

A chance encounter led Lisa down a path that changed her direction. She learned how the body heals. Nature is critical to our healing. Living on the land, using all her senses, Lisa works with what nature has to offer.

Nature's Gifts and Healing

By Lisa Youngstrom

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NATURE'S GIFTS AND HEALING

LISA A YOUNGSTROM



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Table of Contents

1 - Early Years.....	5
2 - Career	7
3 - Integrative Therapies.....	9
4 - Ireland	11
5 - Crystals and Stones	12
6 - Healthcare Revisited	17
7 - February Full Moon	19
8 - Meditation	21
9 - Greetings and Gratitude Prayer.....	23
10 - Aromatherapy.....	25
11 - Crystal Meditation.....	27
12 - A Story of the Land.....	29
13 - Conclusion.....	33
Postscript	35

1

Early Years

Come with me as we explore what is in nature. This includes the plants and animals that stand, walk, crawl and fly. There are stones and crystals from deep in the earth or lying in a creek bed. Some people use these for decoration in and around their home. Others use them for healing. Plants are also used in and around the home as decorations, color and for their beauty. Using plants as medicine and for healing likely dates back as far as humans have been here on earth. My focus here will be on their current use for healing. Earth is home to all of us, providing everything we need. We may have moved away from that concept and the abundance the planet has to offer. But earth has not forgotten.

As a child, my favorite place to be was outside. That's where my friends were. There were other children to play with, horses to ride, and tadpoles to catch in the creek. Did you know that if you take tadpoles from the creek, put them in a jar of water, and bring them to a garage, they will grow legs, lose their tails and then disappear from the jar? Where did they go, I wondered. It took me several years to figure it out! There were vines to swing on and trees to climb. But most elusive were those that watched me from behind trees or from the branches above me. No matter how hard I tried, I couldn't turn around fast enough to catch them. But I knew they were there!

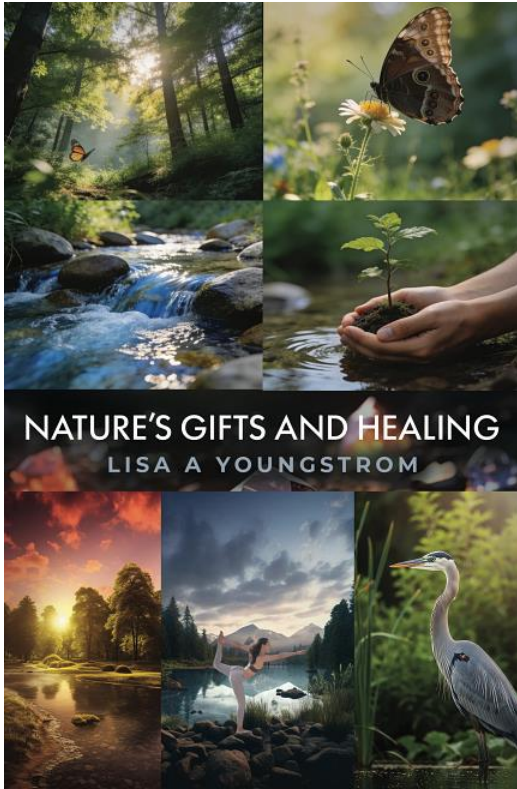
There was Grandmother who lived in a cottage, in the middle of the woods. Smoke was always coming out of the chimney in puffs or occasional streams that blew away with the wind. A stone path led up to the door, and a small window was on each side of it. Grandmother's house was right in the middle of a small clearing. It was warm inside her home. I would sit at the table or by the fire that she stoked in the stone fireplace. It always seemed to be going and was always warm. Grandmother would teach me about the plants. For instance, she would talk about how to prepare them, what to use them for, and where they grew, and why. Before I knew it a new day had arrived, and the "normal" routine of life would continue.

There were sparkly stones I found in the driveway to our house. Sometimes I would dig in the dirt because I saw a sparkle or hint of something buried just beneath the surface. The taste and smell of fresh saffron stems to chew on has stayed with me all these years. The smell and colors of the flowers Mother

planted, or the feel and smell of aged horse manure Dad spread in the garden to make everything grow so much better. And he was right. Things did grow better and bigger!

When I grew to a teen, the magic (or truth) of childhood faded into the background. That happens for many of us. Yet it stayed in my memory, to surface later in adulthood. It is interesting how experiences of nature stay with many of us long after we have “grown up”. The smell and colors of the flowers, and the smell of fresh aged horse manure hold memories. The sense of smell is an amazing sense! Experiences of nature stay with us long after we have “grown up”. It is just going out into nature to find them again. They are there in your memory bank. My time in nature as a child drove my adult exploration of nature and the plant world. The elders were my mentors and teachers. They watched as I explored my world, and would add other aspects as I was ready. And as you know, the mind of a child is like a sponge! Each facet of nature I studied as an adult, brought greater understanding of it. It isn't just what we see but also what we feel or sense. Beyond that is another layer of what many of us are beginning to understand. For me, energy is at the core of all of it.

While I was studying the medicinal use of plants, I found out that I had a great uncle who was an Eclectic physician in the early 1900's in Cincinnati, and his father before him, in North Carolina. My mother would tell me stories of his work. For example, he treated her when she had scarlet fever and rheumatic fever. In his day, herbs were the primary medicine. This was before “modern” medicine. She said that she and her cousin would sometimes ride along in the car when he made house calls. He would often come home with a chicken as payment for services. His wife wasn't too happy about that. To this day, it makes me laugh!



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