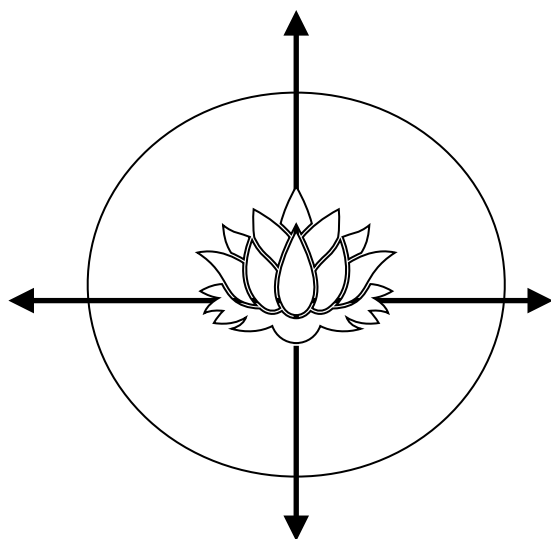


Navigating the Flower Compass

An Introduction to Plant Spirit Medicine



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by Shawn Marie Westendorf



"...you cannot have a relationship with the plants without entering fully into a relationship with Gaia, the living earth..."
~Rosemary Gladstar

What is plant spirit medicine?

Plant Spirit Medicine is the unique relationship between humans and plants that results in shared deep love, respect for life, and miracles. It is relating on a soul level to another being, and being so stoked about it that you keep engaging and growing; you grow, Earth grows, and the relationship itself grows. Plant spirit medicine is a bridge to our very personal connection to God through our Earth and her garden of beings.

Relating with Earth

Earth and all of life moves in cycles. Tuning into Earth's rhythmic cycles, we encounter our own inner workings and restore our personal rhythm. Nature's cycles, when harnessed, become our compass, guiding us through life and pointing to the direction of our highest dreams and potential.

Flowers and their cycles have a particular affinity for mirroring consciousness. Tuning into the growth cycle of a flower, we tune into new perspectives about our personal and collective phases of growth. Each time we move through a phase of blossoming, we visit from a new vantage point. We are called to integrate the next level of our life lessons around this cycle, spiraling upward, with heightened perspective to offer. Thus, we respond differently each time, creating a ripple effect of positive change throughout our entire circle of life, and beyond.

Navigating the Flower Compass

The flower compass can be viewed as an outward, visual map of our inner guidance system. As we move along, we see the true potential of our precious life force.

Flower Bud: Vision (East)

Keywords: New Beginnings, Possibility, Illumination, Outward Movement

The budding flower appears East, in the direction of new beginnings. Eastern energy is filled with soft, breaking light, and supports the growth and expansion of new life. East is associated with Vernal Equinox (spring), sunrise, warmth, youth, dawn, rebirth, the colors yellow and green, and budding consciousness.

The budding flower is full of potential. It has a need for nurturance, yet determined wild seeds shoot to flowers and blossom. The sprouting seed or budding flower can be seen symbolically as an idea, life lesson, situation or cycle that is beginning to take shape and has the potential for multiple outcomes.

In autumn, a flower drops her seed to the ground and it becomes buried in the earth. Autumn turns to winter, winter fades and soft spring light touches the earth. As she begins to warm, the seed that is buried within her becomes activated and grows towards the light on the surface. The subconscious awakens into consciousness. Just as the seedling grows and cracks the surface of the soil, what is buried within us cracks the surface and begins to feel encouraged by the light. An idea is illuminated; a new cycle of awareness has become apparent to us making way for a new phase of blossoming to begin. New life that is a direct result of the quality, character, and experience of the life before.

Our ideas are actually groundbreaking. If we can think of it this way, imagine the possibility for beauty and expression that exists. A seed must break ground and push its way out of the dirt before it becomes a flower. The power of light, the warmth of the sun (God, Spirit, Love, etc) inspires the seed to grow and fills it with potential and promise. Light activation awakens enthusiasm for the possibility of life, expression, beauty and connection.

We call upon the energy of the budding flower to cultivate patience, develop virtues, nurture our ideas and see from new hopeful perspectives.

Reflection: What experiences, patterns and insights are coming up to be felt and understood in this next phase of our lives?

Blossom: Action (South)

Keywords: Expression, Giving, Manifestation, Outward Movement

The blossoming flower appears South. Southern illumination helps us perceive our connection to Earth and our bodies. We integrate the perspectives awakened in the east into our physical being. South holds peak energy, and is associated with Summer Solstice, bright light, heat, noon, celebration, the color red and fully conscious awareness.

The energy of the blossoming flower is open and receptive, and generously giving at the same time. To illustrate this point, imagine a Gardenia flower in full bloom. As you picture its inviting, white petals, its thick, sweet scent may also come to mind. As a flower blossoms, it opens. The more open it becomes, the more we are able to receive its aroma. As it becomes more and more open, the strength of its offering increases, until it reaches its peak, and the cycle moves inward again. The blossom dries and falls from the tree, and the plant turns its energy once again to its roots.

Just like flowers, when we are blossoming, we are unveiling, uncovering, and generously giving our sweetest offering all at the same time. In this time when we are our most giving, we are also our most open to receiving. The more open we become, the more we are able to receive the bright light of love, the biggest contributing factor to our personal growth. As we experience the warmth of "sunlight", we open and blossom; we receive and have something to give simultaneously.

In our cycle of consciousness, the blossoming flower represents our virtue or idea (the seed we planted in the spring) being given the nourishment it has needed to thrive and grow into fruition. We are coming into a cycle of our awareness around this lesson being at its peak. We are fully living in and experiencing the sweetness of this new awareness. As our awareness blossoms, others become attracted to the luminosity we are naturally offering through living out our learning experience. Just like the aromatic allure of an open flower attracts bees, our allure attracts people, places, and experiences to us, and, being open as we are, we receive their blessings.

Blossoms, having fully opened their layers, represent fully-realized potential. As the wheel turns to autumn and the flower fades, we collect the seeds from this cycle's awareness and save them for sowing in the spring. Thus a new cycle continues, related to the one that came before, but with infinite possibility of its own.

The blossoming flower offers the sweetest nectar, holds its head high towards the sun, and stands proud of its being-ness, knowing well its unabashed beauty. We call upon the energy of the blossoming flower to cultivate the courage to offer our sweetest expression, find strength in our inner truth, and to see and receive the love being offered to us.

Reflection: What dreams, virtues, and seeds of awareness have we cultivated and watched blossom into radiance?

Flower in Seed: Reflection (West)

Keywords: Mystery, Summary, Integration, Sunset, Subconscious, Inward Movement

The flower in seed is associated with the western position on the compass. West is the place where we may connect with our shadow aspects and parts of ourselves hidden from full view. It holds the energy of the sunset, when we are preparing to enter into a cycle of darkness. As we move westward, we tune into energy that is unknown by our conscious mind, but may be communicating to us through its direct line to the East, and through our thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. West is associated with sunset, Autumnal Equinox, the harvest, the mysterious unknown and subconscious awareness.

In the west, we harvest the fruits of this cycle of awakening and collect seeds for the next cycle. The flower in seed, having fully expressed her gifts and offered her sweet fruit, moves inward, where she takes stock of the season and nourishes the seeds of new life. The life force of the flower is transferred into the seed to be carried on to the next generation. Energy moves inward and downward to nourish the roots for winter preservation.

Like the seed, we absorb the life force of our ancestry and carry it forward into our lives and that of our own seeds, our children. In this phase in the spiral of life, we deepen our awareness of our roots, our ancestral connections, and integrate their wisdom into our own.

In our cycle of awareness, the flower in seed represents the waning of our lesson or idea. We have fully expressed this new level of awareness and are beginning to summarize what it has meant to us, harvesting the nourishment from the lessons, and integrating it into our current awareness. We have created a new "baseline" for ourselves. As we move into the space of completion, we begin to step again into the unknown, and plant the seed for the next cycle's lessons. As we integrate, we create space in our hearts and minds for the lessons in the next ring of our spiral. We prepare our space for the deep rest and rejuvenation that is coming. We call upon the Flower in Seed and the essence of autumn to move inward, develop intuition and insight, and to cultivate inner space for generational healing.

Reflection: What nourishment (life experience) have these lessons provided? What can I integrate to prepare for the next cycle?

Dreaming Seed: Rest (North)

Keywords: Purification, Spirit, Knowing, Mastery, Completion, Inward Movement

North is the realm of the Dreaming Seed. Northern energy signifies closure, and is the place of deep, rejuvenating rest, sleep, dreaming, and un-manifest awareness. In the north, we experience mastery. We pass the wisdom we have earned from our experiences down to others. We also receive inspiration and guidance from Spirit, our ancestors, and the stars when we connect with northern energy. This direction on our compass is associated with Winter Solstice, midnight, darkness, dreaming and unconscious awareness.

The flower in winter, having dropped her seeds, is at rest, invisible to the outer world. She is contained somewhere deep in the soil, under cold snow, cleansed and quiet. She is in between life and death; as her life as a blossom has died yet her seed remains, dreaming of the warmth of spring. The cold winter chill purifies Earth and prepares her soil for new life.

In our cycle of awareness, the resting flower and her dreaming seed represent the completion, outcome, or closure phase of our lesson. We have received and integrated what we can and planted the seed for the next generation. All there is left to do is pause in the space between what was and what is yet to come. As we pause, we purify our minds and connect our hearts in prayerful, reflective meditation. It is in this phase where we may light a flame of intention for the new season ahead, to guide our growth and expansion.

In the rest phase, when our minds are quiet and reflective, our connection to God is strong as ever. We receive white light that channels through our mind, body and psyche, purifying our perspectives and detoxifying our thoughts. This allows our space to fill with deep love, reverence and appreciation for our connections to other living things. While we are in the dark phase of winter, the light that others carry within becomes a beacon of warmth and hope for us. This phase inspires us to care for one another, be of service, and share our love and abilities.

The dreaming seed finds peace, restoration, and inspiration in the cold, winter darkness. We call upon the dreaming seed to support us in prayer and quiet reflection, to allow rest and rejuvenation, and to cultivate spiritual connection.

Reflection: How can I use my skills and experience to serve the greater good?

Timeless Flower: Soul Essence (Within)

Within refers to the place inside of us, and all living things, where all of the directions meet, and is associated with all stages of blossoming. It is the place within that remains unchanged as all things change. Within is where unconscious, subconscious and conscious awareness all work together to guide our inner compass. It is where our Spirit resides and bears witness to our growth.

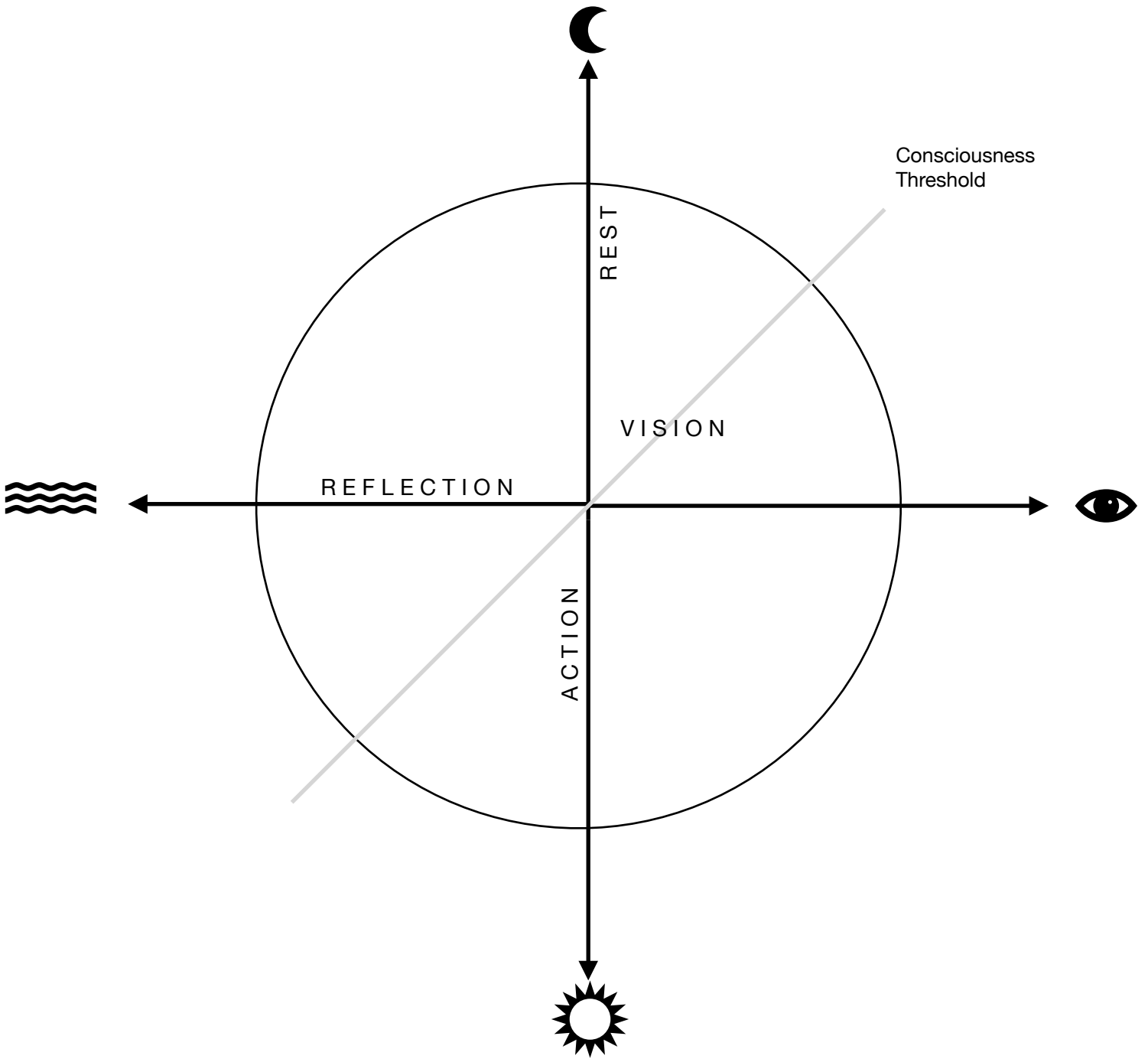
When dropped into the place within, we can never be lost. This is because when we are connecting with this part of ourselves, we are tuned into an "intersection" point on our maps. The intersection is where East, South, West, and North all cross circuits and share energy. It is where our awareness is budding, fully blossomed, integrating, and resting all at once. When tapped into "Within" we are feeling into the swirling energies of life all around us, and have perspective over our entire experience. We call upon the energy of the timeless

flower within to ground and recenter ourselves, access inner knowing, gain perspective of “the big picture”, and cultivate trust for the process of living.

Reflection: To which other areas of life can this lesson apply? How far can I extend my circle of loving awareness?

Flower Compass Meditation: *Listening with the Heart*

Create an outer compass by placing a stone, shell, salt, coffee bean, candle, or any object of importance to you in each direction, symbolizing the East, South, West, and North. Sit within the center of the compass, light a candle in front of you and gently close your eyes. Allow your mind to settle. As you breathe deeply, tune into warm energy arising within you. Sweep your arm over the back of your head, collect the energy from the nape of the neck, and offer it to the candle as you exhale. Repeat for five slow breaths. After the fifth breath, place your hands over your heart. Notice how it feels to connect in this space. Listen deeply. Trust that while you may not hear words, your heart is communicating with you. Continue to breathe at a comfortable, slow rate. Bring your attention back to the flame. Sweep your hands over the flame, taking the light into your hands. Bring your hands back over your heart, feeding it the warmth and light of the flame. Continue to fill your heart with light until it is full and overflowing like a waterfall. As the light spills over, visualize the ripples it creates around you. Watch as the circles of light expand in every direction, merging and dancing with the energy of each direction. With each beat of your heart, the ripples of light expand further and further. See and feel the beautiful influence of your life force on the world around you.



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