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SSSS Sustainable SalonSpa Summit

April 6, 2009 by [christineshahin](#)

There are times in a life when there is no apparent explanation for the profound responses we have, and yet they create a shift in perception, and direction.

Such an experience happened when I attended the [Sustainable SalonSpa Summit](#) (SSSS) a side event at [America's Beauty Show](#) (ABS), in Chicago IL last week, an imperative, intelligent, inspiring, occasion, coordinated by [Mary Beth Janssen](#).

Mary Beth is someone I have held in high esteem from afar for many years before our recent amity. I first "met" Mary Beth reading her books *Naturally Healthy Hair* and *Body of Knowledge*; I was inspired to know more about her; a Master Herbalist, Certified Chopra Center Wellness Educator, and leader in the beauty industry, she became a demigoddess to me.

From the outset, my "place" in the salon/beauty industry has been an independent owner practicing natural methods; offering safe healthy products for people and planet, then as eco-activist, then as educator and creator of a product grading system, and back to owner of a small natural consulting business.

Over the years I attended only a few local beauty shows; their product offerings were not the direction I had intended, therefore industry events were not where I put my energy. I attended henna, herbal, aroma therapy, and reflexology seminars and incorporated these into my practices.

When Mary Beth extended me the invite to ABS, and SSSS in particular, I looked forward to it all year, putting aside all other offers and events not knowing what was in store.

So, when colleague Syed and I stepped into the [McCormick](#) Conference Center with divas on display, runway music blasting, crammed in line waiting entry, I was shocked at my emotional and yes physical response of "home coming". There was something, still unexplainable, that spoke to my deepest self. An industry blamed for creating low self esteem through unrealistic role model images, for contributing to eating disorders, for empty vanity and I was "coming home"... seemed unsettling.

Mary Beth greeted the 100 participants in the Sustainable SalonSpa Summit saying that we would be taking the “S” word, “Spirit”, out of the closet. Spirit is the foundation of salons and spas because we are the care givers to the care givers. The nurturers must be nurtured to nurture; can we be nurtured or nurture if we use unhealthy products in our services? What about nurturing planet & space? Replenishing Self with Mediation.

This forum for Salon and Spa associates was one of the best eco informative sessions I have witnessed having witnessed more than most, from participant to presenter. Leaders in the industry including international designer Clodaugh, Horst Rechelbacher, founder of Aveda and Intelligent Nutrients, Organic Spa’s Mary Bemis and Ted Ning of LOHAS mentioning a few. Organic Beauty, Sustainable Living, Business Profit Mentors guided us on: why/ how to be Green, from product to facility design, how to find Real Green amidst “green washing” efforts, about labeling, certifications and yes some deep breathing and shoulder massages!

After two decades in the eco-activism field, the last 8 years voiding 40 years of advances, this dynamic summit showcased, using language from poet Khalil Gibran, “*Work is love made visible*”. Each of these esteemed panelist’s work is their love made visible; and my love has brought me here...home.

Thank you Mary Beth and Panelists! Looking forward to next year!



Photo credit: Dan Rest for 2009 America’s Beauty Show

short bio of [panelists](#)

2009 SalonSpa Sustainability Summit panelists pictured left to right:

Tamara Jercho, [National Association of Eco-Friendly Salons & Spas](#); Kate Leydon, [The Ruby Room](#); Frederic Holzberger, [Aveda Fredrics Institute](#); Ted Ning, [LOHAS](#); Mary Beth Janssen, [2009 SalonSpa Sustainability Summit chairperson](#); Tamara Wills, [Allyu Salon](#); Luz Segovia, [President of Cosmetologists Chicago](#); Mark Wuttke, [Wuttke Group, LLC](#); Max Simon, [Get Self Centered](#); Mary Bemis, [Organic Spa Magazine](#); Horst Rechelbacher, [Intelligent Nutrients](#); [Clodaugh](#), International Design Leader; and Gary