**BEEING An Apitherapist**

**Bella Donna- Apitherapist, Herbalist, Aromatherapist, Beekeeper**

Recently I had a flashback through my long, exciting, and wonderful life. I first recalled being young and loving the time spent with my younger sister and brother, always explaining, or teaching them something. Had I thought then of being an apitherapist? Surely not. But I did have glimpses into the “teacher” in me.

As a tenth-grader, eons ago, my class was assigned to write a two-page “philosophy of life.” I asked the teacher, “What in the world is that?” After his explanation I thought, how in the world would we know at our age? It did get me thinking, although I never did the project.

That same semester I brought two of my grandmother’s books into English class and asked permission to do book assignments on them. One was a health book by Adele Davis. Davis was a writer and advocate for better health through nutrition. The other book was about the use of herbs for health and healing. It quoted some scriptures, solidifying to me that herbs were designed by God for healing.

At the time I seemed to be defining my philosophy without even knowing it. I still had no concept of being an “apitherapist.” I’m even pretty sure I never heard the word back then. But I do remember coming across a recipe for skin care, made with an infusion of fresh sage into honey. Interestingly, that was well over forty years ago and I still use the same recipe as a facial cleanser and mask, as well as a retail item in my business. Without defining myself as an apitherapist I was practicing it early on.

In my twenties, I went to college pursuing a business degree. It taught me research and writing skills. And in my spare time, what was I researching and writing about? You guessed it- herbs, health, and honey. Did I yet have a clue what an apitherapist was or did? You guessed it --I did not.

In my thirties, I found myself back in school working towards a writing degree. I don’t think I loved to write at the time as much as I loved learning to write. One of my most wonderful teachers directed me to read the styles and works of naturalists Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman. And also to explore one of their contemporaries, Annie Dillard. I loved learning about nature and the outdoors through different eyes. But was clueless as to where my path was taking me.

My writing, research, herbalism, love of nature, appreciation of honey, understanding of natural healing, and quest to be and do as I truly feel and believe God intended, have organically evolved/involved me into the world of apitherapy.

What is Apitherapy?

Apitherapy is more than just using bee products for health and healing. It’s much more than beekeeping and collecting honey. It’s a way of life. It’s a way of understanding God-given insights and methods to the design of the human body and being, and its navigation through life in a natural and healthy way. I am an apitherapist because this is who God meant for me to be.

To quote an author of one of my great-grandfather’s books, which I amazingly still have and cherish, “I believe the doctor of the future will be a teacher as well as a physician. His real job will be to teach people how to be healthy.” – D. C. Jarvis MD, 1957. And interestingly the year I was born.

And one of my favorites from Proverbs 24:13 is, “My son, eat honey, for it is good. Yes, the honey from the comb is sweet to your taste.”

May your special and personal calling organically also evolve you into your divine purpose.