

learning should be hard fun!

HCC

**THE HERBAL COACHING
COMMUNITY –
SCHOOL OF HERBALISM
PLAYBOOK**

**A Division of the Arco Iris
Earth Care Project**

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The Problem and a Solution

Two recent studies highlight the problem. First, [research on ginger](#) shows it's far more effective in curing cancer than any of the drugs currently used in oncology. Second, results of studies reveal that the [side-effects from taking conventional drugs](#) are 5 times worse than previously thought. You've seen the ads on TV? After listing a benefit the announcer goes on and on warning of side effects, sometimes including death. Yet, we're only hearing 1/5th of them?

It's a fair bet that if you have cancer you won't be told about ginger but will be put on less effective drugs with life-endangering side effects. It's up to you to find out about ginger and all of the other natural substances that can eradicate it, safely. If your doctor backs you up and continues to treat you based on your use of natural substances, he or she risks losing their medical license so you'll be dismissed as a patient. Therefore your choice narrows to treating yourself without the professional supervision of a physician, experimenting on yourself in the hope you've picked the best approach out of the plethora of natural therapies found online, in books or through friends. In addition to being sick, you must quickly become your own expert in oncology. Whatever your health issue, the same pattern repeats itself.

Another aspect of "the problem", do you have the insurance or enough money to pay for getting the help you need? If you turn towards alternative health care providers who aren't covered by insurance since their practice is outside of the powerful American Medical Association (or its equivalent in other countries) you will pay out of pocket. Even if you're fortunate enough to have a physician who can legally practice some form of alternative medicine, the financial issue remains.

The other side of the picture concerns providers of alternative health care, be they practitioners or suppliers of natural substances (including food). They must function in chains imposed by a legal establishment supporting a medical industry that would prefer they just go away. This is especially true for herbalists. In the United States there is no recognized profession of "herbalist" despite all of the clinical studies supporting the claim that plants are very effective therapeutic agents. It's disheartening to devote one's time and resources to acquiring certification as a Master Herbalist in a system that doesn't recognize it as a qualification to legally practice. Yet, the more science discovers about the abilities of plants to restore health, the more we need the expertise of herbalists to guide us in their use.

I'm assuming that readers are already very familiar with the above issues so I won't elaborate on them. Instead, there's an appendix with links to the above studies and related information. This book is about an alternative, a solution arising from the nature of play.

One outcome of the suppression of herbalism turns out to be a benefit. By locking the door, herbalists have been forced to live "outside"...in the wild, close to the plants themselves. It's like imprisoning a musician inside a fully equipped music studio. The artist masters his craft but music lovers are deprived of his masterpieces. Until the word gets out and those doors are pried open – suddenly a renaissance of music lifts the world's heart.

To create the symphony of wellness requires a variety of instruments. Conventional medicine is master of emergency medicine and surgery. When it comes to diseases, especially chronic conditions, other players get the part. The melody may flow from herbalist to acupuncturist and back again. Or physical therapy through massage or chiropractic is required to tune the anatomy. The *single answer for everything* approach is dead. It's time to assemble all of the instruments together in harmony.

As beings with limited life spans we can't wait until governments hear and respond positively to our voices by lifting the sanctions against natural, traditional therapies. Protests, letters to congress, and email campaigns have done little to edge the industrial complex out of our bodies.

Nor can we afford to haphazard our way forward in the hopes of stumbling across a cure for whatever ails us. There's another way – the self-organizing complex system of community can be played as a game to create a genuine health system, responsive to our needs as they arise. With or without money. We already have the knowledge and tools we need to do this ourselves.

Imagine playing a game that enabled you to master herbalism; including gardening, making your own herbal products, foraging for edible & healing plants, and sharing your knowledge with others. If you already have expertise with botanical therapies, imagine applying your craft in a community that rewarded you for your skills and furthered your abilities. If you're a practitioner of some other modality of alternative health care, your game would be to discover how your field intersects with the use of plants, adds to the means by which we can successfully overcome health issues, and extends your practice to a wider community. Or, if you're someone who just wants to feel better, imagine having access to a community that can help while playing in the Garden of Life.

So What is this Game and How does it Work?

It's a blended learning game which means part of it is played online and part of it occurs in the physical world. It takes the wealth of knowledge available online and transmits it to you in useable chunks according to your level and interest. It's an alternative to online courses and off-line schools. It can be an alternative to medical bills since it's a community of practice.

When players sign up they choose between joining a small team of 5-6 called a Pod (a personal learning network, PLN) or going solo as an independent- study player. At any time players can switch between being in a team or by going independent. Since life circumstances can change, so does the game we play. We encourage players to join Pods since that's where the juicy action is, but there are occasions when making a time commitment to others isn't fun or productive for anyone involved. Single mothers or fathers with small children and a job, for example, may need the flexibility of independent study.

Pods

There are different versions of Pods. Some are *Location* based. This is a huge asset for off-line, hands-on Quests and Challenges. Do you have a circle of friends near you to play with? By joining together you'll have a jump on the game. Some Pods are *Interest* based. This includes a *Topic* of special interest, for example, growing herbs...or making botanical preparations. Or it could be *Level* of interest, how far your Pod wants to go...do you want to excel to become qualified Herbal Coaches? Do you want to *go for it* through intensive game play? Or are you a more casual player who just wants the fun of exploration without any particular goal in mind? Then there's the *Practitioner Pod*, these folks have years of study and possibly clinical practice behind them. They're in the game for "continuing education", *comparing notes* with other

practitioners, extending their experience and practice through consultations within the game community. They quickly become official Herbal Coaches.

Initially, our Pods will be mixed until enough players are in the game to sort them out into “the best fit”. Exception: if you sign up with enough friends to create a Pod of your choosing. When your game begins the administrator will enter you into a Pod and send you the information you need to connect. If you’ve requested to join up with players you know, we’ll connect you with them (unless they’re in a Pod that’s already reached its limit of 7, we try to keep them at 6.)

Soloists (Independent-Study)

Many of the same benefits to belonging in a Pod can be had by folks studying on their own. Partially because of being paired with a [Study Buddy](#). Since Peer-to-Peer review and validation plays such a big role in the game, Soloists also need someone around to review their work and validate their knowledge. This is also who you’ll turn to first when you need help. If neither of you knows the answer, you can take it to the Soloist G+ Circle. All of the Soloists are together in one big happy family on G+. Since you’ll be on different topics the conversations will cover a broader spectrum than a Pod’s. But if you want to zero in on those working on your topic, just ask and you can narrow conversations down to your topic.

You’ll still want to *talk* about what you’re learning (not just write about it). So [Hangouts](#) could either be with your Study Buddy or with anyone in the Soloist circle. You can start a Hangout yourself and invite your circle. Only a limited number can attend due to limits on Hangout size by Google. Watch for other Soloists inviting members to a Hangout, if you get there in time you could join in.

When you’re ready to take a final exam, notify your Coach. The Hangout-with-a-Coach portion of it is only conducted in groups so you’ll be waiting for a group to form for this part of the exam. Since you can still move on to another Module you won’t be left in the dreaded void of waiting. You simply don’t get your points for a Module converted to credits until after you pass the exam.

Course Modules

Everyone starts on *Home Base*, an orientation module that also provides research tools, news updates, access to the General Discussion area of our forum, the profiles and work of members. It’s also the location of “*Stories and Collections*” and our *House of Quests*.

Once players have completed the Orientation Module they are free to choose their next topic. Pods will decide together and play the same Module. A list of available Modules is found on the Syllabus page on our blog. Members have access to all of our courses, however, we ask that you choose among them and select one for study. When you tell us which course you’ve selected, your name goes on the course roster. A section of the forum is dedicated to each course and

there you can interact with others who are on the same roster and upload your work for posting into the course or on *Home Base*.

An advantage of playing within a Pod is the help you give each other to move ahead and remember what you've learned. Modules will be added as the game evolves. Players can request modules that aren't in the game yet and we'll quickly add them. Just email your request or post it in the General Discussion forum.

Some of the first modules include: Introduction to Herbalism, Origins of Western Herbalism, Plant Constituents, Energetics, Plant Intelligence and Communication, Properties of Herbs, Plant Identification. Future modules will also focus on specific conditions and specific botanicals..

The game covers Traditional Herbalism, Integrated Herbalism, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda, Aromatherapy, Bioregional Herbalism, Vibrational Medicine and more. We also have our own "recommendation engine" for quality sources of products and services as well as a full reference library and coming soon – a registry of qualified practitioners.

Disclaimer:

This game is not intended to substitute for nor replace care under a medical doctor nor does it constitute medical advice or prescription. This is a learning game for educational purposes only.

We encourage you to find a qualified physician who adheres to the Hippocratic Oath, "Do no harm". It's no easier being a medical doctor in today's version of health care than it is being a patient. Many are dropping their practices due to over-regulation and the near impossibility of following the Hippocratic Oath. If you or someone you know is a disgruntled doctor, fed up with the profession, we extend a warm invitation to join our community where love for the profession can be rekindled.

The Game of Learning

Learning innovator, Clark Quinn, says "Learning should be hard fun."

Rather than learn endless facts only to forget them (applause please for reference books) – we can bring them to life by discovering their relevance to our lives and to those around us. They stick with us when they tell a story. At one of my herb workshops there were indoor cats that joined the group. Karen was terribly allergic to cats. One of the plants we were studying was wild ginger so we hiked out to the ginger patch and pulled up a root for her to chew on. Immediately all of her symptoms disappeared and didn't reappear even after we returned to the cat's quarters. Everyone in that workshop remembers to this day that wild ginger stops allergy attacks. Had it been just another fact in their notebooks, without repeated mnemonic exercises they'd probably have forgotten it. Telling them it works doesn't register, showing them it works does. And, it was *fun* to share in this transition from suffering to feeling good again.

The traditional healing methods are really community arts. They're meant to be learned and practiced within community. We know what works because we see it for ourselves. The opposite is also the case.

Our “target audience” is anyone with a physical body who wants to delve into the “mysteries” of its care and upkeep...in the spirit of adventure and (need I say it?) – love of Humanity and love of Nature - for love itself is one of the “secret ingredients” for wellness. We embark on a psycho-spiritual quest in addition to the obvious physical aspects. We unleash the power of curiosity by dropping into a game littered with Challenges and Quests that push us beyond the monotony of the familiar. There is always more to learn so the game is endless.

To Begin:

Now we’ll launch into the “nuts & bolts” of game play. Since the game is designed to evolve along with the coaching community, rules may change.

Sign-Up

Simply visit the Enrollment section at www.herbalcoachingcommunity.com . Use the contact form to request an enrollment application. The rest of the information you’ll need to get started will be sent along with the application.

Costs/Fees

There’s a tax-deductible fee to join the community. Payments are made to our nonprofit organization, Arco Iris, Inc.

Students who contribute the most to our community and towards their own advancement in gaining herbal knowledge should pay the least. Thus, a sliding scale exists to reward dedicated students for contributions, engagement with the rest of the community and helping others to learn.

Every new member will begin with a free month to demonstrate their level of involvement with the program. Obviously, levels of involvement can and will change over time. Initially, a fee to cover the first three months (after the first free month) will be set according to:

- The student’s own estimation of how much time and effort they think they can make for the program over the next three months.
- Their coach’s suggestion based on performance (defined below)
- The suggestion made by other students (all students will have the opportunity to weigh in)

Two weeks before the next 3 month enrollment fee is due an announcement will be made on Home Base and on our Assessment topic pulse asking that the above 3 items (student self-estimation, community vote, coach’s assessment) be completed within 7 days. The next enrollment fee will then be set and will be due a week later (at the end of the two weeks).

Note: This does not apply to our initial ten foundational (beta) members who have a lifetime membership no matter what they accomplish.

The enrollment fees:

A - \$50 a month (\$150 for 3 months)

For those who are, for whatever reason, only able to give a minimum amount of time to the learning program...or, are studying actively in the “background” and are not able to fully engage through discussion, challenges, contributing assignments, research, essays, etc.

We do expect to see at least an occasional appearance on our forums (once a week), self-reporting on what modules are being worked on including progress reports on exercises, completion of at least one notebook assignment, making or responding to at least one challenge, one essay, two hangouts.

If a minimal amount of work cannot be done the student can discuss their situation with their coach who, along with the student, will decide whether or not to extend membership another three months. Why pay for something that isn't being used? It may be that the time just isn't right and when it is, said student can re-apply.

B - \$40 a month (\$120 for 3 months)

The price drops by \$10 a month if, in addition to the above minimal requirements, the student increases engagement on our forums (2-3 meaningful appearances* a week), makes 3 contributions to Stories & Collections, is active with their study buddy & members of their class roster (their peers in the modules they are working on), makes/responds to 3 challenges.

C - \$30 a month (\$90 for 3 months)

In addition to A & B above, the student attends 2 hangouts a month (with any members), actively participates in a Quest, participates in the community vote on upcoming enrollment fees for other students, reviews and comments on the work of at least two other students, completes a module within this period. The student selects at least one of our public sites to follow actively and engage by "liking" posts, posting articles, ideas, questions, comments etc. on those sites.

D - \$20 a month (\$60 for 3 months)

In addition to the requirements for A, B, C above, the student focuses more attention on Challenges by reviewing other student's Challenges notebooks, evaluating their strong & weak points, has the Challenge been completed or is there more work to be done -- stimulate conversation around these findings. The student increases self-reporting of their progress through any modules they are working on in the appropriate forum so other students & coach know what is being studied. The student tracks the progress of their study buddy and gives assistance and encouragement as deemed appropriate. The student develops a research project pertaining to the module they are working on and provides the description in the topic's forum. The student has also: subscribed to our blog, subscribed to our YouTube channel, "liked" our Facebook page (if they are on FB), "followed" our G+ page and Pinterest site (if they are on Pinterest)

E - \$10 a month (\$30 for 3 months)

In addition to A-E above, the student creates games/quizzes/flashcards for the community for any 3 levels of any modules they have completed. The student initiates "coaching hangouts" with other students on a regular basis and records them for the community. A "regular basis" can be weekly or bi-monthly. The student is active on our Facebook page, G+ page, blog & is subscribed to our YouTube channel -- contributing to discussion, offering links to articles, "liking" posts.

F - Scholarship

We will do some fundraising to come up with scholarship funds. Students who excel by going beyond the objectives listed above are eligible for scholarships. As the scholarship program develops we'll provide details.

Once you join, review the above "fee-setting" objectives and create some goals for yourself that seem realistic. Some of the later goals can be achieved easily & early...for example, subscribing to our YouTube channel and blog can easily be done right away to fulfill that requirement. Always let us know when you have accomplished something! Use the forum topics. If it pertains to a module use the module topic forum. If its more general ("I just subscribed to the HCC YouTube channel), use our General discussion...when in doubt, post on General Discussions.

Let your study buddy know what goals you've set for yourself and help each other achieve them. If you have questions, ask your coach (at this time, that's going to be D'Coda)

Be aware of the community, especially those in the same modules as you. How are they doing? Do they have a better grasp of the subject than you? If so, why not "hangout" and talk about it together, or direct questions to them to better understand something? If you see someone struggling or stalled out, reach out to them. This is what coaching is all about...helping others blossom.

Once you're in the game there are other optional fees. To ensure that our members are learning and not just going through the motions, each module will close with a "final exam" which must be passed to earn the accumulated credits. Right now, the exams are on hold due to the time constraints of developing an ideal syllabus of courses.

When we add the exams, there will be an exam fee of \$30 which includes a webcast that summarizes and adds to the key points in the module followed with a virtual conference with an Herbal Coach. See the section on exams for details. This is optional because members don't need to pass the exam to move on to a new Learning Module. However, there won't be any credits awarded by doing that. One can always return later to take an exam and earn the related credits.

Also in development are Kindle review books for each course module.

Questionnaire:

Your application includes a confidential questionnaire inquiring about...

- your background in herbalism and/or other healing disciplines
- your health status and any specific health issues
- your location (used to match you up with other members in your area)
- your top 3 learning objectives with us and whether you want to join a Pod or start as an independent study member
- any specific topics you want to learn about

Your membership begins after we receive your completed application. You'll receive instructions for joining our membership area where you'll begin at Home Base and the forum. Please have a photo selected to upload for your profile. Uploads are done in the forum.

More about Home Base

Everyone starts here. Look under "Instructions" for tutorials on the various tools we're using and you'll be setting them up for your own use. The tools include:

- **Zoho Notebook:** A free personal notebook online with the ability to "scrape" the web by clipping any content you want to save into it. It's also a full featured text editor and has the ability to make audio recordings. While you can designate parts of it as "private" for your own personal use, portions of it will be shared with your Coach, your Pod or, if you're Soloist, your Study Buddy, for "peer to peer" review. We also offer some alternatives to Zoho for anyone who has difficulties using it, such as New Hive and LiveJournal. Often, a Word document that can be uploaded will do the job. It's up to you to select the best tool for the job.
- **Flashcards:** Members will join a free flashcard website to create their own flashcards and have access to an existing library of flashcards on herbalism, anatomy, etc.
- **Google Plus:** Designed to facilitate discussion among groups, this is where Pods & Soloists can talk and share photos, videos, links, etc. It's the "hangout" feature that decided us on Google Plus

as our optimal social gathering spot. Hangouts provides free video conferencing where Pods can meet to actually talk “live”, do screen-sharing and watch videos together if they wish. If you don’t have a webcam you can still participate through audio. Our final exam follow-up is conducted using the Hangout service. We’ll have a Google Plus Page and recommend following it even if you aren’t in the game. Note: we’ll also use Facebook but it won’t be as private as G+. Pods won’t have their private circles there.

- **Discussion Forum:** Located on our main website in the “Members’ Area”. Discussion is topical with optional email notices on topics you may want to follow, such as scheduled hangouts. When you are studying a course, following its discussion forum is required unless you prefer to just “do your own thing” in the background.
- **YouTube:** We’ll show you how to set up a private YouTube channel to upload videos you’d like to share selectively.
- **Connecting and Making Introductions to a Pod or a Study Buddy**
- **Tips on doing web searches**
- **Selecting your next Module**
- **When we add other tools, tutorials will be found on Home Base.**

Strategy

Keep your objectives in mind since they’ll influence your outcome by how you’re playing the game.

Professional Goals

If you’re in the game to build up your existing (or future) healing practice, you will be playing for “social proof”. Another term for social recommendation or social currency, what people have to say about you. Aim to join a Practitioner’s Pod either right away if you qualify, or later in the game. Because you’re playing a “higher stakes” game, the peer to peer review becomes more important to verify any claims to expertise. Therefore, the Pod is especially important in your case. You will be vetted first within your Pod. Since the reputation of the entire Pod stands on each member’s accomplishments, the Pod will cultivate a culture of excellence from which you’ll benefit.

Watch for “Wants & Needs” requests from other players who need help (on Home Base). You’ll be credited for helping and awarded for a successful outcome, individually and as a group. These credits and awards accumulate and ultimately result in a certification via a Mozilla Open Badge (still in development) and a Place of Honor in our own Community and our own official Coaching designation. You will gain experience with a wide variety of health related issues. Contribute your own material. If your best work results in a book, apply for publication through our Open Intelligence publishing service (an income opportunity). Share your experiences in using herbs or other treatment strategies as “case studies”. If you already have expertise in some area, apply to develop a module in it and serve as the module’s Coach (which gives you the responsibility to create an exam webcast and conduct the oral part of the exam – a portion of the exam fee will go to you).

Resolution of Specific Health Conditions

If your objective is to learn about a specific condition that troubles you or someone you know, request a module for that condition if it isn’t already in the Community learning space. You will still need to cover the basics as necessary background knowledge so start there and work your way towards the area of interest. If we discover that we have enough members who have listed the same condition as a special interest, we’ll suggest forming a Pod together. For example, a diabetes Pod. When the Pod demonstrates in-depth knowledge in this area and qualifies as Coaches, you and your fellow Pod members can request a listing as our “go to” Coaching Pod for diabetes issues. By helping others you will continue to learn what is

or is not of practical benefit for that condition. You may have multiple conditions you want to learn about, if so, just take them one at a time.

For those in independent study, we'll match you up with a Learning Buddy with the same interest. You can achieve all of the same awards, recognitions, Community certifications and Coaching status as a Pod would in this game objective.

Master Herbalist

You aim to become a Master Herbalist. If so, you'll be casting a wide net to capture and learn all of the modules. Herbalist, Susan Weed, said, "It takes 7 lifetimes to become an herbalist". We agree. To become a Master Herbalist in one lifetime can only mean that you've mastered the art of constantly learning more about it and applying as much of what you've learned as possible. Here again, you'll have an advantage by belonging to a Pod. If you can join a Location based Pod you'll have the advantage of working together face-to-face directly with plants which will speed things up for you.

Exploring

Your aim is your own adventure of discovery. Maybe you have herbs in your garden you'd like to know more about. Or you'd like an overview of how herbs are used in various conditions, in the kitchen, in making your own herbal products. Exploring is often the inspiration to begin the journey of plant knowledge. You may also have an interest in other forms of healing and want to see how they can be integrated with the herbal approach. You'd be a good fit with a Location based Pod or a casual "general interest" Pod. And of course, independent study may be the way to travel.

Playing in a Module

When you start a Module begin by telling us! Self-reporting is necessary, we aren't "tracking" you on the web. This isn't an automated program...its *people powered*. Your name will go on the course's roster where others can find you to collaborate and talk about the subject. When you complete an exercise, either tell us or if it requires creating a notebook or writing a report or essay, etc. upload it in that course's discussion forum. It will be posted into the course itself as well as into your profile on Home Base.

While working through a Module, think up Challenges for your Peers in the roster. See Challenges below. We benefit when a learning community stimulates our thinking, questions assumptions and explores controversy...and when others hold us accountable to produce our best work. The course modules grow over time and include the research and contributions from our community.

Set up your Zoho Notebook with a new section for the Module. Think of your notebook as your portfolio. Clip web content into it; add your own notes, ideas, and questions. Upload your own photos. You can add pages and subpages to each section. Title one of the pages "Challenges", another is titled "Quests" and another is to be titled "Notebook Reviews". You'll share a link to your notebook with your Pod or Study Buddy as well as your Coach. Pods and Study Buddies regularly review each other's notebooks and so does the Coach. The advantage of doing this: repetition helps shift working memory into long-term memory but it can get boring reviewing the same material over and over. It's more interesting to see what someone else has done with the same material. Have they discovered something new that wasn't in the Module? Make note of it in your own "Notebook Review" page. You may find photos of their herb garden or a kitchen where they're fermenting vegetables. Did they leave something out that should be there? Why? Don't assume they just forgot, or just skipped it, there may be another reason and this makes for great discussions in your G+ circles if that's the case. Talk about what you found in each other's notebooks. You may suddenly find yourself with a Quest like "Show us the best one of your notebooks on roses by Thursday afternoon for a chance at the Milky Oats Prize" and it's up to your team or Soloist circle to make that selection.

Create a schedule for hangouts and keep it. Set a time limit. It's important for everyone to know their time is respected by sticking to a schedule. The purpose of the hangout is to *talk* about what you've learned since your last hangout; is anyone having any difficulties they need help with, is the pace ok for everyone, does anyone need a break. Prepare ahead of the hangout either by creating an agenda for the call on G+, or individually think about what you want to cover. Designate someone in advance to start the hangout. Hangouts are where teams really get to know each other and feel connected so feel free to talk as friends about life as you find it. Stories are great. Share your experiences...*hangout*.

For Pods the aim is to complete a Module together at about the same time. If you decide you want to take the final exam and receive the credits (points are transferred to credits), register to watch the final exam webcast and when everyone has seen it, schedule a hangout with your Coach. The final exam hangout is an informal conversation about the topic. You and your Pod will do most of the talking, as if you were coaching the Coach. You'll have a chance to discover that you really do know the topic! In the unlikely event someone doesn't, you'll be asked to coach them until they are ready for another try. Round Two will be with a different group; the entire Pod doesn't have to repeat it. But the Pod's credits won't be activated until all members pass. The moral of the story is, be sure everyone can pass before taking the final.

Credits:

This is still in development. Credits will be in some form of virtual currency that can be used both within the game and, hopefully, outside of it.

Credits can be used to get coaching for a health issue. Let's say Bob suddenly has a terrible case of shingles and doesn't know how to treat it himself, nor does he have access to anyone who does. He has credits from passing finals through two modules; let's say its 40 credits. He looks on our Coaching registry and finds an individual or a Pod that lists shingles as one of its skill areas. He can't just offer his 40 credits in exchange for help though, he must also make a promise and use his credits to represent that promise. The promise is that he will take responsibility to heal himself by learning from his Coach and applying what he learns to recover. We heal ourselves, Coaches can only assist. If the Coach agrees, the 40 credits transfer to the Coach. When Bob is well, he has kept his promise to recover and the Coach then transfers some of the credit back to Bob. It's up to the Coach to decide how much, depending on how difficult the case was. Records will be kept in our database. As the Coach demonstrates skill in assisting with shingles that skill transfers naturally over to any professional practice he may have outside of the community. Members learn how to coach by coaching other members through real-life scenarios.

Credits may also be used for products or other services offered in the community. If we decide on some form of widely used web currency, you'll also be able to use it for goods and services outside of the community.

Challenges

There's a simple formula, whenever you feel challenged by whatever you're studying, turn it into a Challenge for your Pod, or Soloists challenge their entire G+ circle. To do that start by recording it as a question in your Zoho Notebook's Challenges Page. Bring as much clarity as you can into the Challenge question. Give it a deadline. Then go to G+ and using the hashtag, #challenge, pose your question along with its deadline.

When you receive someone else's Challenge, write it down in your Notebook's Challenge page with a record of where it came from (the person's name) and when you received it and the deadline date. On your own, try to meet the Challenge and in your G+ circles offer your best answer and why you think it's valid. Among yourselves, come to a decision about having reached a satisfactory answer, then write it in your Notebook under the original Challenge. The true prize awarded is gaining a deeper understanding of your topic than you'd otherwise have. We'll look more favorably on Notebooks packed with Challenges (whether they're answered or not) than on blank pages.

The Coach may call for a Quest at any time, turning everyone loose on each other's Challenges pages to locate incomplete Challenges that they can add meaningful knowledge to, or pages marked as completed that weren't completed, or signs of mastery when a group showed some brilliance. Quests tend to have some interesting prize or form of recognition attached to them.

Expect fireworks on controversial subjects, like whether or not comfrey is safe to take internally. Together we may actually turn up evidence helping the entire community to agree.

Quests

Quests are issued by the Coach but don't necessarily originate with him or her. The Community may be called in for a Quest-a-Thon, to think up their own Quests for the Coach to hand out to the tribe. What does the word "Quest" call up in your imagination? A search for something difficult or illusive? Something out of the ordinary? Something worth finding? Or accomplishing?

Quests tend to be infrequent and show up when the temperature of the Coaching Community seems about right. That is, not too hot and not too cold...maybe leaning towards a bit stagnant, spice is needed. They break up routine and keep things interesting. Awards, recognition, prizes are for Quests.

How will you know when one occurs? A Quest symbol will appear on our G+ page and our Facebook page to alert you that a Quest is on and will provide the details. So keep a close eye on those pages. We'll publicly track progress there as well and announce the winners.

Projects and Field Work



Much of our work is offline in the internet world, and online in Nature. As you'll discover, broadband internet isn't new at all. Nature has been using broadband for many millions of years (probably billions). So making a direct connection, regularly, with Nature is a requirement for any good healer. There we can learn things that aren't online. There we gain qualities of insight and understanding surpassing words. If all you have of Nature is a dandelion sticking out of a cracked sidewalk, that's enough.

You'll find exercises to enhance this connection throughout the Modules. Assignments will include projects involving anything from planning and growing herbs (even if it's just a few pots...or working in a friend's garden), identifying plants, making plant preparations like ointments and tinctures. We encourage you to take pictures or videos and add them to your Notebooks, share them online, and add them to your galleries when it seems appropriate. If you start a physical plant journal, so much the better (you could take some photos of it). We want to see your feet in the grass.

What Really Happened? Our Stories

The single most important thing we'll do together is tell our stories about healing. Are you struggling with a heart condition or a serious illness or the flu? Tell us everything. Tell us what you've done so far to improve your health, what you'd like to do but haven't (& why). If you've helped someone and they got better, tell us everything. What did you do? What can you tell us about them and their health history? Add as much detail as you can. When does chamomile work and when doesn't it?

We have a special place on *Home Base* with its own forum for story gathering and you there you can add links to your Notebooks where you tell the whole story, as well as make comments in the comment section. Or you can simply write them out on Word and upload them. Carry your stories over to G+ or our Facebook page. Keep the stories rolling (they'll never end). You may find that some of your family & friends tire of hearing you go on about how some herb cured this or that, but not here...this is the place to open up and share. Your *Stories & Collections* are also connected to your profile.

You'll also find requests for stories in other Modules, especially those for specific conditions.

Events

What's a Community without events! Here in the Arkansas wilderness we host events and we imagine that where ever you are, there are events calling out for attention and invitation. Post your events on our Facebook and G+ pages so our members have the chance to attend if they're in the area. Meeting face to face is a joy. We'll let you know what's going on in our neck of the woods...please do the same.

Winning Badges and Other Awards

Do you know about the Mozilla Open Badges project? With so much learning occurring now on the web, traditional approaches to education are giving way to entirely new methods. One area concerns the awarding of Degrees and Certifications. Now, instead of 4 year college programs, many are taking the "life-long learning" path. Leading edge innovators say it's time to recognize the accomplishments of those educating themselves. Mozilla agrees and along with several major corporations and universities, is developing what it calls Open Badges. These are intended to demonstrate accomplishment the same way a Degree or Certification from a college or university does.

We will be adding the Open Badges to our site once the system is a little more developed.

At first glance one might think, "Oh, I can just click through the learning objects, talk a bit on G+, throw a few notes in my notebook and voila' claim I'm an expert on (insert topic) and get my badge." We've been very careful designing this game so it prevents shallow game play and unqualified herbalists from marking their spot on our official Coach registry. All along the way, learning is going to be "hard fun" because of peer-to-peer review and a Coach supervising the quality of work being done. Additionally, our players are going to be actively helping each other to *learn* their topic. When a member feels ready to claim a Coaching Badge and applies, there will be a vote by his or her peers confirming that in their experience, he or she demonstrated thorough knowledge and understanding of their topic and was responsive to the needs of others, offering help as fit the circumstances. Getting that Badge isn't a just a process of going through all of the lessons and gaining all of the points and credits, it's backed by social proof. So a tip is in order;

engage with the community, when you've learned something, demonstrate it in the quality of your contributions and your ability to help others.

Some Modules repeat at higher levels. When a topic is very complex, the first Module will be enough for those who need a basic understanding of the topic. But if it's in an area you'll want to claim proficiency in for a Master's Badge, you will need to continue on through the additional Modules for that topic. As we begin our game, all of the Modules will be at a "starter" level, adequate for the average player's foundation. We'll add higher levels of those Modules that player's want to advance in. Let us know if that's you!

The Badges we'll offer will include:

- Foundation Badge: it will list which subject it's for and demonstrates that you have a solid foundation in that subject.
- Coaching Badge: This is a level up. It shows you know enough to coach others in this topic and that you have the coaching skill to go along with it.
- Master's Badge: You've made significant contributions, adding new content to the program, met Challenges and some Quests (not necessarily all of them), fulfilled all of the requirements for the Foundation and Coaching Badges as well. Successfully completed all of the Modules for your subject.

Note: Badges are specific to categories of herbalism or other healing modalities. A Master's Badge isn't awarded for being a Master Herbalist, for example. To become a Master Herbalist you would need to acquire Master's Badges in each category of herbalism. You'll pick them up one at a time.

When you feel you are ready for a Badge, notify your Coach. A review of your study records will commence and seeing that you've completed the requirements, a poll will go up to your learning network. They will validate that in their experiences with you, you demonstrated Foundation, Coaching, or Master level knowledge of the area you are applying for, and that you demonstrated an interest in the community and willingness to help others. If the poll goes against you, we'll find out what holds you back and work with you to succeed in gaining that Badge on a second try.

As you can see, anyone listed with a Badge in our Registry is someone you can trust to be what that Badge represents.

Besides Badges, other awards will come into play. These count towards your Badge but are not necessary to get one.

Some of our members won't have Badges as a goal and may be playing as adventurous explorers. They may be every bit as proficient in an area as someone holding a Master's Badge...so Badges don't mean everything. Just because someone doesn't have a Badge doesn't mean they aren't Badge worthy.

Coaching Registry

In a sense, everyone playing the game is a coach since they help each other along. To indicate someone who has been acknowledged through their accomplishments by a badge, their name and qualifications will be entered into our Coaching Registry. This is the "go to" place to locate someone you'd like to ask for "expert" assistance. When referring to Coaches at this level we'll capitalize the term.

We'll have both individuals and Pods in the registry. When an entire team receives a badge, they'll be listed together. The advantage of asking help from a Pod is the greater range of experience and the

combined strength of a group working on the same issue. It's akin to having a team of medical specialists vs. one individual.

The Coaching Registry will be added when we have players who are ready for the registry.

Product Recommendations

As the Community shares which products they're making or using that are of high quality and perform especially well by giving dependable results, we'll gather them up into our Resources area on Home Base. We suggest that several players try the product to confirm its value. Post your recommendations on our Facebook and G+ pages as well as the forum. To confirm them we'll run a poll. This also goes for suppliers you've come to trust and can be depended on for excellent service. At this time, we have an initial listing of quality suppliers.

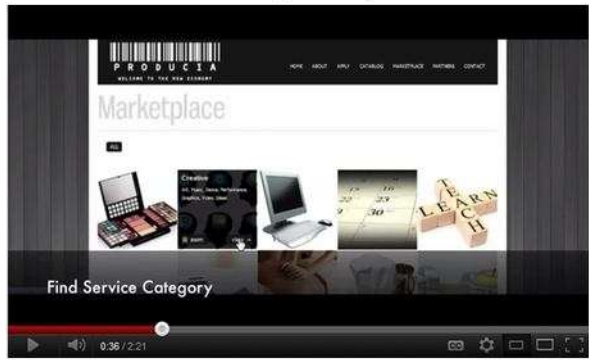
Income Opportunities

There are several ways membership in our Community can benefit you financially. If you need social proof (recommendation) that you grow high quality organic herbs or foods (and you really do), you'll get it here, thereby building up the kind of reputation necessary for today's market. The principle goes for those who make herbal products or provide clinical services or bodywork. You can build both a reputation and your clientele. Some of you may want to launch your own coaching businesses for the public.

If you develop a learning module for us and are qualified to Coach it, you will also give the final exam webcast and follow-up oral exam with players. A portion of the exam fee will go to you.

Alternative Economy

For many reasons, we believe it's time to build a strong alternative economy. There are many good options available and most are listed on Elle D'Coda's website at <http://www.scoop.it/t/instead-of-money>. Below is a recent screenshot of that site. We recommend you go through it to become familiar with all of the approaches and we want to know about your ideas for implementation of a system that appeals to you.



Producia RVA - Coming in May

Marketplace


Find Service Category

0:36 / 2:21

"The Fun, Barter-Based Marketplace With a Cause..."

Scooped by Elle D'Coda

Build a New Economy for the Cost of a Cup of Coffee?!




"Learn how the people can use their purchasing power to implement a new, sustainable economy that benefits everyone!"

Scooped by Elle D'Coda

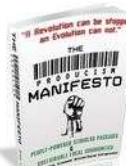
blog.p2pfoundation.net - March 29, 11:53 AM

Potato movement shows Greek 'post-crisis' shift to a sharing economy



producism.org - March 29, 12:11 PM

Producism - Welcome to the Evolution of Capitalism



"An evolutionary economic model that provides people with the opportunity to self-organize a sustainable economy and planet."

Our Community will explore various approaches to bringing practical alternatives to our members. Initially through our own credits which may be in the form of a web based currency or barter service.

Glossary

Hangout - A free video conferencing service on Google+ for up to 10 people. Webcams aren't essential since they also work with just audio. It includes optional screen-sharing and watching videos together.

Thoughts/Learning Objects – The individual “buttons” appearing as on the module screen in the upper area are best thought of as discrete chunks of learning activity and topic organizers.

Open Badge: A *badge* is a symbol or indicator of an accomplishment, skill, quality or interest. Badges can be used to represent achievements, communicate successes, set goals, and motivate behaviors,. They can support learning that happens in new ways and new spaces beyond the traditional classroom

Study Buddy – Soloists have someone to study with. This relationship is similar to the teamwork done in a Pod. A Soloist can pick their own Study Buddy or ask the Coach to find a suitable match. If the match isn't working for any reason, a replacement is found by request.

Wants & Needs – A forum exists by this name where you can posts requests for help and also respond to other’s requests. A system of credits will extend to this area whereby those who give help receive credit for it.

Appendix

<http://naturalsociety.com/ginger-destroys-cancer-more-effectively-than-cancer-drugs/>

<http://www.nature.com/news/drug-data-reveal-sneaky-side-effects-1.10220#/b1>

More Americans now die from prescription pills than car accidents. The nation's response to the trend will define an era, but corporate influence threatens reform.

http://beta.alternet.org/health/153576/the_10_most_dangerous_meds_driving_america's_pill_crisis

<http://naturalsociety.com/antidepressants-cause-your-arteries-to-thicken-400-more-than-aging/>

<http://www.sott.net/articles/show/240031-Scientists-Often-Conveniently-Withhold-Negative-Drug-Trial-Information>

<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/blog/do-cortisone-shots-make-things-worse-0>

<http://www.nutraingredients-usa.com/content/view/print/599987> fda sends out warning letters to sites making health claims

<http://www.anh-usa.org/big-pharma-suppresses-data/>

<http://naturalsociety.com/fda-ignores-scientists-dentists-warning-of-amalgam-mercury-pandemic/#ixzz1mmrhPNsh>

<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/blog/why-law-forbids-medicinal-use-natural-substances>

<http://www.nutraingredients-usa.com/content/view/print/599987> fda sends out warning letters to sites making health claims

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<http://www.greenmedinfo.com/blog/why-law-forbids-medicinal-use-natural-substances>

<http://www.openbadges.org/en-US/faq.html>