



## Episode 432: Using Olfactory and Transdermal Methods to Calm Anxiety With Jodi Cohen

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Katie: Hello, and welcome to the "Wellness Mama" podcast. I'm Katie from [wellnessmama.com](https://wellnessmama.com) and [wellnesse.com](https://wellnesse.com), my new personal care line. That's Wellnesse with an E on the end. I am here with my friend Jodi Cohen today from Vibrant Blue Oils, talking all about olfactory and transdermal methods of using essential oils for things like calming anxiety, helping the body achieve parasympathetic, improving sleep and focus, reducing inflammation, and much more. Her story is pretty incredible. She's been through some pretty tough things and has found big benefit from a lot of these methods that she mentions today. She's here with some of her tips, including a simple technique that literally takes two seconds to do that's based in functional neurology to help balance the brain quickly, and it works on kids and it's completely safe. So definitely stay tuned for that one toward the end of the interview. And as always, thank you for listening. Without further ado, let's join Jodi.

Jodi, welcome back.

Jodi: Oh my gosh, it's always great to connect with you, Katie.

Katie: It's always so fun to chat with you. And I'm glad that we get to actually do it on the record today. I know we have a lot to talk about. I wanna start broad with your new book, which I think is especially relevant right now in today's world. So, start off with that. Explain what was the impetus for this new book was and, kind of, the overarching approach.

Jodi: Yeah, so I've been practicing nutritional therapy with essential oils for over 10 years. And I started to notice consistent patterns, you know, of, kind of, imbalances in people that I think really lied at the root cause of their health concerns. And I don't believe oils...you know, I don't think there's an oil for everything. But I do think that oils lend themselves especially well to these five underlying concerns, kind of, stress, sleep, detox, energy, and inflammation and immunity. And so I decided that it made sense to try to put it out there so that people could really get to the root of their problems, and people that were already using oils and just looking for a different way to use them or had, kind of, dismissed oils because they didn't really realize what they were doing and how they were doing it. So, I just wanted to make this tool more accessible to more people with a system that I knew would help them.

Katie: I love it. And I think there's certainly a lot of information out there about essential oils and everything from aromatherapy to very targeted therapeutic uses. And I know that you through Vibrant Blue Oils, your company, you have really honed in some of these specific targeted therapeutic uses. One of our employees at Wellness Mama even notice drastic changes in her health with her gallbladder from using your oils and was able to avoid gallbladder removal by taking a more holistic approach. But for people who aren't familiar with you yet, kind of walk us through your story with that because it's really, kind of, amazing and profound how you learned a lot of these things.

Jodi: Yeah, I think it's like you, you know, necessity is the mother of invention. I first started getting interested in nutrition through my second child. My first child was easy, my second child was not. And I kept reading parenting books that didn't really work. And then one day at a birthday party, a friend noticed that my son's behavior really Jekyll-Hyded after he ate something and suggested I take him to a nutritionist, which was a life-altering choice. Because once we took him off certain foods that were causing, kind of, bad excitatory reaction, his whole personality changed. And it was so profound because I had really felt like a bad mom or like I was doing something wrong. And I couldn't believe that the answer lied in food. So, I went back and got a degree in nutrition and started trying to help other moms because, you know, it's a really dark place when your kid isn't quite showing up the way the world expects them to. And people can be mean and it really was hard to go through. And I didn't want anyone else to suffer.

So, in working with squirmy kids, I learned some techniques that made it more efficient to figure out what the root problem was and what remedy would support that. And it was a technique called muscle testing that helped when my next rock bottom hit, which was in 2012. My then-husband was severely depressed and it became clear that he might die on my watch. So, my friends staged an intervention, and we moved him to a residential treatment facility. And the moment I knew he was safe and it wasn't my job to keep him safe, my adrenals finally decided it was safe to collapse. And basically, everything felt exhausting and overwhelming, including climbing like a flight of stairs. I was a single mom, suddenly. I had a full-time job. And that wasn't

really sustainable. You know, I'd get up with the kids, make them breakfast, pack their lunch, drive them to school, come home, climb back into bed, and set the alarm for pickup.

And, you know, my company understood for a while, but then it was getting clear I needed a better solution. And nothing that I was trying seemed to help. But luckily, a good friend came by with a big box of essential oils and said something that hadn't occurred to me. You know, "You have been so high stress for so long, which releases the hormone cortisol, which then causes systemic inflammation, including gut inflammation. So it's possible that whatever you're ingesting, whatever remedies, whatever food, isn't necessarily getting into your system. Oils can get through the skin. They can be inhaled. It's just a workaround. You might consider that." And I thought, "Why not? You know, that seems easy. I've tried everything else." But I was so depleted that I just decided to muscle test the box, you know, is this even gonna work? And I got a strong yes. And then I thought, "Well, okay, I wonder what oil is going to help me. "

And normally when I narrow it down, I narrow it down to one remedy or maybe two. And I kept getting the same five oils, which really confused me until it occurred to me, "Oh, wait, they're liquids, I can combine them. So, I tested each individual oil and came up with a blend that I applied on the low back over the adrenals. And I suddenly felt like myself. I was like, "Oh, wow, I can do the laundry. I can clean the house. I can go to the supermarket. I can make dinner." And I just kept getting things done. And that night after I got the kids to bed, it's not uncommon for stress during the day to correlate with insomnia at night. And so I was, kind of, watching the clock tick by. And I had this idea. "Oh, I wonder if I can make something for sleep." Because I knew a while back, I had tried a topical melatonin remedy. So I knew what points around the head had the easiest access to the part of your brain that releases melatonin. So I made up a remedy. I don't even remember falling asleep. I just remember my kids waking me up the next day.

And I just kept making things up to start to feel better. And once I got better, my friends were like, "Oh, we wanna try that." And it would work for them. It would work for their clients. And then they came back to me and said, "You have to do something with this." And I thought, "Well, I'm sure it's already being done," you know. So I finally had, kind of, the mental bandwidth to go online and research. And I was very surprised at two things. I was surprised that no one was really looking at essential oil blends through the lens of balancing organ systems and regions of the brain. And I was also surprised at how complicated they made it sound. I was almost grateful that I didn't have, kind of, the bandwidth to go online in the beginning because I would have felt completely unqualified. So that's... You know, I realized, oh, this can help people. So I just started putting it online. And, you know, Dr. Google, people found me and that's how it started.

Katie: I love it. And I think it's an important topic. I know you and I have chatted about this in-person too because there is so much information out there about different types of essential oils. And I believe also a lot of misinformation because certainly, this is an area where more is not necessarily better and just overusing things can eventually cause problems. So, to start really delving into the therapeutic uses, walk us through some of the different methods of essential oil use because I would guess most people are familiar with, for instance, diffusing essential oils into the air and how that interacts with the body. But they can also be used in various other ways, including transdermally. And then I know some people even take them orally and I know there's implications there as well. So walk us through some of those mechanisms of delivery.

Jodi: Yeah, so the easiest application method is literally direct inhalation, which means you open the bottle and you smell it under your nose. And that's the most efficient because it helps the oil last the longest and it also is the easiest way to get any remedy into our body. What people don't realize is that our sense of smell is critical for our survival. We smell food, we smell water, we smell danger, like fire or predator odor. And so, it has direct access to an important part of our limbic system in our brain, which can help keep us calm. Now, you can reach that through diffusing, but it's more wasteful because you're filling up the air and the entire room and you're only consuming part of it. So, you can absolutely diffuse. I think a lot of people over-diffuse. So, I recommend limiting it to like 20 minutes twice a day. And if you're using a plastic diffuser, just make sure you clean it out once a week with vinegar, so mold or things don't grow in it. But there's absolutely nothing wrong with that.

Topical application is fascinating because I actually find that to be the most effective way to get oils into the system. And I think it's diminished because people are looking at it assuming that things need to get into the bloodstream to be effective. You know, anyone who's ever hurt their low back or their knee, maybe they put an anti-inflammatory cream topically, you know, on that area, and they know it helps the knee but it's not affecting the entire body. And they're looking at that because oh, it's getting from this skin into the blood, and then it would need to go to the heart and then back out to the rest of the body to have an impact. But I think by applying on certain reflex points, that gives you a full-body experience in a different way, and it's far more effective.

For example, one of my favorite ways to use essential oils is literally to help my nervous system calm down. So, your body is designed to survive. If it thinks it's in danger, it allocates resources differently to keep you alive. You know, your blood gets routed to your arms and your legs. Your heart beats faster. Your breathing increases. Your ability to focus on things changes. And you might experience that as anxiety, or overwhelm, or panic, or stress. And you might think, "Oh, well, you know, I have a busy life. I have a stressful career. Whenever I turn on the news, I get really overwhelmed." But what you don't realize is that you can actually help your body shift gears so that your body feels like it's safe and calm, even when the world around you is really more than you would choose to take on.

And the way to do that, your nervous system has, kind of, the fight or flight, you're in danger reaction, which is known as your sympathetic branch of your nervous system. And then you're safe, you're good, you can rest digest and heal branch known as your parasympathetic. And I know you wrote a great blog on this. The on-off switch between those two branches is your vagus nerve, cranial nerve number 10. And Katie has an awesome blog on how to stimulate the vagus nerve to activate the parasympathetic nervous system. But if you're looking to use oils to do it, there is a really specific point where you can apply it and I'm gonna just share really quickly the anatomy of the vagus nerve to help you understand where that point is.

So, it's the information highway between your brain and your body and your body and your brain. It's how your brain and body communicate. It starts at the very base of the head, back of the neck, splits and winds around both sides behind the ear lobe. If you take a moment and just feel behind your ear lobe, you'll feel a

bone. That's your mastoid bone. That's where the vagus nerve is the most accessible to the surface. And so, here's something interesting. When I was originally trying to figure out, how do I calm the nervous system? How do I activate parasympathetic? I was looking at calming essential oils like lavender, chamomile. And the way you can tell if your nervous system calms down is by looking at your heart rate. You know, there's a great Oura ring that you can check. You can actually take your own pulse. There are lots of ways to assess its effectiveness. But that wasn't working.

And then right around the time that I started this company, there was a researcher out of New York, a New York neuroscientist named Kevin Tracy, who was surgically implanting a pacemaker device right behind the ear lobe on the mastoid bone and using it to electrically stimulate the vagus nerve. And it worked so incredibly well that the FDA has approved this for epilepsy, migraines, and depression. And when I saw that study and realized, oh, he's not calming the vagus nerve, he's stimulating it, this light bulb went off. And I realized, oh, there are lots of stimulatory oils. You know, we typically think of them as hot oils, like clove, oregano, lime, peppermint, cinnamon, nutmeg. And that means that if you were to put a drop undiluted on your skin, your skin might turn red or it might feel hot.

But I realized there was a way...When you're trying to topically use oils to impact a reflex point, you need to make sure that it's both stimulatory and also has molecules small enough to get through the skin and work quickly. So, clove on its own gets through the skin in like 20 minutes. Lime has the smallest molecules. So when you combine it in a blend and then, say, layer in a carrier oil like fractionated coconut oil that is also designed to get through the skin quickly, it works like an acupuncture needle. So you can literally put this blend on your vagus nerve, you know, behind your ear lobe on the mastoid bone, and it's like a gearshift on a bike. You can go from overwhelm, heart ready to explode out of, you know, the chest and just feeling like you can't...you don't even know how to take the next step to, kind of, calm and collected. And oh, the world is still, kind of, outside of my control, but I feel safe in this moment and I can figure out my next step.

Katie: That is so fascinating. And I've noticed that with your parasympathetic, the differences...like you said, feel that downshift, but also I'll see changes in my HRV, or heart rate variability, which is also an indicator of parasympathetic nervous system activity. I think it's also...This is a really important point, not just after this past year with stress and anxiety being at an all-time high but in general, we know statistically, most of us in the modern world are overly sympathetic and in fight or flight way too much. And this can be a difficult thing to achieve. So, walk us through a little bit of that blend because that's my favorite one, I think it's the parasympathetic one, and how people are using that commonly.

Jodi: Yeah, so it's really interesting that you've hit on a good point that your nervous system has to be in the right gear in order for your food to be digested, absorbed, and assimilated, in order for, you know, the garbage to, kind of, flow through the body and leave the body. And that is the parasympathetic gear. And what I found when people are doing everything right, when they're eating the right food, when they're making the right lifestyle choices, when they're getting the right amount of sleep, the only thing that they aren't doing that they hadn't thought of is helping to shift their nervous system into the right gear. You know, for anyone who lives in a hilly city...Like I live in Seattle, and I love to bike. And sometimes I'm so, you know, taking in the

beauty of what I'm biking through that I forget, I'll start biking up the hill and I'll realize, "Wow, this is hard. Oh, wait, I can downshift." And the minute I downshift, it becomes easy.

So, I think that one of the main underlying impediments to healing is that we're all stuck in sympathetic dominance. And we don't know how to shift out of it because it's not like we're going to stop being an amazing parent to our children, or an amazing partner, or an amazing daughter, or friend, or employee. We can't drop the ball on our life. We just have to find a way to show up better, you know, in that situation. Oh, so you asked me about the parasympathetic blend of clove and lime. What's interesting to me is clove is very high in this constituent eugenol, which is really powerful and healing. Like, if you think about it, clove has been used throughout history in dentistry because it helps to, you know, clean out the mouth, which is really the center of, you know, bacteria in the body, not just from what we eat but if you have metal amalgams, they can be off-gassing. If you have root canals or cavitations that maybe were not done as well as they could have been, that can be a low-grade infection in the mouth. And the exit route for the garbage in the mouth is your trigeminal nerve, which runs along your jaw.

So, ideally, things exit along the trigeminal nerve, and then they intersect right behind the ear lobe on the mastoid bone and go into the your lymphatic system where they're, kind of, shepherded out of the body. But sometimes, when your lymph is congested, toxins can sit too long, and they can get uptaken into the nerve and cause what's known as a vagus nerve infection, where there's a small infection in the nerve, that's then sending, kind of, an infection signal to the body. So when the immune system, kind of, kicks in, it does a couple of things. It immobilizes you so you have pain, like fibromyalgia, or it makes you tired, so you can rest and heal, so chronic fatigue syndrome, or it makes you more sensitive to other things in the environment, so you avoid them and allow yourself to heal, so multi-chemical sensitivity.

So there's a lot of hypothesis that a lot of these chronic conditions that no one really knows how to fix can be correlated to a minor infection in the vagus nerve at that exact point behind the ear lobe on the mastoid bone. And so, clove because of its ability to, kind of, clean up toxicity, topically applying it on that spot, it really helps to both stimulate the vagus nerve and unravel the underlying problem. Like, think of if you're going to knit something and you have to, kind of, unravel the yarn, sometimes you have knots, you really have to, kind of, finesse it and just remove stagnation, remove congestion. That's what oils do in the body. And that's the beauty of using them topically on specific points.

Katie: And because they are so concentrated, they're able to be incredibly effective, even transdermally. And I think that's the thing that people often miss and why they sometimes get overused because they are so concentrated. I know you would know this better, but it takes quite a bit of a plant to get the essential oil, right, because they're basically distilled out. I mean we're talking what concentration compared to, like, for instance, in herbal tea or something?

Jodi: Yeah, I think it's like 25 cups of peppermint tea is like one drop of oil. They are highly concentrated. And that can be a blessing or a curse. You know, like, if someone's super low in vitamin D, you know, they can megadose to get back to normal. If their body is out of balance, oils are a really great way to return them to

balance. But that's one of the things. I didn't mention ingestion before. You know, when people come to see me, if they're addicted to their coffee, I'm not taking their coffee away. If you're listening to this and you love to add oils to your water, I'm not gonna take that away from you. I just don't necessarily...I think there are other ways that are more effective to get remedies into your body. And there's certain oils that while there's great research that they can help with things like biofilms, so like oregano, you know, they can kill the bad things and they can kill the good things. So just use caution. You know, if that's something you wanna do, work with a practitioner and be careful.

Katie: Yeah, very important point. I think an analogy I like to use is that if you believe you can take, for instance, a pain medication that's very small and it can have a profound effect on the body, realize that, like, really concentrated plant compounds like this also can have a very profound effect on the body and you would not ever overdose, I would hope, on a normal medication. You know, you wouldn't take like nine Tylenol because you had a really bad headache. So you just wanna use them with respect to their potency, which makes them a very effective tool, but realize there is that bell curve. And overusing can be just as problematic as having deficiencies in whatever area may be. You also mentioned autoimmunity. And this is of particular interest to me having had Hashimoto's in the past. And I know many of our listeners have some form of autoimmunity that they're working through as well. So, can you explain some of that mechanism by which essential oils can be beneficial for the autoimmunity component?

Jodi: Yeah, so I also have Hashimoto's in remission. And what I found is I mean, there are a number of things that can contribute to putting your body out of balance and, kind of, your immune system out of modulation where it overreacts. The things that...One of the biggest challenges that I find in helping people heal is helping them rid themselves of toxins. You know, if they've had a mold exposure, they might remediate their home, but they still have some mycotoxins and mold in their system. You know, we're so exposed to toxins day in and day out...I love, by the way, your products that you've made. Most people don't realize that their personal care products, like their shampoo and their toothpaste, can be full of toxins. So absolutely buy Katie's Wellnesse products and avoid adding more toxins to your load.

But let's help you shepherd those toxins out of the body because what happens is, if there's any toxin, it can be undigested protein. It can be a bacteria or a virus, or it can be...you know, any toxin is really something your body can't detoxify. So, for example, rat poison is actually vitamin D. But rats can't process that. So, when we're trying to get rid of...Oh, toxicity can trigger the immune system. So what happens is there's some kind of pathogen or something that shouldn't be in your body, including metals, and mold, and toxins, and the immune system responds to it, and that triggers inflammation. And inflammation lies at the root of your autoimmunity.

So the more you can help to shepherd this garbage out of your body, the more you, kind of, calm the immune response and the inflammatory response. And that's really challenging, especially garbage, kind of, leaves the cell when it's safe, when your body's in parasympathetic, then it travels to the lymph, then the blood, then the liver, and the gallbladder, then the gut, and ideally, the toilet. But it's a little bit like a highway, right? Imagine that there's traffic at one point, it can cause a backup all the way back. So you need to make sure that everything continues to flow and move.

And this is one area that I think oils are especially powerful, especially for supporting the lymph because there is no pump. You know, it works alongside your cardiovascular system. Katie has fabulous blog posts on, you know, dry brushing, and rebounding, and just movement, wonderful ways that you can move your lymph. But there was some interesting research that Dr. Marco Ruggiero did. He was, kind of, looking at the neck. And the neck is the biggest bottleneck in the body. There's a lot going on there. There's the structure, the musculature, the lymph, the vasculature, and then also the nerves. And since everything's, kind of, fighting for space...

I mean, think about if you're in the middle seat in an airplane next to two linebackers and you're trying to figure out what to do with your arms and there's not space, you know, on the shared armrest, you know, your ability to move is compromised because other people are congesting into your space. The same happens in the neck. You know, all of the toxins that are trying to drain from the brain have to travel down the neck in order to leave the body. And if the vagus nerve is infected or the lymph isn't really flowing, that delays their movement. You know, like, if you're traveling on a freeway, and theoretically, there are four lanes, but three are closed because of an accident, that one lane of traffic is really gonna trickle along until you pass the accident, and there are four lanes again, and there's more space to move.

So, Marco Ruggiero was using a sonogram machine, you know, what they used to do ultrasounds on babies, and taking photos of the neck, and seeing how the lymph was compressing into the vagus nerve. And then taking different remedies, topically applied remedies because you can't necessarily take a supplement that goes through the whole digestive process and then travels through the bloodstream to the neck and have it be as effective as topically applying essential oils directly on the neck. And so, he would take before and after pictures, and not only be able to track how the congestion and stagnation, kind of, dissipated, but also to track the patient and see how they really were able to improve very quickly.

So, autoimmunity, focusing on the neck, focusing on making sure that if there's any vagus nerve toxicity, that you, kind of, help to unravel that, that you help to stimulate the parasympathetic state, and then you make sure that lymph is flowing. And oils are great for that. And one thing I learned researching the book that I didn't realize is that lymph, you know, it flows in one direction. So, it's flowing down from the head primarily on the left side. So even without an oil, castor oil is good for this too, just taking your fingers and moving in a downward direction on the left side of the neck and then gently massaging the left clavicle, the collarbone. You know, if it's remotely tender, just, kind of, gently breaking up stagnation and massaging that whenever you can think about it, that helps. You know, under the armpit, lymph gets congested as well. But the more you can support the body in shepherding the garbage out, the more, you know...the immune system doesn't have to react to as many things and you, kind of, lessen the burden.

Katie: Yeah, and keeping that reminder that this is all to work with the body's natural detox pathways. And that's what makes them so effective. I'm always cautious when I hear people talk about detoxes that work against the body's natural detox pathways or overwhelm the body's natural detox pathways because those can certainly be more problematic. And so I'm always a big fan of methods like this that you've talked about that support the body's natural detox responses, whether it's things like sweating in the sauna, movement to

increase that lymphatic flow, sleep. We know that the brain flushes amyloid plaques during deep sleep, things like that, versus really harsh cleanses that maybe have their time and place if you're working with someone who knows what they're doing. Like you mentioned, oregano oil being used to help break down some biofilms. But that's a very specific clinical thing that you would wanna do very carefully, not something done haphazardly, whereas the way that you use these oils is to work with the body's natural detox pathways to make them more effective.

So, it's not that we're counteracting anything the body does. We're just offering extra support. And I think the two recurring themes that are so important here, especially for all the moms listening, are those ideas of finding ways to get into a parasympathetic state as often and as easily as possible. And also the vagus nerve stimulation component. Do you have any other tips for just, kind of, nurturing those habits within daily life?

Jodi: Yeah, my favorite tip...I am the poster child for anxiety. I didn't even realize you know, like...I've had coping mechanisms my whole life. I would never wait until the paper was due to write it, I would always have to have it done a couple of days before because I would be too anxious if I waited until the last minute. So, life has thrown me some curveballs that have accentuated my anxiety to the point where I would have panic attacks like in supermarket lines. It was really unproductive. And I learned this technique that has been life-altering that I'm gonna share. And it doesn't matter what oil you use. It's really where you use the oil.

So, what I learned is that there's actually a whole branch of chiropractic called functional neurology that is looking at different regions of the brain and looking to balance the two hemispheres of the brain. So, our colleague, Titus Chu, taught me that the right frontal lobe, so your right forehead, if you put your hand on your right forehead, that is, kind of, known as the rumor writing hemisphere. That's where worry and anxiety and overwhelm, kind of, live. And when that is overactive, that's when you're more likely to have a panic attack, you know, to yell at your child. You'll overreact to anything.

So the way to calm that down is to stimulate the left frontal lobe, your left forehead. And the easiest way to do that is to smell anything, any oil in your house. Oil lives in the peel of citrus fruits. You can peel a tangerine and smell that. But literally use your right thumb to plug your right nostril, smell anything through the left nostril. Just like you get full of food when you have enough, you know, it's usually three to seven breaths and then you stop smelling it. And just notice how quickly you feel calmer and you feel more in balance. And what I really love is that they talk about how stresses are additive and cumulative. I feel like solutions are additive and cumulative. Like, I used to have panic attacks probably at least once a week. And I think it's been three months since I've had one.

Katie: Wow, that is definitely a tip I have never heard. And I love that idea. It's so simple and so easy. And I'm sure most people would already have something they could use on hand. I'm a big fan of anything that's that quick and that effective, and especially for moms. People have heard me say on here many times that I think moms are the most effective people on the planet. And anything we can do to support moms helps improve the world immediately. So I love that. That's a perfect tip for something like that.

Jodi: And it's good for kids too. Like, if they're having test anxiety or sports anxiety, that really seems to help them calm down.

Katie: That's so great to know. And I think it's a good segue as well. Another area that moms and kids at times can really struggle with is sleep. And we know that statistically, throughout the past year, sleep problems have intensified for many people. And that this was already an area that Americans, especially, are not spectacularly good at. And I know that there are some uses for essential oils and some of these practices that can really benefit sleep. So for anyone who struggles with insomnia or just not getting as good as sleep as they could, what can we learn?

Jodi: Yeah, so there's a lot of research on lavender for sleep. And it's funny, to me, lavender is like Benadryl. It's either great or it's not. You know, my first overnight flight with my son, I tried to give him Benadryl thinking it would knock him out...longest six hours of my life. But one thing I've noticed is the most effective way to use lavender for sleep is as part of an Epsom salt bath. So, the skin is our largest organ. The heat, kind of, dilates the pores. Epsom salt is magnesium. It's full-body relaxation. I'm gonna give you the adult recipe and you just cut it in half for a child under 6.

So, it's 2 cups of Epsom salt, 1 cup of baking soda, which is alkalizing and also relaxing, and then literally use your bathtub as a mixing bowl. Drop in two to three drops, you don't need a ton, of lavender and stir it into the dry bath salt before you add the water, so that way the oil does not float on top of the water. And just doing that as hot as you can for as long as you can before bed is like a full-body relaxation experience. It's great for adults. It's great for kids. It seems to help alkalize the body and reset the body. So if you or your child feels like a cold is coming on, you know, you get that little tickle in your throat, if you can do this before bed, you usually wake up feeling better.

Katie: That is another great tip. I'm making notes to put in the show notes at [wellnessmama.fm](http://wellnessmama.fm) for all of you guys listening. And, of course, I'll also have a link to your book and to *Vibrant Blue Oils*. So you guys can find those to try as well. Certainly, I mentioned that the parasympathetic blend is a favorite of mine.

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Any other ways...I know that there's also tips related to focus with this, which can also be beneficial for moms and kids. So, how would you recommend using them for focus?

Jodi: Yeah, it's funny, that's what I'm writing my blog on this week. There's a lot of...So back to different parts of the brain. The forehead, which is the part of your brain that's executive function, that's what helps you focus. That's known as your prefrontal cortex. And there's an insane amount of research that that is, kind of, under-stimulated. And there's a whole branch of depression that correlates with under-stimulated prefrontal cortex. So, the prefrontal cortex is what not only helps you, kind of, make executive decisions and plan, it's also what helps keep you calm and less reactive. It works in tandem with a part of your brain that is really the fear center. It's called the amygdala. And the way I would describe it, if you are ever walking in the woods and you instinctively jump back because you think you see a snake, that's your amygdala sensing potential danger. And then your prefrontal cortex weighs in and says, "Oh, no, that's a stick. You're safe." So you calm back down and carry on.

So, if that connection between your amygdala and your prefrontal cortex isn't as strong as it should be, every stick feels like a snake. You are overreacting to every potential threat. And that's a really hard place to live in. So, the more you can stimulate your prefrontal cortex by smelling anything through your nose, the research that I've done on this, cinnamon...I'm sorry, peppermint and rosemary are the ones that seem to work the best. You know, part of that is that they bring more oxygen to that area. And oxygen really helps with focus and concentration. I personally prefer just to smell it because it's just as effective. You can also topically apply it, kind of, on your temples, but just be a little careful. Like, combine it maybe one teaspoon of any carrier oil in your kitchen, olive oil, coconut oil, and a drop of peppermint or rosemary, and you can put it on the temples. But that can get messy, that can get hot. There can be a danger of it getting in the eyes. I just think it's easier to smell.

Katie: Yeah, and then like you said, it lasts almost forever that way, and it's super easy. I love keeping, like, the little bottles because you have these great little size bottles that can fit even in my pocket. So I'll do that a lot, especially when traveling, like, with post-flying fatigue or just to have in the car, I found that really helpful as

well. And from my understanding, this is partially...there's specialist compounds in essential oils, things like terpenes that interact with the brain differently through the olfactory system. Is that right?

Jodi: Yeah, that's exactly right. And there are different branches of terpenes. I mean, it's funny, you can look at it, there are a number of ways to look at it, and I really tried to...for the people that really love their science, I have probably 400 research studies that I quote in the book. And then if you go to [boostthebrainbook.com/resources](http://boostthebrainbook.com/resources), I give you all of the links so that you can go deeper. Yeah, they all have different constituents that have, kind of, different chemical compounds. Like, frankincense is, kind of, a crowd favorite for a number of reasons but it has this terpene called sequestrene, which is low in oxygen. So it actually attracts oxygen like a magnet. So it's believed to bring more oxygen to the brain. And we know that oxygen is really great in healing. You know, that's one reason if you have any kind of concussion, it's great to get in a hyperbaric chamber. That's one reason exercise is so powerful. You know, oxygen and glucose, blood sugar are really critical for energy. And the more you can make sure that that system is working as well as possible, the more you work as well as possible.

Katie: I love it. Okay. So as we get toward the end of our time, a couple of questions I love to ask are, the first being, if you were going to take an 80/20 approach to a lot of these things that we've talked about, kind of, the idea that often 80% of our results come from 20% of our inputs, and that focusing on some certain high leverage things can have a really big impact, what would those things be for you in your own life and/or in relation to Vibrant Blue Oils and to these products? What do you consider the biggest needle movers for you personally?

Jodi: For me, personally, my dad used to always say, "You need someone to love, something to do, and something to look forward to." So, I try to incorporate routine. You know, I move every day. I use certain oils every day. I always try to schedule something fun and have something to look forward to. So that's, kind of, how I try to live my life. And then in terms of the book, that's actually why I organized these five steps. I find that the biggest needle mover...you don't need to change anything else, you don't need to change your diet, you don't need to change your sleep patterns, you don't need to change your exercise routine. Just helping your body shift into the parasympathetic state is super powerful and seems to move the needle more than anything else I've ever seen. So that's the first one. For anyone who might have, like, an autoimmune condition, or Lyme, or something that's a little bit more complicated, supporting your lymphatic flow, like basically helping the body take the trash out so that it doesn't recycle and cause, like, more stress on the body, that seems to be the second biggest needle mover.

Katie: Love it. And then lastly, other than your own, which I'm sure, of course, was obviously influential, if there is a book or a number of books that have had a profound impact on your life, either at any point in your life or recently that you would recommend?

Jodi: I love "The Four Agreements." I go back to that all the time. I think that as long as, you know, being impeccable in your word, try not to take things personally, not making assumptions, and always doing your best, those four things always, kind of, help me navigate the world as best as possible.

Katie: I love it. That is one of my favorites as well and probably my most gifted book ever. It's inexpensive on Amazon, and I love to give it to people, even just new friends. I feel like it has a profound impact on almost anyone I've ever talked to you who read it. So I love that that's yours, as well. And it's always so awesome to hear your voice, to hear your advice, and to share time with you. So thank you for being here today.

Jodi: Oh, always a pleasure. Thank you, Katie.

Katie: And thank you guys as always for listening and for sharing your most valuable resources, your time, and your energy with both of us today. We're so grateful that you did, and I hope that you will join me again on the next episode of the "Wellness Mama" podcast.

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