Module One

Introduction to Aromatherapy

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Module One: Lesson 1

Exploring the Foundations of '*Aromatherapie*'

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Define the term aromatherapy.
2. Describe the general history of aromatic plant use for medicinal purposes.
3. Discuss the impact Gattefosse, Valnet, and Maury had on the development of aromatherapy.
4. Describe traditional aromatherapy as practiced in England and list the top ten reasons the average person in England goes to see an aromatherapist.

INTRODUCTION

Aromatherapy is often a misunderstood and undervalued holistic therapy in the United States possibly due to its commercial exploitation. Aromatherapy is, however, an incredible holistic and complementary therapy which is gaining in recognition as more and more healthcare professionals incorporate it into their practice and more individuals incorporate essential oils into their daily life for self-care as well as to care for family and friends.

This lesson is dedicated to shedding light on what genuine aromatherapy is, its history, modern development and practice and why the language we use in describing it is crucial for the professional development of the field and to cultivate a deeper appreciation of aromatherapy to the general public. The last section of this chapter will provide you with an understanding of the philosophy of holistic health and its importance in both 'treating diseases' as well as for preventative healthcare.

DEFINING AROMATHERAPY

Aromatherapy is the holistic therapeutic application of genuine and authentic plant-derived essential oils for enhancing the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health of the individual.

"Is aromatherapy a nice smelling air freshener, a relaxing massage, a delightful beauty therapy, a useful home first aid tool, or a serious health care modality?"[1] Aromatherapy continues to be one of the fastest growing complementary healthcare modalities of the 21st century and yet it continues to be one of the least understood not only among health care practitioners but particularly within the mainstream. Defining aromatherapy, on the other hand, is a complex task and one that requires sensitivity to the diverse practices and philosophies which are encompassed by different practitioners.

According to Sheen and Stevens, "the 'misuse' of the term aromatherapy in the wider society could be an indication of the misunderstanding of what aromatherapy is, or an indication of aromatherapy's lack of a clear definition".[2] Aromatherapy is practiced by a diverse set of lay people and practitioners including: naturopaths, nurses, massage therapists, independent aromatherapy consultants, occupational therapists, social workers, psychologists, reflexologists, and at times and in some countries, by medical doctors.

Aromatherapy can be used to reduce anxiety and agitation, to heal skin ulcers, to reduce the impact of stress on the physical body, and to expectorate mucus from the lungs. Aromatherapy can be applied in hospice environments to increase quality of life, in maternity wards to support the delivery process and relieve postpartum stress, and in bodywork practices to enhance the therapeutic benefits of the bodywork technique itself. Aromatherapy has these therapeutic benefits and many more as will be discovered throughout this text.

Perhaps the best place to begin our understanding of the term aromatherapy is to go back in history and to its modern birth and the actual coining of the word.

HISTORY OF AROMATIC PLANT USE

"……there is virtually no people known to anthropology – however remote, isolated, or primitive – in which some form of doctoring with plants was not practiced."
Barbara Griggs, The Green Pharmacy

When we discuss the history of Aromatherapy, we are really talking about the history of the use of aromatics or aromatic/herbal plants. Aromatherapy, as the profession we know today, is actually quite young and only has a short history. However, the history of medicinal and aromatic plants is indeed ancient and aromatic plants did enjoy some similar uses as we have to this present day, albeit in different forms. In this section we are covering a very brief history of aromatic plant use. The history of herbal medicine is vast and we recommend several herbal books at the end of this chapter for those who would like a more in depth historical account of herbal and aromatic plant use.

The history of aromatic substances could place us as far back as the origins of humankind, when he/she put material onto a fire or ate particular plants. Remember our sense of smell was quite powerful during these early stages of humanity. Primitive humans may have found the smoke, scents, and aromas affecting them in different ways. Some of the plant material would have made him/her feel restful, while others stimulated, and some would have gone to the chest making breathing easier.

Primitive humans discovered that leaves, berries, roots etc. made sick people better. Also twigs thrown on the fire made people happy or excited, or they had spiritual experiences. Smudging or burning aromatic plant material to treat a patient is one of the earliest recorded forms of treatment with herbs, often used to drive out evil spirits or as a form of incense for protection and potential health benefit. Scents, either inhaled through the nose or absorbed directly by the body, were regarded as important healing agents in antiquity.[3]

Known written records about medicinal plants date back at least 5000 years to the Sumerians, who lived in the Mesopotamian civilization; the Babylonians, another Mesopotamian civilization, which dates to the second millennium B.C.; and the Egyptians, whose Nile river-based culture began to flourish around 3000 B.C.[4]

Ancient India had a rich knowledge of medicinal plants. The *Rigveda* (5000BC) has recorded 67 medicinal plants, *Yajurveda* 81 species, *Atharvaveda* (4500 – 2500BC) lists 290 species.[5] The famous Indian physician Charaka, who wrote the *Charaka Samhita* (700 BC), covers the uses and applications of over 600 medicinal plants. The development of systematic pharmacopoeias dates back to 3000 BC, when the Chinese were already using over 350 herbal remedies.[6] The Shen Nong Ben Cao Jing is considered to be one of the first Chinese herbal medicine books. It is said to have been written sometime during the first or second century A.D.

The Ancient Egyptians (approx. 3500 BC), Greeks (1100 to 140BC), and Romans (10th century BC to 1453AD) are well known for their use of aromatic plants and aromatic extracts. The Egyptians used balsams, perfumed oils, scented barks and resins for medicine, food preservation, and religious ceremonies and for embalming the dead. It is thought that the Greeks learned much of their aromatic knowledge from the Egyptians. Hippocrates, the renowned Greek physician, is often quoted as having said "the way to health is to have an aromatic bath and scented massage every day". And of course, the Romans are known to have popularized the use of the bathhouse as a place to use aromatic oils and other scented products for beautification and for health.

Aromatics were also used during the Middle Ages (476 to 1453AD) for defense against the bubonic plague. Aromatics were burned in the streets and in homes to ward off infection. And it is commonly suspected that the perfumers and glove makers were mostly immune to the plague because they were constantly surrounded by aromatic plants/pomanders. "Those who stayed in town (during the plague) made sure to carry with them some olfactory prophylactic whenever they ventured outside. One of the most popular of such devices was the pomander – originally an orange stuck full of cloves and later any perforated container filled with scents and carried on the person. Otherwise a cautious person might carry a bouquet of aromatic flowers or a handkerchief sprinkled with perfume."[7]

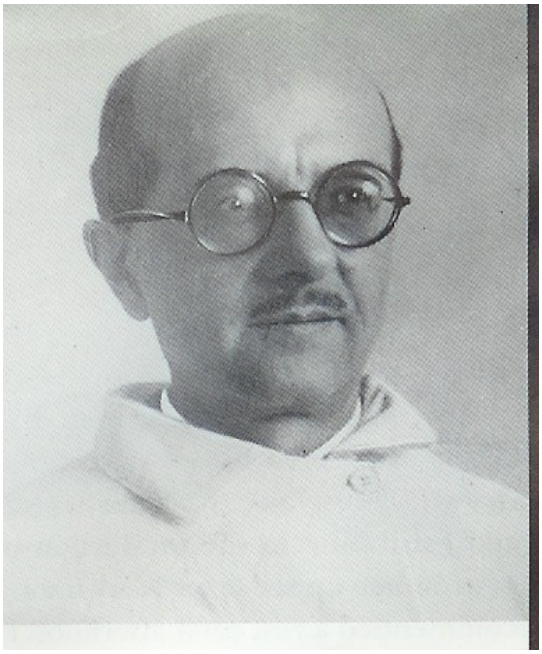
During the 18th Century we begin to find essential oils being used extensively and much research was being carried out on their medicinal properties. Some apothecaries even had their own stills to produce essential oils. On the other hand, it was during this time that the growing specialization of medicine was occurring which would eventually attempt to take medicine out of the hands of lay people.

In the 19th Century the 'family doctor' is established. Oils of chamomile, cinnamon, fennel, bay, juniper, rosemary, and thyme are recorded as official essential oils in William Whitla's *Materia Medica* (1882). In 1887, Chamberland published studies showing the anti-bacterial and antifungal properties of many essential oils. (E.g. lavender, juniper, sandalwood, thyme, cinnamon, and cedar wood)

In many ways, the history of aromatherapy is the history of herbal medicine that enjoys a long and abundant history throughout the world. Plants, specifically aromatic plants, have been employed for thousands of years and are still considered to be an important source of medicine. Aromatherapy as it is known today, however, is a modern development of how aromatic plants were used by these

early cultures. To understand modern aromatherapy, we shall turn to Rene-Maurice Gattefosse, who coined the term in 1937.

AROMATHERAPIE: MODERN DEVELOPMENT



This history has been compiled from the work of Marcel Gattefosse (1992) on writing about his father in the International Journal of Aromatherapy.[8] Rene-Maurice Gattefosse was born in the French region of Lyon in 1881. Gattefosse grew up around plants and aromas. His father, Louis Gattefosse, owned and operated the Gattefosse perfume business which remains in business today. During Rene's youth, perfumes were still created from a mixture of natural essential oils, alcohol extracts, and flower pomades and some synthetic products. Louis and his two sons, Abel and Rene-Maurice worked closely together to define the conditions under which perfume compositions were prepared so as to achieve constant levels of strength and odor. In 1906, they published a book entitled "*Formulaires de Parfumerie de Gattefosse*".

The Gattefosse family was active in many areas of the perfume business, from plant cultivation to formulating perfume compositions. In the early 1900's the Gattefosses initiated a campaign to promote lavender as well as to support its distillation for essential oil production. This campaign was in response to the need to increase trade in lavender to support economic conditions for local farmers within various areas of France. During the early 1900's Rene-Maurice assisted with the organization of mint and other herbs for culture in France. He also embarked on a systematic study of exotic essential oils and the creation of distillation units which would be easy to build on location.

Sometime between 1908 and 1910, Gattefosse joined forces with his younger brother, Jean, a botanist and chemist, to pursue his research of exotic plants. Jean and Rene-Maurice spent time in Morocco compiling a large selection of new plants and establishing distillation in North Africa. It was during his stay in Morocco that Rene-Maurice began to learn of the ways in which the peasants used essential oils as popular medicines. This intrigued Rene-Maurice so much that he set to work to discover the medicinal properties of these essential oils and understand their efficacy in healing the body. From the peasants of Morocco, he learned the incredible healing properties of lavender essential oil including its antiseptic, prophylactic, and vulnerary properties.

It was July of 1910, the day of the birth of his son, that Rene experienced an explosion in his work's laboratory and was very badly burnt on the hand. Treated by conventional medicine, he soon

developed gangrene and as a last resort he took off his bandages and tested lavender essential oil on his infected wounds. He soon noticed that he was feeling better, the wounds were quickly healing, he felt less pain and the inflammation was decreasing.[9]

Motivated by this success he decided to enlarge his research to other essential oils. During the Spanish flu epidemic in 1918, he experimented in hospitals with an aromatic disinfectant that he called "Salvol" that was made from a blend of essential oils and then pulverized.

The term "***aromatherapie***" was coined by Rene-Maurice Gattefosse in 1937 with his publication of a book by that name. His book "*Gattefosses Aromatherapy*" contains early clinical findings for utilizing essential oils for a host of physiological ailments. It seems vital to understand what Gattefosse's intention for coining the word was, as he clearly meant to distinguish the medicinal application of essential oils from their perfumery applications. Gattefosse was already a perfumer and as such had a love and passion for the aromas they imparted. However, by 1918 he had become deeply involved with the study and application of the essential oils for medicinal purposes. He was to remain active throughout the 1930's, writing articles and working with hospitals and others to test the medicinal actions of essential oils.

Gattefosse was a prolific writer on the medicinal uses of essential oils including the following studies:

1917 Culture and Industry of mountainous aromatic and medicinal plants
1919 Bactericidal properties of some essential oils
1924 The psychological role of perfumes
1925 Psychological actions of aromatic solutions
1926 The therapeutic value of lavender essence
1926 Therapeutic essences
1927 Rapid wound healing with essential oils
1932 Therapeutic use of lavender essence
1932 Pine essence and its bactericidal properties
1937 "Aromatherapy"

We can, therefore, interpret his coining of the word "*Aromatherapie*" to mean the therapeutic application or the medicinal use of aromatic substances (essential oils). Since its origin, Aromatherapy has implied a practice which encompasses human pathology and the treatment of different emotional and physical conditions with essential oils. As Aromatherapy developed into a practice it adopted a more holistic approach encompassing the body, the mind and the spirit (energy).

Aromatherapy 'Co-Founders'

The following individuals also contributed greatly to the shaping of modern aromatherapy.

Dr Jean Valnet (1920-1995)

Dr. Jean Valnet was trained as a traditional medical doctor at the University of Lyon in 1945. Valnet began his research into essential oils in 1953 and his focus was mainly on the best methods of application as well as dosage levels needed to attain maximum benefit without risk of side effects.[10]

Jean Valnet was very interested in the study of the anti-infectious and antibiotic properties of essential oils. In 1960, he presided over congresses with university lecturers and members of the Academy of Medicine as assessors. In 1961, he became a collaborating member of '*The International Centre of Biological Research*' in Geneva and of a number of scientific journals, the French and foreign press also regularly consecrated articles to him. Throughout 1964, Jean Valnet published amongst other articles: '*Different Medicines*', '*Phytotherapy: treatment of disease with plants*', '*Aromatherapy, a new medicine*', '*Phytotherapy and aromatherapy – how to heal infectious diseases with plants*', and the '*ABC of phytotherapy in infectious illnesses*'.

In 1971, he founded the Association of Study and Research into Aromatherapy and Phytotherapy (A.E.R.P), the first of its type in France that he transformed in 1973 into the French society of Phytotherapy and Aromatherapy (S.F.P.A). He abandoned the society in 1980, followed by all the members of committee of honor due to the ambivalent attitude of several if its members and the scheming atmosphere that had developed. In 1981, he founded the College of Phyto-aromatherapy and French-speaking field doctors, which had the same aim as his first society, to regroup health professionals (doctors, pharmacists, vets, surgeons, biologists etc.) carrying out research on phytotherapy and aromatherapy.

He created his own essential oil complexes, Tegarome (indicated for burns, insect bites, sun burn), Climarome (respiratory tract problems), Flexarome (calming muscular tension). In 1985, he handed over the production of his preparations to the laboratory Cobionat, specialists in the fabrication and

the packaging of plant-based products. The laboratory continues to consecrate itself exclusively to Doctor Valnet's aromatherapy and the formulas have never been modified.
They also trained many student-doctors (Belaiche, Lapraz, Duraffourd d'Hervincourt, Morel) and were at the origin of the two main branches of modern aromatherapy: the French school with its scientific and clinical approach that joins the strong, French medical tradition and the Anglo-Saxon school of thought, which originates from the work of Margaret Maury, who chose the more specialized route of well-being through the use of massage techniques.[11]

Marguerite Maury (1895 - 1968)

Marguerite Maury deserves special attention as her work with essential oils led to the creation of holistic aromatherapy practice as we know it today. Born in Austria in 1895, Maury led an interesting and passionate life. She was trained as a Nurse and surgical assistant in Vienna and then moved to France, where she was given a book entitled "*Les Grandes Possibilites par les Matieres Odoriferantes*". (Ryman, D., 1989) This book was to provide Maury with a life long passion for researching and educating others on the applications of aromatherapy. Together with her husband, Dr. Maury, they explored numerous healing therapies including: homeopathy, naturopathy, acupuncture, yoga, meditation and others.

Marguerite Maury pioneered the dermal application of essential oils and the recognition of both the psychological and physiological benefits gained through this pathway into the body. The popular application of essential oils to the skin has been attributed to the seminal work of Marguerite Maury entitled: *The Secret of Life and Youth*, published in France in 1961. In this book, Maury expands on her ideas about the secrets of staying young and shares her insights in using essential oil, which provided the seeds for the modern development of holistic aromatherapy.

Her many contributions to the development of aromatherapy include the following:

- **Integrated Massage and Aromatherapy**
  Maury states "*Massage of the conjunctive, neuromuscular or soft tissue pave the way admirably for the penetration of the odoriferous substances, and the resultant rejuvenation*."[12] Maury not only pioneered the dermal application of essential oils but was one of the first to draw attention to the enhancing effects of essential oils on the already beneficial effects of massage itself. *"We had to find a method capable both of influencing the muscular tonus, the quality and aspect of the skin and the tissues, and to obtain a better functioning and a normalization of the individual's rhythm."*[13]

- **Recognized the importance of a holistic approach**
  Throughout her book, the *Secret of Life and Youth*, Maury acknowledges the importance of maintaining health through nutrition, exercise, a healthy emotional & spiritual life, and massage or

hydrotherapy. She draws on such philosophical traditions as Traditional Chinese Medicine, Tibetan and Ayurvedic medicine in providing an understanding of different approaches to health, disease, and healing.

- **Emphasized the importance of the individual**
  Perhaps her greatest contribution to the evolution of aromatherapy was her clear commitment to and recognition of the importance of treating the individual. The idea of treating the individual is one of the core principles for holistic aromatherapy practice.

  To reach the individual we need an individual remedy. Each of us is a unique message. It is only the unique remedy which will suffice. We must, therefore, seek odoriferous substances which present affinities with the human being we intend to treat, those which will compensate for his deficiencies and those which will make his faculties blossom.[14]

- **Recognized the dual effect of essential oils**
  Maury was keen to observe that essential oils applied to the skin not only had a physiological effect but also a corresponding psychological effect.

  Applied to the skin these essences regulate the activity of the capillaries and restore vitality to the tissues. .... But of the greatest interest is the effect of (aroma) has on the psychic and mental state of the individual. Powers of perception become clearer and more acute.....The use of odoriferous matter induces a true sentimental and mental liberation. ..... the essential oils free us from the (a challenging emotion) but leave our faculties unimpaired.[15]

  From these observations and applications modern holistic aromatherapy was born. Based upon Maury's contributions to the practice of aromatherapy we can then define aromatherapy more comprehensively as:

  Aromatherapy is the holistic therapeutic application of genuine essential oils for enhancing the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual health of the individual.

THE MODERN PRACTICE OF AROMATHERAPY

The Aromatherapy industry is dynamic, diverse and, often, divided in opinion and practice. This state of affairs is perhaps a reflection of the industries youth and seemingly constant growth. In general, aromatherapy can be used to enhance a client's well-being and encourage positive states of health. Clinical or medical aromatherapy was born of the medical tradition in France; Holistic aromatherapy was born of the touch tradition in England and then throughout the world.

Holistic Aromatherapy, also known as traditional aromatherapy, was popularized in England, where the standard aromatherapy program includes the following core subjects: essential oil therapeutics, anatomy and physiology, Swedish massage, basic pathology, basic counseling skills, reflexology (both as a diagnostic tool as well as a treatment approach), Touch for Health, and basic nutrition.

Traditional aromatherapy is a hands-on-approach to applying essential oils for stress reduction and other psychological benefits as well as to enhance overall health and wellbeing. According to Harris, the typical aromatherapy client is female and in her middle years and the top 10 reasons the average person in the United Kingdom (U.K.) goes to see aromatherapists are:

1. Stress/Anxiety
2. Headaches/Migraines
3. Insomnia
4. Musculoskeletal problems
5. Hormonal problems
6. Respiratory problems
7. Arthritis & rheumatism
8. Skin problems
9. Chronic fatigue
10. Sinus problems[16]

Traditional Aromatherapy, as practiced in the U.K., has experienced many setbacks in its introduction and acceptance within the United States. The original introduction of aromatherapy into the U.S. mainstream was through the retail and gift industries rather than through the profession (such as occurred in England). With this original introduction came the additional problem of low quality essential oils and synthetics being sold as the best and the purest. Today, there are more and more educated consumers and practitioners seeking high quality essential oils for their therapeutic application and potential. Unfortunately, there remains a plethora of synthetic fragrances and adulterants in products posing as natural aromatherapy, and this underlies the continued importance of educating the public and healthcare professionals on the value of genuine aromatherapy.

Other areas where aromatherapy can be utilized include:

➞ **Spa therapy:** Essential oils are being used in a variety of spa treatments and are commonly employed for general aromatherapy massage sessions, during hydrotherapy or balneotherapy and for signature treatments.

➞ **Palliative care:** Aromatherapy is being introduced into complementary medicine for cancer patients to reduce stress, tension, anxiety, and fear as well as for general comfort therapy. Aromatherapy is also being applied for its physiological benefits of healing radiation burns and reducing nausea.

➞ **Hospice care:** Aromatherapy is being used to reduce undesirable odors in the air, to enhance quality of life and mood, to support family members, and as a general comfort therapy.

➙ **Elderly care:** Aromatherapy is being used to enhance skin integrity, reduce stress, tension, anxiety, and fear, as well as to enhance quality of life.

➙ **Labor and Delivery:** Aromatherapy is being used to help relax laboring mothers as well as to support the birthing process. Essential oils and/or hydrosols are also utilized for healing hemorrhoids and perineal/vaginal tears which occur during the delivery process.

Clinical research and experience-based initiatives by nurses, massage therapists, and aromatherapists are supporting the use and introduction of aromatherapy into hospital and hospice settings throughout the United States. According to leading nurse aromatherapist, Jane Buckle, Ph.D., "*Because health insurance is so expensive, one of the most acceptable ways of integrating aromatherapy into a hospital or health facility is to link research to reducing cost of care.*"[17] Thanks to the dedication of individual nurses, massage therapists and aromatherapists who utilize aromatherapy as a complementary therapy, hospitals and other healthcare centers are beginning to recognize that aromatherapy can be of great benefit.

Buckle reports that aromatherapy is increasingly being used in hospitals and other clinical environments: to relieve post-surgical pain and anxiety, promote sleep, reduce stress, reduce chronic pain, heal skin ulcers and relieve emotional distress.[18]

Aromatherapy promises to be a valuable complementary therapy in a wide range of settings, including within the home for self care and care of one's family.

Module One: Lesson 2

Holistic Framework for Aromatherapy

Learning Objectives

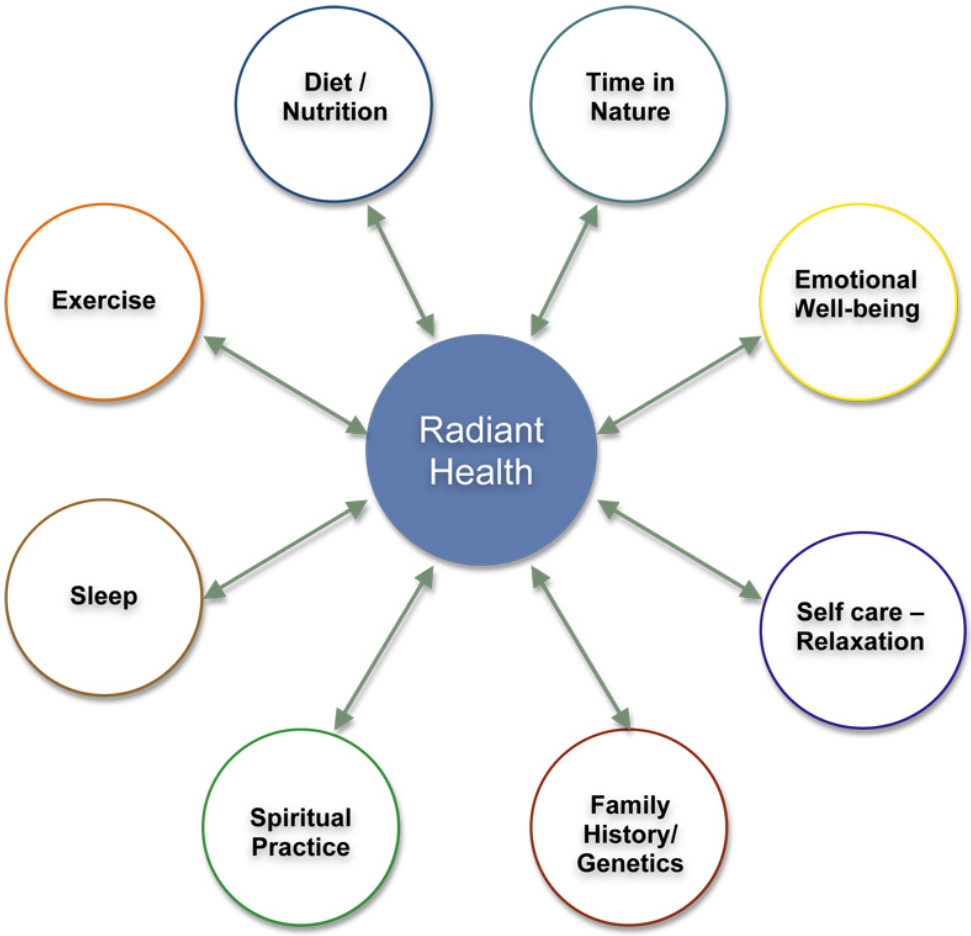
Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the holistic framework for aromatherapy.
2. Discuss how concepts borrowed from Ayurveda and TCM may lend themselves to a more holistic approach for aromatherapy.

Aromatherapy: A Holistic Health Approach

Complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practices differ from orthodox medicine in their philosophy and approach to health and healing. This difference in approach can be attributed to the belief which arises from philosophical and conceptual ideas regarding the role of the practitioner in supporting the client back to health and wellness. While traditional allopathic medicine focuses only on the disease, seeking out an agent (microbe) or malfunctioning organ to either kill or repair, holistic therapies focus on healing the patient by addressing the nature of the disease within the context of the whole person including diet, lifestyle, exercise, stress levels etc. that may be contributing to or potentially causing the disease or imbalance.

Holistic CAM therapies; such as Aromatherapy, foster a cooperative relationship between client and practitioner with the goal of attaining optimal physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well-being, not simply the absence of disease. It emphasizes the need to look at the whole person, including analysis of physical, nutritional, environmental, emotional, social, spiritual, and lifestyle values.



As a holistic therapy, aromatherapy clearly is able to affect the body-mind-spirit (energy) aspects of the individual however it does not, in and of itself, create whole health or wellness for that we need to be sure to address diet, exercise, stress, bodywork therapies, as well as be aware of potential genetic predispositions.

Aromatherapy can be used to treat acute and/or chronic health conditions and it can be used as a preventative approach to various disorders. Aromatherapy is, however, one aspect of holistic health and well-being.

Two potential additions to furthering the holistic practice of aromatherapy include even a basic understanding of Ayurveda and/or Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Let's begin with a brief exploration of these two holistic medical systems.

Ayurveda is one of the world's oldest medical systems. It originated in India more than 3,000 years ago and remains one of the country's traditional health care systems. The word 'Ayurveda' is derived from two Sanskrit words: the root '*ayus*', meaning "life", and '*veda*', meaning "knowledge", Ayurveda is commonly translated as the "science of life" or the "knowledge of life". Ayurveda advocates the total health of an individual through preventative, restorative and curative measures that may include whole foods (healthy diet), herbs, meditation, Yoga, mantras, Pancha karma, aromatherapy, color therapy, music and a healthy lifestyle.[19]

Ayurveda, first and foremost, is the art of preventing illness with a healthy lifestyle. According to Dr. Tiwari, 'Medicines and treatments are not the priority of Ayurveda. It first teaches how to achieve and maintain health with conduct, diet, and daily routines; only after that do we prescribe drugs. The treatment of disease is the secondary objective.' This philosophy and the roles for doctors (aromatherapists) and patients it implies, is an important distinguishing characteristic of sattvic medical systems. In doctor-patient interactions ruled by rajas and *tamas*, patients become unquestioning, passive recipients of treatments and medications; in a sattvic relationship, the physician (holistic practitioner) is primarily an educator who supports positive transformation by teaching self-care and responsibility for one's health. Sattvic practitioners are spiritual friends on a shared journey toward well-being, who elevate and empower their patients by assisting them in self-improvement.[20]

Traditional Chinese medicine (TCM), on the other hand, originated in ancient China, and has evolved over thousands of years. TCM is rooted in the ancient philosophy of Taoism and dates back more than 2,500 years. TCM practitioners use herbal medicines and various mind and body practices, such as acupuncture and tai chi, to treat or prevent health problems. TCM encompasses many different practices, including acupuncture, moxibustion (burning an herb above the skin to apply heat to acupuncture points), Chinese herbal medicine, tui na (Chinese therapeutic massage), dietary therapy, and tai chi and qi gong (practices that combine specific movements or postures, coordinated breathing, and mental focus).[21]

Ayurveda and Traditional Chinese medicine embody the two oldest practiced traditions of medicine on the planet. At the heart of both of these great healing traditions is a worldview that sees man and

nature as inextricably linked.[22] The integration of aromatherapy or essential oils into these traditional systems of medicine is a relatively new phenomenon as none of these systems have been known historically to have used essential oils as a treatment modality.

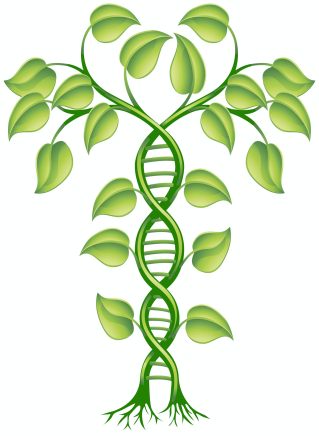
Our goal as a school is to inspire the integration of aromatherapy with such approaches as Ayurvedic or TCM in so far as they both support a deeper understanding of health by also looking at diet, nutrition, exercise, meditation or spiritual practices, etc. so that we may begin to see the many contributing causes to ill health or health imbalances and to understand that often to achieve true holistic healing, multiple modalities may need to be utilized for an individual. Aromatherapy is one of these modalities that can support health and wellness while also treating disease, however, it is of equal importance to acknowledge the role of genetics, lifestyle, stress, diet/nutrition, exercise, meditation, herbs, etc. in supporting not only the individuals' health but also aromatherapy.

The aim of developing holistic principles for the practice of aromatherapy is to provide a basis for your therapeutic approach to addressing your clients' needs or to develop a product line based upon specific goals. With a holistic framework of principles, practitioners are able to act continuously and consistently through a particular mind set which guides them in their treatment approach and applications.

The majority of aromatherapy practitioners, as they have developed over the past 20-30 years, have professed certain philosophical themes which, when pulled together, provide the practitioner with a holistic framework for practice.

These themes include the ideas that Aromatherapy:

- ✓ Stimulates and supports the body's own natural healing abilities.
- ✓ Encompasses the whole person
- ✓ Attempts to address the underlying causes of an illness
- ✓ Is about educating client and self on the nature of essential oils and their benefits
- ✓ Is a preventative healthcare approach
- ✓ Adopts the philosophy of Hippocrates: First do no harm



These common themes can be utilized to create 6 Philosophical Principles of Holistic Aromatherapy:

1. Stimulate and support the body's own natural healing abilities

It is known that humans have an incredible ability and potential to facilitate self-healing. In Naturopathic medicine this process is described as *Vis Medicatrix Naturae* and it recognizes the

individual's capacity to 'self-right' or 'self-heal'. Aromatherapy, as a complementary therapy to other professions such as bodywork, esthetics, etc., is able to support and enhance the bodies own natural healing abilities during acute and chronic stages of 'dis'-'ease'.

2. Encompasses the Whole (Individual) Person

Holistic therapies recognize that an individual is a whole made up of interdependent parts, including the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. The integration of aromatherapy with bodywork and other hands-on practices creates a dynamic avenue which enables practitioners to work on each of these levels simultaneously. Aromatherapy recognizes the uniqueness of the individual on all levels of being and treatment is customized according to individual needs and goals.

- **Mental/Emotional**
  Aromatherapy is able to affect the mental and emotional aspects of an individual via the power of touch as well as via olfaction. Olfaction is capable of affecting emotions and nervous system activity via its impact on the limbic system (the emotional brain).

- **Body (Physical)**
  Aromatherapy is able to affect the physical body via dermal application and inhalation. The potential therapeutic activity of essential oils is extensive including such activity as: anti-inflammatory, antispasmodic, antiseptic, expectorant, febrifuge, etc.)

- **Spirit/Energy**
  Aromatherapy, through the energetic functions of individual essential oils, is able to support an individual's spiritual practices, be it meditation and/or prayer etc., as well as to affect change on the subtle energetic body.

3. Addresses the Underlying Cause of Disease

Tolle causum is the Latin expression for addressing the underlying cause of disease. While orthodox medicine seeks a diseased organ or invasive microbe, holistic aromatherapy seeks to find the imbalances which led to the manifestation of the disease state. As Hippocrates once said "*I would rather know the person who has a disease, than the disease a person has*." Aromatherapists seek to understand the potential contributing factors (diet, lifestyle, stress, etc.) of disharmony as well as the potential pathways for supporting the body-mind in reaching its optimal state of being.

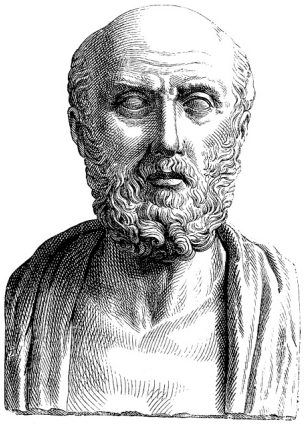
4. Aromatherapist as Teacher

To be an aromatherapist one must experience aromatherapy first hand in all its therapeutic potential for healing. To teach is to share one's knowledge and experience of using aromatherapy within one's own life or within the lives of your clients, family members and/or friends. To teach is to enhance and deepen ones understanding and awareness of the amazing effectiveness of aromatics by applying it within one's everyday life. The better your relationship is with aromatherapy the better you will be able to apply it to other individuals. This idea is reflected in bodywork and massage

therapy education, where the therapist is trained by both receiving and giving treatments in order to better understand the benefits and the feel of the bodywork and massage technique being learned.

5. Prevention

Aromatherapy can be used to reduce the likelihood of occurrence and/or prevent the manifestation of chronic degenerative disease when integrated into a whole health lifestyle. The use of aromatherapy for preventative measures often involves the reduction of stress as well as strengthening the immune system and uplifting a clients' perception of their life, including empowering them to deal with stressors in healthier manner. Essential oils can easily be incorporated into natural home cleaning products too as this would support immunity and health, for sure!



6. First, Do No Harm

The idea of *First, Do No Harm* is derived from the Hippocratic Oath of medicine. The idea is that the intervention used shall do more good than harm. In aromatherapy, this idea is expressed in our selection of essential oils, our understanding of their safety issues, as well as the understanding of the clients' constitution. ***You should always know about an essential oil prior to using it on a client.*** This way you reduce the likelihood of an adverse reaction.

Adopting the above framework for the practice of aromatherapy would be of great benefit to practitioners as it allows aromatherapy to be viewed as a holistic complementary therapy rather than a 'treatment' approach to disease. It also keeps the practitioner from diagnosing and prescribing, which is outside the scope of practice for the aromatherapist. The holistic framework provides the therapist with a basis for a therapeutic approach which lays emphasis on supporting and enhancing the client's ability to reach health and well-being through facilitation utilizing aromatherapy rather than through the treatment of a specific disease or illness.

Aromatherapy is indeed a dynamic profession with many potential applications in diverse settings. As this course unfolds, aromatherapy will be presented in a manner which is easy to understand and its application easy to integrate into any form of bodywork and massage therapy being practiced or as a stand-alone therapy or into the creation of a therapeutic product line. I hope that this text inspires you to embrace genuine aromatherapy as a valuable complementary therapy which can deepen and expand your practice, wellness, and life.

As aromatherapy practitioners, we acknowledge that aromatherapy is a modality of healing and can serve as a complement to traditional or orthodox medicine. Aromatherapy practitioners are typically not qualified to diagnose, unless they are an M.D. or N.D., and hence the practice of aromatherapy is considered to be a complementary therapy.

To learn more about language and aromatherapy, see Lesson 4: The Art of Language

Module One: Lesson 3

The Language of Aroma

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this lesson, you will be able to:

1. Discuss the importance of language and the words we choose to use within the aromatherapy community.

THE LANGUAGE OF AROMA

Aromatherapy is suffering from an identity crisis and has been since its rapid growth within the retail industry throughout the late 1980's and into the present time. The average consumer is confused as to what aromatherapy is and if there is a difference between synthetic fragrances and genuine essential oils.

In aromatherapy language becomes crucial in defining the profession as well as providing a clear identity for its practice and growth within the public and private sector. Language provides insight into a given subject and often defines a practice. The language we use in relation to the practice of aromatherapy is crucial in educating the general public on genuine aromatherapy. Since the vast majority of the public thinks of perfume when one uses the word 'fragrance', I would like to put forth that aromatherapists begin to use a more specific language that more adequately describes aromatherapy as a holistic healing therapy.

The following words relate to and express genuine aromatherapy.

- **Aroma:** an odor arising from spices, plants, cooking, etc. especially an agreeable odor
- **Aromatic:** having an aroma; fragrant or sweet-scented; odoriferous
- **Aromaticity:** the quality or state of being aromatic
- **Fragrant:** having a pleasant scent or aroma
- **Scent:** a word derived from the french "Sentir" which means to feel, smell. Also based on the Latin word 'Sentire' meaning to feel or perceive

However, many individuals, even aromatherapy practitioners, use the word 'fragrance' when describing an essential oil or an aroma. Essential oils and aromas both have a reference back to plants and to natural scents or odors. Fragrance, on the other hand, has a reference back to perfume and cologne as can be seen in the very definition of 'fragrance'. It would seem that the use of the word 'fragrance' furthers the misconceptions of what aromatherapy is, particularly amongst the general public. Therefore, it may be prudent for each person who practices genuine aromatherapy to refrain from using the term 'fragrance', since it inadequately describes genuine aromatherapy and the essential oils (natures aromas) which have been derived from medicinal plants.

- **Fragrance:** perfume, cologne, toilet water, or the like, the quality of being fragrant
  (All definitions, except for scent, have been taken from: Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary of the English Language. (1996). New Jersey; Random House.)

The language of aromas offers us a new vocabulary to work with. Although aromas contribute to our perception of the world and our own lives, we lack a true vocabulary for describing these individual

aromas. This may be because aromas or odors do not get remembered as a word or even as a scent/odor, but rather an aroma will be remembered by its meanings and memory-based associations. Describing an aroma is a highly individual experience so we need a universal vocabulary to describe particular characteristics of an individual essential oil aroma. The following is a list of words gathered from a book, "*Perfume and Flavor Materials of Natural Origin*" by Stephan Arctander, which is considered to be a definitive guide to odor descriptions.

Balsamic	Intensely sweet	Rosy leafy
Balsamic-woody	Leafy-woody	Root like Smokey
Bitter – sweet	Light	Soft
Bitter	Meadow-like sweetness	Spicy
Camphoraceous	Medicinal, reminiscent	Spicy-herbaceous
Citrusy	of cough preparations	Spicy-peppery
Clean	Mild	Sweet
Earthy	Minty	Sweet-fruity
Fresh	Musky animal-like	Sweet-spicy
Fresh-fruity	Penetrating	Tea leaf-like
Floral	Peppery	Tenacious
Floral-woody	Pine-like	Turpentine like
Fruity – sweet	Powerful	Warm
Fruity-warm	Pungent	Woody-green
Grassy	Radiant	Woody-resinous
Green undertone	Rancid	Vanillin like
Hay-like	Reminiscent of……	Woody
Heavy	Resinous	Warm – woody
Herbaceous	Rich and tenacious	
Honey-like	Rosy	

As you begin your studies of individual essential oils you may want to refer back to this list and use these words to help describe the aroma of a given essential oil.

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