

Essential Oil Safety

Guests: Sylla Sheppard-Hanger and Nyssa Hanger

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Dr. Zielinski: Hello, everyone. This is Dr. Eric Zielinski from DrEricZ.com. I'm a chiropractor and public health researcher who specializes in natural therapies. My passion and life's work is to help people live the abundant life, which is why I'm extremely honored to cohost this Essential Oils Summit with my dear friends Dr. Josh Axe and Jill Winger.

In my opinion, there's nothing on the planet that is more versatile for everyday use and that promotes healing in the body than essential oils. And I am very excited about this session of The Essential Oil Revolution because I'm interviewing Sylla Sheppard-Hanger and Nyssa Hanger.

Sylla has 40 years experience and personal research into body work and essential oils as a natural healthcare practitioner, licensed massage therapist, aromatherapist, and licensed cosmetologist. She is also the founder of the Atlantic Institute.

Nyssa is the assistant director of the Atlantic Institute and has veritably lived and breathed this lifestyle since in utero. Bottom line folks, these ladies are a big deal. And I am just honored and blessed to have them on the line right now.

Thank you so much for joining us!

Sylla: Thank you, Eric!

Nyssa: Yes, thank you for having us!

Dr. Zielinski: Well, with that, I just want to begin. If you ladies could let us know a little bit about yourself and how you first got involved in the aromatherapy profession.

Nyssa: Well, you go first.

Sylla: Well, I thought I invented it back in the '70s. I took a trip to California, like all good hippies, in a Volkswagen van. And I found my first oils on that trip. And from then on, I used them in my massage practice and made perfumes for myself and other people and literally realized it was something special.

And from there, I did discover Robert Tisserand had already written a book and Joan Valnet. So I jumped on their bandwagon and started studying and learning how to do it and putting more and more together that ended up in courses, classes and the Atlantic Institute of Aromatherapy.

Nyssa: And I guess I came along around the time that you were writing that course.

Sylla: Yeah, or getting started.

Nyssa: That then turned into the manual. And yeah for me, it definitely was just part of our lifestyle growing up. I remember being a kid. And other kids, "Oh, what does your parents do?" "Oh, my mom's an aroma therapist." "Oh, what's that?" And I had to explain. I had to get her to explain to me how to explain what that was. And...

Sylla: She thought all kids knew about aromatherapy.

Nyssa: Yeah. And so I actually ended up pursuing a massage therapy career early in my 20s. And I've been practicing for about 10 years now. It's only been in about the last 5 years that I've really actively started using the essential oils in my practice because we want to have some time to discover

ourselves outside of what our parents do. But I quickly learned, as well, that it enhanced my massage sessions.

And then the more I started really not tuning her out because I'd listened to her my entire life, really listening to the information that she has, I realized there was such a vast knowledge and really an incredible intellectual legacy that I cannot let go. So I've taken it upon myself to try and learn the craft in and out the way she has. And my goal is to be able to talk about the oils the way she does. I know it will take quite a long time. But it's my mission at this point.

Dr. Zielinski: Well, what a nice thing to say. I want you to coach my kids because I want my kids to say the same thing. I got to...

Sylla: They have to turn 30, Ed.

Nyssa: Yeah, I was going to say, it wasn't until I was 25 and later.

Dr. Zielinski: That's hilarious. I got to ask about the hubby—about your husband. I know what it was like being married with my wife now for 8 years not knowing anything about essential oils or aromatherapy and looking at her doing her routine every day.

And I just thought it was smelly stuff until I stumbled upon the research. And one of my clients asked me to write several public health reports on essential oils. And I was literally floored, just floored. And so what's up with your husband? What's his story? I should have asked him because he's some big burly guy who doesn't want to smell like essential oils? Who is this guy?

Sylla: No, he's the perfect balance for me. He's very quiet. And he is a musician. And he works with the Neilson Corporation. So he's running computer programs all day. And he lets me do what I need to do. He's always been that way. He knew that's who I was when he married me. And from day one, he was covered in my scent. And then as time went on, we've been

married 33 years. So he doesn't get as covered as he used to. But we do have essential oils in the diffusers all day long.

And he swears that keeps him healthy. His work people are mad. He never takes a sick day. But he blames it all on me for keeping him in the air. But, yeah, he's totally supportive. And maybe when he retires, he can work with us and keep our books and do things for us at the Atlantic Institute of Aromatherapy. We'll be a family operation.

Dr. Zielinski: So you both come with experiences. And you've used them for different uses between the two of you. I'm very curious at both of you in the various stages of your career, how are you today seeing aromatherapy and essential oils versus when you first started? Where's the evolution gone?

Sylla: Well, when I started nobody knew what I was talking about. They thought I was saying Roman therapy. And I was one of the first people in Tampa, Florida to sell oils. I had a salon at the time. And I sold vintage clothes. And it all just came naturally. So I started selling.

And then I had to teach classes. And that evolved into a home-study course. And eventually, I quit. I closed the salon. You can't sell oils and teach and do it very ethically because you can't say lavender does this and that and here's a bottle for \$9.95. So you've got to pick your battles.

So I chose the education route and began studying and putting things together because when I started there was no Internet. I traveled and I had to go to libraries to look up stuff and go study with people that would let me come and stay with them like Martin Rye. And nowadays, people can look everything up. And if their kid has a problem, they'd ask Dr. Google. So things have definitely changed since I started.

And the other thing that has changed is the science of essential oils have come about and a lot more research has been done on therapeutic properties. A lot of the early therapeutic properties were taken from herbal medicine. And

that's not exactly right. So now we're studying the oil itself as opposed to an herbal extract that contain some oil. They're not the same thing, an essential oil and an herbal extract because there's so much more in an herbal extract where the oil is just the concentrated oil from say the lemon rind or something.

Nyssa: And one thing that I would like to point out is that the evolution that I've seen over my lifetime has been very great. I know that she's seen quite the evolution, as well. But when I was younger, nobody that I would talk to knew much about essential oils. Maybe, maybe somebody's mom had something that seemed like essential oils.

Sylla: Because they were all hippies!

Nyssa: Yeah. Definitely. But by the time I was in middle school, Bed, Bath & Beyond started. No, not Bed, Bath & Beyond. What's that other one? Bath and Body Works came out. And so this whole idea of aromatherapy was something that scents your candle. Aromatherapy has become a buzz word in the past few years.

And one instructor that we hosted last year, Peter Holmes, made a really great point in that he said that he's really trying to get away from the word aromatherapy because it's become such a popular culture term that most people think that it means, like you said, scented Glade air fresheners or whatever.

When truly, it's the therapeutic use of essential oils. So he's actually started framing his verbiage more around the word essential oils because that's what we're working with, and less around the term aromatherapy." And I thought that's a really good point. So I'm trying to adopt that myself, as well.

Sylla: The other shift that I've seen that brings up her point is it's not just aromatherapy, it's aromatic medicine now because there's an oil for everything. And so we're treating symptoms with an oil, which takes us back

to chemical medication. And this is how a lot of people are getting hurt. When in reality and what we teach and try to teach people is to find that holistic blend for that person that accounts for everything, not just treat their runny nose or their achy muscle or whatever. We've gotten away from that holistic blending and the holistic practice that I learned, taught, and still teach because everybody has jumped on the oil wagon now. And they...

Nyssa: Yeah. And I love when we're out some place and someone asks, "Oh, well what's a good oil for stress?" And I've got to say, "Well, what are you stressed about?" And I explain that *your* oil for stress that might really help you reduce your stress is not going to be the oil that does it for *me* or the blend that does it *me*.

And so part of what we want to do is help people elevate their knowledge to feel empowered that they can create an effective synergistic blend and not just have to use whatever this book says to use for headaches, for example.

Sylla: And learning the properties of each oil. When I started we had 20-30 oils. Now, my manual covers 350. And so it's impossible for you to...You got to pick and start somewhere and learn the known properties of each oil, not what your company says or your guru says or any top man in the industry.

You've got to look the scientific evidence yourself, find out what that oil is proven to do. Otherwise, you're just spouting off more missed information. And so we do have that information now and we have the safety information. So the other side of the coin is people are spouting off misinformation without pointing out the facts.

Dr. Zielinski: I love the phrase. I'm going to borrow that, "aromatic medicine," the importance of getting to the root cause of disease. When we go have the race or the walk for the cure, what about the race or the walk for the cause? Let's get to the root issue.

Nyssa: That's a great point.

Sylla: You see and this is what happened and why I wanted to bring that up. We didn't do aromatic medicine in the '70s. We were feeling good and treating our skin things. But now, it's because of myths that were started about the French taking oils orally and all that. Yeah, there is medical aromatherapy. It's done by medical doctors. They take a swab. They do an aromatic gram which finds out which oils exactly treat your issue. And you're treated with that.

It's not drinking or taking oils and capsules, which is aromatic medicine because you're messing up your systems. And people that don't know what they're doing are getting in trouble and having organ damage. And this is the big area that I've seen. We have never, ever in the United States taken orally the amount of oils that are being done in the last 10 years.

Nyssa: And I would be willing to be that in another 10 years, we'll be starting to see a lot more of those repercussions.

Sylla: And children will be sensitized from all the mothers slapping on undiluted oils all over the children. We already have a generation of sensitized early aromatherapists from my generation. We thought they were natural. We put them on. Some people are sensitized. Now, we have a whole new generation starting in the '90s, again thinking they were natural. They slathered them on. They're sensitized. Now, another generation has reared its head. And they're pouring them all over the babies.

So I've got quite a few blogs about this sort of thing. And this is what I'm seeing is happening. And my fear is for the children in the future because children won't be able to use oils. And they'll have aversions to all the clove and cinnamon that mom's poured on them. So there's already a girl that can't use peppermint. Her mom overused it on her. So this is my fear of what may happen. But if people can get on the right track, we can do a lot of healing and good work.

Dr. Zielinski: Well, for those people who aren't familiar with the term

sensitization, can you all explain that a little bit?

Sylla: Well, it's an allergic reaction that happens when we put it on or are around anything that is a hapten, which is an allergen. Now, aromatherapy, there's 4 stages of it. But we only worry about the first one, which is acute dermatitis. That's irritation. That happens the first time you use an oil undiluted. Okay, so you quit using it.

But then if you ever use it again, by this time the body has recognized that as an allergen. And it sets up a sensitization reaction. It has to do with the Langerhan cells in the skin that reacts with the haptens, which is protein binding. Therefore, it's a true immune allergic reaction. And they are known sensitizers. We know from the work in the cosmetic and dermatological industry, we know which oils are sensitizers like lemon verbena and cinnamon bark.

But any oil can become a sensitizer with overuse. So maybe you use lavender a lot in the early days. And then somebody put some lavender absolute on you at a conference, you're now allergic and sensitized to lavender. This is a true story that happened. But it can happen with any oil. And the overuse is what's causing it. And there's a lot of these reports in our injury reports.

So people think sensitization can't happen with a pure oil. And there's no protein in oils, which is true. But there's protein in your skin. And essential oils, even the pure oils, may be worse because they are pure. It's the chemicals that are contained within the oils, like cinnamic acid or aldehyde. And so any oil that has that in it it's going to react on the skin.

Nyssa: But let me just offer a little cheat sheet here for those that aren't super-scientifically minded and their eyes may have glazed over as mine did for many years. But this is the short of it. Sensitization is an irreversible allergic-type reaction that anyone can get to any essential oil. There are certain essential oils that are known sensitizers that are really highly likely to

cause this reaction. But we also know lots of cases of people that often are sensitized to lavender, which is known as one of our most gentle essential oils.

So to avoid sensitization, your best bet is to always dilute your essential oils, especially if you're putting them on the skin. And there's no reason not to dilute them. I don't know if you've ever taken an ounce of your carrier oil and put in 5 drops, 15, maybe 30 drops to get yourself at a 5 percent dilution. But it smells pretty much as strong as that essential oil. So you're going to save yourself money. You're going to save yourself on your health. And...

Sylla: It goes further. You can do a whole body massage. You aren't meant to go through 2 bottles of lemon oil a month. I go through one a year. I don't drink it. There's no need to drink it. There's no need to use it undiluted. So oils are cost effective when they're used properly. And, again, I've used them for 40 years for cleaning, healthcare, and everything else. And I don't spend that much money for them.

Dr. Zielinski: I'm curious about one thing. I've been trained as a clinical researcher and as a public health researcher. So I've been digging around PubMed a lot and I've been just reading a lot of articles trying to get a good understanding of proper essential oil usage.

What are your thoughts of the few recent studies that are coming out? I don't know if you're familiar with, for example, out of Iran that they're taking healthy male students at a university, putting a drop of peppermint right on their tongue or a drop of peppermint in their water up to 16 ounces. And they're testing blood pressure, heart rate, spirometry parameters. And they're showing that peppermint ingestion is actually enhancing athletic performance.

Sylla: Yeah, I saw that. That's a great study. And it was done really well. And I think that could be used. I love that. But it's not like we're drinking bottles and bottles of it. They had a reasonable amount in their water. And yeah, I love that study. That is something that proves some value for it. And it could be that many oils might do that. But this one happened to be on peppermint.

So that's a great study.

A lot of the studies unfortunately are on cells in a petri dish. And so we can't say that just because an oil kills...Many things kill cells in a petri dish, including bleach. But we're not going to drink that. And so the extrapolation from those kind of research into, "Oh, well, let's take the oil for that," that's where people go wrong. Between confusing the herbal preparation, properties, and research in a petri dish, this is where people go wrong. So I applaud you for being a critical researcher because that's very important.

Dr. Zielinski: So what do you recommend for...Well, would you advise against, let's say an athlete trying to enhance performance by taking a drop, just one, just one drop?

Sylla: Well, I'd advise to take the whole lemon. Why would you give up the vitamin C and all the good stuff in the lemon? You're still going to get a little bit of the peel oil in there, as well. So when you're taking a drop of lemon, you're only getting limonene. It's about 90 percent limonene. It's from the peel oil. We use that to degrease driveways.

So when you do the whole fruit in your water, then you're going to be much better off. And it would be interesting to compare that study with a drop of oil because I would be willing to bet you might even get more because there's a lot more nutrients in the lemon or the peppermint plant even than...That was peppermint. You're right.

Nyssa: Yeah, that study's new information for me. And I'm wondering from that study, I wonder what their hypothesis is on why they're getting those results? It's interesting to me. But I would want to, before recommending that to an athlete, I would definitely want to see some further studies on how did it compare with ingesting the tea?

Or something like a little bit more. If you're an athlete and you want to improve your performance consider having a raw food diet or really increasing

the amount of live nutrients that you're getting in your body instead of just taking a drop of an essential oil because for me, I think the critical shift is in getting out of the traditional model of, "I need this result. I'm going to take this one pill." No, it's a whole lifestyle change. You want to improve athletic performance, let's try 10 minutes a day of silent meditation—

Sylla: Yeah, and visualization.

Nyssa: —and things like that. And incorporating all of that into their lifestyle, I think they're going to have probably perhaps—the French already did a study on this—but even better results than just taking the one drop of the essential oil. Now, I know that critical studies can't work with multiple variables. So it's hard to say. But the results are really interesting.

Sylla: But that's a good study though.

Nyssa: I want to hear more about other studies.

Sylla: And it's one of the only few that I've ever heard about taking any value of taking a drop internally for anything.

Dr. Zielinski: Yeah. Yeah, it's interesting. And one of the plausible explanations are that peppermint relaxes bronchial smooth muscles, which basically increases ventilation. In a sense, it's blood doping, just like Lance Armstrong got banned for doing it. You're naturally blood doping because more oxygen, more energy.

And something else, too, there's some other studies, one out of New York about enteric-coated peppermint good for IBS, right?

Sylla: That's widely been studied. There's medication offered for that now because we know that peppermint works on the IBS very well. It goes back to the peppermint tea. What did we drink for an upset tummy in the old days? We did a peppermint tea. And now in this case, the concentrated menthol that

is in the oil is what does it. It's the menthol more so than the oil itself because the tea would not be as strong. So you can see why that works better.

Dr. Zielinski: Well, we definitely have to talk a little bit more, well, a lot more about safety. But before that, though, from what I could tell one of the greatest contributions that the Atlantic Institute has offered, not only the aromatherapy profession, but also the world, is your injury report. Please explain that, describe it? How can people access it, get plugged in? All that.

Nyssa: So that began I believe—and she'll correct me if I'm wrong—but our national association originally was collecting these injury reports for many years, I believe. And I think at the time, people were afraid to report their injuries because...

Sylla: Yeah, they were scared of retribution from the companies.

Nyssa: Yeah, so people actually didn't report.

Sylla: So they would call me on the phone and email me. So for 14 years, I was chair of the safety committee. I had to handle all this. But nobody would fill out a report. I had millions of emails. But they're just anecdotal until we decided to...When the organization revamped their website and removed that, we decided to pick it up. And we have hosted it on our website. And people could fill out their report.

Nyssa: And for whatever reason, people started filling it out. I don't know if we have an explanation why we all of sudden started to get those reports, but maybe just the fact that it wasn't associated with an association...

Sylla: With a company, anonymous. And the word has spread around Facebook because the more...I'm very blessed because I've been hollering about safety for 20 years. And it's gotten really old. But a lot of people have picked up the banner for me. And I don't even have to go on these sites and monitor because my students and other people who finally got them, they do

it, too. So they send a lot of people there. If people come on saying, “Oh, I put undiluted peppermint on my nose or menthol oil. And now I have a scab. What am I going to do?” I’m like, “Go to the doctor for one.” But then everybody else is, “No, fill out a report.” So that’s how we get a lot of those reports.

And I would guess that in a year’s time we got a hundred. I’ll bet by next year, we’ll have a thousand.

Nyssa: Yeah, it just keeps getting exponential. So if you go on the website AtlanticInstitute.com and either look under the tab for LEARN and then click on SAFETY. You can find a bunch of safety information there. Or if you just go to the main page and see the photo for if you’ve been injured by essential oils, fill out our report, just click that. That will take you directly to the report itself or to the survey, rather.

And we did publish our first report summary last year. And you can download that. It’s available. It’s got 30 cases on there. And there’s a summary, as well as, the complete Excel spreadsheet of the data. So you can literally see it case by case without any names. So it’s all anonymous.

And then if you want to fill out a report, we’ve got about 19 different questions that’s some general information about your age and all of that. And then what oil you used? How did you use it? What was the effect immediately after? What was the effect 6 hours later? And on and on in detail, and then a place for people to just put their comments and testimonials. And I’ll tell you what? Some of these stories are a little bit heartbreaking.

Sylla: And by the time this interview airs, our second report will be up, which will be almost a hundred. And those are the worst and scary cases are with baby stopping breathing and things like that.

Nyssa: And the thing for us is it seems that if the right information gets out there, these can be totally avoided. And that is really our goal and our mission

is to continue to do everything that we can to make sure that people have the right information. And I would like to just make a comment on that of I think sometimes we get in any field...And you had mentioned earlier in our conversation about there's all this animosity that's in our field. And I've had other people mention that, as well.

And people want to be right. And, of course, we want to be right. But if anybody gets anything from this interview, I want them to be encouraged to develop their own critical thinking skills. So don't take our word at face value, go research it yourself, find out your own information. But the safety guidelines that we have are a great way to stay in the right frame of mind.

Sylla: And safety is well established. We've known essential oil safety for a hundred years. The cosmetics people like I said, they've been making products out of them, food flavor. We're really a drop in the bucket in the whole essential oil market in the world because aromatherapy's very small compared to food flavoring, cosmetic, toiletries.

But because of that, we know what's safe and not. So certain products aren't allowed to use certain amounts of things because we know they are sensitizers and irritants. So aroma therapists need to know that, as well. And if you don't know that and you're planning to practice or selling or anything, it's negligence. And I'm shocked there's not more lawsuits because there's no excuse for ignorance and not knowing your field and not knowing your materials.

Nyssa: Another part of where understanding the science of the oils really comes into play because once you start looking at that—and Dr. Rob Pappas is a great source for this—but when you start looking at the science and chemistry and understanding, “Okay, when this essential oil with these particular constituents go on the skin, the skin is going to react in a fairly predictable way.” It will vary case by case. But...

Sylla: And that's not detox. People confuse your skin turning red with detox.

No, when you put an irritant chemical on your skin and it turns red, it's called irritation. It has nothing to do with the demons and toxins leaving your body. And this is a big myth that hopefully is getting busted because that's been a bad one spread around. And that's why people get injured. They're told, "It's detox, put more on." Well, that's how they end up with a chemical burn on their skin or being sensitized. So people need to know what they're talking about before they start issuing out bad advice.

Nyssa: And I know she mentioned this before. But a lot of this has nothing to do with the purity or the quality of the essential oil—

Sylla: Right. Or the brand.

Nyssa: —or the brand. Really and truly if people are getting a brand that they know doesn't have any additives in it and it is the pure essential oil, then they need to treat it like it's a pure essential oil and it's a highly concentrated plant extract that will react in a chemical way to the body. So...

Sylla: They don't have to have added things in. The chemicals...

Nyssa: No, sometimes it's even worse when it's pure.

Sylla: Yeah, the chemicals within the oils are the issue, not anything that may have been added to it.

Dr. Zielinski: That makes complete sense. For anyone who hasn't even heard of anything like this before, when you look at the fact that essential oils are veritably medicine. And every medicine has inherent risks to it if used under proper supervision, used correctly.

However, here's the question because the FDA still refuses to monitor or evaluate or test. And thank God because if they did, who knows what's going to happen? But at this point, we have the inherent danger of Dr. Google. You mentioned that earlier. So how do we balance? How about this? If you could

answer this specifically, what recommendation would you give to Dr. Mom out there, Dr. Dad, in not only balancing this whole self-empowerment to really knowing what to do?

Sylla: Yeah, they do need to know what to do. You don't get your education from the company you're buying from. You need to get it from other sources. And I'm afraid the FDA doesn't control laws at all. They do what they do. And they come after people making claims because it's illegal to make medical claims on something that hasn't been proven. That's why companies get letters. And that should be shut down and taken care off. That's the right thing to do.

Nyssa: Well, part of what we've done because all the information is overwhelming and because our primary focus is on safety and we are a source for education for people, with our recent co-authored journal article in the *International Journal of Childbirth Education*, it's geared towards safety and using aromatherapy in pregnancy and child care and labor and delivery.

But we took that article and created a safety fact sheet that is available for download on our website. And so that's, of course, we'd like to believe, a great place to start. It's got all the bare bones of what you need to know when you're using those things on your kids. And anything that would be a safety issue on a kid would certainly be a safety issue on an adult. It's even going to be more conservative than something for adults. But if you can get that information down, that's a great place to start.

And then we always like to highlight the idea of getting your education other places, don't just take our word for it, go and see what some of these other legitimate educators are saying about safety, as well.

Sylla: There's great books out there we could recommend. There's good places to start.

Nyssa: And if you want the nitty gritty, Robert Tisserand has literally written

the book on essential oils safety.

Sylla: Their safety. Yeah.

Nyssa: So and that's got everything in it that you'd want. And it's fully referenced. And it's research-based. So it's almost a little bit too much for even me right now. But...

Sylla: Well, we need that. We need to know if lemongrass is a mild sensitizer so we don't go slapping it on our undiluted. Or if we do, we wonder why we are broken out. So people need to know that information. And it's out there. And there's no excuse for not having it.

Nyssa: For me, the big things are always diluting the essential oils, pretty much always, always diluting the essential oils. And then being aware of things like if an essential oil's phototoxic. And if that's a new term for someone, you definitely can look that up. If you're going to be using essential oils on the skin, make sure they're not phototoxic. Be aware of the essential oils that are known irritants. And that is included in our safety fact sheet. And so you would want to use those in even lower concentrations.

Sylla: You need to respect the oils and not just treat them lightly because they're very special, very concentrated and very powerful.

Nyssa: Yes.

Dr. Zielinski: And for those of you who didn't catch the journal and the article that they mentioned, I want to highly encourage everyone to take advantage of it. It's free. You could just type up *2015 International Journal of Childbirth Education*. And the title is "The Importance of Safety When Using Aromatherapy." And I just got to give this article a plug. It's just fantastic! I really appreciated the guidelines for aromatherapy during childbirth. They're just fantastic.

Two things I want to mention. One, having gone through 3 natural homebirths with my wife, scent—everyone's different—scent and taste and sound, everything is different. And when a woman is going through that experience, it changes from one birth to another and even from hour to hour.

And so what you shared was pretty common sense. But it's profound because it needs to be said. Just don't throw an essential oil out there. Let mom first test it. And if it is approved by mom's body, go through with it because what mom is going through game day is not what mom enjoyed during practice, A. And, B, another real good common sense piece of advice is don't be throwing a bunch of oils in your birth water because you don't want baby to touch that first thing. I a hundred percent agree.

I read that. I'm like, "You know what? That's just good sound advice. So for those of you who are thinking of using essential oils during childbirth, you have great examples and great guidance on how to do that. So thank you, ladies, for putting that together. I really enjoyed that article.

Sylla: If anybody wants the article, they can email us. We'll send a copy. And we've placed that on the site with the fact sheet. So they could download that, as well. So if anybody has problems, just email us.

Dr. Zielinski: One thing I wanted everyone to learn a little bit about is the significance of the Atlantic Institute. It is currently the oldest aromatherapy school continually run by a practicing aroma therapist. And your instructors have well over 100 years combined experience. That's very impressive. I just want to hear a little bit about the story of how the Atlantic Institute came about?

Sylla: Mmm, let's see. I had my shop. I was selling oils. Everybody wanted a class. And I was the first one in Tampa to have oils. So I got a lot of newspaper, TV, and things like that because people didn't know what I was talking about. But from having my little shop and closing up there, I closed up in order to focus on the education. And so I created the Atlantic Institute of

Aromatherapy in 1989. And that was to be my institute. And from there, I had already started a course, a correspondence course, as well as live classes.

And I got so tired of looking up in a hundred books that I stopped to make a wall chart. And the wall chart became bigger and bigger to 4 double-sided wall charts, which eventually became my book, which is called *The Aromatherapy Practitioner's Reference Manual*. Two volumes, 350 oils in the chart form.

So then I went back to the course and got that revised and redone. And we've had our home-study course. We're the second oldest continuous running home-study course in the U.S., as well, too.

Nyssa: So that home-study course is still available. And I'll just speak to what I feel what I want to see for the future of the Atlantic Institute. Of course, I'm coming on to help really keep it going and keep our classes going. We've been revamping the way that we do a lot of our live classes.

And just a note on that, we really love doing the live classes. For us, those classes are less about you coming and learning information about how to use aromatherapy in your life and more about helping you on your healing journey because if you are going to be a practitioner in any capacity, you can't help others until you work on yourself. And we all got that stuff to work on.

So that actually, though we talk about the science and the chemistry and the properties of the oils, that becomes a primary focus of those workshops. And that is really important for us to keep going. So a lot of our more advanced students will take the correspondence course. And I have looked at this notebook. It comes in a notebook form.

Sylla: It's a bioptical offline knowledge device.

Nyssa: In the form of a book. I actually spent summers putting those courses together. And even though I've seen them backwards and forwards, it's still daunting to me. And so in the past few years, I said, "Mom, you know what?"

Let's expand our live classes and add an additional live-class option to support people that are working through this course together." And so we've started that with a prototype group this past year. And we're walking them through the whole course piece by piece. And it's been amazing the community that we've been able to build with that.

And I'm just so excited that as we perfect this new program, we like to call it the APT Program—the Aromatherapy Practitioner Training Program—to aptly prepare you to be a confident, competent, and empowered aromatherapy practitioner. As that continues to be developed, I'm just so excited to see what new aromatherapy practitioners we're going to be created in the world. We've got some really stellar students right now that I see helping me continue on the Atlantic Institute. And I just want to make sure that we maintain this incredible legacy of knowledge.

Dr. Zielinski: So let's give some people out there some encouragement that natural therapies can really be life-changing. How effective is aromatherapy as medicine? And please share some testimonials from some of your clients or patients.

Sylla: Well, we as a family have always used pretty much the oils as medicine. When Nyssa had a friend that would come over with a tummy ache, I'd give her a drop of peppermint on a spoon of honey and something like that. Or Nyssa, she had a lot of respiratory issues as a child. And this is, again, when I first started playing and learned a lot. But yeah, the eucalyptus in diffuser.

And then, of course, whenever we get sick, which is rare, but occasionally, we will have bronchitis or something or a viral thing. Now, if you know what the germ is, you can go right with oils that attack it because certain oils are more specific. But if you don't know you have strep throat or what your bacteria or your virus is, then what I use, I call it my play blend. It has about 10 different anti-infectious oils in it. And I would use that to treat myself, either inhalation, oral or suppository or whatever is needed.

So other than having breast cancer 15 years ago, I'm not sick either because I nip things in the bud like that. And...

Nyssa: Yeah, we can say I think a lot of it comes with the necessity of slowing down to really use these oils in their true capacity. The peppermint for the upset tummy might be a one-shot deal. You take peppermint. You feel better.

But if you've got a systemic thing going on...Or let's say you're working with depression and you're trying to get yourself out of that downward spiral, it's not you put this blend on and you feel better sort of thing. It's about really taking your health in your own hands. As I'm sure you're very familiar with. And so when people do that, the essential oil...

Sylla: The oil's secondary almost.

Nyssa: It's totally secondary. It's really just playing this part in this play of this person taking their life back and taking control of their life.

Sylla: But then we can use that in the other aspect of the psychological. I did a lot of work with children's issue. And that paper's also on our website. It's called the "Psychosocial Aromatherapy Research Project Report." But the point is, not with children, but you can pair any emotional state with a scent.

So, for instance, children learn a word list better with a scent, any scent. And then they're presented with that scent when they have a test. And they're going to do better. Or you have anxiety over something, you pair a relax aid or create a visualization, medication with say jasmine or whatever blend you want. And then you carry that around to prevent a panic attack whenever you feel that anxiousness coming on or pair it with EFT tapping or something like that. So the oils can do tremendous, tremendous things on a psychological level that then transfers into the physiological as you know.

In fact, I just read an APA article that said it had a distinct relationship between people's mood changes and their skin. So dermatologists and

psychologists need to work together. And they need to bring us in because we can handle both, the skin and the mood.

Dr. Zielinski: Well, also, I'll even add one more layer to that. Ever since the mid-20s, the gut-skin-brain connection has been very profound. And so when you guys add irritable bowel, leaky gut syndrome is just rampant right now. And we can start implementing some enteric-coated peppermint and some other aromatherapy to help digestive issues, literally what we could do, I believe we can completely just annihilate autism, ADD, and all these learning disabilities, especially if we get kids on a good diet, right?

Sylla: Yeah. Well, Dr. Amen, he's already proven that in his work. And diet's the most critical thing with the children. But, yeah, we got to get them off the drugs. Twenty years ago, children were not on drugs and then adults, too. Everybody's got ADD or ADHD or whatever.

But there's a lot that could be done in the aromatic realm with children especially because they're a blank tablet. And we could really do a lot with kids in aromas and change their behavior and use it for motivation like we proved in our report paper.

Dr. Zielinski: Well, how about this? Let's end with that because this is such a very important issue right now. And right now, as far as I understand, a recent MIT researcher has just come out in public and said because of this glyphosate-ridden GMO wheat stuff that's just Roundup everywhere, we're looking at 1 in 2 children are going to have autism if we don't stop by 2025. So we're looking at 50 percent of every kid born having autism because we're irrigating our wheat fields with Roundup.

So with that in mind, what recommendations and even give some specifics of oils and some maybe blends people can make themselves, or whatever it might be? What can people do for kids?

Sylla: Well, we recommend...There's no magic bullet. There's no magic bullet

for ADHD. What Trevor and I found in our work is you find the kid's preferred blend. You've got to find what's fixed to the child. So we tested 20 oils, 5 kids or 5 people, comes down to their trial and error, process of elimination. You get their 3 oils. You make that blend. That is their scent. And now children love having their own scent.

And then you teach them how to relax themselves with it. Of course, we want to clean up their diet and everything else, but teaching the kids the skills to calm themselves down is way more important than getting the Roundup out of the environment, in my opinion because...

Nyssa: Because it's something that we can do.

Sylla: And we don't know it's Roundup. And, yeah, it could be everything else that's out there.

Nyssa: And that's almost out of our control. But the way that we interact with our kids, the things that we give our kids, the things that we give ourselves, we have control over that. And that's what I think the natural health movement is really about.

Sylla: And I think the parents have to get themselves healthy first before they can teach the child how to calm themselves down. Children get everything from parents. So when they see you running around crazy and anxious, then they're going to be that way, too. But yet they get punished for it. So children have to learn that it's natural to have emotions. And you're mad, you go punch that punching bag in the back room and come out when you feel better. And use the oil to reward them or give them a bubble bath or a back rub. Children need touch more than anybody.

Nyssa grew up with lavender rubs and lavender baths. And being an only child, we spoiled her, of course. But to this day, that is her thing. She wants a lavender bath when she don't feel good. And it works because she's had it for 30 years.

Nyssa: Well, yeah, I have those memories. That will take me to my mom's massage table.

Sylla: And kids will remember that more than getting on medication or punishing them for being rowdy. Kids just want to be kids. And I hate to blame it on Roundup because it's kids and it's teachers that can't handle rowdy kids. So it's a very multi-faceted problem. But the kids can definitely benefit by the oils, definitely.

Nyssa: And I want to encourage people to see, if they're listening to this, thinking about using essential oils more in their lives in a variety of ways, see the essential oils less as, like she said, a magic bullet and more as a doorway into this whole new way of being and living and know that that journey will continuously unfold and evolve over time. So I think it behooves us all to see ourselves as part of that continuous journey, rather than on the straight line of progression to some specific endpoint.

Dr. Zielinski: That's just fantastic! I see. I have a vision. I have a dream that every classroom has diffusers going around that works with the children that helps even teachers even become more calm because the worst thing in the world you want is an anxious, angry teacher.

And I even see aromatherapy being used at the offices. And, unfortunately, I have a dear friend of ours who was asked by her manager to stop diffusing essential oils because other people just didn't like it. But then again, they were allowed to spray their Armani spray and poison everyone around them. So that's the double standard.

Sylla: People are so afraid of chemicals anymore. And so they do go nuts when you do spray something like that. But a funny thing, when we used to go to conferences and set up a trade show and the person next to us would invariably say, "Oh, my God. That's giving me a headache" and want us to turn off the diffuser. But by the end of the day, they're going, "Wow! I feel so good! Maybe you could give me some of that oil." And we used to say it's

because it cleared them out so they could think straight.

But the other thing, we can't put them in the schools because again just like you said somebody's going to complain. And a child could have an allergy because again, we don't know. But the individual kids and their blends and the teacher could have a sniff in her pocket. Yeah, I'm all for that.

Nyssa: Yeah. And I've really gotten into these little personal aromatherapy inhalers. They look like the Vicks inhaler. And you can get them blank and make them at home. And I think that unless the school is really stuffy, kids could get away with having those. I know actually one of my colleagues, her kid would get really nauseous riding the bus.

Every day she couldn't ride the bus. So we made her a little anti-nausea blend, which I'm pretty sure was ginger and peppermint. And she just had it in a little cotton. We didn't even use the inhaler, just a little cotton ball in the bottle. And she could just be discrete about it. No one had to know that she was smelling something. And it totally took away her nausea.

Sylla: We're going to invent a lip gloss with a sniffy on the end. So you could put your lip gloss on and then flip it over and have a sniff.

Dr. Zieland: That's funny. Some James Bond thing, it'll get through customs, right? It'll get through TSA. You ladies are a hoot. Well, Sylla and Nyssa, just thank you so much for taking the time.

Folks, if you have found this content helpful, remember that you could take it home with you. Just click on the banner beside or below for more details.

And, ladies, I just wanted to give you an opportunity to say goodbye. Bless everyone listening. And then we'll say adieu.

Sylla: Thanks you so much, Eric. You've been a saint in being patient with us and getting this done. And thank you. This has been great fun. I'd love to do it

again.

Nyssa: Yeah, we're so grateful to have this opportunity to share more information because obviously it is our passion. And we're happy to find other like-minded folks out there that also are working hard to get the information out there. So thank you!

Dr. Zielinski: And, everyone, thank you for tuning in to The Essential Oils Revolution. It's just been an honor. And you guys just feel privileged that you are listening to legends in the making. And just wish you all a God bless. And we'll talk to you soon.