

## Avery Gilbert

Smell Scientist  
Author, *What the Nose Knows*

*Leading expert on the science of odor perception and the pop culture of smell*



A scientist and entrepreneur, Avery Gilbert is known for his groundbreaking work on the psychology of odor perception and his innovations in the fragrance business. He co-authored the famous *National Geographic* Smell Survey and worked behind the scenes to create some of the world's best-selling perfumes. He helped launch DigiScents, Inc., a Silicon Valley startup that brought smell to the internet. He founded Cranial One Corporation to produce rapid smell tests for doctors, and he helped commercialize a medical device that diagnoses smell loss by measuring sniffing.

Avery's scientific research includes the fascinating phenomenon of synaesthesia, in which smells evoke associations to colors, sounds, and textures. Avery's discovery of ways to measure these multisensory impressions helped launch his consulting company, Synesthetics, Inc.

A social observer with a keen sense of irony and a humorous take on popular culture, Avery wrote *What the Nose Knows: The Science of Scent in Everyday Life* (Crown, 2008). This highly-praised book takes the reader on a witty, whirlwind tour of the science behind our least-known sense and incidentally reveals many of our fondly held beliefs about smell to be urban legends.

Avery gives a fast-paced, entertaining and informative talk. He covers a wide range of topics in an easy-going style that will captivate almost audience.

**Contact:** [avery.gilbert@gmail.com](mailto:avery.gilbert@gmail.com)

## **Testimonials**

“We kicked off our New York Hall of Science lecture season in Manhattan with Dr. Avery Gilbert speaking and a book signing. It was our best kick-off in the ten years this lecture series has been produced: fascinating remarks, great presentation slides, a topic of interest to both our science-philic audience and those who love perfumes and cosmetics. Avery is an experienced speaker and finds the temperament of his audience immediately. The topic itself is of interest to everyone. His book is accessible. He is accessible. A terrific booking.”

*Marilyn Hoyt, President & CEO  
New York, Hall of Science*

“Avery Gilbert is a delightful speaker with the rare ability to convey scientific information in a humorous, artful and engaging way. As fragrance-lover, historian, popular culture-maven, marketing guru and connoisseur of unexpected facts, Gilbert is masterful on the podium. I have had the pleasure of hearing him lecture to a crowd of perfume-loving “Sniffapalooza” members as well as to a hall packed with science buffs – wonderfully, in each case the address was unique, with gorgeous graphics and anecdotes galore, perfectly tailored to the audience.”

*Laura Donna  
Connecticut Forum*

## **Selected Speech Topics by Avery Gilbert**

### **What the Nose Knows**

Beginning with the basics, Avery explains the workings of the human nose and how the brain interprets what the nose detects. He describes the huge range of olfactory talent, busting a lot of myths along the way—for example, the notion that blind people and perfumers have more sensitive noses. He describes how the amazing odor complexity of the natural world can be reduced to a few hundred key molecules, using examples from tomatoes to French fries. The human nose has been underrated by big thinkers from Sigmund Freud to Carl Sagan, but new evidence shows it to be as good as a dog's. Avery describes three traits of olfactory genius and illustrates each with stories of cultural luminaries such as Richard Wagner, Kurt Cobain, Emily Dickinson, and a new wave “odor jockey” named Odo7. He explains why odor-evoked memories are so vivid and long-lasting, and why Marcel Proust is miscredited as the bard of scent memory. This lively presentation combines episodes from popular culture with the latest discoveries of smell science. Audiences come away with a new appreciation of this fundamental area of human experience.

## Your Brand and the Consumer's Mindful Nose

The psychology of odor perception is much more than the emotional response to smell—and it's time for companies to take note. Building on the case he made in *What the Nose Knows*, Avery's message is that rational thought also determines consumer perceptions: smells activate memories, word associations, and multisensory impressions. The brain uses context cues to give meaning to smells. These universal cognitive processes can optimize consumer perceptions of your product. Drawing on the latest research, Avery gives product designers, brand managers, and marketers practical examples for leveraging the brain's cognitive response to scent. He analyzes subliminal scent marketing to separate fact from the fantasy, and shows how even traditionally scentless products and services benefit from addressing the consumer's nose.

### Speaking Venues

Los Angeles Festival of Books, Bell Museum/U. of Minnesota, Purchase College, NY Academy of Sciences, NY Hall of Science & National Arts Club, HBA Global Expo, Columbia University Engineering School Alumni, Consumer Specialty Products Association, The Smithsonian Institution, U. of Southern California, Franklin Pierce Law Center, Nassau Community College, Society of Flavor Chemists, and the American Society of Perfumers.

Corporate venues include ICI Group, Chesebrough-Pond's USA, Sephora, S.C. Johnson Wax, Avon Products Inc., The Gillette Company, and the Colgate-Palmolive Company.

Avery is a frequent guest on television (FOX: *America's Newsroom*; CBS: *The Early Show*) and radio, including *Science Friday* (NPR), *A Chef's Table* (NPR), *Radio Times with Marty Moss-Coane* (WHYY), *The Wayne Resnick Show* (KFI-AM Burbank), and many more.

### Credentials

President, Synesthetics, Inc.  
Chief Scientist, The Scent Marketing Institute  
Former president, The Sense of Smell Institute  
Former Faculty Member, The Monell Chemical Senses Center  
Author or co-author of two dozen peer-reviewed scientific papers  
Ph.D. in Psychology, M.A. in Biology, University of Pennsylvania  
Member: Association for Chemoreception Sciences  
Association for Psychological Science  
European Chemoreception Research Organization