



TEA Values, Rights & Responsibilities

A living, evolving, collective guide

Our Values

Temple of Earth Apothecary and Freedom School is a Black-led herb shop, multi-generational freedom school and community healing space, offering locally grown and Indigenous-grown bulk dried herbs, community and house-made herbal preparations and ritual goods from our Indigenous lineages. We celebrate and center Indigenous/Africana land and plant stewardship, and the rememberers in our communities who come together here and beyond to steer the return of our lands back to our stewardship, to see to the recovery of prosperity, spiritual balance, and the holistic wellbeing of our people; we treasure and honor our medicine folk in community concentrating our unique diasporic Indigenous healing and medicine ways.

We innately and decisively value medicine folk and healers and we intend to see to it that they are honored, nourished and well paid!

We gather and organize in the name of Black liberation and Indigenous sovereignty. As a Black-led project we honor our ancestors and those who have come before us clearing the ways on this medicine path. We humbly and passionately continue in the freedom-making and healing justice lineage that manifests us, into an audaciously reparative and just future! We take radical care of ourselves and one another, attuning our hearts to let ourselves be led by the ones who are already there in the places we are going. We hear their call and we commit to seeing to our visions of what is possible.

We serve in the protection of Black/Indigenous bodies, spirits, and lands. As such, we approach all our practices and teachings in herbal medicine, the sourcing of herbs, and land stewardship with integrity in the most ethical, reciprocal manners of our dreams. We seek and rigorously check for such practices in all of our community partners.

We are deeply rooted in our ethics and in our mission to support self-sufficient, ancestral medicine connections to grow within ours/our people's worlds, to support our folks to live in harmony with the lands beneath us, to grow our own food and medicine, to learn how to attune to our bodies and see to our needs in ways that the medical industrial complex does not support.

We pour our ashé into the co-creation of learning, healing, farming and spiritual environments designed to support us all to root into our ancestral medicine.

*Temple is an exploration, a shaping, a softening and a sharpening of our freedom-making, healing and living beyond the imperial attitudes and infrastructures of our day. We innerstand that we are constantly creating cultures at every moment. These values and principles come not from an intellectual space, but from a lived, relational, and rooted heart space. **As are we, our values are organic, alive and evolving.***

Rights and Responsibilities

*We are guided by the truth that we are integral parts of the earth, and that it is our **RIGHT and RESPONSIBILITY** to remember and repair our connection to the land. We are tapped in with strong and loving ancestors past and future. We are tapped in with our powerful electric hearts. As community healers, visionaries, and stewards of this Temple, it is our right and our responsibility to take excellent care of ourselves and one another – so that we may see, hear and receive our instructions clearly.*

As earth, we innerstand that it is our right to be free and well. Temple of Earth Apothecary comes from a dream and a calling to steward the earth through times of change. We feel called to support our people to root into our ancestral medicine together, relate with the plants and the lands around us, and explore what healing looks like beyond the medical industrial complex. We intend to support our people to not rely on a wack medical system that is set out to destroy us. We take power and agency to learn the ways of our ancestors and to practice our Indigenous science and medicine — the very medicine by which our people survived the atrocities of the past several hundred years.

*As rememberers, back and forward, it is our responsibility to historicize the present moment. It is also our responsibility to dream with the ones of worlds ahead. In doing such, we feel inspired in knowing that colonial empires have not and will not last forever - and we open to receive a palpable vision of the inevitable return of our lands and our harmonious ways with and upon them. **We are not naive; we do our sacred work to prepare the path.** We create space from the fire inside of our hearts out to the Temple walls at 536 Grand Ave to co-create justice, freedom and love for our people.*

Temple Freedom School of Black Indigenous Mystery & Ancestral Herbal Medicine exists as a place of remembrance and recovery of our healing ways so that we can reclaim our power, our wellbeing and our sovereignty. It is our responsibility to create a learning and healing environment dedicated to the remembrance, practice, study, archiving and evolution of Black and Indigenous healing and freedom making traditions.

As medicine folk, it is our responsibility to support our community to self-heal together by sharing what we know about the plants and our bodies. At our storefront apothecary, we offer welcoming, warm community space via our library, free herbal tea station, candle service and community herb counter. We meet patrons where they are on the apothecary floor, offering free informal health consultation. For those who would like to make their own medicine, we offer guidance on how to work with the herbs to create medical infusions and decoctions, tinctures, steams, topical applications and other preparations. For those who need an urgent solution, we direct folks to the pre-made blends from the herbal lines we carry.

As a Black/Indigenous organization dedicated to the healing of our people and our lands, it is our responsibility to be very intentional about who we partner with and choose to partner with people and businesses that reflect our values for Black liberation and Indigenous sovereignty. We prioritize partnering with Black and like-hearted liberation-oriented vendors, contractors and practitioners and teachers at all times, in part because we desire to intentionally redistribute wealth. We host community healing events and Freedom School classes with accessibility for our Black kin as a highest priority.

Rights and Responsibilities: Community Relationships

Temple's Co-op Status

Last updated 1/2/2024

As of January 2024, Temple is a single member LLC run by Danielle Benjamin with the gracious help of her family, friends, and a generous community of volunteers. With community support, we have created a Community Stewardship Work Trade program in order to begin Temple's transition to co-operative stewardship. With wisdom from local, like-hearted co-operative projects (like Mandela Grocery Co-op and Understory Oakland), as well as structural advising from the [Sustainable Economies Law Center](#), Danielle is currently organizing to propose and co-facilitate Temple's transition to a horizontally run and led co-op with our trusted community of co-stewards.

We practice reciprocity in relationship with one another, with our community of patrons, with the neighboring community, with the earth and the collective whole.

*We intend to see to it that Black medicine folk are treasured, nourished, paid well and held as sacred in their communities, out of respect for their vital and priceless contribution to the collective. In a particular call for justice, **Temple of Earth Apothecary supports Afro-Indigenous, Indigenous and Black-identifying medicine folk to practice, study and evolve our ancestral medicines while receiving generous, livable wages and are protected, honored and valued for their integral work in their communities.** As we bring Temple of Earth Apothecary into form, we are praying and divining about how we can most powerfully provide for Black and Indigenous medicine people toward the healing justice, freedom and prosperity that is destined.*

*Core and key to all our moves is an understanding that our healing is interconnected. All things have roots. **We track and keep close attention to the patterns at play in conflict arising within ourselves, our families, our team of apothecary stewards, our community of patrons, the Lake Merritt neighborhood, Oakland, and the larger collective. Noticing the patterns at play within ourselves, our intimate spheres, and in the collective is our responsibility as community healers.***

We trust and innerstand that conflict and keys that arise in our intimate and collective fields come up to be healed and often shared. Collectively, we are brilliantly prepared to heal, evolve and level up through any and all conflict!

We respect and honor our emotions as teachers. This is our right. It is our responsibility to care for ourselves and listen to our emotions in ways that cause no harm. It is our responsibility to utilize the tools of wisdom and healing we have gathered in times of conflict or big feelings. It is our responsibility to seek healing balance for ourselves in all ways we are aware in times of conflict or big feelings, knowing that this is practice, and we are expanding our awareness all the time. To do this, we

*actively practice communicating and seeing to our needs; **To create a culture of care, it is important for us to practice communicating and seeing to our needs both in times of ease and in times of contraction.***

*It is both the right and responsibility of each person in community at Temple to kindly and honestly speak from our hearts at all times possible, and see to our needs and boundaries. **We work to attune to our needs so that we may hold space from a heart-centered place of fullness and generosity.***

*It is the right and responsibility of each person in community at Temple to offer care to one another, to attune to the needs of one another and the space, and to offer support *from our overflow*. We innerstand that this requires great flexibility and honesty from everyone. We innerstand the humility and greatness that is required to release any seeking to "be right". We seek to allow ourselves and each around us the sacred accountability of our own paths, and to reflect consensually with one another in order to support our collective path to reflect these liberatory values.*

In times of contraction and of ease, we practice transformative and healing justice. We respond with fierce and wise quickness, tenderness and strength to protect our people and our values at all times. We prioritize communication and connection when conflict arises. We breathe and we stay in our hearts. We are committed to knowing ourselves and seeking to understand one another so that we can evermore move with greater consciousness, and care for our wounds so that we do not create from them.

We practice courageous and radical honesty at Temple. We innerstand that the whole of the culture, community and the prayers we create must have at heart a hearth of individuals who are attuned to our own wellbeing, pouring into ourselves and each other so that we may show up full and generous as community.

Rights of and Responsibilities to the Land

We learn about reciprocity through our relationships with the land. With great respect for the plants, we grow our own medicine wherever possible and provide education on gardening to prevent overharvesting in the wild. We create opportunities wherever possible to clearly delineate the land and human lineages of the medicine we offer. We rebuke extractive models of herbalism, and embrace a practice of reciprocity.

We continue in the land stewardship tradition of our Black and Indigenous ancestors by listening to the land and engaging the “permaculture” wisdom lineage of ancestor George Washington Carver. We approach all our practices and teachings in herbal medicine, the sourcing of herbs, farming and land stewardship with integrity in the most ethical, reciprocal manners we can dream of. We seek these teachings, and rigorously check for such practices in all of our community partners.

We are specifically dedicated to the repatriation of Turtle Island and land back efforts beginning locally by partnering with Huichin Ohlone families of the East Bay, in the radical tradition of Black and Native collaborations for freedom. We know deeply that returns of the lands to Indigenous stewardship is crucial to the healing of our planet in repair of the biological and ecological harms of colonialism and imperialism.

We innerstand the dangers of white and multi-racial “healing spaces” that capitalize on Indigenous healing ways while failing to acknowledge or make effort to untangle the roots beneath the sale of our peoples’ sacred medicines and traditions. We call for justice! We come together to create our own healing spaces, temples of connection with the land and our bodies, free from a centralized white gaze, honorable to ourselves, our ancestors and the earth.

Temple Freedom School is for Everybody

*We are a Black queer mother and family run medicine project. It is always fundamental and imperative to Temple of Earth Apothecary and Freedom School that community healing experiences are accessible to those who need them regardless of financial access. **We find it entirely integral that Black/Indigenous people of color get to share medicine in this space, and so we offer 'Pay What You Can' tickets to our Black/Indigenous relatives, at times naming specific sub-groups.** We are much owed by way of wealth stolen from us and our ancestors. We view the return of our lands, wealth, health and ways as a matter of justice and one of inevitability, as we intend to help facilitate it. Those who are called to return our money back to us can use the ‘Pay It Forward’ option on our Temple Freedom School classes and events to tithe in and support the space, our practitioners, facilitators and shop keepers.*

For reciprocity and sustainability we will often ask for a minimum donation. If our minimum ask is not currently within reach, we understand ~ we invite folks to write to us at info@templeofearthapothecary.