



Lesson Nine *Olfactory System*

Olfactory System

Essential oils work directly with the olfactory system —specifically with the limbic region of the brain. The limbic region is the oldest part of the brain —the survival area dealing with our primal need for food, sex and safety.

Your sense of smell is the only sense that goes directly to the brain and because essential oils consist of such tiny molecules, they are the only fragrance that can pass through the **blood brain barrier**.

Aroma + emotion + experience = memory.

You will go more into the study of the brain and the role sacred oils play in the second section of this course, but for now, it's important to understand how the oils work on a therapeutic level.

Our sense of smell is so important. We have 10 million cell receptors compared to dogs that have 250 cell receptors. We use our sense of smell to determine whether food is good or bad, and some believe we even search for a compatible mate through our sense of smell.

Other than physical pain, taste is the only sense developed at birth AND 80% of taste comes from odor. This is why if we have to take some awful tasting medicine, we can eliminate the taste by plugging our nose as we take it.

The Amygdala:

The amygdala is a small gland in the limbic region of the brain. It has two parts, anterior and posterior. The posterior being the part that holds trauma. The anterior is considered the gateway to the frontal lobe. Using essential oils through inhalation, forces the trauma from the posterior part to the anterior part, opening the frontal lobes to transform the negative thoughts and patterns from trauma into happy and peaceful thoughts.

How to Apply Therapeutically:

When you're dealing with any kind of trauma or upsetting memory that continues to negatively impact present day, then working with oils therapeutically can help immensely.

Introducing an oil is your first important step. Many people have the idea that when you're stressed, then smelling something calming will help. This isn't how aromatherapy works. Aromatherapy involves training the brain.

I first ask the person if there's a particular scent they like. Some like rose and lavender while others prefer pine and other evergreen scents. Choose an oil you're confident they'll enjoy, **but don't offer it to them to smell.**

You only want to introduce an oil while the person is immersed in a happy memory —one that brings joy, or feels loving and peaceful. When they are fully immersed in the memory and are accessing the feelings from the memory (*very important to access the feelings and not just remember*), introduce the oil at this time. Let them inhale and associate their good, positive, peaceful feelings with this oil.

Let them inhale several times. This is the oil that they will use whenever they are stressed or when trauma is triggered. Their brain will associate the scent with peaceful, happy thoughts. This is the process of helping the trauma to take a backseat in the brain and move the peaceful feelings to the front of the brain.

Essential Oils Molecular Make-up

Essential oils have two main categories of constituents —the terpenes and the phenylpropanoids.

The phenylpropanoids are found throughout the plant kingdom. They serve as essential components of structural polymers. Their derivatives, such as floral pigments and fragrant compounds protect against ultraviolet light, defend against pathogens and mediate plant-pollinator interactions. Their protective qualities are one of the reasons the oils are so helpful to us when seeking protection from pathogens.

The terpenes are the largest group of components found in essential oils. They are biosynthetic building blocks within nearly every living creature. The terpenes are mainly categorized as **monoterpenes**, **sesquiterpenes**, and **diterpenes**. Currently there is research being done studying the effects of oils high in monoterpenes in regards to anti-tumor activity and are being considered for human cancer chemo-prevention testing.

There are also studies that have been done and are continuing to be done in regards to trauma. Some believe the terpenes and phenyls are directly involved in regards to healing trauma. According to some research, these essential oil components will "clean" and erase faulty programming while introducing new programming. Is this done through creating new neural pathways? Or through DNA structure? I am personally researching this area more as I feel the research is still very rudimentary.