

# Scrying - How to Practice the Ancient Art of Second Sight

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Scrying, also known by the names of *hydromancy*, *crystal gazing* and *oculomancy*, is the ancient art of revelation.

Traditionally, scrying has been portrayed through the popular image of the psychic gazing over her crystal ball. But scrying, like all esoteric practices, is not about “seeing the future.” The future can’t be seen, it can only be speculated based on present moment information.

The word “scrying” actually comes from the Old English word *descry* which means “to make out dimly” or “to reveal.” Therefore, scrying is about revealing the unseen through the use of our in-born second sight. Second sight is our capacity to see things that can’t usually be perceived through our five senses.

Scrying was first mentioned in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century in an Ancient Persian text called the “[Shahnameh](#).” Later, as Christianity rose to power, scrying was outlawed as a work of the “devil.” And yet almost every culture has used some form of scrying: from the Native American’s observation of smoke, to the Egyptians use of oil gazing to gain wisdom. These days, scrying has largely evolved into a pagan practice. But you don’t have to be pagan to experiment with it.

**Scrying helps us to get in touch with our unconscious minds: the realm of the soul.** As such, it can be used as a powerful form of self-understanding and psychoanalysis. If you're struggling to find direction, meaning or purpose in life, scrying could be a wonderful way to get in touch with your core needs, dreams and goals.

Usually, scrying is performed with the use of a reflective surface, such as a mirror, water or crystal globe. However, there are many other forms. Here are nine common types:

**Wax** – This is done by dripping wax onto a water surface. The scryer then interprets the images or words formed from the dried wax.

**Cloud** – Also called cloud gazing, this form of scrying involves observing clouds and the shapes they form. This is used to gather special information or knowledge.

**Mirror** – This is perhaps the most popular form of scrying. Also called catoptromancy, this involves relaxing your vision and staring into a mirror. After a while, images and scenes will begin to emerge.

**Water** – Staring into water, images can be perceived after a time. Objects such as pebbles can also be dropped into the water to create ripples. These ripples are then interpreted.

**Oil** – This form of scrying can involve pouring oil into a dish, rubbing it on the body, or coating a cup/plate. The scryer then observes the light reflected off the oil for information.

**Fire** – Possibly the most ancient form of scrying, this type of scrying involves gazing into fiery flames for visions. This can be done through the use of a simple candle or oil lamp. Bonus points if it's a bonfire!

**Smoke** – As smoke rises from fire, its ethereal shapes present spiritual messages.

**Crystal** – This is the stereotypical form of scrying, but nonetheless very effective. It involves the use of a crystal object (usually a ball or globe) to gather special meaning.

**Eye** – This is unusual! Also called soul gazing, this form of scrying involves looking deep within a person's eyes and observing the reflections.

As we can see, we've practiced unknowingly many types of scrying in childhood and throughout our adult lives!

## How to Practice Scrying



For this demonstration, I've chosen water scrying, also known as *hydromancy*. I particularly like water because it is symbolic of consciousness, so it seems very fitting to use it for the purpose of conscious revelation.

You're welcome to copy my method or create one of your own. Also, don't feel restricted by water, especially if it doesn't "call" to you. Experiment with many of the other scrying techniques I described above.

What you will need:

- A bowl (preferably black or natural)
- Water (preferably natural)
- 1 or 2 candles
- Lighter/matches
- Crystal/small object
- Table
- Darkness (e.g. a room at night)

Optional:

- Energy cleansing item (like incense)

## 1. Fill your bowl with water



I bought this wooden bowl at the thrift store for \$1. I prefer wood, but you can also use a dark (navy or black) plastic, marble or glass bowl. Dark bowls are recommended because they allow you to concentrate better.

You can put your bowl out in the rain to collect natural rainwater (like I did above). Or you can fill your bowl with mineral water. If all else fails, tap water should be fine.

## 2. Put your crystal in the bowl



Prepare your space. You can water scry indoors or outdoors. Just ensure you have a clear space to put your bowl and a candle or two. I chose this crystal quartz as the focal point for my water scrying. Quartz is said to have balancing, amplifying and focusing properties. You can choose any object you like (it doesn't have to be a crystal). Ensure that the object is right in the centre of the bowl: it will serve as a point on which your eyes can focus.

## 3. Energetically cleanse the area



There are many ways of clearing the energy in your scrying space. Some options include: burning herbs or incense, using sound (like a singing bowl or tuning fork), clapping your hands, visualizing white light, sprinkling salt, or using (organic and authentic) essential oils. Why cleanse your space? It helps you to remove stagnant energy that may impede your scrying.

#### **4. Light the candle/s**



Light your candles and place them either side of your bowl. The light of the candles must be able to reflect off the surface of the water.

## 5. Enter a trance-like state



Trance is an altered state of consciousness. Almost every culture known to man has had its own trance rituals. These may include chanting, drum beating, dancing, singing, fasting, the use of psychoactive plants and visualization. In your case, simply meditating may help you quickly enter into a trance-like state. I like to focus on my breath while listening to tribal music.

Remember, all of this needs to be done in a darkened room preferably at night. You could also try scrying outside as the sense of expansion could contribute favorably to your experience.

## 6. Stare into the water



After you have achieved an altered state of consciousness, you can then gaze into the bowl. You'll be able to tell when you've reached an altered state when you feel peaceful, expanded, alert, focused and connected.

In order to scry, your eyes need to be relaxed. The crystal (or other object) in the center of the bowl will help to focus your eyes. You might also like to seat yourself in a comfortable position, as sometimes scrying can take a while. Be patient. Often it takes many tries to master scrying.

Next, hold your intention in mind. For example, your intention may be to uncover a hidden gift of yours, or perhaps to discover what is holding you back from achieving a dream. As you gaze into the water, let your eyes soften. Relax your entire face, from your mouth to your ears. Breathe deeply from your stomach. At times images may come and go briefly. Don't try to hold on to them – this will make it much harder to scry. Instead, allow all images and sensations to come and go freely. The goal is to become a passive observer rather than an active participant. Once again, this can take practice.

After a while, your mind may start to wander. Allow it to. However, ensure that your eyes stay focused within the bowl. Eventually a word, image or even entire scene may play out before you. This is normal. Once you "feel" that your scrying session is over, you may like to ruminate on the words, images or scenes that were presented to you. What were they trying to reveal? Sometimes you'll be able to immediately understand the nature of the visions presented to you, but not always. Look out for symbolism, analogy and metaphor.