

1. Why did you decide to become an herbalist?

Well, I think that when I knew I was headed in this direction is when I was in massage school and I had a teacher who was a doctor of oriental medicine and she was teaching the class about (doctor signatures" and I was really impressed with how easy it was to identify certain types of plants by certain aspects of the plant and from that time on I started searching out other teachers and paying really close attention to plants.

2. What role does local medicine play in your practice?

Local medicine is really important to me. I have worked in retail for a long time with local herbalists serving people with supplements and different herbal remedies that are helpful to them and I found that the things that don't grow here were very expensive and many of the people here that use herbs don't have a lot of income and especially now that the economics have gone down people are really struggling with including their own medicines and providing for themselves in their diet so I've looked to the local plants here and I have studied to find out what nutritional value they have, I like that they grow for free, you know most people can find seeds anywhere and most of the time you don't even have to go out and grow them because they grow here anyway. So local plants play a huge part for me, and probably anywhere I went I would look for the local plants. You don't have to use so much water to grow them.

3. Why do people need herbalists why couldn't people learn the same info from a book?

People always ask me what's a good book to read and I always tell them, you know books basically they study and learn from each other and they repeat you know so you're getting the same information from books and books aren't so bad. To me it's like looking at 2-D vs. 3-D when you study with a person they can show you the plant so then you can be assured that this is the plant we're talking about in the book cause when you look at that picture a lot of plants look like that picture and so it's useful to have that guidance. And then practical uses you know some people read about a certain herb and they'll try it and you can't eat it cause it's not palatable and so it's nice to have somebody who can guide you and say ya know you can't really eat that herb like that, but maybe you can make it into a syrup candy or something, and then people can learn how to use it so that they can take it into their body.

4. What inspires you about your work to continue doing it every day?

People come and call me up, people come and visit and people have some imbalance in their body and sometimes it's a diagnoses that a medical doctor's given to them and they don't want to take the pharmaceutical action to the medical action that is required they want to do something more natural and so they'll come to me and ask me about it. Sometimes I don't know the disease cause there's a lot of new ones out there or I just haven't had experience because people haven't come to me with it and so I research and then I research the herbs that go along with it and I'm always really amazed at how much natural medicine there is and how many people have cured so many so called incurable diseases and so I want to promote that so that people know they have a choice and so that people feel empowered by their choices.

5. How do you help people, and what are some of the problems you help them with?

The two things that pop into my mind right away is that there is always a stress component going on with the person so there's something in their life you know maybe it's a relationship or a job, some habit that they have that's causing undue stress in their body and so I just help them to recognize that, not contribute too much shame to it but to kind of know well this is where the issue is and if you kind of lessen it, not put so much focus on it. I never tell people to quit if their smoking or drinking or their using some type of recreational drug, I show them alternatives that will help balance out what they are trying to heal using those other substances. So to me it's stress, in the background of everything people are dealing with stress and their trying to self-diagnose themselves and they are trying to self-help themselves which I think is great and I encourage them to do that but I want them to use a substance that will bring a positive result instead of more negativity into their lives. Another thing is peoples diet, in our culture people are really dependent on packaged foods and instant foods and those are two things that I think are really poisoning the body and since we put so much of it in our body, you know we eat at least 3 meals a day plus snacks we are putting a lot of that what I call medicine into our bodies and so what I try and get people to recognize is that herbs grow like plants the grow like our food and therefore they are part of our food system and if they can equate it they start losing that mysteriousness about herbs and then they'll start incorporating more herbs, and food cause I think food is medicine too, but real food. And those are kind of the bottom line, it can sometimes be a little more complex but I think if you simplify things for people they are more likely to comply and keep on doing something for themselves. If you make it way out there and give them some nasty herb they're not going to follow that, they're going to go back to their bad habits. So that's where we start.

6. Why should I use herbs? Common arguments pertaining to herbs hard to determine correct quantity because potency, species, and preparation vary, wouldn't it be more reliable to take a pill or listen to a doctor?

Herbs are not a magic pill that will cure a disease, we all hear people going to the doctors and doctors say this is the only thing we think will cure this or you know we can work with it but even the pharmaceutical stuff they don't claim to cure it either, they claim to help you sustain your life but you have to use those drugs, most of them for the rest of your life, like high blood pressure, diabetic any of those medications people have to keep on using for the rest of their life and so what I'm saying is if you're going to use something synthetic that has so many side effects that could even contribute to more bad health why don't we try something natural first. Herbs are really working on people, their balancing people giving them nutrition, and so that's my argument for it is why don't you just try and strengthen the human body because it seems that our bodies a lot of times when we put good food and good herbs, good health into our body we start to heal we come into balance, we feel stronger we feel positive so that's my argument for using natural medicine.

7. How would you're your practice change if you had not gained local knowledge? Do you feel you would have had the same success?

I think if I wasn't doing what I'm doing now I would probably be doing something a little more scientific or mathematical because I like puzzles and I like science, but I don't think that I would be feeling complete, I think I would be more stressed out and I think I would have more health issues I'm almost fifty, in a year I'll be fifty and I have basically really good health, I feel strong most of the time and when illnesses or flus come around I can nip them out pretty quickly, and I pride myself in that I have a lot of health a lot of energy for an almost fifty year old woman.

8. DO you feel that local medicine is more sustainable than conventional medicine, why or why not?

Absolutely, mainly because the local medicine has established itself and we don't have to use a lot of water to maintain it, to keep it growing and it knows it's environment so it actually breathes in and uses the same atmosphere, the same energy, it's growing in the same area as us, basically the constituents that it has is taking in and breathing in the same elements that we are taking in so it kind of works on our bodies more successfully than if we took things from other environments.