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How did you first become interested in herbal medicine? My interest in herbal medicine dates back to when I was 13 years old. I had a spiritual calling due to my own health challenges and began studying on my own at a time when there were no herbal schools or other avenues for study. I started out by reading my mom's books -- Back to Eden by Jethro Kloss, The Herb Book by John Lust and all of Bernard Jensen's works. I began experimenting with dried herbs purchased at a local health food store. I had no fear at all! I just followed my intuition. Several of my extended family members were willing guinea pigs for my concoctions. This is not surprising as my great great grandmother Zoe was a known French Canadian herbalist and midwife. It must have been genetic memory. From that time on I have made the study of herbs and natural healing my life's work.

One of the points David tries to make when addressing laymen is not to think of herbs allopathically i.e. St. Johns wort as "the" depression herb, Echinacea as "the" immune support herb. Do you find that blending emphasis on diet as well as herbs helps your clients understand that holistic view of the synergy of herbal formulas more readily? Absolutely! The foundations of health are good nutrition, sleep, exercise, mindfulness and management of stress. I have always approached my clients from this holistic perspective. I see herbs as secondary to these other important aspects of a healthy lifestyle. In my practice, I rely on herbs to support digestion to facilitate proper nutrition, adaptogens to help with stress management, and herbs for sleep, mood and immune support. Inflammation is a driving factor in all chronic illness so I attend to the body's ability to heal by incorporating an anti-inflammatory diet as well as supplements and herbs for decreasing inflammation.

Tell us about your training and how the different modalities you have studied work together. I have a background in botany and ecology at the undergraduate level which has allowed me to really see and experience plants in one specific way, and this has allowed me to be very effective at teaching plant identification to my students. My master's degree is in nutrition, specifically the functional medicine perspective, so I have a depth of understanding of how nutrients work in the body, the importance of gut health, how to interpret blood work etc. I have also studied TCM and Ayurveda, which allows me to see the body from an entirely different perspective. In David's program he brings all of these modalities together, so I could really relate to the way David teaches. There is the idea of putting on different "hats" and taking them off as needed in order to see something clearly. All of these models are useful ways of looking at human health, which ultimately is a mystery unfolding before us. It is important to be humble in the face of this mystery and to use all of the tools at one's disposal to

be a good practitioner. I am always learning. Staying open to new ideas and different ways of knowing is essential in today's world.

How did you find David's classes and how did that fit into your other studies and practices? Because I had such an extensive background in herbal medicine, health and nutrition before I began my studies with David, I was really able to focus on my own deficiencies and to hone my skills in formulation. David is an excellent teacher. For students who are new to herbal medicine, this program requires a lot of study and commitment. You get out of it what you put into it. For me, the program was a joy. I loved every minute of it!

Your teaching involves time in the garden as well as making herbal extracts. Is there usually a moment in that education process when you see the understanding of herbs come alive in your students? At the Institute of Sustainable Nutrition, there are many "Aha!" moments. There is such a joyful energy in the classroom and many of our students have gone on to study herbs further. I love inspiring others with my passion for herbs, which I am told is infectious! When students are first introduced to the plants in the garden or in the field, there is a deep connection being made to the earth as the source of our food and medicine. It is lovely to experience the treasures each student finds and the gifts each of them bring out into the world as they travel down this beautiful path.