

## ***“FINDING THE GODDESS WITHIN”... EMPOWERING GIRLS IN THEIR JOURNEY THROUGH PUBERTY.***

by Yamin Chehin L.Ac, Dipl O.M

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”<sup>i</sup>

Most of us adult women recognize the importance of guidance throughout these 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 sometimes blindly follow the dictates of fashion and whatever trends the market finds profitable<sup>ii</sup>. 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 and within the group(s) to which they belong that they can call home and 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 a collective exploration will serve as a blueprint or a map to assist them in understanding the hormonal impact on their feelings and emotions, instead of blindly buying into the social trend of labeling each moon phase as a blessing or a curse<sup>iii</sup>. Coming back home will also allow them to get in touch with their and their group’s gifts and tendencies in life which will in turn help them (and us!) 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:*

- ✓ **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 during the cycles such as: menstrual cramps, headaches or bloating
- ✓ **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 have 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.
- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **Home-made body lotions and perfumes**: We will use aromatherapy and essential oils to make unique blends to fit their personal needs and taste.

### *2. The way of Council as practiced and transmitted by the Ojai Foundation: Council is the practice of deep looking, deep listening and speaking from the heart. “It inspires a form of deep communication that reveals our own and the group’s vision and purpose. Council provides a comprehensive means for co-visioning and making decisions in a group context. Council is about our personal and collective story<sup>iv</sup>”. It is of special interest for us to provide a safe space for each girl to understand the way(s) her personal story weaves into the collective story of the group she belongs to and vice versa. The understanding of these core values will become the real backbone and soul of the goddess workshop.*

3. *Observation and research:* after they come to the understanding of what their and the group's needs are through the practice of deep looking and deep listening, we will take an honest and educated look into what mass media shows us as "trendy and true"; particularly in the areas of nutrition, clothing and cosmetics, and how and if such trends align with what they want and need. We will also analyze the impact of cosmetics on health and explore alternatives to reduce the harmful side effects that many cosmetics have on our planet.
4. *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.
5. *Journaling:* The girls will be invited to use a journal as a way to map the emotions associated with 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 not only help them connect with their bodies and emotions in a much more accepting way, but also allow them to become more compassionate with other girls going through the same changes.
6. *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 for the best use of their own hearts and for 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 these workshops are delivered greatly depends on the group's maturity level and levels of curiosity expressed by the girls. It is not about imposing any particular point of view; it is about supporting the exploration of new pathways of thinking, and doing so in a way that aligns with each girls' fundamental values as transmitted by their families and community.

Looking forward to working together!

Yamin Chehin Lac, Dipl O.M

*"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"*

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<sup>i</sup> “Mother-Daughter wisdom”, Christiane Northrup, MD. Page 57.

<sup>ii</sup> The environmental Working Group has a very revealing study on the extensive use of harmful make up by teen girls. To get access to the full article please follow this link <http://www.ewg.org/reports/teens>

<sup>iii</sup> This is true especially to the so called PMS (pre menstrual syndrome) during which time a woman is usually labeled as “crazy” or she feels she suddenly becomes a monster.

<sup>iv</sup> “The Way of Council”, [Ojai foundation](#) website