

## HOW I BECAME A HEALER

As a little girl I always felt lonely and different from all my friends even though we grew up in the same city. While my friends were going out to shopping and gambling and having fun, I was staying home helping my parents take care of my family and our farm. During those early years, I began learning about foods as medicine. When we made food we didn't just make a meal, but we selected ingredients that acted as remedies to help soothe, enhance and protect the body.

Honestly, at first I felt upset about being an outsider, but that was short lived. "who cares, right?" I didn't know about many modern, fancy things, but I knew how to take care of my family and also the pigs, rabbits, fish, cows and geese. I didn't know how to gamble, but I could enjoy the sounds of nature and the feeling from every single tree and living thing. I could learn how to use all of the herbs in my back yard for healing remedies. That's why when I was in middle school, my friends called me as Archimedes, a Greek mathematician, physicist, engineer, inventor, and astronomer in c.287 BC-c212BC, not because of my intelligence alone, but because I was already steeped in traditional country healing modalities that I learned from my family.

My life at home was simple but meaningful. My happiest memories are of my grandfather rewarding my learning and achievements with a gift of a couple of plums or cherries that were normally kept to sell. Day by day, I learned from my parents how to use herbs, fruits, poultry, pork, even insects, not just as food but also for remedies. For example, for stomach flu, we use cupping therapy, or coin scratching therapy, which are alternative & traditional medicine for release of toxins and to clear out congestion, and to improve energy healing circulation in our body. Then we would drink some warm ginger tea with sugar, which has a calming and soothing effect on the body. That's it! If we had low back pain, we would make some meal with cow's tail, which is the best supplement for the spine. In our traditional medicine, we believe that each animal organ will be a good supplement for the related organ in our body; cow's tail is the last part from the spine, so it's good for low back pain. Sometimes, I would see my dad roll healing herb as a cigarette and burn it above other's accu-points for pain relief or some other illness, so that the heat, and the healing properties from the herbs would activate the accu-point, and soothe the painful area.

I don't know when I first began to love all of the herbs, vegetables and trees, but I grew to love them in every moment of their growing state, with every color shades on the leaves, with their own fragrance. When I was surrounding by them, I felt so peaceful and happy. And yet, my dream since I was in

elementary school was become a good teacher. I fulfilled the first part of that dream when I graduated from Teaching University of Hochiminh City in VietNam in 1997.

However, sometimes life takes a turn and we cannot predict our next step, right? Up until now, I was focused only on becoming a good teacher and had not considered using my background and experience as a healer.

Then one day, when I was teaching French for the Foreign Language Center of Teaching University in my country, my back started to bother me, soon after that I got the terrible headache. I did not know what was wrong, and no matter how many pills I took, my suffering was not relieved. The medications were very strong and were creating a secondary stomach problem for me. My condition worsened to the point that I could not walk without pain, I could not read the letters on a page, and could not remember a thing. I love books like crazy and not being able to read was heavy punishment. Finally, I even got to the point where just blinking or swallowing saliva would make me violently ill. After six months in pain, and three months without sleep, the doctors gave up on me. They told me they could not help me.

Ok! That is their answer, but no matter what, I would never give up! The only hope I had left was my own will power and determination. I started to research about alternative & traditional medicine on my own, to use the healing herbs and traditional medicine that I learned from the past, and to apply the body energy healing work that I'd been practicing for 5 years while I was studying in University. After two years of learning, searching and self healing practices for at least two hours a day. I began to feel better. How wonderful it was the first time I could walk for 5 minutes without any pain! But I was still having a hard time remembering and learning new things.

In Oct 2001, I went overseas to United States. My sister and my brother found me a job working in a Japanese restaurant with them. During that time, I worked and I continued my self healing because I still could not read more than 10 sentences a day. At the same time, I was trying to determine what would be my next step. Continuing to teach French in University was not realistic because of my health and my financial situation. I did not know where I belonged next.

Then someone suggested me that I should go to massage school. At that time I didn't know what massage even was, but then one day I received a catalogue from Holistic Healing Hands School, just one block away from where I lived. It was like a light went on right in my head when I read the introduction about hydrotherapy and using water to treat illness without medicine. "Without medicine?" "Cool! I

love that!” I kept reading the catalogue and I was so energized and excited that I knew I was hooked. I had found where I would belong next.

My biggest challenge was still in front of me. How could I study and learn about massage when I could not understand and speak English much? I could read because of my French vocabulary, and I had a dictionary, but speaking and understanding is different. Not only that, in my traditional education, I was not allowed to lie down in front of another, especially a man, even with clothes on. How could I overcome my own psychological, emotional and cultural training to become a massage therapist and healer? Further more, I had to learn to protect myself from common misperception about massage, and make sure that I’m recognized as a healer only.

After 11 months of practically living in school ( I say so because I went to school 7 days/week, from 9 am to 10 pm) I graduated with good results. It took me two more years to completely overcome my own psychological obstacles. After four more years, finally I had recovered physically, which for me, was worth my nine years of consistent research, learning and holistic healing practices. When I look back, I think maybe because of my healer mindset, and caring attitude, I can now more easily overcome most of my challenges, and build up a positive energy protection around me that pushes away negative thinking and dis-ease.

From the day I graduated from school, 95% of my clients have come with injuries, or have health issues from light headaches, to migraines and other serious and long term problems from head to toes. Because of my childhood, my experience, my own struggles with illness and all my studies and training, I am able to help them. I know that I’m on the right path. Maybe I need to say “thank you!” to my health issue, as without that event, I would not have become the healer that I am today.