



Beyond Surviving Truly Thriving

A GUIDEBOOK TO CHINESE MEDICINE AND ACUPUNCTURE

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Introduction

You have likely picked up this book because you are looking for ways to live a healthier, more balanced life. Maybe you have been struggling with your health and are in need of a new approach. If you are like most of our patients, you do not want to choose between being on medications for the rest of your life or suffering with nagging health problems. Instead, you want to live a life that is unlimited in its potential. You want to be full of energy. You want your body to be a symbol of vitality, strength, and longevity. If you are fed up with not being able to enjoy the quality of life that you deserve due to various health problems, then the information in this book could change your life. Within these pages, you will learn about a fascinating ancient treatment method called Chinese medicine. This is an ancient form of healthcare that has been practiced for thousands of years and has helped literally billions of people. Our goal in offering you this information is to:

- Offer you a clear overview of this incredible healing system
- Give you a sense of empowerment that there are indeed natural solutions to your current health problems
- Encourage you to be proactive about your health and treat it as a top priority for the rest of your life

Having treated many patients with numerous health concerns, we know how frustrating and challenging it can be to struggle with chronic health issues. We have learned that health problems are often warning signs from a very intelligent place within ourselves that we need to change our current way of doing things. Learning how to thrive in your life has a lot to do with learning from your health concerns, not just pushing them away or judging them as negative. This approach is, for many of our patients, where true healing begins. The information contained in these pages is your blueprint for a new way of understanding your body and mind. If you have any questions or would like to pursue this form of healthcare, please refer to the end of the book on page 29 where there is information about our practice. Let's begin!

Chapter 1

INVESTING IN YOUR HEALTH

When you think about it, there is nothing more important than your health. Even if every other dimension of life is going well (work, marriage, finances, etc.) we really can't enjoy life if we are struggling with our physical or emotional health. Investing in and making a commitment to your health can feel like a big step to take, especially when we are conditioned to put everyone else's needs before our own or to just 'suck it up' and deal with our stressful lives. This is the starting point for learning how to thrive, as investing in your health is one of the most powerful steps you can take to dramatically enhance the quality of your daily life. It sets the stage for success in every dimension of life. When you have more energy, confidence, mental clarity, and improved physical health, you are more able to gracefully handle daily stressors and challenges that would have previously overwhelmed you. Composure, control, and peace become the foundations of your life rather than isolated experiences.

Committing to and being proactive about your health in this way will lead to not only immediate improvement in your life, but will also set the stage for greater vitality and resilience as you age. In this way, there is a strong preventative aspect to claiming optimal health right now. Most of us have been taught to put off our own needs until our bodies and minds are screaming at us for acknowledgment. We wait until we are given a wake up call that usually comes in the form of illness or worsening health problems.

But what if you were to be proactive right now? What if you decided to care for yourself enough to take the steps necessary to optimize your current state of health, thereby preventing future problems? What is preventing you from living a life of boundless energy and radiant health right now?

These are powerful questions to ask yourself. You see, most of us are caught in a constant game of negotiation with ourselves to buy more time to put off the most important things in life. We think we have time to postpone our deepest needs for health, peace, and balance.

What we are getting at is that, in order to thrive in the modern world, it is essential that you commit right NOW to your health as a top priority. This means:

- Partnering with the right holistic and allopathic (Western) medical Practitioners
- Eating an organic whole foods diet
- Exercising 3-4 times a week
- Taking time each day to be present using relaxation techniques
- Freeing yourself of any limiting beliefs that undermine your health and quality of life

As with all important priorities in life, it is essential that you surround yourself with a community of people that can inspire and guide you in the direction of optimal health. We all need this kind of guidance or else we easily feel alone and confused. As you will see, a skilled acupuncturist can be an incredibly helpful resource in this regard.

Let's summarize the main points here, then we will jump into an exploration of Chinese medicine and how it can help you achieve your health goals:

- Your health and quality of life depend on the choices you make every moment you are alive
- You can choose to claim a much higher level of health right now
- You do this by freeing harmful beliefs, establishing healthy lifestyle patterns, and allying yourself with a team of skilled holistic and allopathic medical practitioners
- NOW is the only moment we have; putting off your deepest needs will create bigger problems down the road

How do I know if I'm a good candidate for acupuncture treatment?

You would likely receive great benefit from this form of care if you are:

- Struggling with chronic health issues that haven't responded to other forms of care
- Interested in reducing dependence on Western medications
- Looking for alternatives to conventional forms of treatment
- Seeking ways to optimize your health on all levels of being

- 
- Fed up with the conventional healthcare model
 - Looking for ways to grow spiritually and emotionally
 - And perhaps the most important point: You are interested in taking responsibility for your health to make the changes that will create a life of greater balance and purpose

Chapter 2

THE MANY BENEFITS OF CHINESE MEDICINE

As we mentioned, Chinese medicine has been practiced for thousands of years and is used around the globe by millions of people. The reason that it has survived for so long and adapted to different cultures is that it offers a vast and potent repertoire of healing benefits that are so widely needed in our modern world.

You may have noticed that acupuncture has enjoyed an enormous surge of interest lately, as the media is really catching onto the widespread benefit that this treatment option is offering to so many people.

Just what are some of these benefits? Well, the list could expand over many pages, but here is a condensed version of what our patients are expressing and what clinical evidence is suggesting:

- Substantial increase of energy
- More restful sleep patterns
- Less cravings, habitual behaviors, and addictive tendencies
- Reduction or elimination of chronic stress
- Emotional balance, increased joy and motivation
- Reduction or elimination of emotional and physical pain
- Improved athletic performance
- Enhanced metabolism
- Enhanced spiritual and emotional growth
- Reduced inflammation and swelling

Chinese medicine can effectively treat a number of chronic health problems, from anxiety and depression to chronic pain and PMS. The list of conditions treated by this medicine is vast to say the least. Many people report a deep feeling of peace that stays with them for many hours or days after acupuncture treatment. Many patients find that this feeling of peace becomes the foundation for their life rather than an occasional experience.

Chapter 3

WHAT IS CHINESE MEDICINE AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Chinese medicine is an ancient form of healthcare that has been practiced throughout the Asian world for 5000 years. Historically and up until this very day, Chinese medicine is perhaps the most widely used form of medicine throughout the world, as billions of people have used it as their primary form of care. There are five main branches of Chinese medicine:

- Acupuncture
- Chinese herbal medicine
- Massage (*Tui na* or *An mo*)
- Nutrition
- Exercise (*Taiqi Quan*, *Qi Gong*)

According to Chinese medical theory, these five branches form the foundation of a healthy and balanced life.

What Is Qi?

Chinese Medical theory is premised upon the concept of Qi (pronounced Chee), which loosely translates as energy, life force, or function. The main point when trying to grasp the concept of Qi is to consider the possibility that there is an immaterial energy both permeating everything inside and outside your body. Indeed, this energy is the foundation of everything in the universe. Chinese Medical theory suggests that many of our physical and emotional problems begin at a level of function that is more subtle than our physical brain chemistry or organ function.

Quantum physics has come to a very similar understanding of the material world and the human body by proving that when we break down any material object into its smallest components, it is reduced to pure energy. Einstein's famous equation, $energy(e) = mass(m)c^2$, is a statement that energy and mass at a fundamental level are equal, with energy creating mass and mass breaking down into energy. So, many of these ancient Eastern cultures have long understood what Western science is finally beginning to accept.

Our bodies, while seemingly solid, are actually energetic configurations that are constantly changing.

Chinese Medicine is premised upon this understanding. The point of treatment is to manipulate the flow of Qi within our bodies in different ways to induce a therapeutic effect. By working on the energetic level, the physical or material level can be directly affected. In fact, according to Chinese medicinal theory, many forms of imbalance or disease cannot be fully healed simply by intervening on the material level. The underlying energetic component has to be addressed in order to treat the root cause of the problem.

Qi is our life force; it's what awakens the human spirit, what animates the body and provides its deepest source of nourishment. If this is blocked by difficult emotions, physical injuries or chronic illnesses the body will be vulnerable to a process of more rapid deterioration. Chinese medicine is a way of making suggestions to the body/mind to release any blocks in the system. Only then is the body able to function harmoniously at all levels and this deep source of health and well-being can finally be accessed.

Your Body's True Nature

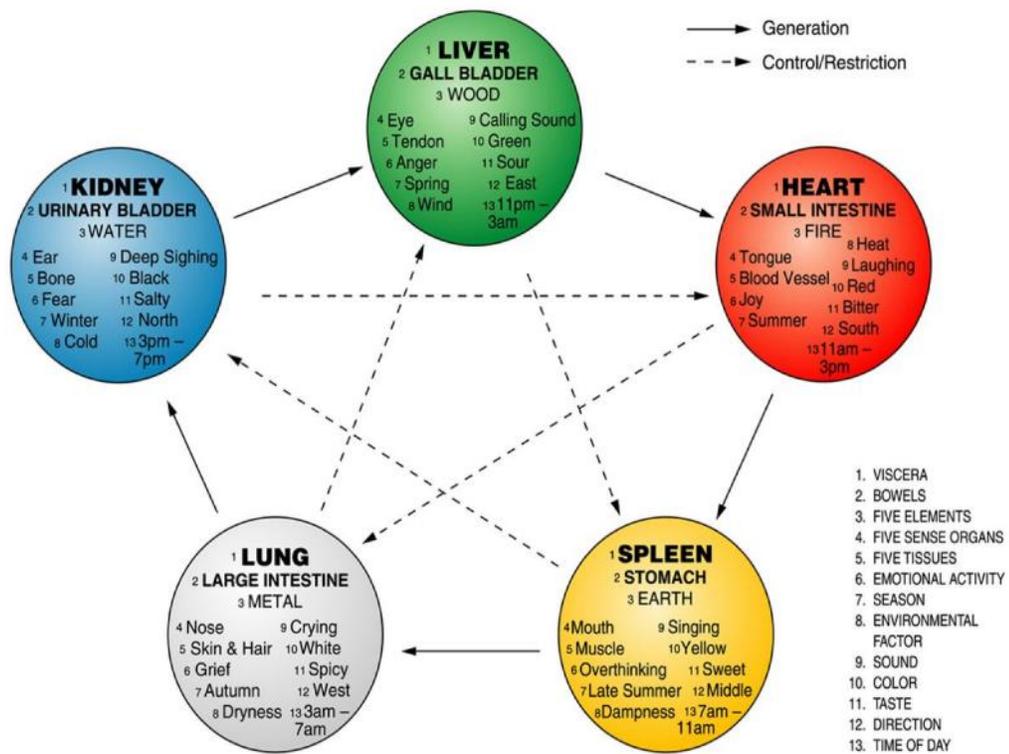
As with all forms of holistic treatment, Chinese medicine begins with the theory that human beings and nature are all one. The natural cycles and processes occurring in nature are also occurring in microcosm within your body. Imbalances occur in nature's cycles, and imbalances also occur internally in your body. Your body must adapt to nature's changes externally, or suffer from imbalances internally.

In Chinese Medical theory, all of the major organs of the body are a direct reflection of the cycles that occur out in nature and are believed to work interdependently. This means, that when one organ is impaired it will inevitably affect another organ. For example, from a Chinese Medicine perspective the function of your Kidneys can have a direct impact on the function of your Lungs. This is one example of the holistic nature of Chinese medicine. Western medicine tends to reduce the focus down to one isolated component without regard for how the organism is functioning as a whole. Typically in a Western medicine approach the patient is then offered a pill or surgery to suppress or alleviate their symptoms only. Chinese medicine is mainly intent on treating the root cause of our health conditions. If you picture the body as a garden and each organ system as a plant in that garden

if you notice one plant is failing to thrive you cannot cure the plant by only trimming off the diseased leaves. To truly heal the plant you must provide it with the missing nutrients and eliminate any harmful factors so the entirety of the plants environment will allow to thrive from the root to the leaves.

Chinese medical theory divides the body into 5 major organ systems that are each connected with 5 main elements in nature. Every human being has a constitutional type that is created from the unique balance/imbalance of the five elements: earth, metal, water, wood, and fire. Each of these elements has within them specific associations that are found throughout the natural world. As such, there is a color, sound, odor, emotion, season, and belief system ascribed to each of the elements. Below is a basic chart that will help you to understand the associations of each element:

CLASSIFICATION OF THINGS ACCORDING TO THE THEORY OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS



The beauty of holistic medicine is that it truly does account for your individual and unique makeup. For instance, you may have noticed in Western medicine that there are three or four medications that are used for all kinds of anxiety and depression. Prozac, Paxil, Effexor, etc. are standard treatment options regardless of the patient's specific energetic, physiological,

and emotional makeup. In holistic medicine, anxiety and depression are considered generic labels that do not capture the unique dynamics of the individual. For instance, one person can experience a grief-based depression due to the loss of a loved one while someone else is depressed because they are internalizing a lot of anger and don't know how to express themselves. In Western medicine, these two very different patients would likely receive the same medication. In holistic medicine, there are entirely different approaches used to compliment the specific emotional dynamics of the patient. Grief and anger are very different emotions and need different therapeutic inputs in order to be liberated. In this sense, holistic medicine really does treat the person, not the disorder.

Using the wise guidance of this model, we can see how there are precise psychological dynamics at work that perpetuate our physical health problems. As these psychological dynamics are allowed to persist, the five element model clearly shows us how physical pathology will eventually result.

Chinese medicine asserts that the body and mind are one. To the extent that what happens to the body will affect the mind and what affects the mind will affect the body. For example a person who constantly worries will eventually suffer from physical problems if it is left untreated. The eventual physical decline is the result of attachment to limiting viewpoints that suppress the spirit. Conversely, a person with a physical imbalance in the body will eventually suffer from emotional and mental pain as well. Many people blame their failing health on the aging process. From a holistic perspective, chronological age has very little to do with the health of the physical body. The reason that the body tends to decline as we age is because of the persistent and stubborn nature of repeating our pathological beliefs and habits. If we choose to enable these beliefs and habits to run our lives year after year, rest assured the Qi of the body will increasingly flow erratically and the body will inevitably undergo a process of degeneration that can be gradual or sudden. The body becomes less tolerant of our internal imbalanced energy and over time Qi becomes more blocked and imbalanced failing to support the proper functioning of our body. This is the main reason that age-related physical issues become apparent. This is accounted for by the many elderly people in the world who have maintained a state of thriving physical health that seems to defy their actual age.

Now, this does not mean that you have to believe in these techniques for them to work. It does mean that you have to believe in yourself to reap the full benefits that these strategies have to offer.

We have already touched on the fact that Chinese medicine is one of the few truly holistic medical traditions in the modern world. What does this mean exactly? Well, a skilled acupuncturist looks at health and illness differently than does a typical Western doctor. A holistic form of care is one that focuses on:

- The effects of the mind (beliefs, perceptions, attitudes) on the human body
- The role that nature plays in health and disease
- The relationship between emotional and physical health
- The subtle ways that energy is distributed through the human body
- The energetic processes that underlie physical and emotional imbalances

When we normally think of holistic medicine, we think of the connection between body, mind, and spirit. While this is certainly one dimension of any truly holistic paradigm, holism implies a much broader usage as well. For instance, when diagnosing your various health issues, the acupuncturist will look at:

- The relationship between your beliefs and predominant emotions
- Physical imbalances that may be contributing to emotional hardship and vice versa
- Dietary habits
- Exercise habits
- Social support systems
- Spiritual awareness
- Intimate relationships

All of these factors are potential inputs into your current level of health. From a holistic perspective, anything that we have attracted into our lives that strengthens the momentum of our current health issues needs to be considered as a potential avenue for therapeutic intervention.

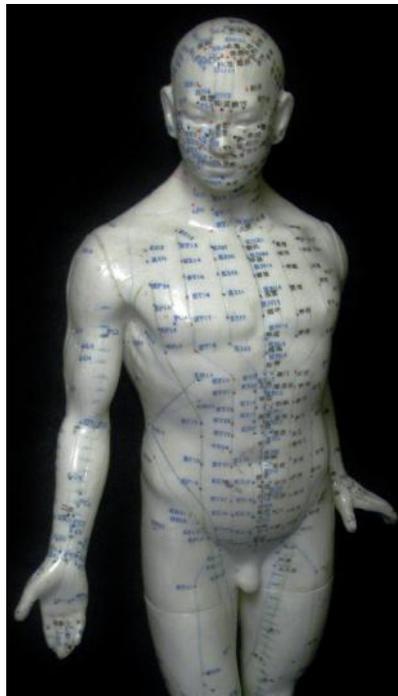
In Chinese Medicine we are with the Qi, the energy, that pervades all our organ systems, and in the case of disease, has become imbalanced and dysfunctional. In this sense, by working with the qi of the body we can restore harmony and proper flow to the energy within our system and in turn restore physical, mental and emotional well-being. If life circumstances have caused us to feel disconnected and blocked from becoming as healthy as we know we should be, then we can certainly turn to Chinese Medicine as a way to reconnect with ourselves and awaken to our full potential. But this medicine is not intended to be a cure-all for our health problems nor is it a magic bullet that will make all of our pain go away. A skilled acupuncturist will engage in a therapeutic relationship with the patient to help educate them about how they can take responsibility for their symptoms or imbalances.

Chapter 4

WHAT IS ACUPUNCTURE AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Now, according to acupuncture theory, the Qi in our bodies is said to flow throughout the body along specific channels, or meridians. These channels then transport the Qi throughout the body to the various organs and tissues where the Qi energizes the organ or tissue thereby allowing it to function. The specific locations where Qi gathers are called acupoints, or acupuncture points. These are typically the places where the Qi of the body is easier to access. Acupuncture needles are inserted into these points to induce various therapeutic effects. There are approximately 365 basic acupoints on the human body. The 12 major meridians that run through the body are paired with the organ they supply Qi to, and are named as follows:

LUNG
LARGE INTESTINE
SPLEEN
STOMACH
BLADDER
KIDNEY
HEART
SMALL INTESTINE
SAN JIAO
PERICARDIUM
GALL BLADDER
LIVER



There are numerous acupoints on each of these 12 meridians. For instance, the Lung meridian has 11 acupoints while the Bladder Meridian has 67 acupoints. Each of these 365 points have names, metaphors, and images associated with them that help the acupuncturist utilize them in different ways. The meridians travel through specific regions of the body; they have definite origins and end points. Typically, an acupuncturist will insert tiny

needles into a number of the acupuncture points on the meridians that are most in need of balancing.

What does the needle do?

Acupuncture should be a relatively painless, deeply relaxing experience. Many people are reluctant to pursue it because it involves the use of needles. Rest assured, a skilled practitioner can treat you with minimal, if any, discomfort. It is common for the patient to ask, 'did you *really* just put a needle in?' after it is inserted because the procedure is so gentle. Most patients are surprised by how little they feel as the needles are inserted. After the needles are in, there is typically a sensation of dull pressure or a mild achiness. Other patients report a feeling of tingling or warmth, while others feel a tangible and strong presence of Qi coursing through the body. In any regard, acupuncture should be a pleasant, tranquilizing, and safe experience. The needles are hair-thin and are used only once, then disposed into a biohazard container.

Most acupuncturists use surgical, stainless steel needles which are said to disperse energy and get the Qi moving effectively throughout the meridian that is being worked on. The needle is used as a medium for transferring and manipulating Qi in various ways. There are some acupuncturists who are so skilled at working with Qi that they don't even need to use a needle to do so. They can simply use their hands or, even more remarkably, the power of their faculties of awareness, to induce the desired energetic shift that needs to occur for healing to take place. Most acupuncturists prefer to use needles, simply because this is the easiest medium to utilize for changing the energetics of the body.

More and more modern research is being done on acupuncture and is showing very direct physiological responses in the body. Many articles report acupuncture affects all the cells related to your immune system. According to modern research more and more conditions are linked with a weakened immune system. Whether or not you have a compromised immune system, or you just want your immune response to be as strong as possible, this is a very positive effect of acupuncture. Most modern research on acupuncture has been done on its ability to treat pain. Evidence shows acupuncture raises levels of your endorphins, your body's natural pain killers, and overall reduces the nerve reaction to pain.

There are many other ways science has demonstrated acupuncture affects our body, but overall inserting a needle into an acupuncture point is a way of communicating with the patient's body and brain. We are sending a signal to the nerves and tissues whenever we place a needle to reestablish a balanced communication between the brain and all areas of your body. It is like saying, "WAKE UP!" or "relax." There are numerous occasions where patients directly feel energy shift in their body and seem to awaken to the healing intention of the treatment.

What can I expect during treatment?

Many patients have been amazed by the sensations they feel during treatment, as if their body is pulsating with a pleasant electrical current that they have never felt before. Acupuncture helps people feel their internal energy. It gets them out of their head and restores a kind of intuitive connection with the body. Acupuncture has a way of dropping one's attention deep into the body to feel the subtle currents of sensation that are created by the movement of Qi.

Many people also describe how quickly the acupuncture session goes by. Even though they had been laying on the table for 45 minutes, they literally feel that only 10 minutes have passed. This happens because acupuncture has a way of taking people out of linear time. As the patient's awareness becomes more body-oriented, the normal thought process of cause and effect ('I have to make that meeting at 12') falls away, and a sense of timelessness ensues. This alone can be a profoundly healing experience.

If you try acupuncture, you will very likely fall asleep or simply sink into a deep relaxation. For the rest of the day (and possibly for several days after that), you will feel energized and refreshed, as if your body has just gone through a period of deep rest.

Chapter 5

HOW ARE ACUPUNCTURE AND MASSAGE DIFFERENT?

As mentioned in Chapter 3 Chinese medicine includes 5 different branches, one of which is massage. Often, massage is included in a full treatment with acupuncture and herbs, or it can be used by itself. You are probably more familiar with massage as a stand alone treatment, specifically Western types of massage such as Swedish massage and Deep Tissue massage. Usually, when people receive typical Western types of massage they are using it for general relaxation, and to treat muscular pain. Therefore, the question becomes, “How are acupuncture and massage different, and why would I use one over the other?”

Acupuncture and massage do have some overlapping affects. For example, acupuncture, like massage, is very relaxing and they both are able to relax muscles and relieve pain in the body. The main difference in the two lies in the scope of problems they are able to treat. Acupuncture can affect the body on a different level than massage and has a greater ability to treat internal disorders such as psychological problems, nerve problems, problems with the organs such as digestive disorders, immune disorders, etc. On the other hand, when we are doing massage we are directly using our hands to manipulate the soft tissues of the body; the muscles, tendons, ligaments and connective tissue. Therefore, people who have lots of problems in these soft tissues will benefit greatly from a thorough massage. Most of us, however, have multiple issues on multiple levels. When health issues remain for a long time, soft tissue problems, internal organ problems, psychological problems all usually occur simultaneously and should be addressed using a combination of techniques such as acupuncture and massage.

Chinese massage, *tui na* (pronounced twee nah), is a form of massage that differs from typical Swedish/Deep tissue massage that most Westerners are used to. *Tui na* is much faster and more invigorating than most forms of Western massage. Just like acupuncture, *tui na*, is performed to manipulate the flow of Qi through the meridians of the body in order to treat the muscle and connective tissue layers. After a massage with *tui na* most patients describe a vibrating or tingling sensation throughout their body. They feel

lighter, invigorated and more energized instead of the extremely sleepy and sedated feeling that is felt after a Swedish type massage.

In China, a *Tui na* therapist is more than just a massage therapist. Traditionally, the *tui na* practitioner is trained to deal with all levels of musculoskeletal conditions from sore, tight muscles to dislocations and fractures. The section of *tui na* that deals with manipulation and adjustment of bones and tendons, especially after trauma, is known as *die da*. Unlike in the West where we have separate specialists to deal with these conditions such as chiropractors, osteopaths, physical therapists and orthopedists in China the *tui na* therapist performs all the manipulations as well as the massage for any musculoskeletal condition. In the West, unless you are an orthopedist or chiropractor, thrusting adjustments, like those used in *die da*, are out of the scope of practice for massage therapists and Chinese medicine practitioners, so they tend to perform only the massage techniques used in *tui na*.

Sometimes *tui na* will be performed in the beginning of the treatment, and other times at the end depending on the state of the body. Often, certain techniques and pressure points will be shown to the patient so you can perform self *tui na* at home. This is an excellent way to maintain the benefits of the treatment between your appointments and can give you a simple tool to treat yourself when minor aches and pains occur. Ultimately, this is always the goal of Chinese medicine – the ability for the body to learn how to heal itself. Unfortunately, as we live our lives we will inevitably fall down, get into a car accident, or sleep in an awkward position causing aches and pains. At this point we have two choices. We can either treat our problems before they get worse, or we can try and ignore them and let them build up into a much bigger issue affecting multiple areas of the body. When an imbalance in your body is more serious, or when you are unsure of the best course of action to treat it always seek the help of your Chinese medicine practitioner. This is why they are there, to guide you along the path toward health and well-being. On a day to day basis though, we don't have to merely suffer through these painful experiences, but instead we should heal our minor traumas with simple techniques like *tui na*. In this way we are truly thriving, not just surviving.

Chapter 6

AN OVERVIEW OF CHINESE HERBAL MEDICINE

As one of the main branches of Chinese medicine, Chinese herbs have also been used for thousands of years to help in the healing of physical and mental disorders. Many people find herbs to be an attractive treatment option because, if they are used skillfully, they are generally free of side effects. Herbal medicine supports and enhances one's overall health.

A Chinese herbalist is more interested in strengthening the foundation of one's health rather than offering symptomatic band-aids, although both can be accomplished with herbal medicine. Ideally however, we use herbal medicine to work from the inside out; it treats the core issues that underlie our symptoms, which will either sooner or later rectify the symptoms themselves. This is in contrast to Western drugs which work from the outside in. They offer immediate symptomatic improvement without directly addressing the deeper cause of the symptoms. While there are certain cases where this is warranted, the long-term use of Western drugs for that are not resolving the underlying issue can be potentially detrimental to one's foundation of health. This is why it is often best to pursue plant-based medicines and nutrition before going the drug route. It is a gentler, life-affirming way to heal yourself.

Chinese herbalists differ from most Western herbalists in that they generally use the herbs in various combinations to make up formulas. Throughout the history of Chinese Herbal Medicine many very successful herbal combinations have been made into formulas that are still used today. Some of these formulas may contain up to 20 different herbs all specifically formulated to correct the underlying imbalance in the specific patient. A talented herbalist will then use these formulas, perhaps slightly modified, to offer a highly specific form of treatment to the unique needs of the patient. Herbs are quite versatile. One formula can have ingredients for treating depression and all of its byproducts such as pain, insomnia, or menstrual problems. When the underlying pattern of disharmony is addressed, all of the symptoms associated with that pattern should improve. In regards to physical health complaints, Chinese herbs can be used for a wide range of conditions including:

- Chronic pain
- Diarrhea
- Constipation
- PMS
- Menstrual cramps
- Weak immunity
- Asthma
- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Type 2 diabetes
- Infertility

When it comes to treating the mind with Chinese herbs, it has long been recognized that there are numerous herbs that offer direct benefits for our emotional and psychological health. Everything that we ingest as food or medicine affects the mind in some form or another. Sometimes, however, it is too subtle to detect. When certain herbs are concentrated and given at a sufficient dosage, there can be tangible effects on one's consciousness.

Chinese herbal formulas that work on the mind can:

- Make you feel psychologically lighter
- Relax and calm your thoughts
- Open your perspective on yourself and life
- Engender patience and calmness
- Boost confidence levels
- Induce more peaceful sleep

Chinese herbal medicine is widely regarded as a wonderful complement to acupuncture treatment. Many practitioners use Chinese herbs as a way to offer continual therapeutic input into the body between acupuncture treatments. By taking herbs on a daily basis, the positive momentum created by acupuncture is enhanced.

Can Chinese herbs be taken with my Western medications?

In many cases, yes. When you visit your practitioner, be sure to mention any medications you are taking and ask them about drug/herb interactions. There are situations where the herbs will antagonize Western medications, but in

most cases herbs are safe to use with medications as long as they are prescribed by a skilled herbalist.

Along with acupuncture and Chinese herbs, Chinese medicine asserts that dietary therapy, exercise, and the healing of our environment also play crucial roles in our overall health and quality of health. In order to thrive, we want every piece of the puzzle to be acknowledged and working for us. Many acupuncturists will be able to help you develop a nutritional plan that reflects your unique constitutional needs. They may even show you various breathing exercises or Qi gong (a meditative form of movement) exercises that will enhance your treatment experience.

Chapter 7

CASE STUDY

The following is a case study that illustrates the differences and similarities between Chinese Medicine and Western medicine. Chinese medicine looks into the physical, mental and emotional levels of an illness in order to diagnose the imbalance at the root. When a problem is treated from the root you are not just treating a few symptoms, but restoring balance to the entire system so all the symptoms are relieved and the body remains healthy.

Jane, a 42 year old female came in suffering from severe fatigue, pain throughout her body, chronic urinary tract infections and digestive weakness. She had seen multiple doctors who, having diagnosed her with Fibromyalgia, gave her medications to treat her symptoms and told her there was not much more they could do.

Her problem originally began with a car accident five years ago. Her health began to steadily worsen after this until she was unable to live the life she wanted and finally decided to seek treatment using alternative means. When she was asked how her stress level was at the time of the accident she said it was very high. Her mother had died that same month and she had generally lived a very fast-paced stressful life with work and her hobbies. Directly after the car accident she mainly experienced a lack of energy and occasional pain in her back. Eventually, she also started to have urinary tract infections. At this time she was given antibiotics for the infections and when they unsuccessfully treated the infection they switch her to another antibiotic. She started this routine of continual antibiotics for the next few years and slowly became resistant to the antibiotics and developed chronic cystitis. It became painful every time she had to go to the bathroom and caused her constant stress in her life. At this point her digestion became worse until she had continual gas, bloating, acid reflux and was unable to eat many of her favorite foods. Jane had always been someone who loved her job and worked a lot, she was constantly on the go and lived a full life. She eventually was so fatigued, unable to sleep well, was in constant pain and was unable to work a full time job. She felt like she never fully recovered from her mom's death and the car accident and only became more and more depressed as her health worsened. She described that she felt she didn't have

the energy to get out of bed and she would lay there and just worry of all the bad things that could be going wrong with her body and life. This worrying could become so severe she would eventually have a panic attack.

This was the point Jane sought help with Chinese medicine. She finally became “tired of being and sick and tired” and wanted to live the life she used to enjoy so much. For the first treatment we did a very simple treatment using acupuncture. During the treatment she fell asleep and woke feeling “more relaxed then she had felt in many years.” Jane was advised to relax the rest of that day and night, and as she was lying down to go to bed that night to try and breathe deeply and slowly into her abdomen. She was to focus on allowing her body to breathe evenly and relaxed and feel each breath throughout her whole body.

When Jane came in the following week she said she was sleeping better and the pain throughout her body felt better. She noticed her urinary pain from the cystitis was slightly improved but still very uncomfortable. Her energy was still very low but she felt less depressed. During this treatment we gave her some more acupuncture and did some very light massage on her main areas of soreness. She also began taking a custom Chinese Herbal Formula to treat the cystitis and give her body the necessary nutrients to build her energy and repair her digestive system. After several more treatments involving both acupuncture and massage, and her taking her herbal formula regularly her cystitis was relieved completely, her pain was reduced her anxiety attacks dissipated and her energy improved to the point she was able to work again. She still noticed if she worked too hard or exercised too much some of her symptoms would increase, so we continued treatment until she felt more consistent relief.

According to Chinese medicine Jane’s imbalance started from the combination of the trauma from the car accident and the stress and grief she was experiencing at the time. Emotions such as stress and grief can impair the ability of Qi to move smoothly throughout the body and when Jane physically damaged her body at the same time it aggravated the problem and became chronic. She was especially affected in the Urinary Bladder meridian, which runs up the back and through the Urinary Bladder organ itself. As Qi became more stuck along this channel it caused her back pain and eventually caused inflammation and pain in the bladder itself. Unfortunately, she was also continually taking antibiotics that over time damaged her Spleen/Stomach Organ System causing her to have digestive

problems and making it harder for her to produce energy from her food. As the lack of energy continued her body began to break down further and toxicity became to accumulate causing more pain, depression and extreme fatigue. Acupuncture points and Chinese herbs were given to remove this toxicity, circulate qi and blood evenly throughout the body and boost the digestive energy of the Spleen/Stomach organ system.

To give you a sense of how acupuncture treats the body the names and functions of the following acupuncture points are given:

Spleen 3: Strengthens the basic ability to receive nourishment from life

Ren 3: The main place where the Qi of the Urinary Bladder gathers. It can cool and calm this organ as well as cool and calm the body emotionally. Classically, used for a feeling a “running piglet” that “rushes up to the throat with such ferocity that the patient feels he is close to death. It attacks and then remits. It is brought about by fear and fight.”(*Essential Questions of the Golden Cabinet* Chapt. 10)

Liv 3: “The Liver governs spreading and draining. When the qi and blood flow harmoniously, the ten thousand diseases will not arise. Once there is constraint, all diseases may arise.” (*Zhu Dan-xi*) This point is used with LI 4 to move qi throughout the body in order to relieve stress and pain.

LI 4: This point has a particularly strong affect on treating pain, especially pain in the upper body and is used commonly with Liv 3 to circulate qi throughout the body. This treatment is based on the rule “without movement of Qi there is pain, with movement there is no pain.”

Du 20: This point is used to awaken the brain and relieve depression. It also raises the overall energy level of the body. It is through the opening of this point that we are better able to absorb the pure energy of heaven, and then send it on its way through our body and into the earth through the soles of our feet.

Using these points and an herbal formula Jane was able to reestablish the correct flow of energy throughout her body thereby fixing her pain. Her digestion improved as her energy improved and the continual pain from her cystitis eventually vanished. She continues to eat a healthy diet, do breathing exercises and yoga for her stress and anxiety and take probiotics to replenish her healthy bacteria. She currently only comes in for occasional treatment of stress and the occasional cold

Chapter 8

THE DOCTOR OF THE FUTURE: A RETURN TO THE LAWS OF NATURE

"The doctor of the future will give no medicine, but will interest his patients in the care of the human body, in diet, and in the cause and prevention of disease."

~Thomas Edison

One of the primary goals of holistic healthcare practitioners such as acupuncturists is educating patients on lifestyle choices so they don't become dependent on Western medications. Western medicine is miraculous in its ability to treat certain kinds of health concerns. Its ability to deal with conditions such as broken bones, life-threatening injuries, and severe infections is outstanding. These **acute** conditions are where traditional Chinese medicine is often limited. (Chinese medicine is very good for some acute conditions such as acute pain and childbirth, but usually works best when its more subtle methods have time to work.)

On the other hand, traditional Chinese medicine is very good at treating **chronic** problems. Whether it's allergies, chronic insomnia, digestive problems, fatigue, menstrual issues, or emotional imbalances, the goal of Chinese medicine is to gently bring your system back to a state of dynamic balance. When this is done skillfully, there are no side effects or risks associated with the treatment.

This is why traditional Chinese medicine is called complementary medicine. It complements Western medicine's strength with acute problems by treating chronic problems that Western medicine can only hide. So when considering what treatment to seek, you may want to determine whether Western medicine will actually help the condition be resolved, or only make it tolerable. While Chinese medicine can not treat every chronic condition, it usually can help.

What's Wrong with Using Pharmaceuticals for Chronic Health Issues?

Most of us think of drugs as safe and effective. We hear about "wonder drugs" and are told such things as "take one and call me in the morning." Often these medications help to control symptoms, but they do have a dark side.

According to a study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA) in 1998, deaths due to legal drugs in hospitals were the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. Notice that this study only covered deaths in hospitals – the very place to be if you're near death. These deaths occurred even with ready access to doctors. Dr. Jay Cohen, in his book *Overdose: The Case Against Drug Companies* explains that this study is actually very conservative: *Because of the especially rigorous methods the researchers applied, even these numbers may not present the full picture. The authors defined serious side effects narrowly, including only clear-cut reactions causing permanent disability, hospitalization, or death. Thus, they excluded side effects that disable people for weeks or months, side effects such as dizziness or sedation that cause automobile accidents or falls and broken limbs, side effects that require emergency interventions, and side effects that prolong hospitalizations or force people to miss work. And the authors didn't even try to count the largest category of all: side effect occurring in outpatients. Overall, they excluded side effects that occur far more often than the ones they included. Despite omitting so many side effects, the JAMA study still recorded numbers reaching epidemic proportions. And, as the authors noted, this side effect epidemic wasn't new: "The incidence has remained stable over the last 30 years."* (p. 3)

The problem is probably worse now, since this book was written in 2001. Since then, drug companies started to advertise extensively on TV. The drugs that are advertised are the newest drugs; by definition they're the least understood and therefore the most dangerous. As a well-known pharmacology textbook notes:

*"51% of approved drugs have adverse side effects not detected prior to approval."*¹

The side effects of new drugs are discovered over time. In fact, the Physician's Desk Reference, which is used by nearly all doctors as a reference to medications, consists mostly of descriptions of drug side effects.

In fact, "All drugs have side effects, and even the safest approved drugs have side effects," according to Dr. Janet Woodcock, the director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research². Even Eli Lilly, founder of the \$58 billion Eli Lilly and Co. pharmaceutical company said:

"A drug without side effects is no drug at all."

Because of these side effects, drugs are often far from safe. Chinese medical theory explains why. In traditional Chinese medicine, health conditions are believed to be due to an imbalance in the body. Modern drugs control symptoms by interrupting biochemical pathways that would otherwise cause pain, discomfort or other symptoms. However, the original imbalance in the body's systems is still there, and just masked by the medications.

Acupuncture and traditional Chinese medicine work by helping bring your body's systems back into balance. When that happens, natural healing mechanisms take over. As Albert Schweitzer, the renowned philosopher and physician said,

"Each patient carries his own doctor inside him ... We are at our best when we give the doctor who resides within each patient a chance to go to work."

There's actually no way that healing can come from anywhere but within the body. A surgeon may make an incision and remove diseased tissue, but without the natural healing ability of the body, there would be no healing. Even acupuncture needles do not heal – they guide the body to correct the underlying imbalance and heal itself.

As current trends are indicating, our future medicine will indeed be one that places the power back in the hands of the patient through effective education and natural healing. In this way, medicine will once again help us to thrive, not just merely survive.

1. Melmon, K.L., Morerelli, H.F., Hoffman, B.B., and Nierenberg, D.W. Melmon and Morrelli's Clinical Pharmacology: Basic Principles in Therapeutics (3rd edition). New York: McGraw-Hill, Inc., 1993.

2. Trial Lawyers Are Taking Aim at the Drug Industry (New York Times) Sun, 18 May 2003

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/05/18/business/18XDRU.html?pagewanted=print&position=top>

Using this natural and effective form of healthcare, it certainly is possible to thrive in our modern world. If you are ready to take charge of your health, call our clinic today and receive a free 15 minute consult to see how we can help you!

Please consult with your medical doctor and your acupuncturist together to determine the best strategy for your specific needs. We are not advocating that you discontinue your current medications, only that you are well informed about their side effects and potential alternative treatment options.

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Resources

www.nccaom.org National Accreditation for Acupuncturists
www.acupuncture.com
www.acupuncturetoday.com

Books

Archetypal Acupuncture by Gary Dolowich, MD
The Web That Has No Weaver by Ted Kaptchuk
Between Heaven and Earth by Harriet Beinfield and Efrem Korngold

About the Author



Nicholas Wismann, MSAOM, LAc. LMT, has always maintained a keen interest in the science of the human body. Whether it was in undergraduate school studying Integrated Physiology at the University of Colorado, or graduate studying Chinese Medicine, he has always been driven to study medicine. After studying and living in China during undergraduate school he became fascinated with Chinese Medicine. Upon returning to the United States he first became a licensed massage therapist and soon after attended Bastyr University, in Seattle, and became a Licensed Acupuncturist.

Nicholas believes strongly in providing medicine to people in a variety of demographics and has served as a medical volunteer in the barrios of San Jose, Costa Rica; worked in a progressive assisted living center in Seattle; studied sustainable medical practices in Cuba; worked in several low-income clinics in the Seattle and Boulder, CO areas; and studied medicine in both Shanghai and the Yunnan Province of China. Nicholas combines the five thousand years of Chinese Medicine's clinical experience with the more recent knowledge of western medicine to provide complementary, holistic treatment. Overall, Nicholas believes a comprehensive treatment should be a collaborative effort between multiple practitioners, and includes all the modalities of Chinese medicine, bodywork, herbs and ultimately education about exercise, nutrition and the necessity for a balanced lifestyle.

Please call Nicholas's clinic, Arapahoe Chiropractic and Acupuncture Center, at 303.221.3600 to schedule an appointment or with any questions you may have.

Nicholas's website is www.wismannmedicine.com