

TREES

Their healing properties and communing with them

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Trees

As I was thinking about the topic of my paper, I asked myself what I needed to learn about and share. When trees came to mind, I felt a sensation of excitement and joy. Trees and wood have long held a fascination for me. I can remember as a child seeing art and furniture made of wood and thinking how beautiful it was. The craftsmanship that goes into making things, the beauty of the wood, the luscious aroma of freshly cut wood, all bring pleasant reactions to my entire being to this day. Driving through a forest with my family felt like the best place on earth. In my teens I can remember seeing a live billboard counting the numbers of acres in the rainforests that were being destroyed. It gave me great cause for concern and made me more aware of the interdependence of nature and humans and the earth.

In ancient folklore trees have been a symbol of healing and magic. The oak is one tree that has been used across many cultures. Depicted as the Green Man in many cultures, it represents rebirth, the wild spirit of the wood and growing things, its acorns emit a very potent wealthy vibration.¹ The trees also have a way of speaking to humans. Vickie Dodd shares her experience of communicating with an oak in her book "Healing Through Sound". She shares a story of being very down one day. There was a big oak tree across a field. It called to her saying 'Come. Are you ready for the next teaching?' She went over to the tree and cried out "I need help." The tree responded and said "You can do what we do... We mind our own business." She immediately felt a response in her body. Her "system responded as if a great magnetic force had created a unified field inside"² her body. That teaching helped her heal on a spiritual, emotional and physical level.

I have often wondered how the indigenous peoples know what plants/trees can be used for what ailment. The book "Thus Spoke the Plant" elaborates that indigenous people spend a lot of time with the plants in silence and isolation, being open to them, thus allowing the plants to speak to them in their unique language. "As in all conversations, the relationship between how information is packaged (encoding) and the context translated (decoding) determines the outcome of the exchange and interaction."³ The author, Monica Gagliano, PhD., goes on to share her conversations with a Socoba tree (*Bellaco-caspi Himatanthus sucuuba*) that developed through a dieta (a ritual that consists of ingesting a part of a plant or tree to commune with the spirit of the plant). She understood through images that the tree was telling her that "it is through blood that everything is connected."⁴ She also realized that this tree is a blood cleanser. By ingesting the bark of the tree, she created a connection that would last forever. The tree had become her teacher. She continued to feel the tree vibrating inside her and teaching her years after her dieta.

Not many of us are cut out or able to communicate with trees in such an intense way to gain the knowledge of their medicinal benefits. Luckily, there has been much research done and passed along to us. We have knowledge of more common, accessible trees as well as their simple healing properties and energies.

The Avocado is chock full of healing properties. The fruit, the rind of the fruit, the oil, leaves and bark all have healing properties. The fruit can be used as a facial healing mask in addition to soothing skin problems. The oil can be used as a hair/scalp treatment as well as for cooking. As a food item guacamole can be seen as a comfort food and is quite yummy. The Aztecs were serious when they attributed lust-producing powers to avocados. They believed that eating an avocado would make it difficult to remain a virgin. In doing my

¹ Whitehurst, Tess, "The Magic of Trees, pgs 225,226, Llewellyn Publications, Woodbury, MN 2018.

² Dodd, Vickie, "Healing Through Sound", pgs, 45-47, Findhorn Press, Rochester, VT 2024.

³ Gagliano, Monica, PhD, "Thus Spoke the Plant", page 34, North Atlantic Books, Berkeley, CA 2018

⁴ Ibid, page 12

research I found a recipe for a Choco-Avocado Pudding Potion⁵ that can be used as a love potion. I have included it in my notes.ⁱ

The coniferous pine is one of my favorites. Their majestic beauty, shape and size as well as their intoxicating and refreshing scent leave me in awe, whenever I see them. It is recorded that the number of pine needles in a bundle and the number of spirals in a pinecone are arranged according to the Fibonacci code,⁶ another element in the grand structure of the universe. A bowl of crushed pine needles or the essential oil of a pine can help to alleviate symptoms of respiratory problems, digestive problems and sore throats.

The Elm tree, which is a very familiar tree, is used as a Bach Flower Remedy, useful for healing depression. Sitting near an Elm tree and meditating may also help with depression and the inability to get motivated.⁷ In Homer's *Iliad*, mountain nymphs plant elms at burial sites. This indicates the tree's knowing of accomplishing smooth transitions. When transitioning such as giving birth, beginning or ending a relationship, a new job, or a death, sit quietly with an elm tree or take the Bach Flower Remedy.

The first time I experienced the power of trees is when I went with my best friend from L.A. to an historical mansion in NYC. On the grounds of the mansion was a garden that was bordered in the shape of an octagon. There were several trees around the border. We walked in and sat down on a bench within the octagon. When I looked up, I saw that the trees had grown to create a beautiful canopy. I felt total bliss and felt like I could stay there all day. I went back several times to find solace and joy. After my friend passed away, I went to visit once again hoping to find the bliss I had felt previously to ease my grieving pain. I noticed that one of the trees had been felled – what may have been the oldest tree. And instead of feeling bliss, I felt the sadness and grief of the trees – much like the grief I was feeling. They were feeling the loss of their long-time friend. I also got the feeling that they were determined to keep going. A message I needed to hear for myself.

Not much later I discovered a forest very close to my home – The Bronx River Forest. It is sooo beautiful. I began taking walks in the forest as often as I could, sometimes daily. I noticed a change in my overall demeanor. I was happier and calmer. One day as I was walking through the forest, I saw a tree that looked unlike any tree I had seen before. I stopped to admire it and spoke to it. I told it how beautiful it was and how thankful I was that it was there. I named the tree Theo. He became a dear friend. When I first started visiting him, I felt that he was tired and sad. I saw that part of a large branch up high had broken off. I was concerned. I chanted to the tree, saying a Buddhist chant and before I left, I would say “be well, be strong, be beautiful”, “I love you” and “thank you”. After a few weeks of visiting him frequently, I felt the energy that came from him was lighter and stronger. If I asked him questions about my life, he would give me answers that were very helpful. At times when I would try to leave, he would call me back to stay a bit longer. Being in the forest was like paradise to me. No matter how I felt going in I would always feel better walking out. The energy in that place in the spring and summer is very high. I could tell when the colder months came along, everyone (the trees and plants) was resting. I remember one time as I was walking into the forest a man walking the other direction stopped to warn me that a guy was in there acting crazy and being somewhat violent. I told him I wasn't worried, that I had a tree friend that would protect me. I never saw that crazy person.

I found a video on Youtube made by Karen A Dahlman. She talks to trees and asks them questions. They told her that because of her relationship with them that she would always be a part of them. That gave me great joy to know that I will always be with Theo. She also related that like most all species, they have their own unique way of communicating. The trees told Ms. Dahlman that to hear what they have to say she needs to

⁵ Whitehurst, page 44.

⁶ Ibid, pgs 265, 266.

⁷ Ibid, page 125.

listen with her heart, that they communicate through feelings. By using our heart and allowing ourselves to be open to them we can hear what they have to say.⁸

When I moved to Milwaukee my partner found a Nature Preserve within walking distance to where we live. It is a quiet place that is on the shore of Lake Michigan. There are a couple of trees that are close to the water. I have made friends with them. One tree I feel, channels my friend Theo from The Bronx. One day I was feeling down, I walked down to the Preserve and hugged that tree. I told it I was feeling depressed and sad. I felt the tree (maybe Theo) was saying to me that I didn't have to feel sad. Almost instantly, I perked up and said to myself, "you're right. I don't have to feel sad." I walked out of there feeling much better.

I have had many encounters with trees. Nearby here in Milwaukee is the Schlitz Audubon Nature Center. The energy there is very strong. It is unspoiled forest with a truly magical feel to it. It sometimes takes my breath away. Sometimes I feel the trees are calling out to me to hug them. I often comply with their requests. I am never disappointed in how I feel after hugging them. I try to give back love and energy to them as they give to me. It is a win-win situation. There is a tree in my neighborhood that I recently encountered on a walk. I felt it calling to me. The energy I received from that hug was very strong and intense.

Trees are indispensable to life. They provide us with oxygen and their fruits. Their fruits, leaves and oils serve to nourish and heal our body, mind and spirit. They share wisdom and give us energy as well as cooling the environment. Something I didn't talk about is that they are home to other living organisms, insects as well as animals. Many birds rely on them for the insects that prey on them, as well as sheltering them. After they die they provide nourishment for the remaining plants as they decompose. Trees are used to help build homes and furniture. After doing this report I have much more respect and awareness of the role trees play in our lives. We need to protect them so that we may continue to live with them. I love trees!!

"Choco-Avocado Pudding Potion

The night or morning before sharing this dessert with a love interest (or potential love interest), hold two ripe avocados in your open palms and mentally direct a lovely pink light into them as you set the intention for and visualize what you desire.

Say:

*Fruit of love and fruit of lust
Please help me in my aim – you must!
If hearts are willing and feelings true
Set passions loose between we two!*

Cut and scoop the avocados and place them, 1 ripe banana, ½ cup unsweetened cacao powder, ½ cup almond butter, a dash salt, 2/3 cup maple syrup, and ¼ cup soy milk in a blender or food processor and blend. When the potion is smooth, fill 4-6 serving cups to the very top. (This way, if things get wild, you'll have extras for later in the evening or the next few nights. Cover with plastic wrap or lids and chill for at least six hours. When it's time to serve, top with dairy-free whipped cream and a dusting of cinnamon."

The Magic of Trees, pgs 45-47.

⁸ Karen A Dohlman, "How to Talk with Trees", May 11, 2018, 15:57, Creative Visions TV, YouTube

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