Grief And How This Affects Your Energy Body Transcript

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Introduction and Guest Background

Welcome back to the Reverse Autoimmune Disease Summit 5.0 Healing the Energy Body. I am Doctor Kisha yours. And if you remember, I've been starting all of these interviews by explaining the energy.

And your energy system is everything. There's nothing that's separate from energy. So as I talk to my amazing guests, a lot of what we're covering is anything that could affect your energy system, which then affects your physical structure.

And so this guest today is no exception. My dear friend and colleague Jody Sarnoff. Cohen is a bestselling author, award winning journalist, functional practitioner and founder of Vibrant Blue Oils, where she's combined her training and nutritional therapy and aromatherapy to create unique, proprietary blends of organic and wild crafted essential oils.

She's helped over 50,000 clients healed from brain related challenges, including anxiety, insomnia, and autoimmunity. For the past ten years, she's lectured at wellness centers, conferences and corporations on brain health, essential oils, stress, and detoxification.

She's been seen in The New York Times wellness Mama Elephant Journal, and numerous publications. Her website, Vibrant Blue oils.com, is visited by over 300,000 national health seekers every year.

She's rapidly become a top resource for essential oils education on the internet today. Welcome, Jody. Thank you. It's always great to connect with the Acacia.

Oh I feel the same. And we today what we're going to talk about is the role that grief has on that energy system and then subsequently the physical body.

And I know you have a very poignant story of grief, as many people have experienced grief, but I would love if you feel comfortable sharing, your story with our audience.

Yeah. It's funny how, necessity is the mother of invention, and our children are often the motivators. They, bring people into our lives, situations into our lives that we never would have, you know, necessarily chosen or, you know, followed without them.

But, my my story really begins actually with the birth of my son Max. You know, he has an older sister who was very easy child. I just assumed I was a great mom and had another 122 months later.

And number two was not as easy. He had no impulse control. He, you know, one of our cues was like, look at my nose. You could never look at our nose. And so I spent the first three years of his life reading every parenting book, taking every parenting class, banging my head against the wall, thinking like, why can't I figure this out?

And then one day, we were at a birthday party and a friend was actually complimenting me on how well-behaved he was that day.

Jody's Grief Story and Early Health Struggles

And then another mom passed out, a Ritz cracker as a snack. He ate the cracker and jack off. He did. And she witnessed that and said, oh gosh, you know, my brother was on Ritalin his whole life, and it turns out he was just allergic to weird foods.

You should take him to a nutritionist. So I thought that's, you know, that's certainly easy. I've done everything else.

Took him to a nutritionist who immediately identified that he was sensitive to corn, soy, and dairy.

We took that out of his diet, and the next day he could look at our knees. And my mind was so blown that, you know, oh my goodness, why did I not think of food that I just had to learn more?

So I went back and got a degree in nutritional therapy and was trying to help other moms. You know, we live nearby in Seattle, so I took a class at Best Year to figure out I had a muscle test because that felt like an easier way to assess the root cause with little squirmy children.

And, was doing that until, you know, another shoe dropped. My husband at the time, he, I knew he was bipolar. He was mostly manic. But after our son was born, he got more and more depressed to the point where I was worried he would die on my watch.

So we moved him into a residential treatment facility. And once I knew he was safe and it wasn't my job to keep him safe, like, I just collapsed. It was like running, you know, a five year marathon and finally crossing the finish line.

Adrenal fatigue, kind of at the most extreme. And nothing that I did seem to be helping. And that's when essential oils in my life, a friend, observed that, you know, I was so high cortisol for so long, which means chronically inflamed, which means all the remedies I was ingesting probably weren't getting assimilated.

And so she gifted me some oils, and I just started making things up to help myself heal and launched a company as a result of that. And that was kind of flowing well.

And then, Max was actually killed in a car accident when he was 12 years old. And that, you know, every time you think you're, like, prepared. Oh, I got this.

I more resourced, a bigger challenge comes along and you're like, all right, I guess I'm not quite sure how I'm going to handle this one. And so, that was three and a half years ago.

And in the last three and a half years, I've learned a lot, not necessarily things that I would kind of say, like, oh, gosh, I want to challenge, like, throw me this, please.

But, you know, when you're drowning and you have to learn to swim, you learn to swim very quickly. So, you know, and and it's not, you know, that idea that time heals all wounds.

I don't I don't think it's true. I think some things get easier and some things get harder and things change. And it's really, you know, they talk about peeling an onion.

At a certain point, you peel the onion and you kind of are there. I'm not sure that you ever are done. You know, there are a lot of false summits and you just keep climbing and working through it.

But what we're talking about today, this emotional piece and how it shows up in the physical body and how you can start to unravel it, I think is is really important.

And I don't think it's as, discussed as it should be. Yeah, I agree, and thank you for sharing that. And, you know, as, as you went through the unimaginable grief that happens with the loss of someone near and dear to you, there are stages of grief and you've been able to track them now and, and map them for yourself.

And I would love to have you share them. Yeah. You know, it's so interesting. The first stage is definitely shock. Like, it's kind of I mean, I guess there's no good way to learn that your child has died.

But the way it unfolded there, there were other boys in the car and, one died at the scene of the crime, and we didn't know which ones we had to go to, Harborview, the local trauma hospital, with the other families to kind of, figure out that it was Max.

And my first, like, when I found out, I just felt nauseous. Like, for me, grief was really nausea. Like, I just I couldn't eat anything. I just kind of that was kind of my emotion at the time.

And then, we're Jewish and they have you very, very quickly, which is kind of a good thing. But you're doing it in this state of like, shock and disassociation.

So I really didn't remember anything like I, you know, it's funny, Facebook like tells you when it's your friends birthdays and sometimes I'll go and just send them like a birthday message and I'll realize they sent me a message like Facebook Messenger, you know, three years ago that I just either read and didn't notice or didn't see.

But I think the shock is is pretty, extreme and and in a way that's good. You know, like, it's kind of like we've talked about disassociating when things are too intense, you know, you fight, flight or freeze, you freeze, you leave your body. It's too much to feel.

So you just, find a way to kind of check out and go through the motions. And long term, that's not great. But in the early days, I actually think it's, it's kind of nice to be a little numb.

Yeah. Protective. Yeah. Exactly. Yeah. And so. But we can we can talk about that. I mean, it's basically, when you're not in your body, you know, it's really hard for your body to heal.

And that pattern over time is, is problematic. So that's one thing like grounding. I'm I'm a huge fan of grounding, which to me means actually getting in your body because if you're not in your body, it's kind of like if you're if you want to exercise, if you don't get your sneakers on or get in your exercise gear, you're not going anywhere.

It's just like almost first step, like, you know, stage one foundational. You need to actually be in your body so that you can feel things. Because it's only when you feel things that you process through.

And I think, I mean, my big joke, I always say when I don't know what to do, I do nothing. And I think that can be applied kind of universally. You know, when we are afraid of an emotion, when it's going to feel too sad or we're going to get too angry or we're going to get too afraid, we shut it down.

You know, it's almost like the apprehension of feeling, the emotion is often paralyzing us from actually feeling it. But if we just let ourselves feel it, it's not as bad as you know.

Our mind has created it to be. So past shock, what would be next? Well, for shock. What what I did, I mean, talking about oils. There are a lot of grounding oils, you know, great, easy ways to ground or anything that you can do to connect to nature.

You can walk barefoot. I actually, have a wooden tray that I put rocks in that I just put my feet on when I'm working on my laptop.

Shock, Disassociation, and Grounding

You can use oils like grounding oils. Vetiver has deep roots, cedarwood, frankincense, all of these things to kind of connect you in your body. I, I try to, make sure that I kind of gearshift my nervous system so that I'm not in that fight or flight state, you know, and able to feel safe.

And I do think that that is kind of foundational, because I think that if you're, you know, it's a little bit like I, I used to run marathons, right? And you start at two miles, then you walk up to six and you work up to 12.

If you just jumped in and tried to run like 18 miles, you know, maybe you could do it, but you might hurt yourself. You might tear something. There is something to be said for kind of a slow and steady build.

And I do think that the more you can feel safe, then that allows you. Once you feel safe, you can start to kind of process through things. Yeah. And one of the things that I've noticed and, you know, we've talked about this, this is

kind of what I learned from you.

But oftentimes the, you know, if something traumatic happens, you had problems before you had that problem. And the trauma that you're experiencing from the current trigger is often correlated to an earlier trauma in your past, you know, and if if something is, you know, I think of it like a sore thumb that sticks up.

Like if there's something in your past that you haven't processed, you're going to overreact more to something in your present. So when you really start rolling up your sleeves and getting into the deep work, it's it's deep and it takes time.

You know, it's rare that, you know, I've been in therapy for, I actually was started before the accident. So probably four years on and off. And we finally struck on something that my therapist is like, I've been waiting for you to, like, make this connection, you know, for two years.

And I'm like, wow. It just kind of it happens when it happens, but you almost need to give your body the space to allow that to unfold. Oh yeah. That's beautiful.

So the giving yourself the space, I call that curious compassion, right where you're you're checking in and you're asking and you can engage in self-care.

And I think in certain stages of grief, you're not engaging in self-care, are you? If you're not home in your body, then there's nothing to care for. Yeah. No, I think that's totally true.

And I also I mean, it's interesting because disassociation, there's so many things that are vilified, right. You know, inflammation, cortisol, disassociation.

But we don't realize there's, you know, it's not all bad. There's there's good and there's bad and it's just kind of not staying stuck in that place for too long.

So, I think it's healthy to kind of understand, to recognize, like, oh, this is what I'm doing. Like, for me, I became a workaholic because that was a really easy way for me to check out.

I didn't need to feel, I just needed to work. And everyone, you know, you get accolades when you're productive. So it was, self validating, and at a certain point after it's really interesting, you know, so I wrote this book for random House.

It did really well. I got a bunch of people to promote. It had great sales, and all of a sudden it was over and I felt horrible. I, you know, like, right when you're like, crossing the finish line, I should be celebrating. I feel great.

I realized, oh my goodness, I was using this as a distraction. And now that I don't have this distraction, I actually have to like, sit in my body and feel.

And that's when kind of the panic set in. And then I was like, oh, you know, I'm I'm not as great as people think I am. I, you know, there's more work to do.

So the stages of grief that are often outlined, you know, from Kubler-Ross are denial and anger and bargaining and depression and acceptance. And you just went into them, you know, one at a time where the depression part happened after being in the community and writing the book and getting that out there.

And then right then all that kind of fell apart. Know that the keep a rest model is actually based on facing your own death, and it never made sense to me.

It never really. I know, I was wondering, that's why I was asking like the and the stage that cancer didn't. No, no. And even I mean, you know, it was my ex-husband that was driving the car like I didn't the only one that.

Yeah, I mean, I, I can see whatever. Not not everyone is cookie cutter the same, but, I got a lot of handouts on that. And I kept thinking, like, this doesn't really feel like it fits.

Like what kind of fit for me was shock. And then there was just a lot of sadness, like really, really deep, overwhelming sadness.

Processing Grief Through the Body

And I think, like a lot of women, you know, who are my age, I was kind of raised to be a pleaser. And I was also raised like, when I was a kid, my emotions were never validated, you know, don't cry or I'll give you something to cry about.

And so I never felt like it was okay to be sad. I kind of felt like, you know, I had to, you know, I had to, like, repress it or, you know, keep moving or try to find happy things to kind of compensate.

And it's it's really interesting. One thing I noticed, I, I've done yoga for a long time, and I would start to notice that I could no longer sit cross-legged like I would, you know, I'd get a block or I'd find some kind of compensation.

And I started to realize what is going on, why can't I do this? And so I started to kind of look at what would be impeding my flexibility. And I started playing with fascia, you know, the whole idea that the issues are in the tissues and, actually created a new fascia blend.

And when one time the instructor was, you know, often you do some breathing for, you know, a couple minutes, this was lasting for probably like 15 or 20 minutes.

I'm like, okay, I, I'm going to make a commitment. I'm going to try to do this. As uncomfortable as it is, I'm going to lean into the pain and just figure out what's happening.

So I put the blend on my hip and all of a sudden the muscles started to loosen up. And then I had this really strong hit. Oh my gosh, this is where I carried my son, where I carried Max, you know, because his sister was 22 months older.

So it was often, you know, she was running and I would carry him to like, run after her. And I realized that's where I stuff my grief, like a lot of it was kind of in my hips.

And so it's interesting. I almost call it a three legged race because you do something physically to kind of release, you know, the, the vasculature and the muscles and the lymph and everything.

And then you feel the intense emotion and you have to kind of find a way to breathe through it. Often what I do when I feel intense emotion, I smell oils and I, I just walk in nature without any devices.

I leave my phone and I often, tap, you know, which comes in nervous system. There are many tapping points, but for whatever reason, the clavicles is my favorite and the easiest.

And maybe, I think the least weird when I'm walking around outside. You know, I think it's a little strange to go like this. More subtle, but I really have to, like, feel in and and integrated.

And the good news is, once you kind of choose to show up and feel your feelings, you're not stuck in it for that long, you kind of process it through.

And then I often, I find that physical emotions are kind of like any other toxicants. Like, I take an absence of baths, I take binders, I look at it like, okay, I'm detoxing something and I'm going to just help it, like leave my system more quickly and beautiful.

So, you know, if you don't move through those stages and it gets stuck, your body will tell you and, you know, in

these beautiful ways. And of course, as is just pointing out, it's not going to be the same for everybody. Right?

So hip tightness was hers for you. It might be lungs or it might be something completely different. After my dad died suddenly last February, it was, for me, lower back pain, you know, and, it was so interesting.

It was like this nagging, horrible pain right in my lower back. And I knew it had something to do with, you know, the death of my father. But until I really went in there and allowed myself to feel, you know, I was holding myself erect and being strong for my mother and, you know, getting everything done for her and just not feeling my own feelings.

And so my body just said no. And, and started pulling, right, pulling on these ligaments, pulling on my muscles and getting my attention. So I love that you've brought this up and that the fascia is going to be in your Vedic medicine.

It said that your your body is the canvas of your mind that your undigested emotions crystallize in the physical structure. So this is a really beautiful way of mapping that, that.

Yeah, that's exactly what I think happens. And, you know, so many of us like, I have this one friend that calls like the turtle back, you know, like our fascia clenches, you know, so good at eating all the right food and getting the right sleep and supporting the organs.

But we don't realize if you know, something is kind of, squeezing on top of it. It just limits our ability to unravel and heal. My daughter's in chiropractic, school right now in graduate school, and she's constantly talking about this, you know, how it goes.

And, you know, the issues go in the tissues and then just solidify in your musculoskeletal structure. And that turtle back thing. And I've been building that for years.

So it's like, oh, okay. I need to really. And it's just been something I've been consciously unwinding, you know, ever since I was in yoga teacher training and had it pointed out to me, why are you protecting your heart?

What are you protecting? How come you keep caving? You know, it's like, oh, okay, I didn't realize I was doing that. We don't. It's the unconscious as the as the body armors around that energy system.

Yeah. And I mean, heart opening is huge. It's interesting to me because early on, I, I've been going to yoga for, oh, at my yoga studio, just had their 13 year birthday party set for 13 years, and it was just kind of my natural habit, like the day after Max died.

I'm like, I guess I'm going to go to yoga because, you know, I didn't really know what else to do, but I was a pattern and I was pretty, you know, checked out and disassociated.

But when they would do hard openings, it would be really intense for me. And I'm like, oh, this is probably good for me. And one of the other things that I wish I had discovered earlier, but emotion code, you know, and you're warm, that is incredibly powerful.

And it's fascinating. There are a couple people that are quite good at it and they'll say, like, oh, you have this emotion when you were 43 and you know it like all lines up and correlates.

And so that that was another incredible tool. I don't think, you know, there are a lot of things that are helpful. I wouldn't say, like, I do work with essential oils and they're very helpful, and they're not the only magic bullet, you know, eMDR was wonderful for unraveling trauma.

Trauma, yoga and any kind of movement was amazing. Fascia work. I love oils on fascia detox, because I do think your when you're releasing emotions, it really is like a physical detox.

And the more you can support that with Castrol packs, binders, you know, absence of bad saunas, the better, the

faster it you are able to move through it.

Essential Oils, Fascia, and Nervous System Support

I couldn't agree more. So let's talk a little bit about the role of essential oils in healing and moving grief. Yeah, I think, you know, it's really nice because plants have, I almost think that they're a higher consciousness.

I think that we're all at everything on this planet and nature is is kind of aligned to support you. And I do think that, plants are almost there to help us, process and move through things.

You know, like, we all know how healing it can be to have a plant based diet and to add more vegetables to your diet. You know, Terry Walls sanitize that with her.

What was protocol for? Kind of rebooting autoimmunity. And I think essential oils are the concentrated essences of plants. So they're just like, a higher power, higher frequency dose.

And you can use that. It's almost like there's that great quote about, the man who was walking in the beach, you know, and there were footprints beside him.

And at a certain point he only saw one set of footprints. And God said, that's because that's where I carried you. I do feel like, nature can carry us.

And certain oils in particular, like rose essential oil, there's actually terrific research. A lot of this is anecdotal, you know, or you'll just notice, like, gosh, when I smell rose, I feel better.

But, there's a Nobel laureate from Seattle named Linda Buck who was doing research on the olfactory receptors for predator odor. And what she found was certain receptors were more attuned to predator odor.

And then she kind of took it a step further. What might kind of calm that down and cancel that out. And it turned out to be roses. So you can stop and smell the roses, you can smell rose, or you can put Rose on your heart.

One of the things that I like to do, I have a blend that's designed to kind of help your nervous system put you into the safety gear. You know, our autonomic nervous system controls our automatic functions.

Heart rate. Breathing, digestion. It's designed to keep us alive. So if there is either physical danger or thought driven danger, and this can be a thought driven danger, like, you know, I was assaulted as a child.

And so I'm always on the lookout for assault. And in my mind, I replay that and I, you know, I'm constantly thinking I'm not safe. Your, resources are allocated towards survival, and that means that you're never kind of able to, restore, regenerate, repair and even the way your brain thinks about things, you know, the way we're looking at the world.

If you think you're in danger, different parts of the brain are activated. It's more kind of the reptilian back of the brain, and not as much kind of your prefrontal cortex problem solving gear.

So the more you're able to calm your nervous system and recognize, okay, I'm safe, it's safe to be able to contemplate options and not just look for the fastest way to flee or fight back.

Then you are able to really. It's almost like, you know, if you're trying to, ride a bike, right? And you're going up a hill and you're in high gear, it's going to be much harder and if you're able to downshift and kind of cruise up the hill, you're suddenly able to problem solve, to feel safe, to feel like you have options, to be able to take on like, oh gosh, my back hurts, my hip is tight.

I wonder what this is. I wonder how I can unpack this? Oh, it's the oil side. You were like, is is parasympathetic because the vagus is the gearshift.

And I love that gland of yours. It's so wonderful. And that's probably the one that I prescribe the most to my patients to. Yeah. So do you want to show I noticed you just did this, but be a little bit more intentional about how to use it.

Yeah. So basically, the longest nerve in your body that most people have never heard of is cranial nerve number ten, your vagus nerve. And that can serve as the gearshift between sympathetic I'm in danger and parasympathetic safety starts at the base of the neck.

Splits is most accessible right behind the earlobe. If everyone just feels with me, you'll feel a divot between the earlobe and a bone that's from asteroid boom.

That is where your vagus nerve is the most accessible to the surface, which means it's really just the easiest point to help stimulate it. From there, it whines through your throat, your heart, your lungs, every organ of digestion and detoxification, you know, diaphragm breathing, all yoga twists and turns, coffee enemas, any, you know, taking probiotics, any point where the vagus nerve touches you can use to stimulate it.

It's just that people, even things like breathing, which should be simple, you know, we do it every day. All the time that for whatever reason, people find that hard.

So I created a, stimulatory blend of essential oils. It's parasympathetic clove and lime, and you can literally flip a bottle and put it on that point.

And it serves as a gear shift into calm, which is just a nice way, especially if you're carrying a lot of, baggage and emotions, like so many of us do.

It helps you kind of feel, Grant, you know, if you're off to take a big test or if something important that day you might want to eat like a healthy breakfast and get a good night's sleep the night before.

Just to put you kind of in the best place to take on whatever you're taking on. Similarly, if you're, looking to kind of, you know, chip away at the iceberg and work through some of your layers of grief or whatever emotion you're processing, it's helpful to feel kind of centered and able to show up as your best self.

Beautiful. So I just want to, you know, point out to people that the parasympathetic blend is one of many, many, many offerings that Jody has. And one of the things, as I said in her bio that she's really well known for is she's a great investigator and bringing that information back.

So it's understandable for people. And you're giving, our viewers a free gift, right. That parasympathetic activation guide. Yeah. Basically, if if you're like, that seems a little complicated.

I am better reading things and listening to things. We have a guide that walks you through kind of the two branches of the nervous system. And it gives 25 ways to activate your vagus nerve.

One is as simple as using your tongue like a paintbrush to paint the roof of your mouth. All things that you can do at home, often for free, but just to help yourself kind of gearshift in to safety.

Beautiful. And then for those of you that have been listening to all these amazing experts and say, yeah, I want to do the all access pass, and I want to make sure I have some of these practices and the information at my fingertips forever.

And you've, purchased that. Then Jody's also offering her new fascia guide.

Vagus Nerve, Parasympathetic Activation, and Closing Thoughts

Yeah, our brand blend, which are brand new. It is. So I started because you start realizing it's I mean, it's like anything, right? You're an endurance athlete and you're like, I'm making progress, but not as much as I want.

What am I missing? Like, you're constantly seeing blind spots. So I do think because just kind of close to the surface, well, it's it's everywhere in the body.

But oils are a really good way to help you kind of loosen on unfasten, be able to work through your, your turtle back or your hip pain or your low back pain.

Beautiful. Jody, thank you so much. Is there anything else that we've skipped over that you want to mention about the role of grief in the energy body and how it affects the physical structure?

I think I mean, one thing that, you know, with all of the uncertainty in the world, I think it can feel I think we can feel disempowered, you know, and like we don't really have choices or options.

And so, one of my favorite quotes is from Holocaust survivor Viktor Frankl. He says, between stimulus and response, there is a space. And in that space lies our power to choose our response.

And in our response lies our growth and our freedom. And I just want to invite you to consider that even, you know, you might turn on the news and see something that, is horrifying and feel like you're powerless to make a difference.

You do have the power to kind of choose your response and to choose how you show up. And I do think that the more you can, activate your parasympathetic nervous system, the more you'll feel like you have options and choices and are able to control your response, which then, you know, it's kind of like if you, if you catch it early, it never becomes terror trapped in your tissues or, you know, a sense of not being empowered.

It's really important. And Man's Search for meaning was one of the most pivotal, life changing books that I read when I read it as a teenager. So glad that you brought Doctor Frankl into this, because, you know, it's it's so true.

And a lot of times people will land on vagus nerve stimulation as a way of healing trauma. And my response to that is, it's a great way to down regulate your response.

But at the end of the day, where we're going, you know, the comfort setting is to not trigger in the first place. And so that's that space that you're indicating right there.

And, you know, the essential oil blends to be able to help open that space and wide. And then a little bit to give you that okay, I'm going to now take that in practice.

That's just a beautiful gift. So thank you. And then it expands your threshold. You know that idea of if your cup of water is completely at the rim and you're trying to walk with it, you're going to spill.

If we can kind of lower the stress level, then, you know, life is bumpy. You never know when something unexpected is going to happen. And if you're feeling kind of resilient and grounded, it's easier to navigate all those little bumps.

Thank you. Thank you. All right, everybody, until next time. Be well.