

FROM SCEPTIC TO AROMATHERAPIST

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Greetings!

Hi! I am Christina and I would like to share with you the story of how I transitioned from a **BIG SCEPTIC** to an aromatherapist.



Image: Learning how to create the perfect blend for Aromatherapy.

Due to my education background and having worked in a hospital environment as a radiographer, I have always been exposed only to the ways of modern medicine. I had very little to no exposure to alternative therapy at all.

INITIAL EXPERIENCES WITH AROMATHERAPY

My first experience with essential oils was when I mentally broke down during a psychology training session. As the session unraveled many negative emotions that are embedded deeply within oneself, I too became absorbed in the turmoil that was openly discussed. Noticing the changes to my mood, a friend, out of goodwill, placed a drop of a Peppermint and Lavender blend on my hand. When I inhaled the scent, I felt as though the scent immediately

stomach discomfort. Surprisingly enough, the drops helped and I could eat my lunch. Despite still having diarrhoea after lunch, I could nonetheless cope with the remaining activities set for the day.

Ever since this second encounter with essential oils, I had been keeping a lookout for this Lemon essential oil bottle but did not know where to find it. Nonetheless, it still did not make it to my priority list that I had to



penetrated my brain and lifted my emotions. Although I never knew what the blend comprised of, I was impressed with what essential oils can do and I could resume the training activity.

I had yet another experience with essential oils when I developed an upset stomach halfway through another training session. Someone recommended me to drop a few drops of Lemon essential oil to alleviate my

have a bottle. So, it was once again shelved at the back of my mind until June 2015 when I met someone (MCML) who set up a booth at my workplace to sell essential oils.

The Experiment



The mist that escaped the diffuser machine at the booth captivated my attention from afar. Upon approaching the booth to enquire what the booth was selling, I spotted the same Lemon essential oil bottle that I had wanted to have earlier. However, instead of purchasing the Lemon bottle, I was introduced to another type of essential oil blend that was specific to release stress.

For the next 3 months, this was the perfume I used on my wrist that helped me elevate my mood. I could see some difference in the way I approached life and view myself. The blend did help, to some extent, in reducing my stress level, which in turn resulted in me having better clarity of thoughts.



(Image: Learning how to conduct an aromatherapy consultation session at Sandhya Maarga Holistic Living Academy)

BELIEVING IN THE POWER OF AROMATHERAPY

After I had emptied that 5ml bottle of essential oil, I was ready to look for more supply. That was when I decided to get the whole package – a set of essential oils and a diffuser for myself. I was quite vulnerable to acute conditions such as the flu, cough, pains in the shoulders etc.

With more essential oils for me to play and experiment with, I began to appreciate essential oils as treasured gifts for the health. As I applied and diffuse essential oils such as Peppermint, Lemon, Lavender etc., I discovered that they had the power to relieve my symptoms and I could sleep better at nights. Good things should always be shared. I introduced the Eucalyptus essential oil to my son who always suffered from respiratory health problems and he too experienced an improvement.

Quote that inspired me:

“The body has a natural ability to heal itself if it works hand-in-hand with Nature”

Did you know?

∞ While Lavender essential oil is generally safe, some may develop allergy from it.

∞ Many cases of hospitalisation have been reported due to wrongful ingestion of peppermint oil.

∞ Essential oils are so easily available over the counter but it is still best to use them with the guidance of a qualified Aromatherapist.

∞ Our Academy is the only Academy that facilitates clinical training in an actual hospital/clinic environment for Aromatherapy in Malaysia. Find out more by contacting us.

THE TRANSITION

One day, after completing a hospital project, there was a strong urge within me that I should leave my job to start a new life. I planned to rest for a year to recover from the exhaustion and stress at work. As I love studying, I decided to take the opportunity to learn something new.

The woman who set up the aromatherapy booth at my workplace, MCML, and I met up

for coffee. During our conversation, she mentioned that she had enrolled for a course in Aromatherapy. Her excitement about the course perked my interest. With all the positive experiences I had with essential oils, I desired to understand more about the properties of essential oils (EOs) so that I could be better informed about the usage and how I could optimise the use of EOs for the health.

ENROLLING FOR THE COURSE

I decided to attend the introductory session in Kuala Lumpur and was intrigued with the prospects of Sandhya Maarga Holistic Living Academy.

“The body has a natural ability to heal itself if it works hand-in-hand with Nature,” I remember the founder of the Academy said; a quote that inspired me. This quote is etched in my mind until today.

The qualifications and backgrounds of the lecturers inspired me. Although so, I did not realise how important these factors were in my journey of learning to become an aromatherapist until after classes began.

Not only was this Diploma in Aromatherapy a UK Accredited qualification, the syllabus taught

comprised of theoretical and practical knowledge beyond what was required for the examination. From what I know, most of the other Academies that offer a Diploma in Aromatherapy do not give the students an opportunity to conduct clinical training in a clinic/hospital environment. This factor alone sets the Academy apart from the rest.



INITIAL SCEPTIC IN CLASS

Although I really looked forward to begin my first class for the Diploma in Aromatherapy, I must admit that I did not attend the session with an open mind. When the lecturers introduced to us the concepts of holistic healing, I remember myself being very sceptical because of my years of exposure to only modern medicine.

Everything was new to me and I had never heard anyone else talk about the principles of holistic healthcare in so much depth before. In fact, even after the first class, I remained confused as to what holistic healthcare was all about.

To be honest, I only enrolled in the course to learn more about essential oils and was not at all convinced with the philosophy and principles of holistic wellness and healing. While the lecturers were teaching in the front for the first few classes, my sceptical mind kept reiterating: "Are these really true?"

It took me quite a while before I was convinced that the principles of holistic healthcare ideologies really do work!

ANATOMY & PHYSIOLOGY

The Anatomy & Physiology classes were, perhaps, one of the most important modules in the entire Diploma in Aromatherapy course. It was easy for me to relate to this module as it was scientific. Due to my background in modern medicine, this module was what changed my perception of holistic healthcare. While most students tend to find this

module dry and "boring", I found this very interesting as it re-established the idea in me that the principles of holistic medicine / therapy can also be scientific! I agree with the lecturers that this module is extremely important for the students to gain a good understanding on how the body works before being able to apply the knowledge in the use of EOs to restore health.



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THE BIGGEST TURNING POINT

I was not so thrilled about the massage therapy component in one of the modules of the Diploma in Aromatherapy course. As already mentioned earlier, I only enrolled in this course to know more about essential oils and how they can improve our health.

So, when we reached to the massage component in our syllabus, I remember asking myself: “Why should I be another person’s servant?”

Being an educated individual, it was a challenge for me to lower the ego to massage another individual. Furthermore, I was also uncomfortable with the thought of having to touch another person’s body. However, as this was a compulsory module to obtain

the Diploma, I swallowed my pride and gave it my best. I told myself that I would just persevere to complete the training to fulfil the syllabus requirements.

The part that I enjoyed most was learning how to create customised blends of essential oils. There will never be two blends that have the same scent. Each has its own unique aroma. To learn how to use the different essential oils to customise a blend to suit different needs is both fun and challenging at the same time.

While I initially struggled to understand how certain properties of essential oils should not be used on people with certain needs, I eventually developed the confidence with more practice.

“Why should I be another person’s servant?”

BOOST OF CONFIDENCE

After completing the massage module, it dawned on me that aromatherapy is indeed a very effective form of healing and I can help others with the knowledge and skills that I have gained. That was when I began to re-evaluate the authenticity of holistic wellness and healthcare practices. I started to adopt a different perception about massage therapy. The power of aromatherapy amazed me and caught me in awe. I am now absolutely convinced that Aromatherapy can help anyone on the physical, mental and spiritual level.

Although the case studies were demanding, I really enjoyed doing them. I dare say that it was through doing these case studies that I could really apply all that I have learned from the Academy on real-life model clients. The knowledge and skills no longer remained theoretical. With the practical training, clinical training and case studies, I was applying all I have learnt to good use. I also began to appreciate the importance of developing rapport and trust between a therapist / practitioner and a client.

A friend whom I customised a blend for to help relieve the tensed muscles around her back suggested that I could explore how to use essential oils for traumatic support. She had expressed how she could connect with the aroma of the blend specially customised for her and that it “*touched her heart*”.

My mother had a role to play in developing my interest and boosting my confidence in my aromatherapy massage skill. For a long time, she had suffered from digestive problems. However, after 4 aromatherapy massage sessions with me, she claimed that she felt much better and still talks about how effective the massage sessions were.

Another friend who was going through chemotherapy also became a model client to help me complete this aromatherapy massage module required by the syllabus. She too expressed that the massage sessions helped her tremendously in relieving stress.



Although I had initially intended to just complete the course to get a UK certificate and some knowledge in essential oils, I ended up with more than just that. The lecturers went the extra mile and taught us so many different things that are not part of the syllabus and these knowledge and skills left a huge impact on me.

After each class, I would try different holistic health remedies / methods such as oil pulling, castor oil pack etc. and I was honestly surprised with the positive results.

Only after people started giving feedback about how effective the Aromatherapy sessions were and started looking for me that I realised that this is the path I want to venture into. The excitement and positive outcome of those Aromatherapy massage practice sessions opened my eyes to the magic of human touch.

BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

I never really thought I would ever take Aromatherapy seriously. I was definitely interested to know more but I never had a passion for it. However, after being introduced to so many aspects of holistic wellness by the lecturers in this Academy, I began to open my mind and heart to receive the knowledge and skills to become a professional Aromatherapist.

In this Academy, I learned that it is not sufficient to merely know what essential oils can do. It is also important to have a thorough knowledge about Anatomy and Physiology so that we may apply our knowledge in the properties of each essential oil to help support certain systems of the physical body. The lecturers also taught us that it is important to follow certain scientific protocols when practising Aromatherapy. There is a line that divides an ordinary person who merely recommends the different potential essential oils to help support the body systems and a qualified Aromatherapist who can advise the proper usage, storage and properties of these oils to help support specific conditions.



Image: Christina asking questions during an Aromatherapy workshop session.

“In this Academy, I learned that it is not sufficient to merely know what essential oils can do.”

PHYSICAL & MENTAL PREPARATION

If anyone is interested in enrolling for the Diploma in Aromatherapy course, I would advise the person to be prepared to embark on a roller coaster ride into a whole new world of discovering what holistic healthcare is about. One cannot take the Anatomy & Physiology module lightly. To be a good holistic health

practitioner, one needs to understand how the body works. Some parts of the course may be challenging but I am sure everyone will pull through if one were to be disciplined and dedicate the necessary effort during the course. Always remember that practice makes perfect. I too initially struggled with the massage therapy component

but with perseverance, people started acknowledging that they had a liking for my techniques. Communication skills will also improve after the course as the lecturers teach the students how to properly conduct a professional aromatherapy consultation session.



Photo: With our students at the Kuchai Lama Campus

"Aromatherapy is a caring, hands-on therapy which seeks to induce relaxation, to increase energy, to reduce the effects of stress and to restore lost balance to mind, body and soul."

– Robert Tisserand (Leading expert in Aromatherapy)

MEETING EXPECTATIONS

Whenever I enrol for a course, I always expect the instructors to be willing to share information freely. As this Academy offers a Diploma in Aromatherapy qualification from the UK, I was already convinced that a UK standard syllabus would definitely be of quality since it is internationally recognised. This itself already was a pulling factor for me to study here. I did not need to fly over to the UK to study this course and the UK examiners came down to Malaysia to assess our knowledge and performance at the end of the course. With all the expertise and knowledge that the lecturers at this Academy passed down to us during the course, not only did I save a lot of money of having enrolled in an internationally recognised programme at this Academy that did not require me to fly over to Europe, I vouch that I have gained so much more than what the course actually required us to know.

PROTOCOL & SCIENTIFIC PRACTICES

Until today, I make sure that I follow the protocol and principles taught to me by the Academy. Coming from a medical background, I understand and appreciate how important it is to maintain documentation. When the Academy taught us how important the records of all our meetings with clients are in maintaining the professional standard, it resonated with me. Such records can also contribute to the field by allowing it to gain a more scientific standing among other medical professionals or bodies.



A SECOND CHANCE

I want to thank the Academy for giving me a very solid second chapter of my life. Enrolling in this Diploma in Aromatherapy course with them gave me hope and renewed my faith that even at my age, I could still change my life path and job. Although I have completed the Diploma, I still take up short courses with the Academy every now and then as part of my Continuous Professional Development (CPD) training to enhance my knowledge and polish my skills.

The lecturers have been nothing short of helpful. When the founder of the Academy, Master Geneviève Tan, was in India, she did not fail to continuously provide me with the necessary support and advice when I was faced with a dilemma while working on challenging cases. Whenever I am faced with a dilemma in regards to the choices of oils or massage techniques, the lecturers always make sure that our doubts are cleared and try to assist us the best they can. The importance of such continuous support cannot be stressed enough for fresh graduates.



Image: We, Diploma in Aromatherapy students, was learning how to conduct professional consultation session in a hospital setting.

CLINICAL TRAINING

I did not know that clinical training was so important until I attended my first session. This is an opportunity that every student at the Academy should appreciate. The willingness of the Academy to facilitate such training in a hospital or clinic environment clearly shows their dedication in equipping their students with the relevant knowledge and skills to manage real life situations.

Through their clinical training, I learned how to properly conduct a professional consultation session with clients / patients. We were trained to think outside the box and ask specific questions to prompt answers from the clients / patients to better analyse their situation / condition. One question leads to another. The quality of our questions will determine the quality of the answers received that will in turn affect the quality of the consultation session. Our ability to recommend the correct oils heavily depends on the outcome of our consultation sessions.

How many Academies offering a Diploma in Aromatherapy in Malaysia provide their students with an opportunity to do clinical training in a hospital or clinic environment? As per my knowledge, there isn't any other so far.



CPD

In the Health Sciences, it is important to engage in Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses. The healthcare sector is changing all the time and it is up to its practitioners to keep up with the current law, and the new techniques and discoveries. A practitioner that engages in CPD courses show that they truly care for their clients as they seek to continuously improve their skills and knowledge to serve clients better.

As the statistics on infertility is on the rise, I recently enrolled myself in the Academy's Fertility Wellness & Massage short CPD course in order to better understand the perceptions of holistic healthcare practitioners in regards to this problem.



DID YOU KNOW?

Sandhya Maarga Holistic Living Academy organises many CPD or short courses from time-to-time to enrich our students' minds, update them on new discoveries, and improve their knowledge and skills.

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE & EXHIBITION FOR HOLISTIC WELLNESS (ICEHW)

The Academy organises the annual ICEHW, inviting expert speakers, practitioners and medical doctors from different fields and different parts of the world to share their knowledge and skills with medical students from different universities, alternative medicine practitioners of different fields and the general public. It is through the Academy that I learned about the concept of integrative medicine, a concept that they have been actively promoting in Malaysia since 2013. Never before have I ever attended such a conference. When every practitioner from the different fields of medicine works together, each contributing their expertise to help solve a case, the objective of healing is achieved because this integrative effort places the well-being of the patient first. This, I have learned, should be the goal and future of healthcare.





(Image: ICEHW participants comprise of medical students from different universities and holistic health practitioners from various fields).



(Image: Some of the Academy's ICEHW 2016 participants and team members)

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