



SOBER HERBALISM

Visioning herbal medicine for all peoples

Drea Moore dreamosatva@gmail.com soberherbalist.com @soberherbalist

Class title: Making sober medicine

The portal of sober herbalism initiates expanded consciousness of the possibilities for medicine and people. To boldly go beyond the tincture bottle and engage in a symbiotic relationship of elements, beings, earth systems is a radical practice of deep embodiment and communication with our co-evolved species of plants. This ride moves through the senses, back in time, across landscapes, through patterns of energy and relationships of tremendous healing capacity. And you don't need alcohol to do it.

Three main points on Herbalism (capitol "H") right now:

1. Reviewing the dominant narrative of non-alcoholic medicine in the herbalist community.

What's at stake in the refrain, "non-alcoholic medicine isn't as strong..."

Why this narrative doesn't serve the herbalist or the community

How this narrative gets perpetuated in practices—systemic beliefs and practices limit us all

Adopting a compassionate practice of inquiry for your community and practices

2. Changing the narrative by using skepticism, open-mindedness, curiosity and experimentalism in the work. (organoleptic, traditional practices, plant spirit guidance)

Notes on fears around solubility and sober herbalism—Lisa Ganora's writings and teachings highlighted here

Listening for the language of systemic beliefs around people, plants and medicine in your own beliefs

The challenge and opportunity of making medicine with other stuff!

Inciting revolution with your education and privilege—shake the foundations, stay teachable and humble

Identifying your subjectivity and trusting your ethics and practices as you apply practical critique

3. Hitting the streets and making medicine with glycerine, honey, vinegar, oils and water

The vastness of preparations and how millennia, global traditional practices are your allies (Interdisciplinary)

Investigative research practices such as organoleptic analysis highlights these solvents and preparations as synergistically and symbiotically powerful

Inviting high vibrational keywords/ tools/hashtags/language:

Embodiment—Mindful awareness of the present moment (body, breath, place, time) BE HERE NOW to engage the body electric (innate human physical technology)

Organoleptic—Powerful sensory intelligence communications—as simple as eating a berry, chewing some mint leaves, smelling a mushroom.

Symbiosis—Recognition of all beings' integrated coevolved long term relationships. Our primary encounters were raw; whole foods/plants and this can inform medicine theory. An intention to align closely to this raw or natural form as a possibility to activate ancient patterns and relations. This is like BERRY PICKING, mushroom hunting...

Synergies—The amplified force of positive relationships between all things dependent upon conditions, timing, so it's contextual and collective rather than isolating, extracting. This is the activity of changing your thinking about plant preparations from taking apart to adding together. The HOLOBIONT ala Hoffman...

Creative and personal tools:

Ground yourself in the body and the senses—three deep breaths of embodied presence. As herbalists we ourselves and our medicines invite radical healing embodiment through awareness.

Organoleptic testing is the analysis of properties of products and materials (in this case herbs and solvents) by means of the sense organs. As herbalists and humans we possess an innate skill set that rivals what can be done with analytical equipment. We must acknowledge our instinctual relationship with plants this way and learn to work with phytochemistry at the level of the senses more. Engage with phytochemistry through the eyes, nose, mouth, ears, hands.

A Practice: Engage a plant, berry, root, seed and use this powerful method of evaluation to sharpen your understanding of the possibilities for medicine. As you analyze your material use vivid and descriptive words and actions to tap into the “conversation” of plants/foods/etc... Do this also with your solvents—taste the honey, taste the vinegar, taste the water and attribute “actions” to these—is the taste and thus action astringent? Demulcent? When you use organoleptic testing you tap into all the

qualities that a solvent can amplify or activate. Emollient solvent, demulcent quality/action, amplified like increases like consequence. Chemistry is assessable play here!

Also factor in the **transformative qualities** of air, fire, time. Can you sense something deep from within the cells of your being that remembers this relationship between humans and plants? Can you access the aromas, textures, tastes, vibrations of these materials and relationships? With these practices and questions, the herbalist can engage the medicine with confidence, jump back in time before capitalism, the industrial age and discover a trustworthy medicine preparation that is personal, powerful and vitalist. “Vitalist” is a word used by Lisa Ganora that describes the collaboration of herbalism and nutrition—the **dietary matrix**. **Vitalist therapeutics** considers multiple plant preparations for maximum value and to my surprise this often leads to using plants as medicine in a more **contextual** way that layers plants into our existence as humans cleverly, traditionally, and invites a more **holistic** therapeutic approach.

On the land, the berries, trees, plants, shrubs, mushrooms, insects, lichens are **symbiotically** relational. Take a walk through a landscape after a rain storm and smell the fragrant aromas. Do the same with your medicine to create a **nutritional matrix** using ferments, natural products, natural processes....engage in the preparations in a way that acknowledges earth system science, co-evolution, sustainability, co-creation. ancient relationships, the holobiont.

These practices draw the herbalist away from fears of solubility and extraction and affirms a consciousness of the organized forces in collaboration and harmony — holistic relationships based on ancient coevolved creation. **This perspective recognizes the context of plant, person, land, season, etc.** This is perhaps why we can all make the exact same medicinal preparation yet the result will vary by person. How is this influencing solubility? We don't know, phytochemists don't know and this is a broad and roomy spiral to jump into!

Synergists amplify relationships. Oregon grape root amplifies efficacy of antibiotic pharmaceuticals in the human body. Vitamin C amplifies the absorption/activation of Quercetin in the human. Lecithin amplifies/activates absorption of Milk Thistle seed in the human. When we look at the relationships of molecules in phytochemistry, molecules do not work alone—they collaborate and work in pairs, groups, teams—they activate each other, regenerate each other and amplify their purpose. This takes place across nature—at the molecular level and so on up to our human level with our relationships, communities, regions, etc. By acknowledging the role of synergism in the collective experience and evolution of all beings, we access the power potential of ourselves and our medicine. We are not isolated elements—we are in relation and these connections amplify healing possibilities. *see above discussion on the greater mystery of solubility and context...

Recipes/methods/experiments/portals/inspirations/mantras

Oxymels (acid and honey)—a recipe that is so revolutionary, folk, accessible. 50/50 vinegar and honey. Dry or fresh plants work here but I usually use the fresh dried because some water content from both honey and vinegar reconstitutes the plant's cells and “opens up” the aromatics and constituents for a musical number. I've seen people make fresh ones and was betting on a little transformative fermentation but that's just symbiosis...cool.

Fresh glycerites: I make a lot of fresh plant glycerites because glycerine does a great job of holding aromatics and it's fun. Use ratio method. Fresh plant 1:2 (weight/grams to volume/milliliters) Use at least 55% glycerine to preserve. I often go for 60-70% glycerine in my calculations. But sometimes more depending on how juicy something is. My fresh cleavers glycerite is a 1:1.5 100% glycerine and my oat tops is a 1:3 90% glycerine. Keep a log of this stuff and refer to it as you succeed and fail and get savvy in the process.

Blend the plant and the total menstrum of water and glycerine together with a nutrabullet or vitamix type gadget. Pour into a mason jar, cap with a lid and gently simmer bath this maceration for at least 40 minutes. This is like canning a little bit, but be careful not to accidentally let some of the medicine leak into the waterbath. Once the bath ends, remove the cooled jar and label your medicine. Leave for a couple of weeks or until you need it (I have some years old stuff still need to press oops). Go ahead and shake it around while it's jarred, also.

Press out with a jack press and allow the process to go on for a while—I take 48-72 hours to press out a glycerite because I want a bone dry marc. What I do is leave the press in the middle of the kitchen and crank it regularly. I just allow it to take its time and eventually I have my full yield. Sober medicine asks for patience, attention and love like this. My fresh plant glycerites have lasted 4 years and counting. Allow no excess water to get into the medicine and it will last. Stress test it if you want to. I leave one in the car all year just to see what happens....Just wait till you start making these —they are so fun, useful and strong you will never get tired of playing with them. Some favorites are albizia blossoms, chamomile blossoms, rose petals, ginger root, saint john's wort, oat tops, skullcap, mint, thyme, rosemary, tulsi, cleavers, mugwort...

Decocted glycerites: This is dried and hard roots, barks, seeds and berries territory. Use ratio method for dried plants 1:5 (grams/weight to volume milliliters) and at least 55% glycerine. The trick with this preparation is to double the water portion of your math because you are gonna cook this baby down some and you need the extra water to spare—it will evaporate and create a concentrate or sorts.

Pour all the glycerine and water and finely ground material into a ceramic or glass pot and simmer it on the stove for 30-40 minutes slowly. It's smart and witchy to hover over

this process and stir with a wooden spoon like risotto. You can recite mantras, infuse prayers and that kind of thing during this time.

When the mixture in the pot has thickened and become syrupy you can see that it's medicinal now—it's got color, texture and smells like what you think it should smell like because you've used your organoleptic testing and have a sense of the plant closest to its raw form.

You then allow this to cool and press it out the long and slow way I described above in the fresh glycerite instructions. Allow time to get that marc really dry.

Measure the final medicine and add more glycerine to match your original calculation menstrum total. You can also just leave this final press be and know that you simmered off a lot of water and what's left is very concentrated.

This final product is clinical therapeutic strength medicine. I use these a lot in my practice and they were used on me when I was very ill with Lyme disease. They worked but you have to be compliant and take as directed. Dose is dependent upon the plant, formula, person, symptoms. They last a long time but honestly they are pretty useful and they never sit unused. My favorites are licorice, schissandra berry, dandelion root and milky oat tops among others. Super tasty, super strong and very useful in clinical work.

Bibliography of co-conspirators

Lisa Ganora 2009 Herbal Constituents

David Hoffman 2002 Holistic Herbal

Susan Parker 2015 Power of the Seed

Sandor Katz 2013 Art of Fermentation

Sandor Katz 2016 Wild Fermentation

Michael Pollan 2014 Cooked: A Natural History of Transformation

Rosemary Gladstar anything she's written!

Any classes by De Anna Batdorff and Mary Sheila Gonella

Spice reference books

Design reference books that use natural geometry and physics

traditional cookbooks

ethnobotany