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DR. KEESHA: Welcome to the Women's Vitality Summit. This is Dr. Keesha Ewers, your host, and my guest for this particular session is Dr. Trevor Cates, who is a nationally recognized naturopathic doctor.

She is known as The Spa Doctor and was the first woman licensed as a naturopathic doctor in the state of California and appointed by former governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to California's Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine Advisory Council. She's worked in world-renowned spas and sees patients in her private practice in Park City, Utah, with a focus on graceful aging and glowing skin.

She's been featured on Doctors, Extra, First for Women, Mind-Body Green, and is the host of The Spa Doctor iTunes podcast. Dr. Cates believes the key to healthy skin is inner and outer nourishment with nontoxic ingredients. Her new book Clean Skin from Within will be released in early 2017.

Dr. Cates says The Spa Doctor skin care and supplement lines are formulated with natural and organic ingredients designed to help you achieve the clean and natural path to confidence and beautiful skin. Welcome to the show, Dr. Cates!

DR. TREVOR CATES: Thank you! It's great to be here.

DR. KEESHA: You know, I have a radio show too, and I just said welcome to the show but what I really meant was welcome to the Women's Vitality Summit!

I usually start off with talking about what the word vitality means, which is the state of being strong and active, having energy, exuberance, vigor. I always ask my guests who do you see as a wonderful female role model for that kind of vigor and passion and dynamism and sparkle that's influenced you?

DR. TREVOR CATES: Well, I'm not much of a person to follow celebrities or TV stars or that sort of thing. The women that I look up to the most are women that are in my family. I think about both of my grandmothers who were beautiful, elegant Southern women that were strong but elegant, and also my own mother.

I watch them as they've gotten older and it seems like they're wiser and even more understanding and intelligent, so I really look up to them as very powerful yet sweet and kind women.

DR. KEESHA: You know, I'm the same way, and you might be surprised to know that most of my guests say the same thing - mothers and grandmothers. I haven't had one person list a



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celebrity so I just want you to know you're in good company. We're all very honored and respectful and lucky to have people in our ancestry that we can look up to like that.

With the people that you see in your practice and that you reach out to and that you hear from, what would you say is the biggest vitality sucker that you see for women today?

DR. TREVOR CATES: Well, I think women often try and do too many things. We are trying to be the best partner, the best mom, the best friend, the best worker, maybe business owner, athlete, all kinds of things, and I think that's great.

I think it's okay to try and do those things, but we also have to find a way to fuel ourselves so that we don't get drained by all the different places that could drain our energy.

DR. KEESHA: That is really so important and our listeners will have heard me say this before, but I often say that women have gotten themselves more freedom than we've ever really had in history that I know of, but we've gone so far over to the other side that we have to bring home the bacon, fry it up in the pan, and look hot at the same time, and it's burning us out.

So I think supermom, superhealer, superwife, supersister, all these things. We're all motivated to be the very best we can be, and doing it on a lot of fronts, wouldn't you say?

DR. TREVOR CATES: Yes, I do, and I think it's okay to do that. I think it's possible. But I also think it's important to notice when your body's giving you signals that you need to take a break and to not just wait for that, but also try and incorporate that into your daily care of yourself.

Like they say on the airplane, before you help your child with the oxygen mask, make sure you put yours on first. You can't help others if you're flailing yourself. You'll just go into a tailspin because you're doing too many things all at once, and then you get sick and injured, basically.

DR. KEESHA: How does that show up on women's skin? You see women and you give a lot of wonderful advice and research and tips for how to maintain a healthy, vital exterior from the inside out. How does this lifestyle, if you're not really balancing it and being mindful and doing self-care activities, show up for women that you see?

DR. TREVOR CATES: Our skin is our largest organ, and it's right on the surface of our body, so it's a great tool to use to check in with yourself. It's a great way to monitor how our health is going, how our stress level is going, how our nutrition and a lot of different things are going just by looking in the mirror. When I say that, I don't mean look in the mirror and be hard on yourself, because that's the last thing that women need. But use it as a tool to check in with yourself.

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There are other things that you can do. I focus a lot on skin, so this is one way that you can do it. If you look in the mirror when you're brushing your teeth in the morning or washing your face, if you notice your skin is drier than normal, if you're breaking out more, if you've got bags under your eyes, if you feel like your skin is starting to age more rapidly, if you've got itchy skin, eruptions anywhere, that can be an indication that something's out of balance and it's time to take a closer look.

A lot of people have a tendency to just cover it up; cover it with makeup or put a topical steroid on it that their dermatologist might recommend. But you're not really using it as a tool. I call skin our magic mirror that gives us great information on our overall health. So if we just cover it up, then we're losing that opportunity to really learn the messages our body is giving us.

DR. KEESHA: I think this is so important because your skin is a feedback mechanism, and the magic mirror is a great way of saying it.

I practice Ayurvedic medicine and I know Chinese medicine says this too - as an integrated medicine practitioner, one of the things I do when I look at my patient in front of me is I'm looking at certain tells. I'm looking at their fingernails, their skin, their hair, their eyebrows, and it's giving me information. I think one of the things that we have not been blessed with in our culture is the ability to know what the body is trying to say to us early on.

So what would you say to women about how to really listen early on to what their skin or their body is saying rather than making the body get into a shouting match with you? Because in the end, the body will win! You will have to sit down and rest because you have a disease process if you push it that far, right?

DR. TREVOR CATES: I think early on, as far as the skin goes, what starts to happen is our skin can start to be dull, or dry, or sometimes we might break out in pimples. Those are some signs that you can see right away that show up pretty quickly.

You can think back and say "Okay, what did I do, what did I eat differently? Am I overly stressed? Have I changed my skincare routine? Have I changed any diet or lifestyle things?" So have you made any subtle changes that could be impacting your skin? Because that can be an early indication that something is going on.

Also, it can be a sign that your hormones are out of balance. As a naturopathic physician, I'm always trying to find what the underlying cause of a person's health problems is. If they have skin issues, or even if it's anything less than glowing, vibrant, clear skin, then we want to find out why is that happening. So hormones can be playing a role in that.



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When we think about hormones, a lot of times people think about sex hormones - estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone - which do play a big role in the skin, but there are also thyroid hormones. We know when our thyroid function is low, our skin is dry. Also adrenals can play a big role too, especially when it comes to things like stress. We can tend to have more itchy inflamed skin if our cortisol, which is an adrenal hormone, is elevated. So hormones are a big part of it.

Also nutritionally, if we're deficient in certain micronutrients in particular, things like vitamin A, vitamin E, zinc, vitamin C. If we're not getting enough of those type of nutrients, then it can show up as skin issues.

Also, if there are any problems with the gut, if people have digestive issues or they have leaky gut, which is hyperpermeability of the digestive tract lining, or food allergies, those can also lead to skin issues.

When you see these subtle changes in your skin, then it's good to think about what you might have done differently. Maybe you just didn't get a good night's sleep, and that's fine, Just try and get back into your sleep routine. Maybe you stopped eating as much of the essential fatty acids that we need for good skin, or maybe you started eating too much sugar, because we know that sugar can be an inflammatory food for the skin. It can be simple, or can be more complicated.

Sometimes you can just look in the mirror and figure that out and think back to what you did. Sometimes it's more complicated and that's when I think it's good to go see a naturopathic physician or some sort of functional medicine doctor - Ayurvedic practitioner - somebody that can help you figure out what that underlying cause is and then help you figure out a way to take care of yourself.

DR. KEESHA: In my functional medicine practice, what I do is, if I see somebody that's got a lot of skin issues, one of the first things I do is look for food sensitivities, and that's from my own experience.

Years ago I took Accutane, and I took antibiotics, the normal stuff that a dermatologist prescribes for terrible acne in adolescents. I didn't know anything about the kinds of medicine that I practice now. I look back at that and think, my goodness, I was using a sledgehammer on this very natural feedback mechanism my body was using to try and get my attention. Of course, it didn't work, I still had acne.

I would go running, then I'd eat yogurt and nuts and blueberries - thinking I was eating the perfect post-run food – and I was getting bloated and I had acne. It turns out I was allergic to gluten and dairy. The granola that I would put on top of the yogurt and the yogurt itself were causing me trouble, and lo and behold, I took those out of my diet and no more acne.

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I think that if you're willing to do a little sleuthing and really listen to your skin as a powerful indicator of what's going on inside, then you won't have to go further with that. Unfortunately, I went further, I didn't know all this stuff, and wound up with an autoimmune disease. Acne had been my early warning, bloating had been my early warning. Finally when I had rheumatoid arthritis, that's when I really starting looking into "Why am I killing myself? Why is my body attacking itself?"

I started finding out about Ayurveda and functional medicine and started asking those good questions like "What is the root cause of this?" instead of just trying to treat the symptom.

So if we try to treat the symptom by putting, like you said, steroid creams on the outside of it or taking Accutane - something to really kill off your liver! - you're missing the whole point, aren't you?

DR. TREVOR CATES: Yeah, and I'm so glad you brought that up, because I do see this a lot. If people don't take care of their skin issues, it shows up in some other way, and sometimes it's even more significant of a health issue. I had skin issues as a child; eczema and itchy skin, atopic dermatitis. I had a lot of allergy problems and it showed up on my skin. I had little bumps all the time and it really impacted my self-esteem as a kid.

Luckily, that's what got me on the path to becoming a naturopathic physician. My parents took me to a number of different conventional medical doctors and specialists, but I had adverse reactions to medications or developed allergies to those as well.

Luckily, my parents didn't give up and they found an integrative practitioner that they took me to, and that's the one thing that turned my health around and really showed me a path that I wanted to follow. Sometimes I think "What if I hadn't followed that path? What if I hadn't paid attention? What if my parents hadn't found that practitioner?" I don't know what my health would be like now.

I see it in my patients. I see children come in to see me and we clear up their eczema and they're fine. Then I see others who've had eczema and they're constantly suppressed with corticosteroid treatments and antihistamines and things. Then later they develop asthma and their health continues to get worse, and it's more complicated to treat people at that point. It's not impossible - we can still do it - but it's just a lot easier. The earlier you figure these things out and pay attention to them, the better off you're going to be.

DR. KEESHA: Well that is for sure. In Ayurvedic medicine they talk about stages of disease progression, that it happens in six stages. The first layer of your tissue layers is your skin and if



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you don't catch the progression of it there, it will definitely go deeper if you ignore it. Ignoring it means just treating the symptom.

I am so glad that you are bringing this out as a topic of conversation for people with your book *Clean Skin From Within*. What a great topic to talk about because too many people are smearing things on the top of their skin hoping to make the skin look better and not realizing that it's an inside job. And a lot of it includes your thoughts.

So in talking to women, what do you talk to them about in terms of toxicity? A lot of times when people think of detoxing they just think of changing their diet and taking supplements, but what about emotions and your thoughts?

DR. TREVOR CATES: Certainly there are a lot of things that play a role, and we've talked about some of those underlying causes. You mentioned a couple of the common foods that cause skin problems, but certainly emotions play a role, self-talk and self-esteem, and all of these things. It becomes this vicious cycle.

When people do have chronic skin issues, it can make their skin problems worse if they're stressed about it, and then the skin problem itself stresses them out. It becomes this vicious cycle. So it's a matter of trying to figure out a way to break that and be easy on yourself and understand that it's a healing process. That can sometimes help.

I do think that even if people already have good skin, or even if it's already glowing, you should certainly keep doing the stress management and certainly doing things like meditation, exercise and getting a good night's sleep, and other stress management practices like breath work - those are all really great to do on a regular basis.

I think a lot of times people wait until they're overly stressed or completely bombarded to then go and do a weekend workshop or read a book on how to meditate instead of trying to figure out what you can start doing gradually. What can you do a little bit every day? What can you find time for in your schedule? Is it morning, or is it at night? Maybe it's at lunchtime, during the day. For most people it's sometime right after they first wake up.

If people have kids, that can be a good time if you get up before your kids. I have older kids now, so I usually get up before my kids. It used to be that I would have my time at night after they went to bed, but now they go to bed around the time that I go to bed.

Depending upon whether you have children, or you work or whatever your schedule is, try to find that time for yourself, to find some sort of practice that works for you; whether it's breath work, meditation, prayer, going for a walk, taking a bath, finding something to take care of yourself, to really nurture yourself on a more emotional level.

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DR. KEESHA: Well, the good news is that one of the guests on the Women's Vitality Summit is Ajayan Borys. His session is all going to be about meditation and how to make it doable. His whole practice is called Effortless Mind Meditation and his passion is making it effortless.

Haven't you ever talked to a patient and seen their eyes cross when you ask them to do one more thing? They look like you've just smacked them! They're like "I can't put one more thing in my day!" I have so much compassion for that.

I was talking to Dr. Jay Davidson on another interview, and he gives women the little task to write a list of the things that they don't need to do. It's like the book Essentialism, right? Where if your life is crammed to the gills to that state where when someone says one of the best things you can do to save your life and improve your aging process is meditation and you want to burst into tears because you can't do one more thing, you might be a little over-scheduled.

DR. TREVOR CATES: Yes, I agree. I think the word meditation sometimes is intimidating for people because for many people meditation is quite a practice, and there are people who meditate for hours, but you don't have to do that. You can still get benefit from meditating for even seconds to a minute.

I'm excited to have somebody talking more about that. There are some great benefits from meditation, even if it's just briefly, or you can even do walking meditations or meditate in the shower. You can be on the go and still be meditating.

DR. KEESHA: Exactly. So you have a daughter?

DR. TREVOR CATES: I have three kids. Yes.

DR. KEESHA: Are any of them girls?

DR. TREVOR CATES: Yeah, my two younger ones are girls. I have a 9 year old daughter and a 14 year old daughter.

DR. KEESHA: I have two daughters also. So what would you tell young girls? What is it you want your girls to know? What do you want all the other mothers out there to focus on when we talk about having our girls grow up with their maximum vitality? Making their expression into this world of their skills and living up to their potential with a lot of vigor and dazzle and sparkle. What is it that you want your girls to know?

DR. TREVOR CATES: That's a really great question. I think about that a lot and I go back and forth on this. What I think right now is - and I haven't done any official scientific study on this or

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anything, so I don't know exactly how my girls are going to turn out - I do feel like there's a lot we can do just by leading the way and showing by example.

So if we are overly stressed, complaining, talking about how fat we are, how our butt looks big in these jeans or how old we are, it's going to rub off on our children, especially on girls. They listen more than we ever realize. That's one of the things to be aware of. How you talk and how you present yourself and what you do in front of your girls is more important, I think, than what you tell them to do.

Because when they get to be teenagers - now that I have two teenagers, I know this - they're going to not want to do what you tell them to do and they will resist you. This is just part of being a teenager. However, if you've been leading by example, they're going to know what that means. Does that make sense?

DR. KEESHA: Oh it's absolutely accurate. I have a 19 year old daughter and I have a 21 year old daughter and I have two sons also. They are very different to my daughters are in terms of how they went through their adolescence. One of the things my 19 year old had is terrible acne, and she listened to me when I said she really needed to figure out what she was eating and what she was doing with her emotions.

In Ayurvedic medicine, we often think about rheumatoid arthritis and acne as being undigested anger - kind of like with hypothyroidism - that you're not speaking your truth in a way that is holding yourself as also important in the world, that you're over-caregiving other people and ignoring yourself.

She was a barista at Starbucks at the time, and she started watching her foods. She took out coffee, and she's also allergic to gluten and dairy - a little genetic pass-off from mom - and her acne cleared up, beautiful skin. And she started meditating. All I did was lead by example on that and said you might want to look at this. I didn't hound her about it, which of course as you mentioned, is not a good strategy for teenagers. Hounding doesn't get you anywhere good.

Leading by example, then suggesting something, and walking away. The human growth and developmental stage of adolescence is learning how to be autonomous and making your own decisions. So they have to learn that there are consequences to actions.

If she decided to have coffee because she was tired and not pay attention to her adrenal glands in a healthy way, then she wound up with acne, and she started seeing that very clearly for herself. I think that's a really important thing that you just said. Along those same lines, what are some of the top foods that trigger skin problems?



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DR. TREVOR CATES: That's a good question, too. I would say the number one food is sugar. It impacts the skin in a number of different ways. It's a pro-inflammatory food, so it's going to trigger inflammation. A lot of skin problems are actually what I call "skin-flammation" which is internal inflammation showing up on the skin as some sort of problem. Sugar is a problem for that reason.

Also, sugar is one of the biggest trigger foods for acne breakouts because when our blood sugar is elevated, our insulin also increases to accommodate for that. Then what that does is increase sebum production and androgen activity. We know that excess sebum production and androgen activity are two of the things that really cause acne breakouts. That is why acne is often triggered by sugar, or really anything that turns to sugar in the body. So if you're eating a lot of grains, fruit, honey, maple syrup, agave syrup, any of those kinds of things, it's going to create a similar kind of problem.

As for skin aging, the number one food for that is sugar because of the glycation issues that occur with elevated blood sugar. When our blood sugar continues to be elevated from eating a lot of sugar, or foods that turn into sugar, then what can happen is we have these advanced glycation end products that occur. One of the things that happens is they bind to collagen on our skin. Collagen is what gives our skin the tone and firmness. So it binds to that and causes it to break down and become more rigid. That's what causes more wrinkling: fine lines, wrinkles, sagging of the skin.

I would say that's why sugar is the number one food. I'm not saying that you never ever can eat sugar. Just be careful. What I'm talking about is more when you eat excessive amounts of these things and your blood sugar gets elevated and especially when it stays elevated. It's about eating more balanced foods and watching the amount of sugar you eat.

Also if you're getting your blood work done with your practitioner, I would suggest getting your fasting blood sugar tested as part of that, which is pretty routine. Looking at the number 85 as the number that's kind of the top side of that rather than what's typical. Conventional doctors will tell you if it's under 100, that's normal and you're fine. However, there are a lot of people in that 90-100 range that are actually borderline. That's a time when you can actually be proactive with your diet, taking supplements and things to help balance your blood sugar so that it doesn't become more of an issue.

The next big one would be dairy products. Because of the inflammatory effects of dairy products, a lot of people have dairy allergies or sensitivities, digestive issues. Then the milk sugars can also cause increases in blood sugar which means we're talking about some of the same things we talked about with sugar being a problem.



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I would say those two, and then close behind them are things like gluten and corn. But I'm going to share with your audience the whole entire best and worst foods list as a cheat sheet as a gift to your audience so we don't have to go through all these foods. There are quite a few that are good for your skin and then also that aren't so good.

DR. KEESHA: Beautiful. That's such a great thing and very generous because if people read in a magazine about the top ten best foods for your skin or the foods that cause problems, they may not really understand what's behind that.

So if it says blueberries are great for your skin but then you start overeating blueberries, you might not understand that it's turning into more sugar in your system. I'm glad you mentioned this because I see people getting into trouble with this. Isn't that the American way? If a little bit is good, a lot must be better?

DR. TREVOR CATES: That's true. And it's the same as [inaudible29:49] you don't have to completely restrict things unless of course you have an allergy, then yes it might be good. But it seems like we're so extreme on things and there's definitely a balance.

Commented [A1]: Something is missing

A lot of it is just getting back to eating whole foods in a balanced way, looking for foods that are high in antioxidants and essential fatty acids and things that help support our collagen, like vitamin C rich food like broccoli and strawberries. Those kinds of things are good for us, but it's all in balance.

Of course you want to get the right balance of macronutrients, carbohydrates, fats, proteins, and you can get that if you eat a whole foods diet, if you get back to nature, it's pretty easy to do that.

DR. KEESHA: What are your thoughts about far-infrared sauna therapy? I find that my skin looks so much better when I do regularly get into my sauna.

DR. TREVOR CATES: It can be great for the skin. For people that aren't used to doing something like that, it can create flushing and may create some redness, so I would say it's something to build up to, not go in and try to do a long sauna treatment right off the bat.

Some of my patients that have a lot of toxin exposure; a history of exposures from either their work or hobbies or different things where maybe they've been exposed to a lot of pesticides or different solvents or things. When they go into a sauna, if we haven't done some work to help clear out some of that first, they start detoxing heavily right away and they can develop some symptoms like headaches, feeling nauseous and also some skin itching and things like that.

If someone is generally pretty healthy and doesn't have all these issues, then starting off with a five minute sauna and then building your way up can be great.

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I always say to end with a cold shower is the best way to do a sauna. Hydrotherapy is a big part of the naturopathic training and what we like to include in the naturopathic approach. One of the things we really believe is that anything you do warm, whether a hot tub or a hot shower or a hot sauna, it's good to end with a cold blast.

DR. KEESHA: It's very invigorating to do that too. I find that also if you soak too much, like in Epsom salts, it can be damaging. But you have to know for your body type what's going to be the right amount.

It's a good point about not going into a sauna for 45 minutes when you haven't ever done it before. You've definitely got to work into it. Good advice. What would like to leave for your listeners here in terms of how to get hold of you?

DR. TREVOR CATES: People can find me at thespadr.com, you can go there. I've got a podcast and a skin quiz on there, where you can learn about what might be some things that are holding you back from having clear, radiant skin. It is a free quiz, just takes a minute to go through the questions and gives you your own customized skin report. I've got some other great tools on there.

Also, my skincare line is on that site as well. I just want to say there's so much we can do internally - a lot of what we talked about today for our skin - but also what we put on our skin impacts our skin. A lot of the skincare products that are out there that we use on a day to day basis contain a lot of harmful chemicals.

On average, we use nine personal care products a day, which exposes us to 126 unique ingredients, and because that's an average across both men and women, it means for women that's even more. Many of these are not well-studied, or they have been studied and found to be harmful yet they're still being used and they haven't been banned. In the UK and Europe, they've banned over a thousand ingredients. In the United States, the FDA has only banned 11 ingredients.

So a lot of skincare products are full of harmful ingredients, and that's why I decided to create my own skincare line because I couldn't find something for my patients that I felt good about them using that was both natural and effective. That's why I created the sought after Daily Essentials and the 4-Step System that I have there as well.

DR. KEESHA: I think that's wonderful, and I always send my patients to the Environmental Working Group website. They've got a really wonderful program there where you can punch in an ingredient that you have in your cupboard or in your medicine cabinet or in your skincare stuff and just see what is in it and what it does. Instead of taking our word for it, you can look at

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the science behind it and the research and see what the Environmental Working Group shows on that. It's a great website for everything in your house in terms of ingredients that you're being exposed to because everything you put on top of your skin, you're eating.

That's another thing Ayurveda says: don't put anything on your skin you wouldn't eat. It makes sense.

I don't understand why people don't see the correlation between putting a birth control patch on your skin, or a Scopolamine patch behind the ear when you're getting on an airplane, but you don't know that the bug repellent you're spraying on you is actually also going in there.

It's a really important concept to wrap your mind around so you understand that everything on your skin is actually like putting it in your mouth.

DR. TREVOR CATES: Yes, Environmental Working Group does have some great information and they do have a rating for all the different ingredients. It's great that you can just plug in on their Skin Deep database. You can plug in any ingredient and get a rating.

It's important though, when you see the rating, if you really want to be aware, to read what it is that it does. Because sometimes it may have a rating of 3 or 4 and that might seem like it's a bad ingredient, but actually they rate it a 3 or a 4 if people tend to have an allergic reaction or sensitivity to it. It doesn't necessarily mean it's toxic, it just may not be the best for you. It's not just about chemical toxicity as far as their ratings go, so that's something to be aware of.

I also would recommend the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics. They have a great website that gives some great tips on how to avoid toxins in skin care.

DR. KEESHA: Fabulous. Just for one final question, what would you like to leave with our listeners in terms of how to regain or enhance their zest and their vitality?

DR. TREVOR CATES: I would just say that you're beautiful. Whether you realize it or not, you're beautiful. We all are, and it's a matter of seeing that, finding it, and appreciating it. Look in the mirror every day and try to find something positive to say. Even if you're having a hard day, try and think of something positive you can say to yourself and let it really soak in the best you can. Those daily affirmations can be really powerful in realizing that you are beautiful on the inside and out.

DR. KEESHA: Perfect. Well thank you, Dr. Cates. I so appreciate you joining us today and sharing your wisdom on the Women's Vitality Summit.

DR. TREVOR CATES: Thank you.

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DR. KEESHA: All of Dr. Cates' contact information for reaching her and the website and her bonus materials will be on her speakers' page for the Women's Vitality Summit. Everybody have a sparkly, vitality-filled day!