



## Wisdom Keepers' Stories

*The following excerpts are from conversations with curanderos and curanderas or traditional healers from Mexico*

### Curanderos and Curanderas: Healers of Mexico

The healers have asked that their names be changed to protect their identity. Several of them do their work in secret for fear that "sorcerers" and practitioners of "dark magic" may seek them out and attempt to harm their families. The curanderas and curanderos that follow are from many different places including Mexico City, Oaxaca, and various small villages in Mexico. Interviews were either conducted in their homes or when they made a special visit to Tucson, Arizona. Several of the healers are now missing and their whereabouts unknown. They had been struggling with "spiritual wars" between dark and light practitioners. We pray that they are safe and well. The interviews would not have been possible without the assistance of Kevin P. who established relationships with healers throughout Mexico and made arrangements for them to be met in safe places.



The photos in this story are in no particular order to protect the identity of the healers.

#### Maria

My mother and grandmother and great grandmother were all traditional healers. They knew how to work with plants and make special prayers for those who came for help. I learned these things from them. I also learned how to heal people with my hands, using them to massage in a special way.

My family fully supports what I do. We are there for each other and we are all very religious. We say our prayers with deep faith and we take our offerings. My mother is still alive and she lives with us. We both are part of a network of healers who take care of each other. We regularly meet in a sacred place, a chapel in the yard of one of the great spiritual healers of our area. There we pray for one another and allow the spirits to speak to us. There are many spirits from this world and from other worlds beyond our planet. Those who receive the spirits and speak for them sit along a special side of the chapel. There is a lot of learning and spiritual strengthening that takes place in this place. I will take you there.

Healers must be careful about being overly noticed. Mexico has many people who work the dark side of spiritual matters. They get jealous of a good person's abilities and may try to suck away their power. We have to be careful and not let them notice us. If they start attacking us on the spiritual plane, we must protect ourselves. We do this with special ceremonies and by deep prayers. I knew I was to become a



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healer when I had a vision of the sacred light. The light fell over me and I was told that I would do this work. You might assume that you can try to be a healer and then go read many books and study under many teachers. No matter how hard you try to learn, you can never become a true healer unless you have God in your heart. In addition, God must shine the light over you and directly call you to do this work. Many people say they are healers, but they have not received this call. They are deceiving themselves. Such deception will only lead to great disappointment, bitterness, and inner sorrow. If you try to be something you aren't supposed to be, it can destroy you and hurt many people.

You can tell a true healer by her or his smile. If God's joy is in your heart, you show it. If a person doesn't smile much, is not kind, is deceptive, desires personal power and attention, then they are not a healer. They are a deceiver. Healing is about loving. Healers do not claim that which isn't theirs to claim. They serve God. It is that simple.

I once knew a woman who always wanted to have spiritual power. She wanted it from the time she was a little girl. Carlotta lived in my neighborhood and she was always an outsider and felt sad and lonely. She wanted to have power to get back at the people she was jealous of and she even prayed for this kind of power. When the witches, brujos, and sorcerers saw her desperation, they preyed on her. They made false promises, told her secret words, and taught her how to make dangerous dolls that cause harm. Those dolls are placed near where a person lives. The person being spiritually attacked may then start to get sick. It usually requires a special healer to locate the doll and remove it. That's a very dangerous job and this sort of conflict or constant battle between the good and bad takes place all over Mexico. I think it takes place everywhere else in the world. Where there is light, there is dark. The two will always be facing one another and wrestling for life.

In Carlotta's case, she wanted power so bad that she couldn't resist the temptation. Of course, she never told anyone that she practiced the dark side. She became so good at lying that she even convinced herself that she was only about love and healing. Yet I always knew she didn't have God in her heart. When she was near a church, you could see her smile disappear. She secretly hated the priests, the nuns, and all the churches. Her heart couldn't look past the human limitations of the church and see the beauty of its intention to love God. Her heart was cold and empty, only available for the thirst for power.

I protected myself from her jealousy by praying for her and asking God to cover her in light. I also covered myself in light. She never bothered me. She often tried, but it would always backfire. Sometimes





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it appeared that she was hurting me or gaining power, but it would always collapse on her. She finally could only find her power in a drink. Alcohol did her in. It lied to her in the same way she lied to herself. She died an unfulfilled person. Her friends were just like her. They didn't smile much, thought they were spiritual beings, but in fact, they had no love of God in their hearts. They only loved the idea of being important, especially being spiritually important. This is the oldest spiritual lesson in the world.

But enough talk of the challenges of life. I want to share with you the greatest experience I ever had. Several years ago my friends went on a road trip to another city. It took them a full day to drive to this place. On the way back, it was very late at night. I was asleep in my home. They had invited me to go with them, but I had work that had to get done. In the middle of the night I woke up and saw myself covered in a column of light. It was the same divine light that called me to be a healer. As I looked into that light I saw Jesus standing over me. I was bathed in his illumination. I wept and sang with joy. It was the greatest moment of my life!

The next morning I couldn't wait to tell my friends. They were to arrive any moment. When their car pulled up, I ran to them, but before I could say a word, they started shouting and screaming with joy. "You won't believe what happened to us!" They went on to tell their story, "In the middle of the night, we saw a bright column of light by the side of the road. We pulled over and stopped the car. When we approached the light, we saw Jesus standing in its midst. Juana ran to the car and got her camera. She had brought it with her on the trip. She then took a picture of Jesus in the light. Yes, Maria, we saw Jesus."



Photo taken by Maria's friend Juana



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Needless to say, they were even more surprised when I told them that I had awakened in the middle of the night to see Jesus in a column of light. We had all seen him at the same time. We immediately went to get that picture developed and sure enough, it came out. You can see Jesus in the photograph. I have made a copy for you. Please show it to others and tell them that Jesus is alive today. We have seen him. He is alive in the world and comes to healers whose hearts love God.

After I saw Jesus in the light, I stopped telling any magical stories. There is nothing worth saying about healing or magic or spirituality. The only thing that I can now say is to go and love God, love Jesus, and love the Blessed Mother. Let them live in your heart. They will do what needs to be done. They will take over your life. They will provide protection. There is no need to learn anything. It is only important to let God live in your heart. When you have God in your life, the sorcerer's promises of power do not attract your attention. It seems silly and stupid to be casting spells and pretending that you have a secret power. Love makes magical power turn to dust. Love is the Power of God and it

pulverizes all the secret powers. Only love God and let that love bring a light into everyone's life. That is all that I want you to say about my life.

### Carlos

I knew Maria since she was a little child. She is more powerful than she will ever let you know. But her power comes from loving God. The witches hate her, but they are also scared of her. They know she is the real thing and that if they are not careful they can get hurt. Maria doesn't do them any harm. I think God sometimes gets other people out of her way so she can do the work that she was called to carry out. I have seen many unusual things happen. Witches and sorcerers who have tried to hurt her have ended up feeling weak and vulnerable to the darkness in their own hearts. Be careful when you are around her. God loves her and takes care of her.

I, too, have God in my heart. Although I am not as blessed as Maria, blessings sometimes fall upon me and allow me to help others. People come to me and I give them some holy water with some prayers. The prayers were prayers I heard my uncle give when I was a boy. After he died, he came to me and told me to say the prayers. He wanted me to continue his work. I have done so and it has provided an interesting life.

I never know when the next meal will come or how my bills will get paid. I just keep saying my prayers and then I get enough to live. My prayers don't make me financially rich and they won't win me the lottery. But they help make me spiritually wealthy. In the final hour, that's the only wealth that counts. I am a spiritual millionaire. Sometimes I do worry about money, but then I remember my prayers. When I say them, I feel spiritual energy going through my body. It





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makes me forget my financial poverty and turns me to being grateful for my spiritual wealth.

I don't use any plants to heal others. I only use my prayers. All the healers are different. Many use plant medicines and all of us use prayers. Some specialize in certain kinds of treatment like setting bones, delivering babies, or giving a massage. The most special healer is the spiritual healer. They are the instruments of the spirits. They pray, use their hands, and let the spirits do their work. Spiritual healers don't need plants or magic. Their closeness to the spirit world enables spirit to do the healing. This is something very special. My mother was that way. You could get healed just standing next to her as she was praying for someone else. Today, there are few healers like that. It is very hard to find them.

### Alicia

Let me tell you about someone I healed. A man brought his wife to me and complained that she was too thin and pale. He was afraid that she would wither away and die. She did look sick and didn't have much to say. I told her to go home and take a bath every day. While she was in the tub, she had to drink a glass of milk. She did this every day for two weeks. She got fat in no time at all. I get these strange thoughts in my head when people come to me with their sickness. My husband says it's my grandfather who is telling me these things. It may be. All I know is that when someone comes to get treated, something pops in my mind and I say to go do it. If they do it, they get better.

I tell people to do many things with the water that I bless – bathe in it, sprinkle their chickens with it, pour it over themselves before they go to sleep, and other things like that. People think twice before they come to me. They really have to want to get better if they submit themselves to what I might tell them to do.



Years ago, there was a town drunk that everyone thought would drink himself to death. He was almost always lying by the side of the road, unable to move because of his drunken stupor. The only time he walked was when he begged for a bottle. He was considered a hopeless case. Some friends came to me and said, "Alicia, can't you use your healing talent to cure this man? He is an embarrassment to our community. This village is known for two things: your healing and his drunkenness. We'd prefer to be known for only one thing and you know what that is. Please try to help him. It would be a great miracle and would help everyone's faith in God if this could be done."

I prayed about this man for several days until I had a dream. My sister came to me in the dream and said, "You can heal him. Pray for another three days and then you will be ready. Get a tub and have the men place it in the woods. Fill it with water from the river. Then ask the man





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if he wants to be cured. He will say yes and then you must give him some specific instructions. Tell him that he must take a 3-day long bath in this tub. He can never get out of the tub for any reason. He must stay in the water. He may not eat, but he can be brought some water to drink, but make sure that you have blessed the drinking water.”

The man did say that he wanted to be cured. I prayed over him and the men led him to the tub in the woods. He went in the tub and was brought drinking water three times a day. You could sometimes hear him shouting, crying, or talking to someone or something. He stayed in that tub for three days and when he came out I knew that he had been cured. The next week someone came up to him and offered him a drink of whiskey. When he looked at the bottle, he became very ill and pushed it away. He never had a drink for the rest of his life. It is amazing what blessed water can do, whether you drink it or bathe in it.

Many healers spend a lot of time fighting witches and sorcerers. People are often made sick and sometimes killed with witchcraft. The good healers give people special amulets to protect them from evil influences. Sometimes we take parsley and garlic and place it in a small bag that is worn around the neck. Other herbs may also be used, but they are always given spiritual power through our prayers.



There are times when we have to use some clay, plaster, or cloth material to make a likeness of the person who has been stricken with an illness caused by a witch. As I pray over the image, the sickness and bad spirits are absorbed into it. In a way, I use a method of witchcraft to counteract the witch's harm. A curandero cannot do this unless they are strong and resistant to all temptations. It is very dangerous work. Only through fasting, spiritual baths, prayer, and abstinence can you become strong enough to take on the most powerful witches.

To perform magic to counteract bad magic, I must pay attention to the moon and stars. Rituals can only be done at a certain time. It is important for me to blow on my patients in order to give them strength to fight off a curse. I also encourage my patients to throw dirt in the direction of the witch or to pour some holy water over the path where the witch will walk. Doing these things strengthens our faith. It is faith that fights off evil and sickness.

I am happy that I can help other people. It is a good thing that God lets these strange ideas get into my head. It helps the people.



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### Lucha

I learned how to heal from my grandmother. She taught me how to make a special bath for those who are sick. When people take their bath, I tell them to drink herbal medicines that I have made for them. It is a strong treatment to drink medicine while taking an herbal bath.

A healer or curanderas may be an herbalist, midwife, bonesetter, or massage-curing specialist. They all rely on special prayers. Our healers treat headaches, anxiety, irritability, nervousness, depression, gastrointestinal problems, hypertension, diabetes, renal problems, back pain, nonspecific problems, and special kinds of folk diseases like mal ojo (the evil eye), empacho (surfeit), caida de mollera (fallen fontanel), susto (magical fright), and mal puesto (hex). Patients with gunshot or knife wounds, myocardial infarctions, comas, epilepsy, and high fevers are usually treated by medical doctors.

The rarest healers are spiritualist healers who have direct contact with the Divine, spirit protectors and aids, and the spirit world. Some of these healers seek bodily possession by the spirits. They rarely travel in the spirit world, but are mediums for the helping assistance of spiritual entities. They sometimes create prayer chains, praying and working with other healers who use the same spirit guide. Some of these healers become weakened by their long and concentrated efforts of healing and praying. At times, the healing of a patient leaves them with the physical symptoms of the illness cured. They are very sensitive and vulnerable healers. On the other hand, the strongest healers seem to be protected most of the time. God takes care of them.

### Jorge

Sometimes I can help other people who are sick, but I am reluctant to do so. They really have to be ill and make me feel that I am their last opportunity for help. Otherwise, I send them to someone else. I wish that people would stop being spiritually jealous of one another. It's worse than the jealousy people have for money. Spiritual jealousy is out of control in the world right now. Too many people who work with spirit are fighting each other. It's terrible to see these things happen.



You have to be careful that someone doesn't put a spell on you or make the dolls that can hurt you. On the other hand, if you keep God with you, no one can harm you. Whatever they throw at you will backfire. It will make a turn and hit the person who threw it. The best protection is to pray and keep the joy of God's love. You really don't need special ceremonies if your faith is strong. Most healers won't tell you this. They will try to convince you that you need certain prayers and offerings and ceremonies. That is only true if you don't practice your faith.

My grandfather told me about a healer who cured a toothache in an unusual way. A woman came with a toothache on the left side of her mouth. The old healer told her to roast a clove of garlic by putting it in some hot ashes. After it was roasted he had her place that garlic in her right shoe, opposite the side of the toothache. She slept with that shoe on. The next morning her pain was gone. He was a very special healer.



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There are many stories about magical things that happen in Mexico. It is a very strong spiritual place. However, you shouldn't come looking for these things if your heart and soul are not right with God. You can get hurt or lured into things that are dangerous. I am happy that you love God and that you can tell other people about our ways.

Jaime

My grandmother told me about a healer who lived outside her village many years ago when she was twelve years old. He was a man who lived away from other people. He felt that it was important for him to live outside the town and to spend his time praying for the people. Others only came to him when they were sick or when they needed a blessing. He often used an egg when he worked with the sick. He would roll an egg over a person's pain and then bury that egg faraway so it wouldn't be found again. He also knew the plants that could help us. He made special teas for settling a sick stomach or for relieving chest pains. He was a good healer.



Grandmother said that the old man had a way with animals. If a farmer had a sick mule or horse, the old man knew about it before the farmer arrived at his house to tell him what was wrong. The old man would tell the farmer that his animal had already been cured. The farmer would never have to say a word. Sure enough, when he went back to his farm, the animal would be healed. Grandmother said that sometimes the old man would be seen waving his hands in the air as if he were touching a horse or mule. The animal wasn't physically there. He must have been working on the spirit of the animal. I think he could call the spirit of the animal to his place and then work on it. When he sent it back to animal's physical body, it would be well.

People who have the gift (el don) at the spiritual level (nivel espiritual) are very rare. Most curanderos are working at the material level and use plants and magical objects. Spiritual healers, on the other hand, learn how to be a vessel or link with the spirits who send messages as if they were phoning in on a spiritual phone line. Spiritual healers go through a dramatic and often unsettling period of developing their skills. This time of development is called desarrollo.

The soul is regarded as a force field or a concentration of vibrations that can be felt and tapped into. The vibrations hold the knowledge and personality of a person even after death. The spiritual healer uses these spirits and their vibrations to help heal others. When you are learning to do this kind of work, you are vulnerable to being harmed by witches and brujos. They know when someone is developing this gift. They sense it. A teacher must place a protective covering around the student so they are protected.

The healers who work on the good side (en lo bueno) are always fighting those who work on the bad side (en lo malo). The attacks often come in the night in the form of bad dreams. The same is true in the spirit world – some of the spirits are good while others are bad. This is how things are in the spiritual universe. It is always good to have a glass of water, a crucifix, and a rosary next to your bed before you go to sleep. That is good protection.



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A spiritual healer works with the spirits through both dreams and in a trance state. When the spirit takes over your body, you can see the change. It is important to not be near any metal when the spirits take over. You should especially not sit in a metal chair. The spiritual current could shock you. Almost all spiritual healers sit on wooden chairs and remove their watches and any jewelry.

The strongest spiritual healers go past being a link with spirits and instead become a direct pathway for the power of God's healing love. They are the purest among us. They never worry about protection or nor do they necessarily follow any particular rituals. They just pray to God and maintain a joy and peace that scares all the witches and brujos. These are the rarest healers in all of Mexico. You were very lucky to meet several of them. They can change your life by looking at you, touching you, or blowing over you. It only takes a moment or a second for them to heal and give you spiritual strength.

My grandmother was a very strong spiritual healer. She would simply touch my forehead and say, "God loves you." I would feel a tingling throughout my body and be assured that I was blessed by a holy presence. She walked with God and spoke for his love. Today all I have to do is think about her and I get that tingling. She is a strong spirit and is available to me. She never tells me what to do. She just keeps saying, "God loves you." After that, I know what to do. I am blessed to have had her as my grandmother.



### Tito

Sometimes small children get the evil eye, a sickness caused by their getting too much attention. It is also possible for an adult to get the evil eye. They get a high fever and sometimes a part of the body swells. The usual treatment is to pass an egg over the body and then to dispose it by burying it in a shady place. Some healers do different things with the egg. One healer I knew would pass the egg over the face and body and then break it onto a saucer. The broken egg would then be placed underneath the bed of the sick person for a night. On the next day, the egg would be disposed. Sometimes the egg turns into a hard-boiled egg. I once heard that an eye had formed in one of the broken eggs. The evil eye had gone into the egg.

My aunt cured headaches by tying a ribbon around the head. She made sure that she said a prayer over the ribbon before attaching it. She prevented a cold by rubbing her saliva on the sole of a person's foot and she cured the flu with a drink made of cockroaches. Again, she always made her prayers before toasting the small cockroaches, grinding them, and adding them to milk. There were many cures like this. That's how we took care of ourselves. Even today there are places in Mexico where there are no readily available medical doctors. Our healers are the only ones who are available to take care of us. When their faith and prayers are strong, their medicines always work.

### Esperanza

I am a spiritual healer and am nearly ninety years old. My husband and I help the people and we help the other healers learn more about how to heal and pray. Our home is open to many healers. We gather in a circle and say our prayers. Fresh flowers must be brought and incense is burned. Our altar holds the candles that are prayed over. When healers come together, great power can be created. All of them must



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be supportive of one another. Any healer who feels the slightest tinge of jealousy is considered sick. They have to be treated. They need to be bathed in holy water and prayed over. Sometimes they must be covered in flowers.

I am one of the few purely spiritual healers left. I do not need to give plants or use any magic. I only listen to my spirit guides. They tell me what to say, what to do, and how to use my hands if it is necessary to touch someone in a healing way. My husband has always been by my side. He is my helper. He interprets some of the things that the spirits say through me. He is also an agent of the spirits. Together we are very strong. All the dark witches are afraid of us. They wouldn't dare challenge us. If they did, they would be hurt. People who play with power are fools. They don't realize that every time they make a magical incantation, they lose a piece of themselves. The cost of making magical power is to sacrifice a piece of your life. It makes you weaker every time you do it. This happens whether they know it or not. However, they foolishly think they are getting stronger. The truth is that the stronger you feel yourself getting, the weaker you are usually becoming. If you are overtaken with the love of God, you feel weakened and fall to your knees in utmost humility. Yet the truth of that situation is that you are getting stronger. This is the way things work.

One day as a young woman, I was walking across a field filled with beautiful flowers. I heard a thumping on the ground and when I turned around, I saw some giants walking behind me. They were spirits from the mountains. They taught me how to be strong and how to never let my faith be moved one inch. Thanks to them, my faith is as strong as a mountain. Nothing can take it away.

I have also had many special dreams. My father came to me and told me to heal. I felt electricity come into my body when he hugged me in that dream. That's how it started for me.

I also saw the dolphin fly out of the ocean and take me back with him. There I learned things from the sea. It was very beautiful. The dolphins are very wise spiritual teachers. Their energy can heal us if we open ourselves to their vibrations.

I knew you were coming. You must sit with the others who bring in the spirits. Let those vibrations bring you a special voice to teach and direct. Be careful around those who don't understand the vibrations. They will get jealous. Bombard them with light and love and remove them from your sight. Only see the light when you look toward them. Only see the light. It will guide and heal all things and burn all obstacles out of the way.

My grandmother is with me as a guide. It is very special when I feel her presence or see her spirit. I once saw her sitting in a special chair wearing a magical dress made of silver. It was a holy sight. She empowers me without saying a word. I'm lucky to have had a strong grandmother. She gets stronger as I get older. She is preparing a place for me on the other side.

## Miguel

There are some anthropologists and visitors who come to Mexico and think that we all eat mushrooms to see God. Actually there are very few people who do that. There are probably more Americans and hippies than Mexican people eating mushrooms down here. Most of our healers and spiritual people get their power through sincere, heartfelt prayer. Even those who take the mushrooms must pray. They will tell you that the prayers and songs are what are most important. There is no easy way to get to God. If you are spiritually shallow, the mushroom will bring you a shallow experience. You will think that it is a big experience and you may even think you were brought into the biggest of mysteries. Such grandiosity just shows your shallowness. There is no way into the deep mysteries of God other than deep and sincere praying. You have to get out of your head and live in your heart. The heart is the home of the spiritual healer.

I learned these things from my Grandfather. He was a wood carver and he never did anything unless he felt the hand of God on his hands. He used to say that he put his hands inside God's hands as if he were putting on a glove. Those hands could make beautiful things and they could heal the people if he touched them. He taught me to do the same thing. Every time I carve or make a prayer or help someone who is sick, I close my eyes and ask God to make my hands worthy and ready. I then feel my hands slipping into his gloves. I know from the bottom of my heart that these are the same gloves that my grandfather wore. No one else can see them, but I know when they are on me. They make my fingertips feel tingly like little thorns are sticking into me. Sometimes it feels like electricity is shooting out of my fingertips. It's hard to explain how amazing those gloves make me feel.

With those gloves on, anything is possible. I can point at someone, and they will feel the electricity. I can bless water and make it a medicine. And I can use them to pray in a special way. My prayers are elevated when I have those gloves on. I haven't told anyone outside my family about God's gloves, but I feel it is time to do so. Others need to appreciate the miraculous ways in which God can use his servants. All things are possible through The Holy Father and Holy Mother's help.

## Anna Maria

I am blind, but my faith sees everything. I know why you are here and that you were coming. These things were shown to me. The answer to your question is yes. Yes, all things bathed in the light of the Blessed Mother bring music to your soul. That is the secret to healing. I know you dreamed of the Blessed Mother of Guadalupe. She is very much alive throughout the world, but especially here. Listen to what she asks you to do. Find what she says is out there to be found. She is a spirit, a place, a power, a blessing, a love, and a channel to God. All of these things I say are true. And they are more than true. They are words that carry a light that can be seen if your ears give way to your heart. Listen with your heart.

My work is to heal the sick. I do so by telling them the truth as it is revealed to me. Sickness is brought about for different reasons. Sometimes we neglect what is important and we must be reminded to stop and reassess our lives. Sickness makes us stop and provides a





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time to change our course of action. Sickness may also be a teaching, showing us the suffering of others and helping us become more compassionate. Sickness has many faces, many lessons, and provides readily available wisdom for those who open themselves to its sacred place in our lives. These things I know to be true for they are as they are seen through the divine light. Isn't it a miracle how I am able to see more clearly than others with perfectly healthy eyes? My physical sight was taken away so I could truly see and see deeply into the heart of things.

Never forget that a pure faith will burn brightly and attract the dark. The dark seeks the light. Its jealousy and surface bad will is actually a veiled hope that even it can be surrendered to the light. It is the petty self that must be given up. When it falls away, all will be submitted to the fire of the light. For these things are true as my heart has seen.

Keep a candle by your bed. Light it before retiring each night. Say your prayers while the candle burns its light. Blow it out after you pray and then go to sleep, Ask God to perform surgery on your heart, cleansing it from any spiritual toxins and unhealthy influences. Ask the Blessed

Mother to transplant your inner being with a blessed spiritual heart. Ask for this as sincerely as you can. I did this and a great miracle took place. I received a spiritual heart transplant along with renewed spiritual eyes. These two organs are not separate. They come together when it is time for you to enter the spirit world.

When the spirit world is seen through unblessed eyes, only illusions and mirages will be seen. You will get a circus performance that makes you feel special. You are only seeing the reflections of your own desires and fears. Your heart and eyes must be spiritually transplanted in order to see through the veil. This I know to be true because I have felt and seen and heard these things through the blessings of the Blessed Mother.

Many will tell you to be careful around witches and sorcerers. I say something different and I say it because I know it to be true. There are no witches or sorcerers. They have no power. They are simply the spiritually lame. They are crippled with unfulfilled hearts and deluded dreams. Pray for them as you would any leper. They, too, are God's children. The Blessed Mother sees them no less than she sees the holiest of those who walk the earth.

Do not walk in fear. Walk in joy, innocence, and love for all things created by God. Be a willing servant of God. Do so and find your place among God's children. Thank you for allowing my voice to carry the truths of the Blessed Mother into the world. I pray that these words will anoint the hearts of those who thirst for God's wisdom.



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### Rosario

*(an account of her healing ceremony)*

A client, a middle-aged woman, came to Rosario, a curandera near Oaxaca, Mexico. She had a bad case of chronic bronchitis. Rosario previously had instructed her to bring an herbal bouquet of red flowers, basil, rosemary, and piru leaves. This bouquet was a necessary part of the healing ritual. When the client arrived at the curandera's house, she was taken to a corner of the living room that held a small altar. Incense was lit and smudged all around the client's body. The room became so full of smoke that it was hard to see anything. The incense was finally placed on the altar.

The curandera then made a circle of alcohol on the floor around the client. As the client stood inside this circle of alcohol, a prayer was made and the alcohol was lit. A circle of fire dramatically burned around the women as the curandera described this ritual, as the beginning of a cleansing process.

The *limpia*, or cleansing ritual, continued. Using the herbal bouquet, the curandera rubbed the client's body while praying in the name of Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and La Virgen de la Soledad, the patron saint of Oaxaca. Then the healer drank some mescal and sprayed the client's entire body with it. After this was completed, she told the client the diagnosis. The curandera said someone was jealous of the client's abilities and that was the cause of her breathing problems. Special prayers were given and special instructions were given that involved praying to a specific saint.

### Don

*Mazatec curandero from Oaxaca region*

Most curanderos or shamans from my tradition won't talk to anyone because they are afraid that someone will steal their power. We believe that our magic can hurt or kill others and that's why we are careful to protect our secrets so they won't get into the wrong hands. Most of our shamans are very secretive and worried about other shamans. Many of them also are jealous of one another's powers. This how it has always been with us.

Our shamans believe in the Christian God and saints, but we also use our historical knowledge of plants that has been passed down through the generations. We use tobacco mixed with lime to protect ourselves from witchcraft and for ritual cleansing. Our tradition has been preserved for hundreds of years. When the Spanish came here, we were already practicing our magical ways.

I will tell you one of our secrets. Our strongest curanderos learn from a series of visions. These dream lessons may take place over a period of one to three or four years. Some of us, particularly those who have trouble getting into the visionary world, undergo a special apprenticeship where special psychoactive plants are used. We must master the morning glory seed and the sacred mushrooms. When we are training, we abstain from sex, alcohol, and certain foods. It is a very disciplined time. Once we learn to enter the spirit world, we don't have to use the plants as often.

### Julio

*a curandero near the base of a mountain near Oaxaca*

[Julio is described by many curanderas and curanderos as one of the great healers in Mexico. When these healers or their family members are sick, they go to see him. He is regarded as a "natural" healer,



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meaning that he was called and instructed by God.] Yes, I am a natural healer. It is my duty to help others. There are very few of us left. There are many people who have learned about the herbs or who have learned to give a healing massage. But to have a natural connection to God is rare. There used to be many more of us in the past. Today most of the so-called healers are pretending to be healers. They cannot accept the fact that only a few people were chosen by God. I didn't make a choice to be a healer. It was God's plan.

I use eggs to diagnose and remove sickness and bad influences. Before I begin, I check the pulse and blood pressure on both sides of the body. If one side is different than the other, the imbalance must be treated. I then wash the eggs and my hands with rubbing alcohol before I begin. I rub the egg over the person's scalp and face while making a special prayer. The egg is also rubbed over most of their body, along the neck, chest, belly, arms, hands, and legs. I take a second egg and with some water in my mouth, I glide the egg along the skin and suck out the sickness or bad influences. I then spit out the water. I do this over most of the body.

Finally, I break each egg into a clean glass of water. How the egg appears in the water tells me many things. It tells me whether there is sickness, what illness and/or bad influences were removed by my treatment, how long the person will live, and many other things. This is an old way of diagnosing that curanderas have used. When we are through using the eggs in this way, we must be very careful with them, making sure they don't pass the illness back into another body. I pour them into a plastic bag, place them on my altar for a while, and then dispose them in the earth. This is done after the patient leaves.

Last year I had a patient come from far away. His skin color had changed and was very dark. He had also lost a lot of weight and was just skin and bones. The medical doctors couldn't diagnose his condition and were worried that he wouldn't live much longer. I treated him and saw that he had witnessed a car accident where four people had died right in front of him. It was the shock of that experience that caused his body to go out of balance. After three treatments, his natural skin color returned and his weight increased. Today he is fully healed.

I treat many people who have been hurt by others pretending to be healers. It is sad that there are so many people who deceive themselves into believing that they can heal. They claim to be spiritual, but they aren't living a spiritual life. It makes them feel important. I can't say how unfortunate this situation has become. Too many people are told that they can be a healer. They think that a book or a class can teach them. This is not possible. This is not something you just decide to become. It is God's business, not the choice of human beings.

The true healers often are taught their skills through dreams. If you are a man, a little, old man with a white beard comes to you in your dreams and teaches you for one to three years. For women, a little, old woman may come to their dreams. These teachers from the dream world instruct us how to heal, which plants to use, where to find them, prepare them, and what spiritual tools to use, like crystals.

In the case of my teacher, he was very old with white hair and a beard. He wore white linen clothes. I loved to wait for the evening time when he visited me in my dreams. He would show me where to find my special healing objects. I wasn't ready to heal others until he said it was time. When he would appear, I would ask him a question. Sometimes he would spin and run away. When I went after him, I would



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suddenly see a large window and see the evening stars through it. I actually thought I had awakened from the dream. Then he would tell me to stare at the stars and before I knew it, I would fly right through the window and be taken somewhere for a lesson. It was magical!

The curers only work for the good and their hearts are full of love. Witches, on the other hand, are bad. They say they are good and they may even deceive themselves into thinking they are good. But they are not true lovers of God. They only like magical power and believing they are special. They are the ones who easily get jealous of the pure curers. They will do anything to have power and show that they are the ones in control of everything. Rather than being humbled by life, they quickly rush to prove their abilities. However, if a witch, or for that matter, anyone, breaks their promise with God, they will eventually face disaster.

I will tell you a story I haven't shared with anyone else. It is about my grandfather. Many years ago, there was a wealthy landowner in his village who announced he would protect my grandfather and financially support his work. My grandfather was a very special curandero who God loved. He was a strong and effective curer of the people. The truth was that the landowner wanted to have my grandfather's power and be admired by others. Over the years, the landowner started to pretend that he, too, had some spiritual power, even arguing that it was God who made him wealthy. He was lying to himself.

The landowner saw that the people did not love him like they did my grandfather. He began to doubt everything he had once thought was true. He doubted God and he doubted my grandfather's gifts. He finally became skeptical about all matters of faith and love, though he continued to publically profess that he was a faithful believer. He grew bitter and envious of others. You can guess what happened. The landowner's heart grew cold and he sank deeper and deeper into unhappiness. He became the most impoverished spiritual person in the village. He grew fat, lost his hair, and his skin became pale. My grandfather, however, never stopped loving people and he never ceased to love God. His heart was blessed and showers of spiritual blessings poured over him.

All true curanderos and healers know that many people will betray them, lie about them, and even try to destroy them. It's always been that way. The temptation is to get angry with them and risk losing your own loving connection to life. My advice is to love God without question and without limitation. Never let anything or anyone interfere with this love. It is the only wealth worth having.

I almost forgot to tell you about another way the eggs can be used. You can place one underneath a person's bed or hammock. It will absorb any evil influences while the person sleeps. Do this once a week and you will constantly be spiritually clean. Make sure that you bury the egg in the ground the morning after you sleep over it.

There is nothing we curers can do to stop people from being jealous of us. This is part of our life. But we can keep cleansing ourselves and others, doing so with the prayers our grandfathers and grandmothers used to say. There is a spiritual universe that a few of us can enter. It is not open to everyone. I wish I could say that anyone could enter, but I would be lying. Only a few are chosen by God, but





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they are given a huge burden of helping others. The way is not easy, but it has great spiritual rewards. The spiritual universe is nothing like the dreaming and fantasies of everyday people.

You can tell when someone has entered the spiritual heavens and when someone is just full of himself. The spiritual person will be generous and never stingy. Spiritual people smile and laugh all of the time. If a person is somber and shows a face with little emotion, there is no spirit living in their body.

People who are spiritually blessed are easily recognized. They are human, yes, and they make many mistakes, especially mistakes involving their open hearts. They are too vulnerable to being used by others. They love freely and this can make for trouble, tempting others to crucify them. But they keep on loving and forgiving. And God keeps on loving them no matter how many times they may stumble. This love is the curandero's biggest blessing. Sometimes it may seem like a curse, but that is only because the light attracts the dark. The only answer to this dilemma is to keep shining because light always burns away the darkness. Thank you for letting me say these things. Walk in the light and know that God's love is what makes all great things possible.