REVIVAL OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE OF MEXICO & THE SOUTHWEST

Curanderismo y yerbas Medicinales
Tonita Gonzales
Curanderismo

- **Curanderismo** is the art of Mexican Folk Healing, from the word *curar*, meaning to heal.

- Curanderismo uses an holistic approach to healing – treating **body**, **mind**, and **spirit**.

- Traditional remedies of Europe and Asia have been blended with those of Aztecs and Mayans.
History of Curanderismo

- 1519 – Spaniards arrived in Mexico
- 1521 – *Tenochitlan* & 3,000 medicinal plants destroyed
- 1552 – Martin de la Cruz, Aztec Indian doctor, wrote first book (listing 251 herbs) on medicinal plants at School of Santa Cruz de Tlaltelolco; written 31 years after conquest of Mexico
- 1554 – Cervantes de Salazar described Montezuma II’s gardens; physicians experimented with hundreds of medical herbs
Codex Badiano (cont.)
Evolution of Medicinal Herbs

- Aztec pharmacology – 1,200 medicinal herbs
- Aztecs treated arthritis, gastrointestinal ills, hepatitis, etc.
Curanderismo has influenced the revival of Alternative, Complementary, Holistic Integrated Medicine

- $21 Billion in Consumer Spending
- Andrew Weil’s Common Sense Approach, “Can’t hurt, could help”
  - Less fat, animal food, stress
  - Eliminate or reduce intake of booze, cigarettes, coffee
  - Begin exercise, massage and hypnosis therapy
  - Use herbs, olive oil, garlic, ginger, etc.
  - Keep lots of fresh flowers
Nineteenth Century Mexican Folk Healer who emphasized holistic, common-sense approach to treatment and healing

Modern “Integrative Medicine” specialist who emphasizes holistic, common-sense approach to treatment and healing
Uniting Two Countries and Cultures

- Learning from traditional medicines
  - University of New Mexico
  - Centro Desarrollo Humano Hacia La Comunidad (CEDEHC)
  - Tonantzin Traditional Healing
Calpulli Mexica
La Cultura Cura

Center of Human Development
Centro de Desarrollo Humano

Mission: To contribute in the healing and teaching of holistic health, based on traditional and ancestral customs of health and healing.
This course uses instructors who are healers and health practitioners from the Southwest, Mexico and the Albuquerque community to provide information on the history of Curanderismo (the art of Mexican Folk Healing) in the Southwest and Mexico. It explores an integrative approach to medicine and featuring demonstrations that incorporate Curanderismo with various traditional and holistic health techniques.
13th Annual Traditional Medicine without Borders: Curanderismo in the Southwest & Mexico

Uniting two countries & two cultures. Celebrating 13 years of traditional medicine & service to the community.

July 15-26, 2013

curanderismo.unm.edu
www.facebook.com/curanderismo
Three Levels of Knowledge

1. **Material** – herbs, animals, eggs, water, candles, cigars

2. **Spiritual** – *Curandero* as medium; soul concept

3. **Mental** – channels mental vibrations to patient
Specialties of Curanderismo

- **Hierbero** – herbalist
- **Sobador** – hands on healing
- **Partera** – midwife
- **Consejero** – heart to heart talks, platicas
- **Huesero** – bonesetter, traditional chiropractor
- **Espiritualista** – energetic channeling
- **Temazcalera** – sweatlodge healer
- **Acupuncturista - Meso-American Acupuncture**
Spiritual and Mental Levels

- Evil Eye – *Mal de Ojo*
- Magical Fright – *Susto*

Other rituals
- *Caida de Mollera* (tossing baby)
- *Empacho* (bolus of food lodged in digestive tract)
- *Bilis* (suppressed anger)
- *Muina* (outward rage)

- *Sobador*(a) – a kind of *Curandero/a* who is a folk masseur(se)
Material Level

- Can use simple, mixed & popular plants
- Water
- *Piedra Iman* (Lodestone)
- Candles
- Temezcal
Traditional Medicine Ideology of Illness

- Curanderos don’t use medical labels
- All illness starts as an emotional imbalance, trauma, or shock – susto, magical fright
- In treating an illness, Indigenous Mesoamerican medicine does not separate the body, mind, and spirit
- Patients have a direct connection to the earth, nature and society – holistic approach
Emotions and Curanderismo

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Organ</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fire</td>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Joy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earth</td>
<td>Spleen</td>
<td>Worry</td>
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<td>Metal</td>
<td>Lungs</td>
<td>Grief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Kidneys</td>
<td>Fear</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wood</td>
<td>Liver</td>
<td>Anger</td>
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</tbody>
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FEAR

- Accidents are wake-up calls
- Curandereros refrain from medical diagnoses which can become negative stigmas
- Fear eventually depletes the body of its essential energy and can lead to death
- Curandereros aim to empower patients:
  - Listen to their body
  - Become their own healer
Treating the Spirit

Temazcals are used for soul and spiritual cleansings

Temazcal Tonantzin in Albuquerque, NM
Curandera Tonita Gonzales
- *Limpias* – energetic cleansings
- *Platicas* – Heart to Heart Conversations
- Rituals to bring closure
Treating the Mind

- Daily meditation
- Deep Breathing (minimum 100)
- Sleep 8 hours
- Calming herbal teas, tinctures or Bach Flowers
- Changing lifestyle
Treating the Body

A *sobada* is light hands on energy work
Environment
Nutrition Recommendations

- Drink 3 liters water daily
- Blended drinks
  - Papaya
  - Grapes with Seeds
  - Tomatoes with Spinach
  - Cranberry
  - Chia seeds/Cucumber
  - Carrots
  - Aloe juice
Not Recommended

- Lactose products
- White flour products
- White sugar, only honey or raw sugar
- Sugar substitutes
- Carbonated drinks
Traditional Medicinal Herbs

- Vinca, (*Vinca major*)
  - Anticarcinogenic

- Echinacea, (*angustifolia*)
  - Immune System
Traditional Medicinal Herbs

- Garlic, *Ajo*, (Allium sativum)
  - Immune System
  - Anti-inflammatory
  - Antibiotic
  - Liver function

- Chaparral, *Gordolobo*, (Larrea Tridentata)
  - Lymphatic System
- **Common Plantain, *Llanten,* (Plantago major)**
  - Immune System

- **Aloe Vera, (Aloe barbadensis)**
  - Digestive System
  - Antiseptic
  - Constipation
  - Fever
  - Inflammation
- **Chaya**, (Cnidoscolus chayamansa)
  - Nutritional supplement
  - Diuretic

- **Yerba Buena, Spearmint,** (Mentha spicata)
  - Digestive
  - Headaches
  - Indigestion
  - Nausea
- **Uña de Gato, Cat’s Claw, (Uncaria tomentosa)**
  - Immune System
  - Kidney “cleanser”

- **Boldo, Bold, (Peumus boldus)**
  - Kidney cleanser
  - Liver Cleanser
¡Gracias!

Thank you for your interest in the great and ancient art of Curanderismo.

If you would like to learn more please contact
Tonita Gonzales 505-681-5602
tonita@temazcalito.com
www.temazcalito.com

Dr. Eliseo Torres 505-277-0952,
cheo@unm.edu
http://curanderismo.unm.edu