

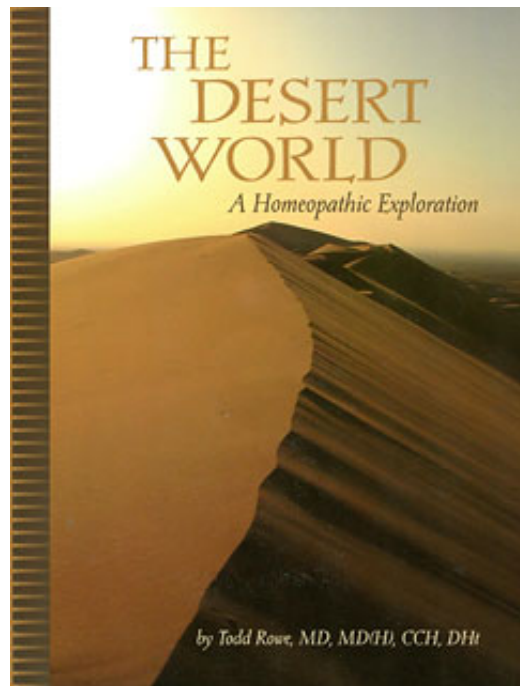
Todd Rowe The Desert World

Reading excerpt

[The Desert World](#)

of [Todd Rowe](#)

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Foreword

The desert is one of the earth's greatest treasures. It is a vast world, deep and complex: a place of great mystery and romance, of expanded vistas and extreme conditions, of sudden bursts of awesome beauty - or equally sudden death. Here water is precious and life shapes itself to the harsh reality of prolonged drought, blistering heat and bitter cold. For man, the desert way is nomadic; a never-ending cyclical journey, meandering and wandering through seemingly immeasurable stretches of desolation to isolated pockets of shocking abundance.

As homeopaths, we possess a unique tool or window into the natural world. Like folklore and mythology, homeopathy can speak to the true nature of things, offering us a way to touch on the spirit or *anima* of everything in our natural world. When we learn to speak with the animals, plants, and rocks that make up the environment around us, they are no longer separate from or subordinate to us. They become our teachers, friends and companions, each one having a profound story to tell.

This book attempts to evoke the images, feelings, stories, sensations and movements that are desert and show how they play out in the remedies that come from the desert and the people who need them. The sensations and movements are especially important because they touch on the deepest level of our understanding and experience. You cannot reach the desert with a book, just as you cannot witness it in a single visit. To truly experience the desert you must become it. It is a never-ending nomadic journey.

We can be profoundly touched and healed by our connection with the desert. It has the power to burn away that which is extraneous and unnecessary, leaving behind only what is vital. Similarly, desert medicines have the capacity to transform; to change that which is of little or no value into something that has tremendous healing power. Desert medicines offer the promise of cures for many ills including diabetes, cancer, tuberculosis, attention deficit disorder, depression and autism.

Call of the Desert

Callings speak to a deep part within us. The nature of these callings remains largely a mystery, not easily described in words or captured well in feelings. Heeding the call brings individuals into harmony with their inner nature and their natural world. While some find their callings in their work or art, others find they must return to a certain place or environment in order to be at peace.

Different environments speak to different people. Those who are called to a certain environment may need a remedy from that environment. In part, this is why they hear the call: they require something from that particular environment to complete themselves.

The ancient and elemental powers of the four elements - air, earth, fire and water - can be represented by the four environments of sky, mountain, desert and sea respectively. What is the mystery of the desert, the sea, the sky or the mountains, that exerts such a powerful call? What types of people are called to these different environments?

Individuals drawn to the sea often have an inner feeling of restlessness that is only pacified when at or near the sea. The ocean and its creatures are almost always in motion.

People called to the air can be aviators or avid birders. Pilots have told me that they cannot wait to get back up into the air. Within the stillness of empty space, they find freedom and a sense of belonging that they cannot find on the ground.

Mountain people can be spelunkers or have a fascination with mining or climbing. The mountains draw us up into the spiritual realm; speaking to aspiration and expansion of consciousness. Towering mountains exemplify the brute force of natural processes. Mountain climbing is most often focused on striving and overcoming obstacles with a need to reach the summit.

The desert draws people who feel alienated or who desire isolation because they prefer solitude, serenity and stillness for long periods of time. They are well contained within themselves, preferring wide-open spaces, big skies and brief, extreme or intense experiences. They may suffer from internal chilliness and flee to the desert for its constant warmth. They can be rebels, seeking out a place where the manmade rules are few but those of nature inarguable, unavoidable and strict.

Deserts have so much power for us because they have historically so assiduously avoided by man. They have been places of great mystery and romance. While modern man has begun to populate the deserts in increasing numbers, he exists there in an uneasy truce, altering the landscape to fit his needs rather than submitting to its requirements. As deserts become threatened, we risk losing an essential part of life that is central to our understanding of the natural world and ourselves. The loss of the desert is no less important to us than the loss and destruction of the rain forests or of our oceans.

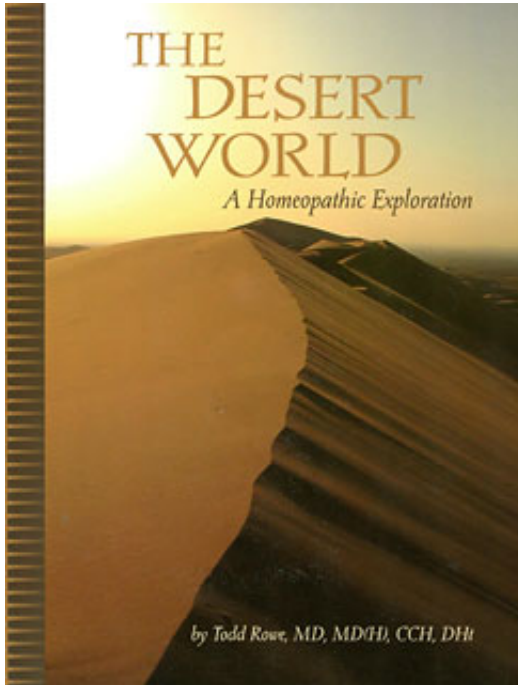
Each of us contains a desert within us. We all possess empty, desolate, isolated, alien, dry, contracted, dark or well-defended parts. Yet with the right conditions, these areas can be suddenly transformed into places of light, fullness and connection with life. Every mineral, plant and animal in the desert has a story to tell. The desert speaks to us if we will listen.

My Love of the Desert

I could not have written this book unless I deeply loved the desert and felt its calling. My first visit to Arizona's Painted Desert at age 8 left an indelible mark upon me. I remember feeling entranced, as if I had stepped into a whole new alien world, alive with color and rich textures. The experience changed me and left a haunting imprint that has called me from afar ever since.

I am a true desert rat. I can leave the desert for brief periods but I only truly feel at home in desert settings. Like a boomerang, I always return. The mystery of the desert provides me with endless fascination and is the place where I feel at peace. Its stark desolation encourages my soul's desire for solitude, silence and contemplation. There I can look deeply into myself; there I can journey for self-knowledge. The desert is my true calling.

—Todd Rowe, Fall 2005



Todd Rowe

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