



CHEEKY HERBS

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Commitment is liberating - we just don't see it yet



IT IS THAT contemplative time of year again when we humans tend to ponder upon innovative “reboots” or directives to shunt us further forward on our life path, if not our spiritual path.

There is a wonderful word in Sanskrit - *sankalpa* - that means the solemn vow that is formed not just in the mind but also in the heart.

It is much more than our concept of the New Year's resolution, it is about the gracious and empowering state of being that we can adopt to bring about our deepest, most cherished wishes that come from our highest place.

Our Sankalpa is a heart-felt commitment that becomes foundational for our spiritual evolution.

A Sankalpa is a resolve that can be made before or after meditation or any spiritual practice; it may be repeated at the beginning of the day, throughout the day and just before sleep.

The idea is to focus the heart's desire upon creating the fulfilling life we are meant to embrace and enjoy, one that realises our true life's purpose.

This is the holistic way of making our vow that potentially transforms us as multi-dimensional beings, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.

It is our sankalpa that determines the course of our destiny.

We will need to beget a deep state of relaxation, because only a calm mind that is free of chatter will effectively imprint our sankalpa on to the subconscious, which will start to direct our conscious actions.

We don't just make a mindless declaration about what we want; rather we sow the sankalpa seed into the deepest level of soul to access the inner voice of conscience who can be trusted to uphold the true meaning of our life. Like tending lovingly to a plant,

SPECIAL FEATURE NEW YEAR REBOOT

we sow our carefully chosen intention; we water and feed it to make it grow in an environment where it will flourish.

It is from this initial seed that was created and determined by our concentrated mind, that all of our actions will follow through gradually creating the full flowering of our wish.

It is more helpful to keep the sankalpa short and positive, a meaningful statement or pledge that resonates to us with real feeling and respect as we repeat it three times.

The sankalpa statement that we make can be as if the desired outcome is already in place, for example: 'I am healed of my sorrow', or we may like to create a specific intention to focus upon.

This may require laying down “stepping stones” that mark smaller objectives that lead us in achievable stages towards our eventual goal.

It is wise to meditate first, before settling on the sankalpa that feels the right fit for where we are right now and what could benefit us most on our soul journey.

Give it a go; in fact give it your best shot, because by making a conscious, focussed effort, and immersing ourselves in the sincere ritual of “sankalpa”; it will be much more worthwhile and rewarding than the usual vacuous and ephemeral goal-setting that New Year obliges us to make.

So remember to relax and breathe consciously to drop into the deep seat of Self to connect with your

soul who knows best who you are and stay focussed to witness the real story of your life unfold magically before you, step by step. Don't try to foretell the future, build a bridge to the present.

Your very own personalised sankalpa will make the coming year one that enthuses and inspires you to express your highest spiritual potential.

We wish for you a sensational 2016 that sets you forth upon your own luminous path to realise your most precious dreams.

YOUR SANKALPA

Go to your sacred space

Connect to your surroundings

Relax

Begin to breathe consciously and deeply

Feel yourself dropping into the core of your Being

Feel at home in this spacious space

Look into the secret longings of your soul

Recognise that which feels right for just now

Hear your inner voice

Say that desire internally in simple words

Repeat it three times

Then let it go, releasing your wish into the cosmos

Upon returning to everyday life:

Keep the sanctity of that secret wish alive

Repeat it internally or out loud

At the start, throughout and at the end of each day

Watch how your actions reflect the seed that you

have sown

Holy Wood's mystical oil

ESSENTIAL OIL OF THE MONTH PALO SANTO

PALO SANTO is widely prized as being very spiritual.

This evocative wood has been used for centuries in a variety of spiritual, religious, medicinal and practical ways.

It is traditionally used (especially in Ecuador,) against the 'mala energía' (bad energy). It was, and still is, an efficacious tool for facilitating shamanistic journeys.

The Incas used Palo Santo during ritualistic ceremonies to cleanse and purify negative energies and vibrations, which remains the oil's salient use today.

In Spanish, Palo Santo means Sacred (or Holy) Wood and as a consequence it is often called Holy Wood and sold as such.

The tree is in the same family as frankincense and myrrh and can be interchanged when using for emotional and spiritual purposes. Palo Santo is a somewhat sweeter and softer oil and doesn't come with any skin sensitivity.

In the traditions of the South American Shaman, this sacred wood is used for purification and warding off evil. Palo Santo enhances our Spiritual connection because it helps to open the third eye and crown chakras.

This oil is emotionally grounding; a prerequisite for shamanic journeying and entering altered states of consciousness.

It helps to release negative emotions such as anger and fear. Diffuse it in your home and workspace for protection and to cleanse away negative vibrations. Use this oil during meditation to connect with spirit and stay focused.

The essential oil is distilled from the dead heartwood of the Palo Santo tree.

The heartwood must be at least two years old and be from the red wood to produce the higher quality oil; the longer the tree has been dead, the more powerful the oil. This also holds true for frankincense essential oil.

It is believed that a tree or fallen branches must lie dead for four to ten years before the medicinal and mystical properties of the wood begin to come alive.

It is also believed that the branches of the Palo Santo that are felled by lightning have the highest concentration of medicinal and mystical properties.

Palo Santo wood has also been used in indigenous medicine in South America. In northwest Argentina, the Criollo people burned the wood of Palo Santo together with the leaves of *Ruta chalepensis*.

The resulting smoke was blown into the ears of patients with otitis. Palo Santo was also burned along with yerba mate and feathers of the rhea bird; inhaling this smoke every nine days was reputed to treat "aire", an illness recognised in many Latin American cultures and believed to be caused by rapid changes in weather temperature.



It is widely used in folk medicine for stomach ache, as sudorific, (to induce sweat) and as liniment for rheumatism. Palo Santo wood is also used for crafting objects and to produce burning sticks and incense. It is burned as a repellent for mosquitoes, ants and other insects.

This essential oil is not fully explored in modern aromatherapy for everyday medicinal application, its unique aroma is more utilised for burning incense and perfumery.

All of the deeply calming and grounding psycho-therapeutic uses for this oil, when employed as incense, could be also applied to using the essential oil on the body (such as at the base of the skull or on the spine) to promote relaxation.

Palo Santo the wood is included as a component of herbal tea blends to address respiratory, urinary, and bowel problems.

This suggests that the oil could also be included in chest rub pulmonary blends, and massage oils for the lower abdomen.

Palo Santo oil contains approximately 75 per cent D-limonene, which is quite rare in tree oils.

This is a terpene found in lemon, orange and citrus peels. This compound has potent antioxidant and anti-inflammatory properties that offers assistance for a variety of metabolic and health problems.

It even helps with weight management because it helps reduce appetite and improve metabolism. Its calming

properties help settle anxiety and therefore can be used as a natural sleep aid.

The addition of Palo Santo in aromatherapy body blends could well make use of these D-limonene properties.

Using the Palo Santo oil that comes from Peru and Ecuador is environmentally ethical because no trees are clear-felled for the wood; it is harvested only from fallen branches.

In Ecuador it is against the law to remove or cut down Palo Santo trees as they are protected, even taking the dead

trees has Government regulated limitations.

There are very few companies that are permitted to even touch the trees, much less produce the essential oil.

Most companies are selling it under the generic name Holy Wood or other common names such as Brazilian paw paw (*muricata* species).

Some South American vintners use the wood to create fermenting barrels and it has been similarly used to craft a bold, toasty and caramel-like flavour in beers in the United States.

Name: Palo Santo

Botanical name: *Bursera graveolens*

Common name: Holy Wood

Family: Burseraceae

The Plant: There are several species of Palo Santo that is native to different parts of Mexico, South and Central America. It is also found in Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and on the Galapagos Islands.

The Oil: The Palo Santo wood must be turned into sawdust primarily to steam distil the essential oil; it takes 9kg of Santo sawdust to produce 500mL of oil.

Scent: Palo Santo has a sweet,

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balsamic, somewhat earthy aroma with incense-like overtones. The longer and more aged the wood is before being harvested the richer, sweeter and more woody the olfactory notes.

Blends well with: Frankincense, myrrh, patchouli, lavender, neroli, rose, ylang ylang, sandalwood.

Indications: cold & flu symptoms, stress, asthma, headaches, anxiety, depression, inflammation, emotional pain.

Precautions: Considered safe in common use such as incense, perfumes and massage blends.

Tinderbox

37 South Western Highway, Balingup WA 6253
www.cheekyherbs.com • tinderbox@cheekyherbs.com
P 08 9764 1034 • F 08 9764 1560

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