

# **Self-Care Through the Cycles of Nature**

Kris August, DVM, GDVWHM, CHPV

Dates: September 2022 – May 2023

Location: Online offering with live Zoom sessions

This course is open to veterinarians and all other humans!

Pricing:

\$450 for new attendees

\$360 for repeat attendees (20% discount)

Payment accepted by check, money order or through Paypal

## **Overview:**

It's challenging in today's world of unpredictability and hectic daily life to build and maintain healthy habits. But more and more, self-care is being recognized as essential for not just surviving, but thriving. We know it takes more than a few days or a short course to build a daily self-care routine.

Over a period of nine months, we move through the seasons, considering their natural influences on our activities and self-care needs. This course will introduce many ways of nurturing yourself and those around you, and its relaxed schedule provides time to pick and choose what works for you and your lifestyle. Participants are supported in building personal habits of gentle self-care following the natural cycles of life, which include not only hard work and physical exercise, but also rest, healing, celebration, community, remembrance and gratitude.

Our self-care needs change with the seasons and daily rhythms. Aspects and variations of these cycles or directions are found in many indigenous cultures that live closer to

nature, including Native American, Celtic, and others. The natural cycles are also an integral part of Traditional Chinese Medicine, Ayurveda and other traditional medical systems. In addition to exploring these traditional cultures, Dr. August has spent several years studying Village Building and Nature Connection with the 8 Shields Institute, an organization dedicated to supporting community connection through the cycles of nature. The interpretation presented in this course is primarily based on the 8 Shields approach, as well as Dr. August's experiences in nature as a veterinarian, herbalist and most importantly, as a human being.

Building upon itself over nine months, this course will include access to materials and recordings along with a monthly 90-minute online zoom session for discussion of the current topic. This interactive discussion and contemplation allows for further growth with the sharing of experiences of a diverse group of participants. Of course there will be an herbal aspect to each module—we will be sending out care packages with herbs and more in advance! There will also be journaling and other at-home exercises to enhance the understanding of each lesson.

Let yourself be nurtured by nature!

### **Course Inclusions:**

Each month includes a different topic and activities relating to the season:

- 1- Monthly topic recording or video and written handouts available the first of each month.
- 2- Monthly 90-minute interactive live Zoom call emphasizing discussion and connection; groups will be limited to 15 attendees each.
- 3- A Google Group Chat for ongoing discussions with classmates over the nine-month period.
- 4- Personal journaling questions intended to deepen your experience on each seasonal topic. If desired, these can

- be shared by email with Dr. August, on the Google Group Chat, or in the Zoom discussions where time allows.
- 5- Teas and other surprises included in the care package (see below) to explore for each month.
  - 6- Additional activities and ideas to explore for each topic.

### **Care package:**

- Sent one time in August
- 9 different tea samples—1 for each section that supports each month's topic.
- Additional monthly surprises for experiential and hands-on activities throughout the course.

### **Monthly Schedule:**

Zoom meetings are currently planned for the second Tuesday of every month, September through May, at 8 pm ET. More sessions will be added as necessary.

1. **September:** Introduction and Overview
  - Why Self Care matters for Veterinarians and Everyone!
  - Cycles of Nature – overview of the 8 Directions and their seasonal connections
  - Daily Gratitude Practice
2. **October:** Southwest – Healing, Rest, and Recovery
  - Supporting General Health and Wellness
  - Peace in the body – meditations to enhance awareness of physical needs in the body
  - Timelessness – allowing time to “do nothing”
3. **November:** West – Celebration and Story Catching
  - Creating space and time for appreciation and celebration
  - Value of catching the story of others and having your own story heard
  - Peacebuilding through communication agreements

4. **December:** Northwest – Honoring and Remembering
  - Lessons from our ancestors, looking back
  - Importance of honoring and remembering stories of the past in working through grief and finding the path forward
  - Compassionate listening, empathy, and resilience
  
5. **January:** North – Sleeping and Dreaming
  - Importance of Sleep
  - Review and Integration, planning for the future
  - Love and Forgiveness - Lovingkindness meditation
  
6. **February:** Northeast – Mindfulness, Gratitude, and Creativity
  - Mindfulness and Creativity – pathways to reducing stress, worry, and anxiety
  - Nature meditations to open awareness and gratitude
  - Cycles of the Moon – exploring the ebb and flow of nature
  
7. **March:** East – Inspiration and Wonder
  - Welcoming and Connection – Community Building
  - Childlike Happiness
  - Inspiration and Wonder in the Garden - Nourishing Herb Gardens
  
8. **April:** Southeast – Movement and Forward Momentum
  - Playfulness, Energy, and Vitality
  - Motivation – exploring what motivates us and keeps us going
  - Movement – Whole body wake-up including Qigong and other movement practices to get the energy flowing
  
9. **May:** South – Positive Focused Effort
  - Using inspiration and motivation to set the stage for real work and accomplishment in a positive way

- Nature journaling as a way to continue building connections with the natural world
- Closing Intentions and Celebration of Accomplishments

### **Additional options:**

- **Individual sessions:**
  - These sessions are for personal goal setting and deeper understanding.
  - Available singly or in a 3-part package scheduled through the 9-month period.
  - Inquire at [info@purplemoonherbstudies.com](mailto:info@purplemoonherbstudies.com) for pricing.
- **Special self-care for team building:**
  - Bonus monthly online materials for team-based community building, focusing on roles and group communication along with personal self-care.
  - 4 additional online group meetings throughout the 9-month period for the team to establish goals and review needs and specific interests.
  - Before signing up, set up a call to see if this is a good fit for your group or organization!
  - Discounted pricing for all team members to participate in the full 9-month course.
  - Inquire at [info@purplemoonherbstudies.com](mailto:info@purplemoonherbstudies.com) for exact pricing and options.

### **Testimonials:**

“The cycles of nature self care class helped me tune into what is going on around me and better understand what helps my body and mind deal with life and practice. I have thought that the best way to "self-care" was to have spa days or go on vacation. Those are great but I now realize that those things also are another thing to plan for and put on my calendar which is already kind of crammed. I found that looking at the

season and what nature is doing and spending time outside helps me better relax and calm my mind...Each month I looked forward to opening the package for that month and trying a new tea and spending time learning about the next season. Overall, I loved the experience.”

“I really enjoyed the course! Spending the year working through the seasons was a great way to tune into the natural world, as well as reflect on normal fluctuations in our own energy and motivation levels throughout the year.”

“As veterinary professionals we are smart enough to know that we under-serve ourselves. That self-care is an important part of our well-being. This course, and Kris August who leads it, provides a good motivation to jumpstart us in the right direction. You have the option to go "all in" or just get your feet wet or anything in between. No judgement. Just gentle guidance. The information presented was simple to understand but very deep in its meaning and implications. Well-worth the investment - time, money, etc.”

“Kris is the mentor everyone needs - calm, understanding, knowledgeable and open.”

“The Self Care through the Cycles of Nature was an interesting look at why we need what we do as humans/creatures of nature. It was thought provoking and, like all the classes I've taken at Purple Moon worth the time and financial investment.”

“I really enjoyed sharing experiences and thoughts with others in the veterinary field. This course helped me look deeper into my personal experiences and how to understand how to take better care of myself. The packages were such fun to look forward to opening each month. Kris is such a serene and loving person. Her sincerity and caring is real!”

**Bio:**

Dr. Kris August's love for animals and nature developed during her childhood in the Sonoran Desert of Arizona. Extensive time in nature and summers spent traveling with her family throughout North America and beyond cultivated a desire for learning, exploring, and connecting with animals, plants, and people. Gardening with her mother and grandparents developed a deep love for the natural world and enjoyment of watching things grow and change. This has led to an eclectic and philosophical approach to life, parenting, veterinary medicine, and teaching.

Dr. August received her DVM from Colorado State University in 1991 and spent the first 7 years of her career in her hometown of Tucson, Arizona practicing small animal and emergency medicine, along with wildlife rehabilitation and zoo medicine with a diverse array of clientele and patients. Dr. August spent a few years as a stay-at-home mom, during which her interest in herbal and wholistic medicine grew. These experiences led to a desire to treat difficult cases, such as animals with chronic or life-limiting diseases, and Dr. August started an integrative housecall practice to care for these pets and their people. She soon found like-minded veterinarians in the International Association of Animal Hospice and Palliative Care (IAAHPC). Dr. August was a co-author of the certification course, guidelines, and the textbook for the IAAHPC.

In 2011 Dr. August joined the first cohort for the Graduate Diploma of Veterinary Western Herbal Medicine (GDVWHM) through the College of Integrative Veterinary Therapies (CIVT) studying under Drs. Barbara Fougere and Susan Wynn. In addition to her herbal and palliative medicine training, Dr. August has advanced training in Ayurvedic medicine, essential oils, acupuncture, and pain management. Her desire to provide and encourage gentle care for animal patients has led her to also pursue certification in Low Stress Handling, Fear-Free, and Cat Friendly Veterinary Practice.

Dr. August values compassionate care for animals, people, plants, and our world, with a special focus on caring for the caregiver. We cannot help others unless we continue to care for ourselves. She is currently a student of tai chi and qigong and practices nature meditation. Dr. August has spent several years studying Village Building and Nature Connection with the 8 Shields Institute, an organization founded by Jon Young and dedicated to supporting community connection through the cycles of nature. This has enhanced her ability to teach, connect, and learn as she shares her passions with others. Over the past 30 years, Dr. August has been teaching in a variety of capacities from Waldorf-inspired playgroups and Tae Kwon Do, to teaching veterinarians and veterinary students in herbal medicine, animal hospice, and self-care topics.

Dr. August continues her integrative veterinary housecall practice in Ames, Iowa, in which her primary focus is geriatric and end of life care, and herbal medicine. She also lectures and writes on topics concerning end of life care, herbal medicine and “caring for the caregiver.” In 2017 Dr. August began teaching with Dr. Laurie Dohmen and Purple Moon Herbs and Studies. Together, they created the only hands-on veterinary herbal medicine course for western veterinary practices in the USA.

**Disclaimer:**

Dr. August is not a therapist, simply a veterinarian, herbalist, and nature enthusiast searching for ways to connect more people with the natural world. Please be sure to contact health care providers – mental and physical – to meet all of your healthcare needs.