

Diamonds in the Rough
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It was discovered January 26, 1906, lying above ground; one of thousands of stones heaped into a great pile of slag. John Cullinan walked toward the twinkling gleam that caught his eye, not really allowing himself to consider seriously the fantasy that was filling his mind. As if in a daze, he put his hand down and picked up a stone the size of a big softball. Cullinan had just found the world's largest diamond, weighing 1.37 pounds, or 3,106 carats in diamond talk.

Although already brilliant enough to catch and turn back the sunlight, the diamond Cullinan picked up was a diamond-in-the-rough. Without a master's touch the hidden fire locked within the diamond would never be ignited to its fullest flare.

The Cullinan was cut into nine major stones as well as 96 smaller gems. The largest of the jewels, weighing 530.20 carats, became known as the "Great Star of Africa" and was placed in the head of the scepter of King Edward VII. This diamond, together with seven other Cullinan diamonds, comprise the British Crown Jewels, now on display in the Tower of London.

In 1988, another huge diamond was found. Dubbed the Centenary Diamond, it weighed in at 599.10 carats in the rough. The master diamond cutter was able to cut off precisely the minimal amounts of stone necessary to maximize the brilliance and flawlessness of the Centenary Stone. Today it stands as the world's largest and most modern-cut flawless diamond.

The Centenary stone is a beautifully cut, flawless stone, but it is not a jewel. Its shape is a kind of chunky. It doesn't fit into any scepter or golden crown. It will never be worn or used. It simply sits on its velvet cushion in cold, quiet beauty.

The difference between a stone and a jewel is that a stone blocks light, while a jewel transmits it, shaping and coloring it but knowing that the source of the light lies elsewhere

God has created us to be jewels, transmitting His light. Every jewel is cut into some kind of shape: pear, oval, triangle, square, trapezoid, etc. But a stone that hasn't been cut and shaped remains just that – a stone. We've all been cut, but have we allowed ourselves to be shaped?

The cuts of life – the pains, the failures, the sufferings – are all instruments that can form us into the shape God intended for us. Or they can smash us to smithereens. It all depends on whether we allow the master cutter of the universe to transform those cuts and curses into blessings and strengths.

Every diamond has its own unique color. Some people prefer white diamonds. Others prefer yellow, blue, black, or even chocolate. One color isn't better than another. The challenge is to be the color that we are.