

One Ring to Rule Them All

What is the art and science behind power objects? From where does their power come? How much power do you need to create one? How much power do you need to “control” one?



The world of symbolism and mythology of J.R.R. Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings is as magical and entertaining as it is reflective of our human experience. Here is a recap of that epic story, as well as ideas on how it relates to our class, Creating Medicine Pieces. If you have questions over this article, we can discuss them during class or on our Facebook site.

The power that Sauron, the Dark Lord, put into the One Ring to Rule Them All – meaning the nineteen other great rings made by elves with knowledge given them by Sauron – was his downfall, for it morphed into attachment, which became an obsession for possession and control. The One Ring mastered the master, whether Sauron held it or not. The Ring was his Achilles Heel. Sauron’s belief that he could not get his power back without getting the One Ring back led to his destruction. Had he given up his need to control, and the One Ring, Sauron may have regained his power, but he did not. Although Sauron poured his will into the One Ring, Tolkien made several references that the Ring had a will of its own, and its will may not have always been compatible with Sauron’s.

All of us create or probably have power objects, which are often referred to as medicine pieces. (I feel the word “medicine” has more utility than power.) It seems a need or intent rises within us to impact our surroundings and wellbeing by transmitting energy into something outside of us. When growing up, we likely had a favorite blanket, toy, piece of clothing or stuffed animal, the attraction to which amused the adults around us, especially as the object(s) became more haggard. To a young child, the more chewed, wet and worn an object, the more security and comfort it provides. From Linus’ blanket, to Samson’s hair, to crystals, religious icons, music, good luck charms, family heirlooms and more, we alter our environment and energy – and our performance – through the intentional alchemy of imbuing so-called inanimate objects with power and belief. In many indigenous circles today, a person’s standing with his or her people is greatly influenced by his or her medicine and the medicine attributed to one’s medicine pieces.

On the other hand, if we are not supposed to give our power away, why would a person of power give his/her power away to an object, as Sauron seemingly did?

Obviously it's a choice, not a necessity. The power of an object may not only come from the person, but can also be inherently present in an object. Ancient wisdom claims all objects are animate, there is no such thing as an inanimate object – and power/energy/medicine can also come from without into an object. Thus, there are three basic sources of power object power: from a person, from the object, itself, and, shall we say, from the spiritual realm, which is so general as to be almost meaningless, yet I think it's good enough for now. In other words, some sort of awareness or consciousness is attracted to the object and energizes it.

In a perfect world, or I should say a perfect power object, these three animating essences work harmoniously and synergistically to create a benevolent emanating essence from the power object. Simply because a person – or a Dark Lord – imbues a medicine piece with intentional energy does not have to mean that power is no longer available to the person if the person no longer has access to the piece. So, we can give power to an object without losing that power. In addition to the three basic sources of power, there are three basic sources of medicine pieces: 1) ones we find or buy, 2) ones we are given, and 3) ones we make.

How does one imbue an object with power? Usually with one's own power, and each of us has enough power to do that. As we are all connected to an inexhaustible source of energy, it is simply not possible to be drained by putting energy into an object, unless we *believe* we actually have given our power away to it in ways we cannot restore. Such an energy drain is usually based on bad intent, or when our actions do not align with our higher purpose, as much as it can be on limiting belief. Sauron, as powerful as he was, believed he had to give his power away to gain control. That didn't work out so well. Despite the dangers posed by Sauron and his Rings to Middle Earth, they may not have been as threatening as the dangers we pose to ourselves today. Our relationships to much of our technology emulate how Sauron identified with the One Ring. We often feel lost without it and overly empowered with it. I feel one of Tolkien's lessons for us about our technological rings of power is to have right relationship with them, which may include destroying them when they morph into something we cannot control.

As far as I can tell, the sorcery Sauron used to create the One Ring and what he taught the elves who forged the nineteen Great Rings are unchronicled. So, it is possible Sauron actually did give his power away to the One Ring in ways that both served and diluted him, yet to me power is much like knowledge. Sharing something does not usually diminish what is being shared. Imbuing an object with our power and intent is the same thing. When done properly, both the person and the piece are enhanced.

Years ago I was given permission to make a canupa, a sacred pipe, by a Lakota elder. The bowl is carved of traditional stone and the stem is from an ash tree. I did my very best to maintain a good intent during the entire creation process. I feel that certain things are more powerfully imbued during their creation in ways that simply cannot come along later. In other words, the act of creation can inject power into an

object that is not available any other time. However, I never felt it took anything from me; quite the opposite actually. Our relationship has grown over time, yet when there are long periods between ceremonial uses, I need to re-establish our connection before there is a re-establishment of power for purpose. I also sense the canupa is alive without me.

Medicine pieces we get rather than create should be energetically cleared so we can be clearly aware of their intended purpose. If that intended purpose does not suit us, we can try to reprogram them for our purposes or move the piece on. Ritualistic and rigorous clearing of such a medicine piece helps assure compatibility between the object and the carrier.

With that said, I would like to offer ways to ritually clear and empower items you would like to use for peace, solace, strength, health and comfort when you need. You may use anything to which you are attracted, however at this point, I suggest you avoid photographs of people you know. A crystal, rock or something comparable that you do not already equate with a person, experience or favorite pet is a good place to start. Or it may be something you make, or have made, for a specific purpose, a purpose you kept in your head, heart and hands as you made it. A rattle is a good example.

I suggest you do a simple rite of self-purification before using your medicine piece. Wash your hands, then smudge yourself with sage, copal or any other traditional incense or fragrance known to make you feel good and purify your energy field. Smudge the area around you or the room you are in, then with good intent, pick up your object and smudge it over your sacred smoke, incense, flowers or whatever appeals to you from your tradition. If you can, open a window while you smudge so the denser energy can leave the room.

If I have an object I used in a healing ceremony for another, or bought from an antique shop or rock shop or gifted to me, I may cover the object in lavender Epsom salts in a ceramic bowl for a few days and nights, leaving it somewhere sunlight and moonlight can also get to the bowl before I use it again. Sometimes I will hide a crystal in a clean running stream or in the rain. Other people will bury medicine pieces in the ground for a while, allowing the earth to draw out all negative energies. The idea is to make the object pure and receptive to your energy and intent, and begin to develop a relationship with the object, keeping in mind it has an inherent awareness. This also helps determine if you and the medicine piece are compatible.

Once the object and I are in a good, clear compatible state, I do deep breathing and get chi energy running strongly between my hands. Here's one way. On inhalation, pull energy in through the top of your skull to the base of your spine. Allow that energy-oxygen to pool and circle in your lower abdomen as you hold your breath for several seconds. On exhalation, pour energy out your hands and forehead/pituitary into the object. Do this deep breathing and energy exhalation for several minutes, visualizing energy going into the object from your hands and forehead. I perceive

light energy coming out of my hands with a lot of amplitude, like water streaming out of a fire hose. If you are barefoot and outside, so much the better. That way you can choose to bring earth energy up your feet, legs and perineum to your center, allow that to pool in your center, and then emit that out your hands into your medicine piece.

This process tends to help wake the medicine piece up and make it sensitive to your intent, as well as make you sensitive to its story and awareness. After cleansing a piece, you may decide to just let the piece sit and let it come to you with its name and purpose, and determine whether that piece is for you. Ask for its name. Tell it yours. Sense its purpose; it will come to you in time. Smudge and energize yourself and your medicine piece(s) as often as you want. As with any relationship, the relationship between you and a power object is a co-creative act and will likely change over time. If an outside animating essence is attracted to your work and medicine piece, you may well become aware of a new infusion of beneficent energy. For instance, before a sweat lodge we may put medicine pieces on the altar outside the lodge. In this way, benevolent spirits can touch, bless and empower those pieces before the spirits join us inside.

Let's talk for a moment about outside volitional energies that may enter a power object. These are what some people question or fear. Think of your medicine piece as being like a flame that attracts a moth, yet we are talking about energies much more powerful than a moth. When we are engaged in medicine work, by "association" we are engaged in spiritual work, that is work with normally unseen forces – energies and entities. The more we work in this arena, the more sensitive we become to what is trying to assist. Consequently, our vibration changes, the vibration of our medicine pieces change and this creates new attraction and curiosity. By staying focused on a benevolent intent for the highest good, without undue efforts to manipulate things solely for a specific result, things, in time, usually turn out all right. Likewise, benevolent spirits can help, but not interfere. This is an excellent *modus operandi* for anyone to follow when doing medicine work.

Everything has a vibration and emits a unique energy. Most of us likely have an experience of using someone else's coat, shirt or other article of clothing and how it felt different from ours. In a martial arts class a while ago, a friend forgot his gi pants, so borrowed a pair from another. Although the pants were clean and identical, my friend noticed how different the pants felt from his. I said "They have Ben's energy in them." He didn't agree with me until he sparred. Later he told me he did one of Ben's "signature moves" several times, a jump spinning back crescent kick, something he could not do well on his own. He said, "It just came out of the pants." This may seem like mere anecdotal evidence, until you get kicked in the head, but people have equated magical outcomes with objects for millennia.

Often, sensitive people intuit as to whether or not a medicine piece they have is for them or not. As Peruvian shaman don Oscar Miro-Quesada so heartfully and artfully says, we are all just "temporary custodians" of these artifacts. We need to realize

that their inherent power is never static, and if we attempt to hold on to them too long, they will resist...even misbehave, so to speak. Misbehavior is often an indication they are ready to move on. Sauron could have avoided a lot of problems had he been strong enough to let the One Ring go or, ideally, destroy it himself and everything else he had made with the intent of controlling others.

We all have helping guides, guardian angels and/or totemic allies. Sometimes they will enter, or simply enter into relationship with, an object with which you have a relationship because they want to help. Sometimes their presence is more palpable than at other times. The thing is, with the animated quality of resonance, based on the intent and relationship with a medicine piece, the field of attraction thus created will really be most appealing to that which wishes to benevolently serve rather than trick or subjugate. Can such trickery happen? Sure, but it is often because the object is not “for you” rather than because of any ulterior motive or influence. In other words, through your intuition, your ritual cleansing of self and a medicine piece, your intended use, your relationship with the piece and how these combine into a resonance, the odds of attracting something less than beneficent are small. Possible, yes, but unlikely. If the unlikely does happen, and an unwanted “something” does come around, usually it is simply a matter of sending it away in no uncertain terms. Then clean and “reprogram” the object again. However, I’ve never found this to be necessary. If you have a real problem with a medicine piece, check with a spiritual elder about it.

Shortly after this summer’s solar eclipse, I wanted to find a special present for a special friend. I couldn’t find exactly what I wanted, but I did find something emblematic of the event for her in a store. However, I was looking for something more. A couple of days later, I went for a hike in an area I know well and paused where the trail crosses a most beautiful spring-fed creek. I did a teeny ceremony there with sage and found a rock in the stream I



Whale Bear Stone

was going to give her. It was fine, but not necessarily “the one.” I’ve been on this trail at least a hundred times, so I know this stream crossing very well. As I got ready to leave, a shimmering object in the water slightly upstream caught my attention. I got into a Gollum-like crouch, reached into the water and pulled out a stone. I was mystified, mesmerized by it. To me it looked exactly like a whale, one of my friend’s most beloved animals. Looked at another way it appeared to be the head and upper body of a bison bull. And, from the opposite end, it appeared to be a grizzly bear, with its head down and rump up in the air. Even more amazing is that my friend has a strong relationship with each of these animals. Obviously it was for her, not for

me, and I gladly gave it to her. When I did, she saw all three animals: the whale, then the bear, and finally the buffalo.

I am sure she will develop a relationship with this stone. Who knows what stories and secrets it has? How and why did I reach in and pull it out that day? Why was it shining under the water, but dull brown after I took it out? To me, it is truly one of the nicest things I've ever given anyone and it all happened so perfectly. I feel my intent, the stream, the stone – and the eclipse - all worked together to bring this about. Most of us have similar experiences. Unlike Sauron, I didn't lose anything when this totem went out of my hands, but then again, it was never meant for me.

The power of power objects grows with proper care and use and relationship. Through their emanating essence, they can maintain their charge and a harmonious environment when we are less than at our best, and through their medicine buffer us from negative influences, including our own negative thoughts. Clear quartz crystals are extremely good for this. I feel power objects can pull us out of the doldrums purely through their intent to help us. And, when we are on top of our game, they offer added power in whatever form best serves, be it for healing, intuition, guidance, knowledge, wisdom or right action.

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