just when the tide is going out, and it will be more of a struggle to make headway with our plans. It is far better to wait until the current is moving with us.

The degree to which we hold onto our need to keep to our schedules, agendas, and plans often equates to the degree in which we find ourselves going bonkers during this time. When we doggedly hold on to our logical, rational structures, we court the "Trickster" element of Mercury, which will fool and frustrate us to no end.

Now is the time that we must surrender our forward leaning push and embrace the lessons of letting go. We must not underestimate the degree to which our psyche can resist change. The abdication of our will/ego to a deeper function of consciousness can be quite a challenge as the retrograde cycle continues. But there is great reward if we manage to do so.

This period is a great time to clear your mind. To go back and complete unfinished projects. To work on reconciling old issues. To tune into your dreams and unconscious thoughts. To listen to your inner wisdom. To open to new ways of thinking and perceiving.

So rather than pushing against the cosmic current, try to take a three week break from our hectic, breakneck speedy ways and allow yourself to slow down. To summon up and sort out the past. To be in the moment. And to savor the NOW.

It can't hurt!

Best blessings of sanity during challenging times,

xxMama Donna

*Are you cyclically confused? In a ceremonial quandary? Completely clueless? Wonder no more. *Send your questions about seasons, cycles, celebrations, ceremonies and spirit to Mama Donna at: CityShaman@aol.com .

Donna Henes is an internationally renowned urban shaman, ritual expert, award-winning author, popular speaker and workshop leader whose joyful celebrations of celestial events have introduced ancient traditional rituals and contemporary ceremonies to millions of people in more than 100 cities since 1972. She has published four books, a CD, an acclaimed Ezine and writes for Beliefnet, The Huffington Post and UPI Religion and Spirituality Forum. Mama Donna, as she is affectionately called, maintains a ceremonial center, spirit shop, ritual practice and consultancy in Exotic Brooklyn, NY where she offers intuitive tarot readings and spiritual counseling and works with individuals, groups, institutions, municipalities and corporations to create meaningful ceremonies for every imaginable occasion.

www.DonnaHenes.net

www.TheQueenOfMySelf.com

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