

GENTLE MEDICINE FOR BALANCE IN BODY AND PEACE OF MIND

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The plant kingdom was the original medicine cabinet, Nature's pharmacy, given to us by God or the gods. The world's sacred traditions speak of the blessings that plants are endowed with, as nourishment and medicine for the body, mind, and spirit. From deep antiquity – and still known to indigenous peoples – there has been a hallowed compact between humans and the plant kingdom. If we have distanced ourselves from that understanding, that sublime partnership, it's not the fault of the plants; they are here for us, as they have always been. It is up to us now to learn from them, engage all our senses, let them know we see and love and respect them. When we touch a plant, let it be with acknowledgment and gentleness and receptiveness – and a sincere desire to hear what it has to tell us. What we have to learn will be beyond price.

Martha Libster's Elements of Care® program, which is the focus of this extraordinary book, can be a life-changing experience. Be ready to encounter a deeper awareness of the body you inhabit and its profound energetic resonance in partnership with plants. Be ready for a shift in perceptions as you enter the beautiful world of "gentle medicine."

The healing effect of a conscious partnership with plants operates on levels far beyond what we think of as the physical; it extends to the emotional and spiritual. It is a pathway to "balance in body and peace of mind," as the book's title tells us. It is difficult to adequately describe the scope of this self-care program, except to say that a person who engages with it may never look at a plant or one's worldview, quite the same way.

Dr. Martha is a Clinical Nurse Specialist, a Nurse-Herbalist, and an Herbal Diplomat®. She is also a scholar of the long history of the healing arts and its practitioners. The Elements of Care® program represents thirty years of her integrative insights. Her life's work is the healing of the Self, in all its magnificent, majestic wholeness.

Throughout her book we find Gentle Medicine Self-Study lessons to guide us into an intimate conversation with the plants around us...to learn how to enter the Green World and become apprentices in a process of lifelong learning. And what a master class this is! Can food be

medicine? Of course it can. Can what we call a weed be medicine? Of course it can. "...[E]very substance (including plants) has the potential to be medicine," Dr. Martha writes. The modern medical paradigm has moved away from these primary, traditional avenues of self-care and self-healing, in its embrace of the dominant biomedical way of healthcare. Should it be a choice between one or the other? Not at all, she tells us. She is here to teach a new healing paradigm of inclusion, "a balance of biomedical, traditional, and personal plant partnership experience."

So, how does this training work? It has to do with such concepts as mindfulness, sentience, common sense, intuition, insight. It's about going into yourself and knowing that "partnering with plants requires full communion as an open two-way channel" – a tuning of the self "deliberately, consciously, and enthusiastically to plants." We don't "use" plants in this self-care paradigm, she says, we "apply" them.

And we keep the two-way channel open. "In essence, what and how we observe something, and what we think when we observe it, changes 'it.' If that sounds like Quantum Theory, it is, but it is also what is understood in indigenous cultures around the world. Your touch, your thought, your *intention*, affects your relationship with a plant. You could call that scientific, or spiritual, or simply mysterious. But Dr. Martha witnesses it every day of her life.

Self-care, as she sees it, is primary prevention. Her program of plant partnerships is "a foundation for a healthcare reform movement that seeks ... to ensure a more sustainable healthcare system for the future."

Gentle Medicine for Balance in Body and Peace of Mind is an important – I would say essential – book for these times. It is entirely possible that you will come away armed with new skills, new awareness of the plant consciousnesses all around you – and of the subtle vibrational ocean we and our plant partners swim in. Together.

This is a book of wisdom and peace – a glorious how-to on so many levels. It is as calming, hopeful, informative, surprising, enlightening, life-affirming and joyful as anything I have ever read. It brings forth the ancient truth of what "healing" is and should be, but often is not.

If you want to wrap your arms around a brilliant, beautifully written, “old-new” way to be fully alive to Nature’s healing ways – and expand yourself from the inside out – start here. And be sure to read about Dr. Martha’s multi-generational secret recipe for lemon bread, a creation that apparently lives in its own wondrous, alchemical reality.

Peace,

Catherine Dees

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