



LAURA B. FOLKES
Certified Holistic Health Coach

Simply Smita Interview Transcript

Laura: Hi Everyone! I'm Laura Folkes, Certified Holistic Health Coach, and I'm here with Smita. She is the founder of an organic skincare line called Simply Smita.

We first met at an event that we were both doing, and I fell in love with the products. I had been looking for some natural skincare products to use and just loved the fact that most of her products have five ingredients in them and now I'm a convert. We will learn a little more about her brand today and I'm super excited for you all to get to know about her and the products!

So, tell us about what inspired you to start the brand?

Smita: There were a few things actually! I feel like there was, 6 and a half years ago when I started making my own products, there really wasn't a lot on the market and it started with deodorant. My background is in healthcare and I specialized in Alzheimer's care and so in my work I came across research that linked aluminum and Alzheimer's disease as well as breast cancer. At that time, I was using an aluminum filled anti-perspirant so not even deodorant, an anti-perspirant, which is so much worse.

So, in my search for looking for clean products, I started to realize how many toxins are actually in everything that we are putting on our skin. I was really into the clean eating movement when I was in high school, so way before it became popular. But, I never ever thought about what I was feeding my skin.

So, in a search, kind of getting fed up searching for something that was clean as well as companies that were ethical in their practices and how they made their products and how they paid their workers and how they sourced and also in terms of sustainability, I just started making my own deodorant and kind of found this passion that I didn't know I had. It kind of led me to making all of my own products and then five years later Simply Smita was born!

Laura: That's amazing! And, just so you know, if you have been thinking about trying a natural deodorant I have been using the Simply Smita deodorant and absolutely LOVE it.

Smita: Yay! It's one of the best things, I think one of the best changes you can do for your health, because sweating is the way our body releases toxins. Except for going to the bathroom, there's really no other way we are releasing these toxins. So, if you are preventing that from happening or using a product that doesn't work in harmony with the way your body works naturally, we are just building that up inside of you. Over time that can lead to a lot of not-so-great things.



LAURA B. FOLKES
Certified Holistic Health Coach

Laura: Yeah and you've even said that once you've started using the natural deodorant you don't even need to actually use deodorant and I find that I don't smell as much anymore, which is amazing!

Smita: Yeah and it's not your sweat that smells, it's the bacteria and if you harbor a healthy bacterial environment, which our deodorant and a lot of natural deodorants help you to do, you're not going to smell.

Laura: That's so cool. So, I'd really love for you to share a little bit more about the Simply Smita products and a little bit more about the line of products and the brand.

Smita: Okay, so, for us our mission is kind of four-fold. All of our products are handmade in small batches, everything contains five ingredients or less, it's all organic, and it's fair-trade when it needs to be. There are no preservatives, which is really important to me because I have really sensitive skin so even a natural preservative is going to cause me to have a reaction, and no fragrances!

There's also all of our packaging is eco-friendly and either reusable, recyclable, or biodegradable. And then we donate 5% of our profits to local Chicago-based charities who we work very closely with during the time that we're donating. We usually pick a new charity every year.

Another thing about our products is everything in it is actually edible. So, my whole motto is if you're not gonna eat a spoon of it why would you feed it to your skin? I'm not gonna say they taste very good, I don't recommend going home and eating a spoon of it! But if you did or if your baby or child did – nothing is going to happen because there's nothing bad in it.

Laura: That's awesome!

Smita: And another thing is we don't use any water in our products and so that's for two reasons. One, if you use water, you're kind of diluting the natural properties of a lot of the healing oils that we use. But, also, you need preservatives then to prevent bacterial growth and prevent spoiling. So, our products are shelf-stable. They are good for a year unopened – they are actually good for up to two years on the shelf we just say a year to be safe, but I use mine longer! And that way you are really getting something potent. They look like small jars, but they last for months and months and months.

So, some of the things we carry, and I hand make all of these, our deodorant paste, which is our best seller, and then we have a variety of balms for your face and body. So, some for dry skin and eczema, some for more sensitive rosacea type skin, and then just your everyday moisturizer as well as a baby line and lip balm.



LAURA B. FOLKES
Certified Holistic Health Coach

Laura: Awesome! And then you also just launched some scrubs too, right?

Smita: Yeah! We have a face scrub. It's taken me – I've never been able to wash my face or exfoliate, I always just break out. So, it's taken me years to find something that works, and this is made with organic Japanese adzuki beans. It's just one bean that I grind up into a powder and it naturally contains saponin, which is a cleanser. So, it cleanses your skin and leaves it really smooth but it doesn't irritate my face, so I love it!

And we have a few more products coming out soon. We've got a beard balm for men, and then my actual, after the deodorant my favorite product, I'm not sure what I'm gonna call it yet but it's basically like a boo-boo salve. So, if you're hiking and you get scrapes, cuts, rashes, mosquito bites, you put it on and it's gone the next day.

Laura: Oh my god! I can't wait! That's gonna be amazing.

What makes you different from some other natural care product lines? You've already talked a little bit about how you don't use water because of the bacteria and stuff like that, is there anything else that makes you guys different?

Smita: Yeah, I mean I think there's two things aside from like the five ingredients or less and all of that. One is our price point. When I launched this company, I really wanted our stuff to be more affordable. So, for the quality of our ingredients, the packaging we use, how we source and the fact that we're giving back a portion of our profits, what we charge for it is relatively low. I mean you can get our sets for \$20 – you're getting a deodorant, a lip balm, and one of our body balms and that's gonna last you for three months at least, you know? Sometimes that balm will last you six months! So, \$20 is something that I thought could be a lot more affordable.

When I was younger, I couldn't afford a lot of the organic products. We also want people, you know, single family homes and all of these people to have access to the products for themselves and for their children.

So, that's one thing and the other thing is we run a wellness blog and as much as I love selling our products, there's nothing that makes me happier than educating our customers. We focus a lot on consumer education and on just mindful living. So, at the end of the day, if a customer comes to a fair we spend a lot of time with them and they might not buy anything but if they left with more knowledge, that makes me happier than the sale.

Laura: That's awesome. It's so helpful and empowering too to help educate people on like why, because I knew that I probably should have been using some more natural skin care products but it was a process and it took me about three years to make that leap and



LAURA B. FOLKES
Certified Holistic Health Coach

actually try it because it's so overwhelming. To find a line or even know what to look for, it took me a while with food to figure out what to look for on a label but then skin care is a whole other thing that's so overwhelming.

So, what are some top tips that you can share for some people that are thinking about making the shift into going more natural? What can they look for or what would you suggest that they look for or do in order to make that transition?

Smita: Yeah, I mean it's definitely overwhelming, it's overwhelming for me as well. I think the main thing is to start small. It's nearly impossible to remove multiple products from your life overnight. When you start to go down this path you realize everything you're using is not so great. That can be a lot to take in.

So, I recommend starting small and starting with the products that are going to be on your skin the longest like sunscreen, lotion, deodorant, or the products that you use the most often. If you have children definitely start with what your kids are using because babies and kids have thinner skin, they are going to absorb more of what's in it. And kind of go from there.

I think it's also really important to become an educated consumer so read about products and read the full list of ingredients. There are way too many companies out there saying they are clean, they are organic, and they are made with these natural ingredients. Sure, maybe 5% of it but when you go down the list, there's a ton of other things in there. And, even if there's only 1% of something that's bad for you... you know I always equate it to if I had you a glass of water and I say there's 1% of formaldehyde in here, are you gonna wanna drink it? No.

Laura: Right!

Smita: So, it should kind of be the same for your skin. When you look at it that way, if there's an ingredient you don't understand, and you can't look it up in that moment then just don't buy it. That's kind of my rule of thumb. Kind of take it from there.

Laura: That's really helpful because I did find when I was looking at the ingredient list it's like, I don't know what half this stuff is and then it says it's natural, but you don't really know if it is. Your products really take the...

Smita: The thought!

Laura: The thought and like the overwhelm out of it because you can read there's five ingredients, you know exactly what they are, and like you said they are even edible so it's like it's a no-brainer.



LAURA B. FOLKES
Certified Holistic Health Coach

Smita: And that was kind of my goal. Another thing I can recommend is if you're unsure and the product seems good and they are a clean company, they are a green company then go to their website. The harder it is to find the information about their sustainability practices, their ingredients, about how they source, the more wary you should be about buying their product. Brands that are doing it right want to promote that like crazy because they're proud of it, it means something to them, but it's also a huge selling point so you wouldn't hide it. You would put it everywhere! So that is a huge thing.

You know, go to their FAQ section, if it's not evident or if you really have to search then it's a red flag. If it's a product you really love and you just don't want to let go of it then email the company to find out more or maybe use it sparingly. You know, for example I think I told you before, I have makeup that's not all organic, but I don't use that lipstick everyday. I use it for weddings or special occasions and that's okay! You don't have to be perfectly clean all the time. I think it's really about finding balance.

Another thing I enjoy too, because I make a lot of products but I don't make everything, is go to your local farmer's markets, get to know the local makers of your goods and buy from people you know. You can ask questions to them on the spot and kind of know where everything is coming from.

Laura: Awesome! That's such great advice and hopefully it's really helpful for other people. So, if people are interested in learning more about the brand and getting educated, it's not just about skincare it's also just health, wellness, and just a healthy lifestyle in general is a lot of the education that you do, which is amazing. Where can people find you?

Smita: So, they can find us online at www.simplysmita.com. If you're interested in learning more about products, DIY recipes, and just kind of mindful living you can sign up for our weekly newsletter, which I send out every Monday or every other Monday. They cover a lot of variety of topics and then we are on social media as well!

Laura: Fantastic! Thank you so much for being here!

Smita: Thank you!

Laura: Everybody feel free to reach out to Smita if you have any questions!