

Puberty is a fascinating process that involves hormonal changes in our body and brain.

During this time in our lives we experience a series of profound physical and emotional transformations. The way teens interact with themselves and the world becomes dependent on the way they learn to interact with their ever shifting hormones. As Dr Christiane Northrup points out: “If the rising force associated with this time is nurtured, protected and fertilized, the bloom that results is a blessing and a thrill to behold”

Most of us adult women recognize the importance of guidance throughout those key years in our lives. Why guidance? Because puberty can be quite a vulnerable time in the life of a girl. Teens become very aware of the way they look to others and they are willing to follow the dictates of fashion and whatever trends the market finds profitable. Unfortunately not all of those trends are good for teens’ physical and emotional wellbeing. They will likely cause more harm than good to the yet fragile self esteem that girls are learning to hone.

“*Finding the Goddess Within*” is an invitation for teen girls to discover a space within themselves that they can call home and that they can come back to whenever needed. To get in touch with such a place, they will explore what they tend to think, feel and do during the different phases of the moon and menstrual cycles. Such an exploration will serve as a blueprint or a map for them to get to understand the hormonal impact on their feelings and emotions instead of blindly buying into the social trend of labeling each phase as a blessing or a curse. Coming back home will also allow them to get in touch with their gifts and tendencies in life which will in turn help them understand how they can best serve the needs of their community.

The practical tools that we use in this exploration are:

1. ***Self-care tips and modalities:***

- Ü **Acu-pressure:** This modality will help them understand and feel subtle connections inside their bodies. Massaging certain acupuncture points will bring relief to some of the imbalances usually experienced along the cycles such as: menstrual cramps, headaches or bloating
- Ü **Herbal home-made recipes:** I have seen girls’ faces light up when they find out that they can relieve PMS, acne or mood swings with herbs they can find in their gardens! These home-made recipes stood the test of thousands of years’ trials in China as well as in our western societies. It’s truly empowering to know that you can use your own taste and creativity to design the best formula for your own needs.
- Ü **Nutritional advice:** Poor nutrition is a key factor in many of the physical imbalances experienced by teen girls. Nutritional information coupled with observation of their personal experience with certain foods will give them the opportunity to make healthier choices.
- Ü **Preparation of their own body lotions and perfumes:** We will use aromatherapy and essential oils to make unique blends to their personal needs and taste.

- 2. ***Observation and research:*** we will take an honest and educated look into what mass media shows us as “trendy”; particularly in the areas of nutrition, clothing and cosmetics and how and if that trend is aligned with what they want and need. We will also analyze the impact of cosmetics on their health and which alternatives they can use.
- 3. ***Movement:*** Tai chi movements, stretching and creative dance will allow for the girls to connect with their emotions at different moments in their cycles and become more mindful of how to honor and respect each phase.
- 4. ***Journaling:*** They will be invited to use a journal as a way to map down the emotions associated with the hormonal changes throughout the month. This will give them the opportunity to find certain patterns of thinking, behaving and feeling at different times in their cycles. This understanding will in turn help them connect with their bodies and emotions in a much more accepting and compassionate way.

5. ***Rite of passage:*** The purpose of traditional cultures' rites of passage was to “walk” the youth into adulthood. Through rites of passage, the youth discovered their gifts, their vision for their role in the community, and their own personal "medicine" for dealing with the challenges that lay in front of them. Their elders facilitated these discoveries, and supported the young adults to integrate their visions, roles, and paths into the fabric of the community.
- Through exploring their relationship with each phase of their lunar cycle, the teen girls will get a chance to connect with their gifts and talents. This will create a safe space to review and eventually transform the child mentality ("What's in it for me") into the adult mentality ("How can I best serve the needs of my community?").
- Even though the whole workshop can be considered as different steps in the rite of passage to adulthood, we will have a *rite of passage ceremony* at the end of the workshop that will serve as a springboard into the experience of applying their talents to the best use to their own hearts and to the heart of their community.

Gentleness and receptivity are two of the most precious and fundamental characteristics of our female soul. The way in which the contents of this 7 weeks workshop are delivered greatly depends on the group's maturity level and curiosity expressed by the girls. It is not about imposing any particular point of view; it's about supporting the exploration of new pathways of thinking but only if aligned with the girls' fundamental values transmitted by their families and community.

“Goddess Gatherings presented by Yamin offered the young women the rare opportunity to celebrate their femininity. In a world that objectifies women and exploits their sexuality, Yamin's course was a true gift. The students learned important information about their bodies and how they work, discussed with positivity and inspiring of the genius of nature. They created individualized, healthful cosmetics that respect the body and are economical as well. The young women enjoyed each session and as their guide, I was thrilled to provide the chance for them to build a strong sense of the wonder of their bodies”

Ellen G. Sanchez, M.Ed.

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Director, Santana House Youth Action Center

Class Format

In general, I recommend taking this workshop in a 7-week format, meeting 2hs once a week. There is also the option to meet over the course of three weekends, 4 hours each day.

Cost

The cost for the entire workshop for a group of up to 15 teen girls is \$3,500. An additional cost of \$1,000 will be charged for a group up to 25 girls. The price includes materials for acne and PMS recipes, body lotions and aromatherapy blends as well as handouts. Keep in mind that we will need a stove and a sink for the hands-on projects.

Looking forward to working together!

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