



element three: PURIFYING

PRACTICING THE 13 ELEMENTS OF ALCHEMY

1 SIMPLIFY. Few things really matter. And it's easy for them to be obscured and crowded out by the things that don't. Soon there are no resources or time for the *important things* because they're completely allocated to all the *other things*—the urgent and noisy things. Purification is a way of life where we reduce out what's non-essential so the essential can flourish. The result is not austerity, but abundance.

2 MOVE TOWARD. The worst type of purification is a violent pursuit where we attempt to beat out what's unwanted. The most potent purification is surprisingly subtle. It happens as we attune to higher energies and potentials. What is incompatible gently falls away. One day we realize it's gone—not because we pursued it into oblivion, but because it no longer resonates with us. Purification is less about *pushing away* than *moving toward*.

3 BUILD INTERNAL FIRE. We build internal fire when we are one minded in the midst of that which is uncomfortable or hard. We concentrate force as we maintain constancy and persist. Parts of our self burn away and others clarify—just as fire refines gold by separating out dross. It's in the midst of that which is fiery that we emerge most brilliant and luminescent. And it's here where we learn not just to muscle through, but to inhabit a place of delight.

4 DE-CONDITION. A whole array of things may exist just under the surface of our normal awareness. But we rarely see them because we're fully absorbed in the buzzing intensity of everything going on around us. It's only in the pause, the space of nothingness, that it rises into our awareness. De-conditioning is a purification process where we seek out an empty interval, a literal or metaphoric desert, so what is normally invisible can become more apparent.

5 TAP THE ROOT. The root of an organization often has purity and power that is later lost. Over time, contamination occurs as trappings and trimmings intermingle with essence and essentials. Structure grows and special interests take hold. Memory fades and purpose drifts. Unless continuously purified, the organization declines into obsolescence. What we want is the *original energy constantly in motion*. Not a return to old forms, but a sequence of new ones, each as pure as the initial impulse.

6 ADOPT A BEGINNER'S MIND. Un-learning is often more important than learning. It's frequently not what we don't know that prevents forward progression, but what we think we know and refuse to release. Beginner's mind is the utter openness we have when first encountering a thing. It's possible to return to this freshness even as we learn. We loosen mental models, ask original questions, look in unsuspecting places, and perceive essence. This purification frees us from *knowledge blindness*.

7 CLEAR AND RELEASE. The things that muddle and mire us may have occurred long ago. But they feel as if they happened moments ago. They're just as alive—just as present and palpable. *What is unreleased lives forever*. And grows stronger each time we replay and rehash it. Purification is a practice of reversing the energy. So if there is anger or regret, we practice holding an intentional space of blessing. And do it again and again as many times as needed. Ultimately this removes the load and enables us to move forward pristinely. What we clear, we don't later carry.

8 APPROACH MULTI-DIMENSIONALLY. In alchemy, purity is key to potency. Purification practices may be *physical* as we strengthen and vitalize the body; *emotional* as we refine out turbulence or anxiety; *mental* as we clarify thought patterns; or *spiritual* as we connect into greater purpose. Distortion on any one level impacts all the others—as you know if you've ever been “worn out” from worry. Often we seek power and think we can forget about purity. But in alchemy, power arises out of purity.

9 STRIVE FOR COHERENCE. Many of us become adept at portraying something different than we're actually thinking or feeling or doing. This creates a kind of incoherence and dilution. The more we bring each part of ourselves into alignment, the more potent we become—as individuals and in groups.