

THE HERBAL ALCHEMY

TRAINING SESSIONS



Lesson One: HOW ALCHEMY BENEFITS HERBALISM

The synergy of the western alchemical tradition and clinical herbalism leads to a truly holistic model of plant medicine. This is not a system focused on mere symptomatic treatment with herbs, but rather a comprehensive approach that equally works with the physical, energetic and spiritual elements of both people and plants. In this way, Alchemy takes your practice of herbalism to a deeper level where you are in fact supporting in the evolution of the soul.

But what exactly does that even mean?

A transformational level of healing means that the plants are helping to decondition the modern cultural model out of our hearts and minds. This conditioning most of us in the western world are born into is at its root completely disconnected from the natural patterns of the Earth, the intelligence of nature, and severs our connection to our true essential nature. This is the byproduct of an overly rational, reductionistic, mechanistic worldview that has stripped our capacity to be in relationship with the living intelligence of the natural world- both on the outside and on the inside.

Alchemical herbalism is all about reprogramming our minds with the language of the heart- which is the language of nature. It's about helping us to overcome the psychological and emotional patterns that ultimately block us from seeing the Truth within and without. This means cleansing our hearts and minds of our traumas, thought patterns, and emotional dynamics that are not in accordance with our true essential nature.

It is sort of like peeling an onion. There are layers upon layers of these conditioned patterns piled on top of our essential nature. Alchemically prepared medicines gradually peel away these layers of the onion so our true self can be revealed in its brilliance.

But the process goes deeper than this. The essence of herbal alchemy is not only this purification of the conditioned self, but also a rejuvenation of the true self. Spagyrics, or alchemically prepared plants help us to come into direct contact with our essential nature, our path, our purpose, our contribution to the world through instilling visions, dreams, awakening our intuition, and bringing us the guidance that we need to live the life that

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awakening our intuition, and bringing us the guidance that we need to live the life that we are ultimately intended to live.

And while spagyrics have these deeper, rejuvenative and transformational healing properties, they are also *at the same time* operating on a biochemical level within our bodies, helping to get to the root causes of the struggles we face by targeting our specific organs, systems and tissues. In this way they are considered **balanced holistic medicines** that equally address our bodies, psyche and spirit.

So how exactly does all of this work? As you can see, the premise of herbal alchemy is quite different from our standard model of herbal medicine and in this way gives you new healing abilities with the plants you use. Contrary to popular belief, alchemical herbalism **is not just new ways of preparing plant medicines**, but also involves an entirely different approach to how you learn about plants, how you utilize with them, and how you work with people.

So let's take a look at the 5 primary ways that Alchemy benefits your practice of herbalism and gives you this different approach to how you use plant medicines.

1. Direct Knowledge from Nature

Because the foundation of Alchemy is rooted in the intelligence of nature, when we take an alchemical approach to herbalism, this shows us that we need to learn about our plants directly from the plants themselves. This doesn't mean you can't learn from your books and other herbal teachers, but it does mean that your herbal knowledge needs not only be intellectual- but in fact you need to develop your intuitive faculties as well- this way you don't just memorize what your plants are "good for" but rather **know them by heart**. They aren't just "tools of the trade" that you use, but rather become your friends and allies that you have relationships with.

This way you don't become a mere "armchair herbalist" who just knows what the books say, but rather you get to know the plant through your senses, through your heart, from the plant itself! And from the alchemical perspective, because the plant is a microcosm of all of nature, as you learn about the plants' you are also learning about the underlying pattern of Creation, you are studying Life itself. You gain a deeper connection to the natural world.

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And on a deeper level, you are learning about your own internal nature- as each plant reflects a part of ourselves back to us. This creates what I consider a true herbalist. A person of the plants.

This direct knowledge from nature teaches you how to be a more effective herbalist- for to study nature is to study life itself, and healing is nothing more than re-establishing the life of a person, an organ system, a tissue, a mind, a heart, a soul. *To be a healer means to forever be a student of life and nature.*

The best way to begin integrating this into your work with plants is to start relating with your plants! Find them in nature, sit with them, make offerings, harvest them, make medicine, taste the herb, become acutely aware of how it influences you body and mind. Become highly attuned and consciously aware of every aspect of the plant. Start to build a connection with the plant and study it through your senses, along with studying it from the perspective of the various traditions you have available to you in the modern world. Building relationships with plants is a lot like establishing friendships with people- it requires time, commitment, and taking the time to be with them. This is all about learning to perceive everything in nature and plants as a *language*.

2. Integration of Herbal Traditions

Because of the universality of alchemical philosophy, it enables you see the root behind all the great herbal traditions of the world. The people who founded the main herbal traditions we tend to study the most- Ayurveda, Chinese Medicine, traditional western herbalism, folk traditions, wise woman traditions... they were all in direct relationship with the intelligence of nature, which is what influenced the development of their healing tradition. In this way, they all have a common root- and Alchemy shows us this root.

If you can imagine a statue in the middle of a room, and 4 artists are placed in the cardinal directions, whom are instructed to draw the statue they see. At the end of the day, you are going to have 4 completely different pictures, as perhaps the scene on the statue from the perspective of the north is completely different from the one in the south. But they are all drawing the same thing.

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This is a lot like herbal traditions. They were all looking at the same thing- nature, plants, healing- but they ended up with a slightly different perspective than the others, different focuses, different words- but the end result was always the same. A system of medicine that uses plants.

So rather than getting stuck in just one perspective, why not study herbalism from all of the perspectives to give you a more well rounded understanding?

This is exactly what Alchemy does, giving you a 360 degree perception- seeing all angles of the same thing. If the statue is herbalism, and each artist is a different tradition, the picture they draw gives a limited perspective on the whole thing. But when you bring them together, you get the whole picture and thus a more comprehensive and holistic understanding of the practice of herbalism.

When you study plants, study them from all angles. Study the Chinese, Ayurveda, folk traditions, clinical western herbalism, and yes even modern science. Everything is a piece of the puzzle, and the more well rounded you can be in your approach and understanding of how a plant heals, the better. And from an alchemical perspective, all of these approaches ultimately lead to you knowing how you will specifically work with and prepare an herb according to spagyric methods, what their spiritual and physical properties are, and how to use them within a context of transformational healing.

3. Advanced Preparation Methods

As mentioned under our definition of Alchemy, its practice is ultimately in preparing medicines that operate on both the physical body and on the evolutionary potential of the soul. Most herbalists use simple preparations of powders, teas, tinctures and salves, but when you bring Alchemy into the mix, you open up a whole new world of herbal preparations that go much further than standard medicines. The beauty of alchemically prepared plants is that they are *truly holistic*, meaning that they contain the wholeness of the plant (body, spirit and soul) and thus they heal the wholeness of the person (body, spirit and soul).

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But on a much deeper level, the philosophy of alchemy takes this principle of “holistic” to an entirely new dimension. While holistic herbalism is rooted in using whole plants for whole people, Alchemy brings it to another level by directly seeing how the whole person and the whole plant are in relationship and an embodiment of the wholeness of Creation. The process of preparing plants alchemically is not just concentrating their physiological active constituents like we see in the modern “phytopharmaceutical” or supplement industry, but also concentrating the forces of Creation within them.

You see in herbalism, we focus on harvesting plants. But in alchemy, we also harvest planets. The planets are nature’s embodiment of the archetypal forces of life, which are present within everything. The essence of spagyrics, or herbal alchemy, is to harness these celestial forces within the medicines you prepare so they work on these planetary archetypes within people. This is what enables them to have their more esoteric, spiritual and transformational properties, which is achieved through the various methods of extraction, purification, and recombination outlined within the spagyric method- some of which I will teach you in your 2nd Herbal Alchemy Training Session!

If you want to practice holistic herbalism, you need to have a medicine that embodies the wholeness of the plant which will work on the wholeness of the person- that is, the physical, energetic and spiritual levels within people and plants. Modern herbal pharmacy unfortunately has suffered from our cultural dynamic of separation- where certain preparations are used for the psychological, emotional or spiritual levels of healing, such as flower essences or plant spirit medicine, and other preparations are focused on physical healing like teas and tinctures. Alchemically produced medicines act on *both at the same time*, which at its core lends your practice of herbalism a more holistic and efficient foundation.

4. Holistic Diagnostic Patterns

Integrating Alchemy into your herbalism also changes how you see a person and the health issues they face. In Alchemy, the body is not seen as separate from the spirit or soul, thus the roots of imbalance can exist anywhere and will influence the other layers of the self. Therefore, one can have a physical symptom but its root may be in the psyche or soul, and vice versa! Because spagyrically prepared plants operate so differently than standard herbal

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medicines, it requires a different model of assessing and understanding the people you are working with.

One of the core ways this is achieved is through the practice of astrology- considered the sister science to Alchemy. In fact, my teacher Robert Bartlett states that without astrology the production of true alchemical medicines *is not possible*. And I would add that the practice of medical alchemy is not possible without astrology- for it is through the astrological lens that you are able to **translate** between symptoms of the soul, psyche and body, to see the core underlying patterns of imbalance and treat across the *all of them*.

This directly helps you to get out of mere symptomatic treatment with your herbs and be able to see into the root underlying causes of disease, which may exist on any level of being. All of the sudden you get out of the common “use this herb for that symptom” kind of mindset, and start seeing people very differently- more holistically.

You see that the organs, systems and tissues of the body have certain psychological and emotional dynamics associated with them, as well as a certain evolutionary functions that they are trying to teach us. You see that our bodies are intelligent, and to properly diagnose and treat them, you must not suppress their language but rather listen to it, follow it, and work with it.

Alchemy helps you see that disease, sickness, or symptoms are a **language**, a way of the body, spirit and soul communicating to you that there is a way that you can improve how you live your life. In this way, the process of healing is in and of itself a part of our evolution, because it changes how you live every day- putting it in a deeper state of alignment with nature both within and without. In Alchemy, healing and evolution are two sides of the same leaf- in order to heal you must evolve, and in order to evolve, you must heal.

Through the astrological pattern, you can look into someones birth chart and have a deeper understanding of their constitution, the state of their organ systems and tissues, see the underlying potentials for disease, when they might get triggered, and thus create protocols to *prevent* those seeds of disease from ever sprouting. And at the same time, these same factors that manifest in the body can also be seen through the lens of the psyche and soul, thus helping to see the **deeper meaning** behind the struggles we face, and translate how the body, psyche and soul are communicating. And while astrology shows the sickness, it also

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shows the remedy and thus guides your remedy selection, formulation and administration of your herbs.

5. Transformational Medicine

Our last point here on how Alchemy benefits your practice of herbalism is ultimately that all of these first 4 points come together in a way that takes your practice of herbalism to a completely new level of precision, strategy, and holism- making it transformationally healing. Alchemy enables you to use plants in a way that supports in deconditioning the mind of all of those things that are not true your essential nature- and helping to reveal the *real* you.

In the same way that more advanced forms of Alchemy take toxic materials and turn them into the most potent medicines, so too does the healing virtue of medical alchemy help you to take your traumas and deep wounds of the soul and transform them into your gifts, talents, strength, and courage. The poison thus becomes the medicine.

That is ultimately what transformational medicine is all about- helping you to cleanse and purify that which is not true to essential self, and then instilling a vision, a prayer, a connection to your essence, your path, and your purpose. This process of rejuvenation is likened to a death and rebirth process- where the old you dies and something new, something better is resurrected in its place. The Lead of your ego is transformed into the Gold of your soul.

This is why Alchemy is said to be the science of not only life, but of death and rebirth as well. This is the process you take plants, minerals and metals through in the lab, and it is the same process they take us through when we work with them as medicines.

And this is what is needed *so much* at this time on the planet. We are seeing now the scary reality of what happens when the majority of humans carry the illusion that we are separate from nature. Our system of medicine, the political climate, the ecological destruction of the planet- I believe that a majority of the problems we are now facing in the world have one root- and that is the separation of people from planet, humanity from nature, spirit from matter.

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Alchemical Herbalism gives you a great power to enact positive change in the world by providing a deeper level of healing for yourself, your family, your community and your clients- taking your practice of herbalism beyond mere symptomatic treatment, to reawakening the human soul and spirit and it's relationship to all of life. In that way, you can facilitate in making a contribution to making this world a better place by helping to heal this separation between humanity and the natural world- because Alchemy shows that this separation is merely an illusion, that we are as much a part of nature as everything else.

But what do you exactly *do* in order to practice alchemical herbalism? What is it that you are doing to the plants that makes them “alchemically prepared?” *How do you prepare a truly holistic herbal extract that will work on the wholeness of the person?*

This is what you are going to learn about in the second Herbal Alchemy Training Session, where I'm going to break down for you the 3 foundational principles of spagyrics, or herbal alchemy so you can know first off, how to *understand* plants holistically through the unique lens of alchemy.

From there, I'm going to do something I've *never* done before and take you down into my laboratory and teach you **step-by-step** how to incorporate the #1 essential principle *missing* from literally every form of herbal extract. I'll teach you how to make *crystals from plants!*

So keep your eye on your inbox for my next e-mail where I'll send you a link for the next Training Session!!

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