Cultivate Qi for Body, Mind & Spirit

Yang-Sheng
Nurturing Life

Life-nurturing Regimen of a Centenarian
Longevity & Immortality
Women’s Empowerment
Stoke the Fire of Change
The Key to Long Life, Live Well
How to Overcome Your Worries
Psychological Effects of Qigong
Longevity Eight Treasure Congee
7 Secrets to Grow Younger, Live Longer
Seasonal Harmony...and more!

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Welcome to the September issue of Yang Sheng! It is my pleasure to introduce this issue as the new editor-in-chief of Yang-Sheng. Many thanks to Solala Towler, for doing a wonderful job as Yang Sheng’s previous editor-in-chief, and for recommended to Kevin Chen that I step into this role. Our theme for this issue is "secrets of longevity." This subject becomes less academic and more personal, very personal for us, as we grow older. If we like our lives, we want to extend them, to live longer. However, longevity is more than just extending our lives. It is adding quality of experience, good health and well-being to those extra years. Having a healthy, strong and flexible body; a clear mind; retaining or restoring our youthful zest and passion for life; having joie de vivre, joy of living, is the essence of the real "secrets of longevity."

Qigong came into my life as a way to heal from injuries, the result of an auto accident. Trying to escape for a few quiet minutes and build up my energy to deal with the chronic pain and endless visits to the doctor's office that had become my life; one day, I was hiding out in a bookstore ...did I mention that I have somewhat of an addiction to books? I was browsing among the section of books on eastern wisdom and a book on qigong fell off the shelf and landed on my foot! Although I did yoga and had followed a daily meditation practice since I was a teenager, I had never heard of qigong before. I picked up that book! Even I can recognize a gift from the universe when it lands on my foot! What I learned led to a more in depth study of qigong and then developing a daily practice that led to my recovery.

Back then, I never thought of the longevity, the anti-aging benefits of practicing qigong every day. Qigong and living a Yang Sheng type lifestyle gave be back my body, free of pain; gave me back my life. Just not being in pain was miracle enough! Now, here I am, 20 years later, a senior citizen, the elder generation in my family and a great-grandmother - and I feel even better than I did before that auto accident. I feel like I did when I was twenty years old! Another miracle? Well yes, but its also simply the natural unfolding of what happens when we just do the practice.

As more and more scientific research becomes available on the mechanisms of retaining health and vitality while extending our normal human lifespan to advanced old age; following the teachings of the ancient Chinese masters is revealed as an important key to the secrets of longevity. In the parables of the old sages; meditation techniques; Qi practices; and dietary guidelines lies hidden the fountain of youth.

We have many articles in this issue presenting various “secrets of longevity” including the life nurturing regimen of a centenarian; Dr. Deepak Chopra’s 7 secrets to grow younger, live longer; selected secrets and maxims of longevity translated by Kevin Chen; a special excerpt on longevity and immortality from The Healing Promise of Qi by Dr. Roger Jahnke; exploring the key to long life with Michelle Wood; Phoenix Liu, Ph.D., shares the storey of her mother and the secrets of the world's longest lived people and our TCM nutrition doctor, Dr. Helen Hu has some special recipes for Eight Treasure Longevity Congee. With gratitude and appreciation to our contributors and our growing number of readers, our Yang Sheng community; I hope you enjoy this issue...please share it with your friends.

Follow the daily practice that is just right for you. Just do it—and expect a miracle!

Rebecca Kali
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Lao-tzu lived to be 160 years old. He had three treasures to support attaining longevity: kindness, thriftiness, and modesty. His longevity maxim was: “Let nature take its course; remain detached and lower your desire; apply qigong to nurture your spirit, and swallow saliva to nurture your life.”

Chen Xinxian lived to be 100 years old. His maxim was “Five do nots—do not sit too long, do not stand too long, do not look too long, do not write too long, and do not lie down too long.” He advocated that everything must have a limit, to exercise with a limit, and to eat with a limit.

Zhang Qun, (Kuomintang senior officer), lived to be 102 years old. His maxim was “Get up early; sleep well; eat till you are only 70% full, run frequently; smile often; do not worry; maintain a busy daily routine and never feel old.”

(continued on page 18)
Life-Nurturing Regimen

As revealed by a centenarian, 101 years old

Reported by the United Daily News (Taipei)

If someone can live to the ripe old age of 101 years without any major health problems, still retain his natural teeth and the ability to read newspapers without glasses; he must have kept a good health regimen. With this in mind, Mr. Kai-chen Tsui (崔介忱), was interviewed by Taipei United Daily News reporters who hoped too learn his secret of longevity.

Mr. Tsui was born on January 12, 1910. He lives with his 96-year-old wife and a granddaughter who is over 40. When he was 66, he retire from his job at the Personnel Department, Police Bureau of Taiwan.

Mr. Tsiu is free of ailments. He demonstrates his good health and flexibility by doing an acrobatic exercise of spreading his legs wide, at an 180 degree angle, bending forward from his waist, and touching the ground with his forehead, and then wrapping his legs around his neck, showing that the flexibility of his body is like that of a young child. Mr. Tsui also has the stamina to do 108 pushups in a row. (cont. on next page)

Do not overfeed yourself at meals; sleep well; exercise daily; be never in want of adequate nutrition; always try to be happy; keep yourself free from worries and troubles; and always retain a good sense of conscience; then you may live in youth and health even when you have reached the age of 101 years.

Mr. Kai-chen Tsui's (崔介忱) secrets of longevity are summarized in the lines above.
Mr. Tsui told the reporters: "The normal length of a human life span is around 5 to 6 times 25 years, i.e., around 125-175 years. The secret of healthy longevity lies in: adequate sustenance, adequate sleep, and adequate exercise, having a cheerful spirit and being happy". (Before his retirement at 66 years of age, he was like others showing the usual symptoms of senility. After retirement he started relentlessly practicing a daily routine he learned as a young man when he joined the army and was sent to Manchuria. While he was there, this routine was taught him by a monk in a Buddhist temple in Manchuria. Since retirement he has practiced it without missing a single day.

He rises at 4:30 AM and opens his windows to let in the fresh air to circulate around his room, then goes back to his large bed to do his in-bed exercise.

He has never had to be in a hospital since retirement, nor has he had to use his medical insurance card.

**His Life-nurturing Regimen:**

1. The primary key to longevity is always be happy and be optimistic without quandary; the second key is living a regular life naturally, and the third is to exercise often, even when tired.

2. Exercise everyday his in-bed exercise in twenty modes (fetal breathing, hair-combing, eyes massaging, hips swinging, behind-ear rubbing, etc., etc. 20 modes)

3. Turtle breathing is to breathe deep and long, smooth, natural and regular in a completely relaxed mode, to stimulate self-healing power of your body.

4. Don’t skip breakfast, taking in soy-milk, porridge, whatever, frugally.

5. Take a walk in the nearby park after breakfast.

6. Walk to anywhere in the walking distance.

7. The diet should be composed mainly of veggies, and don’t be picky.

8. Eat not much meat and fried, frozen, over-spicy or salty food.

9. Stay away from the sweets.

10. Never blind-believe in organic foods, just buy the normal veggies from the groceries, and dip the veggies in water for 20 minutes before you rinse and cook.

11. Don’t eat those pricy foods such as abalone and shark’s fin, and just enjoy the simple tea and simple meals.

12. Never take anything besides drinking water after 7:00 p.m.

13. Never smoke, drink or chew gum or betel nuts.

14. For the health of brain-1: Use all ten fingers to “comb” your hair from front to the rear 108 times.

15. For the health of brain-2: Place your hands one on the forehead and the other on the back of the head to massage the head horizontally 108 times.
16. For the health of brain-3: Never play Mahjongg over eight rounds, and never sacrifice any sleep playing it.

17. For the teeth hygiene 1: Concentrate on your teeth and clench them tight together during bowel action to prevent teeth decay.

18. For the teeth hygiene 2: Don’t use toothpaste, but use only brush and salt to clean your teeth.

19. To preserve eyesight 1: Press the tips of your thumbs to press on both the Inner corners of your eyes 180 times.

20. To preserve eyesight 2: Use both the middle fingers and ring fingers to massage the rims of eyes outward 108 times.

21. To preserve eyesight 3: Use your salty saliva secreted by your teeth brushing to wipe your eyes.

22. To preserve good hearing 1: Use both middle fingers and ring fingers to hold both earlobes between and massage up and down 108 times.

23. To preserve good hearing 2: Use middle fingers to massage the areas in front of the upper earlobes 108 times.

24. To preserve good hearing 3: Use both hands to massage the entire area of the earlobes 36 times.

25. For the gastronomical health: Place your index, middle and ring fingers on the navel and rub 81 times clockwise.

26. For the health of bladder: Place your hands one on the top of the other below your navel and rub 108 times.

27. To alleviate waist pain: Lie down with both legs drawn to the tummy and kick out 108 times.

28. To alleviate hemorrhoid pain: Lie down and bend the tips of both feet inwards while contracting your anus 10 times.

29. To preserve leg strength: Lie down and bend the tips of both feet inwards while stretching both legs straight out and lifting them upward 30 times.

30. To keep shoulders straight: Holding hands together in front and lifting them above head 36 times.

31. To strengthen arms and waists: Do push-up 36 times.

32. Self-healing exercise: Sit still in lotus posture and breathe deeply 36 times with tongue licking the upper palate, while inhaling with nose and exhaling with mouth.


See Youtube video of Mr. Tsiu’s exercises in Chinese: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Z4caCs3lj0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Z4caCs3lj0)

[Recommended and Translated by Richard Kwan]
Only a few decades ago, conventional medicine viewed the body as a machine whose parts would inevitably break down until it could no longer be repaired. As a medical student, I learned that random chemical reactions determined everything that happened in the body, the mind and body were separate and independent from each other, and genes largely determined our health and lifespan.

Today scientific research is arriving at a radically different understanding: While the body appears to be material, it is really a field of energy and intelligence that is inextricably connected to the mind. We now know that what used to be considered the “normal” experience of aging – a progressive descent into physical and mental incapacity – is in large part a conditioned response. The mind influences every cell in the body and therefore human aging is fluid and changeable. It can speed up, slow down, and even reverse itself.

There are many studies demonstrating the profound influence of the mind and beliefs on aging. For example, a landmark study by Harvard psychologist Ellen Langer, Ph.D., showed that the so-called irreversible signs of aging, including deterioration in hearing, vision, manual dexterity, muscle strength, and memory, could be reversed through psychological shifts in awareness and increases in physical and mental activity.

Even though we all have genetic predispositions, our health and aging aren’t predetermined. By making conscious choices in our behavior and where we focus our attention, we can transform our experience of our body to decrease our biological age.

The seven steps outlined below are practical ways to tap into your inner reservoir of unlimited energy, creativity, vitality, and love.

1. Change Your Perceptions of Your Body and Aging
Perception is a selective act of attention and interpretation. What you experience as “reality,” including your physical body and aging, is shaped by your habits of perception. While most people are conditioned to see the body as a static, biological machine, you can begin to view it as a field of energy, transformation, and intelligence that is constantly renewing itself.

Begin to notice both your internal dialogue and how you speak about your body and aging. If you find yourself saying things like, “I’m hitting the age where I’ll need reading glasses,” “I’m too old to try yoga (or some other activity),” “I inherited my dad’s bad back,” or other such statements, make a conscious choice to shift your perspective and what you tell yourself about your body and age.

Keep in mind that your cells are eavesdropping on what you say, so unless you want to have your father’s bad back or anything else that “runs in the family,” don’t nurture that seed of intention in your awareness.

A powerful affirmation you can use is Every day in every way, I am increasing my mental and physical capacity.
2 Stress Reduction and Meditation

Meditation is a simple yet powerful tool that takes us to a state of profound relaxation that dissolves fatigue and the accumulated stress that accelerates the aging process. During meditation, our breathing slows, our blood pressure and heart rate decrease, and stress hormone levels fall. By its very nature, meditation calms the mind, and when the mind is in a state of restful awareness, the body relaxes too.

Research shows that people who meditate regularly develop less hypertension, heart disease, anxiety, and other stress-related illnesses that speed up aging. Furthermore, new studies are finding that meditation literally restores the brain. A recent groundbreaking study conducted by Massachusetts General Hospital has made headlines by showing that as little as eight weeks of meditation not only helped people feel calmer but also produced changes in various areas of the brain, including growth in the areas associated with memory, empathy, sense of self, and stress regulation. This study adds to the expanding body of research about the brain’s amazing plasticity and capacity to grow and change at any stage of life. We can nurture our brain’s power and maintain a youthful mind by developing a regular meditation practice.

Getting Started with Meditation

I usually recommend that people learn a traditional meditation practice from a qualified instructor. That way, you know exactly what to do at any point in meditation and with any experience that comes along. Often when people try to learn on their own or from a book, they learn incorrectly and soon give up in frustration because they aren’t experiencing the expected benefits. For those who are interested, the Chopra Center offers instruction in Primordial Sound Meditation, a natural, easy practice that dates back thousands of years to India’s Vedic tradition. Another way to get started with meditation is by participating in the 21-Day Meditation Challenge.

3. Restful Sleep

Getting regular restful sleep is an essential key to staying healthy and vital, yet it is so often neglected or underemphasized. There is even a tendency for people to boast about how little sleep they can get by on. In reality, a lack of restful sleep disrupts the body’s innate balance, weakens our immune system, and speeds up the aging process.

Human beings generally need between six and eight hours of restful sleep each night. Restful sleep means that you’re not using pharmaceuticals or alcohol to get to sleep but that you’re drifting off easily once you turn off the light and are sleeping soundly through the night. If you feel energetic and vibrant when you wake up, you had a night of restful sleep. If you feel tired and unenthusiastic, you haven’t had restful sleep.

You can get the highest quality sleep by keeping your sleep cycles in tune with the rhythms of the universe, known as circadian rhythms. This means going to bed by about 10 p.m. and waking at 6 a.m. Ideally, eat only a light meal in the evening, before 7:30 if possible, so that your sleep isn’t hampered by the digestive processes. You can go for a leisurely walk after dinner and then be in bed by 10 p.m.

It’s also very helpful to download your thoughts from the day in a journal before going to bed so that your mind doesn’t keep you awake. You can find a more detailed sleep routine here.

4. Nurture Your Body with Healthy Food

There are “dead” foods that accelerate aging and entropy and others that renew and revitalize the body. Foods to eliminate or minimize include items that are canned, frozen, microwaved, or highly processed. Focus on eating a variety of fresh and freshly prepared food. A simple way to make sure that you are getting a balanced diet is to include the six tastes (sweet, salty, sour, pungent, bitter, and astringent) in each meal. The typical American diet tends to be dominated
by the sweet, sour, and salty tastes (the main flavors of a hamburger). We do need these tastes, but they can lower metabolism, especially if eaten in excess.

The pungent, bitter, and astringent tastes, on the other hand, are anti-inflammatory and increase metabolism. These tastes are found in food such as radishes, ginger, mustard, peppers, spinach, mushrooms, tea, lentils, lettuce, and so on. You can find more information on the six tastes here

Along with the six tastes, filling your plate with the colors of the rainbow promotes a long and healthy life. We can literally ingest the information of the universe into our biology. Foods that are deep blue, purple, red, green, or orange are leaders in antioxidants and contain many nutrients that boost immunity and enhance health.

Examples of foods of the rainbow:

- **Red:** Red tomatoes (particularly cooked), red peppers, red/pink grapefruit, watermelon, red grapes, beets, red cabbage, apples, strawberries, cherries, raspberries, cranberries
- **Orange/yellow:** Squash, carrots, sweet potatoes, yams, pumpkin, cantaloupe, mangoes, oranges, papaya
- **Green:** Broccoli, kale, spinach, cabbage, peas, avocado, collard greens
- **Deep blue/purple:** Plums, blueberries, black raspberries, blackberries, purple grapes, eggplant (with skin)

5. Exercise

One of the most important ways to grow younger and live longer is regular exercise. Drs. William Evans and Irwin Rosenberg from Tufts University have documented the powerful effect of exercise on many of the biomarkers of aging, including muscle mass, strength, aerobic capacity, bone density, and cholesterol. Not only does exercise keep the body young, but it also keeps the mind vital and promotes emotional well-being. In his recent book *Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain*, Harvard University professor John Ratey, M.D. describes research showing how “physical activity sparks biological changes that encourage brain cells to bind to one another.” This spark, as he calls it, increases the brain’s ability to learn, adapt, and perform other cognitive tasks.

A complete fitness program includes exercises to develop flexibility, cardiovascular conditioning, and strength training. Find an aerobic activity that you can do regularly – three to four sessions each week for twenty to thirty minutes is usually enough to give you substantial benefits. After your body is warmed up, spend five to ten minutes stretching. You will also want to include strength training in your program to systematically exercise the major muscle groups of your body. The important thing is to start off slowly, find physical activities you enjoy, and do them regularly. If the most you can do right now is walk around the block, do that, and you will be surprised how quickly you increase your endurance and enthusiasm for moving and breathing.

6. Love and Friendship

Isolation and loneliness create the conditions for rapid aging. Heart attack and death rates are known to increase among the recently widowed and among men who have been suddenly terminated from their jobs without warning and against their will. The emotional value of social bonding is immense, yet in some countries, including the U.S., we have moved in the opposite direction for decades. With high divorce rates, single-parent families, and a population constantly on the move, social bonding keeps declining. The trend will be exacerbated as the fastest-growing population, those eighty and over, move into retirement homes. It’s becoming increasingly rare for older people to be cared for at home, and there is still a stigma about seniors being a burden to the young and a drag on society.

The key here is to stay connected and open to new relationships throughout your life. Resist the impulse to go quietly into semi-isolation because you assume that society expects that of you. Losing friends and spouses is an inevitable part of aging, and many people can’t find replacements or lack the motivation to. By “replacement,” I don’t mean a new spouse and family (though that is certainly a possibility), but emotional bonds that mean something to you and offer
continued meaning to your existence. No amount of reading and television substitutes for human contact that nourishes on the level of love and caring. One of the most effective steps is for older people to become involved with mentoring programs, education, and youth programs.

7. Maintain a Youthful Mind
An ancient Vedic aphorism says, “Infinite flexibility is the secret to immortality.” When we cultivate flexibility in or consciousness, we renew ourselves in every moment and reverse the aging process. Children offer the finest expressions of openness and flexibility. They play and laugh freely, and find wonder in the smallest things. They are infinitely creative because they haven’t yet built up the layers of conditioning that create limitations and restrictions. To maintain a youthful mind, write down two or three things you can do that are totally childlike. Think of something that evokes childhood for you – eating an ice cream cone, going to a playground to swing, coloring a picture, jumping rope, building a sand castle. Find something that brings back the sense of fun you had as a child, even if you think you’ve outgrown it, and choose one of these activities to do today.

As you carry out your childlike activity, let yourself embody the archetypal carefree and innocent child. The feeling you’re aiming for isn’t a return to childhood, but something more profound, as expressed by the brilliant therapist A.H. Almaas: “When we look at a child, we see that the sense of fullness, of intrinsic aliveness, of joy in being, is not the result of something else. There is value in just being oneself; it is not because of something one does or doesn’t do. It is there in the beginning, when we were children but slowly it gets lost.” By re-experiencing our childlike nature, we not only cultivate a youthful mind, but we also connect to the part of us that is never born and never dies – our eternal spiritual essence.

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For more information on meditation, mind-body healing, and Ayurveda, or to sign up for the Center’s free online newsletter, please visit www.chopra.com or call 888.736.6895.
Longevity & Immortality

excerpt from
The Healing Promise of Qi

by Dr. Roger Jahnke

Time Reversal
One of the most fascinating things to me in Qigong has been the Chinese fascination with longevity and immortality. Immortality is not living forever in the body you have today, it is to be aware of your eternal nature — before you die.

Interestingly, Laozi addresses this in the context of light in his poem #52, “using your own radiance return to the source of all light, this is the practice of entering eternity.”

In Qi cultivation this process is initiated at the practical level of health and healing. However, in the more advanced methods that are explored in the Heaven Phases, healing, longevity and immortality are gained by returning to one’s primordial or pre-birth nature and by merging with the timeless field of universal Qi. Many Qigong practices are focused on reversing time and returning to your pre-birth when there was no stress, no complexity, nothing to know, nothing to plan, nothing to remember.

Very recently, scientists have determined that our usual perception of time is not entirely correct. The arrow of time does not just travel forward in accordance with the clock and the sun, it also travels the opposite direction. I found this out while presenting at the Esalen-Noetic Science conference noted earlier. My roommate was the distinguished physicist Helmut Schmidt, who developed the digital random numbers generator (DRNG) at Boeing in 1969. This device, produces sets of random numbers that allow scientists to investigate non-local and quantum effects. In our conversations I was amazed to find that his work reflected the concepts that were so prevalent in the world view of the ancient Chinese Qi Masters. Talking Dr. Schmidt is a little like talking to Laozi, "When exploring the science of Qi, emphasize the mystery — anything else that you name it is probably wrong." In his research Dr Schmidt has demonstrated that mind or consciousness influence the chance process in nature so that an outcome can reflect your intention. (50, 51)

This was further confirmed by Russell Targ (52, 53) a physicist who conducted the CIA research on remote viewing and Dean Radin of the Boundry Institute. (54, 55)In the discussions with these three luminaries of science it became obvious that there is a significant amount of research data that suggests that an influence can travel from the present to influence the past or from the future to influence the present. It has been found that this influence is potentiated by coherent function, aligning inner resources through mind focus and intention.

The possibilities that arise from this research are amazing. Healing may not actually be simply physiologic. In the light of time reversal, healing could as easily be caused by an influence going into the past and altering the development of health status even before a disease had occurred. This is connected to our discussion on possibility, probability and actuality. The set of "probabilities" that were on track to cause the "actual" disease would be altered by a signal or message that travels into the past to trigger an alternative set of probabilities. This would prevent the disease before it began and established a new history, a new set of "actualities", for the person which begins to manifest in the past but is reflected in the present.
In an applied sense this means that in our practice of Qigong we may be influencing the past to affect the future or that our practice in the future has an effect on our present. Let this sink in. Your practice today may influence the past to alter your future. As your practice advances in the future the more powerful influence may be having an effect on you now. This Qigong effect could translate into new choices or behaviors. Or it could simply inspire us to increase the quantity or quality of our Qigong practice. Essentially, as this picture formed up in the discussions with Schmidt, Targ and Radin it became apparent that as probabilities become actualities it creates what is called our "world line" – a sequential set of probabilities that actualized. The time reverse effect suggests that, through intention an alternative set of probabilities actualize creating a new world line – a new you. This is exactly what the Chinese promise in Inner Alchemy and the cultivation of the Golden Elixir which is a spiritual medicine that creates peace of mind and a direct association with timeless nature of life.

Love

In the highest levels of Qigong it is an intention of the practice to become one with all life. Or as we have discussed it may be more accurate to say -- to realize that that you are of the One. Dissolving in Qi is essentially this, to melt into the universal field of Qi. To become one is to deeply associate with and accept oneness with everything. This is love. One of the most advanced states in Qigong is compassion and spontaneous service – love.

Interestingly, the writers in the domain of physics that I have drawn upon the most in my exploration of the Heaven Level of equivalents of Qi all talk about love. One of the first and most interesting things that I heard William Tiller say about the practical application of his findings in physics was, "We have an inherent capacity to resonate to the frequency of love, except for one thing – fear creates resistance in our circuitry."

Love in all its forms – compassion, devotion, appreciation, gratitude, caring – create inner coherence. Love describes interacting with openness. Physicist Goswami suggests that the reality of quantum mechanics at the human level is love – where the "boundaries of the self are transcended through the experience of unity in spite of apparent separateness."

Shen, the Chinese word for Spirit is often translated as unconditional love – because in the ultimate sense personal spirit is associated with the One. In the most advanced forms of Heaven Qigong, sometimes called Shen Qigong, one enters into a form of practice where the self merges with the One.

Coherence

These universal interactions -- whether through fields, consciousness or otherwise -- suggest that the Chinese idea of the One and the relation that you can elect to have with the One is feasible. We can not decide to make the universe more coherent. The universal field is already coherent. However we can, through our practice, align with or enter into coherence with the inherent power of the universe.

HeartMind Equivalent

Consciousness, it appears, may be the primary or fundamental factor in our experience of what we know as as the cosmos or the world. It also appears that your own consciousness may actually be an aspect or a portion of a universal field of consciousness. In the Chinese tradition this is all consistent with the idea of the pervasive Qi of Heaven entering the individual and residing in the heart (HeartMind). This means that our heart reflects the One.

When the great masters who teach with life and compassion do their good work it is essentially, according to the Chinese, opening to the natural Yin force of Earth, opening to the natural Yang force of Heaven and allowing them to merge in the HeartMind center. By over coming the illusion of separateness that causes fear and worry the heart opens and the influence of Heaven and Earth pour through you and into your life, your work, your family, your community. When you purposefully cultivate Qi to eliminate resistance and the forces of the universe flow through you, it is an expression of the One. Complete surrender to all that is -- that is openness to the One. Openness to all that is that is love and love resides in and expresses through the Heart.
Nesting -- Embedding
The Multidimensional Human

Physiology - Earth    internal, material, local
Bioenergy - HeartMind  internal, non material, local
Biofield - Heart Mind  internal/external, non-material, local
Quantum - Heaven Qi   internal/external, nonmaterial, nonlocal

Of the four Western equivalents of Qi, only one is material. Yet, for most practical applications particularly in health and medicine, Western science has been completely focused on the material. Our science has definitely demonstrated the power to study, and apparently even control, the physical domain. The future of Western science is guaranteed to be awesome given only the smallest material portion of the multi-dimensional world and only a minor aspect of the multi-dimensional human has been explored.

The Chinese are contributing to our capacity to understand what looks like the limitless nature of our being. It appears that each of the levels of our self may be nested or embedded in the other levels. This can be viewed from bottom up as is typical here in the contemporary science of the West, or top down as in the more intuitive sciences of the ancients.

Bottom up – Western Science —
The body -- physiology and biochemistry -- is the conductive ground for the bioenergetic frame work which generates the biofield. These together provide the local framework for the interface of quantum/consciousness which is boundless and timeless.

Top down – Ancient Science —
The boundless and timeless ocean of Qi (quantum) creates the personal Qi Matrix (biofield), which infuses channels and centers (Dan Tian). This constructs and maintains the physical body ( structural and biochemical interactions).

This nesting integrates the parts into a whole. In our practice of cultivation we can either work from the Heaven Level down – which is not generally that easy to accomplish for people from our background in the material world -- using Natural Flow Qigong, Circulating the Light or Guarding the One are examples of this. Or, fortunately, we can cultivate from the bottom up as well. This approach is the approach to Qigong that is open to everyone. Creating inner physiological coherence among the heart, brain, nervous system and other organ systems enhances the flow of the ions which maximize the capacity of the biofield. Western science has recently progressed rapidly toward understanding this. In addition, our coherent biofield very likely creates a positive relationship with or impact upon our interaction with the universal field of conscious or the quantum domain. While this aspect of the multi-dimensional human is going to be a big challenge for science, there are excellent Qigong tools for practice in this area that have been refined and improved for centuries.

Earlier we explored briefly the ancient formula for health and longevity. The emerging new formula that expresses the equivalents from the contemporary sciences of biology and physics for the knowledge of the ancients:
Inner Coherence = Information Exchange = Optimal Function

Western culture is experiencing a breakthrough to new knowledge about the fact that it is possible to purposefully enhance inner coherence through the methods developed by the ancients as well as some more recently developed self-improvement methods. The new formula for the use of personal practice to potentiate optimal function:

Practice + Intention = Coherence = Information Exchange = Optimal Function

The ancient Chinese would declare that we can manage our relationship to the universal Qi to improve our lives through the practice of Qigong and Tai Chi. Western science is progressing rapidly to confirm this. The Chinese would declare that by doing the cultivation practices we engage our Heaven self (spirit, Shen) which enters into us to create the illuminated life. With current trends in energy medicine and quantum science we are, it seems, close to this same discovery in the West. Will we solve the Mystery in the West through our sophisticated scientific methods? The ancients would predict that there is quite a bit that you can uncover about the nature and benefits of the Qi, but that it is unlikely that we will solve the ultimate mystery known as Tai Xuan – Supreme Mystery.

Paradoxically, it has become apparent that way before Einstein, the ancient Chinese were doing medical research that was completely consistent with modern physics. This fact is having a major impact on contemporary science and causing a radical new trend to use the framework of quantum era physics to investigate medicine, healing and human potential.

From its earliest history, Qigong has been associated with a mysterious and wonderful inner medicine, the Golden Elixir, which is based in Qi and the universal field of potential. The ancient theory that Qi is everywhere has both frustrated and stimulated Western science. Western science has a strong aversion to unsolved mysteries. To solve the mystery of Qi, Western science will have to experience a radical transformation. Research in Asia and Western countries has led to speculation that Qi could be a multi-dimensional factor that may link specific components of the local world with unspecific and immeasurable fields of cosmic proportion into a dynamic, unbounded and unified web of life.

Sources

Excerpt from:
The Healing Promise of Qi, Chapter 16, The Light of Science on Qi McGraw-Hill; 2002 by Dr. Roger Jahnke, OMD

Dr. Roger Jahnke, OMD – has practiced clinical Chinese medicine for over 30 years. He has traveled to China 8 times to research Qigong and Tai Chi in universities, hospitals, temples and sacred mountain sites. He is a co-founder of the National Qigong Association and is director of training and research at the Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi IQTC, http://IIQTC.org and http://FeelTheQi.com. Dr. Jahnke is the author of The Healer Within, which is widely used in wellness and health promotion programs, and The Healing Promise of Qi, which became an instant classic of mind-body practice and energy medicine. He, along with his colleagues have recently published the most comprehensive review of the Qigong and Tai Chi research literature in the American Journal of Health Promotion (AJHP). The Integral Qigong and Tai Chi Teacher Training program at the IIQTC is considered by many to be among the most credible Teacher Training programs outside of China.
Set Your Intention for Longevity

What are your beliefs about aging? Every culture has certain assumptions about what is “normal” regarding aging and life span. Some of these beliefs are positive and life affirming – some are not. Ancient Daoist believed a normal life span should be about 120 years in length. What are your beliefs regarding a normal life span? If your beliefs are limiting; would you like to expand those beliefs - extend your life, keep your health and vitality to advanced old age?

Research funded by the National Institute of Health (NIH) shows one of the measurable effects of daily qigong practice is slowing down the shortening of the DNA telomere. This is similar to re-setting, turning back, our biological clock.

“Qigong cannot miraculously change your chronological age, but it can change your functional age. Chinese research has shown that with long-term, regular practice qigong can improve many of the biomarkers of ageing, including vital capacity, blood pressure, cholesterol levels, kidney function, mental acuity (especially memory), vision and hearing, skin elasticity, bone density, reaction time, physical strength, and immune function.”


“The Qigong forms with spiraling movements like Silk Reeling or Swimming Dragon” which imitate the spiral of the DNA double helix are believed to be the most beneficial exercises for attaining longevity.”

from Arnold E. Tayam, DMQ (China). Longevity Center, San Jose, CA.

Qigong offers a simple and comprehensive methodology for enriching the quality of the life you have succeeded in extending.

Longevity is not just about living longer; it’s about living longer and living better; living more fully, more deeply, and savoring life completely on every level.
Many Qigong forms evolved from ancient Chinese observation of animals. Learning the habits and movements of animals that had a long and harmonious life were of special interest. Turtles live an exceptionally long and peaceful life for which they have become venerated in China. A longevity practice called Turtle Breathing developed from observing and understanding the habits of turtles.

**Turtle Breathing – Longevity Practice**

Sit in a comfortable Qigong posture. Put your hands naturally on your knees. Close your eyes and take a deep breath. Exhale while very, very slowly bending forward and down. Bend with one vertebra at a time until finally your spine is curled. Remember to tuck your chin under just before bending down. Inhale as you slowly sit back up until your spine is straight. This forms one cycle. Go as slowly and prolong your breathing as much as possible. You should not hear any heavy breathing. Don’t hold your breath. Adjust to your own pace while performing it. If your breathing is not in sync with your movement, take a breath to adjust your breathing. Do not rush through each cycle. Relax and take your time and do not hunch your back. Repeat daily, in multiples of 3 cycles.
Mencius (Meng-zi) lived to be 84 years old. His maxim was: “Be industrious in using your brain; travel around frequently and have a light and plain diet.” (勤于动脑；四处旅游；饮食平淡).

Zhuang-zi died at the age of 83. His maxim was: “When the mind is broad and level, Qi is full, and the spirit is calm; an easily-satisfied person will always be happy.” (心地坦荡；气足神宁；知足常乐).

Hua, Tuo, (a famous TCM doctor in the Han dynasty), lived to be 90 years old. He liked physical exercise; and his maxim was: “Exercise can release one’s depression, comfort one’s muscles and bones, move one’s blood and meridians, calm down one’s temper, and channel one’s irritability.” (运动能畅其积郁，舒其筋骨，活其血脉，化其乖暴，缓其急燥).

Tao, Hongjing died at the age of 81. His maxim was: “Restore your compassion and will, keep in harmony with the four seasons, and be moderate in eating and drinking.” (调摄情志，顺应四时；节制饮食).

Sun, Simiao lived to be 101 years old. His secrets were: “Keep your four limbs moving industriously; be moderate and controlled in diet; chew carefully and eat slowly; wash and rinse your mouth after meals; and get sufficient sleep.” (四体勤劳；节制食欲；细嚼慢咽；饭后盥漱；睡眠充足.)

Li, Xiuwen (Madame Li Zongren): lived to be 102 years old. Her maxim was: “Leave three mouthfuls of food during each meal; walk one hundred steps after meals.” (吃饭留三口；饭后百步走).

Zhang, Xueliang (General) lived to be 101 years old. His maxim was: “Have a broad and level mind/heart; but build a strong will; frequently do physical exercise to strengthen the body; maintain a regular daily routine and moderate diet; view flowers and read books; cultivate both body and spirit, make a lot of friends, and enjoy life joyfully.” (心胸坦荡；意志坚强；经常运动；锻炼身体；起居有时；饮食节制；观花读书；修身养性；广交朋友；自寻快乐)

Wang, Zhongyi lived to be 105 years old. His maxim was: “Travel and enjoy beautiful scenery; eat until only 70% full at meals; act like a prime minister, show kindness and help others; feel only 70% joy even at fully happy moments; be persistent even during difficult times; always smile and be happy to enjoy daily life!” (去旅游山清水秀；食油腻三分足矣；宰相肚与人为善；喜事临只乐三分；艰难阻进三尺；笑口常开乐悠哉！)

Yu, You-zit died at the age of 105. His longevity 3-character classic was: “Run in the morning, and go to sleep early; eat breakfast only until you are half-full, have a good lunch, and a small supper; read books and newspapers with enjoyment; smile and don’t worry; exercise with persistence; keep busy into old age to live a long, happy life.” ( “夙兴跑；夜寐早；晨半饱；午餐好；晚餐少；读书妙；常看报；常常笑；莫烦恼；动为宝；恒常要；忙到老；寿自高” )
Chen, Naxun lived to be 104 years old. His maxim was: “Endure everything patiently with a tolerant mood and open mind/heart; enhanced massage helps blood circulation; value the environment, prevent accidents; use both brain and body so you can be old without fading!” (凡事忍耐；心情宽容；加强按摩；血脉流通；重视环境；预防意外；脑体并用；老而不衰！)

Yan, Jiyuan lived to be 105 years old. His maxim was: “Have a plain and natural, healthy mind; use both your body and brain, and your mind/heart becomes bright.” (质朴自然；心理健康；脑体并用；心地敞亮).

Lang, Jinshan lived to be 104 years old. His position was: “Do not indulge in fantasy, do not have a bad temper, work slowly and orderly, let things take their course.” (不胡思乱想、不发脾气、做事不急不徐，顺其自然).

Chen Chun lived to be 110 years old. His maxim was “Dress in clothes so you still feel some cold; eat meals to the point of a little hunger; eat a bowl of soup before meals, and half a pound of fruit after meals; keep your living space neat, suitable and with fresh air flowing throughout; frequently travel and walk fast, smile and be happy everyday; spirit and soul will receive relief.” (穿衣三分冷；吃饭留点饥；食前汤小碗；饭后果半斤；住房宜整洁；光气常使通；常行宜急走；一日三哈哈，神灵得慰籍。)

Tudi Shelayi lived to be 133 years old. He thought that “To nurture the body needs movement, while to nurtured the mind needs stillness; combining movement and stillness is the foundation of nurturing life.” (养身在动；养心在静；动静结合，养生之本).

Ma Yinchu (scholar): lived to be 100 years old. His characteristics were: “Keep your diet light and plain, keep your mind open and broad, persistent in exercise, specially enjoy a cold bath and swimming.” (饮食素淡、心境开阔、坚持锻炼、喜欢冷水浴和游泳。)

Lai Yaming lived to be 105 years old. His position for longevity was “Abstain from laziness, abstain from bad habits, abstain from indulging desires, and abstain from worry and anxiety.” (戒懒惰、戒不良嗜好、戒纵欲、戒忧愁。)

Chen Lifu, (Kuomintang senior officer), lived to be 106 years old. His take on longevity was the four “old”s for nurturing life and good health — old friend, old spouse, old capital (body) and old health.” He advocated that the feet should not be too cold, and the head should not be too hot.” (四老养生 — 老友、老伴、老本和老健。主张“足不宜冷；头不宜热”。)

Su Buqing, (a mathematician), lived to be 101 years old. His daily habit was “Have a cup of honey water in the morning; drink a little liquor to sleep soundly; soak your feet in hot water (almost scalding), and invigorate your body with cold water.” (早起喝一杯蜂蜜水；睡前喝一点酒安眠；热水泡脚；冷水擦身).

Educated in both China and the United States, Dr. Kevin Chen has years of experience and training in blending eastern and western perspectives, and in the practice of life-nurturing methods. As a long-time practitioner of Qigong Yang Sheng, he is one of the few scientists to have both hands-on knowledge of mind-body practice, and an active research career in mind-body medicine, which is funded through grants by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and various foundations. Dr. Chen devotes his life and career to the practice of Yang Sheng, and promotion of self-healing and mind-body-spirit integration.
Can meditation slow rate of cellular aging?

Abstract: Understanding the malleable determinants of cellular aging is critical to understanding human longevity. Telomeres may provide a pathway for exploring this question. Telomeres are the protective caps at the ends of chromosomes. The length of telomeres offers insight into mitotic cell and possibly organismal longevity. Telomere length has now been linked to chronic stress exposure and depression. This raises the question of mechanism: How might cellular aging be modulated by psychological functioning? We consider two psychological processes or states that are in opposition to one another-threat cognition and mindfulness—and their effects on cellular aging. Psychological stress cognitions, particularly appraisals of threat and ruminative thoughts, can lead to prolonged states of reactivity. In contrast, mindfulness meditation techniques appear to shift cognitive appraisals from threat to challenge, decrease ruminative thought, and reduce stress arousal. Mindfulness may also directly increase positive arousal states. We review data linking telomere length to cognitive stress and stress arousal and present new data linking cognitive appraisal to telomere length. Given the pattern of associations revealed so far, we propose that some forms of meditation may have salutary effects on telomere length by reducing cognitive stress and stress arousal and increasing positive states of mind and hormonal factors that may promote telomere maintenance. Aspects of this model are currently being tested in ongoing trials of mindfulness meditation.


This article presents a qualitative study following a 6-month Taiji (T’ai Chi)/Qigong (Ch’i Kung) intervention for older adults. The researchers conducted in-depth interviews of eight selected participants who elected to continue practicing Taiji after the intervention ended, in order to explore their subjective experiences of Taiji’s effects and their motivations for continuing to practice. We created a Layers Model to capture the significance and meaning of the multidimensionality of their reported experiences. Participants not only reported simple benefits along five dimensions of experience (physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual) but also described complex multidimensional experiences. Overall findings indicate that participants derived a very wide variety of perceived benefits, the most meaningful being a felt sense of body-mind-spirit integration. Our results support the important role of qualitative studies in researching the effects of Taiji and Qigong.

http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3134827
Mechanisms of yogic practices in health, aging, and disease. Mt Sinai J Med. 2010 Sep-Oct;77(5):559-69. By Kuntsevich V, Bushell WC, Theise ND. From Beth Israel Medical Center of Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York, NY 10003, USA. vkuntsev@chpnet.org

Abstract: Mechanisms underlying the modulating effects of yogic cognitive-behavioral practices (eg, meditation, yoga asanas, pranayama breathing, caloric restriction) on human physiology can be classified into 4 transduction pathways: humoral factors, nervous system activity, cell trafficking, and bioelectromagnetism. Here we give examples of these transduction pathways and how, through them, yogic practices might optimize health, delay aging, and ameliorate chronic illness and stress from disability. We also recognize that most studies of these mechanisms remain embedded in a reductionist paradigm, investigating small numbers of elements of only 1 or 2 pathways. Moreover, often, subjects are not long-term practitioners, but recently trained. The models generated from such data are, in turn, often limited, top-down, without the explanatory power to describe beneficial effects of long-term practice or to provide foundations for comparing one practice to another. More flexible and useful models require a systems-biology approach to gathering and analysis of data. Such a paradigm is needed to fully appreciate the deeper mechanisms underlying the ability of yogic practice to optimize health, delay aging, and speed efficient recovery from injury or disease. In this regard, 3 different, not necessarily competing, hypotheses are presented to guide design of future investigations, namely, that yogic practices may: (1) promote restoration of physiologic setpoints to normal after derangements secondary to disease or injury, (2) promote homeostatic negative feedback loops over nonhomeostatic positive feedback loops in molecular and cellular interactions, and (3) quench abnormal "noise" in cellular and molecular signaling networks arising from environmental or internal stresses.


Background. Due to the limitations and side effects of conventional cancer treatment, especially in relation to quality of life (QOL), patients are increasingly utilizing complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) to supplement health-related outcomes. However, evidence for the safety and efficacy of such treatments is lacking. The purpose of the current review was to investigate evidence for the role of one CAM, medical Qigong (MQ), in supportive care.

METHODS: The literature was searched for reported effects of MQ in improving QOL, immune function, and survival in cancer patients. RESULTS: Although many studies possessed methodological limitations and small sample sizes, encouraging evidence was found for the effects of MQ on these health-related outcomes. More robust evidence in the form of randomized controlled trials with larger sample sizes also reflected positive results for the role of MQ in improving QOL, mood and fatigue parameters, and reducing inflammation.

CONCLUSION: Given such encouraging results, further research is recommended in methodologically sound approaches to further delineate the action of MQ. These findings support the utilization of MQ by cancer patients and the place for such programs in comprehensive cancer care.
Yoga therapy as an adjunctive treatment for schizophrenia: a randomized, controlled pilot study. J Altern Complement Med. 2011 Jul;17(7):601-7. by Visceglia E, Lewis S. evisceglia@gmail.com

OBJECTIVES: There has been limited study of therapeutic yoga as a complementary treatment for schizophrenia. This study investigates the effects of a Yoga Therapy program on symptomatology and quality of life in adults with schizophrenia in a state psychiatric facility. METHODS: In a randomized, controlled pilot study, 18 clinically stable patients (12 men and 6 women) with schizophrenia (mean age=42±13.5) were randomized to an 8-week Yoga Therapy program (YT) and a Waitlist group (WL). YT intervention included yoga postures, breathing exercises, and relaxation. At baseline and at 8 weeks, symptomatology was measured using the Positive and Negative Syndrome Scale (PANSS). Secondary efficacy outcomes were measured with the World Health Organization Quality of Life BREF questionnaire (WHOQOL-BREF). RESULTS: The YT group obtained significant improvements in positive and negative symptoms of schizophrenia symptoms compared to WL, including PANSS scores on positive syndrome (t=-2.64, p=0.02), negative syndrome (t=-3.04, p<0.01), general psychopathology (t=-3.74, p<0.00), activation (t=-2.29, p<0.04), paranoia (t=-2.89, p<0.01), and depression subscales (t=-2.62, p<0.02). PANSS total scores also decreased for the YT group (t=-4.54, p<0.00). YT had improved perceived quality of life in physical (t=2.38, p<0.04) and psychologic domains (t=2.88, p<0.01). CONCLUSIONS: Adults with schizophrenia being treated in a state psychiatric facility who participated in an 8-week therapeutic yoga program showed significant improvements in psychopathology and quality of life compared with controls. The findings of this study need to be confirmed in larger, more sufficiently powered studies with active control groups.


BACKGROUND: Mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) is a group-based clinical intervention program designed to reduce relapse or recurrence of major depressive disorder (MDD) by means of systematic training in mindfulness meditation combined with cognitive-behavioral methods. OBJECTIVE: By means of a meta-analysis to evaluate the effect of MBCT for prevention of relapse or recurrence among patients with recurrent MDD in remission. METHOD: Electronic databases were searched and researchers were contacted for further relevant studies. Studies were coded for quality. Meta-analyses were performed by means of the Cochrane Collaboration Review Manager 5.1. RESULTS: Six randomized controlled trials with a total of 593 participants were included in the meta-analysis. MBCT significantly reduced the risk of relapse/recurrence with a risk ratio of 0.66 for MBCT compared to treatment as usual or placebo controls, corresponding to a relative risk reduction of 34%. In a pre-planned subgroup analysis the relative risk reduction was 43% for participants with three or more previous episodes, while no risk reduction was found for participants with only two episodes. In two studies, MBCT was at least as effective as maintenance antidepressant medication. CONCLUSION: Results of this meta-analysis indicate that MBCT is an effective intervention for relapse prevention in patients with recurrent MDD in remission, at least in case of three or more previous MDD episodes.

OBJECTIVE: To assess the impact of an 8-week structured mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) program on individuals experiencing distress as a consequence of cancer. DESIGN, SETTING AND PARTICIPANTS: Prospective study of 16 participants with a history of cancer and five carers of people with cancer recruited from August 2008 to February 2009 through calls to the Cancer Council South Australia Helpline. Participants were assessed for anxiety and depression before and after undergoing a course in MBCT between 30 September and 18 November 2008 and 20 February and 10 April 2009. MAIN OUTCOME MEASURES: Depression, anxiety and mindfulness as measured by the Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II), State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), and Freiburg Mindfulness Inventory (FMI), respectively, and a consumer-centred evaluation. RESULTS: There were significant reductions in depression (F[1,24] = 6.37; P = 0.012; partial-eta2 = 0.27) and anxiety (F[2,34] = 9.43; P = 0.001, partial-eta2 = 0.36) and mindfulness (F[2,32] = 8.36; P = 0.001; partial-eta2 = 0.34) following the intervention, and these effects were sustained at the 3-month follow-up. Reliable change indices further support these findings. Participants' scores on measures of depression and anxiety decreased as a function of increased mindfulness, as reflected by significant (P < 0.05) negative correlations between FMI scores and BDI-II scores (ranging from r = -0.46 to r = -0.79) and STAI scores (ranging from r = -0.46 to r = -0.50) at all time points. CONCLUSION: The MBCT program appears to be an efficacious intervention for use among people affected by cancer who also experience symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Changes in physician costs among high-cost transcendental meditation practitioners compared with high-cost nonpractitioners over 5 years. Am J Health Promot. 2011 Sep-Oct;26(1):56-60. by Herron RE.

Abstract: Purpose: To determine whether the Transcendental Meditation (TM) technique can affect the physician costs of consistently high-cost people. Design. Quasi-experimental, longitudinal, cost-minimization evaluation. This 14-year, preintervention-postintervention study retrospectively assessed government payments to physicians for treating the TM and no-treatment (NT) groups. Setting. Province of Quebec, Canada. Participants. The highest-spending 10% of 1418 Quebec health insurance enrollees who practiced the TM technique were compared with the highest 10% of 1418 subjects who were randomly selected from enrollees of the same age, sex, and region. TM participants had chosen to begin the technique prior to choosing to enter the study. Measures. Annual payments to private physicians in all treatment settings. The Quebec government health insurance agency provided the total physician payments for each of the 2836 subjects from 1981 to 1994. Other medical expense data for individuals were unavailable. Data were adjusted for medical cost inflation. Analysis. For each subject, least-squares regression slopes were calculated to estimate preintervention and postintervention annual rates of change in payments. The groups' means, slopes, and medians were compared using both parametric and nonparametric tests. Results. Before starting meditation, the yearly rate of increase in payments to physicians between groups was not significantly different. After commencing meditation, the TM group's mean payments declined $44.93 annually (p = .004), whereas the NT comparison group's payments exhibited nonsignificant changes. After 1 year, the TM group decreased 11%, and after 5 years their cumulative reduction was 28% (p = .001). Conclusions. The results suggest the intervention may be an effective method for reducing physician costs. Randomized studies are recommended.
Effect of Qigong on quality of life: a cross-sectional population-based comparison study in Taiwan.
BMC Public Health. 2011 Jul 9;11:546. by Ho TJ, Christiani DC, Ma TC, Jang TR, Lieng CH, Yeh YC, Lin SZ, Lin JG, Lai JS, Lan TY. From School of Public Health, China Medical University, No, 91, Hsueh-Shih Road, Taichung 404, Taiwan. tylan@nhri.org.tw.

BACKGROUND: Qigong, similar to Tai Chi Chuan, is beneficial to health. In Taiwan, Waitankung, a type of Qigong, is as popular as Tai Chi Chuan. This population-based comparison study compares the health-related quality of life between people practicing Waitankung and their comparable community residents.

METHODS: A total of 165 individuals practicing Waitankung were matched by age and sex with 660 general individuals for comparison. Information about health-related quality of life, measured by the SF-36, and other basic and health conditions was obtained from the questionnaires. This study used the linear mixed-effect regression model to examine the association between health-related quality of life and the practice of Waitankung.

RESULTS: Compared with either sedentary individuals or individuals practicing other types of exercise, the Waitankung group scored higher for eight and five out of ten SF-36 components, respectively. The Waitankung group scored better in general health, vitality, and physical component summary compared to individuals participating in other types of exercise, even when considering the energy expended by exercise.

CONCLUSION: The results suggest that Waitankung exercising is significantly associated with health-related quality of life. Waitankung may serve as an exercise choice for middle-aged and older people to improve overall quality of life.


Abstract: Meditation is a mental training, which involves attention and the ability to maintain focus on a particular object. In this study we have applied a specific attentional task to simply measure the performance of the participants with different levels of meditation experience, rather than evaluating meditation practice per se or task performance during meditation. Our objective was to evaluate the performance of regular meditators and non-meditators during an fMRI adapted Stroop Word-Colour Task (SWCT), which requires attention and impulse control, using a block design paradigm. We selected 20 right-handed regular meditators and 19 non-meditators matched for age, years of education and gender. Participants had to choose the colour (red, blue or green) of single words presented visually in three conditions: congruent, neutral and incongruent. Non-meditators showed greater activity than meditators in the right medial frontal, middle temporal, precentral and postcentral gyri and the lentiform nucleus during the incongruent conditions. No regions were more activated in meditators relative to non-meditators in the same comparison. Non-meditators showed an increased pattern of brain activation relative to regular meditators under the same behavioural performance level. This suggests that meditation training improves efficiency, possibly via improved sustained attention and impulse control.
Buddhist group therapy for diabetes patients with depressive symptoms. Arch Psychiatr Nurs. 2011 Jun;25(3):195-205. by Rungreangkulki J, Wongtakee W, Thongyot S. from Center of Research and Training on Gender and Women Health Khon Kaen University, Thailand. somrun@kku.ac.th

Abstract: The objective of this study was to assess the effect of Buddhist group therapy on patients with type 2 diabetes who had depressive symptoms. A quasi-experimental design study using a control group with matching technique was conducted. After informed consent was obtained, the "Nine questions for assessing depressive disorder symptom" (Isan language) was used to determine the patient's condition. A total of 62 patients with type 2 diabetes who had depressive symptoms were assigned to either the experimental group (n = 32) or the control group (n = 32). Patients in the experimental group were divided further into four groups (8 patients per group) and attended the Buddhist group therapy. The intervention consisted of a weekly Buddhist group gathering lasting 2 hours for 6 weeks plus home meditation practices. Patients in the control group received treatment as usual. Both groups received standard physician treatment, including medication. Physicians did not know who was in either the control or experimental groups. Results show that 6 months after the intervention, 65.6% and 100% of patients in the control group and experimental group, respectively, returned to normal level. The intention-to-treat analysis, which included two participants in the experimental group lost follow-up, yielded a small reduction in the number of patients who returned to normal level (93.8%). With intention-to-treat analysis, the relative risk on depressive symptoms between the experimental and control groups was 6.5 (95% confidence interval, 1.4-30.6). Qualitative data from the experimental group supported that there were therapeutic group factors involved. However, patients realized the truth of being oneself and also accepted their current living condition. In conclusion, this program is effective in reducing depressive symptoms.

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Women’s Empowerment in an Age of Illness
by Ginger Garner

This is the first in a two part series.

Health care in America needs a mother/woman-centered approach. American mothers and women are in great need of holistic, patient centered care, rather than disease care centered around drugs and diagnostic testing.

Our current approach in women’s health care in the US is not working.

In the US, there are more women living in poverty and suffering from chronic diseases than men. (1,2) In addition "the United States has more neonatologists and neonatal intensive care beds per person than Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom, but its infant mortality rate is higher than any of those countries," says the annual State of the World's Mothers report. Amnesty International’s executive director Larry Cox in 2010 states "this country's extraordinary record of medical advancement makes its haphazard approach to maternal care all the more scandalous and disgraceful.”

We need change in health care for women in America, and we need it now.

I want to share the latest statistics in women’s health from the US Department of Health and Human Services and the American Heart Association. As a woman, I am saddened, but not surprised. The findings provide us with the objective evidence of what we have felt intuitively for some time - women’s health care, its delivery, and the proactivity of women in America to take responsibility for their health - must improve.

- Women suffer from more chronic disease and pain than men. (1,2)
- Since 1984, more women have been dying from heart disease than men. (1)
- More women die from stroke, heart disease, and stress related illness than men. (1,2)
- Women suffer more from autoimmune diseases than men, at rates from 2:1 to as high as 10:1.2
- More women than men suffer from arthritis. (2)
- Because of the difference in sex-related cancers, women are more apt to get one of the “top 10 cancers” than men. 2
- The leading causes of death in women are (in order): heart disease, cancer, and stroke. More than ½ of all these deaths were attributed to heart disease and cancer. (2)
- Obesity has increased in alarming rates since the 1960’s, with over 61% of both men and women now overweight or obese. (3)
• Stress related disorders and mental health illness like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, attempted suicide, depression, and anxiety disorders, occur most often in women. (2)
• Three times as many women attempt suicide as men. (2)
• Lastly, when polled, more men (who have good reason to) report they are in excellent or very good health. (2)

Why are women in the US less healthy than men?
Could it be because…
• more women live in poverty than men? (2)
• women in families experience higher rates of poverty than men living in families? (2)
• men report higher satisfaction levels with health care and access to health care than women? (2)
• more money is spent (per average expenditure) on men’s health care than women, despite one of the primary reasons for hospitalization and medical visits being maternity care? (2)
• because women use prescription drugs more frequently than men, and of those drugs, the common ones are taken for depression and mental health? (2)
• more women’s health care is paid for by Medicaid or out of pocket? (2)

Whatever the reason, women need better access to and better health care. They also need and deserve the empowerment that comes with enjoying better health. Part Two in this series will show you how you can self-empower your way to better health through a 5000 year old practice.

Sources
4. Over my years of research, teaching, and writing in medical therapeutic yoga, I have compiled hundreds of scientific references which support the plethora of benefits yoga provides. For systemic benefits of yoga, there are 77 preliminary studies published in peer-
Gravity – the force of no force
“Every object in the universe attracts every other object along a line of the centers of the objects, proportional to each object’s mass, and inversely proportional to the square of the distance between the objects.” Issac Newton 1643 – 1727

This law sounds pretty complicated. Don’t worry. As taiji practitioners, we only need to know that everything falls down towards the centre of the Earth at a constant acceleration, about 32 feet per second per second.

Apples fall, rocks fall, students fall; even masters fall; and all fall at the same speed - 32 feet per second per second. Gravity works on all things and knows no discrimination. The reason we don’t fall into the centre of the Earth is because we stand on solid ground with correct body structure. If a student leans his body forward too much, he will fall down. If a master makes the same mistake, he’ll also fall down.

Understand this and you will know the art of leading your opponent to fall into emptiness. ( 落 空)

Here’s the secret: For example, when your opponent attacks with a double push to your shoulders, do not fight back. Instead, use your hands to receive his attack in a calm and soft manner. Relax your shoulders and allow gravity to drop your elbows down. When your elbows fall down, your opponent will fall with you. It’s that simple; both you and your opponent are governed by the same gravity. The main key is: with, but not against. No jin is necessary.

In fact, you must not use jin (force) at all, because jin is anti-gravity. All our lives we are fighting against the gravitational pull of Mother Earth. There is not a moment we can get away from gravity. Gravity is what stops us from performing levitation. A person jumps from a tall building to kill himself is performing suicide by gravity. Gravity doesn’t hurt him. He was killed by a great impact against the ground when his body hits the ground. Mass times acceleration.

Gravity and rooting
Rooting is the art of wu-wei (non-doing). By relaxing your body you will be connected with Mother Earth. No force is needed. We cannot use force to achieve rooting. We use force to move. Rooting means to be still, not moving.

Also, remember this principle: with, not against. This means not to push against your opponent when he pushes you. Instead you should try to accept his push and make a good contact with him. Again, remember: with, but not against. The goal is to become one with your opponent. When that happens, there will be no push, only stillness. If you and your opponent push against each other, this is called double-heaviness, or force against force. This is a struggle and the stronger force wins.

The rhythm of yin and yang
When your opponent pushes, he is in the yang mood. If you push back, you are also in the yang mood. This is no good, because it is double yang. Both of you will be too busy. When your opponent pushes you, you should use gravity to achieve rooting. When you feel the
stillness between the two of you, counter his attack by using any yang move. You can uproot him easily.

This is the rhythm of yin/yang change: yin, yang, yin, yang, or 0, 1, 0, 1 etc. In the yin mood means wu-wei, non-doing. Then you can change into the yang mood easily. “Do the non-doing then there is nothing you can’t do.” 为 无为 Dao De Jing （道 德 经）

According to Dao De Jing, stillness means returning to the root. This verse obviously indicates that gravity is the same as stillness. It’s the gate to all wonders. In fact, many mysterious writings of the taiji classics all refer to gravity. They were written by masters who didn’t know physics. They tried very hard to tell us this message without really understanding the concept of gravity.

We know physics. Shouldn’t we use physics to explain taiji? We might be able to push taijiquan to a higher plateau. Then we will be taiji masters of the West.

The ancient Chinese believed that taijiquan is a martial art for scholars, or intellectuals. They believed that all scholars would strive hard to know the true meanings of nature.

And, like the good book says: The truth shall make you free!  End of part two.

Chun Man Sit - born in 1950s in southern China, his family moved to Hong Kong when he was six years old. He lived in Hong Kong for twenty years and in 1976, he moved to the United States. Master Sit began his martial arts training in 1969 and has studied and practiced continually for forty years; learning many styles such as Karate, Tai Chi, Qigong and Kungfu. He is an expert on Wu style Taiji, Tai Hui Six Elbows Kungfu, and many Qigong methods, including 6 Healing Sounds, Drifting Cloud Moving Qigong, Nei Gong, Silk-reeling Gong, etc. Master Sit has been a chief judge in many national Tai Chi and Kungfu tournaments in the United States of America for the last 18 years and has taught Tai Chi, Qigong, and Kungfu workshops. His articles appear regularly in Tai Chi and Kungfu magazines and he is currently writing a book on Tai Chi. Master Sit and his wife Mary Ann, live in Overland Park, Kansas.

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4. Qigong as a treatment of mental illness

(a) Depression and Psychosomatic Disorders

Depression is a mental disorder characterized by sustained depression of mood, anhedonia, sleep and appetite disturbances, and feelings of worthlessness, guilt, and hopelessness.

Diagnostic criteria for a major depressive episode must meet the symptom criteria in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV), the number indicates the edition). These include a depressed mood, a marked reduction of interest or pleasure in virtually all activities, or both, lasting for at least 2 weeks. In addition, 3 or more of the following must be present: gain or loss of weight, increased or decreased sleep, increased or decreased level of psychomotor activity, fatigue, feelings of guilt or worthlessness, diminished ability to concentrate, think or make decisions and recurring thoughts of death or suicide or attempted suicide.

To be considered major depression:

(i) Symptoms aren't due to a mixed episode — simultaneous mania and depression that can occur in bipolar disorder
(ii) Symptoms must be severe enough to cause noticeable problems in day-to-day activities, such as work, school, social activities or relationships with others
(iii) Symptoms are not due to the direct effects of something else, such as drug abuse, taking a medication or having a medical condition such as hypothyroidism
(iv) Symptoms are not caused by grieving, such as temporary sadness after the loss of a loved one.

Qigong has been studied for its effects on depression. However, the studies did not study major depressive episodes, but some symptoms of depression resulting from other problems.

Tang, et al (19) was a double-blind study in an elderly population of 122 Qigong and 55 Tai Chi practitioners compared to 90 age-matched controls practicing neither. The results demonstrated an improvement in mood, reduction in anxiety and better “quality of sleep” in the intervention group. Wang (20) found improvement in baseline psychological and emotional state correlated with duration of practice of Qigong. In Schwartzman (21), 9 of 13 patients reported benefits from Qigong with a 25-50% improvement in pre-treatment depressed mood. These last two studies showed promise for
treating depression but require verification through future double-blind controlled studies and a larger number of test subjects.

Wang (22) evaluated mental health condition of 27 persons who had practiced Qigong for four months by using the **Symptom Check List 90 (SCL-90)**. SCL-90 is a questionnaire designed to evaluate a broad range of psychological problems and symptoms of psychopathology. It is useful in measuring the progress and outcomes of treatments or research. Four months of Qigong practice had a significant effect on 13 items but not on depression.

Similar research, carried out for more than two years, is also reported in (22). The results of this research indicate that the group practicing Qigong for more than two years had made significant improvements in many factors, including depression, more than the group practicing Qigong for less than two years. However, somatization and paranoid ideation did not show any statistically significant improvements. This research indicates Qigong is not a quick cure and the longer people practice Qigong the better their mental health. More research is needed to devise Qigong methods for certain mental problems.

Another investigation undertaken in (22) was the effects of Qigong on 100 cases of psychosomatic disorders resulting from coronary heart disease, hypertension, gastric ulcer and neurasthenia, etc. These 100 subjects were divided into two groups: the first group practiced Qigong for more than two years and the second for less than two years. The effect of Qigong was evaluated by means of a questionnaire of 40 problems devised by the author. The research showed that the curative effect on most symptoms of a particular disorder ranged from 20% to 45%, while the range on symptoms of psychosomatic disorders was from 50% to 80%. The curative effect was higher in the first group than the second. Thirty-three cancer patients were also treated analogously and evaluated by the same questionnaire with similar results. From this research the author thinks that Qigong has a good curative effect on psychosomatic disorders.

Symptoms of depression improved, but not significantly, for both Qigong and exercise comparison groups (35, 36). Similar results were obtained when a Tai Chi groups was compared to an educational intervention group (37).

Another study (38) reported improved stress, depression, and anxiety symptoms in patients with osteoarthritis for both Tai Chi and hydrotherapy groups compared to a control group of patients waiting for admission to the program. However, the results were only significant for hydrotherapy.

Eighty-two participants with a diagnosis of depression or obvious features of depression were recruited and randomly assigned into the intervention and comparison group (42). The intervention group was given a 16-week period of Qigong practice while the control group participated in a newspaper reading with same duration and frequency. After eight weeks of Qigong practice there was significant improvements in mood, self-efficacy and personal well being, as compared to the control subjects. After 16 weeks of practice, the improvements were even more pronounced in daily life.

(b) **Anxiety**

**DSM-IV** defines 12 types of anxiety disorders in the adult population. They can be grouped under seven headings:

(i) Panic disorders with or without agoraphobia.
(ii) Phobias.
(iii) Obsessive-compulsive disorder
(iv) Stress disorders including post-traumatic stress disorders.
(v) Generalized anxiety disorders, which include general medical conditions or substance abuse.
(vi) Anxiety disorders not otherwise specified to cover symptoms that do not meet the specific DSM-IV criteria for other anxiety disorders.
(vii) Anxiety disorders in children and adolescents which includes the separation anxiety disorder which is specific to children.
All DSM-IV anxiety disorder diagnoses include a criterion of severity. The anxiety must be severe enough to interfere significantly with the patient's occupational or educational functioning, social activities or close relationships, and other customary activities.

The following Qigong studies were not designed to study specific anxiety disorders according to DSM-IV. However, the subjects in the study had some symptoms of anxiety. Although Qigong was effective for treating these symptoms, further studies are necessary because of the small sample sizes.

Li (23) compared 35 Qigong practitioners with age and gender matched controls who received biofeedback using electromyography, all of whom were diagnosed with anxiety, neurosis, headaches, etc. This study found that after two weeks of the intervention, overall measures of frequency and intensity of subjective stress indicators were decreased in male Qigong practitioners as compared to the group receiving biofeedback. There were no significant differences in the group of females.

The 8 subjects in (24) all met the criteria for generalized anxiety disorders in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM –3), where the number indicates the edition. They practiced Fang Song Gong Qigong fifteen minutes every other day for one month. Findings included increased amplitude in alpha wave frequency of EEG; decreases in heart and respiration rate, blood pressure, oxygen consumption, and Galvanic skin response (GSR). There was a significant decreases in anxiety as measured by the Hamilton Anxiety Scale (HAM-A), a rating scale developed to quantify the severity of anxiety by 14 items, each defined by a series of symptoms. Five patients were cured and two were improved, but one patient failed to respond to the Qigong exercise. The effective rate was about 87.5%. This study was limited by the small sample size, short study period, lack of long term follow-up and lack of a control group.

In a prospective open study by Kato (25), twenty minutes of combined passive and active Qigong exercises was undertaken by 13 subjects with a decrease in subjective feelings of anxiety.

Hutton (26) compared progressive muscle relaxation to Tai Chi for treatment of generalized anxiety symptoms in veterans diagnosed with post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD). Eight veterans were randomly assigned to the two intervention groups. Results included significant decreases in subjective distress in the Tai Chi group with a trend towards lowered heart rate in the Tai Chi group. Bias may have occurred because Tai Chi is more interesting than progressive relaxation. Hence, it is likely that the Tai Chi group practiced more alone and enjoyed it more than the relaxation group.

The reports (36, 39, 40) indicated that anxiety decreased significantly for a Qigong group compared to an active exercise group.

In (41), 59 subjects (44 men and 15 women) completed all eight rehabilitation sessions. Patients allocated to the two treatment groups had comparable baseline characteristics. Progressive relaxation was more effective in reducing blood pressures compared to Qigong. Relaxation appeared to be particularly beneficial in somatic domains. The Qigong group demonstrated greater improvement in psychological measures in addition to reduction in systolic blood pressure.

### 5. Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)

In (43), 18 participants with TBI, assigned to a control (waiting to learn Tai Chi) group (n = 9) or Tai Chi group (n = 9), completed the Medical Outcome Scale Short Form 36 (SF-36) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) before, during, immediately after and 3 weeks after completion of the Tai Chi course. The Tai Chi group completed the Visual Analogue Mood Scales (VAMS) before and after each class.

The Tai Chi showed significant improvement on all VAMS scores (except fatigue) with decreases in sadness, confusion, anger, tension, fear and increases in energy and happiness. There were no significant between-group differences on the SF-36 or RSES. Long term studies with a larger sample size should be done to confirm these benefits and to see if they
Another study (44) of 20 subjects with TBI compared Qigong exercise session for one hour per week over eight weeks. Control participants engaged in non-exercise-based social and leisure activities for the same time period.

Outcomes were assessed at baseline and post intervention using the General Health Questionnaire-12, the Physical Self-Description Questionnaire and the Social Support for Exercise Habits Scale, to measure perceived mood, self-esteem, flexibility, coordination, physical activity and social support.

This study provides preliminary evidence that a brief Qigong exercise intervention program may improve mood and self-esteem for individuals with traumatic brain injury. There were no significant differences in physical functioning between groups. The result needs to be tested in a large-scale randomized trial. A longer period of Tai Chi group practice would probably show significant physical improvements compared to a leisure group.

6. Personality Types

Types A and B personality theory was proposed by Jacob Goldsmith in the 1950’s to describe two contrasting personalities. A Type A individual is described as impatient, aggressive, competitive, ambitious, very competitive, controlling, highly, status conscious, and high-strung. Type B’s are patient, laid-back, easy-going, sometimes procrastinate and not easily stressed. Although controversial, Type A personality is associated with a higher risk of cardiovascular diseases.

Some oncologists have recently attempted to characterize patients who have a greater risk of developing cancer. This personality, designated as Type C, has the following traits: denial, rigid control and suppression of emotions (in particular anger), pathological niceness, avoidance of conflicts, exaggerated social desirability, extreme compliance, patience, and rationality. A Type C is more vulnerable to depression than type A or type B, because of their lack of assertiveness which often causes tremendous stress.

Type C may not do well in fighting cancer because they tend to accept their fate passively and lack “fighting spirit”. Professor David Spiegel of Stanford University discovered that cancer patients who joined a support group which fostered a "fighting spirit" had a tendency to live on average, 18 months longer than those who were not in such a group.

Professor Johan Denollet, a medical psychologist, developed the concept of Type D personality by observing cardiac patients. Type D personality is distinguished by a tendency towards negativity and experiences a lot of stress, anger, worry, hostility, tension, and other distressing emotions. This type is also characterized by low self-esteem and social inhibitions, and a tendency towards depression. The prevalence of Type D personality is 21% in the general population and ranges between 18 to 53% in cardiac patients. Research has shown that Type D’s with cardiovascular heart disease have a worse prognosis following a myocardial infarction (MI) as compared to patients without a Type D personality. Type D is also associated with a 4-fold increased risk of mortality, sudden cardiac death, or recurrent MI, independently of traditional risk factors, such as disease severity.

The role of Qigong on type A behavior pattern was also studied in (22). A questionnaire of type A behavior pattern was administered to 89 subjects who practiced Qigong and 144 non-practitioners. The research results indicate that the Qigong group's percentage of type A behavior pattern was 22.43 percent. The non-practitioners’ percentage of type A behavior pattern was 51.39 percent. The Qigong group's percentage of type A behavior pattern is remarkably lower than the control group. However, Wang did not have the percentage of type A behavior before the 89 people began to practice Qigong. The results may have been biased because type A personalities may not be drawn to Qigong.

Another paper (45) also studied the effect of Qigong on Type A personality using Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) and Type A Behavior Pattern Questionnaire. One hundred and twenty-two subjects who had practiced Qigong more than two years with a mean age of 65 were used as the experimental group. Ninety subjects aged, over 60, who had never practiced Qigong were used as the control group.
The Qigong group contained 39.3% Type A’s compared to 51.1% in the control group. In the second part of the research, all of the subjects were college students aged 21. Fifty subjects had practiced Qigong for more that two years, and 97 subjects had never practiced. The results were similar to the first part of the research. The percentage of Type A’s was significantly lower in the Qigong group than in the control group.

The authors realized that there studies might have been biased. Hence, they did a longitudinal study. EPQ and Type A behavior were measured in 158 college students when they started to practice Qigong. Two years later, EPQ and Type A behavior were measured again. Only 33 subjects persisted in practicing Qigong during the two years. The percentage of Type A’s only decreased significantly in the persistent group.

There seems to be little research on Qigong and personality types; more is warranted due to the connection with health.

References

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**Martin Eisen:** By profession, Dr. Eisen was a university Professor specializing in constructing mathematical models. He has studied and taught Yoga, Judo, and Aikido. Dr. Eisen was the founder and chief-instructor of the Shotokan Karate Clubs at Carnegie-Mellon and Dusquene Universities and the University of Pittsburgh. He helped teach Yoga in Graterford prison. His curiosity about the relation of Qi to healing and martial arts led him to study TCM, Tai Chi and Praying Mantis Kung Fu. Dr. Eisen now teaches, writes and researches Praying Mantis, Qigong and Yang Tai Chi.
Echoes of Emptiness (虚之響) – Unknowing

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When we are born, nature gives us the wonderful gift of unknowing. But human beings tend to overlook the value of this gift and treat it as an affliction. And so we try every which way to avoid it or transform it. Yet no matter how much knowledge we accumulate, our basic unknowing always remains.

The fact that we don’t know everything is something that I suppose we all need to come to terms with somehow. We’ve got options. Let’s take the question of life and death.

Ever since I was four years old I was intrigued by the fact that we don’t know where we come from before we were born and where we go when we die. It seems to me that we are all dealing with this reality in one way or another.

Perhaps many people accept that we cannot know the answer to this question, and so they set aside their curiosity and move on with life. These people often self-identify as “agnostic”, meaning without knowledge.

But others of us are driven by a curiosity to find an answer to this question – seeking “gnosis”. I have always been one of these “seeker” types, and since I was a child I have approached this quest in a variety of ways. I can sum them up as: faith, philosophy, and enlightenment…and then there’s Laozi.
Faith: Having been raised Catholic, I was taught that unknowing is not a problem so long as we live a moral life and accept Jesus as our savior. Then all will be revealed when we are granted a glorious everlasting life. We’ll go to heaven and meet God, Jesus, and all of our friends and family who also were moral believers. While this path of faith (or other similar paths) seems to satisfy many people, it didn’t work for me because I felt the people who were preaching it didn’t really “know”.

Philosophy: And so I started actively questioning, outside the realm of religious faith, ruminating on my own and studying the great philosophers and spiritual teachers, picking apart their teachings and looking for gems of truth. This is also the path of science. While deeply engaging, this path too was ultimately unable to pacify my discomfort with unknowing; it only drove me crazy, going round and round, raising more questions than answers.

Enlightenment: And so I turned to Zen, with the hope that if I practiced hard enough I would eventually come to experience a grand enlightenment in which all mystery is revealed. Ahh, at last I had found the way to direct experience – true gnosis. But then Zen Master Seung Sahn told me: “wanting enlightenment is a big mistake.”

What the heck?

Laozi: There’s another way we can approach our unknowing, other than turning away from it, pacifying it with faith, attacking it with reason, or seeking to cure it with enlightenment: we can just let it be what it is, look into it, be with it, come to know it and appreciate it. Zen Master Seung Sahn called this “don’t-know mind.” This of course is the mind of Laozi.

Knowing not–knowing: value!
Not knowing knowing: sickness!

(Laozi Ch. 71)

In scholarship, daily increase
In Dao, daily decrease
Decrease and decrease until wuwei

(Laozi, Ch. 48)

Laozi is inviting us to appreciate this unknowing in its bare reality – not supporting it with faith, not attacking it with philosophy, and not betraying it with the aspiration of enlightenment. This is the gnosis of agnosis, “knowing not knowing.” Herein lies indescribable satisfaction; herein lies our greatest treasure.

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How to Overcome Your Worries:
5 Timeless Thoughts from the Last 2,500 Years
by Henrik Edberg

“If you ask what is the single most important key to longevity, I would have to say it is avoiding worry, stress and tension. And if you didn’t ask me, I’d still have to say it.”
-- George F. Burns

“The greatest mistake you can make in life is to be continually fearing you will make one.”
-- Elbert Hubbard

“If you want to test your memory, try to recall what you were worrying about one year ago today.”
-- E. Joseph Cossman

You are going about your regular day in your usual fashion. Then a thought or a feeling strikes you. It multiplies and start circling around and around in your head. Becoming louder and louder as it saps your strength and makes you feel weaker.

Worries can really put a wet blanket over your life and suck the excitement and fun right out of it.

So strategies are needed. Strategies to redirect our thoughts and feelings away from the worries and to make them fade away and let us regain inner peace or at least make those worries manageable.

What can you do about worries? Here are five timeless thoughts to help you overcome or at least lessen the worries in your life. I hope you find something helpful.

1. Ask yourself: How many of the things you feared would happen in your life did actually happen?

“When I look back on all these worries, I remember the story of the old man who said on his  that he had had a lot of trouble in his life, most of which had never happened.”
-- Winston Churchill

“If you want to test your memory, try to recall what you were worrying about one year ago today.”
-- E. Joseph Cossman

This is a big one. Most things you fear will happen never happen. They are just monsters in your own mind. And if they happen then they will most often not be as painful or bad as you expected. Worrying is most often just a waste of time.

This is of course easy to say. But if you remind yourself of how little of what you feared throughout your life that has actually happened you can start to release more and more of that worry from your thoughts.

So whenever I am struck with worries, I ask myself this question and I remind myself of how little of the things that I have worried about over the years that have actually become real. I find that this most often calms me down.

2. Ask yourself: Am I making a mountain out of a molehill?

“Worry often gives a small thing a big shadow.”
-- Swedish Proverb

“Worry is a thin stream of fear trickling through the mind. If encouraged, it cuts a channel into which all other thoughts are drained.”
-- Arthur Somers Roche

“If you treat every situation as a life and death matter, you’ll die a lot of times.”
-- Dean Smith

It’s very easy to fall into the habit of making mountains out of molehills. You think and think about a small problem until it becomes something that you believe may ruin your life.

So why do we do it? Why don’t strive to make things easy and simple?

Well, one reason I believe is protection from pain. By making the problem huge can you can invent a helpful excuse to convince yourself to not take action.

Another reason is that the ego wants more. It wants to feel better or worse than someone else. By making things more complicated than they need to be you can make them feel very important. And since you are involved in these important things, since you have these BIG problems, well, then you have to be important too, right? Plus, by doing so you can get a lot of attention and comfort from other people.
So how do you get out of the habit of making mountains of molehills? Two tips:

- **Zoom out.** Ask questions that widen your current perspective. Questions like: “Does someone have it worse on the planet?” The answer may not result in positive thoughts, but it can sure snap you of a somewhat childish “poor, poor me…” attitude pretty quickly. This question changes the perspective from a narrow, self-centered one into a much wider one and helps me to lighten up about my situation and to be grateful about my life.

- **Bring awareness to your own thought patterns.** Ask yourself further questions like: “Honestly, am I overcomplicating this?” and “What is the simplest and most straightforward solution to my problem that I may be avoiding to protect myself from pain?”

3. **Let go of that familiarity and certainty.**

   “Worry is like a rocking chair—it gives you something to do but it doesn’t get you anywhere.”
   -- **Unknown**

   “People become attached to their burdens sometimes more than the burdens are attached to them.”
   -- **George Bernard Shaw**

Whatever you have been doing perhaps for decades feels familiar and comfortable. Even if it may be something destructive as worrying. Taking a leap of faith and going into the unknown, making a change that may turn out to be positive, can feel scarier and more uncomfortable than what you are used to. Even if what you are used to is worse in the long run.

But at some point you have to make up your mind to start letting go of that old familiar part of yourself. You have to fill up the space all that worrying used to take up with new thinking. It may feel uncomfortable. It is not so intimately familiar as your past thoughts.

It can be scary and exciting at the same time because now you are not just someone who sees him/herself as worrier and that uses some techniques to lessen that. You are instead making a deep change to who you are, to how you view yourself. You are letting go of something that has been a big part of you and are leaving it at the side of the road.

One great tip that I have learned for making it easier to let go is to first accept it. Then to let it go. When you accept something instead of resisting it you stop feeding more energy into your problem and making it even bigger. A bit counterintuitive.

This is useful when it comes to letting go. If you first accept what you want to let go you aren’t so emotionally attached to it and still feeding it with your focus and energy. And so it becomes less powerful and easier to just drop. As long as you resist it then it will be hard to let it go.

Another helpful hint for letting go is found in tip #1 in this article. All that worrying in your past may not have been very accurate at all. So perhaps it’s a smart choice to let go of that habit?

4. **Refocus your mind and attention towards the solutions rather than the worry**

   “There is a great difference between worry and concern. A worried person sees a problem, and a concerned person solves a problem.”
   -- **Harold Stephen**

   “The reason why worry kills more people than work is that more people worry than work.”
   -- **Robert Frost**

   “You can’t wring your hands and roll up your sleeves at the same time.”
   -- **Pat Schroeder**

To move out of worry it’s very helpful to just start moving and taking action to solve what you are concerned about.

Two tips that have helped me to take action more consistently every week are:

- **Using a morning routine.** This is perhaps the most powerful tip I have found so far in this area. You simply set up a routine in the morning that you do as soon as you wake up. This works so well because what you do early in the day often sets the context for your day. As humans we have a strong tendency to want to be consistent with what we have done before. That’s one big reason why a bad start often leads to a bad day and a good start often leads to a good day. So create a routine that gives you a positive and proactive start to your day. A tip is to include doing the hardest task of your day first thing in your day.
• **Starting small.** To get from a state where you just feel like sitting on your chair and doing nothing much to one where you take action over and over you can do this: start small. Getting started with your biggest task or most difficult action may seem too much and land you in Procrastinationland. So instead, start with something that doesn’t seem so hard. One of my favorites is simply to take a few minutes to clean my desk. After that the next thing doesn’t seem so difficult to get started with since I’m now in a more of a “take action” kind of mode.

5. **Tomorrow will come anyway. Live and fully enjoy here and now.**

   “Worry never robs tomorrow of its sorrow, it only saps today of its joy.”
   -- Leo F. Buscaglia

To be able to let go all that excessive thinking about the future (which often leads to worries in the end), to live better today and to be able to take that positive action to move forward it really has been very helpful for me to develop a habit of learning to live in the present moment. Because it’s there that you can do things in the best possible way with your focus fully on what you are doing.

Three of my favorite techniques for developing this habit and drawing myself back to the now when I get lost thinking too much about the future or past are these:

• **Focus on what’s right in front of you.** Or around you. Or on you. Use your senses. Just look at what’s right in front of you right now. Listen to the sounds around you. Feel the fabric of your clothes and focus on how they feel. Be still right there and just take in the world around you.

• **Focus on your breathing.** Take relatively deep breaths with your belly. Focus your attention on just the in- and out-breaths for about two minutes. This aligns you with what is happening right now and it also calms down a stressed and worried body.

• **Pick up the vibe from present people.** If you know someone that is more present than most people then you can pick up his/her vibe of presence by hanging out with him or her (just like you can pick up positivity or enthusiasm from people). If you don’t know someone like that then I have often recommended listening to/watching Eckhart Tolle in the past. I still do. I especially like his audio book “Stillness Speaks”. Another guy that I find helpful for picking up presence from is Wayne Dyer.

If you found this article helpful, then please share it with someone else by using the sharing buttons at the websites below. Thank you! J


Henrik Edberg is the author of the Simplicity course, The Art of Relaxed Productivity and The Power of Positivity. He writes regularly on Positivity Blog, an internet blog with over 40,000 readers, talking about improving your social life, health, happiness, productivity and general awesomeness. For more information about Henrik and his blog, please go to: http://www.positivityblog.com.
The Key To Long Life: Live Well!
by Michelle Wood

That seems a little simplistic, doesn't it? If you want a long life, you have to live well.

It actually is just that simple, but here's the tricky part: Just what does it mean to “live well?”

I'm sure that you have a very specific opinions on that topic which may include eating natural foods, getting enough quality sleep every night, taking exercise out in fresh air and Nature, working reasonable hours at a job you love that nourishes your soul, and so on.

If you are looking for additional input or ideas and you ask others, everyone you ask will have a different answer! I say that because everyone I have asked has had a different answer! While no answer is wrong for the person offering it, many “how to live well” responses seem incomplete when you attempt to apply them to your own life and lifestyle.

And then there are your communities, the groups of people you associate with; family, co-workers, recreation buddies, medical advisers. It's really surprising just how many people have input into your opinions and experiences of living a long and healthy life!


Contemplate in the morning.
Pull weeds in the afternoon.
The joys and labor of a single day
Are part of a whole journey.

“If all you want is spiritual realization, it isn't that difficult. For the average person, a dozen years under the guidance of a good teacher will probably give it to you. That's shorter than what it takes to be a good musician, athlete, or artist. It's even shorter that the time it will take you to collect your pension. If you have the good fortune to study with the right person, you can succeed in a relatively short amount of time.

“But after you get it, then what? Many of us place such an emphasis on attaining realization that we may forget to put it in context. What actually matters is to walk the Tao, maintaining vitality until we meet our end in a timely way. Spiritual realization is essential, but it is not everything.

(continued from page 37)
“A starving person dwells inordinately on the thought of food. Likewise, a spiritually hungry person can only think of realization. One who has food can place it in the right context, just as one who has understanding can place it in the correct perspective. Followers of Tao therefore do not emphasize enlightenment as an ultimate goal. For them, realization is a means, not an end. Their emphasis is on the act of living. They use the word longevity, not because they want to live forever, but because it symbolizes their determination to live the entire course of their lives well.”

When you focus upon what you have, or you focus upon what you don't have, the outcome is the same: You become stuck in the “what is” or “what isn't” and forget that the real journey is “where am I and what am I doing?” Live in each moment, giving it the attention that is its due. Remember, every journey begins beneath your feet! (DDJ verse 64) If you pay attention to where your feet are, you will never stumble.

Begin each day with contemplation or meditation. Use this time to set your intentions for the day, not just in tasks to complete but in how you want to feel. Peaceful, happy, enthusiastic, hopeful, etc. Take the time to tap in to these energies on a spiritual level so that you may use them as a source of nourishment throughout your day.

Only then should you undertake the tasks at hand, pulling those weeds in the afternoon, when you have prepared yourself through spiritual connection and emotional support from the true Source of life and well-living. Instead of fretting over the past or worrying over the future, give every task the single-minded attention that is its due; this is what is meant by living mindfully.

It is a bit of a challenge when our culture teaches us to remember the past so we don't repeat it, and to worry about the future even though in reality we really have no control over it whatsoever. However, When you can live mindfully, no matter what daily activities you undertake, no matter what foods you have for breakfast, lunch or dinner, no matter how long or short a time it takes to achieve the accomplishments you set as goals for the day, the week, the month, the year, or even for the rest of your entire life, every day you will be living in the Dao, and that is the secret to living well.

The John C. H. Wu translation of the Daodejing, Chapter 59 offers specific advice we may use to realize a long and happy life.

IN governing a people and in serving Heaven, There is nothing like frugality.
To be frugal is to return before straying.
To return before straying is to have a double reserve of virtue.
To have a double reserve of virtue is to overcome everything.
To overcome everything is to reach an invisible height.
Only he who has reached an invisible height can have a kingdom.
Only he who has got the Mother of a kingdom can last long.
This is the way to be deep-rooted and firm-planted in the Tao,
The secret of long life and lasting vision.

In terms of wellness, we can apply these ideas to life and lifestyle:

IN governing a people and in serving Heaven, There is nothing like frugality.
Governing people is a metaphor for mindfully taking care of one's physical body. Serving heaven is a metaphor for spiritual consciousness and connection. Frugality means not going to extremes.

In avoiding emotional extremes in anger, grief, even joy, you govern or take care of your body by avoiding the stress that takes it toll on health and wellness. You make the choice (mindfulness) to govern your health in this way through your awareness of both the consequences of living to extremes, and also by knowing that every event of life is a step along the journey. Moderation is always the key to life's ups and downs.

To be frugal is to return before straying.
Whether the present circumstances of your life are calm
or stressful, good or bad, happy or sad, they will
change. “Return before straying” can be a metaphor to
be aware and monitor your reactions so as to stay in a
place of equanimity and not to “stray” from the
peaceful and healthy lifestyle that will lead to long life
by going to an unhealthy extreme and suffering those
consequences of illness.

To return before straying is to have a double reserve of
devotion.

When you are able to maintain a life of moderation or
equanimit, it demonstrates your very strong sense of
personal power, intention, spiritual power and even will
power.

To have a double reserve of virtue is to overcome
everything.

When you have that very strong sense of personal
power, intention, spiritual power and even will power,
there is no challenge, problem, or difficulty that you
cannot overcome.

To overcome everything is to reach an invisible height.

“To reach an invisible height;” the idea of an invisible
height means you know no limits; if you cannot see the
“height” you are reaching for, it is limitless just like
your personal power and intentions are. The only
limitations you have are the ones you set upon yourself.
Through the strength of inner power and mindful
intention, there is nothing that can stand in your way.

Only he who has reached an invisible height can have a
kingdom.

Only when you have the strength to disallow any
limiting beliefs to hold you back will you be ready to
“rule,” to assume and maintain complete control of your
own body's health and wellness.

Only he who has got the Mother of a kingdom can last
long.

The Mother of a kingdom is the Source, the caretaker
and nurturer of the kingdom/physical body. When you
are in touch with Source/Spirit, you have infinite power
and energy which you may tap into at any time for the
purpose of creating and maintaining health and

wellness, living in moderation, and easily dealing with
the ups and downs of daily living in a manner that
restores rather than reduces your life.

This is the way to be deep-rooted and firm-planted in
the Tao.

The secret of long life and lasting vision.

This is what is meant by

“The Key to Long Life: Live Well!”

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utilizing Sanskrit bhajans (devotional songs). Knowing
that all wellness has its foundation in strong spiritual
connection, Michelle’s Everyday Enlightenment
programs and services help you transform emotion and
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The Story of My Mother and
The Secrets of the World’s Longest-lived Peoples

by Phoenix Liu, Ph.D.

My mother celebrated her 85th birthday in August. When I visited her in Taiwan this summer, I found that she always looked cheerful whenever she worked in her beloved garden, cooked a favorite meal in the kitchen, went for a walk in a park, or took me for a drive. She would laugh aloud when her great-grandchildren were around, when the family watched a comedy on TV together, or when we told her a joke. She has hypertension so she checks and records her blood pressure twice a day. She chants her Buddhist prayer daily, drinks a cup of warm water to start her day, and enjoys one cup of coffee every morning for breakfast. Her diet is 90% vegetarian. She eats only a moderate amount of fresh fish or meat.

Although my mother is “just” 85, I felt I was reading stories about her when I read the book “Healthy at 100: How You Can Dramatically Increase Your Life Span and Your Health Span” by John Robbins (Ballantine, 2007). The four populations of elderly people described in the book are (1) Abkhasians, the so-called “Ancients of the Caucasus”; (2) Vilcabambans, who are the “eternal youth” in Ecuador; (3) Hunzans, the dancers in the mountain region of northern Pakistan; and (4) Okinawans, the centenarians on the subtropical islands of Japan. Below are some facts about these four peoples excerpted from the book.

Abkhasia is located between the eastern shores of the Black Sea and the crestline of the main Caucasus ranges. When interviewed, many of the elders in Abkhasia said they swam daily in cold mountain streams regardless of the weather. The traditional Abkhasian diet is essentially lacto-vegetarian, with a rare serving of meat, and with the daily component consisting of primarily of “matzoni”, a fermented beverage. In Abkhasia, people complement others by saying “You are looking old today,” meaning the person is wise and beautiful in their maturity.
Vilcabamba is a small village tucked away in the Valley of Andes Mountains in the southern region of Ecuador. Like the Abkhasians, the Vilcabambans are very active. There is always physical work for them to do in their daily life. More outstandingly, they have to traverse the hilly terrain daily. This activity sustains a high degree of cardiovascular fitness, and even the oldest Vilcabambans have extremely healthy bones. For the vast majority of their lives, the old Vilcabambans are vegetarian and eat what they grow. Vegetables and fruits are eaten the same day, often on the spot. Their protein comes from vegetables, whole grains, and a variety of beans. (The author especially admired their ability to be joyful with very few possessions.)

Hunza lies at the northern tip of Pakistan, where Pakistan meets Russia and China. The setting is awe-inspiring in its majesty, for here no fewer than six mountain ranges converge. The people of Hunza live in an extraordinarily fertile valley that was totally inaccessible for over two thousand years until recently. When the Western researchers arrived in this valley, they found that the elderly people were extraordinarily vigorous who hiked up and down the steep hillsides with amazing ease and agility. They grow a wide variety of fruit, and apricot orchards are everywhere. The Hunzans have developed more than twenty varieties of apricots whose flavor and nutrient value are worlds beyond the types commonly grown in the West today. On certain rare feast days they eat goat or sheep meat, and on other days they consume a fermented milk product made from goat or sheep milk. The Hunzans have learned to waste nothing and to find a use for everything. It is not that their lives are perfect, but they have found ways to use their obstacles and challenges to become stronger as a people.

Okinawa, the southernmost Japanese state, lies between the main Japanese islands and Taiwan. A research team studies more than six hundred centenarians and thousands of other elders in their eighties and nineties and published their research results in 2001. The report found that it is an everyday occurrence in Okinawa to find “energetic great-grandparents living in their own homes, tending their own gardens, and on weekends being visited by grandchildren who, in the West, would qualify for senior citizen pensions.” The elder Okinawans say that they stop eating when they are 80 percent full. They say they “eat less in order to live longer.”

In all four regions, according to the book and my own firsthand observations, the reasons for such longevity may be lack of pollution, certain medicinal qualities in the plant life and water, and active daily life with exercise. Nonetheless, the most striking
similarity I found in the four peoples was that the elders in these four cultures were highly respected. They are never thought of as burdens. On the contrary, they are society’s most treasured resources. That is why I believe my mother has such a healthy old age despite my father’s early passing.

My father suffered increasing degree of Alzheimer’s disease for over 15 years since the 1980s. My mother took care of him with minimal help. I was always amazed that my father’s condition did not exhaust her patience and endurance. When my father passed away in 1993, my mother began a new chapter of her life at the age of 67. She made smart investments and earned a small fortune to sustain living comfortably. She became the chair woman of her neighborhood association; the board director of the finance committees of a Buddhist temple founded by my parents; and a respected donor of various Buddhist temples and humanitarian foundations in Taiwan, such as Tzu-Chi. She has been well respected in our extended family as well as in her own community.

At the age of 81, in 2007, my mother made the long trip to the States to visit my family for a week. She traveled to Japan and China as a tourist in 2008, rebuilt her garden fence in 2009, bought a brand new car in 2010, and plans to remodel one part of her house by the end of this year (2011). Having a project in hand to keep herself active seems to be the key for her clear mind. At her 85th birthday party, she cheerfully participated in a choreographed hula dance in front of 22 children, grandchildren and great grandchildren.

My mother starts her day, after a cup of warm water, with working in her garden. Then she will do her own laundry, or take a walk in the community court yard before eating her breakfast. The food she enjoys eating includes vegetables she grows in her own garden or is given by neighbors. She avoids foods that are deep-fried or overly processed. Rather than bemoaning what she can no longer do, she has chosen to be filled with energy for what she still can do.

Over the years, I have invested all my energy in my own family and my professional life. The older I get, the more I realize how deep my love is towards my mother and my siblings. I have made it a habit now to talk to my mother on the phone almost daily despite the demand of my own schedule. To account for the time difference between Taiwan and the US, I call her in the evening (her morning) to share my day with her. She enjoys the arrangement and once said, “The day goes by faster after hearing your voice in the morning.” I realized early on how profoundly privileged I am to be my mother’s daughter. As long as she is living, I vowed to myself that I will learn as much as possible from her, adopt her positive perspective toward life, and acquire her wisdom of longevity.

Phoenix Liu, Ph.D., is the Director of the Language House Immersion Program at the University of Maryland, College Park. She received her bachelor’s degree in Animal Science (Taiwan), her master’s degree in Music Education (German), and her doctorate degree in German Philology from the University of Maryland. Dr. Liu holds a black belt in Cuong Nhu karate, a blending type of hard and soft martial arts, and has been a Tai-Chi practitioner for over 15 years. She demonstrates her dedication to Tai-Chi and Qigong by her efforts of combining these two ancient healing arts with music. She has arranged several Tai-Chi forms to music, which have been performed around the metropolitan D.C. area.
Standing Like a Tree! What is this Standing Practice?

by Timothy Booth

Recently I’ve been doing a lot of standing practice and it came to mind to write an article on what exactly is standing practice (Zhan Zhuang). This is definitely one of the greatest gifts from the internal practices. So simple and yet so powerful. It is a way of developing better balance and alignment, stronger legs and waist, deeper respiration, accurate body mindfulness and tranquility. In "Standing Post" (Zhan Zhuang) one meditates while standing holding certain prescribed postures observing the natural flow of the breath what could be simpler and yet profound in more advance practice. There are several advantages to this over seated meditation in that the mind will remain more alert and one is likely to lose balance if one is not alert. The feet and legs are naturally open and extended promoting free blood circulation and actually improving blood circulation.

In standing meditation the body is always part of the experience and may promote natural body awareness. It may be the ultimate joining of the body and mind in a natural practice that can be as simple or profound as one wishes. The student does not try to do anything with qi we simply become aware of the quality of the qi, where it is blocked or whether it is clear, turbid, smooth or coarse. Internally the qi and breath are moving of their own accord. It could be that we are really learning some the four virtues of being human that are the foundation of any qigong practice. How to sit, stand, lie down and walk, unifying the body and mind savoring what it is to be human.

Standing Meditation has been called "The Million Dollar Secret" by some. It is as hidden as the air, deeply infused with beauty. Mysterious and tranquil, a jewel in the crown of all qigong practice. We are allowed to bring back wholeness and rediscover lost parts of the body mind continuum joining body, mind and soul. In standing we learn to get rid of energetic blockages to our potential to be human.
Most ancient cultures had a type of standing practice. It is believed to have developed out of the need for hunters to remain perfectly still for long periods of time in the search for prey which led to an awareness of being in tune with nature and the ability to self heal. They discovered a science and psychology of posture. A lot of this has been documented and researched by Felicitas Goodman Phd. a retired professor of anthropology and linguistics at Dennison University. She has extensively tested some of these postures depicted on cave walls in Lascaux and in African petroglyphs on thousands of students noting their experiences "we found that each posture predictably mediated not just any kind of vision, but a characteristic, distinctly different experience"

Moshe Feldenkrais in his system Awareness Through Movement has also recognized consciousness related aspects of posture. In most of the great religions of the world from Buddhism to Jewish davening to Christianity and Hinduism through the Yoga asanas, postures of prayer are a common aspect. These posture are said to have powerful spiritual benefit.

In China Standing has almost been made into an exact science. Healing aspects and martial applications have been handed down from teacher to student for millennia. In any discussion of Standing Practice one must always mention the established Master Wang Xiang-zhai (1885-1963) who was a Master at all three aspects of Qigong, healing, martial application, and meditation. He believed that Standing had a number of benefits "cure anemia, normalize blood pressure, and make the heart-beat calm and regular." He said , "In movement, be like the dragon and tiger. In stillness have the mind of the Buddha." to him the secret of standing was "emptiness" (kong). Emptiness leads to awareness where one can sense blockages and the flow of qi and also realize the nature of the cosmos. "After forty years of experience, I have learned that all true strength arises from a primordial, selfless void, and that this void can be gradually comprehended by paying attention to the small, subtle movements of the body"

Most students pass through several stages in their practice of standing. Usually the first is a stage of discomfort where everything seems to ache, accompanied by trembling or shaking in the joints. This usually results from weakness in the muscles and tendons perhaps from atrophy. The body is definitely adapting to a greater charge of internal energy. We should just feel this and after a few minutes return to the posture of rest, Wuji. The second level could be called the "Test of Fire". Energetic knots have been released how to stand and breath become automatic, formerly depleted places are now full of energy. the hands and feet may become warm. the forehead may sweat and the abdomen falls hot. This is a transitory state and can last from a few days to months. The most difficult level is the level of patient growth. This the level where most people become bored and do not persever and the stage where most benefit is gained if one can persevere. As Wang has told his students "The ordinary is the extraordinary." We can now focus on the positive ,breathing, feeling and awareness.

Timothy Booth has been practicing Qigong for over 15 years and is a member of the National Qigong Association. He currently instructs private and group Qigong classes in Toronto. He has studied with some of the greatest western Masters of Qigong such as Ken Cohen, and Eric Reynolds, direct student of Dr. John Painter. 
1998 Certificate of Attainment- Senior Level in Baguazhang from Emerge Internal Arts Tai Chi and Meditation Centre Student of Jiulong Baguazhang (Martial Art related to Tai Chi) 1999-2011 with Eric Reynolds and Jan Carstoniu MD, FRCPC – Instructors of Jiulong Baguazhang. He can be reached through his blog at http://integral96.wordpress.com/
Cursed by a wicked fairy, the princess falls into, deep, dark sleep. Trees, vines and thorny bushes grow around her castle, enveloping everything but its high towers. One hundred years later, while hunting, a prince notices the castle spires. He is told that witches live within the walls, that ghosts haunt the place that terrible ogres will eat anyone who dares to approach. But one withered old man tells him that a beautiful princess is asleep in the castle and only a noble prince can awaken her. That’s enough for a hero. Pushing aside all fear, the prince fights his way through the thicket. As he nears the castle, the tangles magically unfold. He enters and finds his way to a golden room where he sees the fairest sight he’s ever beheld. He kneels and kisses the sleeping princess. With bated breath he waits to see the effect of his kiss. Slowly she awakens. “Is that you, my prince?” she whispers. When he hears her voice, the prince’s heart melts and he declares his eternal love.

In my practice I meet couples whose fairy tales are not coming true. I help them get back on track, physically, emotionally, relationally and sexually. Here is a typical example. Jenny and Johnson had been married thirteen years when they came to me for acupuncture treatments. Johnson had injured his shoulder falling off a ladder, had chronic tension in his neck and occasional tinnitus (ringing in the ears); Jenny suffered from migraines, severe menstrual cramps and chronic...
yeast infections. They had come to me for relief from their physical symptoms, but they ended up with more than they bargained for.

I witnessed their marital discord in our first meeting, when Jenny criticized her husband for making them late and continued to insert barbs throughout our conversation. Johnson held his tongue. Later, I learned that when they first met, Jenny had been attracted to Johnson’s easygoing nature and composure under stress. Johnson admired Jenny for being outgoing and assertive. At first it was a good match: Johnson calmed Jenny down when she needed it, and she invigorated and inspired him to accomplish his goals. This “pairing” of energetic traits, his ability to calm her and her presence as a motivator for him, is a typical dynamic between men and women. Here, the man acts as a yin-tonifying agent for a woman and she supports the yang in him.

As is often the case, Jenny and Jacksons’s strengths became weaknesses. This is a core issue when considering behavior symptoms in couples. Energetic imbalances that cause attraction can, when those same imbalances worsen, cause those same two people to repel one another. As years pass the positive attraction and tonification pattern can reverse itself. He weakens her feminine chi by not bringing his yang to support her and she hinders his yang by becoming overbearing. She extinguishes his fire.

Jenny grew to resent feeling she had to be in charge all the time, but she feared that if she were to give up control, the structure of their life together would collapse. Feeling let down and abandoned, she belittled Johnson’s masculinity, criticizing him in front of others and demeaning his accomplishments. This is typical of a woman whose yin chi isn’t being nourished in her relationship. Abandonment is the primary injury to yin energy and if a woman feels abandoned by her partner this can reflect in energetic imbalances. Yin energy deficiency is reflected as yang, hot, aggressive behavior. Women who become yin deficient in their relationships act with aggression, a controlling nature and hostility.

Though Johnson felt angry and exasperated, he swallowed his frustration and withdrew into a shell of indifference. This is typical of yang chi deficiency behavior in men. Rather than having moved towards his woman, setting boundaries and taking a stand for himself, he moved away. Johnson pulled away from sex as well. Jenny approached him frequently, only to be rebuffed. When they did make love, she worked hard to have an orgasm, but failed more often than not. She felt deserted and sexually frustrated, which only made her more edgy. What she didn’t know was that Johnson had not lost his sexual desire: he was masturbating daily, having found himself easier to please than his wife.

When they reached my office, neither was looking for marital support though, clearly, the couple was at an impasse. Jenny needed desperately to access her yin, the softer, more feminine side of her nature and to be more genuinely receptive sexually. Receptivity is the primary energetic trait of yin chi. To do so, she needed Johnson to assert his strength. In turn, Johnson needed to have his yang, masculine energy emerge and support Jenny. But for this he had to have Jenny’s respect, trust and encouragement. After years of consistent stress, their inherent differences, complementary at first, had exacerbated and were poisoning their marriage. As classically psychological as this scenario appeared, I had already come to see this kind of situation as an energetic problem that can be addressed without a direct psychological approach.

I treated them with acupuncture, herbs and diet with out ever bringing up the marital challenges that I saw. They presumed we were addressing the physical symptoms which were their chief complaints. After about four months, Jenny’s migraines were less frequent and Johnson’s shoulder pain was gone. To their surprise, there were other changes as well. The seemingly intractable conflicts that had threatened their marriage began to appear solvable. Jenny became less
of a shrew, so Johnson was less wimpy; he was less of a wimp, so she became less shrewish. I knew things had changed when, five months into treatment, Jenny told me that they’d had their best sex since their honeymoon. Johnson had felt comfortable enough to initiate lovemaking again, and the next day in my office Jenny was cooing like a dove.

At that juncture I proposed teaching them some sexual healing techniques, explaining that they would not only heighten their pleasure but could, perhaps, help heal their remaining symptoms and further the process of emotional healing in their marriage as well. I thought Jenny’s cramps and vaginal infections might be, in part, the result of sexual frustration, resulting in local chi congestion. As for Johnson’s tinnitus, in Oriental medicine it is sometimes caused by a weakness in the system that generates the body’s sexual energy. From this perspective, Johnson’s daily masturbation habit was depleting that system.

I suggested Jenny relax in bed and allow herself to be more sexually receptive. Telling her that she must have time for foreplay, I showed them ways to add variety and spice to that phase of lovemaking. This would help solidify their fragile, new intimacy and give Jenny more time to warm up and open up, a requirement of healthy yin expression. Before long, she became more at ease with her natural sexuality and was experiencing regular orgasms without great effort. Her cramps lessened and her infections occurred less frequently. Seeing that he was able to please his wife, Johnson’s confidence grew. He cut way back on masturbating; even though he now had fewer orgasms, his satisfaction was more complete. The ringing in his ears subsided gradually, and the tightness in his neck eased as the tension between him and Jenny dissolved.

In essence, by addressing the underlying syndromes experienced by both of these patients, physical, psychological, sexual and relational symptoms were alleviated. For those of us in clinical practice, focusing our attention on the relational aspect of a patient’s life is, generally, not a high priority. Certainly if abuse or some other blatant challenge to physical health is involved the discussion of a patient’s lifestyle and circumstances may be important. But, as you can see through this example, much can be done to address a patient’s experience of life and love through manipulating the energetic weakness that allow for disharmony. In essence, every aspect of life can be viewed through the ancient concepts that guide the medicine we practice. One can find solutions upon examining the underlying, energetic causes of psychological and relational disharmony as they manifest in relationships. No matter how contemporary we consider ourselves to be, there is a truth in the ancient myth of Sleeping Beauty. It is reflects the ancient theories of yin and yang and the lives, loves and bodies of our patients.

Born in Los Angeles and raised in a medical family, Felice Dunas, Ph.D., is an acupuncture industry founder, international lecturer, published author and executive coach. She earned her Bachelor’s degree in Sociology/International Health Care from UCLA, and her Doctorate degree in Clinical Chinese Medicine and Pharmacology from Samra University. She uses ancient principles of the body and human behavior to enhance the lives of individuals, couples and corporate executives. Having lectured in over 60 countries, she addresses health, vitality, interpersonal intimacy and sexuality. Dr. Dunas is the author of the best-selling book from Penguin-Putnam, "PASSION PLAY: Ancient Secrets for a Lifetime of Health and Happiness Through Sensational Sex".
For more into, go to: http://www.felicedunas.com
Chinese porridge or congee (Zhou: 粥) is a thick soup that is made from grains. There are various ways of making and serving congee, and no special skill is required. Congee can be sweet or salty, thick or thin, with many or few ingredients, it all depends on your own personal taste.

Medicinal congee, is based on varieties of natural grains combined with vegetables, fruits, nuts, seeds, meat, eggs and certain herbs, selected according to their property for healing, promoting well being and longevity. As part of Traditional Chinese Medicine Food Therapy, medicinal congee has been refined, and developed since the time of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods (770-220 BC).

Eight treasure congee is also called “The Eighth Winter Day Congee” (La Bao Zhou) and “Buddha Congee.”

According to TCM principles of using food as tonics rather than herbs “The Eighth Winter Day Congee” is consumed like a tonic food on a special day of the winter traditional Chinese holiday. (lunar calendar, the eighth of December). The original recipe uses eight ingredients. The number eight is a lucky number in the Chinese culture, even though many versions of it may have more ingredients than eight, people still call it Eight Treasure Congee. Different versions of eight treasure congee have different ingredients for different types of healing. Most ingredients include Chinese red date, red bean, black walnut, pine nut, dried persimmon, sweet rice, millets, tapioca, peanuts, apricot seed, sunflower seed, pumpkin seed, peach kernel seed and black sesame seeds. The Eight days of Winter coincide with Buddha’s ‘becoming immortal day’ so that the Buddha temple adopts the folk day’s tradition and makes the Eight treasure congee the same day, later people call it “Buddha congee”.

A well known fact regarding longevity, is that in “Ba Ma County ‘in Guang Xi province, China; the majority of villagers lived up to 100 years of age and more. They all consumed congee in two meals out of their three daily meals. That gave this dish the name of Longevity Eight Treasure Congee.

Here are a few versions of ‘Longevity’ Eight treasure congee:

One of the most respected Shaolin monks was Ji Qin. He was still active after he reached 100 years of age. Every morning, he would climb five mountain peaks in only 20-30 minutes. One of his secrets was to consume “Longevity Eight Treasure Congee” daily. A high ranking monk, Wan Zhang, stated, “It promotes longevity by strengthening the Spleen, (the earth element of the body), harmonizing the stomach, and nourishing the Kidneys (water element of the body).”
1. Shaolin Longevity Eight Treasure Congee

This congee should be consumed during the spring, fall and winter seasons.

- Millet: 150g
- Rice: 50g
- Peanut: 25g
- Walnut: 15g
- Pine nuts: 5g
- Red bean: 10g
- Hawthorns: 10g
- Chinese red dates: 5 pieces (without kernels)
- Rock sugar

Cooking instructions: Put all nuts and beans in a ceramic pot with 500ml water to cook for one hour, then add millets and rice and continue cooking at a low temperature till everything becomes very soft and smooth. Then add rock sugar, red dates and hawthorn fruit at the end and continue cooking for another 10-15 minutes.

Intake: Eat it warm, at noon time, every day; half of a bowl for elderly people and 1 to 1 ½ bowls for young adults.

2. Longevity Eight Treasure Congee

- Spring rice (or sushi rice): 50g
- Yi yi ren: 30g
- Sunflower seeds: 10g
- Lotus seeds: 30g (pre soak overnight)
- Mung beans: 20g (peeled)
- Black beans: 20g (pre soak overnight)
- Chinese red dates: 5 pieces
- Go ji berries: 15g

Cooking instructions: Pre soak all beans overnight then cook in water for one hour, add rice, yi yi ren, go ji berries and dates to the pot and continue to cook at low temperature until congee becomes very soft.

Intake: Eat it warm 1-2 times per day, better to add black sesame and black walnut power in the congee before eating. One can add sugar to taste or eat it with salty vegetables.
3. Eight Treasure Congee

Dang shen (Codonopsis Root): 3g
Bai zhu (Atractylodes Rhizome): 3g
Qian shi (Euiyale Seeds): 3g
Fu ling (Hoelen): 3g
Lian zi (Lotus Seeds): 3g
Bai bian dou (Hyacinth Bean): 15g
Yi yi ren (Coix Seeds): 10g
Shan Yao (wild Chinese yam): 10g
White rice: 150g

Put the Codonopsis Root and the Atractylodes rhizome in a cheese cloth, cook in boiling water for 40 minutes. Use the herbal juice only. Add more water if needed. Put all the rest of the ingredients and the rice in the pot, and then cook it at medium temperature until all ingredients become soft and smooth.

Intake: Eat it as breakfast or alone at dinner, twice a day. This form of congee is better for people who have a lot of dampness, fatigue, water retention and gain weight easily.

4. Eight Treasure Congee

Rice: 50g
Sweet rice: 30g
Millet: 30g
Soybeans: 20g
Red beans: 20g
Mung beans: 20g
Chinese red dates: 3-4 pieces
Dried lychee fruit: 10g

Cooking instructions: Soak all beans overnight then boil in water for one hour, add rice, sweet rice, millet, dates and lychee fruit in the pot and cook at low temperature till congee become very smooth.

Intake: It can be seasoned with sugar or salted vegetables. Eat it warm 1 – 2 times per day.
Function: this form of congee can nourish blood, improve sleep and strengthen body energy.

For more information about food therapies, please see the new book at www.bodywithoutmystique.com.

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Dr. Helen Hu, originally from Beijing China, has studied Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) since the age of 12. A Cardiologist and practitioner of integrated medicine for nine years before immigrating to the United States, Dr. Hu passed the "U.S. Licensing Medical Exam" (USLME) in 1997 while simultaneously obtaining her Oriental Medical Degree (OMD) in the US. Dr. Hu currently directs and manages a successful TCM practice in San Diego. She lectures locally on Acupuncture and the benefits of combining Eastern / Western styles of Medicine. Dr. Hu has been practicing Tai Ji and Qi Gong over 25 years, and she teaches these ancient Chinese arts Saturday mornings on Shelter Island in San Diego as a gift to the community and to help promote well being and longevity.
Change is a beautiful thing. Or so we have heard. Actually change, while not always easy, surely fires things up a bit. I recall when our family lost power for 4 days after a significant snowstorm last winter. We huddled around our fireplace for warmth and I continually got a visual of this very lesson. When the fire seemed to be a heartbeat away from going out—with only faintly glowing embers left—a simple readjustment of the logs with the poker got it ablaze quickly. Just moving things around fired it up. Desiring change, planning for change, and implementing a plan for change, is worth our attention. But it requires more from us that just “wanting it”.

Effective, successful changes require more than thought, planning and goals. You have to visualize life with this change and how it will positively impact your life. Secondly, YOU must really want the change, or all the thinking, planning and goal setting in the world won’t get you to your desired outcome. It is like the difference between reading a how-to book and then actually implementing it.

When we try to make changes in our life, even things that are really good for us, we may find resistance rears up. It may seem that sometimes, things get worse before they get better. If you are trying to stop smoking, you may feel you are placed in situations when everyone around you is smoking. Or a crisis may arise that taxes your nerves and has you craving your nicotine fix more than a usual day.

If you are trying to eat healthier, get fit, heal from an illness, get your financial world in order, whatever it is; if it gets worse before it gets better, that is great. It is a good sign simply because this blip is evidence of a shift. If there is an energy shift, an attitude shift—even if it seems small and of little consequence, you are stepping toward change. The universe is responding, first with what appears to be resistance, but it is really part of the re-organization of the way things are now.

Please don’t be afraid to commit to a change until you feel you are fully prepared, you know all the answers or have choreographed it to the point that you are sure you cannot fail. Sometimes, change takes FAITH and a first step. Then FAITH and a second step…. and then a third step and so on….

You do not kneed to know all of the answers. Just simply know that you want freedom from the past way of doing, being, or believing—and be willing to recreate the status quo. Your faith and your willingness to act are two ingredients the universe uses to guide you through the How-To’s of the change you seek.

What can you control? Well, actually a lot. You can control your thoughts and what you choose in this moment. This moment is all any of us has, really. Once you are clear on the change you seek, you can ask yourself as choices arise, “Will this choice bring me closer to, or further from, my goal?” Moment to moment, choice by choice we will find we have arrived at the very place, or even a better place than we dreamed of.

Rena M. Reese is the founder of Soul Salon International, an inspirational multimedia company which offers coaching, consulting, web-design, publishing support, and fundraising opportunities for individuals and groups. She is the author of several inspirational titles, a professional speaker and coach as well as the host of a weekly radio program, The Soul Salon. Please visit www.SoulSalonInternational.com and connect with her on Twitter @TheSoulSalon.
The Autumn - Fall season is perfectly designed for letting go. Letting go of the things we have allowed to reside within us that cause irritation/disruption/sadness/disharmony of all sorts whether large or small. Like the leaves that are now preparing to leave the trees, we can prepare to release what we have clung to that no longer serves us, and by doing so, gain greater clarity, detachment, understanding, rectitude, -- essentially balance and harmony. How do we know what no longer serves us? Read on in this month’s health topic for some ideas on this issue.

Autumn - Fall is Lung Season

The organ system for this season is the Lung/Large Intestine. Among its many other functions, we are most familiar with the idea that the Lungs are in charge of the flow of air in and out of our bodies. They connect our “insides” with our “outside” through the nose, its sense organ. The Lung is literally the highest placed organ in the torso and directs the qi it receives downward to the other organs. It is therefore known as the administrator of the organ system. The Lung is known as a “delicate” organ and is, indeed, very sensitive to changes in hot, cold, dryness, dampness, and wind. The Lung is responsible for providing proper moisture to the skin and similarly through its paired partner, the Large Intestine, dry hair is a sign of Lung/Large Intestine imbalance. Skin problems are always associated with the function of Lung energy, as the skin is its “outer” representative. It also breathes, is delicate and it protects our “insides” from the outside. Grief and sadness are the emotions associated with the Lung and crying is its “sound”. An attitude of rectification (setting “things” in balance) can counterbalance Lung sadness, which is important as too much sadness can dissipate qi.

The Autumn (Lung Season) is also known for the beginning of cold/flu season. It is most important to take care of our health by getting the proper rest, exercise (qigong/taijji/meditation/yoga practice is vital), along with eating for our health and energy. On those wonderful clear Fall days, be sure to get lots of fresh air and fill and empty the Lungs completely with long, deep breaths and enjoy the sensation of air going in and out of the lungs and the inhalation and exhalation of your skin as well. The beginning of Autumn is a wonderful opportunity – ENJOY!

Eat Seasonal, Buy Local, Think Global!

Some Foods That Harmonize With Autumn


Food as Medicine

Seasonal Harmony

by Ellasara Kling

The Autumn - Fall season is perfectly designed for letting go. Letting go of the things we have allowed to reside within us that cause irritation/disruption/sadness/disharmony of all sorts whether large or small. Like the leaves that are now preparing to leave the trees, we can prepare to release what we have clung to that no longer serves us, and by doing so, gain greater clarity, detachment, understanding, rectitude, -- essentially balance and harmony. How do we know what no longer serves us? Read on in this month’s health topic for some ideas on this issue.

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Some Foods That Harmonize With Autumn

RECIPIES

Spinach Soup with Snow Fungus

This is a light satisfying soup that is relatively quick to make and that nourishes the Lung and Large Intestine energies.

Ingredients
2 bunches of fresh spinach
½ cup of Snow fungus
2 beaten eggs
1-1/2 qt light vegetable broth or chicken broth
2 thin slices of ginger
1 TB soy sauce
½ tsp salt
1 tsp black pepper
4 oz tofu – cut in ½” cubes
2 TB toasted sesame oil

Directions
Carefully and thoroughly clean the spinach, remove the stems and cut leaves into 2” pieces. Soak the Snow fungus in hot water until softened and rinse a few times. Cut into small pieces removing the “stem”. Bring the broth to a simmer; add the snow fungus, soy sauce, ginger, salt and pepper – bring to a boil and then simmer for 10 minutes, add the spinach, stir simmer until spinach begins to wilt. Pour in the eggs slowly in a steady stream stirring the soup gently in one direction only. Add the tofu and heat through. Sprinkle a little sesame oil on top of each bowl and serve.

A Fall Congee

Congee is especially good for the elderly, people who are ill or recovering from illness, or people suffering from loss of appetite, and it makes a healthy, breakfast as well.

Make rice congee* w/ ginger, when 90% complete, add scallion whites with a bit of the green, when ready to serve add chopped cilantro and diced pressed, black tofu (seasoned with Five Spice Powder and Soy Sauce).

* New to congee a/k/a rice porridge? Here is a basic recipe: 1 cup of rice to 9 cups of water. Wash the rice so that the water runs clear, add fresh water to a large, heavy bottomed soup pot, bring water w/rice to a boil, reduce heat, cover with the lid slightly tilted to let some steam out and stirring occasionally (to make certain the rice doesn’t stick to the bottom). Cook slowly for about 1-1/4 hours until the rice is creamy. You can add more water if necessary or if you want it thinner. You can add almost anything to congee to create the flavor you are looking for. There are innumerable variations, so use your own imagination. It is best to keep the taste light, but as above, it can be very flavorful. Serving congee with small bowls of “added ingredients” gives family/guests the opportunity to flavor it their way to their own taste.
As mentioned in other articles, every culture has foods that coincide with the flow of nature. Here are two lively Autumn examples from the Middle Eastern area of the world. They each are aromatic/pungent flavored dishes that use many spices you may already know with a familiar vegetable in, perhaps, a different way.

**Middle Eastern Style Cauliflower**

**Ingredients**
- 1 large head cauliflower
- 1-2 tablespoon grapeseed oil
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1/2 teaspoon ground turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon curry powder
- 2 cloves finely minced garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon salt

White rice that is ¾ cooked water drained. Enough boiling water to finish cooking the quantity of rice you are using.

**Directions**
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F
Break the cauliflower into large florets and place on a baking sheet. Lightly brush the florets with the oil and bake until they just begin to brown, remove from the oven.

While the cauliflower is baking, place all the spices in a saucepan/wok and heat through – being careful not to burn the spices. Then add the boiling water, stir and add the partially cooked rice. Finish cooking the rice.

Serve by placing the fragrant/spiced rice on a platter and then putting the baked cauliflower on top. The rice carries the fragrant spices and the roasted cauliflower adds a sweet mellowness.

**Moroccan Style Parsnips**

**Ingredients**
- 2 cups water
- 2 pounds parsnips, washed, peeled and cut into triangular type slices
- 5 tablespoons grapeseed oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cumin
- 3 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 1/2 teaspoon dried thyme leaves
- 1 TB lemon juice
- 1 TB chopped cilantro or flat parsley

(continued on next page)
Moroccan Style Parsnips—Directions
Steam the parsnips until tender, but still strong. Set the parsnips aside separating them from the steaming liquid which you will save. Heat the grapeseed oil in a wok/heavy bottomed skillet over medium heat till it shimmers. Then, reduce the heat and add the spices. Lightly toast the spices, stirring frequently, until fragrant, about 10 minutes. Add a 1/2 cup of the parsnip water and simmer covered for 15 minutes not allowing the water to completely evaporate - -add more parsnip water if necessary. Stir in the parsnips, covering them with the spice/water mixture and heat through for a few minutes. Place on a platter, sprinkle with the lemon juice and cilantro/parsley.

TEAS

* * Ginger tea: So many variations on Ginger Tea. . . .So useful on a daily basis and pleasant to drink. And here’s some of the reasons for its ongoing popularity: Ginger tea has been used for literally thousands of years in Asian cultures as a medicinal as well as a pleasant, relaxing and invigorating warm drink. Ginger is known to calm the stomach, reduce inflammation (as in arthritis and ulcerative colitis), relieve headaches, stuffed up sinuses and other cold/flu symptoms, reduce menstrual cramps, alleviate nausea, increase circulation, and much, much more. It is almost a panacea that also has brilliant culinary benefits.

Ginger tea can be as simple as chopping fresh ginger (about 1 tsp. per 6 oz cup) and placing it in a pot with cold water, bring it to a boil, reduce to a simmer for a couple of minutes. Pour into your cup and sip. . . add honey or other sweetener, if desired.

OR: Ginger tea can be made; 1“ of chopped ginger, the whites only of 4-5 scallions (depending on size) and the dried rind of one tangerine in a quart of water. Bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer for 4-5 minutes (longer and it begins to get bitter), remove the “ingredients” and add sweetener – or not – and sip slowly. This common recipe is terrific for “knocking out” the symptoms of a cold/flu; warming up from a chilly day, or if you have become drenched, as I just did in a sudden summer rain storm.

OR: Ginger tea can be made with red dates, peppermint, almonds, or other ingredients if you want to also “target” other experiences you would like to enhance or balance out. The variations are multitudinous. Experiment and enjoy!

* * (As with all strong herbs, consult with your TCM doctor if you have any special issues or questions.)

(Seasonal Harmony continued on next page)
HEALTH TOPIC: Letting Go: A path to health and vitality. Whether we live for five more minutes for 500 more years, I think we would all agree that we want that “time” to be healthy and filled with vibrant energy. Put another way, we want to “vibrate” in accord with the energy of Life moment-to-moment-to-moment, for all the moments we have in this consciousness. What prevents us from having that experience? The things we hold onto and use to “jam up” our energy and thereby cause energy stagnation. Where there is vibrancy, there is flow. Where there is stagnation, there is “dullness” as our rate of vibration in that area slows down.

Of course, we now say, how do I flow more, how do I let go of the habits, thoughts, feelings, beliefs that are hindering my sense of aliveness? How do I let go of these things? How do we decide what to “let go” of? One way to get a clearer look at these things is to consider what is out of balance in our body. Use our physicality as a mirror for our consciousness. Use Five Element Theory to understand what that physicality is telling us is stuck in our mind, emotions, beliefs and use the principles of Five Element Theory to understand how to create the change that brings us that greater vibrancy, harmony and balance. Ask yourself, for example, if Lung/Large Intestine/Fall have the emotion of grief/sadness, what would balance out the sadness I hold onto and carry about? How and where is that manifesting in me? What do Five Element theory and the principles of Chinese medicine suggest for creating harmony and balance? How do I apply that to my life?

Another method might be to ask ourselves what do we believe we cannot live without? A friend wrote me today that there was a time that she didn’t think she could “go without” cheese, even though it created dampness in her and that created congestion. However, now that she has done so, that actually small change in her diet is part of the greater health she is experiencing. I suggest we challenge ourselves and pick something we think we cannot live without. It doesn’t have to be the BIG thing, start small, especially if this kind of challenge is new to you. Experience letting go of “it”. Perhaps, for some people it would be for one day, for others much longer. It doesn’t have to be giving up a food. It could be including something in. For example, including in new foods that carry the messages of benefits for the areas you want to strengthen. Including in seasonal foods from a local market. Or, it could be changing a way of relating to others, to oneself. Such as finding the time in your busy day to truly listen to the concerns of those around you. To let go of “busyness”. It could be letting go of staying indoors instead of finding a pretty place to walk outside. The possibilities are endless. In choosing to increase our vibrancy our intention will lead us naturally to those things that will work best for each of us. In these ways, some very small and others not so tiny, we increase our vibrancy, balance and harmony. In doing so, we increase the quality of our days here and isn’t that ultimately what we often really want when we say we want longevity? The ability to have the time to create an harmonious/balanced/flowing/vibrant/healthy life? Start now.

Wishing you good health! Remember to smile at all things.

Following the threads of her personal tapestry, Ellasara, a long-time student of Master Nan Lu, weaves her life around the exploration and sharing of self-healing through a variety of modalities, primarily focusing on food, common herbal plants, Qigong Meridian Therapy and Qigong for Women’s Health. For comments, questions, consultations,
Sign on the door of a meditation center:  *Out of body. Back in twenty minutes.*

An old man was enjoying his hundredth birthday party when a reporter approached him and asked, "Sir, what is the secret of your longevity?" The old man thought for a moment, then replied, "Well, young man, every evening at 7PM, I have a glass of red wine. They say it’s good for the heart, you know." "That’s it?" asked the reporter. "That," the old man said, "and cancelling my voyage on the Titanic." source: [http://www.jokebuddha.com/Longevity/random#ixzz1XQFWxsyw](http://www.jokebuddha.com/Longevity/random#ixzz1XQFWxsyw)

The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. On the other hand, the French eat a lot of fat and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and also suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans. Conclusion: Eat & drink what you like. It’s speaking English that kills you!

...... What has English done to you?

A student went to his meditation teacher and said, "My meditation is horrible! I feel so distracted, or my legs ache, or I’m constantly falling asleep. It’s just horrible!"

"It will pass," the teacher said matter-of-factly.

A week later, the student came back to his teacher. "My meditation is wonderful! I feel so aware, so peaceful, so alive! It’s just wonderful!"

"It will pass," the teacher replied matter-of-factly.

**Q:** What do you call a one-legged Irish nun who is learning tai chi?  
**A:** Sister Eileen.

**Q:** Why can’t Buddhists vacuum their meditation cushions?  
**A:** Because they don’t have any attachments.  
Confucius say:  
"man who run behind car get exhausted"..."man who run in front of car get tired"

**Q:** What do you get when you cross a Zen Buddhist with a Druid mathematician?  
**A:** Someone who worships the square roots of the tree that isn’t there.

**Q:** Why are there so few Buddhist rhythm and blues bands?  
**A:** Because Buddhists don’t have any soul.
As human beings we are interested in strengthening or health in all respects. By strengthening our physical body, mind and spiritual nature we hope to gain longevity and a higher quality of life. Practitioners of qigong, taiji, and other mind body disciplines will gain some insights in reading this book.

This book is not a treatise on Daoist philosophy and practices. However, reader is brought into an understanding of the concepts relating to an attaining real internal arts skill. Through the practices of internal arts such as qigong, taiji, et.al and practicing Nei Gong results in the awakening of the energy body along with cultivation of our consciousness.

“Nei Gong is not a system of exercises. It is a series of internal changes which a person may go through in order to follow a path to the Dao.“ (pp. 15-16)

The author creates a teaching environment as if the reader is an “inner-room” student by using very clear teachings. Nei Gong practices serve to condition the physical body (jing), then the energy body (Qi) as well as consciousness (Shen). A serious practice of Nei Gong can make the following changes; soften and relax muscles, old injuries begin to vanish, increased immune function, calmer mind, good body alignment, and an awakening of the internal energy. The author suggests that the practice of Nei Gong will enhance and strengthen previously learned internal art forms.

The author discusses in detail the stages involved with Nei Gong practice which are in sequence, conditioning and preparing the physical body, regulating the mind and breath, awakening the energy system, movement of yang qi, attainment of internal vibration, converting qi to shen and converting shen to dao. Nei Gong practices are not recommended for children and teens, pregnant women, have a history of mental illness, and being in a highly emotional state.

Two important practices are clearly described and act as a thread throughout the book are Sung breathing and a qigong practice set the author titles Ji Ben Qigong (Fundamental Energy Exercises). The techniques of Sung breathing are designed to rid the body of physical tension. In practicing Sung breathing there is removal of tension from large muscle groups, connective tissue(ligaments, tendons and fascia). The removal of these tensions helps to re-align the skeletal bone structure as the bones relax into their natural position. The practice of Sung breathing entails 3 phases of practice. Phase 1 is beginning Sung breathing, Phase 2, breathing in tranquility and breathe out tension, and phase 3 breathe with heaven and earth. An entire chapter (Chapter 3) is devoted to the details and concepts based on principles of Daoist teachings.
Chapter 4 is devoted to the principles and practice of Ji Ben Qigong. This qigong practice consists of 8 postures. “They are based around the principle of moving the body’s joints in the most natural and efficient way possible. They only circulate Qi in the direction which is normal for the meridian system and so they should not clash with any other qigong system.” (p. 101) The postures have very interesting titles, namely, compressing the pearl, flying hands, opening the chest, upholding the moon, swimming dragon, diagonal flying, cow turns its head, and the heavenly bow. Each exercise is given a detailed explanation along with photos of the movements. The photos, however, do not cover all of the movements described for each posture, but are adequate for self study.

The book transitions into a detailed discussion of the importance of the kua, proper stances, and getting in touch with your energy body. In awakening the energy system one needs to ask the following questions: Is my physical body relaxed? Are my energetic pathways blocked? Are your emotions fairly well balanced? Using the practices of Sung breathing, Ji Ben Qigong, proper alignments, microcosmic and macrocosmic orbit circulation of Qi are systematically discussed to give the reader the best outcome for his or her efforts.

The last couple of chapters deal with practices for the shen (spirit). The importance of meditation techniques are discussed, the functions of shen, the notion of the “heart mind” in controlling our emotions and a nice discussion of the 5 Virtues (contentment, love (empathy), courage (conviction), clarity and patience. The reader is advised to “Question everything you do, carefully consider everything your are taught but remember to do with an open mind and an open heart.” (p. 221)

In conclusion, the author suggests that the “Dao is accessible by everyone in one way or another. The form it takes only depends upon how much you are willing to put in.” (p. 224) As with any worthwhile goal in life, it takes patience, diligent practice, good teaching and persistence to get the maximum benefits. So it is with Nei Gong. This book will give the reader enough insights to pursue the study of Nei Gong further. The practices of Sung breathing and the Ji Ben Qigong set are bound to be of value to all who read this book.

Review by Sal Casano, Ph.D., R.N.

Salvatore Casano R.N., PhD – a registered nurse with a PhD in Holistic Health, and is an ATCQZ certified Tai Chi and Qigong instructor. His Tai Chi and Qigong journey began over 20 years ago while working as a chemistry instructor, when he felt the need for a more holistic approach to health care. Participating in many programs and projects relating to health, Dr. Casano educates the community on living a healthier lifestyle to avoid obesity and diabetes, and as a way to reduce stress. Over the years, he has learned from many masters including Bill Philips, Marc Issacs, Richard Chu, as well as two ATCQA advisors, Dr. Roger Jahnke, and Bill Douglas. Dr. Casano, along with his wife Veronica, often sojourn together on his healing path, as they use their skills in helping others connect the mind, body, and spirit. They have four adult children, seven grandchildren, and a cat, “Tiger.”
Mission Statements

- To build up a virtual community for all qigong, taiji, yoga, reiki, meditation practitioners, and other spiritual cultivators. To share experience and knowledge, to support each other's practice, and to illuminate higher spirituality.

- To create a network and platform for those who are seeking health, happiness, longevity and harmony in life through their own effort, sharing and exploration.

- To promote self-healing, self-empowerment and positive mind power through feasible daily practice and effective clinical applications.