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Therapist Magazine

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Foreword

CHP Newsletter Autumn 2020

Well what would have normally been a much-appreciated extra hour in bed with the clocks going back has become an extra hour in 2020 argghh! What a mad, confusing period this has been and quite frankly it has felt as if we have been going round and round in a revolving door! Firstly, we couldn't work, then we could and couldn't and finally we can work. Well, that is only as long as you are a member of a recognised professional association such as Complementary Health Professionals and/or a registrant of CNHC. As you can imagine this has made for a huge amount of admin work for us, both enrolling new members as well as verifying qualifications for CNHC so that therapists can go back to do what they love to do.

The misinformation from people posting bits and pieces of incomplete information that doesn't apply nationwide has caused untold amounts of work, research and stress but thank goodness we all have our therapeutic knowledge and skills to stop us tipping over the edge. The only good thing to come of this all is that we are finally being seen as credible healthcare professionals and are being set apart from a Level 3 beauty qualification. Whilst this year seems to have taken about 2 years to get through with lockdown, we are now hurtling towards Christmas so let's see what Santa has planned for us this year!! We have worked so hard to make sure the information we have given you throughout the last 9 months has been accurate and relevant and I am sure the whole CHP team would like to say a huge THANK YOU especially to Carole Preen who has remained calm, cool and collect (well except for that one day when I am sure I saw smoke coming out of her ears) as she navigated us through the turmoil. She has kept us all updated on social media too as well as all of the updates and the resource pack we have placed

in the CHP member's area of our website for you to access.

We really have been totally committed to bringing you the best service possible as your professional association. We always love connecting with our members but unfortunately this has not been possible as we have had to cancel our annual conference for 2020 and although we had re-scheduled for the end of March 2021 we now think it wise to delay again and hopefully be able to deliver in October 2021, date to be confirmed nearer the time. We had so much positive feedback from 2019 we plan to continue moving forward with that format including the workshops and with the focus being on Mental Health, which has been very much in focus during the pandemic and why our services are so much needed at this time.

Did you know that 2020 has seen 5 years pass since Carole and I took over the running of the association and rebranded its name? How time flies! In that time, we have welcomed over 550 new members to our therapy family and accredited a further 19 course providers (with 4 more in process). So, thank you to everyone for your support over the years. It has been and continues to be a privilege to work with you all and together we are a "Therapy Family" (a term we have used since 1994) to be proud of. We will continue to grow and over the next few years during a major life-changing time in history continue to have a voice within our profession and to keep you informed and updated on whatever comes our way. We are living in interesting times at the moment but unity and integrity will allow us to prosper.

Self-employment Income Support Scheme Grant Extension

Details of this have yet to be published but will be up on the Government's website from 30th November, so make sure you do apply if you are eligible. We will of course put up a reminder on our Facebook and Instagram page as well as in the CHP Facebook Forum.

Final Practical Exams for 2020

Final exams for this academic year have proved to be tricky, but with a little bit of innovation and the power of the internet and video cameras we have been able to successfully complete final practical examinations and have been able to introduce another fleet of therapists into the world. Although the format was very different, we were still able to assess students work and technique and feedback for their portfolio. This has not been without its problems but we have been lucky enough to have exemplary tutors and support from our accredited schools. Congratulations to the newest members of the CHP family.

Awards of Fellowships in 2020

Although we have not been able to have a conference this year, we still felt it important to give recognition to members who have really supported CHP and the profession as a whole. As a result, we have awarded two lifetime Fellowships and are pleased to announce that these have been posthumously presented to Dan Stephens and Susan Findlay who both now use FCHP behind their names. I am sure that you will join me in congratulating them both.

Dan Stephens has been really helpful and has been instrumental in getting CHP on the Reiki Council and sorting out our application to the CNHC so that we can verify Reiki qualifications for their Reiki Register. We wanted to be able to do this service for our members so that you do not have to go elsewhere and pay more money to have your Reiki qualifications assessed.

Susan Findlay has been at the centre of helping to raise the standards for sports massage and soft tissue therapies and we are so happy that she chose us to accredit her school, which includes both the NLSSM and her oncology massage training. Susan also sits on the GCMT and supported our application to re-join the Council (we were last represented on the GCMT in 2007). Susan has also been very supportive of our recent collaboration with Yes to Life Cancer 2020 and wrote an excellent article for the CHP website on oncology massage. Do check it out.



continued...



Upgrade courses

We have now developed an upgrade course for Reiki for CNHC accreditation for anyone who does not meet the CNHC registration requirements. You can find out about this and the other upgrades we offer at <https://www.complementaryhealthprofessionals.co.uk/upgradesandbridging-courses>

We are aware that people would like to upgrade their aromatherapy and reflexology qualifications to level 5 and we are going to be working on that in 2021. For Massage upgrades, we recommend the BTEC level 5 and 6 offered by our accredited schools – NLSSM and Jing Advanced Massage – details found at <https://www.complementaryhealthprofessionals.co.uk/accredited-course-providers>



GCMT Update

Carole Preen has been attending the zoom meetings representing us on the General Council for Soft Tissue Therapies. She took the lead to help develop resources for schools coming out of lockdown back in the summer and attended the recent AGM. It is so important for us and you to have a voice nationally and we are very pleased to also be supporting the GCMT, which has also had its profile raised during the pandemic. One of the statements that is so true when you are a member of a professional association is not just about the benefits you receive from us but also just as importantly, how you are supporting your profession by being a member and allowing us to represent you nationally. We have enjoyed sharing information with other professional associations and by working collaboratively in this way, the whole massage profession benefits as do you who receive the right information.



Reiki Council Update

Dan Stephens, has been representing us on the Reiki Council and has sent in the following report:

First, I would like to thank Carole and Julie for giving me the opportunity to do this! Also, a huge thank you for all their hard work during the lockdowns. They don't let it show but seriously they've been rushed off their feet and haven't complained once. You ladies are awesome!

As for Reiki Council news, we have been working on revamping the old website to make it more up to date and shiny. This is a long process, finding funding and trying to keep everyone happy, but we are getting there.

The Reiki Council has designated groups to work on different things, one of which is the 'Reiki with animals' group. They have done a great job and are bringing out a book on the subject. They have also worked tirelessly on setting up standards for working with animals. The book will be out very soon, as will the standards for working with animals and teaching reiki for animals. This will bring working with animals into line with working on humans, as the National Occupational Standards for this treatment were created with veterinarians to raise the standards for everyone.

There has also been a lot of talk around working through the pandemic and teaching through it too. I got a direct quote from the Reiki Council Vice Chair about online training: Re on-line training – yes this can be done for the theory but the student will still need the practical training and attunements plus the required in-person training hours to be able to progress the verification – as per the Reiki Core Curriculum. So, whilst online attunements are out of the question, being able to get started on theory work with students is certainly a bonus.

If you have any Reiki questions, please feel free to send me an email: dan@complementaryhealthprofessionals.co.uk

Message from our discounted insurance company – Holistic Insurance Services

Here at Holistic Insurance we have been here throughout this awful pandemic to give support as best we can to our policyholders. Hopefully, many of you have been able to work during this second lockdown, to give vital help to those in pain either physically or mentally. We all understand how difficult this year has been for everyone.

We sincerely hope that the Government will not increase Insurance Premium Tax in 2021 and this will enable us to maintain the current rate to CHP members. We have no other intentions to increase any prices in 2021. We thank you for your continued support and send best wishes to you all.

The European Congress for Integrative Medicine

We reported in the last edition of our newsletter how we have secured a discount for CHP members for this event and that it had been postponed until February 2021. We have just received confirmation that they have now postponed it again until 5-7th November 2021 due to the pandemic.

Complementary Therapy Week 2020 and plans for 2021



Complementary Therapy Week 2020 was a completed washout as it occurred straight in the middle of a full lockdown in March. This has

only enflamed our desire to do better in the last week of March 2021 as it gives us time to think up new ideas and ways in which we can raise money for our chosen charity.

Designed not only to celebrate complementary therapies but also to help educate people why they might like to use your services and also to help promote you and your practice, it will also help you meet up with other therapists in your area and network. You can offer special discounts and vouchers to people who attend events during the week. We will be putting together a marketing pack to help everyone, along with the CHP logo. We will probably use our logo with an additional banner and it will also continue to raise our profile as a professional association, which in turn helps you – our members. We are hopeful that we will be able to do a full-on marketing schedule for March, but of course as everything else, this is going to have to be reviewed regularly so watch the website for more information.



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We also hold the largest Accredited Register of complementary healthcare therapists independently approved by the Professional Standards Authority. If you meet our criteria, you'll be listed on it at no additional cost.

Visit fht.org.uk or call us on 023 8062 4350 to find out more and join us today!

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Editor's Letter



Hello again,

Normally, I find my Editor's letter easy to write, but I've started and abandoned this one about a dozen times. One minute, we're getting back to normal and reopening even though some treatments are different. The next, infection rates are climbing and the country is a patchwork of local lockdowns and different regulations. We're heading for another national lockdown and even Christmas is in danger.

Every day, we're bombarded with new figures, studies and statistics about rising unemployment, the numbers of small firms in the hospitality and leisure sectors on the verge of closure, divisive politics and rising global tensions. It's difficult to keep track and easy to feel overwhelmed and afraid.

I'm one of those people who's naturally optimistic, actively enjoys challenges and new situations. Intellectually, figuring all this out is something I should relish, but it's so difficult to find a clear path right now. Do we advise you to raise your prices or keep them the same? Share how to attract the next generation of clients, or explore how to reassure more reluctant client groups that it's safe to return to practice rooms – assuming that whatever regulations are in place this week in your area permit that. We know that there's a huge range of opinions and approaches throughout the industry.

The question is this. As an industry, are we going to be able to be there for the people who need us? Don't think that the health implications of this pandemic are limited to those who have contracted the virus. So many people have put off seeking treatment for other chronic diseases and pain conditions. Others have gained weight which will have a long term impact on their health. So many people have had their mental wellbeing adversely affected and the rise in anxiety and depression rates is genuinely frightening.

They've been telling us that we're all in the same boat, but some of us are better equipped to come through this than others. Some will thrive, adapting easily, while others will muddle through. It's all about how we react to the changing situation, so the more knowledge we have, the better.

Whatever happens next, we're here for you.

Love, Alison and everyone at Holistic Therapist x

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Openers

All the latest news and industry information for the world of holistic therapy...



SOCIAL PRESCRIBING GETS FUNDING BOOST

The National Academy for Social Prescribing (NASP) has been awarded an additional £5 million to help maintain people's health and wellbeing following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding will go towards supporting local community partnerships, encouraging innovation, and improving the evidence base for social prescribing. Minister for Health, Jo Churchill, commented, "As we begin to support the move out of lockdown, social prescribing will be key to tackling health inequalities and helping people recover and rebuild their lives. The funding will help implement a more holistic approach to



health by connecting people to initiatives in their local communities to improve their mental health and wellbeing in response to the impact of COVID-19. This will include green spaces, singing, and physical activities, as well as access to tailored debt advice".

YORKSHIRE CENTRE FOR WELLBEING SCOOPS MAJOR AWARD

Harrogate's Yorkshire Centre for Wellbeing has won an award making it the Wellbeing Centre of the Year. The Centre has been running for 34 years and specialises in Yoga, Pilates, Meditation, Tai Chi

and Ayurvedic Lifestyle and Diet Consultation amongst other holistic therapies. They are also known for their retreats and have, more recently, implemented Zoom classes and created a YouTube channel.

BAD NEWS FOR CRUELTY-FREE COSMETICS

The European Chemicals Agency have ruled that two chemicals used in cosmetics must be tested on animals. Animal testing for cosmetics and their ingredients was prohibited in the UK in 1998.

The ban became EU-wide in 2013 but the European Chemicals Agency, a branch of the EU, now claims that separate regulations on the use of chemicals means substances still must be tested, even if exclusively for cosmetic use, to assess any risks to workers on the production line.

The two chemicals are the ultra-violet filters homosalate and 2-ethylhexyl salicylate, also known as octisalate. Both are have been

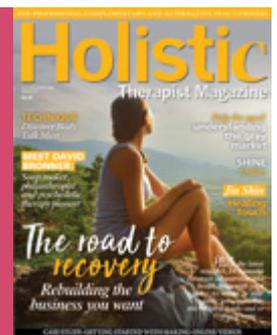


approved for safe use for many years and are widely found in sunscreens, lip balms, moisturisers and many other products including lines produced by the Body Shop and L'Oréal.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals believe that more than 5,500 rats, rabbits and fish are required to be used in new tests. The regulations will apply in the UK during the Brexit transition period, which ends on December 31, after which the Government intends to put in place its own rules.

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TRY THIS... *MAGNESIUM*

Magnesium is an overlooked macro-mineral that's used by the body for a huge range of functions, yet many of us don't get enough to keep us healthy. Adult women should aim for 310mg a day and men around 420mg. Foods high in magnesium include almonds, cashews and spinach.

Magnesium has been shown to help reduce the risk of migraines, chronic diseases including Alzheimer's and Type 2 diabetes as well as strengthening bones and ameliorating PMS and mood

disorders including anxiety and depression.

Consider a high bio-availability supplement or transdermal magnesium in the form of bath salts or lotions.



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MENTAL HEALTH AND OTHER SIDE EFFECTS OF COVID-19

Researchers from Penn State University in America noted a marked rise in depression and anxiety but also discovered that some coping techniques, such as wearing masks and focusing on self-care, were linked with positive mental health.

In another study, a UK poll conducted in June 2020 suggested that 56% of people over the age of 50 said they sometimes or often felt isolated from others, more than double the 27% who felt that way in a similar poll in 2018.

The Office of National Statistics found that depression rates have doubled to 19.2% from the 9.6% level reported in the same quarter of 2019. The rates have trebled in the 16-39 age group and doubled amongst those over 65. Young women were most likely to have developed the symptoms of depression during the pandemic.

Additionally, researchers found that COVID-19 has left many victims of domestic violence facing difficulties feeding their children and accessing services for safe housing, transportation and childcare once they leave shelters. The UK's largest domestic abuse charity, Refuge, has reported a 700% increase in calls to its helpline in a single day, while a separate helpline for perpetrators of domestic abuse seeking help to change their behaviour received 25% more calls after the start of the Covid-19 lockdown.

Looking at side-effects reported by those who contracted the



virus, a preliminary study from South Korea shows 9 out of 10 coronavirus patients reported experiencing at least one side effect of the disease after recovery.

The online survey of 965 recovered COVID-19 patients conducted by the Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency (KDCA) found more than 90 percent of respondents reported experiencing side effects associated with the disease, such as fatigue, loss of sense of taste and smell and psychological effects.

The survey found fatigue was the most common reported side effect, with 26 percent of recovered patients reporting experiencing tiredness, followed by difficulty in concentration. The syndrome has become known as Long COVID, with the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reporting that many of those exposed were left with fatigue, myalgia, fever and the inability to concentrate in addition to inflammation of the heart. The CDC estimates that a third of those with COVID will develop lingering symptoms.

POOLE'S HOLISTIC ZONE CHOSEN AS TRADER OF THE WEEK

Readers of the Bournemouth Echo have voted for a local holistic therapy practice as their Trader of the Week. Owner Julie Miller was praised for her fabulously relaxing treatments and professionalism. Julie's training school and therapy practice specialises in massage and holistic and beauty therapies

using natural, organic and vegan friendly products. This is not the only accolade in Julie's trophy cabinet. She has won several awards in 2020 including Best Massage Therapist and Best in Therapy Education.



SAVANNAH IMPROV TROUPE START ACUPUNCTURE SERVICE

An improvisational comedy group based in Savannah Georgia has opened a community acupuncture clinic. Group member Gabriella Rivera, a Doctor of Acupuncture and Traditional Chinese Medicine explained, "We know that painting, dancing, improvisational comedy are all healing. So, it's not a big stretch.

"Just like being on the stage may be scary for some people at first, acupuncture if you're not familiar with it might seem intimidating. But I just want to encourage people to really come in and explore something new that might be life changing," said

Rivera. "Try something new but also do something for yourself. Take care of yourself. We all need to take care of ourselves right now and each other."

The theatre also offers other health related services and hopes to offer even more in future.



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DIARY DATES



DECEMBER

This month is Decembeard – Beards for Bowel Cancer fundraiser

- 02 – National Grief Awareness Week
- 03 – International Day of Persons with Disabilities
- 14 – Christmas Jumper Day
- 20 – Festival of Winter Walks

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

As most trade shows and major exhibitions have been postponed till 2021, here are a selection of UK Awareness Days which can be used to aid your social media, blogs and marketing activities.

JANUARY

This month's main awareness events include Veganuary, Dry January and Walk Your Dog Month.

- 03 – Festival of Sleep Day
- 11 – Paget's Awareness Day
- 06 – World Religion Day
- 18-24 – Sugar Awareness Week
- 18-24 – Cervical Cancer Week
- 18 – Blue Monday - officially the gloomiest day of the year
- 21 – National Hug Day
- 25 – Burns Night

The mind can calculate, but the spirit yearns, and the heart knows what the heart knows.

- Stephen King -

WORDS OF WISDOM...

Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents, which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.

Horace



UNLOCKING *your* POTENTIAL

Mark Shields on making a mental shift to success...

WHEN you decide to do something for the first time it's natural to have some anxiety. "Will everything be all right, will I perform adequately?" and so forth. When you are your own boss it is exactly the same. It's common to experience a range of emotions, from fear to indecision, to uncertainty and self-doubt. What we need to focus on now is making a mental shift to maximise our full potential. It's all very well having a plan, but how do we attain that mental state that will enable us to take action to achieve the results we need? How do we create and retain a successful practice?

There's an idea making the rounds that 1% of the population control 99% of the wealth. Can this be true? Why are some people so much better at certain things than others? Are people born with super-hero skills, or just born lucky? Why are some practitioners so much more successful than others? Where does their never-ending queue of clients come from?

We all know someone who, whatever they do, it turns to success, money and happiness. They don't seem any different to anyone else, so how do they do it? The answer is they have belief. They truly believe they can achieve fantastic results and success is simply a given. Self-doubt or worry, never enters their mind. Their internal subliminal blueprint exudes confidence and achievement. Failure doesn't exist. We all have the same potential.

It's true there are huge inequalities in this world. Some people are handed opportunities that others can only dream about. Some of us went to university and got a degree, while others left school at 16 without any qualifications. The 1% have massive financial advantages that the rest of us will never enjoy.



Regardless of this, we were all born with the same potential. Confidence and self-belief are at the core of every top performer. They truly believe in themselves, their capabilities and their vision of personal success. To them it's just a matter of time before they get what they want. They think about it every day, visualise themselves in the job they want or driving the car they dream of. The conscious mind convinces the unconscious mind that this is possible over a period of time in such a prolonged and meaningful way that their initial vision becomes a reality.

Achieving unlimited success

How do you get that? The answer is in convincing your conscious mind that you have the ability to achieve your goals. You do this by doing something every day to help you tap into your potential. Daily rituals, visualising your success, positive meditation on your goals and dreams all help. But you must also do at least one thing every day to take you closer to achieving your goals. Accept you can't do it all at once, but as long as you are making progress and your mind-set is shifting, you will get there.

The more you believe, the more resourceful you become, the more action you take and your performance improves. The less you believe, the less action you take, the worse your results and performance get. When your performance drops, the less you believe, the less action you take, and your performance gets even worse. And so it continues, a downward spiral supported by doubt and the self-fulfilling prophecy of, "Oh well, I did say it might never work."

Take yourself mentally back to a time when you achieved tremendous success, a real Wow moment when you felt really good and proud of what you had achieved. Go back to that very moment when you first experienced the sense of total self-belief. Total self-certainty and confidence. You are there. This is the difference in people who succeed and people who fail - that certainty. If you have achieved once, you will achieve again. And it doesn't matter what your achievement was, whether it was "small" and insignificant to others doesn't matter - the important thing is that it was a big success for you. You felt it.

This technique is so simple that people walk right past it. Yet professional sportspeople will pay thousands of pounds to be walked through this exercise. How many famous sportsmen and women can you think of that had it last year but for some reason have lost it now? This is a huge crisis for someone whose livelihood and whole sense of

self demands that stay at the top. When helping these individuals the single best way is to help them replay, remember and re-experience those times when they've been hugely successful. Then they get back in the zone, back into that mental state they experienced when they were at the peak of their powers. With enough practice, they can access those associated feelings of confidence, power and competence whenever they need to.

Take yourself mentally back to a time when you achieved tremendous success, a real Wow moment when you felt really good and proud of what you had achieved.

The Success Cycle

Potential = Action = Results = Belief. And so on. The more you believe, the more you tap into your potential, the more action you take and the results improve. As results improve this reinforces your beliefs and confidence, the more motivated you become, the more action you take and the results continue to improve. And on it goes. This was all brought home to us by my good friend and client Paul McBride, a professional MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) fighter who always seemed to vanish before every fight. When his friends asked him where he disappeared to, he simply replied: "I go somewhere special to train". Three months leading up to a world title fight his whole world would change. His daily routine, training schedule, diet and - most importantly - his mental application

changed dramatically. The secret that eluded his friends and family when they wondered where he disappeared to for three months before every fight was simple. He went somewhere special in his head. In his mind he created this unbeatable, unstoppable fighting machine, which he subsequently became. He achieved this through daily meditation, rituals and exercises. His mental training reinforced his beliefs and confidence and he did become unstoppable. His entire subliminal internal footprint oozed self-belief and confidence. He won the WKA world kickboxing title three years on the trot.

So decide what you want and commit to doing something different every day towards your goal. Work to achieve that peak mental state; enter the zone and see what you are capable of. Think of the unlimited improvement and results you could achieve by implementing this philosophy in your practice and everyday life. ■



MARK SHIELDS is regarded as one of the UK's leading NLP and Coaching experts. Mark is known as the CAM Coach and is the author of a book of the same name. Mark and his team have set up the Life Practice Academy to provide qualifications in Life Practice Transformational Coaching Methodology and proven CAM COACH success in business strategies. Find out more at

www.thecamcoach.com



THE SWEET SMELL OF **SECURITY** *and success*

Elizabeth Ashley shares how using scent can make your clients feel at ease and add to your profits...

MOST holistic therapists understand that they need to put their clients at ease and create an ambience in their practice rooms that fosters a sense of safety and relaxation. That's why so few practice rooms are painted in red or neon shades and why we use warm blankets and heated couches.

Now, thanks to COVID-19, the sumptuous furnishings have been stripped out and visors and masks take their place making it impossible to forget that danger is never too far away. So, how do we ensure our clients feel safe, but also nurtured and cosseted in these challenging times?

I thought I would share some tricks of the aromatic trade to help bring a renewed sense

of security and wellness to your surroundings. Essential oils tap into places of the mind you never even knew existed and bring about a glorious sense of pampered calm.



Aromatherapy 101

Let's start at the basics.

In its classical sense, aromatherapy uses concentrated plant essences to bring

about changes in the emotional, mental and physical bodies. Over time, the term has become somewhat debased to encompass any use of essential oils. Strictly speaking, using them topically is the domain of essential oil therapy.

Aromatherapy is the use of smell alone. With that in mind, one could use chocolate, coffee or flowers in the absence of oils as long as one recognises the medicine derives from the individual's response to smells.



Aromatherapy and the mind

The mind has a unique relationship with fragrance. Molecules enter the body via two routes— up the nose

and to a lesser degree in the air we breathe in through the mouth. These go to different places. The latter heads to the lungs to be defused through the capillaries supplying the lungs and the tiny constituents find their way along the circulatory system, touching all the places that need them (every oil touches a different place) and then they head on up, through the blood to the brain.

By the time these reach the head, loads of work has already been done by those messengers that were inhaled nasally. They, almost instantaneously, reached the olfactory bulb at the back of the nose. This tiny space, approximately the size of a 5p piece, is laden with around 100,000 receptors, each sensing and processing information about the smells it receives. These send information via olfactory neurons to an extremely ancient and primitive part of the brain called the limbic system.

The limbic system also processes thoughts, memories, cognition, pain, hunger, and learning. When the limbic system responds to smell, it triggers myriad psychological processes.

Whilst we can catalogue fragrances by their effects (for example relaxing oils are rose, clary sage, lavender, camomile and Sandalwood), a person's cognition and memories, in particular, will have a bearing on how they receive them.

So, let's put that into context for a moment. Consider Lynda is a 48-year-old menopausal woman who is looking forward to her massage. She is greeted by your lovely carved wood diffuser which has lavender softly evaporating. The fragrance is imperceptibly light, but something about it has her on edge. Perhaps it was the fact her abusive grandmother always wore the fragrance? Not going to relax, is she?

Consider that many of the blends we use in practice are ready mixed. A blend will usually be a combination of three or more oils. Each of those oils is a synergy in its own right, it is made up of roughly a hundred different constituents. In lavender, one of the most effective constituents is linalool, also found in other oils such as sweet

basil. Does it smell like lavender? Nope, and yet the mind recognises that molecule of something that brings danger near.

Remember that the olfactory bulb has those 100,000 receptors, each detecting and sending messages? Now, let's add to that the knowledge that the average nose can discern three million fragrances. It becomes extremely complex.

Rewind then for a second. Imagine then that Lynda's grandmother was her safest place in the world. She misses her laugh, her smile, and her great big cuddles...what will that lavender do then? It's a deliciously plump and nurturing place to lay her head. In this case, lavender becomes wonderful.

Now we start to enter the realms of coaxing the psyche to give up its secrets because, it's very unlikely Lynda can articulate why that scent of lavender does what it does.

It's useful to recognise the key areas of the limbic system that essential oil constituents touch. The amygdala controls fear and what we perceive as dangerous. It's what controls the stress and why smell is one of the main ways we detect danger. We might smell smoke for example.

Scents also often commune with the hypothalamus. This is the agent which decides, based on information the amygdala gives it, whether stress responses should fire.



Creating bespoke diffuser blends for clients

The clever therapist finds ways to tap

into this individuality, by offering the client a scented strip of an oil and asking, "How does that make you feel?" Take time over it. Let them explore where they feel the plant affecting their body. Offer a second and then a third, and work with them to create their own blend.

It's cossetting and incredibly special to discover a blend you have designed yourself. It invokes a profound sense of relaxation that nothing else can achieve. It speaks to a part of the mind that has no form and yet yearns to communicate all day long.

Diffusers are wonderful, but if you can live with an open flame, I would also recommend an evaporator instead. They are subtler and do not need the same safety considerations. Only diffuse for a maximum of 2 hours before taking a half an hour break. Evaporators are gentle enough to forget these restrictions.

The client's own blend is a gorgeous treat for them to take home at the end of the treatment and is a great add on extra for your turnover. If you are not a qualified therapist, ensure you don't suggest any oils for topical use. ■

SOME SUGGESTIONS OF OILS ARE

Uplifting: bergamot, lemon, orange, lemongrass, and melissa

Nurturing: Cedarwood, jasmine and patchouli

If you do feel anxious putting the oils together, why not using my Tongue in The Trees Essential Oil Oracle Cards, designed to bypass the conscious mind and speak directly to the subconscious worries, urges and desires. You can find details of those on my website at

www.thesecrethealer/cards



ELIZABETH ASHLEY is the author of The Secret Healer

series of aromatherapy manuals, and the UK Director for the National Association of Holistic Aromatherapists. You can find out more about her books and courses at

www.thesecrethealer.co.uk

Diversify & CONQUER

With COVID having devastated many holistic therapy practices, now's the time to consider diversifying. Creating additional products and services can help secure your future and provide revenues throughout the year...

DIVERSIFICATION sounds quite scary, like something from the world of international high finance, but really all it means is seeking out and acting upon an additional business opportunity. Many successful holistic therapists already do this by providing services like online coaching or consultations, creating products, writing e-books or offering courses. Often, however, we are so involved in our day to day business and lives that we fail to see opportunities to diversify even when they are right in front of us.

Diversification may provide the opportunity to increase revenues and profitability while making better use of your existing capabilities and resources. It can also be a way of recovering from a slump in business or difficult trading conditions, such as a change in consumer behaviour or forced closure during a pandemic. There's a chance that we may face further lockdowns over the winter months. Diversification gives your business a wider base with several revenue streams, meaning that if one area suffers a downturn, others may make up for it.

Choose a strategy

There are four types of diversification strategy, but only three of these are likely to appeal to holistic therapists as they are more suitable for smaller entities. The fourth, Conglomerate Diversification involves acquiring or setting up a second business unit which is unrelated to your

existing one – such as opening a record shop next door to your existing premises or buying a local cleaning franchise. One example of a conglomerate diversification strategy was when Colgate, the toothpaste company, launched a range of ready meals under their brand in the USA. Although the brand was well known,

and doubtless the company knew a lot about what goes on in people's mouths, American consumers found the idea of eating dinner made by a toothpaste company unappetising and the diversification failed.

Some companies' entire growth history is based on this diversification strategy. Virgin started as a record company, but the group now includes holidays, banking and an airline and even has plans for space travel. Virgin also demonstrate the risks this strategy involves. Do you remember Virgin Brides, or Virgin Cola? While this strategy may well add to your revenues, it will also take more time, money and resources than other forms of diversification.

Horizontal Diversification simply involves offering new products or services that should appeal to your existing customer base. That might involve learning and offering a new type of massage, or a taking courses in a new modality.

Vertical Diversification involves offering products or services which come from further up or down the production cycle. For example,

OPTION	CUSTOMER BASE	PERSONAL INTEREST LEVEL	TECHNOLOGICAL OR OTHER MATERIALS / INFRASTRUCTURE
DISTANCE REIKI	New and Existing customers could be interested 8	7	Skype/Zoom subscription – low cost - 8
ANIMAL REIKI	Some existing clients have horses, but mainly new 6	8	Changes to website, cost of training course 6
ORACLE DECK	Mainly new 6	9 – Keira loves to draw	Would need an e-commerce site 6

an aromatherapist might launch their own label essential oils, or even distil their own oils from home-grown plants. A massage therapist might design, manufacture and market a tool for other bodyworkers or for people to use at home.

Concentric Diversification involves creating new products based on making the most of an existing infrastructure, such as technology and marketing systems. An example, a therapist who already produces e-books may add additional titles, or someone who makes scented candles may create bespoke scented versions for specific events or occasions such as weddings or Christmas.

Whichever diversification strategy appeals to you, creating and successfully marketing a new product or service takes a different skill set from being a therapist, but you can build on your existing knowledge and experience. Choosing the right product or service to diversify into will take a lot of research and some areas have many more barriers to entry than others.

Getting started

The first step in any diversification process is coming up with a viable idea. Try making a list of your skills and abilities and those of anyone close to you who might be able to help out. Brainstorm a list of possible diversifications, divided into products and services. Don't discount any ideas at this stage as you will need to narrow down your choices later.

Narrowing down your choices

Some things on your list may strike you immediately as non-runners. Discard them at this stage, then look more closely at the options that remain. Does one appeal to you significantly more than the others? If so, it may be worth exploring that one first. You are far



likelier to make a success of something which particularly interests you.

If several choices appeal, consider how well they fit with your existing skill base and customer demographic. Naturally, you should do your research and a full business plan, but sometimes a few questions can help you discard some more ideas before you invest a lot of time on the project. You're looking for the diversification that offers the optimal combination of high customer demand, good levels of return on your investment, low initial investment in terms of time, effort and money and a great deal of satisfaction. It must also be something you'd be happy to pursue for years rather than a few weeks.

Let's take an example

Let's consider Keira, who is an experienced holistic therapist. She practices Reiki, Angelic card readings and offers aromatherapy massages. Her list of diversification options includes: Offering distance Reiki, expanding her customer base by taking a course in Animal Reiki, or creating her own deck of oracle cards for sale. She decides to score each option out of 10, with 10 being ideal, for a number of criteria. Using a similar grid can help you narrow your options.

So, Keira has two stronger options. As her circumstances or market conditions change, her options might become more or less attractive over time. Her optimal diversification strategy may involve all three options over time. She could, for example, start by offering distance Reiki, while she looks at the market for and production costs of Oracle Cards while she creates her own unique deck. She could also look for an animal reiki course that starts in a few months and enrol on that. Undertaking a similar evaluation will help you find ways to make your business stronger and more able to weather adversity. ■

TRAINING	COST	POTENTIAL PROFIT	TOTAL
No additional training – 10	6 – would need Facebook or similar ad campaign and changes to website	4 – one to one sessions are time based, therefore can only take a limited number of bookings	42/60
Cost of course, difficulty of getting hands on training 4	4 – would need Facebook or similar ad campaign, training, changes to website	5 – one to one sessions are time based, but fewer specialists	33/60
None – local business support may help 10	4- costs of producing and marketing the decks	8 – low to medium production costs, high margins	43/60



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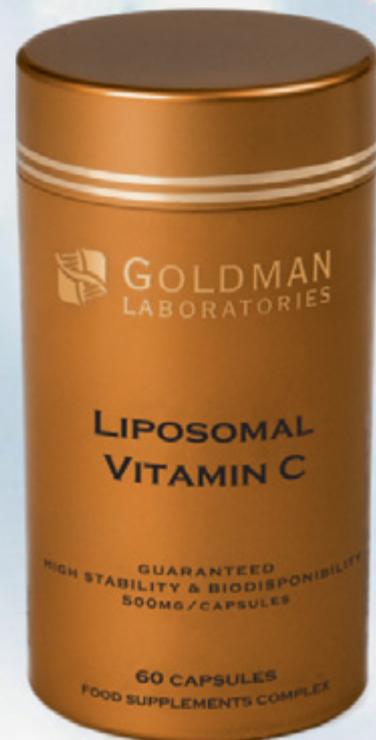


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CASE STUDY

From adversity to diversification

When holistic therapist Kathryn McIntosh couldn't see clients during lockdown, she took the chance to diversify her business by creating her own product line...



I own a re:treat Aberdeenshire, a small business treating private and corporate clients with a variety of massage, reflexology and aromatherapy treatments. I also host events, workshops and collaborations, particularly focused on aromatherapy. I've been a complementary therapist for 15 years.

Even before the pandemic, I was aware of the need to diversify. I couldn't imagine working long days of Deep Tissue Massage all the way to retirement. As well as having a business need for diversification, I wanted to explore new ideas and challenges.

I began making homemade products when studying aromatherapy and began soap making after a backpacking trip. I embraced the need for zero waste products— for our own wellbeing and the wellbeing of the planet.

I've been making Natural Deodorant in my kitchen at home for years, between running my therapies business and having a baby! Friends and family gave great reviews of the Natural Deodorant and were eager to start buying it. The business grew from there. I had the beginnings of a business plan and contacted my local business development organisation for support, then lockdown struck. I couldn't see clients and husband was furloughed, meaning I had the luxury of unlimited childcare – and no more excuses! I decided to push on with

the launch but had to rethink the whole business plan. My original target market was my existing therapy clients – who I wasn't seeing any more! I also had to spend weeks sourcing ingredients and ensuring that there were no issues with supply dues to lockdown. COVID became a huge challenge while trying to plan!

The first products launched online in June. Our Natural Deodorant comes in two varieties - Lavender & Tea Tree and Patchouli & Geranium and a 'Mini Tins' option.

The success of re:treat Apothecary has surpassed all of my expectations! People are so enthusiastic about the products and the ethic of re:treat Apothecary. Sales have been excellent and we are now being stocked in local zero waste shops. As always the best advertising is recommendation, the reviews for the deodorant have been fantastic. I did lots of product testing but it's brilliant to have the general public tell you they love your product – and hearing the Natural Deodorant really works is so important!

Instead of selling a service, I am now selling a product, there is so much learning every day from costings, website analytics, wholesaling, effective marketing – but I am loving the journey.

I am developing my next products right now and can't wait to launch them. I love the creative process as much now as I did 15 years ago and feel privileged to use the power of plants to create beautiful, natural, sustainable products.

There will be a new exciting challenge finding a balance between the apothecary and therapies business going forward, but I am grateful for the time in lockdown to create this new venture.

Diversification means not having all your eggs in one basket. Take the chance to do something you really care about and seek support wherever you can. You will have no idea what you don't know yet, so ask anyone and everyone! ■



You can find out more about Kathryn and her products at www.retreataberdeenshire.com.

IS THE PRICE RIGHT?

Deciding whether to raise your prices is difficult enough in a normal year, but should you raise your prices for 2021 or hold off? The answer may be different for every business...

SETTING the right price for your services is one that most people running time-based businesses find tricky. For some reason, we're willing to accept that a main dealer car mechanic can be charged out at £80 an hour, or that a visit from the boiler repair chap will cost us £60 before he even arrives at our home, yet we consistently base our pricing on covering our overheads and what we decide others would be willing to pay. Weirdly, we tell ourselves that because we are a caring profession, because we have empathy with our clients, often sharing in the most intimate details of their lives, their health and wellbeing, that we cannot charge too much.

In general, we don't think to increase our pricing when our own costs have risen or when we've added to our expertise. Many of us set our prices at the outset of our careers and either hold them until we can no longer afford to do so, or raise them in line with inflation without taking other factors into account.

We benchmark our prices against other local holistic therapists, not realising that they too may be constantly undervaluing themselves, keeping prices low across entire towns or regions. This can easily lead to a situation where the majority of holistic therapists are barely sustaining their businesses.

THE CASE AGAINST RAISING YOUR PRICES

The economy is not in a good place right now. Businesses are closing and current forecasts suggest that there could be as many as 3 million unemployed people by January. Many of these will be in the hospitality and retail sectors. Some leading think tanks are suggesting that it will be very late in 2022 before the economy comes back to pre-pandemic levels and that's without taking into account the uncertain potential impacts of a no-deal Brexit.

It may be that your clientele is likely to be particularly badly affected or that new ways of

delivering services mean that your overheads have reduced. Perhaps most of your income now comes from online sessions or you have renegotiated the lease on your premises so you are now more profitable than previously. Even so, it makes sense to benchmark your prices, consider premium add-ons and carefully review your costs to see if they can be reduced.

THE CASE FOR RAISING YOUR PRICES

The majority of clients are happy to accept a price rise, not least because it is difficult to put a price on many of the intangible aspects of your services which clients particularly value, such

as the improvement to their health and mental or emotional wellbeing. In short, they may value your services more than you do. For many people, particularly those with chronic pain or health issues, their holistic therapy sessions are regarded as essential purchases, not a nice-to-have luxury.

The chances are that the costs of doing business have increased significantly for you. You may have an annual rent rise for your premises, an increase in business rates and increased overheads for utilities and broadband. Factor these costs and others such as additional PPE, increased cleaning and laundry costs, additional



down-time between clients and perhaps being able to see fewer clients due to social distancing restrictions in your workplace or the need to care for children or other family members and you have probably suffered a significant loss of income during the pandemic.

If your costs have risen and you have not been able to replace this through online sessions or switching to a hands-off modality, then you must pass these price rises on to your clients or risk being unable to operate in future. We could be looking at several years of restrictions on working, given the possibilities of local lockdowns, so make sure your business is on a sound financial footing.

You may also want to factor in anticipated rises in both income tax and corporation tax that are may come into force next year, so a single substantial raise may be a better approach than several small rises over the next 12 months.

If your costs have risen and you have not been able to replace this through online sessions or switching to a hands-off modality, then you must pass these price rises on to your clients or risk being unable to operate in future

If your business has been in any way negatively impacted by the pandemic, make sure you have applied for any benefits and mitigation schemes that you are entitled to. Sometimes there are local schemes available for those who do not qualify for UK wide or country-specific relief schemes.

FRAMING YOUR PRICE RAISE

Never attempt to justify or apologise for raising your prices. You have an obligation to yourself to set your prices at a level that allows you to make the level of income you need to sustain your lifestyle and run a profitable business. A failure to do this leads to a situation where you constantly

stress about making ends meet, undermining your own physical health and both your financial and mental wellbeing. Money is held to be the most common reason for the breakup of relationships and one of the most common causes of stress.

We sometimes regard profit as a dirty word, but you need to be profitable to be sustainable. If you set your prices too low, you may find yourself with many clients, but in a situation where you end up working extremely long hours yet making a lot less money. Let's say you charge £20 per hour in an area where the going rate is £30 an hour and it costs £12 per hour to run a holistic therapy business. You may get 60 clients a week while your more expensive competitor only sees 40 clients. Factor in the costs of doing business and you make £8 an hour, compared to her £18 an hour. Overall, you'll make £480 a week after costs, whereas your competitor makes £720 a week and has 20 more hours of spare time. Setting your prices too low can lead to a treadmill of misery where you work more and more hours for diminishing returns without

really realising it. Spend time checking out what others are charging and what it costs you to run your business. Where does the money you charge for each session really go?

If you are nervous about raising your prices, one approach is to raise it for new clients, listing these prices on your website, social media and marketing materials. Existing clients can be informed of the price rise, but given a loyalty discount.

Let's imagine that you currently charge all clients £30 for an hour's treatment, but have decided to raise this to £35. You see 20 clients a week, giving you a gross revenue of £600. If you take on 5 new clients in January, at your new £35 session rate, you will gross an additional £175 for new clients, but also make £30 more from your existing clients, for a 10% discount of £3.50 on the new rate.

It's worth talking to your accountant and doing your research before deciding whether to raise your prices for 2021 or hold them. Either way, your decision should be based on a sound financial basis rather than guessing. ■



Speaking WITH confidence



Lyn Roseaman of Toastmasters International, talks about being a skilful and sincere speaker online and in person...

INCREASINGLY, many holistic therapists find themselves connecting to an audience online, or in a live setting, yet few of us are trained in working with an audience. Many of us find the idea frightening.

To deliver a successful talk, workshop or training session, whether that's online or in person, you need connection, change and confidence. Once you have these, you're well on the way to being a skilful and sincere public speaker.

Creating Connection

If you can't connect with your audience, you might as well be talking to yourself!

Think about how you connect with people socially. You probably smile and make good eye contact. You come across as likeable. What you say is also important and the fastest way to create a connection is to talk about things which you care about and which interest the other person.

As therapists, it is likely that you will have that shared interest with your audience. Unless you are talking to a small group you know well, it is always a good idea to find out as much as you can about your audience in advance. This strengthens your ability to connect with them and influence their thinking and behaviour on their terms. It's about answering their unspoken question: "What's in it for me?"

Knowing your audience will also give you strong pointers about delivery – whether you might need slides and how many, relevant stories you might include, appropriate levels of energy, vocal variety, body language and so on. Body language still applies even if your audience can only see your head and shoulders via a video link.

A message that drives change

Speaking is an opportunity to share your knowledge of holistic therapies and positively impact others.

When preparing a talk, try starting at the end. What do you want your audience to think, feel or do differently after they've heard your talk? What is the one important message you need them to take away? Jot it down in large letters in fewer than ten words and keep it visible. Any content that doesn't support your message doesn't belong in this particular talk.

Developing Confidence

Confidence matters because it is part of your authority and credibility as a speaker.

When audiences sense you're nervous, they will often be more concerned about your wellbeing than about what you're saying. Confidence allows your listeners to relax and engage with what you have to say; your message, not how you're feeling.

For therapists giving talks is a great way to share your knowledge and to promote your services. Confident speakers are frequent speakers, so take every opportunity to speak up, be it to a small group of fellow therapists, in video meetings, or on a Skype call. Get comfortable with speaking and take opportunities to practise different techniques, e.g. voice projection, storytelling, opening a session with impact. Invite people to give you specific feedback on what they liked and any improvements they would welcome to improve their experience.

Speaking styles

Adapt your speaking style to suit different audiences and speaking situations. If your intention is to inspire, you probably need to share your story and invite your audience to adopt your experience and learnings into their own lives. In these situations, slides can be an obstacle and undermine the emotional connection of a story.

If you pitch for training work, you obviously need to demonstrate your competence but also what it will be like to work with you, showing what the relationship would be like.

It's worth looking at speakers with different intentions - the politician campaigning for election, the televangelist soliciting donations or presenters on shopping channels - and exploring their speaking styles. Whatever style you deem appropriate to connect with, and delight, your audience, remaining 'true to you' is crucial.

Being 'true to you'

So how do you remain authentic?

YOU CARE, WE CARE

When you talk about the therapies you care about, your personal passion will shine through. Assuming you've taken care to choose a topic that's relevant to your audience, they will happily connect and engage with you.

Adapt your speaking style to suit different audiences and speaking situations.

WE LOVE A GOOD STORY

Storytelling is part of 'belonging' and also a way of staying together and safe within the group. Storytelling connects us as human beings. Opening a talk with a well-crafted and relevant personal story will captivate an audience. Personal stories are authentic and uniquely yours to tell.

Stories are also memorable and create a far more impact than facts and figures.



YOUR VOICE

Your voice is part of who you are. Your accent is part of your identity. Authenticity is not about trying to hide or change your voice. It's about being proud of your voice and learning how to use it effectively so that you bring both ease of understanding and interest to your listeners. Think about the pace, pitch and volume of your voice and how to project it so that your words are clear, interesting and meaningful. Use pauses for impact or to give your audience time to reflect on what you're saying.

YOUR BODY DOESN'T LIE

If your words don't match your facial expressions or hand gestures, audiences will believe what they see over what they hear:

You can finesse your body language for a presentation or talk. For instance, an excess

of hand gestures and arm waving can become distracting; try dialling it down by letting your hands relax at your side. You want to use gestures and expressions that feel natural and reinforce your words and meaning. Notice your body language in everyday conversation and bring that authenticity to your talks, scaling up or down for the size of your audience and the platform (scale it up for a large conference style, dial it down for a small video meeting).

AUTHENTICITY ADDS ORIGINALITY

We live in a world that values authenticity. We encourage transparency and openness. We want to hear each other's stories and we embrace vulnerability. The bonus of being authentic is that you don't have to work out how to be someone you're not. Furthermore, it often feels as if there is so much information available to

us that it's difficult to come up with something new and interesting

to say. Being authentic in everything you say and do helps you come across as original and unique and congruent with the work you do.

As therapists you have valuable messages to impart. I hope these tips will help build your confidence so you can connect authentically with your audiences large and small. ■



LYN ROSEAMAN, DTM, is

a member of Toastmasters

International, a not-for-profit organisation that has provided communication and leadership skills since 1924 through a worldwide network of clubs. There are more than 400 clubs and 10,000 members in the UK and Ireland. Members follow a structured educational programme to gain skills and confidence in public and impromptu speaking, chairing meetings and time management. To find your nearest club, visit www.toastmasters.org



GEN Z:

A demographic with a different approach

TO HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Research shows that this generation takes a mature view of health and wellbeing despite their youth...

FOR a generation who were born between the mid-1990s and 2010, Generation Z sometimes seem old beyond their time. Unlike previous generations, they are cautious with their money and shy away from overextending themselves with credit cards. They choose their careers thoughtfully, and are keen not to become trapped in debt. Despite being well qualified, they are often stuck in a treadmill of low-wage jobs,

paying high rents in shared accommodation. Many still live in their parental homes, with the average young person in the UK leaving home at 24.5. As a result, adolescence is now considered to end at 34, when just three generations ago, 35 was considered the start of middle age.

McKinsey, the business research company, has identified four core Gen Z behaviours, all anchored in one element: the search for truth. Gen Zers value individual expression and avoid labels.

They believe profoundly in the efficacy of dialogue to solve conflicts and improve the world. Finally, they make decisions and relate to institutions in a highly analytical and pragmatic way.

They also have a different attitude to health and wellbeing than previous generations who have often seen physical health and mental wellbeing as separate. Studies suggest that Gen Z places more emphasis on a whole body/whole mind approach to their own health and wellbeing that sits well with holistic therapy.

Last year, UNiDAYS recently conducted a survey of 12,269 Gen Z students from the U.S., U.K., Australia and New Zealand focused on health and well-being. The findings show that they prioritise health and wellness as a central part of their lives.

72%

SAY MANAGING STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH IS THEIR MOST IMPORTANT HEALTH AND WELLNESS CONCERN.

68%

STATE THAT A WELL-BALANCED DIET IS CRITICAL.

61%

SAY EXERCISE IS A MAJOR CONCERN.

60%

PERCENT BELIEVE GETTING ENOUGH SLEEP IS ANOTHER AREA OF IMPORTANCE.

Winning over the Gen Z client

Collectively Gen Z commands up to \$143 billion in global spending power yet they are far more discriminating than previous consumer groups, seeking out authenticity and placing a high value on products which are ethical and do not harm the planet. They seek a deeper connection with brands and service providers rather than simple consumption.

To connect with this group in the long run, holistic therapists might do well to consider a two-pronged approach:

1. LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT

The key to winning Gen Z will be taking advantage of their views toward overall health and well-being— that mind and body are integrated and working together, not competing.

2. FOCUS ON THEIR IMMEDIATE NEEDS

When crafting campaigns to reach Gen Z, appeal to their time-strapped schedules by helping them understand how making time for one health-and-wellness area (going to the gym for exercise) will benefit another (quality of sleep improves).

They tend to learn about new foods and fitness programs from social media, family and friends rather than through traditional advertising. Essentially, if you are not online, you are not on the radar as far as Gen Z is concerned.

Fitness leads to opportunities for holistic therapists

It's no surprise that this generation, with the constant pressures round being slim and looking good that a world of influencers and constant comparisons with social media feeds in to, that fitness and exercise are important. Many view working out as a priority for their long-term health. 49% said they worked out one to three times a week, with 19% claiming four to five times a week. 43% work out at home rather than in a gym or fitness centre.

Think creatively when engaging Gen Z. They have limited funds, but can become long-term regular clients. They respond well to student discounts or additional perks such as a free herbal tea after treatment or access to add-on treatments at reduced cost. Gen Z connects with service providers that think beyond the bottom line and give back to others, so let them know if part of your profits go to charity, or you are taking part in a fundraising initiative. Similarly, they are often happy to volunteer for free treatments if you are undertaking a training course or introducing a new modality.

Take advantage of social media and technology to provide experiences that incorporate digital and physical components. Live streaming a sound bath or reiki session to connect virtually or invest in spa style interiors that encourage sharing their treatment experience with friends.

Overall, Gen Z men and women use health and fitness apps, but not necessarily for the same reasons. Usage of workout apps by gender is fairly consistent, with 61 percent of women and 62 percent of men saying they use them. Similarly, wearable technology usage is also relatively similar for both women and men, at 26 percent and 30 percent, respectively.

A weighty issue

This is a generation who struggle to maintain a healthy weight, despite high awareness levels of the associated health issues that come with obesity. Nutritional advice and therapy will be a key growth opportunity in the next decade.

52% of Gen Z women use dieting apps versus only 37% of men. 70% of Gen Z women say that eating a balanced diet is a key concern, with 47% also reporting that losing weight is important to them. However, these findings differ from the behaviour of male survey respondents, who score 58% on a balanced diet and just 27% being keen to lose weight.

A way forward

Holistic therapists hoping to attract Gen Z clients should focus on broadening their offerings to appeal to Gen Z's holistic sense of wellness. For example, offering add-on classes such as stress reduction workshops, nutrition counselling or building support communities around wellness, whether on social media or otherwise, could help Gen Z connect with therapists in more meaningful ways.

Alternatively, some holistic therapists may be able to find creative ways to cater to Gen Z's budget-consciousness. For example, live streaming classes or delivering online sessions at a discounted price for students, or reduced prices for treatments at off-peak hours. It may also be possible to design a programme of perks and bonuses when they refer friends.

Don't forget that Gen Z is not entirely dependent on digital experiences, so marketing must bridge both digital and physical realms. Brands need to curate online and offline experiences that are geared toward capturing students' attention.

Word of mouth plays a huge role in marketing to Gen Z in the health and fitness sector, whether it's on social media or simply on the street. By focusing on experiential offerings that cater to the wellness lifestyle, holistic therapists can gain a new generation of clients actively engaging with their services and products. ■



RAISE YOUR GAME

*Being the
best therapist
you can be*

Magda Lorynska explains how making more of your strengths and improving on your weaknesses will make you a better therapist and help your business flourish...

In order to improve, we need to understand what is working in our business and what needs improving. Take an hour when you can be free of distractions and create a simple pros and cons table for your business. Look at your business from the perspective of your client. Start by visiting your website and booking a session. Follow your customer's journey from website visit to confirmation email and follow ups. If you spot anything such as broken links, errors, things that are outdated, difficult to follow or badly positioned or information that is missing, note it and make sure you change them after the exercise is completed. Also check your website stats and see which pages people are visiting most and how this matches up with your services.

Now visit your social media pages. Check interactions that you have had with your clients. Are you happy with how they look? Do you feel that your social media showcases your business well? If not, what could be done to improve it? Again, take time to note what works and what does not. Follow the same strategy when checking your newsletters and your billing information. Which services are most popular? What are you best at? Does your website and marketing material reflect that?

If you are losing business or have local competitors, perform a similar exercise on their websites and social media. Do they seem to have more expertise? Does their site seem livelier or more welcoming? Do they make it easier for new clients to make appointments and feel sure they have made the right choice of therapist? Do they have lots of up to date information and testimonials from their clients?

You cannot improve your business until you know what is not working. Once you have a list of things that work well make sure you allocate time to maintain them. When it comes to the list of things that do not work, create a plan of repairing, replacing, or removing them from your business. Be realistic in the time scale. A broken link on the website can be corrected quickly, while creating a new website or adding new skills will take much longer.

Communication

Sometimes we forget that our clients pay us for results – making them feel, move, or look better and healthier. Make sure that you communicate what is possible to the client well and in a timely manner, which means before they book their next session.

SMART goals really help here. They are specific, measurable, attainable, and accepted by the client and therapist, reasonable, and have a timescale associated with them. In massage therapy, goals go beyond pain reduction or relaxation. Client goals should be specific and should state clients' needs or deficit in their assessment. You can later use this as a baseline to measure the success of the treatments. It is important to let clients know how many sessions they will need to see the benefits and let them know about a future progression plan. For example, you may say to your client that you will require 4 weekly sessions, followed by 2 bi-monthly sessions to achieve a particular goal. This would then be followed by monthly maintenance treatments. This way you are creating a realistic expectation and a plan which your client can agree to or ask for amendments to make it more achievable for them.

Technique

Improving your technique is the quickest way to improve your business, yet there are some relatively easy wins that most bodyworkers could benefit from:

USE YOUR BODY WEIGHT

I often hear from therapists that they cannot do deep tissue work because they are not strong enough. Using your body weight instead of your muscle strength helps even the slightest therapist perform massage deep tissue work more easily

and help sustain a career for longer. Instead of pushing your way through layers of muscles, try dropping your body weight onto your client. This is best used with forearm work. Use this technique to penetrate layers of muscles without it being painful for your client or exhausting for you. Remember that if you are using hands-free techniques, you may need to lower the height of your table.

Once you have a list of things that work well make sure you allocate time to maintain them.



TOOLS

Remember that your hands and thumbs are not the only tool that you have in your tool kit. You can use your fingers to provide finger friction, which provides a nice warm feeling to the client. Your forearm is an amazing tool for working on larger areas, and your elbow (be mindful with it!) for working on particular points. There are also many tools including the Therapist Thumb which can help you get through trigger points work without straining your thumbs.

Consider using your hands for massaging delicate areas e.g. face and use other tools when working with larger body parts.

BODY MECHANICS

As a therapist you are using your body to provide a service for your clients. Make sure that you keep

good body mechanics throughout the day. I like to check my reflection in the picture frames when I am massaging just to check if I am keeping upright. Adopt and maintain a good wide stance which activates your leg and glutes muscles. These are initially challenging but, with time, they do get easier. When you work on different parts of your client's body remember to move your own body instead of staying in one place and just adjusting your back. This way you are keeping your back strength free. Whenever possible keep your chest open and drop your shoulders.

EMPLOY STRETCHING

Stretching your clients before working on their muscles is an amazing way of increasing the benefits of massage without increasing your workload. Since I qualified in table Thai massage, stretches are my new best friend during the treatments. If I have to work on a particularly tight area I always account for a couple of minutes of stretching. Since I started doing this, I have achieved better results and my clients are happy as they are getting a good stretch with their treatment.

BREATHING

Breathing is important to achieve a good level of relaxation. Remind your clients about the importance of gentle, relaxed breathing throughout the treatment.

At the same time, make sure you are breathing regularly and you are keeping your body loose and relaxed. This saves your body energy which means that you can work better for longer.

To raise your game, you need to work on improving your business and your performance. This does not mean that you will need to work harder, but it would help if you could work SMART-er. ■



MAGDALENA LORYNSKA is a therapist and tutor in Cheltenham.

Her passion is helping other therapists to get as much as possible out of their businesses.

If you have any questions related to running a massage therapy business email her at magdalena@wellnessinmotion.co.uk.



WHAT DOES CPD MEAN TO YOU?

Heidi Hinton, FHT Education Executive, explains why CPD has to be more than just ticking the boxes...

CONTINUING professional development is a way of ensuring that you are reaching your full potential, not only within your therapy practice, but in your personal development, too. It is there to help you stay focused on your career progression, to keep your skills and knowledge up to date, and ensure that you are practicing safely at all stages of your career.

KEEPING UP WITH CURRENT PRACTICES

Professional therapists complete CPD to ensure that they are up to date with current practices within their therapy and the industry as a whole. This year has taught us that ways of working can change quickly. As new research and findings are constantly occurring, this may mean that elements of what you were taught within your qualification may have had some changes since. By completing your yearly CPD, you are regularly keeping in touch with your industry and modality.

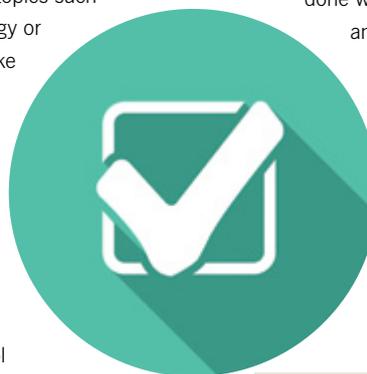
FOR YOUR OWN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Face-to-face training courses are invaluable for acquiring new skills and also a great way to meet new therapists and broaden your horizons. Who knows which doors your newly learnt knowledge or latest network will open? A new course that is slightly out of your comfort zone could give you that inspiration to take your therapy practice to the next level. If you never try, then you never know!

KEEPING THE 'BASICS' REFRESHED

Online CPD courses ensure you keep your basic therapy knowledge refreshed so that you can give the best service and care to your clients. After years of practical experience and work

within a therapy setting, topics such as anatomy and physiology or health and safety may take on a new meaning to you. Your business and marketing skills can always be developed and worked on, and with the social media world constantly changing and evolving, there is always a new tool or trick to help you reach out to your clients. Online training courses, webinars and tutorials will do the trick.



ADDING TO YOUR TREATMENT OFFERING

By completing hands-on training courses, you are continually adding to your skillset and therapy toolkit. Existing clients may benefit from new treatments and experiences and you find yourself with a whole set of additional clients too. In our

exciting and ever-evolving industry, there are always new skills being added to the mix. Make sure you keep an eye on what is out there to get involved in what is new. Building your therapy toolkit will benefit your practice, enhance your knowledge and help you to continue to reach your full potential.

THE OPPORTUNITY TO STEP BACK AND REFLECT

CPD allows a therapist time to step back, reflect and progress. Reflect on what you feel you have done well, what could have gone better and your plans for the future, whether that is in your business or through further training. While you're in the thick of your day-to-day practice, it can sometimes be hard to work out what your next development step should be, if you get the chance. So, take a step back, breathe and focus on your next goal. ■



HEIDI HINTON heads up FHT's education programme and CPD.

The FHT offers a range of membership benefits to holistic therapists and runs the largest independently Accredited Register for complementary healthcare therapists. For more information visit www.fht.org.uk.



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Why Social PROOF could help your practice grow



Ran Janda of Holisticroom.com explains why testimonials and online reviews can help your business gain credibility and clients...

As a child, there's a good chance you were asked, "And if X jumped off a bridge, would you do it too?" Our behaviour is influenced by those around us, particularly online.

This influence is known as social proof and it can be used in a positive way to help build business. We assume that if lots of other people say something is good, or is what we should be doing, then that is the right thing to do. In situations when we are unsure about what choice to make, other people's opinions matter and serve as our guide, even if we don't know them. We've all based a buying choice on the number of five star reviews a product has, or avoided an item with poor reviews and a low rating. In fact, 93% of people say their buying behaviour has been influenced by an online review.

WHY DO YOU NEED SOCIAL PROOF FOR YOUR PRACTICE?

Unless you have thousands of pounds available to invest in ongoing content and search engine optimisation marketing every month, it is getting more difficult to have a strong online presence for small businesses. If you want to rise above the noise and gain greater online visibility, you need strategies that enable you to stand out from the crowd.

To grow your client base, you need to be able to rank highly on search engines when someone is looking for your skills and experience in your local area.

One significant way to getting more social proof that will boost your online visibility is by receiving customer reviews. This will help you rank higher in search engines as well as convince people that you are the practitioner they need to see!

First party reviews, which are also known as testimonials, are reviews which you collect from your clients yourself. These play an important part in determining your credibility in your discipline.

You can display them on your website, and they show your site visitors that you provide a service that others have experienced and enjoyed or benefitted from and they will likely receive similar results.

On the other hand, third party reviews are collected on your behalf on a third-party platform without you having to ask for them. This provides a different kind of perspective. The presence on a third-party platform says something about your practice's reputation in a world outside of your immediate circle. Third-party reviews lend a different type of credibility to your practice in the eyes of clients, mostly because people perceive a third-party review as more objective and less likely to be manipulated. On the downside, it will cost you a monthly fee to use a third party review platform such as TrustPilot and since the format is based on an online questionnaire, there may be little information shown, or the reviews might only be a few words long.

HOW DO YOU GET MORE SOCIAL PROOF?

Ask previous and current clients if they are able to leave a review to be displayed on your website. Ensure that they are aware that the review will be kept anonymous for privacy and will be displayed using just their initials for example. Display first-party reviews as testimonials on your website. Some people have a separate page for this, but it's best to place them on the home page or somewhere they cannot be missed.

It makes sense to ask clients to provide details about exactly what they like about your work. A review that says, "Julie is an excellent therapist with a great selection of massage techniques. Her stress-relieving treatment is so relaxing that I tend

to nod off" is far more useful than one which says, "Every time I see Julie, I fall asleep". It's okay to make a suggestion or two about what your client might comment about in their review, but if a review is going to be persuasive and add to your social proof, it needs to be in their own words.

If you own and use a Facebook business page, you can enable ratings and reviews on your page. This is a great form of user social proof and the higher number of high ratings will also make you more prominent at the top of search engine results and easier to find. Send all clients a follow-up email after an appointment and ask them to like your page and leave a review. Reach out to past clients in the first instance to get the ball rolling.

It's also important to keep your social proof up to date. If you have some great reviews from 2017, but nothing more recent, people may wonder why or even think you've stopped trading. Remember to thank clients who have left a review and consider using your reviews as the basis for a blog or social media posts.

A third-party platform such as Trustpilot can be used to direct clients to after an appointment. You can ask them to leave a review without any further involvement from you. A platform such as Holistic Room provides the same feature, with the addition of a booking system so that clients booking a session with you will automatically be prompted to leave a review with zero involvement from you throughout the process. This option requires the least involvement from you.

BEWARE OF FAKE REVIEWS

Authenticity is at the heart of credibility. There are plenty of people and companies out there

who provide fake reviews and fake followers, so not all social proof is real or valuable. The latest statistics from brightlocal.com suggest that 82% of consumers read a fake review in 2018. Among 18-34-year-old consumers, the proportion is even higher, with 92% saying they've seen a fake review. This drops to 74% of 35-54-year-olds and 59% of over 54s. It may be that older consumers are more trusting.

If you want to rise above the noise and gain greater online visibility, you need strategies that enable you to stand out from the crowd.

54% of consumers would not buy a product if they suspected it to have fake reviews and 30% of us assume online reviews are fake if there are no negative reviews, so getting the right balance is important. Your clients may want to give you a glowing review, but anything that looks too good to be true could put potential clients off.

START NOW

It can be extremely quick and simple to set up and start collecting reviews to improve your social proof and online visibility, and it can go a long way in highlighting your credibility as an industry leader and in informing your clients why they should book with you based on your previous client's praises.

If you're not able to set up reviews on your own website, it is simple to create a business page on Facebook if you don't already have one. You can then start sharing this page with current and prospective clients and start building your social proof in no time at all. ■



RAN JANDA is an acupuncturist, homeopath and founder of

Holistic Room a platform that matches people to the most relevant natural health practitioner to help them achieve their health goals. Find out more at [https://](https://holisticroom.com)

holisticroom.com



Tried and TESTED

HTM's Jason Firmager spent his lockdown trying out some new products...

NORMALLY I spend a couple of hours a day, powerlifting in the gym, so lockdown meant I had to find ways of training at home. As well as some improvised weights made from rubble bags, I chose the UK manufactured weightlifting belt from Modifit, who hand make their belts from top quality French Top grain leather lined with soft Italian Suede.

Available in sizes small to 3XL, it fits waist sizes from 23" to 52", it comes with a chrome lever buckle for a supportive fit that works much better than a standard buckle. It's by far the best weightlifting belt I've ever used and comes with a lifetime warranty. Find it at <https://tinyurl.com/yya66gcl>



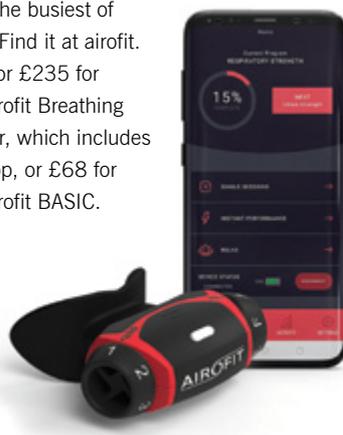
Airofit

Given that COVID-19 causes lung damage, I decided I wanted to make sure mine were functioning well. Airofit produce a neat little device that works with an app to increase breathing efficiency. We don't tend to think of our lungs as muscles, but we know that our performance levels drop when we get out of breath. Our respiratory muscles tire so the rest of

our muscles get less oxygen.

The device provides feedback to the Virtual Breathing Coach in an interactive mobile app, allowing you to train your respiratory strength, vital lung capacity, anaerobic threshold, and other areas of your breathing.

The Airofit is also has tremendous value for those who have asthma or COPD. The training takes just three minutes, so it's easy to fit into even the busiest of days. Find it at airofit.com for £235 for the Airofit Breathing Trainer, which includes the app, or £68 for the Airofit BASIC.



Oliver Peoples Omalley blue light glasses from Opticians Direct

There's a growing body of evidence that suggests that the blue light from computer screens, phones, tablets and TVs has a negative impact on our sleep quality and patterns. I became interested in spectacles which block the blue light that these devices produce, as have many other people. In fact the global market for blue light eyewear is forecast to rise to \$27 million by 2024. I chose frames by Oliver

Peoples and had them fitted with the filtering lenses at online specialists Opticians Direct. Buying online meant they cost about half what I would have paid on the high street. I felt my sleep quality improved and my eyes felt more rested even after using a screen for extended periods. Check out opticiansdirect.co.uk for a huge range of designer brand frames and quality lenses at excellent prices.



Touch Free Sanitiser Station

When the lockdown was lifted, I wanted to start seeing my hypnotherapy clients again in my practice room at home. I have two quite messy small children under the age of five, so anti-viral precautions are important to me. After a bit of research, I found Covid Essential's free-standing sanitiser station.

I liked that it's a touch-free unit which looks good and doesn't take up too much room. There's even a shorter unit for children's environments like nurseries and playgroups. The foot pedal operation isn't silent, but it does deliver a 2ml dose of sanitiser directly to your palm, which is the perfect amount. It holds a litre of gel, so you get 500 applications per bottle. You can also buy 5 litre containers if you're a heavy user. <https://tinyurl.com/y46egja3> for £165.





THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF AROMATHERAPISTS MARKS 35 YEARS

The IFA's Lauren Allen looks back at 35 years of progress...

THIS October, the IFA is celebrating 35 years as a leading membership association for aromatherapists. It's a time which has seen the modality grow from a small band of enthusiasts to a hugely popular form of holistic therapy that is now offered in many hospitals worldwide to aid patients' relaxation as well as health and wellbeing.

The IFA will be recognising the efforts made by dedicated IFA members, staff and volunteers to bring aromatherapy to a wider audience. As founding member Patricia Davis recalled, "It was a time of enthusiasm, excitement, idealism and a sense of pioneering. Before the IFA's inception, aromatherapists had no organisation or representation at all".

When the IFA was established in 1985, aromatherapy was barely known. The IFA championed the profession, promoting the therapeutic value of essential oils in both the media and institutions. The IFA introduced the nationwide Aromatherapy Awareness Week Campaign which continues to run annually in June. Due to increasing numbers of reputable research trials and subsequent media coverage, the public now has greater awareness and confidence in the efficacy of aromatherapy especially in the areas of mental health, back pain, cancer and palliative care.

One of the IFA's most ground-breaking projects started in 1988. The UK wide 'Aromatherapy In Care' project was launched from within the NHS and evolved into a package designed to introduce aromatherapy treatments to the medical profession. IFA volunteers offered free treatments to terminally ill or bed-bound patients. This inspired many nurses and midwives to choose to train in Aromatherapy and, ultimately, led to a range of paid employed Aromatherapy positions within the healthcare sector today.

This year, the IFA was approved as an Accredited Register by the Professional Standards

Authority (PSA) for Health and Social Care. The PSA is an independent body accountable to Parliament and oversees the UK's nine statutory health and care regulatory bodies, including the General Medical Council and Nursing and Midwifery Council. It launched its Accredited Register programme under the Health and Social Care Act 2012, accrediting voluntary registers of professionals working in a variety of health and social care occupations that are not currently statutorily regulated. Patients and GPs need to be assured about the competence of practitioners when choosing the services of a professional Aromatherapist and PSA accreditation of the IFA register provides external assurance that IFA registered Aromatherapists meet that high standard.

As an international body, the IFA is committed to its global responsibilities. IFA aromatherapists have provided assistance during international crises including the Japanese Tsunami of 2011, the 9/11 terrorist attacks and, more recently, during the Coronavirus pandemic. The IFA also provided PPE equipment to enable their members

to work in a safe environment, supporting the wider wellbeing of the populations at large. Annually, the IFA charity donates funds, time and expertise to initiate projects and raise awareness to support those in need. The IFA hold a Guinness World Record for the most amount of hand massages to the elderly. We have a portfolio of over 50 charitable causes.

The IFA are very proud of its achievements over the past 35 years and the loyalty from its members who, in turn, have felt a strong sense of ownership towards their association. Members, volunteers and staff alike look forward to continuing all the best traditions of the IFA and the strong sense of purpose, caring, enthusiasm and commitment, which inspired its establishment. ■



The IFA regulates and accredits standards in aromatherapy for both practitioners and qualification providers.

Discover more at www.ifaroma.org





The great **COVID** Divide

*Reiki and crystal therapy practitioner **Lynsey Hanney** explores the range of viewpoints and business approaches adopted by holistic therapists following government guidance on limiting the spread of COVID-19...*

THE holistic industry has always prided itself on being open-minded to most things. It is a soothing supportive space where people usually enter without fear of judgement. However, recent world events appear to have changed that. A gaping chasm of opinion has formed since the government announced guidelines for preventing the spread of Covid-19.

U-turns on whether mask-wearing reduces the spread of the virus; the mocking and belittling of the wellness industry in parliament; and the stark contrast in the timing of how broadly similar sectors were reopened seems to have irreversibly damaged many people's opinions of those in charge. However, it is not a clear-cut situation. Many in our industry are following the official guidance for returning to work while many are openly challenging it. *We spoke to four holistic workers to find out more.*



Hailey Thomson, an energy healer from Glasgow, has chosen to pivot her business model and concentrate on

building a successful online therapy business instead.

When we first went into lockdown, offering online reiki was just a test. However, I found it was the solution people were looking for to help calm and manage their anxieties. It took off. It has worked so well that it makes sense to stick with offering online sessions. Staying online keeps my client base open and I have clients all over the world as a result.

I have had a few local clients ask when I will start in person again but there are too many restrictions and many of the guidelines just aren't consistent.

I can understand why people question the government and its approach. Guidelines are inconsistent and they don't make sense, there's no further explanation for why certain things are decided upon and, without that clarity, it creates uncertainty and division. I believe we all need to exercise a common-sense approach.

One of the reasons I won't go back to in person, for now, is that I find wearing PPE very impersonal and it creates a barrier of energy between two people. For the client, it must be difficult to relax too. That being said, reiki is about channelling universal energy to the client to rebalance their energies and aid their healing. Nothing should restrict or affect that. For me, reiki is about the person who is receiving it so it should focus on what they are most comfortable with.

I work from home and (at the time of writing) the Scottish Government has issued guidance

that households in our area can't visit another household. If I had gone back to in person treatments, it would have affected my business again. Staying online means I can bypass all of it.

However, I am fully supportive of people going back to work and, if it means it's face to face, then I hope it works for them and allows them to build their businesses back up. I really sympathise with those who don't have an online option.

COVID-19 has definitely divided our industry and our nation as a whole. I feel that we should focus on how we can make it work for our individual businesses and create a higher vibrational frequency rather than adding to the already low-level frequencies that have been created by such a divide. The harmony of the industry depends on the individuals who are within it.



Nicola, a nutritionist from Perthshire, sees clients via Zoom sessions and believes that the current

government advice leads to ill-health.

I'm seeing all my clients via Zoom but, if I were seeing them in person, I would not be wearing PPE. My services are all about strengthening immunity and creating health. I believe over-sanitised, sterilised settings (outwith surgical environments) lead to an erosion of good bacteria, which is essential for a strong immune system and both overall physical and mental health. That doesn't even touch on the psychological and emotional harm being caused.

As far as I can see, all measures and advice given by the government do nothing to promote good health. There has been no advice on how to strengthen immune systems, the importance of vitamin D in warding off colds and viruses, or on how toxic hand sanitisers are.

Holistic treatments are about healing. Nothing the government has advised contributes to creating vibrant health.

For this reason also, as a matter of principle, I'm avoiding businesses who are actively promoting these health-reducing measures. I think people should question the advice given by the government and the fear narrative driven by the media. They should really look carefully at the data, conflicts of interest and the efficacy of the tests.

On top of that, the restrictions imposed on our

industry compared to that of others such as the hospitality sector are unfair and unreasonable. There is no scientific or moral basis for them. The measures are entirely disproportionate to the risk.



Emma Johnston, a yoga instructor from Lanarkshire, is sticking to the government rules for in-person sessions, but still

has some reservations.

I am following all of the guidelines regarding appropriate PPE while working with clients. This means wearing a face covering on entering and leaving the studio or gym, appropriate hand washing and sanitising and social distancing.

I believe it is respectful to clients as their health is paramount. My teaching focuses on honouring the body and that most definitely includes the respiratory system, which is one of the most important practices in yoga (pranayama) and the greatest affected by COVID-19.

From the first mention of classes returning it was made clear in any correspondence I made to clients that guidelines were non-negotiable. Now that standard has been set, they are all content to contribute to our community's wellbeing by wearing face coverings, hand washing, sanitising and following social distancing rules. I do, however, find it affects the quality of the practice as I no longer use hands-on adjustments and rely on vocal cues and clients' observation skills instead.

I think all advice from any individual or collective body should be questioned. Just as I would anticipate my clients questioning me regarding information transferred, I too question if we are enabling collective healing or hindering the process.

If the current treatment does indeed protect us from COVID-19 then I wholeheartedly believe the use of PPE goes hand in hand with the ethos of holistic treatment. However, that has not been positively correlated as of yet.

The use of chemicals in hand washing products and sanitiser are completely anti-holistic and are detrimental to our health, which seems to be a 'small con' that humanity has decided to pay as a whole without truly understanding the implications. I believe the mental health

implications of face coverings and fear culture will not be truly uncovered for many years and has already significantly affected how we interact with one another as individuals and democratic agents.

From this pandemic, and indeed life in general, we must always return to gratitude to fuel our souls. We should celebrate and have consistent gratitude for our remaining independence, our current level of health and the community we have built and continue to build, as these are integral to our holistic nourishment.

Helen Ashcroft, a holistic therapist from Chorley, Lancashire, is not convinced that the UK Government has our best interests at heart.

I question the advice given by the government because it has an agenda that has nothing to do with a virus or our wellbeing.

You just need to listen to the many doctors who are being silenced or threatened with the sack if they speak out. Many of them have posted their truths online and the information has been labelled by "fact-checkers" as false information to try to discredit them. Their videos have been banned by mainstream and social media. Freedom of speech is being taken away. Ask yourself why?

With regards to PPE, I believe many people are following the misinformation churned out by mainstream media and the government. They are acting out of fear. It's my opinion that masks do not stop viruses because the weave of the fabric is much larger than a virus particle. They also inhibit our ability to take in sufficient oxygen whilst forcing us to rebreathe carbon dioxide and any bugs our lungs are trying to expel. The overall

effect is to lower the body's immune system.

I've seen some people feeling compelled to wear PPE because their organisations have said they must. The whole mask-wearing fiasco is not a law, just a mandate. People need to realise this and stand up for their rights.

When giving treatments, I feel comfortable with either face-to-face or distance healing, depending on what the client is comfortable with. I have my own beliefs, but if someone is going to be more relaxed with a distance treatment then I am happy to do that.

Reiki, for example, is supposed to be performed in a calm, nurturing setting, full of love and peace, not with fear. Fear completely brings in the wrong energies and intentions. There's not much point in someone going for a hands-on treatment and being tense throughout.

I respect that other people are on their own path but, unfortunately, I'm not sure if harmony can be brought about in our industry as there are such strongly opposing views.

With livelihoods at risk, it is always going to be an emotive subject. However, it seems that until the government gives clearer guidance and evidence, the chasm of opinion in our sector will remain. ■



LYNSEY HANNEY is a writer, crystal and reiki practitioner

based in Lanarkshire, Scotland. You can find out more about her online reiki sessions and other treatments at www.nibbledapple.com



FOR PROFESSIONAL COMPLEMENTARY AND ALTERNATIVE PRACTITIONERS

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IS INSTAGRAM FOR YOU?

*Leading social media expert **Unsa Malik** looks at whether Instagram could be just the tool you need to help build your business...*

IF you own an Instagram account, the chances of you taking a dozen more endless scrolls these days are high. You've probably run out of patience for Instagram Lives, you can accurately predict what your timeline will look like before you've even clicked the app — and there aren't any new notifications because it's only been a couple of hours tops since you last checked.

All too often, people ask me whether it's worth buckling down on Instagram right now because they fear they've either 'missed the boat', are up against far too much competition, or can't find how their specific brand or niche will fit on the platform. 99.9% of the time my answer remains the same. Providing you're

strategic and focus on growth metrics instead of vanity, there's space for you on Instagram as much as there's space for anyone else. Instagram isn't just for vacuous influencers with a photographer and Photoshop expert on 24 hour call. Real people can use it to build business.

In fact, there's even more leverage for those who consider themselves healers or a positive impact in any capacity at this moment in time. We're living through a pandemic where the widespread of bad and sad news has amped up online, and the general social media user is now actively attempting to make their experience of content consumption less draining.

In this article, we'll go through the top

rules to growing authentically long-term as a holistic healer on Instagram to gain brand recognition, attract potential clients and for those of you who sell products, convert followers into customers. My methods aren't an 'overnight hack' and nor do they require you to use inauthentic means such as engagement pods or buying likes and followers. These never work in the long run and tend to harm your brand more than help it to grow, but if you remain consistent and open to being flexible with your strategy, growth *will* occur.

Finding your niche and community

The first rule that'll remain for as long as social media exists, irrespective of the platform, is that your audience is the most important stakeholder for your business. Every piece of content you upload should be for the specific person you want to attract within the holistic healers' niche.



Before you even go on to create the picture or video, ask yourself whether someone in your target demographic will engage with it in the first place. This is what I call the 'Attraction Phase', part of my self-developed Attention Loop. For example, if you aim to attract females who are within the 30-40 years old age bracket who are on a budget, a scroll through your feed should be evidence for just that. Think about your tone of voice, how you structure your sentences and how you edit your pictures and videos. Once you have enough content on your feed which represents your target audience, start building conversations with others who are doing the same. This is how you begin to develop a community and become a part of the conversations happening within your niche. Engage with their content, follow them, leave comments and reply to their stories. If you follow through with the 'Attraction Phase' correctly, chances are they will follow you back and engage in return. A good tip for finding these accounts is to search the #holistichealers, #holistictherapists, or look for hashtags that represent your modality, such as #energyhealing, #reiki, #CBD, or #tuina and also the more niche hashtags such as #holistichealersofinstagram.

Building your brand and reputation

The first step most people take is the wrong step. That is, to attempt to copy and paste another brand or personality because it seems to be working for them. Keep the comparisons away and use your Unique Selling Point (USP) as the basis for your content. Think: Why should people follow you instead of X, Y and Z? What do you offer which others don't? What makes you special and gives you a competitive edge? All of these factors will contribute to your brand and eventually create a clean reputation with the strong rapport between

yourself, your followers and customers/clients. If you can't answer those questions, get to the drawing board and have a brainstorm session. The biggest deterrents for potential followers, clients or customers is boredom and confusion. They don't want what they can already easily find elsewhere and the second you confuse them, they'll click away. Plus, you'll realise how much easier it is to create content once you know what your special offering is.

Once you have enough content on your feed which represents your target audience, start building conversations with others who are doing the same

Keeping it real and clean

It's true. Instagram is full of over-photoshopped images, but if current trends are anything to go by, users are craving authenticity and slowly turning away from content which can be perceived as 'deceiving' or 'shallow'. They want honesty and a little bit of that vulnerability. Don't be afraid to share personal anecdotes or make yourself seen as more of a human in a superficial world. It'll attract the right followers, customers and clients for all the good reasons.

Content for success and conversion

Most generic articles will tell you to consider the aesthetics of your posts — how 'pretty' or 'cool' your feed looks to a social media user as you scroll down. I tell people to work on the context of the content first. There's no point uploading a

bunch of nice-looking images if it doesn't teach your target demographic anything about your brand. If you want people to follow you for your services or products genuinely, aim to educate them about your brand through what your content shows. Educational and informative content is an all-rounder for every niche but incredibly useful in the holistic healing area because it goes hand-in-hand with what you do in the first place by helping your clients/customers. I strongly recommend giving away free content and going above and beyond with what you share to stand out. Don't worry about giving away 'too much'. People will pay the price once they see the value you are willing to share for free. Allow followers to feel welcome and show how useful you really are. This, in turn, will build trust and turn those followers into loyal customers/clients who will recommend you to others.



Always remember is that likes and followers (the 'vanity metrics') don't necessarily equate to success. There are people with 1000 followers making £10,000+ a month and proven stories of people with 1M followers failing to sell 25 t-shirts.

Building your Instagram content based on these ideas makes success much more likely. Be true to yourself and your brand and you can't go far wrong. ■

i UNSAH MALIK is a leading social media and influencer expert. She is the author of best-selling e-book Slashed It, which is available from www.slashedit.co.uk/ultimate-ebook

WHY YOU SHOULD SWITCH YOUR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP TO COMPLEMENTARY HEALTH PROFESSIONALS



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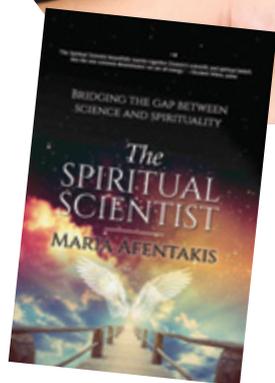
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JOURNEYS:

Maria Afentakis

Every day, I set aside at least two hours for spiritual practice.

Maria Afentakis combines her work as a research scientist with her spiritual and psychic calling to bridge the gap between spirituality and science...



AFTER university, where I gained a BSc in Biochemistry and an MSc in Neuroscience, I worked in cancer research at the Royal Marsden

Hospital for 10 years, managing clinical trials. I also investigated individualised treatments for patients with breast cancer, based on the histology and genetics of tumours and was lead author on published research papers. In short, I'm not the sort of person you'd expect to be blessed with spiritual gifts!

I work as a reiki practitioner for animals and humans and as a psychic channelling the divine realm of angelic beings and elemental beings.

Although I come from a line of spiritual psychics, I only became aware of my abilities as a teenager. My grandmother died and for about six months afterwards, I could sense her energy around my bed and smell her favourite rose scent. My mum often had psychic evenings with her friends using tarot cards and a crystal ball. She bought me my first angel card deck.

At work, I'd hide my spiritual side. My colleagues couldn't understand the idea of logic and science integrated with intuition and creativity. Sometimes it

felt like I was leading two lives; during the day I was working as a scientist and then I'd practice my spiritual work and write my book, *The Spiritual Scientist*.

Every day, I set aside at least two hours for spiritual practice. This includes a guided or a silent meditation just listening to my breathing and heartbeat. I like to use crystals and essential oil aura sprays that I make to enhance my connection to the four elements and I practice Reiki techniques on myself to help me balance my energetic aura and chakra system. I find saying positive affirmations are very helpful in increasing my vibrational frequency and to promote calmness.

My passion now is to educate others by giving them the basic scientific background to understand energy and their body and how to incorporate spiritual practices into their everyday lives to bring balance, relaxation and happiness. My book contains very scientific chapters which include energy, the human body and the brain and interlinking these with the spiritual counterparts for example; energy and energetic aura, the human body and the chakra system and the brain and mindfulness. The chapters on crystals and essential oils both have a scientific element in them.

I hope to help readers to understand and use this connection in their everyday lives to have balance, happiness and relaxation. I'm developing an online course, workshops and an oracle deck to go with the book. I'm also planning a second book on animal healing and communication.

I think it's vital to be true to yourself and be who you want to be no matter what others think of you! Pursue your dreams and aspirations and be kind and loving to yourself. Life is hard at times, so do things that make you feel happy and experience joy. If you feel sad or depressed, do something you love. Watch your favourite movie or read your favourite book. Remember, energy cannot be made or destroyed, only transformed! ■



You can find out more about Maria's work at www.mariaafentakis.com

Or buy her book, *The Spiritual Scientist* from Amazon or by ordering via your local bookshop.

OOHHH! THAT'S NEW!

Because sometimes we all need a bit of a treat...



▲ Nereus London Australian Buddha Wood Shampoo and Conditioner

Nereus London have introduced a new shampoo and conditioner that combines impeccable eco-credentials with an amazing smell and great results. The products are vegan, free of parabens, silicones, gluten and SLS and come in recyclable aluminium cans. This makes getting the last of the rich conditioner out of the bottle a bit trick, so store it upside down.

Buddha Wood is a native Australian figwort tree, rather like sandalwood, which has a long history of being used by the Aboriginal peoples for its antibacterial properties. The products are also scented with bergamot and will leave hair feeling good and looking great. £25 each from nereus.uk



▶ Podberry pea snacks

Podberry pea snacks are 100% natural, crunchy, vegan snacks made from freeze-dried seasoned peas grown on a farm in Perthshire. This means they are high in protein, low in fat, gluten-free and even count as one of your five a day! Podberry pea snacks come in a range of flavours including sweet chilli, balsamic vinegar and sea salt, parmesan and truffle and even a vegan ham hock version. You can find them at Lidl and health food shops or order them direct from eatpodberry.co.uk

▼ Roll Me Open

Roll Me Open is a wooden massage tool that's very appealing to touch and look at just as an object in its own right. It's also a new spinal massage tool designed specifically for deep self-massage, though many body workers may find it useful in the practice room if they are looking for a less hands-on approach.

It's particularly helpful for lower back issues, providing both pain relief and helping relieve tension due to stress and bad posture. It's simple to use and the website has a useful instructional video.

rollmeopen.com



▼ Sensory Retreats Home Spa Treat Box

If you're in need of a little pampering, this treat box from Sensory Retreats may be just the thing. You'll find their single use Divine Eyes heated eye mask, a rose quartz crystal to place over your heart, a link to their Divine Escape Crystal Singing Bowl Music download, a 10ml rollerball filled with Sensory Retreats' Restore essential oil blend and five Camellia Tea House Green Mint Tea bags for after your relaxation time out. Everything you need for a spa treat apart from a holistic therapist! Find it at sensoryretreats.com for £25

▲ Goat Yoga Party Game

Now that Goat Yoga is a thing, Firebox.com have a version that means there's no danger of getting goat pee all over your back. This game is a fun way to get the whole family trying out the Downward Dog or the Archer without realising it's good for them. It's not always easy to balance the inflatable goat as you perform the pose on the cards, but it'll also give you an additional work out, laughing till your sides hurt. £25.99.



PolarAid:

UNDERSTANDING THE BODY ELECTRIC

Each living thing on the planet has a bioelectric field.

ELECTRICAL impulses form thoughts in our brains. Indeed, our entire nervous system is based on transmitting and receiving electrical impulses. Our pituitary and pineal gland – the Third Eye in traditional Eastern forms of spiritual development – both play a role in our ability to experience electromagnetic phenomena.

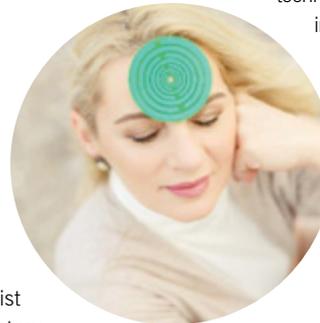
It's possible that external electromagnetic sources can negatively impact on our own electromagnetic fields, much like a magnet distorting iron filings away from their original pattern. We know that some of the functions that are regulated by the pineal gland, particularly our circadian rhythms, can be disrupted by both natural and man-made electromagnetic fields. The pituitary gland acts much like the control unit for a host of hormone-producing organs, including the thyroid, adrenal glands, ovaries and testes.

In turn, the pituitary gland is controlled by the hypothalamus, which plays a part in temperature regulation, food intake, thirst and water intake, sleep and wake patterns, emotional behaviour and memory.

The level of man-made electromagnetic radiation that surrounds us has grown exponentially since the first electric powered street lighting was installed in the UK almost 140 years ago. Just as we now recognise that some other forms of pollution can have an unexpected adverse effect on health, such as dementia risks being higher in areas with more noise, many researchers are becoming increasingly concerned about the impact of man-made electromagnetic radiation on health and wellbeing. Obviously, some people are more affected by disturbances to their bio-electric fields than others.

It's an area of research that stretches back

to the 1930s when scientific pioneers Georges Lakhovsky and Nikola Tesla were using electromagnetism to address certain medical issues. Their technology is the inspiration for PolarAid, the handheld device designed for home use which was created by Dino Tomic, a gynaecological specialist who wanted to offer complementary treatment plans to his patients. Searching for integrative ways of supporting human health, he completed training in quantum medicine, acupuncture, homeopathy, magnetic resonance therapy, energy methods such as Reiki, and some consciousness-based technologies. "I used the most modern diagnostic and therapeutic devices, which exceed today's medicine by light years," he explained.



"Lakhovsky and Tesla achieved amazing results using high-frequency oscillators and vortex antennas on a large number of patients with a variety of health problems, as well as cosmetic issues such as facial imperfections," Dino explained. "I was fascinated by this story, so along with a few of my fellow doctors and engineers, I managed to procure and recreate the most of the equipment and devices Lakhovsky and Tesla once used. We found that we could support our patients with problems they had struggled with for years."

The outcome of this work was the creation of the PolarAid, a device based on Lakhovsky's antenna. It strengthens the body's bioenergetics field, making it less sensitive to external electromagnetic radiation. "I wanted to find a way to bring this

technology to people so they could use it

in their own homes. While the small polarisation disc has no electrical power supply, many users report that it achieves fantastic results for myriad issues, including sleep problems, gynaecological issues, chronic fatigue, digestive issues, joint pain, haemorrhoids, hormonal imbalances and prostate issues".

"I realised that without a single day of training, anyone could use a PolarAid disc at home as an energy support tool to stimulate body's self-regulating mechanisms for self-healing." ■



For more information, please visit

📍 PolarAidHealth.com.

Global REIKI Survey

The Reiki Centre recently undertook a global survey of reiki users. The results make interesting reading for all Holistic Therapists. Elaine Hamilton Grundy shares some insights...

DURING lockdown, The Reiki Centre surveyed 1288 Reiki users in 68 countries, with three quarters of the respondents being from the USA, UK, India, Singapore and Canada. 83% of respondents were female and 78% were between 41 and 70 years old. Reiki teachers made up a quarter of those surveyed, with 36% professional Reiki healers. While not wholly representative of the global population of Reiki users, it is believed to be the biggest survey of its kind, providing quantitative and qualitative data about the benefits users report.

One of the most striking survey results showed that the respondents were very experienced and had a high level of Reiki education. 72% of those surveyed had either a Level 3 qualification or were Reiki Masters. Almost half had seven or more years' experience, suggesting that the path takes considerable dedication. This is borne out by the majority of practitioners applying self-Reiki at least once a week, with over three quarters practicing for over an hour each week.



Trends in Reiki education

There has been a proliferation of styles of Reiki over the past decade as well as the growing

online availability of Reiki classes.

53% of respondents reported Usui Shiki Ryoho, 10% reported the newer Japanese lineage styles, and 29% reported Usui Reiki Ryoho Gakkai. 15% were unsure and 20% reported other styles. This seems to be down to some confusion over names and the differences between different schools.

Those with more experience and higher levels of qualification were more likely to have trained under several teachers, in order to broaden their knowledge, to move to a teacher or Reiki style that they felt more connected with, or because of circumstances/location/availability.

Overall 11% of respondents trained online, but this appears to be trending over time. 34% of respondents with less than a year of Reiki experience chose online learning, perhaps because of COVID-19 and the lack of availability of face to face alternatives. Those who trained online were more likely to combine Reiki 1 and 2 in the same training (30% as opposed to 10% of face to face trained respondents).

Online courses were longer than face to face training at levels 1-3, but shorter at Reiki Master level. Reiki Masters who taught professionally were much more likely to have trained face to face.

The most common length for training courses was one or two days for Reiki Level 1 and 2, with a much wider range of hours for Reiki 3 and Master. This appears to be trending towards shorter hours; respondents with less than three years' experience are more likely to take up shorter

courses. This may have wider implications for those offering courses in other modalities

Online versus face to face delivery methods do not significantly differ in the results reported in terms of the benefits received by practitioners.



Client support

The vast majority of Reiki teachers provided support for their students after class with only 14% having no further

interaction. The most common forms of support were social media (71%), email or phone support when required (56%) and gatherings (both face to face (52%) and online (34%)). This support is also seen to have a positive impact on results, respondents with ongoing interactions with their teacher reported more significant benefits than those with no further teacher interactions.



Benefits of Reiki

91% of respondents reported an improvement in overall wellness since beginning their Reiki practice, 92% reported increased feelings of peace,

87% reported more contentment, and 85% less stress. All these measures are several percentage points higher than a similar survey conducted in 2010. Considering these questionnaires were filled out during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic is extraordinary, and a testament to the resilience and benefits of a Reiki self-practice.

The most significant benefits are seen around measures of mental/emotional well-being, 87% reported less anger, 86% less anxiety and worry, and 84% more happiness. The thousands of personal stories shared in this survey support this with anecdotal evidence of personal empowerment, life balance and transformation. Reiki has been life-changing for so many of the respondents.

One of the most striking survey results showed that the respondents were very experienced and had a high level of Reiki education. 72% of those surveyed had either a Level 3 qualification or were Reiki Masters.

The breadth of improvements reported with Reiki is what is impressive. Reiki affects all areas of wellness including physical illness and pain. 80% of respondents found they suffered from less colds/flu, 72% saw improvements in headaches/migraines and 69% in muscle cramp/pain. 66% reported improved sleep. As a simple method for self-help, the results indicate a huge variety of applications.



Key success criteria for utilising Reiki

The number of hours per week a respondent does their self-practice

provides a strong direct correlation with the level of significant results they see. However, 82% of all Respondents who do less than an hour of Reiki per week still report improvement, so the difference is in the level of significant improvement. Reiki practice at any level will give results, but for those looking for significant improvements, the more the better.

Those who do four or more hours a week achieved significant results immediately and then continue to improve over time. Those doing less hours achieve less significant results even after ten years of practice as compared with a "Heavy" user after one year. This points to the importance of encouraging a regular and ongoing weekly self-practice. Even half an hour

per day would yield significant and fast results.

Continuing support after class plays a part in respondents reported success with Reiki. As a Reiki teacher this would suggest building in a support system is advantageous to students, and as a student it would suggest that seeking an ongoing Reiki community helps to increase results. It could be hypothesised that a feeling of community helps to encourage a regular Reiki self-practice and feeling of well-being. This slight advantage is seen across all the wellbeing measures of physical, mental and emotional improvements.



Finding your own path in Reiki

There is no 'right' way of learning Reiki apart from the one that will

encourage you the most and set you up for a life-long self-practice. Think about what will best suit your own learning style and how you would want to be supported afterwards. A smaller more intimate face to face group in your hometown may be perfect for you if you are not comfortable online. But if you are ready to launch into the online world then an international teacher with a wider experience and breadth of knowledge may attract you more. Coming into your own truth and your own preference is what the practice of Reiki invites in everyone, and it is wonderful to have it confirmed empirically through the feedback of 1,288 people. ■



ELAINE HAMILTON GRUNDY has been a

Reiki teacher for 25 years. She has a background in corporate market research. Elaine founded the Reiki Centre in 2007 and has since trained thousands of people in the gentle and effective art of Reiki. She has also written two books on Reiki. Find out more about Elaine and her work, or read the entire survey at www.reiki-centre.com



ARE WE FORGETTING SELENIUM?

Pharma Nord's Frankie Brogan explains why so many people are missing out on this essential mineral...

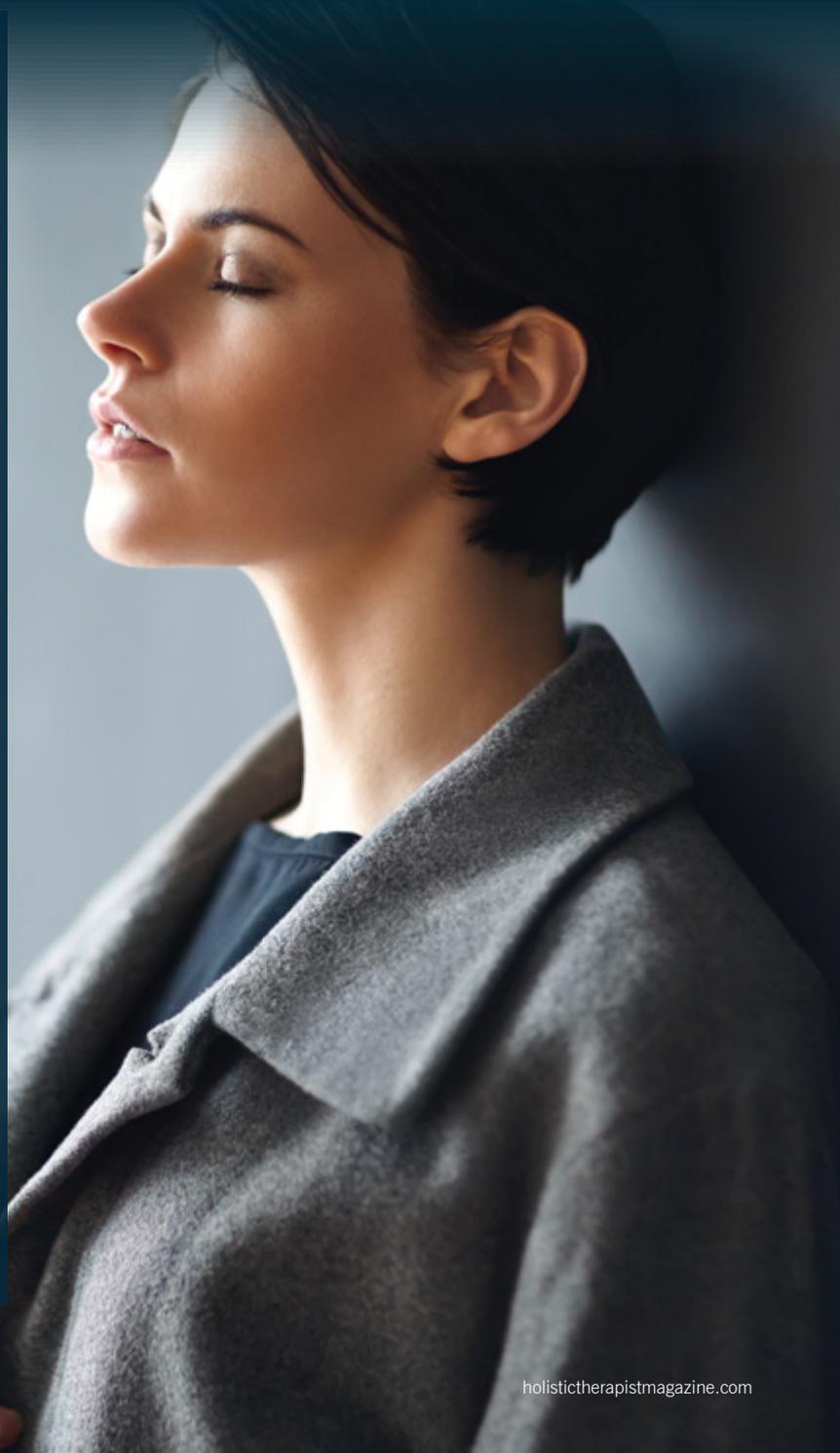
THE great expectation when it comes to food is that if we eat a virtuous, healthy diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables, wholegrains and good fats, that's all we need. In truth, even with a virtuous diet, there are some nutrients we'll probably still lack. We know this in the case of vitamin D, but what's less discussed is the immunity supporting trace element, selenium. In fact, selenium's impact on our immune system is so profound that selenium supplements are being introduced as part of immunity protocols within the UK and Europe.

Why is there a selenium issue?

Selenium enters the food chain via the soil, making selenium content in agricultural land an important factor in our own selenium intakes. Selenium can be found in grains, red meat and dairy products. In low-selenium soil, the crops that grow there and livestock that graze there will also be low in selenium, contributing to low selenium status of the local population.

Selenium levels in the soil naturally vary between countries and even continents. Areas such as Japan and parts of the USA have high levels of selenium, while Europe and the UK are generally selenium-poor. Research shows these levels are dropping further with climate change and agricultural practices being cited as contributors.

UK statistics suggests that our selenium intakes are significantly low, with 50.3% of women and 25.8% of men consuming less than the lower reference nutrient intake (LRNI). This level is widely considered inadequate for good health.



Additional studies show that vegetarians and vegans are even more likely to be deficient in this essential nutrient.

How does selenium work in the body?

Once absorbed, the body utilises selenium to produce selenoproteins. These selenium-dependant compounds are important for a wide range of functions in the human body including immunity, thyroid function and even healthy hair and nails. The selenoprotein glutathione peroxidase, is responsible for production of the most important antioxidant available to the human body, glutathione.



Selenium's antiviral capacity

During a viral infection, selenium depletion occurs, even though the body requires it more than ever. Viruses produce reactive particles known as reactive oxygen species (ROS) when they infect the body. ROS, in excess, cause oxidative damage to our cells. Recent research also shows that these ROS can speed up viral reproduction and reduce the body's immune response. Fortunately, they can be neutralised by adequate glutathione, decreasing cellular damage and improving the immune response.

In a study published in *Advances in Nutrition*, selenium supplements were shown to improve immune responses in the case of various virus types including Influenza type A, poliovirus and hepatitis C. In a separate trial, poultry supplemented with selenium-containing yeast were shown to have improved antiviral defences and be more resistant to avian influenza (H9N2). The authors of these studies suggested that selenium supplements have a place in the therapy of viral infections, alongside traditional treatments.

Selenium and covid-19

Selenium's immune supporting potential has even been associated with the current covid-19

pandemic. In the recent review published in *Frontiers In Nutrition*, the authors outline the rationale for selenium supplement use in those considered high risk of covid-19, especially the elderly.

In a separate study, a dramatic link was made with selenium status and covid-19 outcomes. The study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* discussed how there was a significant link in selenium status and covid-19 cure rate (in this context, 'cure' refers to being free of symptoms consistent with SARS-CoV-2 infections).

The main mechanisms put forward for selenium's immune support function include the protection of cells from oxidative stress during infections. Authors of these studies also proposed

that selenium supplementation offers a low risk, easily accessible option for immune support.

Other benefits in research

Cardiovascular disease – Featured in the trial 'KiSel-10', selenium supplements (combined with coenzyme Q10), have been associated with the reduction of major adverse cardiovascular events (such as heart attacks) by 54% and reductions in levels of NT-proBNP - a peptide used to predict heart stress and heart failure. This indicates that when combined with Q10, selenium supplements may help support heart function and reduce risk of cardiovascular related mortality.

Thyroid function – Selenium contributes to normal thyroid function and this is primarily due to two selenoproteins: glutathione peroxidase (and subsequently, glutathione) and iodothyronine deiodinase. The thyroid gland is the primary mediator of endocrine activity in the body and is actually the most selenium rich component of the body. In the process of hormone production, the thyroid gland produces a high level of ROS. To limit oxidative stress and damage to the thyroid, glutathione is present to

neutralise this free radical activity.

The thyroid produces thyroxine (T4) which converts to the more active triiodothyronine (T3) form. Iodothyronine deiodinase is needed for this conversion, a lack of which may result in thyroid dysfunction with symptoms such as tiredness, depression and weight gain.

Fertility & Pregnancy – Selenium contributes to normal spermatogenesis, supporting sperm production and male fertility. In a 2009 study, men receiving 20µg of selenium daily had significantly increased total sperm counts and motility compared to those taking a placebo. Studies also show that selenium may decrease symptoms of postpartum depression, and a particular study (known as SPRINT) conducted in the UK showed that SelenoPrecise reduced the risk of pre-eclampsia, a dangerous condition that can cause raised blood pressure and seizures in pregnancy.

Selenium-yeast: Our best option?

Selenium supplements are available in two forms. Inorganic compounds such as sodium selenite and selenate or organic types, such as selenium-yeast. The major difference between the two types is that the organic variant contains a wider range of beneficial seleno-compounds, important for the eventual production of immune-supporting glutathione and related selenoproteins.

Most selenium supplements are in the inorganic form. However, scientific evidence suggests that only about 50% of an inorganic supplement actually gets absorbed by the body. Selenium-yeast, however, is shown to be much more effective, with a particular type (the pharmaceutically produced SelenoPrecise) shown to have absorption as high as 88.7%, the highest recorded for selenium supplements. ■



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A DEEPER *understanding of*

VITAMIN D

*The NHS recommends that everyone in the UK take a vitamin D supplement between October and March. Recently, lowered levels of this vital vitamin have been implicated as one possible reason why COVID-19 takes a disproportionate toll on the BAME community. **Jordi Mascio** of Goldman Laboratories takes an in depth look...*

ALMOST everyone is familiar with vitamins, either as food supplements or as dietary essential factors. Ever since the discovery that limes prevented scurvy on sailing voyages, we've known that some diseases are caused by vitamin deficiency and can be treated by adding these vitamins to our diet. However, a thorough understanding of the mechanism of how vitamins work has sometimes eluded us.

Terminology

The terminology regarding vitamin D may be somewhat confusing, even to trained doctors. Vitamin D is not a single substance. Vitamins occur in a variety of related forms known as vitamers. A vitamer of a particular vitamin is one of several related compounds that exhibit biological activity against a specific vitamin deficiency. Nutrition research has shown that all vitamers exhibit biological activity against their specific vitamin deficiency, although different vitamers exhibit different potencies against those diseases.

When it comes to Vitamin D, the most common forms are vitamin D2 (ergocalciferol) and vitamin D3 (cholecalciferol). The latter is produced in the skin following exposure to ultraviolet light including sunlight. It is converted in the liver to calcifediol (25-hydroxyvitamin D) which is then converted in the kidney to calcitriol (1,25-dihydroxyvitamin D). Calcifediol is considered to be a non-active form of vitamin D, so only calcitriol can be used by the human body. The biological influence of this hormone is vast as evidenced by the extensive expression of the Vitamin D Receptor (VDR) in many organ tissues.

Factors affecting Vitamin D levels

Vitamin D is produced by the skin from the provitamin D 7-dehydrocholesterol upon exposure to direct sunlight or artificial UVB light. This endogenous way of producing vitamin D is somewhat hampered by recent changes in lifestyle as humans spend more time indoors and are less exposed to sunlight. Concerns regarding the adverse effects of exposure to sunlight or UV-B light, such as skin cancer and photo-aging have further increased the prevalence of vitamin D deficiency. Other factors may affect levels of vitamin D, such as race, latitude, season and time of the day exposure to sun, and the use of sun cream.

Those who live further north have reduced levels of vitamin D in their bodies. People with darker skin tone have been shown to have lower levels of vitamin D compared to people with lighter skin tones. Recent research has found that although they have lower levels of vitamin D, they don't have the associated deficiency diseases such as hyperparathyroidism or hypocalcaemia. The likely explanation is that they have a genetic polymorphism that results in lower levels of vitamin D-binding-protein, so that the bioavailable vitamin D is equivalent to those with lighter skin. The production of circulatory active forms of vitamin D is dependent on good liver and kidney function. Previous studies have shown the increased incidence of vitamin D deficiency in found with many types of liver disease, including Hepatitis C virus (HCV) liver disease, non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), cirrhosis and autoimmune liver disease such as primary biliary cirrhosis (PBC). Vitamin D homeostasis is also affected with people with chronic kidney disease (CKD), and they are more prone to vitamin D

deficiency. This has led to the recommendation by many health organisations for vitamin D dietary supplementation in patients with these issues.

Vitamin D: the impact on organs systems

After understanding the basic homeostasis of vitamin D, one must understand its effect on different organ systems. Biological influences are mediated by the Vitamin D Receptor which is present in more than 36 organs. When the membrane VDR binds vitamin D, a cellular cascade is initiated that leads to the down-regulation or up-regulation of different genes. One of the most important roles of vitamin D is in calcium and bone homeostasis. Calcium absorption by the intestine is through a passive paracellular pathway and an active transcellular pathway. Vitamin D is a main regulator of the active transcellular absorption pathway in the intestine. Its effect on bone homeostasis is not limited to its effect on calcium absorption but also in its direct effect on osteoblasts. The Vitamin D Receptor is present in osteoblasts, and vitamin D promotes differentiation and mineralisation of bones. This means that children with low levels of vitamin D are at risk of developing hypocalcaemic rickets, an awful yet preventable disease. In 2017-18, there were 101,136 hospital admissions where vitamin D deficiency was a primary or secondary factor in the admission, a rise of 34 per cent in a year, analysis of NHS Digital data shows. Poor nutrition and food poverty have also led to cases of gout and scurvy jumping by 25% in the same period.

Aside from rickets, low Vitamin D levels leave these children at risk of developing seizures and cardiomyopathy. Post-menopausal women are at increased risk of osteoporosis and subsequent bone fractures. Vitamin D supplementation reduces that risk by its negative effect on osteoclasts. Some research studies suggest that vitamin D supplementation might also reduce the risk of early menopause.

Increasingly, scientific data is accumulating that highlights the correlation between vitamin

D deficiency and diabetes. Research has shown that Beta-cells in the pancreas express Vitamin D Receptors. Vitamin D treatment had been shown to improve glucose tolerance in insulin resistance.

Vitamin D may also have an effect on the immune system and the development of autoimmune disease. Its effect has been proven on both B cells and T cells.

Treatment with vitamin D inhibits the maturation and differentiation of dendritic cells, resulting in increased tolerance for autoimmune diseases.

All the benefits and mechanisms mentioned above are probably only the tip of the iceberg. With the use of more advanced research methods, evidence is accumulating regarding the positive effects of this vitamin.

Most recently, vitamin D has grown in public awareness as some research has shown that vitamin D treatment may reduce morbidity and mortality in COVID19 patients. Therefore, there has been increased interest in improving vitamin D status by either recommending vitamin D supplement use or fortifying foods with vitamin D. This objective might be achieved relatively easily, as vitamin D supplements are already available in the market. With all this, one might wonder why the testing and prescription of vitamin D by practitioners is not a routine practice. Should it become one? ■



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FISH OILS:

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We know the gut microbiome plays a crucial role in digestive, immune and mental health.

Michael T. Murray, ND, explains why the right balance of fish oil nutrients has a profound positive impact on microbial diversity...

IT'S no secret that an imbalanced microbiome can lead to a wide range of issues, from digestive distress like wind and bloating, to broader systemic challenges such as obesity, diabetes, Alzheimer's, cardiovascular disease, inflammation, and cancer.

Positively influencing the microbiome is a major health goal for many. Probiotic seeding of the microbiome and even medical faecal transplants have been used. These offer limited long term benefits as they fail to focus on influencing the intestinal terrain and the growth factors that nourish the microbiome towards health, through encouraging microbial diversity. While there are several key bacteria associated with a healthy microbiome, greater overall diversity leads to a more resilient and functional microbiome.

A little-known fact is that some of the greatest influencers of microbial diversity are the long-chain omega-3 fatty acids; docosahexaenoic acid (DHA) and eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA). Research suggests that the ideal DHA: EPA: DPA ratio for influencing the microbiome is similar to that found in wild salmon. DPA is the third 'forgotten' omega-3 fatty acid, Docosapentaenoic acid, which is found in oily fish but has only recently been effectively extracted. DPA has many health benefits, including acting as a reservoir of omega-3 fatty acids in the body.

While the many health benefits of omega-3 fatty acids are well known, their effects on the microbiome are not, even though many of their health benefits are actually mediated through it. Here's what is currently known: DHA appears to be the key omega-3 for influencing the microbiome and has greater anti-inflammatory



effects in the gut. It does this through circulating in the blood, by incorporating into the cells that line the GI tract and by acting as an intermediate to anti-inflammatory compounds known as D-series resolvins and protectins.

Resolvins resolve inflammation, while protectins protect against inflammation starting. By lowering gut inflammation, these compounds help to promote microbial diversity. Their discovery has helped to explain why DHA supplementation produces better results than EPA in reducing gastrointestinal inflammation and in improving microbial imbalances or "dysbiosis".

Higher levels of circulating DHA are associated with increased levels of bacteria in the Lachnospiraceae family. These are the main group of bacteria that transform dietary fibre

into short-chain fatty acids (SCFAs). SCFAs, especially butyrate, have been shown to exert multiple beneficial effects and protect against any overgrowths of unwanted bacteria, such as *Clostridium difficile*.

Higher levels of *Lactobacillus* and *Bifidobacteria species*, known for their beneficial probiotic effects, are also associated with higher DHA levels. Multiple studies show their roles in improving metabolic diseases (obesity and diabetes), cardiovascular diseases, neurological diseases (Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis) and musculoskeletal conditions (including osteoporosis and gout). Higher DHA levels are also linked to higher faecal concentrations of N-carbamylglutamate (NCG), an extremely beneficial substance produced by a

healthy microbiome. NCG preserves the integrity of the intestinal lining by reducing oxidative stress in the gut, helping to reduce intestinal permeability and inflammation.

Another superstar microbe, *Akkermansia muciniphila*, is boosted by both DHA and EPA. *Akkermansia* plays a critical role in the health of the mucin layer that protects the intestinal lining and helps maintain its proper structure. Higher levels are associated with improved barrier function, reduced intestinal permeability (known as leaky gut), and improved insulin sensitivity.

DHA produces favourable effects on butyrate production

DHA helps to increase the levels of butyrate-producing bacteria. Butyrate is the primary energy source for the cells that line the GI tract and controls their proper growth and replication. This means that higher levels help to maintain the functional integrity of the intestinal lining and reduce abnormal intestinal permeability or 'leaky gut'. Colon cancer risk is associated with lower numbers of butyrate-producing bacteria. Butyrate protects against colon cancer through its effect on cellular energy but also on immunity, through positively influencing the function of regulatory T-cells. These cells help the immune system recognise the difference between an infectious organism and self, so play a key role in preventing autoimmunity as well.

Higher butyrate production is also linked to weight loss. In fact, the changes in microbiome composition produced by DHA support weight loss, improved metabolism, and better blood sugar control. Interestingly, some of the key benefits of a ketogenic diet, such as appetite control and better metabolism, are because it increases the body's own production of butyrate. Higher butyrate levels also improve conditions affecting the brain and have clear anti-inflammatory effects, especially in inflammatory bowel diseases such as Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis. Fish oils have also been shown to be beneficial for patients with IBD, perhaps through this mechanism.

The ratio of EPA and DHA in systemic inflammation

As well as having a profound effect on microbiome composition, a higher ratio of DHA to EPA also

appears to have greater anti-inflammatory effects.

One study, ComparED, compared the two. Healthy men (n=48) and women (n=106) with abdominal obesity and low-grade systemic inflammation consumed 2.7g of either DHA, EPA or corn oil for 10 weeks. DHA supplementation resulted in the greatest reduction in inflammatory markers such as C-reactive protein, interleukin-18 and tumour necrosis factor. "DHA is more effective than EPA in modulating specific markers of inflammation as well as blood lipids", the authors concluded.

In another study, subjects were given 4g of either DHA or EPA as part of a test meal to evaluate the effects of each on vascular function after the meal. DHA significantly reduced overall cardiovascular risk, producing a 13% decline, while EPA had no effect. These beneficial effects were the result of DHA being metabolised into protective compounds known as oxylipins. EPA can also be converted into its own versions of these, but those derived from DHA are much more effective at reducing the risk factors for heart disease.

While the science of how to influence the microbiome is in its infancy, the focus must be on improving the digestive tract terrain first to enable the desired change. It appears that omega-3 fatty acids are able to promote the proper intestinal terrain, in particular, DHA. ■

i Michael T. Murray, ND, is widely regarded as one of the world's leading authorities on natural medicine. He is the author of more than 30 books on health nutrition, including "The Encyclopedia of Natural Medicine". Dr Murray serves on the Board of Regents of Bastyr University in Seattle, Washington and is the Chief Science Officer for the Enzymedica Group (Enzymedica & Enzyme Science). Dr Murray is involved with the development of new products for Enzymedica & Enzyme Science and recently formulated a range of innovative omega-3 fish oil supplements that support the Microbiome and include Phytosome technology. This fish oil range is called Aqua Biome™. Register as a Practitioner at www.enzymescience.com to gain access to Dr Michael Murray's latest fish oil webinar.





SAYING GOODBYE TO 2020

The end of a bad year

And so, we come towards the end of 2020. It has been a year to remember and perhaps a year we would rather forget. I certainly did not have a global pandemic on my 2020 vision board, but I did have peace and garden time, I got that. To survive, we have had to be adaptable and creative while motivating ourselves through a time of shock and exhaustion. These are skills that will stand us in great stead for whatever is to come in. So, let us pause, be grateful for what has been and have a good rant about everything we want to leave behind.



Spruce up your sanctuary

We have spent a lot more time at home this year, and it is likely that clutter and negative energy has gathered in the corners. Take the closing of the year as the perfect opportunity for a winter clean. Clean your house thoroughly and then sweep from the back to the front and out the front door... this is a symbolic as well as practical cleaning. Wash all your windows to let in as much light as possible and make sure any internal glass and mirrors are clean. Swap out your scents for warm, woody aromas with a drop of eucalyptus to keep your air fresh. Clear clutter

and add blankets in your cosiest colours and you will be ready for anything.

Let it all out...

I am all about positive thinking but there is no denying 2020 gave us plenty to rant about. It is important to acknowledge when things have been difficult. Unconscious stress is the kind that causes all the problems. Write a letter to 2020 - say everything you have wanted to but couldn't. Share your worries and your fears. Do not hold back, get it all out. When you have said everything that needs to be said, burn the letter. Do not be tempted to keep it or even read it over. Burn it!

There is always something to be grateful for

There is always something to be grateful for. Always! On your darkest days, it might be simply that the day is over and you can go back to bed. Look back through 2020 and write a list of all the things you are grateful for. 'Dear 2020, I am grateful for...' and keep your list coming. It is probably best to leave it and come back to it when something new pops into your mind. Big or small, be grateful for it all.

Thanks, where thanks are due

This year has shown us just how much we need other people, and also how important it is to be there for ourselves. Without our usual levels of human contact, we can quickly become isolated and starved of connection. Small moments of recognition can make a big difference. Think of someone who has supported you this year and send them a thank you card, message, or small gift. Do the same for yourself. You are amazing - you got through this!

And onwards

Who knows what 2021 will bring? What I do know is that we have gathered skills we never had before, we have come through it stronger and with a new appreciation for life. I think that is an excellent start to a new year. Onwards...to the new normal. ■



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When not working she spends time with her menagerie of animals in her wild garden in the Scottish Highlands, reading books and cultivating weeds. Find out

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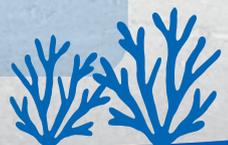


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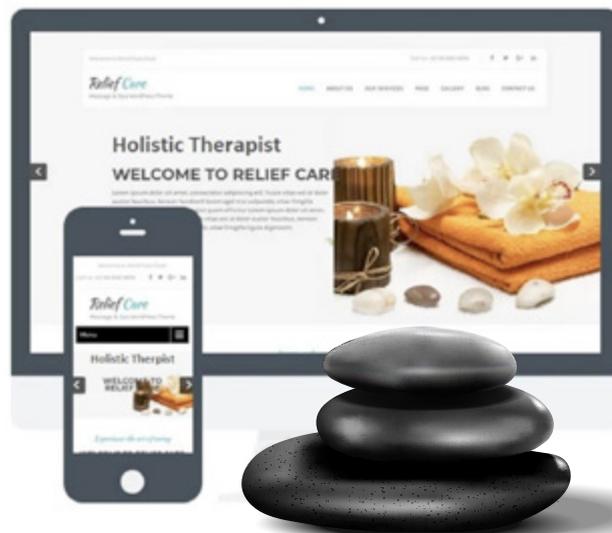
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Have yourself a MERRY LITTLE HAND-CRAFTED CHRISTMAS...

I have a confession to make. I have one of those plastic storage towers in my office which is filled with every Christmas cooking and crafting magazine that's been published over the past three years as well as piles of festive crafting books. Despite this, I never quite get round to channelling my inner Martha Stewart...

I'M a sucker for the idea of a hand-crafted Christmas. The wreaths made of foraged holly and spruce branches, the beautiful boxes of home-made fudge and hand-dipped chocolate truffles, the perfect little luxuries that bring a smile to the face of the recipient. This year, I was determined that at least some of the mountain of gifts I give will be handmade, not least because the stash of Christmas chocolate I bought in September has, mysteriously, disappeared.

The making season starts early, harvesting the redcurrants to make a ruby-coloured gin and leaving it to mature in a kitchen cupboard before moving on to make a batch of rhubarb and ginger vodka. I found some cute mini-milk bottles online and headed to my local craft shop for labels and gift tags. I get rather carried away and come home with nine rolls of Christmas wrapping paper, despite already having 17 rolls in the loft. This

is complemented by around 42 miles of ribbon purchased from the sale section of simplyribbons.co.uk. Did I mention that I may have got carried away?

Making gifts for your nearest and dearest requires a bit of planning ahead. Luckily, HTM columnist Elizabeth Ashley sent me an electronic copy of her book of Quick and Easy Aromatherapy Christmas Gift Ideas. You can find it at <https://www.thesecretehealer.co.uk/product-page/christmas-gifts>.

Such is my confidence in Elizabeth's ideas that I order up soap making supplies, dried petals and everything I think I'll need for making room sprays, bath tea bags and melt and pour soaps.

There are 75 gift ideas in the book, but as Elizabeth notes in the introduction, you can keep the costs down by making things in batches, sticking to a few core scent blends and making gifts that work together – like hand cream, insect repellent, revitalising foot salts and relaxing muscle soak for weary gardeners, or spa-style hampers for those in need of some me time. You can also stick to your budget by reusing things you already have, so it's time to start saving up jars and checking what's lying around in the back of cupboards and the garage.

Although she'd deny it, Elizabeth is a gifted blender and many of her suggestions smell gorgeous as well as being practical. I'm very taken with her neroli, rose and bergamot blend called In the hope of happier days, which I made into room sprays. It seemed like a good sentiment as we head into 2021.

I also headed into my workshop for the first time since March where I made a few bits of jewellery and swore a lot. My sister will receive hand-made gold earrings to add to her jewellery mountain. This year's efforts are simple garnet-set studs. I also engraved a stripy fat cat in copper, which will be framed and make a gift for a cat-obsessed friend, assuming I get to see her before Christmas.

Is making your own gifts cost effective? No, definitely not. Do people appreciate the extra thought and attention that goes into a handmade gift? Again, for the most part, probably not. Did I love doing it? Yes and for me, that makes it worth it, particularly if you can persuade someone else to do the tidying up. ■



Seasonal

SENSATIONS

*At the end of a long day in the practice room, these easy recipes from **Claire Thomson's** new book, *The Home Cookery Year*, offer hearty meals and a special chocolate treat...*



TRAY-BAKED POTATOES WITH MUSHROOMS AND CHESTNUTS AND A SLOSH OF SHERRY

Ingredients

1kg (2lb 4oz) medium–small potatoes, diced or sliced bite-size if large

7 large cloves of garlic, 4 unpeeled and smashed, 3 peeled and finely sliced

4 tbsp. good olive oil, plus more to serve

3 good thyme sprigs, leaves picked
500g (1lb 2oz) chestnut or button mushrooms, sliced

3 tbsp. dry or medium sherry

75g (2 ½ oz.) chestnuts, roughly chopped

½ small bunch of flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped

100g (3 ½ oz.) manchego cheese or parmesan

Salt and freshly ground black pepper

Method -

● Preheat the oven to 220°C/200°C fan/425°F/Gas Mark 7. Line a baking tray with baking paper.

● Spread the potatoes out onto the lined tray along with the 4 smashed cloves of garlic, the olive oil and the thyme, and season with salt and pepper. Roast for 15–20 minutes, until the potatoes are softened but not yet fully cooked through.

● Add the mushrooms, sliced garlic and sherry to the potatoes, mixing together to distribute evenly, and cook for a further 20–25 minutes, until the mushrooms and potatoes are cooked through and have taken on some colour. Remove from the oven and add the chestnuts and parsley, mixing well. Check the seasoning, adding more salt and pepper, if you like.

● Using a potato peeler, shave the manchego or parmesan over the mushrooms and potatoes, sprinkle with more oil if you like, and serve.

FRIED CHILLI BUTTER SESAME EGGS WITH KALE ON TOAST

Ingredients -

2 tbsp. sunflower oil

1 tsp sesame oil

4 cloves of garlic, thinly sliced

250g (9oz) curly kale, stems discarded

2 tbsp light soy sauce

90g (3 ½oz) softened unsalted butter

1 tsp–1 tbsp. chilli flakes (such as Turkish Aleppo; or use finely chopped red chilli)

4 eggs

2 tbsp sesame seeds

4 slices of good bread



Method -

- Heat both oils in a large pan or wok over a high heat, then add the garlic and stir-fry for 30 seconds, until fragrant. Add the kale along with the soy sauce and 1 tablespoon of water, and cook to wilt down, until the kale is cooked through but still has texture. Remove from the heat and keep warm.

- Heat the butter and chilli in a non-stick or cast-iron frying pan (skillet) over a moderate-high heat until foaming. Crack open the eggs one at a time and slip each into the pan, one at a time, immediately reducing the heat to low and sprinkling over the sesame seeds. (Work in batches to cook the eggs, if you prefer.)

- Cook until the edges of the eggs have set and the whites are opaque (about 2–5 minutes), then baste the eggs with the chilli butter in the pan until the yolk is cooked to your liking.

- Toast the bread, add the softened kale to the toast and top with the eggs, spooning over the chilli butter from the pan.

**TRAY-BAKED
FLOURLESS DARK
CHOCOLATE CAKE
MADE WITH TURKISH
DELIGHT, HALVA AND
DATES**

Serves 8-10

Ingredients

- 6 egg whites
- 200g (7oz) caster (superfine) sugar
- 125g (4 ½ oz.) ground almonds
- ¼ tsp ground green cardamom seeds
- Pinch of salt
- 300g (10 ½ oz.) halva, crumbled or chopped into small pieces
- 200g (7oz) Turkish delight,
- ½ finely chopped, ½ chopped slightly bigger to decorate

- 150g (5 ½ oz.) pitted dates, finely chopped
- 200g (7oz) 70% dark (bittersweet) chocolate, finely chopped

To decorate

- 100ml (3 ½ fl oz.) double (heavy) cream
- 150g (5 ½ oz.) 70% dark (bittersweet) chocolate, finely chopped
- 30g (1oz) pistachios, roughly chopped
- Rose petals, optional



Method -

- Preheat the oven to 170°C/150°C fan/325°F/Gas Mark 3. Grease and line a 24cm (9 ½ in) spring form cake tin with baking paper.

- Using an electric stand mixer fitted with the whisk, beat the egg whites to stiff peaks. Gradually add the sugar, beating continuously, then continue to beat for 5 minutes, until you have a thick and glossy meringue.

- Fold in the ground almonds, cardamom, and pinch of salt, then add the halva and the finely chopped Turkish delight. Next, add the dates and finally the chocolate.

- Stir briefly until just combined. Spoon into the prepared cake tin and bake for 1 hour–1 hour 10 minutes, until the cake is set and firm to the touch (it will still be moist in the centre, so a skewer will not come out clean). Cover with a loose square of foil if the cake catches too much before it's ready.

- To decorate, first make a ganache. Pour the cream into a saucepan and

place over a high heat. Bring to a boil, then remove from the heat. Little by little (but still rapidly), whisk in the chocolate, so that the cream doesn't cool too much and will melt all the chocolate.

- Once all the chocolate has melted, allow the ganache to cool for 10 or so minutes in the pan, by which time it will stiffen a little to a thick pouring consistency.

- Transfer the cooled cake to a large serving plate and pour over the chocolate ganache, allowing it to drip down the sides. Decorate with the chopped pistachios and the remaining Turkish delight. Some fresh rose petals will add extra va-va-voom, if you have them.



i Extracted from *Home Cookery Year* by Claire Thomson (£30, Quadrille) Photography © Sam Folan

Gateways to the soul:

SERGE

BEDDINGTON-BEHRENS

Serge Beddington-Behrens explains why he turned his back on a privileged life to find his true path...

I was an only child, born with a gold spoon in my mouth. My mother was a Russian princess, my father a wealthy industrialist and I grew up in a household of chauffeurs and butlers. I went to Harrow and then to Christ Church, Oxford where I represented my university in athletics, skiing and water skiing. Up until the age of 24, I lived a privileged life. I had learned to be very charming, wore elegant clothes, and went to very smart

parties with people who were often rich and titled!

After I left Oxford and was approaching twenty three, something began slowly changing inside me. I was feeling increasingly saddened by my socially very full, but spiritually very empty life. I was beginning to withdraw from it, greatly helped by being introduced to the works of a 20th century spiritual teacher called Krishnamurti. I started doing Yoga and learned to meditate. Gradually, a new life began to open up for me.

As I became increasingly aware of the superficiality of the world I had been born into – all show and little substance - my withdrawal from my old life accelerated. I felt called to move to live in Marin County, California and to train as a transpersonal psychotherapist and involve myself in different spiritual approaches, which also led me to go to India and sit with spiritual masters and train as a shaman in Mexico. It felt like my real life was now opening up.

We inherit 'soulless stories' about how we 'should be' as human beings which fill us with lies, such as the aim of life is to be competitive and materialistic.

I remained in California until I was 40 and this was the most creative and interesting period of my life as I was surrounded by many other 'exiles from the conventional world' also on a spiritual path, and I felt I had found my real tribe. I was deeply privileged in getting to meet and work with some of the leading figures in a movement which in the 70s, was called the Human Potential movement. Transpersonal psychology, which I trained in, basically suggests that we human beings don't only have a personality, but we are also endowed with a soul and that not only are none of us 'islands unto ourselves' but we are all connected to the larger whole of humanity and to our planet. I practiced as a psychotherapist in this tradition, taught many workshops, and with fellow colleagues, founded the Institute for the study of Conscious Evolution in San Francisco.

Conscious Evolution is the idea that we are all responsible for our own growth and development and that if we are to evolve - to become more fully who we all intrinsically are - we will need consciously to work at it. Our evolution, therefore, is not a 'given'. We are not like acorns who grow naturally into oak trees. If we don't work at our spiritual development, it won't happen.

It is not so much that we lose our soulfulness

– it is inside all of us, but hidden - but that we live in a society that actively discourages us to search for it. We inherit 'soulless stories' about how we 'should be' as human beings which fill us with lies, such as the aim of life is to be competitive and materialistic. We're taught that the more we have, the happier we will be. These stories emphasise our separation from one another, which therefore give rise to abominations like racism, war, extractivism and homophobia. Sadly, often traditional religion does not help, as in too many instances, its priests are better at talking about God and emphasising how 'fallen and 'sinful' we all are, as opposed to embodying the divine and thus encouraging us to grow our soul lives.

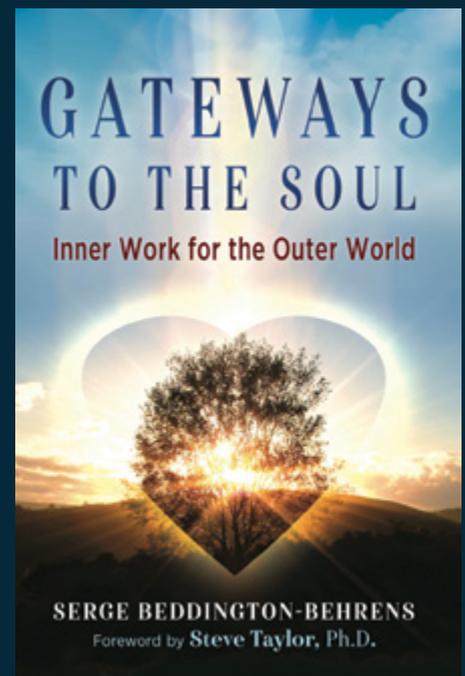
Yes, in the hippy 60s and 70s, we all looked to the East for spiritual inspiration, as the West seemed so contaminated. Today, this is much less the case. Today, there are many good Western teachers (I see myself, in a small way, as a Western spiritual guide). Actually, both approaches complement one another and have much to offer and need to be seen in the light of each other. Basically, the East tells us to let go and accept that we are as we are, and the West tells us, as I just said, that there is something amiss with us and so we need to work at bettering ourselves.

It is possible to reconnect once more with the spiritual dimensions of our lives, but we need to want to. We need to be aware of the spiritual impoverishment all around us. We need to work at reducing the hold of our egos over us, so we may start being a 'space' to allow the sacred to enter our lives. Often, this is activated through our experiencing a big internal crisis that shakes us to the core, which has a strong 'waking up to who we are' component. For many people the coronavirus, which I call 'fierce grace', has been a powerful wake up call.

But wanting to is only stage one. We need to follow up our desires by working on ourselves both to heal our emotional wounds (which can keep us fixated in painful inner patterns and so block any possible spiritual connection) and also to grow our soul life. The aim is both to feel better and to be better. There are many different approaches we can take. We have the path of

the heart, the path of knowledge, the path of will, etc. Different people feel called to follow different paths. Some people use sacred substances like Ayahuasca to reveal what higher states of soul awareness might look like, in order to give them a 'sneak preview' of what might lie ahead if they persevere with their spiritual practices.

Today our planet is in great crisis. It needs millions of people, the world over, to work at healing it, to invest energy in being the solution to world problems, as opposed to being part of them. Therefore, the more we serve the coming into expression of a new, more holistic story for humanity, the more we serve society and our fellow human beings with love and compassion, the happier we are going to be. As the Buddhist mystic Shantideva, explained, "All the joy the world contains has come through wishing happiness for others; all the misery the world contains has come through wanting pleasure for ourselves alone." ■



Gateways to the Soul: Inner work for the outer world by **SERGE**

BEDDINGTON-BEHRENS is published by Inner Traditions. It is available online and in all good bookshops priced at £14.99.



PROFOUND WORDS FROM

Anthony Hopkins:

"Let go of people who aren't ready to love you yet. This is the hardest thing you'll have to do in your life and it will also be the most important thing.

Stop giving your love to those who aren't ready to love or appreciate you yet.

Stop conversations with people who don't want to change.

Stop showing up for, and showing care for people who are indifferent to your presence; who display temperamental emotions; who show disrespect or block you out and keep you at bay, despite your best efforts.

Those people have narrow perspectives and small hearts.

I know your instincts attempt everything to win the good mercy of those around you, but it's also this impulse that will steal your time, energy and mental, physical and spiritual health.

When you start manifesting yourself in your life, completely, with joy, interest and commitment, not everyone will be ready to find you in this place of pure sincerity.

That doesn't mean that you have to change who you are; or play yourself down to suit the judgements projected onto you by those who do not care .

It just means you have to stop bothering with people who don't want to love you yet.

When you are excluded, subtly offended, forgotten or easily ignored by people you give time to, you don't do yourself any favour by allowing them your energy and your life.

The truth is that you're not for everyone...

And that not everyone is for you...

That makes this world so special is, when you find the few people you have friendship, love or a true relationship with - you will know how valuable that is. Because you have experienced what isn't...

There are billions of people on this planet, and many of them will end up with you, on their level, with their vibration, from where they stand.

And many will love and care for you unconditionally.

But the smaller you stay, involved in the privacy of people who use you as background option, the more time

you stay out of the community you deserve and which deserves you.

If you stop showing up, you might be less wanted...

If you stop trying, the relationship might stop...

If you stop texting, your phone may stay quiet because there will be no initiating from those you try to maintain closeness with.

Maybe if you stop showing love towards someone, the connection between you may dissolve...

That doesn't mean you ruined a relationship..

That means that all that this relationship had was the energy that 'only you' hire - to keep it in the air.

That is wanting to give a chance to those who don't want it...or who don't value it, due to their own hidden agendas or disconnection from their core compassion.

The most valuable and most important thing you have in your life is your energy.

Its not just your time because it's limited...It's your energy.

What you give every day is what will become more and more in your life.

It's the ones you give time and energy (who respond to you in like fashion) that will define your existence.

When you realize this, you start to understand why you are become impatient when you spend your time with people who don't suit you, and in activities, places, situations which don't suit you.

You're starting to realize that the most important thing you can do for your life, for yourself and for everyone you know, is to protect your energy stronger than anything.

Turn your life into a safe sanctuary where only " compatible " people with you are allowed.

It's not your job to exist for people and give them your life, little by little, moment after moment.

Decide you deserve a true friendship.

Wait then... just a minute...and look how everything is starting to change..."

by Anthony Hopkins

NEW FRONTIERS: RESEARCH ROUND UP

NEW SCIENTIFIC STUDIES OF INTEREST TO HOLISTIC THERAPISTS AND THEIR CLIENTS...

AGING WELL: GUT MICROBES COULD BE THE KEY TO STAYING HEALTHIER LONGER

Bacteria and other microorganisms in the digestive tract are linked with dozens of health conditions including high blood pressure, high blood lipids, and body mass index (BMI) according to research presented at the ESC Congress by Dr. Hilde Groot of University Medical Centre Groningen, the Netherlands.

This is the first study which investigated multiple diseases and other traits in one cohort. It has revealed the staggering extent to which the microbiome influences sickness and health. The analysis used genetic data as a proxy for microbiome composition and over 422,000 subjects whose genetic sequences are held in the UK Biobank.

The researchers found that higher levels of eleven bacteria (estimated from genetic data) were associated with a total of 28 health and disease outcomes. These included chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), atopy (a genetic tendency to develop allergic diseases like asthma and eczema), frequency of alcohol intake, high blood pressure, high blood lipids, and BMI.

PLAYFULNESS CAN BE TRAINED - HERE'S WHY YOU SHOULD DO IT

Jung once said that all creative thought comes from play, so a new research study from the Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg which suggests that simple exercises can help to make people more playful and consequently feel more satisfied with their lives makes interesting reading.

Playfulness is a personality trait that is expressed differently in people. "Particularly playful people have a hard time dealing with boredom. They manage to turn almost any everyday situation into an entertaining or personally engaging experience," explained Professor René Proyer, a psychologist at MLU. For example, they enjoy word games and mental games, are curious, or just like playing around". Earlier studies by the researchers from MLU have shown that adults can put this inclination to positive use having an eye for detail, easily adopting new perspectives and making a monotonous task interesting for them.

The researchers divided their subjects into three experimental groups, who undertook

daily exercises of different types for seven days and a placebo group. Those who engaged in the playfulness exercises reported an increase in playfulness and a temporary, moderate improvement in the participants' well-being. *Ref: 10.1111/aphw.12220*

WELLBEING: YOGA REDUCES ANXIETY SYMPTOMS

According to the UK government's official statistics anxiety levels have increased dramatically during lockdown and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. More than a third of people experienced they symptoms of anxiety and at a more marked level than in 2019.



A new study at NYU Grossman School of Medicine, suggests that yoga may provide some benefit to those experiencing anxiety. The research showed yoga to be significantly more effective for generalised anxiety disorder than standard education on stress management, but not effective as cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), which often subject to long-waiting lists on the NHS.

After three months, both CBT and yoga were found to be significantly more effective for anxiety than stress management. Specifically, 54 percent of those who practiced yoga met response criteria for meaningfully improved symptoms compared to 33 percent in the stress-education group. Of those treated with CBT, 71 percent met these symptom improvement criteria.

However, after six months of follow-up, the CBT response remained significantly better than stress education (the control therapy), while yoga was no longer significantly better, suggesting CBT may have more robust, longer-lasting anxiety-reducing effects. *Ref: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2020.2496*

PHYSICAL WELLBEING: VITAMIN C CAN HELP OVER 50S RETAIN MUSCLE MASS

New research shows that Vitamin C could be the key to better muscles in later life, according to new food diary and blood analysis research from the University of East Anglia. The research team reported that older people who eat plenty of vitamin C, commonly found in citrus fruits, berries and vegetables, had the best skeletal muscle mass. Older people with poor muscle mass often suffer from sarcopenia, frailty and reduced quality of life.

People over 50 lose up to one per cent of their skeletal muscle mass each year, and this loss is thought to affect more than 50 million people worldwide. The research team studied data from more than 13,000 people aged between 42-82 years, who are taking part in the EPIC (European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition) Norfolk Study.

Dr Richard Hayhoe, of UEA's Norwich Medical School, commented, "Our findings as suggest that dietary vitamin C may be useful for preventing age-related muscle loss. We found that nearly 60 per cent of men and 50 per cent of women participants were not consuming as much Vitamin C as they should, according to the European Food Safety Agency recommendations. We're not talking about people needing mega-doses. Eating a citrus fruit, such as an orange, each day and having a vegetable side to a meal will be sufficient for most people." *Ref: 10.1093/jn/nxaa221*

FERTILITY: LIGHT FROM NIGHT USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA APPEARS TO AFFECT SPERM QUALITY

Preliminary results from a new study show that greater self-reported exposure to light-emitting media devices in the evening and after bedtime is associated with a decline in sperm quality. Sperm concentration, motility and progressive motility were all lower, and the percentage of immotile sperm that are unable to swim was higher, in men who reported more smartphone and tablet usage at night.

"Smartphone and tablet use in the evening

and after

bedtime was

correlated with decline in sperm quality.

Furthermore, smartphone use in the evening, tablet use after bedtime, and television use in the evening were all correlated with the decline of sperm concentration," said principal investigator Amit Green, PhD, head of research and development at the Sleep and Fatigue Institute at the Assuta Medical Center in Tel-Aviv, Israel. *Ref: 10.1093/sleep/zsaa056.028*

HORMONES: OESTROGEN MAY LESSEN SEVERITY OF COVID-19 SYMPTOMS IN WOMEN

Early studies have uncovered wide race, age and gender disparities in the infection rates and outcomes of those contracting COVID-19. Scientists at Wake Forest School of Medicine published a paper in the September online issue of the journal *Current Hypertension Reports* which suggests that as coronavirus affects the heart and oestrogen is known to be protective against cardiovascular disease in women, that the sex hormone reduces the severity of the corona virus in women.

Previously published research has indicated that the angiotensin-converting enzyme2 (ACE2), which is attached to cell membranes in the heart, arteries, kidneys and intestines, is the cellular receptor of the coronavirus responsible for COVID-19 infections, and helps bring the virus into the cells of those organ systems. Oestrogen's lowers the level of ACE2 in the heart, which may modulate the severity of COVID-19 in women. *Ref: 10.1007/s11906-020-01073-x* ■



A natural APPROACH to staying sane in this crisis

We are currently in an unparalleled period of chaos and uncertainty. This comes about on top of record levels of mental health issues, in many age groups. According to mental health charity, Mind, before COVID, 1 in 4 people experience some sort of mental issue in the UK each year...

IT seems clear that even if a vaccine can be found for this outbreak, and even if you trust it, there is no quick fix solution, and there will be ongoing issues with viruses, whether COVID, or other coronaviruses, or new strains, for the foreseeable future as a result of the degradation of our environment.

There are however a number of natural solutions to building our immune systems which can give us the best chance of living a healthy life despite the existence of viruses, both for prevention and amelioration of symptoms.

Our immune system is like the soil – full of bacteria carrying out a range of functions to support life and to destroy harmful substances. Thanks to the new science regarding the microbiome, we know that in our gut, bacteria create energy from nutrients and ‘dis-create’ what we no longer need or can represent a threat. The ‘gut-brain’ axis has and is being researched intensively all over the world.

In the developed world, our immunity has been compromised by a lack of good bacteria in the gut, as well as loss of nutrients in our food.

These issues have developed due to over-use of the soil, pollution, chemical spraying, hormones in animals, over-use of antibiotics which kill all bacteria, good and bad, and more. In the long term, cleaning up our act in terms of our treatment of the earth is the best or only solution. A recent study showed that just one course of antibiotics can increase your risk of depression by 24%, and anxiety disorders by 17%, while two courses give risk factors of 52% and 44% increases respectively.

Adding good bacteria through effective probiotics is therefore one essential step to rebuilding weakened immune systems. A good supply of essential nutrients, including the right vitamin-mineral balance, is the other. This includes Vitamin C which has been used in high doses in China and New York hospitals to support those fighting the effects of Covid-19, and also supplementing with Vitamin D, which recent studies have shown to be an important factor in reducing the risk of infection.

Equally importantly, but often overlooked, the right micronutrient balance is also essential to our mental health. Our brains are amongst the biggest consumers of nutrients, and when

essential elements are missing this can affect our neurological pathways, particularly when we are under stress.

For those affected with mental health issues who want to try a natural approach before turning to psychoactive drugs which may carry side effects or issues of addiction, the combination of broad spectrum micronutrient therapy and a good probiotic represents a potential lifeline. The advantage is felt both by the mind and in the general wellbeing of the physical body.

There is one formulation which has been the subject of over 30 scientific studies published in medical journals in the past 20 years which have borne out the effectiveness of broad spectrum micronutrient therapy for a broad range of neurological conditions as well as optimal general health. It was developed by Hardy Nutritionals in Canada.



David Hardy made it his life's work to perfect a vitamin-mineral formula to help the health of his family and everyone else, including those trapped in mental illness. He created 'Daily Essential Nutrients' as a powerful clinical strength formula to help those affected by stress, trauma and other mood or brain disorders. Their everyday formula for those looking for a balanced supplement to ensure that all the essential nutrients are supplied is Optimal Balance for Women or for Men. Their Greens and Probiotics supplement is an excellent support to replenish the gut microbiome and boost immunity.

These products are now available in the UK through the online store created by Resource & Rebalance Me Ltd, www.naturalmentalhealth.co.uk Its directors Robin and Jenny Littman were inspired by the results in Canada, the USA, Australia and New Zealand, to bring the benefits to the UK.

Robin explained, "As a psychotherapist confronting levels of mental illness in the community, I was blown away by the dedication of the Hardy Nutritionals team, their research and the evidence of results born out in testimonials. These products are so easy to use, and can bring such relief to individuals and families. We are working with a number of

practitioners who are listed on our new website. We believe strongly that building a robust immune system is the best defence against Covid, or any other, virus. These products can do this and address the stress, mood swings, and anxiety felt by so many from whatever cause."

Professional Testimonials

"The products designed by David Hardy have been the backbone of my treatment program for Mood Disorders since 2000. I have found nothing else that even comes close. His formulations represent the most important advance in the treatment of mood disorders since John Cade brought our attention to

Lithium Carbonate in 1949"
Dr Scott Shannon MD ABIHM, Past President AHMA, Asst. Clinical Professor University of Colorado, Founder of Wholeness Centre, Integrative Mental Health Clinic.

"What we're finding is the stability that vitamins and minerals are able to achieve is far greater than what drugs will do. Patients describe themselves as more clear-headed, able to think more sharply and more clearly".

Dr Charles W Popper, Harvard Medical School

"For more than 40 years as a natural medicine specialist I have searched the four directions for the best products for every type of health challenge...

So finding the Hardy's Greens and Probiotics product is nothing short of a godsend. I can say with all my clinical experience there is no product equal to it on the market worldwide.

I have both used it myself and clients of mine in different places and climates in the world, all of whom had very diverse health challenges. I was pleasantly surprised at how quickly, and without any reaction symptomatically, within three to four days my clients experienced the benefits on their entire gastrointestinal systems. I am recommending this product as a base foundation to each and every one of my clients and friends."

Martin Claude Felt, author and creator of Unified Nutrition: Energetic Genetics ■

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Brian Lamb & Sarah-Clarke-Martin OF FUARAIN



OF FUARAIN

A medical herbalist and former global brand manager have come together to create Fuarain, a super-active moisturiser which combines traditional plant knowledge with Deeside Mineral Water. Launching a new brand during a pandemic proved challenging...

"My interest in plant medicine began back in the 1970s. I took an intensive five year training course at the College of Phytotherapy before establishing my clinic in Scotland in the mid-1980s. I believe I'm Scotland's longest practising medical herbalist", explained Brian Lamb who helped formulate Fuarain. "I have a long standing interest in dermatology and the topical application of medicinal herbs, finding it fascinating to see the action of botanicals on a range of common skin diseases.

"I've used Deeside Mineral Water as the basis for my tinctures for many years, and have found it to be particularly beneficial in treating skin conditions. This special water is therapeutic, and even healing, comprising of qualities that make it very different from ordinary water. The water is blended with two of the most interesting botanical herbs for skincare, Calluna Vulgaris and



Brian Lamb

Equisetum Arvense in a formulation which has the minimum number of ingredients, but all work together to incredible effect.

Deeside Water was founded in 1996 by Martin Simpson who started out by hand-filling bottles of water from the sacred springs that have

been on the site for centuries. Martin met Sarah Clark-Martin, a leading Beauty Industry Expert, but formerly of Boots Global Brands, over 10 years ago, when Martin was promoting Deeside Mineral Water as an active ingredient in skincare and asked her to help develop a skincare range based on the water which has been clinically shown to increase cell hydration to possess antioxidant and anti-inflammatory qualities.

Sarah Clark-Martin picked up the company's story, saying, "As a small, independent start up, we have had to work very, very hard to achieve the levels of quality that we aspire to. Martin had a crash course in the beauty industry, and I'm used to big teams and bigger budgets! We aged approximately 20 years

during the naming process thanks to the arduous trademarking process. We also set ourselves back a few months by doing extensive testing in the early stages of formulation. Then, just when we were about to launch, along came the global pandemic. Remote working, Zoom calls with intermittent WIFI, home-schooling children and never knowing what is around the corner made it an interesting time!

"Our initial aspiration is to get our product to lots of customers! We set out to share the benefits of this special water with the world. Nothing makes us happier than hearing the positive stories of how our people love our products. We're already working on an exciting pipeline of new products. We want to grow slowly and carefully - less is more - and only launch products into the range that truly deserve their place.

"We've realised that although it's important to have a purpose and an end goal, you need to be flexible in the path that you take to get there, to trust in something bigger and to remember to stop and appreciate the smaller things along the way!" ■



Sarah-Clarke-Martin



Find out more at

www.fuarainskincare.com/



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As 2020 draws to a close, there's no doubt that the constant use of strong alcohol sanitisers will be making the hands of people up and down the country, dry and lacking real nourishment.

That's where the essential oils come into play to help you soothe your hands and keep them in tip top condition with the added benefit of a nice fragrance.

There's no doubt we are all fed up of the new normal where cleaning, sanitising and disinfection has taken over our lives but if we've got to keep dealing with these necessities, let's do it with the added benefits of compliant, non-sticky, great smelling sanitisers so that the experience becomes enjoyable!

With a wide range of tailored solutions, all designed to help you manage your hand sanitiser provision, the ThermoGel approach

ensures that you have what you need, when you need it with a product that you can trust.

We're incredibly proud to provide our range of Britishmade products backed with EN1500 certification which means our range is guaranteed to kill 99.99% of germs and Coronaviruses.

The popular choice for those looking to manage a successful sanitiser system is to consider buying bulk 5 Litre or 25 Litre drums which can be decanted into dispensers or smaller bottles therefore saving on plastic waste.

For high traffic area, you might consider our new range of MiniTower Dispensers which can be table top or wall mounted and hold 3 litres of sanitiser to minimise constant topping up and management. This allows for fast dispensing and with the stainless steel drip tray, vastly reduces the headache of sanitiser dripping all over your tables!

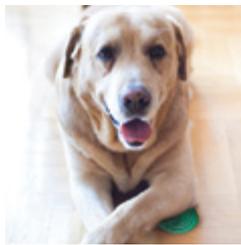
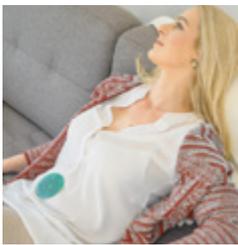
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"I am a retired naturopathic physician and chiropractor. I started my electromagnetic work in the mid-80s, ahead of almost everybody, and have evaluated hundreds and hundreds of homes, offices, automobiles, recreational vehicles, boats and other places where people live and stay. I studied the work of Dr. Lakhovsky way back in the 1970s, when I was first in practice.

About three years ago, a client of mine gave me one PolarAid disc. I have tested hundreds of devices that are supposed to offer protection from electromagnetic radiation. I use muscle response testing to gauge whether a device works or not. I have been doing muscle response testing since the late 1970s and have done it on over a

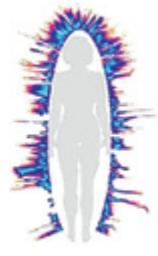
million people. I teach muscle testing and have taught thousands of people how to do it accurately and correctly.

When I tested your PolarAid disc, it tested incredibly well. It transforms the ability of the organism to withstand the radiation. I was shocked, to say the least. I started using the device myself and noticed significant changes. I tested PolarAid disc on numerous other people and found that it worked on everybody. Needless to say, I started recommending people purchase one or two or five and get the whole family involved.

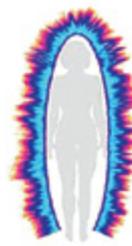
FYI, I have tested hundreds of devices and many are fraudulent and do absolutely nothing. Some of them are ridiculously expensive and some of them actually make the situation worse. Your PolarAid disc falls into a totally different category and I applaud you." (R.A.DC,ND, Kelowna, B.C.)

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Per year: 9 weekends in London at NAOS Institute in Ealing, London and a 5½ day retreat at The Pines Calyx in East Kent.

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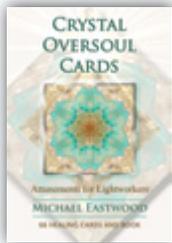
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Autumn Books

This time of year brings a bumper crop of new books and card decks in the run up to the gift-buying season. Maybe it's time to treat yourself?

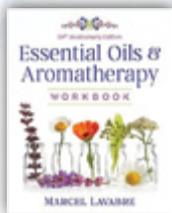
Crystal Oversoul Cards



This is a card deck and guidebook which is designed to facilitate access to the higher energies of the Crystal Oversouls and accelerate the awakening process.

The guidebook provides insight into the meaning of the crystals, including their spiritual and metaphysical properties, associated scents, and their connections to the chakra system as well as the emerging higher chakras. The cards can be used, alone or in conjunction with the visualisations and recorded meditations provided online, for contemplation, meditation, and connecting with the ancient Crystal Oversouls.

Essential Oils and Aromatherapy Workbook



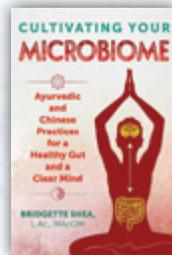
This is a work that will already be known to many seasoned aromatherapists, since it was first published 30 years ago. This edition has

been updated to include the latest research and discoveries. It covers over 70 essential oils – from *Abies balsamea* to *Zingiber officinale* – and the chapter on Aromatic choreography helps both the beginner and more experienced user of essential oils to understand how to bring the notes of different oils together in blends that are both attractive and efficacious.

You'll also find formulas designed for common disorders such as digestive and circulatory ailments, headaches, insomnia, and menstrual and sexual problems, as well as issues with mood and mental wellbeing.

It's an ideal book for anyone developing an interest in essential oils as it covers everything from the history, folklore, science, and art of aromatherapy.

Cultivating Your Microbiome: Ayurvedic and Chinese Practices for a Healthy Gut and a Clear Mind



Alongside CBD, the microbiome is one of the hot topics in holistic healthcare. We have an ever-growing number of research studies showing the symbiotic impact

of what we eat on our micro-flora and the reciprocal effect that our individual bio-landscapes of microbes has on many aspects of our health and wellbeing. Bridgette Shea draws on TCM and Ayurvedic approaches to the relationship between digestion and constitution types to suggest that, by actively managing our microbiome, we can significantly

improve individual health. One of the most interesting themes in the book is her stress on the importance of the mesentery organ, long recognised in the Chinese system but only brought to the interest of western allopathic medicine by a study in 2012. The mesentery is an organ that attaches the intestines to the posterior abdominal wall in humans and is formed by the double fold of peritoneum. It helps in storing fat and allowing blood vessels, lymphatics, and nerves to supply the intestines.

It's a useful handbook if you want to rebalance your internal microbiome, support the mesentery, improve digestion and elimination, and restore a clear mind and strong immune system.

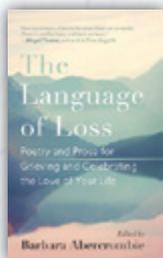
The Illustrated Crystallary



This is the third beautifully illustrated book from Maia Toll following her Illustrated Herbiary and Illustrated Bestiary. She explores the qualities

of three dozen crystals and minerals, including gold, silver, copper, amethyst, hematite, mica, smoky quartz, emerald and ruby. It's a combination of rituals and reflections, ancient wisdom and personal insight that's very appealing. The stunning illustrations provided by illustrator Kate O'Hara exemplify the symbolism of each crystal and are also featured on 36 oracle cards included in an envelope bound in the back of the book. In many ways, this book is as much of a gem as the minerals it describes.

The Language of Loss

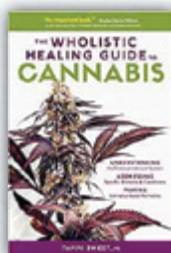


We all flounder for words of comfort when someone is grieving. It's easy to offer platitudes and well-worn clichés about being in better places and being sorry for someone's loss, but

these are often devoid of meaning. In some cases they can be perceived as offensive.

In truth, there are no words, only time, but this collection of poetry and prose, edited by Barbara Abercrombie, offers a gentle consolation. The selections follow an arc that mirrors the path of many mourners from abject loss and feeling unmoored, to glimmers of promise and possibility, through to gratitude for the love they knew.

The Wholistic Healing Guide to Cannabis



Author Tammi Sweet combines her expertise in herbal medicine and neurobiology in this in-depth guide to understanding the science of how and why

cannabis medicine is effective. She explains the physiology of the body's endocannabinoid system and how it is affected by ingesting cannabis, as well as the chemistry of the whole plant. Based on research and her own clinical experiences, Sweet provides instructions for the best preparation techniques and specific dosage recommendations for addressing a wide range of conditions including stress, chronic pain, anxiety, PTSD, insomnia, and more. This book will be extremely valuable

to healthcare professionals, practitioners of the healing arts, dispensary workers, and medical cannabis users who want to understand the science of cannabis and its effects on the whole body.

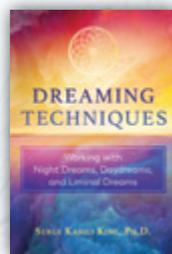
Cannabis Healing



Another CBD and cannabis book, but this one, by Franjo Grotenhermen, M.D. majors on the biochemistry of cannabinoids and the ways in which they interact

with the human body. It also shares the latest research on the use of CBD to treat seizures, anxiety, muscular disorders, and psychotic states and the use of THC to treat schizophrenia, Alzheimer's, ADHD, Tourette's, Parkinson's, depression, COPD, and chronic pain, among many other physical, neurological, and emotional conditions.

Dreaming Techniques



One of the great mysteries of life is why we sleep and why we dream. There are many theories, but there's no doubt that we find dreams fascinating. In this book, Serge

Kahili King, Ph.D., explores techniques to harness the power of dreams – sleep dreams, liminal dreams and daydreams - for healing, transformation, and changing your experience of reality.

King examines the types of night dreams we have, how to remember them better, how to make use of them to improve our health

and well-being, and how to interpret them. He explores how dreams are understood in neuroscience and psychology, in Native American and Aboriginal cultures, in indigenous Senoi dream theory, and in India, Tibet, Hawaii, and Africa as well as ancient Egypt, Greece, and China.

King shows that each of us can use dreams as tools for seeing the world differently and influencing the behaviour of people, things, and nature.

Spice Apothecary



Lets finish up with a book about substances derived from plants. We often think of herbs as medicinal, but limit our use of spices to cookery.

Author Bevin Clare, who is trained in both nutrition and herbalism, wants us to think again. In many cultures around the world, spices have a long history as source of materia medica.

The book takes a closer look at 19 spices that you may already have in your spice rack and explores the health benefits of each spice for supporting wellness goals. There's useful information on the best preparation for medicinal benefit, storage recommendations, and daily dosage guidelines.

Formulas for dried spice blends that amplify the effectiveness of individual flowers, roots, leaves, and seeds accompany recipes deliver flavour and healing. ■



All titles can be ordered from your local bookshop, ordered directly from the publishers or purchased online.



PLANT POWER

Dr. Gemma Newman argues in favour of a whole foods plant based diet to promote health...

WE live in a time of unprecedented change. The Anthropocene Age, where human activity is the dominant, and often detrimental, influence on the planet. It's a time for us to facilitate healing - for our patients, for the planet and for future generations. I believe that adopting a whole foods plant based diet should be encouraged. It has been shown to be effective at preventing and potentially reversing some of our modern lifestyle diseases.

The IPCC tells us we are on the brink of climate catastrophe – and many

environmental scientists and institutions agree that a shift to a more plant based diet is one of the biggest things we can do to combat land mass degradation and mass species extinction. As a doctor, I see that planetary health goes hand in hand with human health. Plastics pollution, the death of the bees and the destruction of habitats mean our kids will have to face some hard choices unless we take action. The BDA's Blue Dot Campaign, the ACC guidelines for 2019, the Eat Lancet's Planetary Health Diet as well as the new Canadian Food Guidelines have all begun to recognise the critical importance of a 'flexitarian' dietary shift.



So – what is a whole foods plant based diet exactly? Whole food plant based eating is defined by the consumption of whole foods that are minimally processed and from nature. This includes as many whole grains, fruits, vegetables, and legumes as you want. Veganism, on the other hand, is a way of life defined by causing the least harm practically possible, and so is more about what is not used – meat, eggs and dairy for food, and avoidance of clothing and personal care products that harm animals. When you go for a wholefood, plant-based approach you are essentially able to calorie restrict, with satiety, whilst also maximizing phytonutrients and antioxidants. It is a more beneficial approach, long term, because it has the power to reverse the underlying disease process of insulin resistance, as well as being able to calorie restrict, without deprivation. This makes it easier to avoid obesity, PCOS and diabetes as well as heart disease and inflammatory health conditions.

One thing must be clear in terms of food choices – chips, crisps, cupcakes and non-dairy ice cream may be vegan, but are definitely not whole food plant based. Meat substitutes are useful for someone who is used to pizza and pepperoni, or as a ‘sometimes’ food to enjoy. But they are not whole foods. The good news is that the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and the British Dietetic Association both agree that well planned vegan diets can sustain healthy living in all age groups – and may also provide benefits for prevention of heart disease and cancer, which are our biggest killers in the Western world. Predominantly plant based eating is important for us all – and a flexitarian approach to reducing meat consumption can fit with almost any dietary preference.

HOW CAN PRACTITIONERS ENCOURAGE PATIENTS CURIOUS ABOUT A WHOLE FOODS PLANT BASED DIET?

Help your client to imagine a simple plate incorporating the four main food groups – fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes. This provides an abundance of whole plant foods and limits sugary cakes, sweets, fizzy sugary drinks, white flour and white bread. Breakfast ideas include porridge, pancakes, healthy granola, muesli, tofu scramble, chia puddings and nut milks. Main meals could be curry, lentil spaghetti bolognese, bean chilli, roast veggies, peanut butter and banana

sandwiches, marmite on wholemeal toast, Tex Mex, Thai food, Buddha bowls, or fruit salad. The world's your oyster mushroom!

Having a diet rich in omega 3s is important. Ensuring you eat enough flax seeds, chia seeds and walnuts, rather than processed oils is be very important.

I always aim to go by basic nutritional advice. The World Cancer Research Fund emphasises the importance of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and legumes for cancer prevention. Advice can also be tailored to the person's needs; for those with asthma I'd incorporate the importance of fruits and vegetables for reducing the risk of allergic conditions and lung conditions. If someone has heart disease, I will talk about the American College of Cardiology guidelines and how a plant-based diet can be part of primary prevention. If somebody has diabetes, I will explain the ACCE Guidelines and how important a plant-based diet is for prevention.

What do you do if you see a vegan in your clinic and you want to make sure they are enjoying a well-balanced diet? Don't alienate them by suggesting they need meat for muscles and milk for bones. Instead, aim to get them on board with nutrition by directing them to resources such as PCRM, Forks Over Knives or Nutritionstudies.org. You could also download the plant-based Eatwell guide from the PBHUK website.

Many will ask about protein. Tempeh, lentils, beans and tofu are excellent choices, but of course there are many more foods that contain protein. As long as they're eating enough calories to sustain them, they'll get more than enough protein, without having to worry about certain food combinations. Ironically, many of us get excess protein daily, even on a plant-based diet. We don't need to worry so much about protein, as we do about fibre, and making sure we get enough of that.

B12 Supplementation is important. I don't feel

we can completely rely on fortification. Many of our foods are pre-fortified without us realising. There is folate in flour and iodine in cow's milk. Being mindful of where fortification takes place is helpful, but vitamin B12 is the only absolute for vegans.

Depending on where you live, I'd also suggest a vitamin D supplement, because in some areas the latitude means that we are not able to produce enough through our skin, particularly in the winter months.

Having a diet rich in omega 3s is important. Ensuring you eat enough flax seeds, chia seeds and walnuts, rather than processed oils is be very important. If you don't enjoy those foods

daily, or are concerned about getting ready-made omega 3s, then an algae oil supplement might be helpful as a ready-made long chain omega three fatty acid. Although there is plenty of evidence that vegetarians or vegans fare better for heart health and epidemiological data supports this too. My personal preference is also to encourage EPA/DHA algae oil

supplementation. The advantage of algae oil is that it is a vegetarian choice which doesn't deplete fish stocks or expose the consumer to the heavy metals, dioxins and PCBs that have accumulated in the fish we eat, especially farmed fish.

Those are the basics. Individual requirements will vary, but generally speaking, emphasising vegetables, fruit, whole grains and legumes with a B12 supplement is good general advice and then additional supplementation needs would depend on the person, and their pre-existing conditions and concerns. ■



Dr. Gemma Newman has been a GP for 16 years. She believes in the importance of plant based nutrition and a holistic approach to health. Find out more at www.gemmanewman.com or [@plantpowerdoctor](https://www.instagram.com/plantpowerdoctor)

Back PAGES

All the stuff we wanted to tell you about but didn't have room for elsewhere...

US GEN Z TURNS TO CANNABIS RATHER THAN ALCOHOL

A survey of over 182,000 US young people has discovered that those aged between 18 and 22 are less likely to consume alcohol than ever before. 28% of university student were teetotal, compared with 20% in 2002. Amongst those not in college, 30% were teetotal. This means that alcohol abuse levels have halved in this generational cohort. Instead, cannabis use was found to be considerably higher than previous studies, due to legalisation of marijuana for both medical and recreational use in many states.



NEW WELLBEING COMPANY OPENS IN HARROGATE

Harrogate Organics Company, opened its first bricks and mortar store in August after starting as an online business. The company's advisors have been

trained to recommend appropriate CBD, aromatherapy, skincare and nutrition products. 95% of the company's suppliers are from the local area. Owner Dan Simpson commented, "I used to get less than 4 hours of quality sleep a night, but turning to natural remedies changed my life. The benefits can vary for each person, but it is something I would recommend people look into for themselves. I fully believe in all the products I sell, and it is much more than just a business to me, I want people to benefit like I have".



MASSAGE EQUIPMENT MARKET GROWS

The global Massage Equipment market size is expected to show good growth in the forecast period of 2020 to 2025, with a CAGR of 8.8% in the forecast period of 2020 to 2025. The market is expected to reach USD 23850 million by 2025, from USD 17020 million in 2019.



ESSENTIAL CANDY INCORPORATES ESSENTIAL OILS INTO SWEETS

Despite significant concerns over the safety of ingesting essential oils, a US company has launched a range of hard candies that are infused with the oils. The "all-natural" sweets were initially developed for those fighting the side effects of chemotherapy treatment for cancer and are now marketed in both Signature Blends and CBD varieties.

TRY THIS... HONEY

There can be few holistic therapists that aren't aware of the health benefits of honey, but now a study has confirmed that honey is more effective than antibiotics for coughs and associated symptoms of upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) such as sore throats and congestion. The study was published in the BMJ's Evidence-Based Medicine Journal and follows guidelines published by NICE in 2018 that GPs should recommend honey, herbal remedies and cough medicines as first-line treatments for acute coughs.



THERME GROUP HAS PLANS FOR CHAIN OF UK WELLBEING RESORTS

Therme Group has unveiled plans to develop its urban wellbeing resort concept in Wales, Scotland and London. The



new resorts will be similar to the company's Manchester hub which is due to open in 2023 and could create more than 3,000 jobs in total.

Guests will be able to experience thermal bathing traditions, fun and healthy activities and affordable wellbeing therapies in a biodiverse natural environment. Therme says entry prices will be accessible, supporting preventative healthcare in communities.

Therme's UK Chief Operating Officer, James Mark, commented, "Our resorts provide a vital piece of social infrastructure in our cities, creating relaxing and fun places to meet whilst also nurturing mental and physical health. Our aim is to ensure that a Therme Group wellbeing resort is within easy reach of 90 percent of the UK population."

"Now more than ever, people living in cities need opportunities to have relaxing and affordable wellbeing experiences close to home. Our concept, creating indoor biodiverse ecosystems that combine pure waters and natural environments, is already hugely popular in a number of European cities and it is a concept that will fundamentally improve the way we will live in the future". www.thermegroup.com/therme-manchester-remains-on-track-for-2023-opening/

MESSAGE ENVY NAME NEW MARKETING CHIEF

Message Envy has named Julie Cary as the brand's chief marketing and innovation officer, tasked with leading all consumer and employee brand marketing functions, including brand strategy and promotion, retail and service innovation, digital marketing, field marketing, public relations, and social media.

The Scottsdale, Arizona-based provider of massage and skin care services has 1,100 franchised locations across 49 states.

Cary brings to the position more than 25 years of marketing experience in the hotel, consumer packaged goods, retail and hospitality sectors.



TRY THIS... PUMPKIN SEEDS AND OIL

Pumpkin seeds are known for their health benefits, with studies suggesting that they contribute towards heart



health, soothe overactive bladder and prostate issues and ease menopausal symptoms such as hormone-related headaches and hot flashes. Surprisingly, a study in the journal Evidence Based Complementary and Alternative Medicine found that male test subjects who took capsules containing 400mg of Styrian Pumpkin Seed oil each day for 24 weeks, reported a 40% rise in hair count, while the placebo group recorded a 10% rise.

Pumpkin seed oil contains phytosterols which can block cholesterol absorption and lower cholesterol levels. The oil should be avoided by pregnant and breast-feeding women.

INDIA'S HEALTH MINISTRY OPTS FOR AYUSH APPROACH TO COVID-19

India's health minister, Harsh Vardhan, has said that traditional Ayurvedic remedies have a role in the prevention

and treatment of coronavirus.

Mr. Vardhan commented, "Ayurveda has a holistic approach towards disease management wherein salutogenesis is a major approach towards treatment of a disease condition and its prevention." Therefore, for prophylactic care against Covid-19, Ayurveda interventions are prescribed after in-depth study of literature, scientific studies, including, in silico studies, experimental studies, and clinical studies".

He added that the ministry has conceptualised and promoted public advisories about the use of time-tested and evidence based natural Ayush remedies for health promotion and immunity modulation of the people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The interventions advocated for Covid-19 like guduchi, ashwagandha, Ayush 64 and a guduchi and peepal combination have a substantial number of studies which prove their immunomodulatory antiviral, antibiotic and anti-inflammatory properties.

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) had previously questioned the minister on whether the proponents of this claim and his ministry were prepared to subject themselves as volunteers to an independent prospective double-blind control study in prevention and treatment of Covid-19. ■

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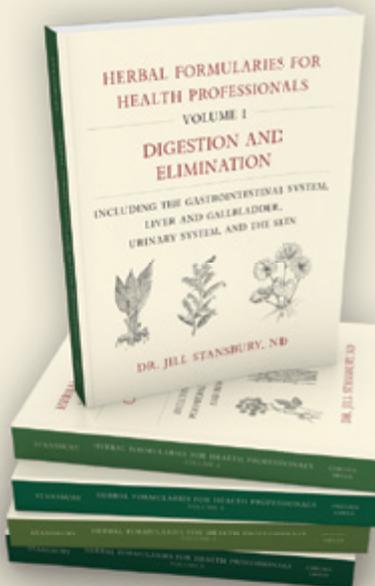


HERBAL FORMULARIES FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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Mimi Guarneri, MD,
President, Academy of
Integrative Health and Medicine



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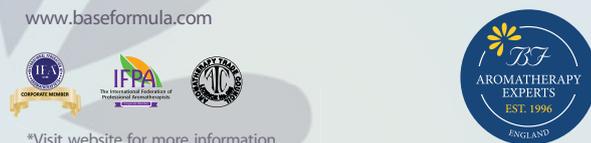


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