



Essential Alchemy

The Ancient Art of Healing Naturally

Season 3, Episode 24: How To Get Started On Your Stunning, Healthy Skin with Rachel Pachiavas

Jodi: Hi, I am your host, Jodi Cohen, and I'm so excited to be joined by my friend Rachel Pachiavas, who is Annmarie Skin Care's COO she spends her days working behind the scenes in many facets of the business, product, research, development, customer retention, marketing, branding style, budgeting, and working to increase education on organics.

My favorite topic, chemicals and the skincare industry as a whole. With her love and passion for ingredients in skincare, community organizing, and healthy lifestyles. She hopes to always bring thought, love, drive, and growth into the team and the culture of Annmarie Skincare.

Rachel: Thanks so much for having me.

Jodi: Annmarie is my favorite skincare line, and I would love to share kind of the origin story if you can talk about how it got started.

Rachel: So Kevin and Annmarie, husband and wife, they had a video blog, Renegade Health, and they went around just advocating for healthy living and healthy lifestyles.

And they talked a lot about what they can consume and different tips and tricks. And people started asking them what skincare they used and what skincare Annmarie used. And so she started looking at what she had. And she realized that she really didn't feel comfortable recommending me these products and went down a rabbit hole of what is in these products. And it set them on this journey to find a product line that they can recommend.

And They looked for a while, met with different manufacturers, found out a lot about the industry and how you can put things in your products without labeling it. Just a lot of things that they didn't align with.

And then one day she went into a spa and she tried a line, and the way she describes it is that it was alive and active and it smelled incredible with the essential oils and the feeling that she got was sensational. And so they connected with the formulator of this product line and formed a relationship and eventually they partnered and she became part owner, the formulator, and they created Annmarie Skincare. And that's how it got started over. 10-12 years ago now.

Jodi: And you guys are just the gold standard. Not only does it not have anything toxic so you're not adding to your toxic burden but I really feel like it's beneficial. Talk a little bit about the ingredients. Talk a little bit about the ingredients.

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Rachel: We definitely go through a very strict auditing process. All of our products go through Made Safe Verification. Made Safe is a third party verification program that's constantly screening for different ingredients and how they're combined with other ingredients and what they can cause in your body and also in nature, so aquatic life and toxicity to the planet. So that's one aspect that they're super clean.

We're using really high quality CO2 extracts and seed oils and the purest essential oils and surfactants that are non-toxic and actually adding moisture to your skin. So we're using ingredients that are adding so much back in to your skin when you're putting them on.

Jodi: How did you formulate and figure out what people needed and how to show up and really fill a void that I think for the cosmetic industry being so vast and broad, you really have created products that no one else is making. Can you talk to me a little bit about that?

Rachel: It's an ongoing process and a journey where we're constantly talking to our customers. We have a great team in our customer care, and then our retention team who are just always having that one-on-one human conversation with our customers to find out what they want and what they love, what they don't love, what ingredients they love.

We're constantly serving our customers to find out what their needs are. I think it helps that people at the company, myself included, do a lot of the product formulation with our formulator. I'm obsessed with skincare and so I'm driven by ingredients and skincare.

If I wanted to be a carpenter or something, we probably wouldn't be researching all the ingredients. But I think it really lends to I guess the creativity and the excitement that we put into our products that everybody on our team is so thrilled and excited about ingredients and skincare and clean skincare.

Jodi: I'd love to hear more about Clean Skincare and how people, our listeners, can figure out what is the best product line for them 'cause I know you really customize it to different skin types.

Rachel: We have our Restore collection, which is probably our bestseller, and it's targeting more of aging, dry, mature skin types.

We also have our Balance, which is more of normal combination, and I can go through products in each of them if you want. And then we have our Purify, which is more for oily skin. And then we also have our Soothe, which is formulated for sensitive skin.

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Rachel: We've also created our Wild Alchemy collection over the years, which is a little bit more of a potent collection. It's a little bit higher price due to the extractions that are in it due to the ingredients. We've visited quite a few of the farms in France and checked out a lot of different things about the ingredients that go into the Wild Alchemy collection.

Jodi: Tell me about some of the ingredients and what they do and just we're getting into plant medicine a little bit.

Rachel: The first thing that comes to mind, just because I feel like it's so important to talk about activated ingredients because someone here is natural skincare and they're like, oh, does it actually do anything? Yes it does.

We use ingredients like ceramides and they're in a lot of skincare, but they're poorly derived. The processing is extremely toxic and the load that it puts on your skin and in your body can be detrimental. It took us two years to create our fruit ceramide eye serum because trying to get the verification in the paperwork and make sure we found the right ceramide and we found a pineapple ceramide that was super pure that we can include.

And it's the same thing with our other ingredients in this collection.

We have a complex that kind of mimics the effects that you would receive if you were using retinol, but you can't use retinol because – you can if you want to, but it's very harmful for your endocrine system and it can be extremely toxic to you.

Or vitamin C, we found one that is not petroleum derived, that is stable, that doesn't cause damage to your skin, that isn't causing ill effects to your health. So using very activated ingredients like those, I'm trying to think other ones. Stem cells, plant cells.

Jodi: Stem cells. It's so funny, a total aside, but I had hot flashes for two days. And found there's this stem cell hops that you can use. Do you wanna talk about what those are in the plants?

Rachel: So we're using one in ours that are orange derived and then we also have another one. But the processing of it, I'm open to hearing more about it 'cause I am very new to it. But it's extracting. So to stay FDA compliant, it's extracting the most potent parts of this plant that are providing the activity and providing the benefits of what this plant does. And it's so concentrated, it's putting just specifically that piece into the skincare.

Jodi: That is amazing. Which of the products have the stem cells so that people who are listening that are like, oh my God, I want that.

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Rachel: I have to think about this.

Our citrus stem cell serum has...

Jodi: That's my favorite. I love that.

Rachel: I feel like our fruit ceramide eye serum has sake peptides and that also has stem cells from a fruit. I can't recall the name of it off the top of my head, but that one is a magical serum. It's the fruit ceramide eye serum. It's a little bottle and you use it as an eye serum. I use it everywhere I want, but you can use it around your eyes and then like your frown line or whatever.

Jodi: For our listeners who might be 45+, tell us about the product line and what the protocol, how you use it morning and night or throughout the day.

Rachel: And I'm gonna give you the extended ritual that I would recommend and you can omit what you want. I would start with a cleanser. We recommend our cream cleanser, which is our Aller Cleanser, and you wanna do that morning and night. It's pH balance. It's really gentle. It smells delicious and amazing and lemony. So you'll cleanse with that. And then after your cleanser, you'll wanna use a toning mist.

After toning, we'll move into hydration, which we'll recommend our anti-aging serum. It's one of our bestselling products. And you don't wanna skip this step. A lot of people just go straight to a moisturizer, but you wanna make sure you include your hydration because your skin might be dehydrated and not just dry. So you wanna make sure you're balancing both of those things.

So use your anti-aging serum and then after that you would move into your eye cream. If you wanna incorporate an eye cream, we have our anti-aging eye cream, and those have plant cells in them. They have three different kinds. And then from there, our anti-aging facial oil, which is another bestselling product. And this one is so potent. It has jojoba, sunflower seed oil. It has urban fusion. All of our products are infused with herbs. So they're never just a basic oil acting as the base of the product.

And they're sitting for up to 30 days at a very low temperature, and there's about 20 to 30 different herbs in each formula, depending on the formula, so that it's tailored to what you're trying to achieve.

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Rachel: And so that's making up the base of the formula of this product and the anti-aging oil. And then from there, there's broccoli seed oil, chia seed, goji berry, carrot seed, like there's so many very high antioxidant, potent oils in this product.

Jodi: So that would be great for the skin. 'cause you're healing it from the inside out.

Rachel: So that would be like your go-to regimen. And then I would include an exfoliant once a week and potentially a mask once or twice a week. So the kale and micro exfoliant, it's amazing. It cleanses your pores and removes impurities and it smells great and you can use it once or twice a week.

And then also the Illuminating pearl mask would probably be my go-to. Have you tried that one?

Jodi: I have. All of your stuff is great. And you know what else I really love about your company is you have such an amazing culture.

You're so clear with your values. Can you speak a little bit about some of your values and how that became such a powerful part of your company and your culture.

Rachel: So our core values internally, and we've made them external as well, is honesty, wild, and beautiful. And so internally they may mean one thing, we're honest with ourselves and each other and we're transparent.

It means the same thing externally as well, where we are transparent with what we talk about with our products. Transparency is the best word for that honesty piece. And then wild. Internally we have our whole culture, core values listed, but wild internally. It's that we have uncomfortable conversations if we need to. We push the mark. We constantly are pushing each other in ourselves. Direct communication. We're just wild and innovative in the way that we think. In the way that we want to, connect with customers, connect with more skincare, like everything in that sense.

And then externally wild, our values, we define them as, using wild ingredients and doing our best to use wildcrafted ingredients being wild in our processing, doing things differently. Challenging the status quo in that sense. And then beautiful. I feel like I get out of breath so often being pregnant, it's, oh my god.

Jodi: Is your stuff safe for a pregnant women?

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Rachel: Nothing I haven't been able to use. I'll get back to beautiful, but when formulating one of our products, I looked into different retinol alternatives and I was gonna use a retinol and it's not made safe because it causes disruption to an embryo in your hormone system and it can cause birth problems.

And I was just like, oh my goodness. It's crazy. We don't think about these things because we're not always pregnant, but it's like, why are we using it anyways?

Jodi: It might be why we can't get pregnant, because if it's disrupting our endocrine system, it's gonna disrupt our hormones and probably make it harder.

Rachel: I use everything in our line and currently too, there's nothing that I can't use or that I don't use, so that's good.

Jodi: Do you have stuff that you can use on the little one?

Rachel: I would use our coconut body oil. I'm already like processing what I would use. I would use our cleansers too, although we probably won't cleanse our baby very frequently.

Jodi: If you think about it, all of the diaper creams, all of the things that they tell you to put on your baby, including the disposable diapers are not very clean.

Rachel: Yeah, I went down a rabbit hole, like looking through everything and just being like, what is this? Why is that in there? We were just looking at baby wipes the other day, so we're just gonna make ours. We'll buy the ones that you wash and then we'll make a little formula. The botanical hydration mist, I can imagine. 'cause I make that at home as well. Just blending it up and that would be really nice on a baby's butt. It's very pure, very fresh, chamomile.

Jodi: I actually don't recommend oils on children under 18 months. 'Cause their skin, they're such little sponges, let's just keep it light and let them thrive on their own. So tell me what's your favorite part about Annmarie? What do you love most about being a part of the company?

Rachel: I really love our team. You need that 'cause you talk to people who don't have that. And sometimes maybe I take it for granted. I feel like I appreciate it every day, but I talk to people who don't have that and I'm just like, oh my God. That would suck to go to work and not connect with people and not just love all of them at that level, so that's probably the biggest motivating factor for always being excited to go to work. Go to work, go to my computer at my house.

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Jodi: You have such great customer service, I think people feel very supported and very nurtured. It's not oh gosh, the package never got delivered. Not my problem.

Rachel: People are very supportive and they're empathetic and they understand they're also customers of other companies, so they definitely want things to be great and they all care to that level, which feels really good. Being at the company for 10 years and seeing the team we have now and how deeply they care and how they'll dive into something just to make it great. It feels really good to be a part of. So I'd say that's number one.

And then the second would definitely be the fact that I feel like I've tried a lot of skincare and I don't wanna be biased because I work Annmarie Skincare, but it's probably the best skincare line I've ever found.

Jodi: I went through so many changes, like when I was young and trying all the acne things. I made so many mistakes. I wish you had been around in the 80s.

Rachel: I remember the first time I tried Annmarie Skincare, I was on my journey and I went to Australia. I was making all of my own products at this point. I lived with a naturopath. And then the one thing I wasn't using natural was my eye cream. I was still using – I won't say anything terrible about it, but you can imagine how not great it is – La Prairie. And like I was like, I need a good eye cream because I'm vain.

And then I was on the Raw Food World website and I found this eye cream from Emory Skincare and I was like, oh, I'll try this. And I tried it and I was like, this is fantastic. And I just loved it and I fell in love with the product. And funny story, I actually reached out to Annmarie and I was like, I wanna get your products into my aesthetician's office. And they met. I don't know if that worked out. I don't think it did. But then fast forward like six months, I go to a meeting to work on a campaign and it's at Kevin and Annmarie's office at the time. And then we became friends.

Jodi: That's so funny. Is that how you started working for them?

Rachel: Yeah, so I met them. It was a campaign in California for labeling GMOS, and I started working for the campaign. And Annmarie and Kevin were super involved in it as well. They were just starting Annmarie Skincare, so they couldn't take on any leadership roles, but they're like, we're happy to host, we're happy to help. I house-sat for them and Cat-sat for them. And then I think it was six months later when Annmarie found out she was pregnant.

They're like, Come help us.

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Jodi: And that also brings up they're not testing on animals and your no cruelty policy. I think that's fairly innovative in the industry.

Rachel: We have to make sure our suppliers, our vendors, our ingredient suppliers, and all of our wholesalers, everybody supports that same mission as well.

Jodi: Is there anything we haven't talked about that you feel like the listeners should know about Annmarie Skincare or about your experience with the company?

Rachel: I feel like your listeners are pretty in tune with avoiding toxic chemicals. I would think if you're just on your journey, I would say there is a reason. I guess I think of my family and I think of people who don't think there is any difference, and we just see this rise in disease. There are a lot of diseases that are being caused from chemicals that are just released on the market. And I would just say be wary. Look into companies that you use. You might think it's clean, they might say it's clean, it might not be clean. So do your research and spend time looking into the ingredients and contacting the companies too.

Jodi: And how can people learn more about Annmarie Skincare and about you?

Rachel: You can go to our website. It's AnnemarieGianni.com and we have a lot of resources too. Our blog is huge. We have a lot of different articles on skincare ingredients, chemicals, DIY, like everything.

And then we also have a few resources on our homepages.

Jodi: If people are listening and they wanna go to the all-you-can-eat buffet and eat everything, what product do you encourage people to start with?

Rachel: If you're swapping out something that you use that's not so great, start with the one that you use the most of. Start with the three that you use the most of. So don't just buy a mask because you're not gonna use it every day. So start with something you can completely throw away. Your cleanser at home and your moisturizer, and get the cleanser, the serum, and the moisturizer. And whatever cleanser you decide to use, whether it's a gel or a cream, or one from the Signature or the Wild Alchemy Collection, the serums are pretty self-explanatory on our website.

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Rachel: We talk about the benefits of each of them and which one would be best for your skin type. So I would say just choose your cleanser, your serum, your facial oil, and start with those three. You'd probably say that's the best.

Jodi: Thank you so much for your time and your great insight. We really appreciate it!