

Article 280: A little About Herbs

A few years ago, a plant collected from a South American rainforest showed a strong ability to affect or reverse nerve damage, but when additional quantities of the plant were gathered and tested, they offered no healing effects for nerves, ...what went wrong? Were the first tests misleading? ...or were the second plants faulty or incorrectly prepared? Were they improperly collected and preserved? What had gone wrong?

Many medicinal plants have similar look-alike varieties which do not offer the same abilities as the original, so identifying errors are easy to make, ...it seems that skilled, completely reliable suppliers may be necessary, for this task, especially since, even if the correct plant is collected, since the chemical composition of a plant can vary throughout the day, you have to know exactly when to collect the plant ...depending also upon previous weather and growing conditions; ...if the chemical composition is not correct or at its peak, the results can be useless or marginally effective. For people who rely on these herbs, the results can be disappointing and painful ...even crippling or deadly, ...and the symptoms intended to be relieved can spread or intensify.

The chemical composition of a young plant is frequently different than for an older plant; ...some healing plants become toxic. Shade or sun make a difference ...as do adjacent plants. Collecting the right plant at the peak of development is critical, and preparing the correct plant part is equally important. Then, the correct preparation and dosage is vital, *but these facts and treatments have seldom been recorded or standardized, merely handed down from healer to healer, such that little reliable information is available; ...and even when preparation techniques are confirmed ...the plant's effectiveness cannot be assured*, such that the patient's herbs may be ineffective ...or even harmful.

If you are struggling with a deadly, crippling, or incapacitating disease or illness, are you willing to trust that the unknown substances in an unreliable plant will destroy the sickness-creating pathogens? ...or stimulate a proper response from your immune system instead of an adverse reaction? And if the herbs are to be brewed into a tea, what constitutes "proper brewing"? ...and will over-brewing destroy the healing ingredients? ...or under-brewing fail to activate the necessary chemicals? And if you take other herbs or pain-relievers, how might this combination of chemicals react?

Many commercial medications come directly from medicinal plants ...or are enhanced by them, but these compounds are tested,

standardized, measured, and tested again ...and measured for side effects and degrees of toxicity, which is a little more reliable than brewing tea from unmeasured numbers of various leaves, stems, roots, or flowers. Synthetic compounds are not all wrong, dangerous, or unreliable; ...and while many plants can be used to deaden pain, many diseases and illnesses are much too complex to be effectively treated or relieved by a single plant ...and multiple, varied plant ingredients are too uncertain to be relied upon.

Preserving the direct knowledge of proven herbal healers is vital, but this knowledge and its preparation and application must be tested ...and even improved by being combined with other ingredients. When dealing with medicinal plants, we need to discover the proper way to deal with and prepare each plant, for though synthetic compounds are more easily managed and prepared, they frequently lack the combination of chemicals offered in herbs ...which makes them effective. There are frequently too many variables with plants ...and too few chemical ingredients in synthetic compounds.

The effectiveness of herbal remedies may lie in complex chemical components which establish a symbiotic union that is beneficial to all constituents such that, apart, much of their effectiveness is lost ...or impossible. Improper preparation of these compounds frequently includes lessening deleterious or parasitic ingredients which otherwise render the herb ineffective. Manufacturers of synthetic remedies tend to focus on the major active ingredient and ignore, or are unaware of, other necessary chemicals present in the plant ...or in active parts of the plant. The dual nature of many compounds frequently gives rise to, supports, and nourishes both “good and bad” aspects of many herbs, and it is the proper interaction of this dual nature which makes the herb effective or ineffective.

Synthetic compounds are frequently “too pure” for your own good ...or effectiveness ...and herbal remedies are frequently too weak to be effective ...or too strong for your own good.

Now, assuming you have an herbal or a manmade remedy at hand, the effectiveness of one over the other often depends upon the relationship you have with your self and life. This is not an *attitude about life* ...yet it is, for your beliefs•thoughts•attitudes•emotions•words•actions constitute the oneness of yourself and all things in life ...including the effectiveness of remedies.

You are your own effective remedy,

an ineffective cure, or the sickness itself.