

Peace WITH ENDO PODCAST

PWE58: Cannabis & Endo with Ellen Scanlon & April Pride from Of Like Minds

Aubree: Hi, love. This is episode 58 of the *Peace with Endo Podcast*. I'm your host, Aubree Deimler. I am an author, wellness coach and energy healer who helps women with endometriosis naturally manage pain, increase energy and find peace with endo.

Today's show features fellow endo sister Ellen Scanlon and April Pride, a cannabis entrepreneur and advocate for women's education. Ellen and April founded a new cannabis education platform for women called Of Like Minds, within that platform includes their new podcast, which is called How to Do the Pot, which answers common questions women secretly Google about cannabis. The show's goal is to inform, educate and demystify cannabis.

With Cannabis legally available in Canada and with its growth in availability across the United States, there's more and more information coming out about the benefits of cannabis for women's health issues, including endometriosis.

On the show today Ellen and April helped breakdown the legal cannabis market in the United States, how to navigate this, and find a doctor who may be open minded to prescribing cannabis for endo symptoms. We chatted about the ways that cannabis can help with endometriosis and some ways that you can utilize it, if it's available in your area.

We also talked about some of the stigmas about cannabis and how we can start shifting some of those ideas, given the fact that cannabis is a super healing plant. I hope you enjoy our conversation, now onto the show

Hi Ellen and April. Thank you so much for being on the show today.

April: Thank you for having us.

Ellen: Thank you so much.

Aubree: So, I'd love to know a bit more of your stories and how that transpired to what you're up to now? So, did you want to start with that Ellen?

Ellen: Sure. I am... April and I are friends from college and we recently reconnected a few years ago when I was working at a women's healthcare start up and she had founded her company Van der Pop, and we started talking a lot about women's health and how women's health from the perspective of what I was looking at, which was around wellness at different points in women's lives, so pre and post natal, and around menopause and pregnancy and April was talking to women who were finding cannabis and finding it really helpful to their wellbeing in a variety of ways and when April sold her company Van der Pop to Canopy Growth, we decided to come together and try to connect both of our backgrounds and our passion really for helping women to feel better, and that's when we decided to found Of Like Minds.

And Of Like Minds is a marketing channel and platform for cannabis brands to connect with women. Our first product is actually a podcast, and it's called How to Do the Pot. It's a modern women's guide to legal cannabis and we feature stories of women and we talk to incredibly renowned experts who share what all of us know, which unfortunately is not as much as we'd like about cannabis, but what we know right now, and that's where we are.

We were connected because one of our episodes is about endometriosis, which is a condition that I discovered that I had when I was 39, after several years of infertility, and so it's very close to our heart and is extremely important for us to talk to experts who understand how cannabis and endometriosis come together.

Aubree: Awesome. So, April did you want to share a little bit of your background as well?

April: Sure. I am, I think what's most accurately been described as a creative entrepreneur, so I've launched brands in fashion and home and cannabis seemed to me like uncharted territory and as a creative, that's what you're looking for, right? Where are there no rules? Where can you make the rules? And I launched Van der Pop in January 2016, with accessories to store, smoke and share cannabis. Again, I'm a designer by training. I went to architecture school, and so it just seemed like we needed a 21st century revamp of the... the accouchement around our cannabis behavior, right?

Something... items that match what's... what you'd find on your vanity or in your closet, right? Items that look like they were intended for quote a modern, design-minded person. We didn't actually start focused on women. I didn't change our positioning I guess you could say until we were about three months in and I realized the ways in which the plant was specifically working with a woman's body and the ways it could resolve some of the life-changing, not for... not in the... good ways, life-changing conditions that a lot of my friends... I'm almost 44, so at that time I was

40... were experiencing, and pelvic health was absolutely one of the ways in which I saw cannabis providing comfort and relief, so fast forward, three years later as... as Ellen mentioned, I sold my company to Canopy Growth, which is the world's largest cannabis company and Van der Pop sits as a top three brand there. I left last February and that's when Ellen and I launched Of Like Minds.

Aubree: So, what was the inspiration behind Of Like Minds?

April: Well having been in the industry at that point for three years and having worked in the Canadian market for two years, it was pretty clear that the industry was going in one direction, which is the largest companies, with the most money win, and they were all in Canada, because it was federally legal. It's federally legal up there. It had been federally legal medicinally since 2001, and so it was just a more robust market, where there was a lot of opportunity.

So, what that means is that most of the people running the licensed producers who really control the cannabis market distribution up there are white men and I think we all know that one of the reasons why women's health isn't prioritized is decision makers don't look like us, and so with Of Like Minds we wanted to make sure that we were working with people that shared our values, that wanted to help build an industry that was equitable, not only for women's conditions and making sure that there were products on shelves that spoke to our needs, but also that every single step of the supply chain that we we're seeing diversity in terms of racial diversity, cultural diversity, again so that consumers know that their needs are being looked after by someone that has a life that looks a lot like theirs.

Aubree: So there's definitely been a lot of changes with cannabis availability and legalities across the United States. Many states have it for medical use, or it's been decriminalized and in some places like where I'm at in Colorado it's legalized for recreational use, so since it all can be a little confusing, what do you think our listeners should understand about the legal cannabis market?

April: That's a really good question. So, I would like to start off to just say that we talk about it as rec versus med, and Ellen and I use terminology "adult use", because while a... a person may not be a patient. They may not have a medical prescription. They may not be consuming cannabis simply because they want to get high, right? They're adults and they're making this choice because they have individual needs and I think that a woman who suffers from endometriosis and chooses to explore cannabis obviously fits into that category, so I think one thing to understand is that there are 11 legal states? Go for it Ellen.

Ellen: Sure. Well there are 76 million women over 21 that live in the United States in states where they can legally purchase cannabis and there are many millions more who live in states where they can medically purchase cannabis, and unfortunately cannabis remains a Schedule One drug, and so it cannot be tested as used, you know, in NIH and places that do a lot of studies around drugs are limited

in what they can study about cannabis and so a lot of the research has been anecdotal. Luckily more is coming on especially as more states legalize and more states realize that this is a... an enormous, enormous market that really needs to have experts looking at it as well as people who are consumers.

So, when we think about what women need to know, I think the first thing is whether you live in an adult use state or not, if you live in an adult use state there unfortunately are even more complications. Some states have different types of distribution. Purchasing might be legal, but distribution isn't legal, and so it can be a little bit complicated, so depending on your state you'll have to probably dig a little bit more to figure out exactly how things stand.

Same thing with medical use and then there's also states that have been decriminalizing the use of cannabis, so we're really in an interesting, interesting time in our country right now. It... April and I talk a lot about how there are similarities with prohibition, alcohol prohibition in the 1920's and we like to say that history doesn't repeat itself, but it rhymes and so there is still states in our country where you can't buy alcohol on Sundays for instance and those are the remnants of prohibition, so we're probably looking at a bit of a mishmash as cannabis legalizes across the country, but in general I think that women should know that they have a lot more opportunity to get the cannabis that they need, they just have to... to look a little bit harder.

Aubree: Right, and I know at least being here in Colorado and having experience with the medical side of things I think you have to find a doctor who's open to that. I don't know about going to just a... any type of doctor, but maybe seeking out somebody's who's more open minded to it, or do you have any tips as... as far as that side of things with the medical?

April: So, in our episode on endometriosis we speak with two doctors who practice cannabinoid medicine, one of whom is doctor Jessica Knox, and she outlined three questions that you should have right if you're seeking a medical prescription or a doctor that understands how to work with cannabis to help you achieve your... your wellness goals.

So, the first question is does your doctor know about cannabis? Do they know what the endocannabinoid system is and that might be something that we want to speak about further, Aubree. The second question is what are your goals with using cannabis? Are you looking to get some of your old life back? Do you need to sleep better, beyond reducing pain or are you looking to reduce anxiety. Are you looking to be more productive at work, right? Your goals may be different depending on where you are in your life.

The third question is what is the quality and safety of the cannabis medicine that you're using? And obviously if you are in a state where it's been legalized, you know, funnily enough if it's legal for medical patients, the quality of the cannabis is

probably not as good as if your state is an adult use legal state. There's just much stricter regulations when you're talking about administering this to a larger segment of the population, so those are the... the three questions that she advised people ask when they're looking for a doctor practicing medicine... cannabinoid medicine.

Aubree: Branching off of that, how can cannabis help with endometriosis?

April: So, without going into all of the specifics of the human body's endocannabinoid system, we'll just talk about it in broad strokes. So, the ECS, which is what we'll call it, the endocannabinoid system, was discovered in the early 1990's, so this is a system, just like our respiratory system, just like our neurological system, our cardiovascular system, that has been in the human body since the beginning of humans, but we just didn't know it until about twenty years ago. It's a network of receptors, of cells signaling system that has one purpose and that is to promote homeostasis, so balance within our body, within all of our internal organs and systems.

So, endometriosis, as you know and as your listeners know is an autoimmune disorder and when there is a deficiency in the endocannabinoid system, this seems to be the underlying factor for autoimmune disease, so within our body we produce naturally endocannabinoids, and cannabis, so far they've found 113 molecules that are cannabinoids and mimic what our body already naturally produces, so when you consume cannabis in a variety of methods, you are helping to replenish your endocannabinoid system and giving it more cannabinoids, so that it can start to get closer to homeostasis and start to more properly function.

Two of those cannabinoids that we have the most information on and we can speak about with a fair amount of knowledge are THC, that's the cannabinoid that gets you high, and CBD, which can be found in the hemp plant, not just the cannabis plant and that is what is available over the counter, right? That we're reading all these headlines about CBD, CBD, CBD. It is available from the hemp plant and that is legal in all 50 states, but they work together and so endometriosis patients they may find that they need a product that provides both of those cannabinoids.

So, the way that THC works is it disrupts pain signals, right? CBD fights inflammation, so if you have pain, pelvic pain due to inflammation, CBD may be what you need to reduce the pain because you are targeting the inflammation, so at a high level that's what we're talking about. Do you have anything to add Ellen?

Ellen: So I... as I mentioned I found out that I had endometriosis and I still, you know, don't know for sure because I didn't have the surgery, but I was 39 when it became something that came into my health understanding and what I've been learning since... since that time and how cannabis helps with endometriosis is really around the deficiency and, you know, we would love to introduce you to the physicians that helped us to understand this and I'm sure that they could go into this

in much greater detail, but from a practical standpoint I use CBD as soon as I get my period and I... it really, really helps to minimize very painful cramps and so that is just kind of the practical way. I haven't needed to use THC. I find that CBD works really, really well and I think that endometriosis presents itself differently in... in everyone and so there is a bit of experimentation that has to go on and if you listen to our episode on endometriosis on How to Do the Pot you can get a lot more information from the physicians, the neuroscientists and the... the physician that we talked to.

But in general I just think that... don't be alarmed if you have to experiment a little bit before you find the cannabis that works for you, and we always say start low, start slow, so choose low doses and give it some time before you make a final decision, but it really, really can help and many, many women are finding a lot of relief with cannabis, it just takes a bit of experimentation.

Aubree: Right. I agree with that as well and there is that interesting debate I think between do you need the THC or is CBD enough? I have a product that I've tried from Joy Organics, which is a local CBD company here in Colorado, which is strictly, you know, there's no THC at all in it, and I do find that it helps in certain ways, especially being applied topically is how I like to use that. So, let's talk a little bit more about some ways that you can utilize cannabis.

April: There are benefits and drawbacks, right? To various ways to consume. Smoking is an obvious one. It is obviously the one that has the least association with a medical solution, as you might... as you might imagine. It's the fastest acting. You'll have immediate effects. It is not something that is metabolized through your liver, which we'll talk about a little bit later how that can complicate things. Smoking you absorb toxins like ammonia, so obviously that's a drawback. Like I said it's the fastest acting and it will provide relief for three to four hours, depending on how it moves through your system.

Then there are oral methods such as sublingual tincture, which is the cleanest way to consume cannabis, and allows for the most... the most predictable dosing is considered the most medical administration of cannabis. Its onset is about five to fifteen minutes. It's absorbed through your cheeks, through the cells within your mouth and it, again can last anywhere from between three to four hours depending on how you metabolize, how quickly you metabolize it.

Also orally we'll just throw edibles in there, right? So, that has a one-hour onset and it is metabolized through your liver, which can have pharmacological impact, depending on how your body processes THC and CBD, so it's the trickiest, but it is in a lot of ways how most... how a lot of patients prefer to consume cannabis.

So, there are topicals. Topicals can include a cream. It can include patches, transdermal patches, which you can apply to your, like lower half of your abdomen, right? I know that there are people who do that during their period.

And suppositories are really the most direct way to... to feed the receptors in your pelvic region, so shaped like an OB tampon, you insert it vaginally, you get your body, invert your pelvis for 15 minutes, so your legs up the wall and again you can get these with a THC and CBD formulation. You can also get them CBD formulation mailed right to you, and I really love them when my period is starting as well. They're... it's really a great way to get to the source of whatever your discomfort is.

A woman's pelvic region has the second highest number of cannabinoid receptors in her body, second to the brain, so it is... it is a region that when it goes wrong, right? I mean obviously we're talking about endometriosis, it can go very wrong. One of the things that CBD in particular, so a CBD suppository can help with this. It reduces... it's been shown to reduce endometriosis related lesions and the spread of endometriosis. So, I mean just from a pelvic health standpoint, I mean I obviously am a huge fan of choosing cannabis for maintenance and I think that **any woman that chooses to use a suppository in particular on a monthly basis that CBD, hemp derived CBD is only going to be helping her health in that area of her body.**

Aubree: Absolutely. And another thing with the hemp, that comes into play with the cramps and the... the contractions that can happen when your period starts are those hormones those prostaglandins, so the hemp oil and the CBD you've got those good, nice anti-inflammatory agents, which I guess serves in a way, you know, as like a natural Ibuprofen in a sense, where it's kind of calming that inflammatory reaction down and that happens very strongly at the start of your new cycle, so I've found loading up like especially two to three days before my period's going to start has really helped me as well with the CBD.

Ellen: That's a great tip. I hadn't thought to... to start before my period. I usually start right when it starts and I get a lot of relief, but starting before makes a lot of sense, especially I think the way that many people are learning to take CBD that it... it acts almost like a supplement for a lot of people and you can kind of think about it like a vitamin, where it's something that taking it every day, the effects might be more subtle, but it's you know... if you go a couple of weeks and you don't take your multivitamin, maybe you feel a little bit off and I think that people are... are coming to believe that CBD has similar effects.

Aubree: Absolutely. Now I know that there can be some stigmas around cannabis, and while that's changed a lot in my environment, where it's heavily accepted now here in Colorado, that's not the case across the US and certainly across the world. So, what kind of stigmas have you two experienced now leading up to this organization you've created that's all about pot and how do you think we can start to shift some of those ideas?

April: So, at Van der Pop we conducted a survey of 1,500 North American women and the results were fascinating, so 66% of women, this was two years ago, so these

numbers may be different, but I think it gives some insight into the bigger picture. 66% of all women felt like there was a stigma attached to their cannabis usage and when you broke this down to women who lived in legal markets versus non-legal markets it was like 68%... I'm sorry 68% of women who lived in legal markets and 66% of women who lived in non-legal markets felt like there was a stigma, so it doesn't matter if it's legal or not women just still feel stigmatized and these are obviously societal based stigmas.

Men are more concerned with, you know, am I going to go to jail? Am I going to lose my insurance? Am I going to lose my job? So those are the things that they're most concerned about when it comes to their cannabis consumption, but women are worried about what people will think of them. How it reflects on them as a mother as a... as a women who is serious about her profession, or serious about being taken seriously, so that's some insight into the stigma and I do think that it has changed simply because we have more outlets that are focused on educating women with the correct information... with correct information, with research as we have it, as Ellen mentioned, there's not a lot of it but increasingly more and more and with education comes a lot of questions from women and they're asking their doctors and that's really one of our goals too, is to make sure that women are not afraid to ask their healthcare providers what they know about cannabis and how they think it could maybe help with conditions that they're suffering from.

Aubree: Right.

April: But you know they go... they go to their doctor's office though, maybe their doctor judges them, right? Does that go on to their records? Does the insurance company find out about this? Right? There are a lot of questions that... or a lot of concerns that will keep them from being honest with even their healthcare professional because of the stigma.

Aubree: Right.

Ellen: One thing that I think that we have really been hearing from women is that it's... it's a personal connection that starts to change your mind. A lot of the women that we've been meeting who are entrepreneurs really are... are having positive life-changing experiences and when you hear those stories **it's hard to maintain your stigma or to maintain any type of judgment, because I think we all just believe that everybody is doing the best they can and if cannabis is... is bringing good results to someone that you love then it... it gets a lot harder to maintain whatever programming you might have** and so as more and more women start to talk about this with their friends with their physicians with their healthcare providers, with their alternative medicine providers, I think that it's becoming a... a word of mouth change and April and I talk a lot about G to G marketing, girlfriend to girlfriend marketing and it's just talking to your friends and telling them about your experience and explaining you know that you might need to experiment, but here are

the ways to avoid some of the challenges that people may have faced in their life with cannabis, feeling too high, feeling paranoid, feeling anxious, things like that.

If you can talk about those things and... and then talk about the reasons behind the legalization in eleven states and what that means for... for regulation and... and understanding what you're getting. I think people bring all of that together and... and we are finding and you know we're definitely in this market, so we're talking to people that are believers, but we're finding that people really respond well.

Aubree: Right and I've seen this shift happen, that G to G (laughs) even online, like in the support groups, especially in the endometriosis support groups where people are talking about it more. So, unfortunately with endo there's not a lot of good options out there at least in conventional, Western type medicine, a lot of the drugs have horrible side effects, so I do see that rising, in a sense, happening of people talking more about it, because it is providing a lot of women relief, you know, with nausea, with focus, with sleep, with a lot of things that come sort of as side effects of having a chronic illness.

So at least I'm seeing the shift of people talking more about it and it definitely is coming more I think in the community sense, because I do think on a larger scale sense we're up against the fact that, you know, it's illegal still federally here in the United States and then when I talk to people across the world there's even more of that stigma because it's illegal, so people, you know, not really wanting to talk about it, but kind of wanting to talk about it, and I get that having lived through the fact that it was illegal here as well and still having it be illegal at that Federal level I think is an issue that's hopefully changing, but still one that's very much present. Have you seen some of that shift happen as well, like people talking more about it and getting more comfortable with it?

April: I feel like I live in a bubble, because I am the one person that everyone talks about cannabis to because they may not have anyone in their life that they feel comfortable talking about cannabis with or they just don't know anyone that can give them answers that they're looking for so... but I think in general there has been more acceptance and frankly it has everything to do with CBD. Hemp derived CBD and all of the headlines that we read in 2018. Cannabis became a wellness industry, you know? And that persisted through 2019 and it's just... it was a convenient way, I think, for the industry to position this cannabinoid, but it had the effect of really, you know, we talk about cannabis as a gateway drug, I really feel like CBD is the gateway cannabinoid, right?

Once someone is open to CBD and they find that it's helpful for them or for someone that they love then they're like well what is this THC thing? You know maybe... maybe I want to have that rather than a glass of wine or I do have some acute pain and I hear that THC can only... is the only cannabinoid that can really help with that so far as we know.

So, I do think that I live in a bubble, but it does seem like everyone's lightened up a little bit and it's also generational, so I'm a member of gen-X and my generation is the most... we have been programmed by 'just say no' more than any other generation, right? The 80's really, whether you were in high school, or like I was in elementary school, the commercials of this is your brain on drugs, you know, had a huge impact on how we... how we look at any sort of drug and... and the results are in and the only real lasting impact that those campaigns had was that... are that people who chose to inhale (laughs) at some point, they have lower self esteem because they were told you're a loser if you choose cannabis.

And so that's the one impact that it's had, so I'm hoping that, again, more education, more research can help to make people feel like this is an option that is legitimate, not only because it will produce results, but because they don't fear that they will be judged because of it.

Aubree: Exactly. And I do think... I feel like there's almost a re-branding happening (laughs)

April: Yeah. Right.

Aubree: In a sense, and especially with women, which is what you are after, but even switching from, you know, marijuana and pot, and like all the old words to cannabis, to really putting more focus on the plant part of it. It's been interesting to watch that re-branding happening, getting away from, you know, the Chi Chi Chong movies of the guy you see with the guy smoking on his bong, to now this cannabis plant, which actually has a ton of healing properties within it. It's funny and kind of interesting to watch.

Ellen: Our podcast, How to Do the Pot, is really aimed at... at changing hearts and minds, you know, we... we love stories. We think most people love stories and we wanted to tell these stories that we hear. We think the best stories in cannabis are not being told and so we wanted to tell them and that's what How to Do the Pot is all about. It's hearing someone who sounds like you or your mom or your friend or your sister and thinking oh this person is getting relief, or this person is feeling better and just has a different outlook and maybe this is something that I can bring into my life as well and... and we just want to do whatever we can to help women and men, but really specifically women understand why other women might choose to consume and... and consider it as an option that they have available to them, depending on where they live.

Aubree: And I love that you're opening up the conversation and doing just that, you know, sharing the stories of women I think that is the way that we slowly start to change things, so thank you for doing that.

Ellen: Thank you.

April: And thanks to all of the women who... before us who got this to a place where it is an option to drive blocks from your house and go into a store, where product has been tested and you can start to, you know, start on your cannabis journey in a much... in a safer way period. Right? So, Ellen and I are part of a... a larger group that is looking to normalize cannabis use, but there are certainly hundreds and dozens of people who have made much bigger sacrifices over the decades during prohibition to get this plant to a place where, you know, we're looking at it as a legitimate option to help with some of these conditions.

Aubree: Absolutely, and hopefully that spreads, you know, we're seeing it spread throughout the United States and I'm hoping that it spreads throughout the world as well, sort of being the example here of what can happen when you do legalize it and make it available. I've watched it here in Colorado it's been, not only tons of people have moved here, but (laughs) I've watched the attitude change about it and it's just so much more accepted and even being able to have a conversation with my very conservative parents over Christmas about it. I feel like it has changed me and I hope that that continues to evolve across the country. I know that there's different cultures and pockets of places that aren't like that, but hopefully it's a trend that continues, because I do think that there is a lot of value to it.

Ellen: Totally. We do too.

Aubree: Well I appreciate you two coming on and sharing some of this information with us. Do you have any final words of inspiration for our listeners?

April: Be honest if you feel like it's safe about your cannabis consumption with women around you, so that they too feel like this is an option for them to, you know, regardless if they have endometriosis or another condition where cannabis can help improve their wellbeing. It just... it really requires that we talk about it honestly with one another and we don't suffer in silence or consume in shame.

Ellen: **And I would just say for women who have endometriosis cannabis can really help, so experiment, talk to your doctor, talk to your friends it can... it can bring a lot of relief without any of the painful side effects that other options have** and so I encourage you to be brave if it's something that is... that feels a little bit outside of your normal ways to behave and... and check it out because it's... it's incredibly helpful.

Aubree: Agreed, and again like you said experimenting and finding what works for you. Even if you want to try something I think that has a little THC, you can always find kinds that have higher ratios of CBD, so figuring out what works for you, what type of strains work for you, and experimenting in that sense as well, and maybe finding somebody who's, like you two, who are educated about it and can help direct you.

So, how can our listeners connect with you further if they want to listen to the podcast or find what you're up to?

April: So, the podcast again is How to Do the Pot, and we're available wherever you all may listen to podcasts. Our website that goes into each of the episodes and where we have more educational information is dothepot.com, and of course you can follow us on social media as well on @aprilpride and as the host of the show a lot of the educational content that we cover is dissimilated through my feed as well.

Aubree: Excellent and I'm assuming Ellen that that's where they find you as well?

Ellen: Yes. I am a little more private on social (laughs) but you can definitely find at all information about us and the podcast at dothepot.com and all the good information that comes out through April's Instagram feed. I have my hands on it too.

Aubree: Well I appreciate you opening up this conversation for women and educating about a topic that I know has been a bit taboo, but is changing so thank you for being a part of that evolution. I appreciate you coming on.

April: Thank you so much for having us, Aubree.

Ellen: Thank you so much Aubree, we really appreciate it.

Aubree: If you enjoyed our conversation I invite you to subscribe to continue on the journey. Please leave us a positive review and share with your friends so more endo sisters can find the show and get on track to finding peace with endo.

If you want to connect with me further and see how we can work together, head on over to peacewithendo.com or you can find me on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @peacewithendo. Pop on over and share your thoughts on the show, or simply say hello.

Check out the resources from this episode in the show notes including the high-quality CBD oil that I use and recommend to all my endo sisters. This is available to those of you in the US, and has helped me a lot with the multitude of endo symptoms. Please reach out to me if you have any questions.

I hope you find some peace in your day today. I'm sending you so much love. Bye for now.

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