

Getting Started

Thank you for choosing the *Magic is Medicine Flower Essence Journal*! I hope it becomes a special place to record all the magic in and around you as you transform your life with flower essences. Before you get started, here are a few things you should know about this powerful medicine, and how to best use this journal:

What are flower essences?

Flower essences are vibrational plant remedies that bring us into alignment with our best possible self in any given circumstance. They are tools for increasing our self-awareness, and bring into our attention subconscious limiting beliefs, emotional complexes, and distorted perceptions that are blocking our success.

Flower essences are based on the Shamanic philosophy that humans, the cosmos, and all of nature constitute a unified whole, and that the natural world has much to teach humanity. Flower essences are a plant medicine that are often confused with essential oils, which are used in aromatherapy. Unlike essential oils, flower essences have no scent, and ingested as an herbal tincture.

What are flower essences used for?

What are flower essences used for? The short answer is, "just about everything!" Flower essences can be used to support many areas of our lives: relationships, physical health, parenting, stress and anxiety, spirituality, sexuality, career support, and so forth. In my practice, I most commonly use flower essences for what I affectionately call "money and honey!" Money refers to our material wealth and abundance, our careers, our life's work or creative pursuits, and how we access our personal power and sense of purpose. Honey refers to relationships- with ourselves, with our bodies, with friends, family, colleagues, and the world.

There is such a wide range of issues that flower essences can address, and that is part of what makes them so magical. There are three major categories of flower essence use:

Unresolved Emotions

The first category of flower essence use is unresolved emotions. Emotions are the color of human experience, and the goal of flower essence therapy is not to numb our emotions. However, flower essences are an incredible resource for working with emotions that are persistent, stuck, unprocessed or creating challenges in our lives. Flower essences also support us when we experience an emotion whose intensity surprises us, catches us off guard, or gets expressed out of proportion to the actual situation.

Emotions can be triggered by any circumstance in our personal lives that presents an opportunity for our hearts to expand. These can include unresolved emotions from

childhood experiences, as well as acute emotions experienced with relationship break-ups, recent loss, isolation, anxiety, and frustration at work. A verbal cue that an emotion is calling for our attention is when we find ourselves saying things like:

"I know I shouldn't feel this way, but..."

"I can't shake the feeling of..."

"I don't know why I feel like this..."

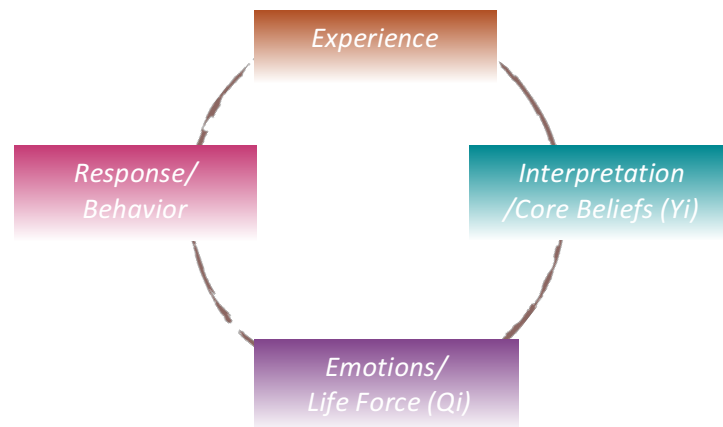
Each of the Five Elements of Chinese Medicine represents an organic flow of life force (Qi) that is necessary for life. The emotions related to each Element emerge when that organic flow is either balanced, excessive, deficient, or obstructed. The Five Elements help us to understand the lessons and gifts that each emotion brings us when we reestablish and align with the natural flow of Qi.

Flower essences are effective because they bring unconscious emotions into our awareness, allowing us to listen with care and concern to their messages. They help us to move energetically through emotions that are blocking us or that are stuck in repetitive patterns. Flower essences also help us to clarify the emotions that are driving our behaviors, to help us gain perspective, and to help us use the energy of our emotions as vehicles for change and transformation.

Mental Blocks

This category includes issues of studying, learning, remembering- all the activities of our busy little brains! There's a saying in Chinese Medicine that *Yi* leads *Qi*. This means that the *Yi* – our thoughts, intentions, and beliefs- guides and directs the *Qi* - the life force or energy that gives rise to emotions. Flower Essences bring awareness to the thought patterns that refuel and perpetuate our emotional states. Anxiety, worry, self-defeating thoughts, critique, monkey-mind, memory lapses, and faulty reasoning are all states of mental activity that flower essences can address.

Flower essences help us to pay attention to, turn off, or reprogram the inner dialogue of limiting beliefs that keep us from reaching our goals, as well as facilitate a change in perspective. As we begin to see the world differently, the world around us begins to change, as summarized in the chart below:



Soul Evolution

There are aspects of ourselves that are neither thoughts nor emotions. They are default, often archetypal, ways of being through which our experience is filtered. These are areas that become life lessons, and themes that reoccur in many aspects of our lives.

For example, if I have trouble asserting personal boundaries, it's going to show up in my parenting. It's going to show up in my intimate relationships. It's going to show up at work. It's going to show up when I'm looking for a seat on the train- it's going to show up everywhere! Our brain holds an encyclopedia of conditioned responses and beliefs that were formed primarily as infants, in early childhood and in situations of high stress or trauma. In psychotherapy, these patterns are called maladaptive schemas; in yogic philosophy, these patterns are called subscaras. These emotional responses and beliefs- which are often in conflict with our stated (conscious) intentions, are accessed rapidly without us even being aware of it.

Places that are ripe for soul evolution are those challenges in our lives that repeat until we learn what they intend to teach us, and then continue to repeat as we refine our understanding. Through these lessons, we grow and evolve into the highest expression of ourselves. Flower essences can help us to identify these "blind spots" in our psyche and transform them. They can also help us to align with archetypal energies- such as the Lover, the Warrior, the Healer, and so forth, to direct us toward our goals.

We evolve no matter what. Part of the magic of flower essences is that they can help us to evolve *consciously*- with intention and integrity. Flower essences help us to get out of our own way so that we can live fully and authentically.

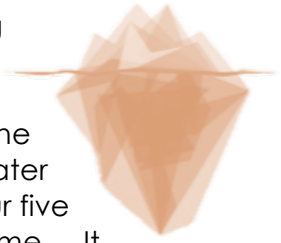
How do flower essences work?

Each of our thoughts and emotions has a specific frequency or vibration. When in harmony, it is like a beautiful symphony within our souls- we experience joy, abundance and a wide range of emotions that are appropriate for a given situation. We allow our emotions to transit with ease and grace; we integrate their lessons and align our actions with the organic flow of Qi that each emotion evokes. However, there are times when this grand symphony gets interrupted, because one (or several) of the instruments is playing out of tune in the form of a discordant emotion or thought. When this happens, we experience illness, emotional unrest, or simply the desire for change. Flower essences are an energetic tuning fork- as we ingest the essences they work to align whatever is out of pitch in our psyche with the universal truths from the soul of nature.

Flower essences work through the principle of sympathetic resonance, which Wikipedia defines as "*The harmonic phenomenon wherein a formerly passive string or vibratory body responds to external vibrations to which it has a harmonic likeness.*" A well-known example of sympathetic resonance is when an opera singer shatters glass. The note reached by the singer is perfectly tuned to the frequency of the glass, and thus affects its physical molecules. Similarly, sympathetic resonance is in action when you have two guitars in a room tuned to one another. When you pluck the C-string on one guitar, the c-string on the second guitar will also vibrate! Flower essences work in the same way.

Each flower essence resonates with a specific belief or feeling. As we harmonize this feeling or belief to the frequency of the essence, we experience shifts in how we think about, feel into, and perceive our life circumstances.

Another way to understand how flower essences work is by exploring the relationship between the conscious and subconscious mind. At any given time, we are only using about 10% of our brain- the other 90% is beneath the level of our awareness. A great metaphor for the mind is an that iceberg. The tip of the iceberg that peaks above the water represents our conscious mind- what we can actively perceive with our five senses, study, memorize, and mentally process of at any given time. It represents the Beta frequency of consciousness, the state of being required to navigate the external, physical world. Our habits, our instincts, our conditioned emotional responses, and our autonomic nervous system are all part of the 90% of the iceberg beneath the surface that we don't have to think about. The subconscious mind- Alpha, Delta, and Theta states of awareness- can be accessed through dreams, imagination, art, images, meditation and ritual.



The magic of flower essences is that they bring conscious awareness to subconscious habits, emotions and beliefs that are blocking us from success. With an integrated consciousness, we can consciously re-program automated responses to our emotional triggers, and we can embody new truths to replace our limiting beliefs. And as we do so, change starts happening around us.

What is Flower Essence Therapy?

Flower Essence Therapy is the process of working with flower essence remedies over the course of 3-6 months in order to bring about change in a particular area of our lives. I compare flower essence therapy to peeling the layers of an onion. We start with the outermost layer, with is whatever is at the surface in our lives. After working for several weeks with one flower essence or blend, we arrive at the next layer of soul work as unconscious beliefs, habits or memories begin to rise to the surface. In each cycle of flower essence therapy, a different set of essences are used to address the emerging themes as our capacity for introspection and self-awareness increases. Eventually, we land on a central nugget- an essential belief or core value that needs to be updated in order for our goals to be realized. The central nugget- what alchemists called the *prima materia*- is the lead of our lives that can be upgraded into something of lasting value and higher consciousness. Flower Essence Therapy invites us to engage in true alchemy- and to turn the lead of our lives into gold!

What should I expect?

The changes we experience while using flower essences are subtle, yet profound. Here are a few tips for maximizing your flower essence use:

Tip #1: Practice Mindfulness

This means to simply notice, without judgement, changes in the way you think, feel or respond to life situations. The effects of flower essences are subtle and gradual, and often experienced within a situational context. For example, if you use flower essences to support your parenting, the changes may be noticed when you are interacting with your child. You might find yourself saying or doing something that is out of character for you, yet feels more authentic than previous behavior patterns. Keep in mind that flower essences work through resonance, and so they are simply amplifying virtues and qualities that already exist within you. It's similar to turning up the volume on one instrument so that you can hear it more clearly and distinctly within the symphony. The more mindful you can be of your thoughts, emotions, and actions, the more impact you will notice.

The *Magic is Medicine Journal* is designed to help you reflect on and record these subtle shifts, such as

- Vivid, revealing dreams
- A sudden "Aha!" moment- an affirmation or a statement of higher truth may arise spontaneously into your awareness in the context of the situation you are working on
- A solution that previously evaded you reveals itself
- Deeper insight into your behavior or feelings
- Relationship dynamics that shift as others begin to notice, celebrate, or even resist your transformation
- New reactions to challenging situations
- Synchronicity- unexpected opportunities or new "chance" connections that propel you toward your goals or offer deeper insights.

Tip # 2: Be Intentional

There are so many wonderful flower essences that can do so many wonderful things. Keep in mind that flower essences are meant to help facilitate inner growth, not change your personality! Most people notice the effects of flower essences when there is a specific area that they are experiencing as a blockage and are trying to learn from. Choose flower essences or blends related to significant, long-term changes that you would like to make, rather than flowers that have qualities that it would be "nice to have" or offer "quick fixes". Remember: we use flower essences as a tuning fork for those things that are out of balance. Use the "Prima Materia" worksheets on the pages that follow to help narrow down the focus of your flower essence work for the next 28 days.

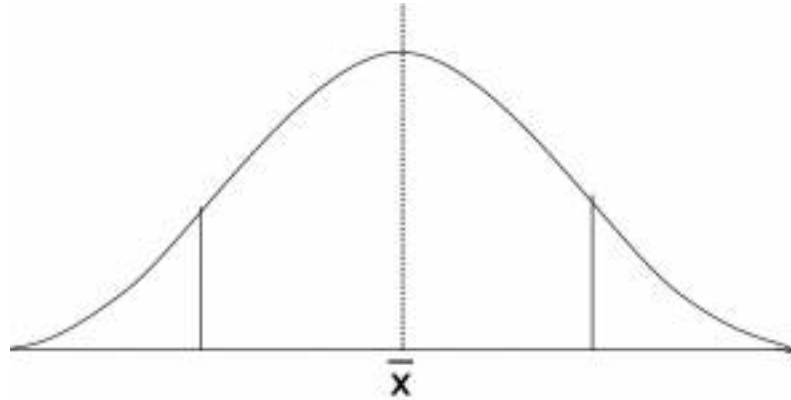
Unless advised by a certified Flower Essence Practitioner, work with up to four flower essences, or one flower essence blend, at a time. Flower essence blends are alchemically prepared essences in which several flowers are combined to synergistically act as one flower. Otherwise, you risk confusing the psyche with too many directives and information. It's a bit like being an alchemical chef- when you throw too many flavors into the pot at once, the flavor is less distinct!

Tip #3: Be Consistent

Continue to use the same flower essences or blend consistently for one full cycle of 28 days, but not less than 2 weeks. This is the time it takes for the Moon, an archetype

associated with the emotional body and the soul, to transit all twelve archetypal expressions of the Zodiac. Resist the urge to try new essence or blend every few days. This allows the flower essences the opportunity to take hold, and yourself time to notice their subtle effects.

An average cycle of flower essence will reflect a bell curve:



In the first few days, you might feel more relaxed, or calm, or energized (depending on your starting point). Or, you might not feel much of anything! During this phase, the change is more energetic, and may be vague or hard to pinpoint anything more than just feeling “different” or “better”. That will continue to shift and grow until the second or third week, where most of us start noticing the effects. This is a great time to record those powerful insights, the changes in your emotions or behavior, and vivid dreams.

After about the third week or so, the flower essences may start to taper off. This is when you might forget to take your flower essences, or you might lose or break the bottle. Don't worry! This is all very natural- it simply means that you have already started to resonate with the frequency of the flower essences. Through several cycles of flower essence use, you will be able to trust your own intuitive sense of how often and for how long to work with a particular flower essence or blend.

Tip #4: Work with Cycles

Because of the rhythmic nature of flower essence therapy, attention to organic cycles can deepen your experience. It can be very powerful to start a new flower essence on the new moon, and observe as the insights and awareness increase leading up to an on the Full moon. Women can start flower essences on the first day after her menses ends (the menstrual cycle is already a powerful time of psychic awareness, emotional clearing, and release; it may be better to tune in to yourself without flowers essences during the monthly cycle). Other shifts in the etheric plane- such as Equinoxes and Solstices- are ideal times to start a new flower essence protocol.

While flower essences are safe to use on your own, sometimes support can enhance your experience of self-discovery. Here are clues that it's time to see a certified flower essence practitioner:

- You can't narrow it down to the right flower essences or blend
- You have the right flower essences, but haven't noticed any changes
- You are working on an area that has been problematic for a long time
- You are emotionally engaged in the issue you are working on, and cannot see yourself objectively
- You would benefit from sharing your transformation with someone who can guide, witness, and celebrate your growth over time

Next, let's get to know each of the Five Elements, and explore how this ancient philosophy is relevant in our modern lives. As you read, see if there are one of two Elements that resonate with your current experience.

