

# Flower Essence Therapy: Establishing Context

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## Flower Essences and Essential Oils

### Similarities

1. Both essential oils and flower essences are often called “essences.”
2. Both derive from natural plant products (unlike synthetic perfumes and fragrances).

### Differences

1. Essential oils are used in aromatherapy and have specific natural aromas. Flower essences have no aroma other than the alcohol preservative.
2. Essential oils are a plant extract, usually made by steam distillation or cold-pressing, yielding volatile oils. Flower essences are water-based infusions, preserved with alcohol.
3. Essential oils are a physical extract, often needing large quantities of plant materials (flowers, roots, seeds, bark, etc.) Flower essences are energetic remedies, made only from the flower of the plant at the precise moment of blossoming.
4. Essential oils are generally used for physical conditions, with secondary effects on the emotions. Flower essences are generally used for emotional conditions, with secondary effects on the physical body.

### Combining flower essences and essential oils

1. Flower essences and essential oils can be used in tandem, although the subtle vibrational patterns of the flower essences will be more blended and often less distinct.
2. Flower essences and essential oils combine well in spray bottles and in topical applications, such as in skin cremes, pulse-point applications and massage oils.
3. Flower essences and essential oils offer complementary pathways, from the psyche to the senses and from the senses to the psyche.

# Flower Essences and Herbal Remedies

## Similarities

1. Flower essences and traditional herbal remedies are made from natural plant substances, either wild-harvested or cultivated.
2. Traditional herbal healing involves time-honored customs and a lineage of apprenticeship, including the healing of the soul as well as the body.

## Differences

1. Flower essences are only made from fresh blossoms and only by solar infusion or decoction (boiling).

Herbal remedies are made from many plant parts, by various extraction methods including alcohol tincture.

2. Flower essences are physically dilute, so they work vibrationally, impacting the vital energy and emotions, and affecting the physical body indirectly.

Modern herbal remedies are designed and marketed to address physical ailments and symptoms.

## Using flower essences and herbs together

1. Herbs and flower essences can be skillfully blended to work synergistically.
2. These products will generally address more foundational issues in the body-mind spectrum but may lack some of the higher vibrational properties of flower essences that are used as a distinct modality.

# Flower Essences and Other Vibrational Remedies

## Similarities:

1. These remedies are based on energetic, rather than biochemical principles.
2. They are either physically dilute or contain no physical substance.
3. The healing properties of the remedies are derived from archetypal qualities of the substances or energies involved.
4. Use of the remedies is based on the understanding that human beings have subtle energy bodies that can respond to substances which carry subtle healing energies.

## Differences:

1. Flower essences are derived specifically from plant blossoms, whereas other vibrational remedies can be derived from minerals, animals, human substances, various environmental energies or even thought projections.
2. Dr. Bach's sun method of flower essence preparation method, a solar infusion in water, is derived from the dew formation process on plants, as found in Nature. Application of this method to other substances or energies may not be appropriate to the nature of those substances or energies. For example, putting a gemstone in water does not correspond to how the mineral world interacts with the elemental forces of nature.
3. Essences made from flowers have a particular ability to engage the emotions and attitudes, the soul qualities of the human being. Vibrational remedies made from other substances and energies may affect other aspects of the human energy system.
4. Homeopathic remedies, which are a well-established energy medicine modality, are prepared differently and have different effects than flower essences. See the next section for more detail.

## Using flower essences and vibrational remedies together:

1. Various kinds of vibrational remedies (including homeopathic remedies) can be combined, often with potent synergistic effects.
2. However, it is important to include remedies such as gem elixirs, color remedies, and environmental remedies in the more general category of vibrational remedies, rather than categorizing them as flower essences (which are also a type of vibrational remedy). In this way, we can recognize the unique contribution of each modality.

# Flower Essences and Homeopathic Remedies

## Similarities

1. Both types of remedies are based on energetic, rather than biochemical principles, and are physically dilute.
2. Both modalities address the whole person: body and mind.
3. Both flower essence therapy and homeopathy can be used to treat acute situations or more long-term chronic conditions.
4. Both modalities work with the person's healing process rather than by suppressing symptoms.
5. When used for long-term conditions, both homeopathy and flower essences can stimulate suppressed symptoms or emotional trauma to surface, so that they can be healed. This can be called a "healing crisis," or "awareness crisis."

## Fundamental Differences

1. The very definition of Homeopathy is embodied in the "Law of Similars" – Like Cures Like," giving remedies that work with the body's symptoms as a healing response. Samuel Hahnemann coined the term homeopathy based on the two roots from Greek and Latin: *homeo* – "like or similar" *pathy* – suffering or feeling" compare to "pathos").  
  
Hahnemann contrasted this with Allopathy. *Allos* is the Greek word for "other or different." Allopathy based on the "Law of Contraries," giving remedies that counteract symptoms by creating the opposite effect.
2. Homeopathic indications are developed by "provings" in which doses of a substance or remedy create symptoms in "provers" who might not ordinarily have that symptom, and these become the indications for the symptoms treated by the homeopathic remedy.
3. Flower essence indications were not the result of "provings," as with most homeopathic remedies, but rather observation of their archetypal qualities and clinical effects. Dr. Bach, through his empathic sensitivity, would experience an emotional imbalance of a patient or of his contemporaries, and then would find the flower that would address that suffering. If this were a homeopathic proving, he would have experienced the emotion *after* taking a substantial dose of the flower essence, for example taking *Mimulus* and experiencing fear.
4. Flower essences balance and integrate polarities within the individual. We can say that the essences follow the alchemical law of the "Union of Opposites," rather than the homeopathic Law of Similars, or the allopathic Law of Contraries.
5. While Dr. Bach had practiced as a homeopath, he considered that with flower essences he was creating a different kind of preparation, moving beyond Hahnemann's work. Furthermore, flower essences are not prepared by the decimal (1:10) or centesimal (1:100) preparation methods specified in the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia of the US (HPUS), which made the inclusion of the Bach remedies in the HPUS in the 1980s, and their labeling as homeopathic remedies highly controversial with homeopathic practitioners.

## Flower Essences and Homeopathic Remedies *(continued)*

### Differences in the Methods of Preparation

1. Flower essences are made exclusively from the fresh blossoms of plants, whereas homeopathic remedies can be made from a variety of plant parts, or from other mineral, animal, or human substances.
2. Even homeopathic remedies of flowers are prepared differently from flower essences. A homeopathic tincture (extraction in alcohol) is typically prepared in a laboratory, often from a macerated or dried plant substance. Flower essences are prepared from whole blossoms, floating in water, and only later preserved with alcohol. Flower essence mother substances are always prepared in "nature's laboratory," in the open air and sun where the flowers are growing, either in the wild or in a garden. They are supported by a living elemental matrix of Earth, Water, Air, and Fire.

### Differences in the Therapeutic Process

1. Homeopathic prescribing is typically based on a cataloguing of symptoms, with a strong emphasis on physical, as well as emotional and mental patterns. Flower essence selection considers symptoms, particularly emotions, attitudes and life challenges, as clues to the life lessons and life goals of the client.
2. The goal of homeopathic therapy is generally the restoration of health through the stimulation of the life force of the individual, which is typically inaccessible to the conscious mind. For this reason, it is particularly effective for chronic illnesses that have embedded themselves in the vital (etheric) energy of the client. Flower essences work with underlying deep psycho-spiritual challenges, with the ultimate goal of actualization of one's life purpose.
3. Homeopathic remedies, if wrongly selected, may create unintentional "provings," symptoms that the client would not ordinarily have experienced. Wrongly selected flower essences are most typically ineffective, either by having little or no effect, or by having a more chaotic effect than the client is prepared to handle. Flower essences heighten awareness of issues already within the soul life, but they do not create true provings or aggravations.
4. Classical homeopathic prescribing generally involves one remedy taken at a time, with repetition dependent on the response. Flower essences are typically taken in combination and repeated several times a day for maximum effect.
5. Typically, with many homeopathic practices, the client's main responsibility is to report symptoms so that the practitioner can select the correct remedy. With flower essence therapy, there is generally a greater emphasis on the client's engagement in the healing process, using the flower essences as a catalyst for self-awareness and inner work.
6. High potency homeopathic remedies, which can strongly impact mental and emotional states, need to be used by experienced and trained health practitioners. Low potency homeopathic remedies, such as are sold in health food stores, are safer for the inexperienced customer to use, but generally offer symptomatic relief for physical conditions. Flower essences are safe to use for home care by beginners, as well as by experienced health practitioners.
7. Unlike most homeopathic remedies, flower essences are not antidoted by substances such as camphor, or strong herbs. They are safe and stable.

## Flower Essences and Homeopathic Remedies *(continued)*

### Homeopathic potencies of flower essences

1. Some practitioners and companies have subjected flower essences to a series of homeopathic dilutions and succussions to produce “higher potencies” of flower essences, claimed to increase speed and effectiveness
2. Flower essences prepared by homeopathic methods may not have the same indications as standard flower essences, and it is misleading to ascribe the same qualities to them. They should be considered as new remedies that will need to have their properties clinically tested and verified.
3. Since flower essences do not need to be raised to “high potencies” in order to affect the mind and emotions, they combine the safety of low-potency homeopathic remedies with the ability to affect the psyche found in some high-potency homeopathic remedies.
4. Homeopathically potentized flower essences may create provings and aggravations if incorrectly applied, as do high-potency homeopathic remedies. Even if potent and effective, they may overwhelm the individual with their effect, discouraging a more active participation in the therapeutic process
5. Rather than trying to enhance the power of flower essences through homeopathic potentization, we suggest supporting the client with counseling, journaling, dream work, therapeutic art, affirmations and other ways to engage the client in the healing process.

### Using flower essences and homeopathic remedies together

1. Homeopathic remedies do not interfere with flower essences, from the standpoint of the flower essence therapy.
2. Some homeopathic practitioners use flower essences with homeopathic remedies. Some classical homeopaths (using a single constitutional remedy) recommend their patients not use any other modality, including flower essences. Additionally, homeopathic practitioners may delay the use of flower essences until they see how the client is responding to the homeopathic remedy, so as not to confuse the symptom picture.
3. Homeopathic practitioners may use flower essences as an adjunct to the homeopathic treatment, to help ameliorate emotional issues stimulated by the homeopathic remedy. In these cases, the homeopathic treatment is primary, and the flower essences are used for “stage one” relief.
4. In other cases, after the homeopathic treatment has dealt with chronic physical symptoms, flower essences are used to address underlying emotional stressors that need further exploration. In these situations, the flower essence therapy moves through further stages of self-awareness and transformation.
5. Read the interview with New Zealand homeopath Den Illing on integrating homeopathy and flower essence therapy: [www.flowersociety.org/den-illing.html](http://www.flowersociety.org/den-illing.html)
6. Some companies market combinations of flower essences with low-potency homeopathic remedies for a synergistic effect. Also, that allows them to make claims for physical symptoms listed in the Homeopathic Pharmacopoeia (HPUS).



# Flower Essences and Allopathic Drugs

## Similarities

1. Flower essences are liquid substances in a “medicine bottle”. They can be taken orally, as well as topically, so they appear outwardly to be similar to OTC (over the counter) drugs.
2. Clients may be expecting drug-like symptom alleviation.
3. The first stage of the flower essence response may offer a natural alternative to drugs for symptom relief and de-stressing, an “allopathic” use.

## Differences

1. Essences do not work via biochemical pathways to directly impact physiological systems or brain chemistry as do drugs.
2. Flower essences are *vibrational catalysts that work in the energy fields surrounding the physical body*. These energy fields are the carriers of thoughts and emotions. Thus, flower essences create change by stimulating awareness. One feels, *“I am changing.”* The change originates from within, so one can gain a level of mastery over one’s thoughts and emotions and develop inner strength.
3. Because allopathic drugs directly alter biochemical balance, one feels, *“change is happening to me.”* The change comes from an outside intervention, and thus dependency can develop.
4. Flower essences address emotional and mental precursors of illness and stress. They enhance consciousness, by helping the user to identify and transform feelings, thought processes and attitudes.
5. Allopathic drugs help to alleviate or suppress painful symptoms. For example, psychiatric drugs such as antidepressants and antipsychotics are claimed to cure the chemical imbalances that supposedly underly such emotions as depression and anxiety. While there are nutritional deficiencies and metabolic disturbances that can have detrimental effects on our moods, these drugs do not address such imbalances. Rather they create stimulating or anesthetizing drug effects that are useful for controlling symptoms, somewhat like drugs that relieve physical pain. Thus, drugs can often bring an acute situation under control much faster than can flower essences. However, flower essences, properly used, can assist one to gain the ability to cope with and learn from such emotional challenges as depression and anxiety.
6. Allopathic drugs create side-effects, ranging from discomforting to life-threatening. Flower essences do not create side effects. Any reactions are part of the healing process.

## Allopathic drugs and flower essences (continued)

### Using flower essences with allopathic and psychiatric drugs

1. Flower essences are not intended to directly treat psychiatric or medical conditions. Anyone with a diagnosed physical or mental illness needs to be under the care of a licensed health care professional. If you are not qualified to treat the condition, you have the duty to make a referral, and make sure that the illness is monitored by a health care professional, even while flower essence therapy is continued.
2. Flower essences can be used in tandem with allopathic medications. They will not interfere with the effects of drugs. However, some allopathic medications dull consciousness and may therefore reduce the effectiveness of the flower essences.
3. Some people experience that their emotions are so intense that psychiatric drugs enable them to stabilize enough to be able to do inner work with the help of flower essences, often with a goal of reducing or eliminating the drugs.
4. With professional monitoring, many people have been able to reduce or eliminate their intake of psychiatric drugs by addressing the mental and emotional precursors that cause or aggravate many illnesses. This is especially true if counseling and guidance is included along with flower essence therapy. However, it is not advisable to abruptly discontinue psychiatric drugs, as there may be rebound effects because the body and psyche have become accustomed to the drug effects.