



# Essential Alchemy

The Ancient Art of Healing Naturally

## Season 1, Episode 14: Sympathetic Stressors: Mold and Mycotoxins with Evan Brand, CFMP, NTP

**Jodi:** I'm Jodi Cohen with Vibrant Blue Oils, and I'm super excited to have one of the smartest, nicest, most interesting people I know, my very dear friend, Evan Brand, who is a podcast host, certified functional medicine practitioner, nutritional therapist from Evanbrand.com.

He's passionate about healing chronic fatigue, obesity, depression epidemics, and after solving his own IBS and depression issues, he uses at-home lab tests, which makes it completely accessible, and customized supplement programs to find and fix the root cause of a wide range of health symptoms. So, thank you so much, Evan, for being here.

**Evan:** Jodi, thanks for having me. It sounds like I need to update my little bio that I send to everybody because that was when I thought I only had gut issues, and I had no idea I had mold issues and Lyme issues and co-infection issues and all that. So, the rabbit hole, as you know, goes deeper and deeper and deeper the more you look.

**Jodi:** Right. And one of the things that we were talking about, so this is The Parasympathetic Summit, and the parasympathetic nervous system is regulated by your vagus nerve. And there's a huge correlation between your vagus nerve and all of those issues, parasites, mold. Can you speak a little bit to that?

**Evan:** Sure. And you gave me this. Actually, you educated me. You were like, hey, Evan, what do you think about the possibility of swollen lymph glands being a possibility of why someone gets stuck in fight or flight, that the toxicity of mold clogs up the lymph, and then that can put pressure or impede the vagus nerve signaling and triggers an over-reactive histamine response.

And I said, Jodi, that's amazingly smart. You're probably right. But I'm not confident enough to say that. So, I'm going to say that you said that, and I'll just say you're probably right. But what I do know regarding the nervous system stress is not even biochemistry at all.

It's just the overwhelming fear that comes into your life when let's say you've gotten a tick bite or you were sexually active with someone who has Lyme and it was transmitted to you, or you found out you've got mold in your house.

That alone outside of biochemistry is enough to make you freak out and put you into the fight or flight mode. And so, for us, my wife and my daughter — my second girl wasn't born yet — we were on my birthday, basically evacuating and taking everything we own and throwing it in a duffel bag and staying in a hotel for a month.

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**Jodi:** Wow. How old was your daughter at the time?

**Evan:** She was two and a half.

**Jodi:** Okay. So busy. That's hard.

**Evan:** Yeah. And not alone, we were stuck in fight or flight there because it's well, how do we cook? We're trying to eat healthy. We're trying to eat organic. How do you cook in a hotel for a month? And the answer is just this little simple burner, and you make it work.

But regarding the nervous system stuff, I was doing everything I could in terms of detox support, and it didn't matter because my life was so thrown out of my normal routine that all the lymphatic support and self-lymphatic massage and binders and glutathione, it didn't do crap because my life was up in shambles.

So, I think at a certain point, we have to talk about you've got the day-to-day life parasympathetic/sympathetic stress balance, and then you have the underlying, like, I guess you would call it the toxin exposure or something like that.

**Jodi:** And I often tell people, when they've tried everything, and nothing works, like think about the nervous system because if you're trying to bike up a hill in high gear, it's going to be a lot harder than if you downshift. And when you get your nervous system in the rest, digest, recovery state, it can work with you. And it makes everything that you're doing work so much better.

**Evan:** Yeah. So, for me, I think if you're doing this on your own, it's really tough, but if you hopefully have a practitioner that's supporting you--

**Jodi:** And you're a great one if they don't.

And I often tell people, when they've tried everything, and nothing works, like think about the nervous system because if you're trying to bike up a hill in high gear, it's going to be a lot harder than if you downshift. And when you get your nervous system in the rest, digest, recovery state, it can work with you. And it makes everything that you're doing work so much better.

**Evan:** Yeah. So, for me, I think if you're doing this on your own, it's really tough, but if you hopefully have a practitioner that's supporting you-- **Jodi:** And you're a great one if they don't.

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**Evan:** Which is cool, but you could do all the ashwagandha in the world you want, and you could still have issues with parasympathetic/sympathetic balance. Now, one thing that you kind of triggered me to think of when you were talking about this whole lymph gland phenomenon was cavitations. And I had cavitations, and luckily, I figured it out from our mutual friend, Christine.

**Jodi:** Yes, Dr. Schaffner. She spoke about that, how the metals can drain along the trigeminal nerve and impact the vagus nerve. And I think one of the challenges with mold and with parasites and with all these other issues is everyone's kind of addressing the body, but they don't necessarily know how to address the brain. So, like the lymph and the drainage and everything.

**Evan:** Yeah. So, when I was talking to Christine, I was telling her I was having these random heart palpitations and blood pressure spikes that didn't make sense. And actually, part of it was mold because now that I've detoxed, I'm no longer having those symptoms.

However, Christine goes, well, maybe it's cavitations. And so, I went through the whole process of getting the panoramic x-ray, and turns out I have eight teeth missing. So, I got all four wisdom teeth gone, and my 12-years molars never came in.

So, most people at most have four cavitations. I actually had all eight cavitations and the surgeon, I did a podcast with him, Stewart Nunnally down in Texas. He's a good surgeon.

**Jodi:** Can you talk about how did they even identify it? People are listening, and they're like, oh, I got my wisdom teeth out. How would they know if it was a cavitation?

**Evan:** Yes. So, the problem is like 99% of the surgeons, they don't remove the periodontal membrane, and it stays in there, so when they stitch you back up, that membrane just starts to rot. And then that, of course, affects your jaw bone, and your job bone gets black and necrotic, and it's literally dead rotting bone underneath your jawline.

So, you don't see it. You don't really smell it. You don't really know it's there, but they found it via panoramic x-ray. Now, they often talk about in the dentist's field of cavitations is doing a cone beam, but a cone beam is a massive amount of radiation. And I was kind of mad because I did a cone beam, and I sent it to their office, and their system couldn't read my cone beam. So, I got all that radiation.

**Jodi:** You got radiated for nothing. And do they need to go to a special kind of dentist to get this done?

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**Evan:** To get the panoramic x-ray? Likely not. That's probably widely available, but there's only a few dentists. Like there's a guy named Dr. Yu, Y-U out of St. Louis, and then Nunnally down in Texas, they're the only two that I know of that are like expert cavitation people, but how does this all tie into this conversation?

Well, because my nervous system was screwed. I would measure my parasympathetic nervous system with a heart rate variability monitor and my HRV — HRV for short of heart rate variability — the higher the number, the more "rest and digest", more parasympathetic you are. And I had really low HRV scores indicating I was kind of stuck in fight or flight.

And literally, overnight after I got that cavitation procedure done and they cleaned out all the necrotic jawbone, they ozonated it, they put in platelets, I was on a vitamin C IV, that night was the first night in I don't know how long that I didn't have heart palpitations, and I didn't have shortness of breath and some of these panic symptoms, that was the first night I didn't have those symptoms.

So, I'm not saying that this is everybody's problem. But if you've had tooth extractions, it's highly likely that this could be part of your puzzle.

**Jodi:** And just to connect the dots for people. So, what happens is these cavitations have toxins. The toxins need to drain. They drain along the trigeminal nerve. Your vagus nerve, which controls the parasympathetic state, runs here.

Nerves have a really high affinity for toxins. So, those toxins can get into the nerve. That nerve releases the neurotransmitter acetylcholine, which is what tells your heart rate to slow down.

So, if that nerve isn't signaling, you can have racing heart rate, it can feel like anxiety, all of these things. And it's just something that people don't think of. It's a blind spot or missing link in our healing. Thank you for sharing that story. That's amazing.

**Evan:** You're welcome. And I was doing band-aids, like extra magnesium and calming herbs like passionflower and stuff to try to calm the nervous system. And I think those can be great tools to help kind of engage that parasympathetic state.

But I was missing the root cause. Even if they were herbs that are far better than anxiety medication or blood pressure medication, but they were still band-aids, even if they were really good, natural holistic band-aids.

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**Jodi:** Yeah. That's a great point. And one of the things that I absolutely love about you is you really do look at the root cause. And I'm curious.

Like for people that might be considering working with you, when they come in, and your typical patient is probably someone that's seen I don't know how many doctors before they found you, what do you do? How do you determine if it's mold, if it's parasites if it's digestive issues? How do you kind of walk someone through that process?

**Evan:** I use data to prove that my hunches are correct. I've gotten some flack and some haters saying, Evan, just because you got sick with mold doesn't mean everybody else has mold. And I'll say, okay, fine. Maybe you're right, but let me prove it to you.

And so what we'll do is we just do Petri dishes. This is part of our standard workup for everybody now. And sometimes we find houses that are perfectly fine, and I say, great, for less than \$200, you've ruled out your house being a contributor to your health problem. Great. But what we're doing now is we're doing these Petri dishes. You put them on the floor for one hour. You tape them up, and you get a health score.

And based on that health score, if you find you've got 20 colonies of penicillium growing in your basement or your master bathroom, you've got a problem because these molds are putting off mycotoxins, and mycotoxins destroyed me. My levels were off the charts. I'm talking mycophenolic acid was one kind of toxin. You want to have less than like a 30. I was at like a 3000. I mean, I was extremely toxic.

**Jodi:** Can we explain mycotoxins. The mold gets into your system, and then it produces these poisonous by-products.

**Evan:** Yeah. So, two situations can happen. But to answer your question, like how to do the workup. Mostly the environmental testing with the plates, stool testing to look at gut infections and parasites, which are super common, and then urine testing to look at organic acids and to look at mycotoxins. So, we can measure the mold toxin via urine.

**Jodi:** I see. So, you're doing two things. You're looking at the environment, and then you're also looking at the physical environment. So, if maybe they lived in a moldy place, but they still have mold in their system, you're looking. That's smart.

**Evan:** Totally. Which ties into your question of how do you explain mold coming into the body? So, there's two situations, and that's why we do the environmental screening, and the body screening is because some people they're just a victim of mold, meaning that they breathed it in.

**Jodi:** Right. It could be in their work environment.

**Evan:** Yes. Those molds were producing mycotoxins, and they were a mold reservoir for lack of a better term. They stored the mold toxin in their body. And if they have methylation issues or detox issues, mold depletes glutathione, and you need glutathione to get it out. So, the very thing you need to get better, mold screws that up.

**Jodi:** And can you talk about there's a certain population that their immune system doesn't even react to the mold. Can you talk about that a little bit?

**Evan:** Yeah. That's me, unfortunately. And I guess my wife and maybe my daughters, I don't know, but yeah, some of it is genetic, and I don't do the genetic testing because I think it's a waste of time, but you could--

**Jodi:** It's a data point, and what are you going to do with it?

**Evan:** Yeah, because like you could do the HLA-DR gene test and see whether you have the gene and it's like 25% of the population that can't recognize mold and therefore, it can't make an immune or detox response to get it out of the body. But here's my theory. If you test positive for mold toxin on the urine, you've probably got the gene because your toxic bucket according to that's full.

So why look at whether, yeah, you might be able to detox it with the gene. To me, it's irrelevant. So, I just look at the toxin, and then the other situation is that someone is colonized, meaning that they have mold growing in their sinuses and/or their gut or inside a biofilm. There's actually mold colonies. And you can measure that. Luckily, on organic acid testing, it's really easy to measure.

And the good news is you can fix it. But I would say someone who ends up more symptomatic, more stuck in this sympathetic fight or flight mast cell activation system, those people are not usually just mold victims, meaning they show up with mold toxin.

They're usually people who are actively getting exposed in their home or their office or their car. Mercedes did a huge recall this year on 2.5 million cars for moldy HPAC systems. So, if you drive a Mercedes and you get to work, and you got a headache, consider that.

**Jodi:** And also, that's a good point to like update the filter in your house furnace and also in your car really quickly and frequently.

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**Evan:** Yeah, totally. And where you are and where I am, I'm in Kentucky. And you're up in an area where it's just as humid as it is in Kentucky. We've got high humidity. So, someone may listen, and they may tune out like Evan, what are you talking about?

I thought we're talking about the nervous system, but the truth is that you could do all the meditation and essential oils and yoga and whatever you want to do to calm yourself down, but if you live in a humid environment and you're not actively sucking the humidity out of your home, if your home is at 55% or 60% humidity like mine was, you're going to get mold growth, and it will affect you.

How much will it affect you? In general, women more than men, but I guess I was more genetically weak. And so, it took me down, but this is why women will get told they're crazy because the husband is fine and they have no symptoms, but the woman is sick, and she has different hormones, and she may have different genetics.

So when the husband says, oh, you're just stressed, that's why you're having all these heart palpitations, and you can't sleep at night. And then I come in, and I say, no, husband, you're wrong. Look at the data. This woman's got a toxicity issue.

**Jodi:** Right. And so, ideally, you want to kind of keep your environment clean, and that's done with good circulation. So like air filters, good fans in your bathroom, leaving windows open, sunlight is good and then also preventing it from your body. It's pretty hard to get mold out once it gets into your system, right?

**Evan:** It takes a while. And the windows open is great except if it's 80% humidity outside, now all the humidity is getting into the house. So you can open the windows. Just don't leave it open all night for 12 hours because unless you live in the desert, you're fine.

But if you live in Seattle and it's 85% humidity, that 85% is coming right in your house. It's going to soak into your drywall. It could go through the wall, get the back of the insulation wet. On the back of your drywall is paper.

That is the perfect food source for mold. So, that's why a lot of people get sick because they don't even see it. It's in the wall behind the drywall on the paper backing of the drywall. That's what gets moist. And that can make you sick.

**Jodi:** I was just curious when you're helping people when they have the mycotoxins and the mold in their system. What have you found to be super helpful in actually moving that out of your body?

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**Evan:** Oh, yes. And you asked, "Doesn't it take a long time to get rid of it?" That was what you said. And so, a guy I really look up to and respect called Dr. Neil Nathan, he wrote a great book called Toxic. It's all about mold, mast cell activation, chemical sensitivities, Lyme, and co-infections — amazing book. I interviewed him. He's an awesome guy.

**Jodi:** He talks a lot about the vagus nerve too.

**Evan:** He does. The polyvagal theory, he's all into it. And so, he told me two to three years minimum to really like detox someone. And I was kind of mad when he told me that because I'm kind of a get-it-done guy. I like things to happen quick.

And so, at the time of us speaking, it's been one year and two months that I've been working on my personal detox stuff, and I've got like 95% of the mold gone. So, I think I did it a little faster than his timetable, but I was also doing extra stuff that's not in his protocols. So, I think I shortened the timeline a bit, which is convenient. But yeah, I would say a year because the immune system gets messed up too.

It's not just like toxin in, toxins out. It's the immune system gets dysregulated. Melatonin gets affected; your sex hormones get affected. The hypothalamus can get affected, so now you've got body temperature regulation problems, the nervous system, so now you've got anxiety and panic attack issues.

So, the hard part is trying to keep someone stable enough to do the treatment, meaning if they're having panic attacks every time they take a binder like charcoal or chlorella or zeolite or bentonite clay if you're really sensitive and a lot of people are, that binder alone could trigger bad symptoms.

**Jodi:** Do you think that's because it's mobilizing toxins, it's triggering a detox reaction?

**Evan:** Yeah. Especially when it comes to charcoal because charcoal is good, but it's a weak binder, and I don't think I'm smart. This is what Neil Nathan said, and I verified it. Cholestyramine is a prescription drug that was used to lower cholesterol. One of the off-label uses was to detox biotoxins like Lyme and mold toxin.

And so, he told me cholestyramine is a really strong binder, meaning it holds onto the toxin and it doesn't let go. Zeolite is very strong, meaning it encapsulates the toxin and pulls it out with not a significant Herx or detox reaction. But he said charcoal's very weak. And I said, "What do you mean?"



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**Evan:** And he said, "Well, charcoal's like a weak magnet where if you put the magnet on the table with the iron filings and you drag it across, some of the iron filings fall off." And so, if you apply that analogy to mold toxin, you picture dragging all the mold through your intestines, some of the mold toxins falls off the charcoal and reabsorbs back into the body, especially if you've got a leaky gut barrier.

**Jodi:** What's your favorite binder for mold detox?

**Evan:** Well, it depends on what kind of toxin you're talking about because I see a ton of ochratoxin. That would be the most popular mycotoxin, which comes from aspergillus, which can come from water-damaged buildings and moldy coffee, moldy food, moldy nuts, moldy seeds.

**Jodi:** Moldy peanuts.

**Evan:** Yeah. Aflatoxin is in peanuts a lot too. I would say because it's easy, readily available, and cheap charcoal, but I often use a blend.

**Jodi:** What blend do you like? I like GI Detox.

**Evan:** GI Detox is awesome. I felt really weird on it, though. I don't know. Maybe I was just too sick, but I like TOX-EASE BIND from Beyond Balance. Beyond Balance is cool. It's a charcoal-like fulvic acid mix. It seems to be a little more gentle than GI Detox. And GI detox in some people causes constipation.

But there is a little aloe in GI Detox. So, in theory, it would constipate people, but it does constipate people more than what I've seen with TOX-EASE BIND. But if you're just talking like, hey, I've got \$10, what can I do? You could buy a bottle of charcoal, coconut charcoal for like \$12 these days.

**Jodi:** And that's one thing that I find. Like no one talks about it. You talk about it. Our friend Christine Schaffner talks about it, but I think everyone should take binders before bed when your liver is activating. I think if you're doing anything to kind of heal your system, you're going to be almost offgassing toxins. And if those toxins don't leave your body, it causes more problems.

**Evan:** The problem is the world's not getting any less toxic. I could pull up the number real quick on this, but I want to say that on average, we're putting 300 million pounds of Roundup with the main ingredient glyphosate in the US per year.

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**Evan:** So, we are applying so much toxin that I would agree with you that, yeah, I think everybody, even if they're not sick, would benefit from some sort of binder. Okay.

So, here's the study on this. So, in 2007, that's kind outdated. I know it's significantly more than this. In 2007, glyphosate was the most used herbicide. One hundred eighty-five million pounds were applied.

**Jodi:** Wow. And this only came out in my lifetime. Like I believe GMOs were kind of introduced in the early nineties. So that's pretty amazing.

**Evan:** Yeah. It's crazy. So why am I bringing up glyphosate? Well, because you mentioned doing binders before bed. And one interesting thing that I found personally before I found it clinically was that binders significantly improve my deep sleep quality.

**Jodi:** Yes. Well, you know what I think, that is, I think because your liver is working harder at night and especially around 3:00 a.m., if you're not taking binders, your liver has to work too hard. By giving yourself binders, it almost allows your liver to relax a little bit and not have to process so much so you can stay asleep.

**Evan:** That seems totally valid to me. Last night, of course, we've got a 10- month-old, so she still wakes us up.

**Jodi:** Of course, you are not sleeping.

**Evan:** Yeah. So, mom slept in a different room with the baby last night. So, I was alone, and I woke up at 5:00 a.m., and I was like, oh my God, it's five o'clock. I made it through the night without waking up. And guess what I did? I did charcoal before bed. It's so easy.

**Jodi:** It is easy with people. My whole goal with doing this parasympathetic summit is to make people aware of the easy things that they might not even realize that they're missing because it's really hard to heal. You have to take certain foods out of your diet that you might like.

You have to often cook for yourself. You have to add in supplements. You have to kind of deal with days when you feel fairly rotten. So, the more we can do to make things easier for people, I feel like that's a big benefit.

**Evan:** Yeah. And if you want to take me in a different direction, please do. But if I may, I want to briefly circle back to talking about the balance of the tight rope, I call it. I call it like the treatment tight rope. Meaning if you do nothing, you stay sick, and you fall off the tight rope to one side.

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**Evan:** If you do too much like I've got parasites. I'm going to take every herb known to man to kill it. And I'm going to drink essential oils to kill parasites. If you're doing too much, you fall off the other side. So, walking the tight rope to success or to the finish line or to healing or to recovery, that's the tricky part.

And that's where I hope some of the simple strategies can help. Because when I was mentioning to you like you talked about like a detox reaction just from binders alone. And I've totally experienced that.

I was doing eight capsules of charcoal per day. And one day, it just turned on me, and it was making me feel so sick. And it was like I was mobilizing too much toxin. And then I started to have heart palpitations and blood pressure changes.

And so, kind of the art of all this is managing the symptoms of the person to keep them, number one, motivated enough to move forward but to keep them feeling good enough. So, for example, if you feel so bad by doing binders that you stop doing binders, you're not fixing the root cause.

You're still toxic. Those toxins are still affecting you. You're still stuck in fight or flight because of the stress response of the toxin. So, then you have to kind of recalibrate, and you think, well, what if I take like motherwort. Motherwort is a favorite herb of mine. It's great for anxiety.

It's great for heart palpitations. The Latin name has cardiac basically built into the Latin name. It's like *Leonurus cardiaca* or something motherwort. I love it.

So, one of these simple things you may need to do to move forward is maybe you take a shot of motherwort. You kind of calm the nervous system, and you turn on the parasympathetic or crank them up, and then you do your binders.

So now, if the binder does previously trigger heart palpitations or anxiety, you blunted it with the herbs. So, I think that's where the beauty of this stuff comes in.

Or maybe we take like your parasympathetic oil, which you gave me and I love. And you apply that, and then you do the real work. So, people get so focused on the work, like killing the toxin, detoxing the metal, killing the parasite, getting rid of the---

**Jodi:** Yeah. Well, especially parasites, because those are pretty heavy drugs. And if you're sensitive, that's why I love plant medicine because I find it to be so much more gentle and manageable. I absolutely love that analogy. You're so good with analogies, that tight rope.

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**Jodi:** That's perfect because I think especially a lot of the people that wind up getting sick are the previous type A's and so they have this like very aggressive, I'm strong, I can do it, but they move too fast, or they skip steps. It's like I actually think that you had that great analogy that I heard that treating parasites is like opening all the presents on Christmas morning. Can you share that?

**Evan:** I don't know if I came up with that. Did I say that? I may have.

**Jodi:** You said it, and you basically said, and then you've got like all the wrappers. And so, if you haven't opened your drainage pathways and you start killing things, and they can't get out of your system, then it just stays in your system and adds to your toxic burden.

**Evan:** So maybe I said that, but maybe that was our buddy Jay Davidson who uses good analogies too. So, I don't know if I'm going to take full credit. I may have said something like that, but I will say that yes, in general, it's something like that, which is once you open up the can of worms, you start killing off bugs, you can feel much worse because-- And I have no proof of this. This is all just clinical, which I think maybe more valuable than what the studies say.

**Jodi:** Well, you're clinical. I'm hearing this over and over from practitioners.

**Evan:** Okay. Because here is the thing. How would you prove this on a study? I don't know.

**Jodi:** You have to make people feel worse, which no one's going to sign up for.

**Evan:** Yeah. So, here's what I've seen with just working with people, it just happens is if you're not supporting the liver, if you're not doing something for the adrenals, you could lump the parasympathetic conversation into this because of the adrenals. What I've noticed is if you don't support adrenals, you don't support the liver, you don't support kidneys and or lymphatics while you're killing bugs, people feel way worse before they feel better.

And so, to me, any good, well-rounded protocol to get yourself better if you are someone who's tested positive for parasites, or even if your practitioner just says that they think you have parasites and you pursue that rabbit hole, I really think it's smart to have some sort of binder, liver, adrenal, all that on hand, and then, therefore, it's going to go much better.

Maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I'm a type-A in disguise. I don't really consider myself like a type A. Like I'm definitely a go-getter. I'm definitely a hustler to get things done, but I wasn't like the uptight bow tie, suit and tie person. That's what I picture when I hear type A, but I guess you can be type A and wear hemp pants like I do or organic cotton underwear or something. Like, I guess you can still be crunchy and a type A.

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**Jodi:** I was just thinking overachiever. And I do think you're a strong achiever. I love everything you're saying. I mean, this is one thing that I often find with my clients. If they tell me when I take supplements, I feel nauseous, or when I tried this, I couldn't sleep, my step is always pause, and exactly what you're saying, support the underlying foundational issues.

**Evan:** What I was going to say is I didn't really identify as like a type A, but once I found out that I had mold toxin and all these other issues going on, I really wanted to just get it done and get myself better. And it was an extremely brutal lesson in patience.

And I found that let's say we're talking about chlorella. I found that five drops of chlorella may fix my symptoms. I really want to do 10 or 20 drops of chlorella because I know that's going to get the mold out or heavy metals out faster.

But if I tried to do too much, then I felt worse, so then I'm off of the supplement for two to three days because I felt so darn bad at the high dose. So, it was a really brutal lesson for me to know that slow and steady wins the race. And in some cases, the tortoise really can beat the hare.

**Jodi:** Yes. And more is not more. So, I'm just curious because I want to be respectful of your time, but ways to calm your nervous system. If you're going to share with your viewers, what are some of your favorite strategies for you?

**Evan:** I did a podcast on this this morning, all about what do you do to mitigate fear and calm the nervous system. And my favorite strategies I mentioned were motherwort, which is one of my favorite herbs, passionflower, chamomile tea, Epsom salt baths, essential oils, especially lavender I love. Frankincense is amazing as well. You're the expert, and I'm sure you can--

**Jodi:** Those are two great ones. And I combine that in an Epsom salt bath but put the oil in the salt before you add the water.

**Evan:** Sweet. So those are my two favorites. Float tanks, so flotation therapy was on the list, acupressure mats, which is like acupuncture without the needles. It's like a little foam mat with these little, usually plastic needles. They don't penetrate, but they really calm the nervous system.

I've strapped on a heart rate variability monitor, and I can show you the proof acupressure mats will put you into the parasympathetic mode. I've watched my heart rate variability scores go up just lying on the mat.

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**Jodi:** Do you have a brand you like?

**Evan:** There's a million. I bought mine like five years ago on Amazon. I don't even know if that brand still exists, but any acupuncture mat is great. They're all the same. And EFT, tapping, I love tapping.

**Jodi:** Oh, tapping is amazing. Yes. We're going to have Amy Stark do a tapping session on the summit.

**Evan:** You could put somebody in parasympathetic in 30 seconds if you just have them do a really good tapping. And even though I'm stressed about this situation, I deeply love and accept myself.

**Jodi:** Right. And if you're somewhere in public, you can just tap on this point or have your kids if they're at school tap under the desk on this point. Yeah. It's amazing.

**Evan:** I wonder if holding it too-- I've read some, and I haven't practiced holding, but I wonder if holding points is better or tapping. I like tapping.

**Jodi:** I like tapping, and my other favorite one — I do this in the airports — I tap on my thymus or my heart, and that calms me down too.

**Evan:** The clavicle, I don't know why they can-- And when I say they, I'm guessing this is the EFT. I've read a few videos. They say that the clavicle is like the trauma point.

So, I don't know. I feel really good with that point. What else did we talk about? Massage, but right now, currently as we're recording, everything is shut down, so you probably can't go get a massage in person anyway.

**Jodi:** But even massaging the outside of your ear is really good, and that can help turn on the vagus nerve.

**Evan:** I love that. I wasn't going to mention that, but I'm glad you did. I was going to mention even just like abdominal massage if you're someone who holds all your stress in your gut. Clockwise massaging your ileocecal valve, where your small intestine connects to your large intestine, you learned about that.

**Jodi:** I did. And actually, it's funny that you say it. I always tell people to apply oil clockwise. There's something kind of magical about that direction.

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**Evan:** That's cool. So, I mean, I think those are some of the key strategies. And then also just if you can, I'm not saying live under a rock, but if you can tune out mainstream media somewhat.

**Jodi:** Yeah. Or just go out in nature.

**Evan:** Yeah. I mean, I've got a pond right in front of me. I'm looking at my fountain. I've got birds sitting all around the pond. So, for me, nature's kind of my church. So, if you can find a place where you forget about the world's problems, even if it's just for a minute, I think do it.

And then just try to remove negative people and bring in positive people. So, like if you spend time with somebody and you're exhausted after talking with them, you probably need to like spend less time with that person.

Now, the problem is that's often a spouse or a brother or sister or a mom or a dad. So, how do you cut those people out? I don't have all the answers, but I did YouTube video called Energy Vampires. And I've gotten more comments on that video than any other video.

And I was kind of going out on a limb because I was like, oh, they're going to say Evan is woo-woo and whatever. And I was like, no, this is a real phenomenon. I've experienced energy vampires, but people loved it. But long story short is if you spend time with somebody like when I talk with you, I'm like on a high right now. You can see I'm talking faster and all that.

So, when I start talking faster, I'm kind of getting elevated, or energy is rising together. Those are the people you want to talk with and associate with. But if you're, and I won't say who it is, but it's somebody in my family.

My wife always calls me out. She goes, babe, listen to your energy. Now you're talking like this because that unsaid person on the phone talks like that. So, I was matching their depressed energy.

**Jodi:** Yeah. Well, we tend to. That's why oils work. It's this idea of resonance. We try to match frequency, and oils have a really high frequency, so they lift us up.

**Evan:** That's awesome. Except you don't want to resonate with negative people probably.

**Jodi:** Well, negative people are lower, and there's this theory that viruses are a lower frequency. So, just kind of like airplanes, if they're not flying at the same altitude, they're not going to crash into each other. So, the more we can elevate our own energy through nature, all these tools you're sharing, the more likely we won't be a match for anything negative.

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**Evan:** Yeah. And speaking of nature too, there was a study on NK killer cells, and these are your fighters. They help you fight, and you can experience an upregulated NK killer cell activity for a month, and NK killer cells fight cancer.

**Jodi:** Is this forest bathing? Was it that? Yeah.

**Evan:** That's it. That was the forest bathing one.

**Jodi:** Because of the smells of nature, like essential language of trees. Yeah. Well, they communicate. They send messages to each other through smell, and since plants and humans are biofamiliar, we pick up on the smell too. Yeah.

**Evan:** You can do it for a month, literally. I think it was like a two-hour hike or something. It boosts the immune system for like a month. I mean, it's not that difficult. It's like, duh, we evolved in nature. We lived in nature forever. We just recently moved indoors with drywall and sealed windows. I mean, this is not a surprise that nature is good for us.

**Jodi:** Yes. This was so amazing. Thank you for your unbelievable generosity and knowledge. And if people want to get in touch with you, what is the best way for them to find you?

**Evan:** Just check out [Evanbrand.com](http://Evanbrand.com). That's where my podcast is too. I've got hundreds of episodes. So, I guarantee I've covered a topic that you're interested in. So please check it out. And I work virtually. So, if people need help, I'll be there.

**Jodi:** You're amazing. Thank you.

**Evan:** Thank you, Jodi.