

The REAL Story of Gary Young and Young Living Essential Oils

By Eva F. Briggs, M.D.

PART 1: WHY DID I INVESTIGATE THIS OUTFIT?

In December 2002, I wrote an article exposing Gary Young, Young Living Essential Oils, and the Young Life Research Clinic as dishonest and misleading. Many people in the aromatherapy community asked me how I developed an interest in this subject. This article explains my interest and summarizes my findings about these enterprises. The longer original article, which also contains footnotes to my references, may be found at <http://www.quackwatch.org/11Ind/young.html>. This shorter piece touches on the key points and also includes some information not included in the first story.

One spring day in 2002, I picked up what appeared to be a textbook lying on an acquaintance's workbench. A business card from a Young Living Essential Oils independent distributor fluttered out of the book, *Essential Oils Desk Reference* (EODR). I pocketed the card, and briefly thumbed through the book. The EODR, as described by Lynda and Graham Sorensen <http://www.smellennium.com/mag.7.html>, appears to be mostly the work of D. Gary Young, although he is not specifically credited as the book's author.

I politely returned the book, and expressed the opinion that this particular book, with long lists of chemical components of essential oils, would be more meaningful to the distributor if she first learned at least basic biology and chemistry. After returning home, I visited the distributor's web site and from there linked to a transcript of D. Gary Young's tape "The Missing Link."

Gary Young created the tape "The Missing Link" for the alleged purpose of educating the public about the healing powers of essential oils. Young Living Essential Oils distributors purchase the tape inexpensively for distribution to potential customers and new recruits. Many distributor web sites post links to a transcript of "The Missing Link."

At first I read only the beginning of the transcript, because it seemed entirely ridiculous from the first few paragraphs. I examined the entire transcript soon afterward, because I learned that the distributor had convinced my acquaintance to travel thousands of miles to Utah so that an ill family member could be treated at Young's clinic.

PART 2: YOUNG'S WRITINGS – THE MISSING SCREW PERHAPS?

I'd like to point out some specific examples from "The Missing Link" that demonstrate that Young simply has no understanding of basic science, let alone a subject as complex as essential oil chemistry. I will examine a few quotes from that tape.

"One of the primary agents in the blood that is responsible for the delivery of the nutrients through the cell walls is called oxygen."

Animals do not have cell walls. The most basic high school biology courses teach that only bacteria and plants have cell walls. Animals do have cell membranes.

"You see, in the human body we have a substance called blood, and that blood has a very specific purpose. That purpose is to transport nutrients to the cells, to nurture and feed the cells. . . . When we look at Essential Oils [sic], they have the same role, and play the same function in the plant, as blood does in the human body."

Essential oils do not transport nutrients to the plant cells. Phloem transports nutrients in plants, and xylem transports water. Examples of the functions of essential oils in plants may include attracting beneficial organisms such as pollinators, or repelling organisms that might eat or infect the plant. Essential oils do not function as blood. Only about 5% of all plant species even contain essential oils. The other 95% would not be able to survive if plants required essential oils for nutrient transport!

“Okay, how many of you ladies have seen a leaf on one of your houseplants torn or damaged? What comes out? It’s a liquid, isn’t it? It’s called the resin by some, some call it the blood of the plant. Some call it the life force of the plant but it’s the same thing, it bleeds.”

Young implies that essential oils run from the injured plant. However, essential oils do not run out because they are contained within special oil glands. The plant sequesters essential oils in these special glands because concentrated essential oils can actually harm plant cells. It would harm, not benefit, the injured plant if essential oils were to run out. The liquid that runs out an injured plant is sap, a mixture of fluids from the damaged xylem and phloem.

“ . . . now we have a new VIRAL tuberculosis, do we not?”

Nonsense. Tuberculosis has always been caused by, and still is caused by a bacterium. Bacteria and viruses are completely different forms of life. A bacterium cannot change or mutate into a virus.

“The Missing Link” contains many more similar nonsensical statements. But it is only one example of Young’s complete intellectual unsoundness. For example, a selection from Young’s book *Aromatherapy: The Essential Beginning* further documents his ignorance. Young writes about a type of white blood cells called neurophils. This is a very basic term familiar to anyone with basic medical training. In the introduction to “The Missing Link”, Young claims to have studied hematology, the science of blood. Yet in that book, Young misspells the neutrophil incorrectly as “nutrifile” not just once but five times!

PART 3 – GARY YOUNG’S ACTUAL BACKGROUND

Young’s writings convinced me that the man had no business claiming to be an authority on essential oils, and I decided to investigate his background. He claims to have discovered the healing powers of essential oils after he was allegedly left “paralyzed for life” by a head injury. He claims to have discovered an essential oil cure for this supposed paralysis, but has never provided documentation of either the injury or his miraculous cure.

By the early 1980’s Young had moved to Spokane, Washington. Although he lacked any training in medicine, obstetrics, or midwifery, he insisted on delivering his first wife’s baby underwater in a whirlpool bath. He left the healthy baby under water for an hour. The otherwise normal healthy infant drowned.

Young claims that he subsequently operated a clinic in Mexico that treated cancer patients with laetrile. Laetrile is a useless and dangerous drug that can harm or kill people because it forms cyanide in the body. It is illegal, and it is something of which Young should be ashamed, rather than proud.

From Mexico, Young moved to California and opened a clinic offering supposed treatments for cancer and other illnesses. He claimed falsely at that time to be an M.D. He was arrested in California in 1988 for a variety of charges related to the sale of ineffective and worthless medical treatments.

Young then returned to the Spokane area. He was arrested on January 10, 1994 for assaulting several family members with an axe. This behavior is from a man who claims to be deeply religious and spiritual.

And what about Young’s claims to be an N.D., or naturopathic doctor? They are false. His “degree” is a worthless piece of paper purchased from a notorious diploma mill called Bernadean University. With this worthless credential, Young has NEVER been licensed to practice naturopathy in Utah or any place else.

PART 4 – YOUNG LIVING ESSENTIAL OILS

In 1992 Young, with his third wife Mary Billeter Young, started his current multilevel marketing company Young Living Essential Oils (YLEO), in Utah. This company makes inflated claims for their products, and encourages some unfair business practices. A few examples follow.

Young Living claims that their oils are purer than those of their competitors. According to the archives of the IDMA discussion list, (posted by Graham Sorensen on a Web page called The YL Files (<http://www.fragrant.demon.co.uk/ylfiles.html>)), an expert with a gas chromatograph actually analyzed one Young Living oil. The findings in fact showed the presence of a carrier oil not indicated on the label, and the presence of an artificial chemical fragrance. The Young Living organization responded by accusing the distributor who had sold the oil of product tampering and subterfuge. Young Living never offered any additional samples for independent laboratory testing.

Many YLEO product descriptions are misleading, and imply health benefits where none exist. The FDA has cited company has several times for misleading labeling.

Company sales leaders promote a variety of dubious marketing techniques. One former distributor told me that she was persuaded to purchase a Web site designed by her sponsor's husband. She received a number of visitors to her web site, yet she never received any e-mails or orders for products. As the former distributor learned more about using the Internet, she discovered that her Web site was designed to be invisible, hidden from search engines. When potential customers she had recruited through her own hard work placed orders or sent e-mail, the orders and e-mail went directly to the sponsor! The sponsor was not merely earning a percentage of her sales; she was taking all the customers.

PART 5 – THE YOUNG LIFE RESEARCH CLINIC

Despite Young's lack of education and criminal background, YLEO distributors continue to support him with cult-like devotion. Young himself appears to want to promote his own ideas about "healing." To that end, in October 2000 he opened the pompously named Young Life Research Clinic Institute of Natural Medicine in Springville, Utah.

Because Young has no license, he cannot legally examine, diagnose, or treat patients himself. He hired licensed doctors to operate the clinic. The medical director is pediatrician Sherman Johnson, M.D.

What sort of doctor would want to work for an unlicensed, uneducated man with a criminal history whose writings reveal an utter lack of intellectual ability? I explored Dr. Johnson's background. In short, Johnson pled guilty to manslaughter after injecting his patient, a long time girlfriend, with a lethal overdose of narcotics. He falsified her death certificate to cover up his crime. The wrongdoing was discovered when a suspicious nurse demanded an investigation and the body was exhumed. The entire story is so entirely bizarre that I suggest the reader check the longer account in my Quackwatch article <http://www.quackwatch.org/11Ind/young.html>

This clinic operates on a cash only basis. This enables them to avoid regulatory scrutiny from health insurers and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMA). For example, they can blatantly perform laboratory tests without proper certification because they are immune from CMA fines. The FBI, who is supposed to enforce such laws, is busy with more pressing matters.

Prospective patients must pay \$349 to register at the clinic, and are then advised to receive a week of treatment costing \$2000 to \$3000 dollars. The patient must also sign a form stating that he or she is not a member of the press or of any regulatory agency. In addition, patients pay out of pocket expenses for food, travel, and lodging.

Treatment at the Young Life Research Clinic includes large quantities of essential oils and nutritional supplements sold only by YLEO. According to one case history presented at the June 2002 Young Living Grand Convention, a "suggested patient supplementation program" prepared for a woman being treated for breast cancer advised her to take 14 different supplements, totaling more than 65 doses of Young Living products, every day.

PART 6 – RAINDROP THERAPY

Young's invention, Raindrop Therapy, (RDT) is recommended at the clinic and by thousands of YLEO distributors. In RDT, essential oils are dropped in potentially unsafe concentrations onto a subject's feet and back. An excellent paper by K. Barber and J. Gagnon-Warr, *White Paper on Young Living Oil's Raindrop Technique*

<http://www.aromaticsage.com/RDT.html> describes in great detail why this technique is potentially unsafe and does not represent the best use of essential oils.

PART 7 –SUMMARY

In summary, Gary Young is a man who is uneducated and who has repeatedly falsified and exaggerated his credentials. He has been arrested at least twice for health fraud related charges. His inability to recognize his lack of training and the limits of his skills contributed to his own baby's death. He purports to be a religious and god-fearing man, yet he assaulted his own family. His writings reveal a complete and utter lack of knowledge about even basic science, let alone a subject as complex as essential oils. A physician who pled guilty to manslaughter in the death of a longtime friend, falsified her death certificate, and attempted to cover up the crime heads his clinic.

Gary Young, Young Living Essential Oils, and the Young Life Research Clinic have no relationship to real legitimate aromatherapy. The wise consumer can purchase essential oils from a host of other suppliers who sell quality products without resorting to inflated claims or dubious marketing techniques. And people with medical problems can find honest ethical health care providers elsewhere, most likely closer to home and at less cost.. Don't be misled by the hype. The clinic has NO miracle cures or treatments.

Article Source: <http://www.aromaticsage.com/GYRDT.html> -- May 31, 2013