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PHOTO: Laura Breedon



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Dao of Chinese Medicine

Clayton Willoughby, R.Ac.

At our fingertips today we have a near endless wealth of information. For every book lost to purge or accident, there are countless others we can study.

And if there is one book I could recommend to anyone studying or practicing Chinese Medicine it is the Dao of Chinese Medicine: Understanding an Ancient Healing Art by Donald Kendall.

I'd go so far as to say that it should be required reading. Even if you disagree with everything he puts forth in the book at least you'll have been exposed to the ideas inside and the unique perspective that the author provides.

The field of Chinese Medical classics is dominated by translations of the same few books with authors finding more poetic ways of expressing the same text, or obsessing on the best word in English to use for a two thousand year old character.

What we haven't had is an examination of the classics from the perspective of modern science, and that is what this book is. The Dao of Chinese Medicine is essentially the Neijing (and a few other classics) as told through the understanding we currently have of anatomy and physiology. It's less of a word by word translation and more a translation of the ideas into modern medical knowledge - what were they trying to say about the form & function of the body.

Open minds required past this point.

The controversial concept of this book is that acupuncture is a physical medicine with measurable effects on our bodies. When our Lungs get Qi from the air, they're getting oxygen. When Qi travels in the Blood and helps circulate the blood, oxygen is carried in the blood as well as helping to move it via

smooth muscles in the arteries and skeletal muscles in the venous system.

Kendall also suggests that the vessels (aka meridians or channels) are essentially the blood vessels, and to a lesser extent the nervous system. Each vessel as a larger whole includes the tissues and organs, which are supplied by the blood vessels.

This might seem a big slap in the face to standard TCM school teaching and college testing, but if we don't get defensive we can see that these ideas are hardly new.

Our classic texts, including the Huangdi Neijing, Hanshu and Nanjing describe Qi travelling in vessels that while deep inside the body can be measured and sometimes seen. They also describe how cold constricts these vessels and causes pain.

Here are a few key bits of thinking I took from this book:

1. Clarifications of basic theory

Much of my education was memorize first, understand later and for years after starting to practice, my knowledge of why I was using certain points was based more on context and textbooks than genuine understanding.

Going back to my first classes on TCM foundations, I remember a lot of charts; how things related to a five organ system, a six channel system and the Yin & Yang binary. But there wasn't much explanation as to why and so I didn't give them much thought beyond memorizing them.

Kendall exploring the links between theory and function, showing why in some cases dilation of physical structures are sometimes yin responses and in others yang.

2. How did early acupuncturists diagnose?

Early acupuncturists didn't have a unified TCM theory, so diagnosis was often as simple as "Cold

attacking a vessel" which looks incomplete next to a modern diagnosis with 4-5 different patterns (or even more). But if we look at how early practitioners viewed the body a simple diagnosis makes sense. By linking physical structures, Kendall doesn't just list signs & symptoms for disease patterns, he shows why they happen.

Even classic pulse diagnosis, limited to excess or deficiency patterns, is better explained here than anywhere else I've found.

3. How wide is a vessel?

In most acupuncture textbooks vessels are little more than an invisible line with points along the way. There are tiny collaterals and connections as well as internal pathways, but I finished school thinking of the vessels as pretty much just a collection of sets of points.

This is something that came up studying with Dr Richard Tan. There's a lot more body between the vessels than there is on them. I remember reading the muscle vessels in textbooks, but not as part of the curriculum and not on any exam. This book provides clear pictures linking the Jingjin directly to the vessels so they're less of a footnote to the vessels, rather a part of them.

4. The medicine of circulation

From the chest to the hands (artery), back to the torso (vein), to the head (artery), back to the chest again (vein), down the abdomen and legs (artery) and finally back up the leg to the chest. Is that a good description of the circulatory system, or the pathway of the Lung, Large Intestine, Stomach and Spleen vessels?

Chinese Medicine really is the medicine of circulation, the Heart is the Emperor after all, and the health of our body is tied to the health of our circulatory system.

The Huangdi Neijing is the fundamental textbook of Chinese Medicine, and as one teacher put it, any theory can be brought into Chinese Medicine, as long as it agrees with the Neijing. Kendall takes nothing away from the Neijing or the practice of Chinese Medicine, all of the key concepts of yin & yang, Qi & Blood, body fluids, spirit and others

are still there - just framed in the context of modern scientific understanding.

If anything, the Dao of Chinese Medicine shows how well Chinese physicians understood anatomy and physiology thousands of years before we discovered oxygen or nutrition and other vital functions.

To close, do I agree with everything in this book? No. Do I understand everything in this book? Also no. This is a book to be studied and should open doors to further examination of how we practice and how we think about our medicine.

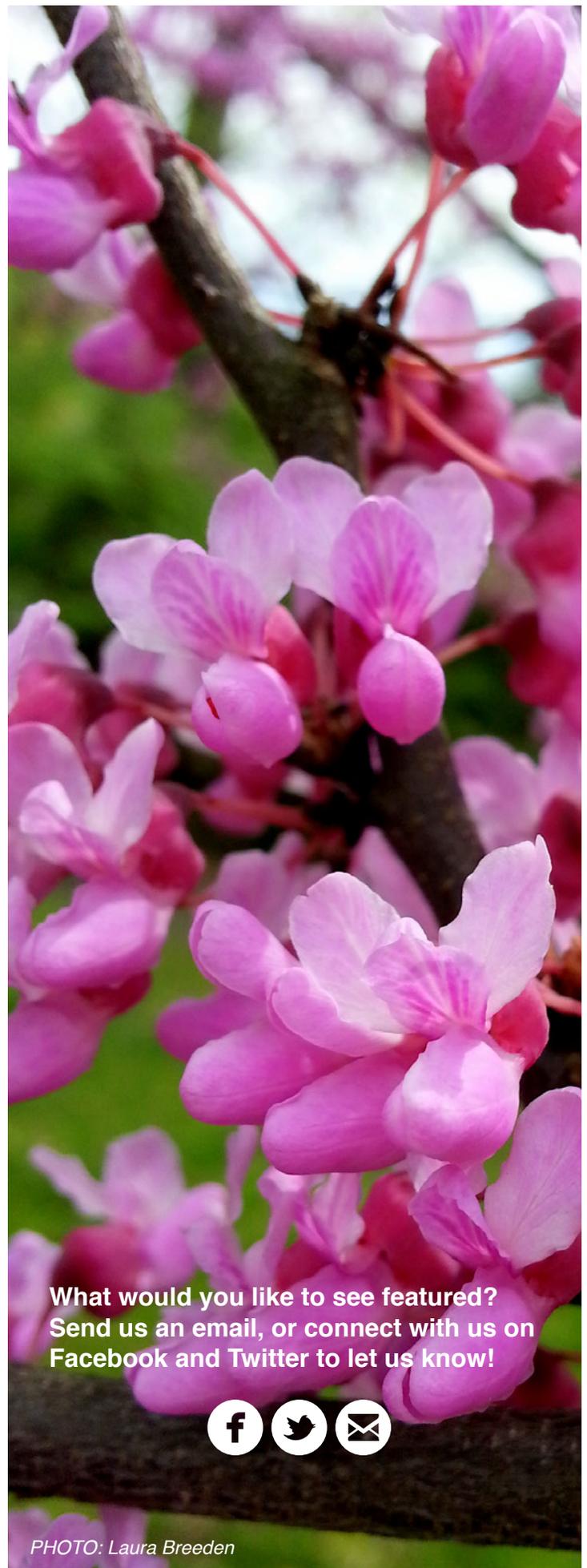
Ideas that are followed and not challenged is the basis of religion, not science. Of the criticisms I've read on this book, I'm not sure if they've read it with an open mind, if at all. The Dao of Chinese Medicine is thoroughly researched and very well presented and again I would recommend it to anyone interested in the practice of Chinese Medicine or the history of medicine.

- Clayton Willoughby

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Clayton Willoughby is a Registered Acupuncturist in British Columbia, Canada, and has been in practice since 2004. In 2009, he founded Nanaimo Acupuncture as Island Community Acupuncture, one of the first Community Acupuncture clinics in Canada.

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PHILOSOPHY AND MEDICAL EDUCATION

“Man is a part of the world, and if we wish to understand his aim and activity, and use and place, then we must first know the purpose of the whole world, so that it will become clear to us what man’s aim is, as well as the fact that man is necessarily a part of the world, in that his aim is necessary for realizing the ultimate purpose of the world” - Al Farabi

Philosophy must not only be reinstated in Chinese medical studies, but must be the very basis of any enlightened curriculum. Until a few decades ago, M.D. physicians and other service-related professionals received a broad liberal arts education, including philosophy. Today’s students in Chinese medical schools need to be immersed in Asian philosophy and culture along with an Asian language (at the very least, medical Chinese or Japanese) in order to understand how the venerable medicine of Asia developed from the world view of these great civilizations. Specifically, yin/yang, five phase theory, and channel theory all developed from the specific cosmology of China that was the basis of the Jin and Han dynasties, and all that followed until the 20th century. This cosmology was based on the Yi

Jing and Confucian classics, and was expressed in Chinese culture, politics, technology and medicine.

It is also helpful to understand how Western philosophy, religion and science developed throughout history. The work of Maimonides, the great Muslim philosophers (Al Farabi, Ibn Sina),

*Aristotle, etc. nurtured
the world view that
predominated in classical
Western sciences and
philosophy.*

Chinese medicine, like Ayurveda, Greco-Arabic medicine (tibb-i-unani), and Tibetan medicine, are 'whole systems' medicines, including longevity/health cultivation, lifestyle, exercise regimens, physical manipulation, dietetics, and internal medicine. The West has quickly adapted acupuncture as a modality, largely because of its great successes in stress reduction, pain relief, and the familiarity of Westerners with surgical techniques (which it resembles, but in a much less invasive manner). However, in Chinese medical texts, internal or herbal medicine is 80% of the professional practice of medicine. This is not to denigrate acupuncture in any fashion, it is essential and especially important in the high-stress 21st century, but without its essential theory as outlined in the Su Wen and Ling Shu, it is reduced to a technique, watered down and reduced in its potential effectiveness.¹

"Full strength" Chinese medicine can reveal to us in many cases the origins of human illness, and it can view the progression of disease states from possible origins. Chinese medicine as presented in the Han dynasty (and later) medical classics can potentially be a guiding light for the future development of world medicine; for example, see the new frontiers of genomics and systems biology/medicine as modern developments of what traditional cultures always practiced as systems sciences applied to medicine.²

To move away from the philosophical foundations of Chinese medicine, to water it down to be more 'appealing' to Westerners is a great disservice to the public. And the first step in reestablishing its historical grandeur is to move away from an education based on data and technique rather than deep understanding of theory.

*As the physician thinks, so
he/she practices.*

By immersing oneself in the Han dynasty worldview

of synchronicity, one begins to view one's patients as microcosmic expressions of the grand order of nature. From this perspective, illness is seen as an aberration of the laws of nature, and the role of the physician is to be as much a teacher as much an applier of technique, in treating the body/mind in such a manner to restore dynamic equilibrium.

*The acupuncture and
moxabustion techniques,
herbal prescriptions and
other clinical strategies
are all expressions of
sophisticated medical
philosophy applied to
the problems of the day,
but are still applicable to
modern conditions and
diseases. Local conditions
may change, but timeless
principles do not.*

- Z'ev Rosenberg

¹ See chapter on acupuncture, where I discuss how by not understand source principles outlined in such texts as the Su Wen, Ling Shu, Jia Yi Jing and Nan Jing, the acupuncture practiced today suffers from the limitations of empiricism. In other words, using a specific point for a symptom, techniques for pain or musculoskeletal disorders. The full potential of acupuncture/moxabustion has not been realized in our present ear, and the multiple models used to practice it from microsystems (ear, abdominal, hand) to biomedical/neurological approaches which are far removed from their original understanding.

² See Institute of Systems Biology, <http://www.systems-biology.org/>

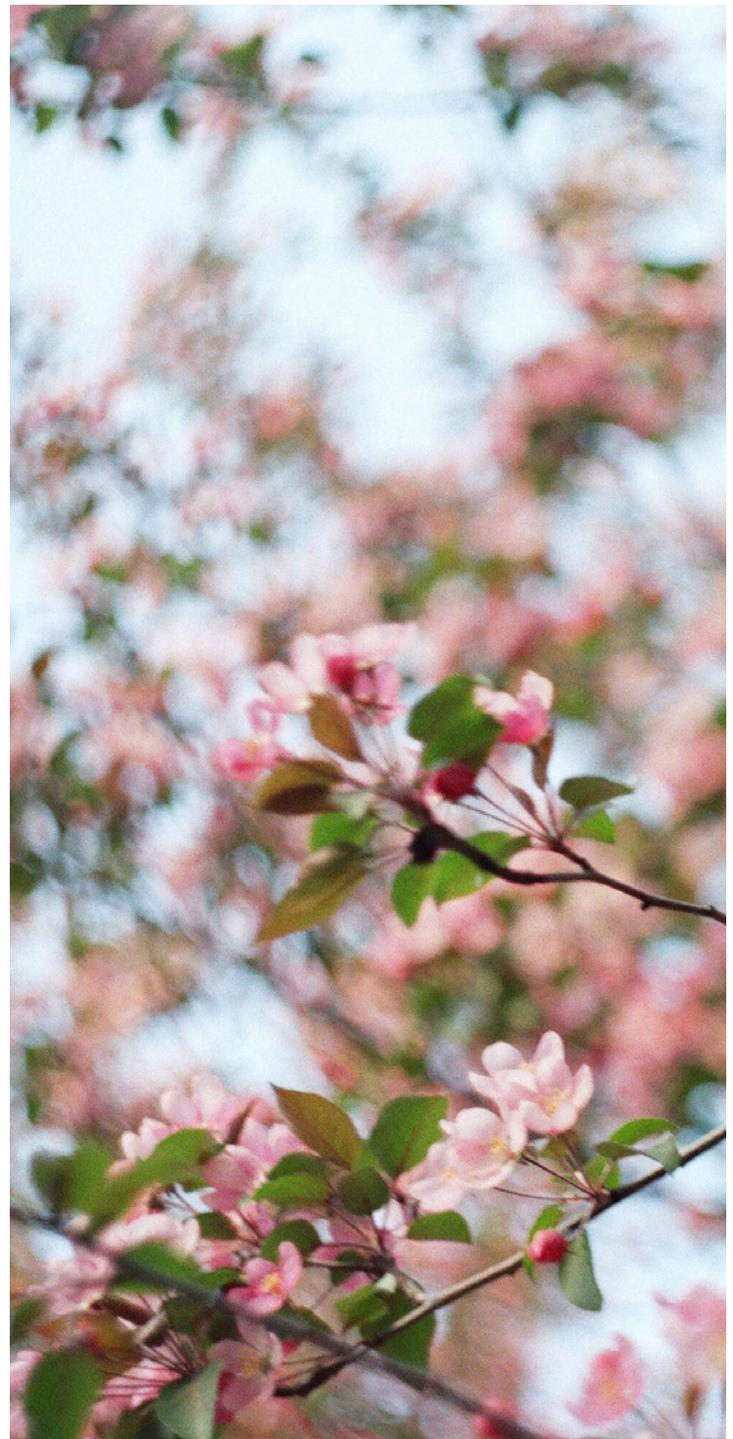




ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Z'ev Rosenberg, L. Ac., is recognized as one of the first generation of practitioners of traditional Chinese medicine in America. Before opening his practice in acupuncture and herbal medicine in 1983, he was a shiatsu therapist and macrobiotic counselor since 1975 in Denver, Colorado and Santa Fe, New Mexico. He was one of the initiators of an acupuncture licensing law in Colorado, spearheading a drive as President of the Acupuncture Association of Colorado from 1984 to 1988. As well as being a professor/ chair emeritus at Pacific College of Oriental Medicine, where he taught for twenty-three years, he has lectured widely around the United States, and has written many articles published in all of the professional English-language journals of the Oriental Medical profession. Presently, he is director of the Alembics Institute, an advisory board member at the University of California San Diego Integrative Health Center, and a senior researcher the Xinglin Institute, a research organization in classical Chinese Medicine. He is also a professor at the Academy of Chinese Health Sciences in Oakland, Ca., in their doctorate program, as well as at Five Branches Institute, San Jose, Ca.

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The Brilliance of Sheng Hua Tang for Postpartum Health

Dr. Maryam Mahanian, Dr. TCM

Sheng Hua Tang is an excellent Chinese herbal formula given to almost all women immediately following childbirth in China and Taiwan. It is a popular postpartum herbal formula and one that I love to use for patients in my clinical practice.

Sheng Hua Tang was developed by the famous gynecologist Fu Qing Zhu who came from seven generations of gynecologists before him. Fu Qing Zhu's book on Gynecology (Fu Qing Zhu Fu Ke) is an excellent reference book I have in my clinic.

COMMON PROBLEMS IN THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD:

Commonly seen postpartum problems include: insufficient breast milk; depression; abdominal pain; lochia which does not descend or cease; dizziness; fever and constipation. In my clinical practice, the most common postpartum problems that I treat include insufficient breast milk and postpartum depression.

THE CAUSES OF PROBLEMS IN THE POSTPARTUM PERIOD:

Pregnancy and childbirth are very taxing on a woman's body. It depletes the mother of her Qi (energy) and Blood, which leads to stagnation of Blood.

There are three main causes for problems in the postpartum time:

1. Detriment and damage of Chong and Ren, excessive loss of blood, and loss of blood damaging fluids
2. Cold congelation, Qi stagnation, and Blood stagnation
3. External pathogen invasion, poor diet, or bedroom taxation

WHAT MAKES SHENG HUA TANG SO APPROPRIATE FOR POSTPARTUM HEALTH?

Sheng Hua Tang means 'Generate and Transform Decoction' and also known as 'Giving Birth Decoction'. Sheng Hua Tang 'generates and transforms' means that it nourishes and moves the Blood. When you get rid of old Blood in order to generate new Blood, this results in recovery of the whole body.

Sharon Weizenbaum, a highly respected teacher and Doctor of Chinese medicine, who has used Sheng Hua Tang "more times than she can count" says "the formula essentially ensures that the uterus is clear, clean and warm after birth."

Sheng Hua Tang's action in moving and warming Blood benefits uterus involution (contracting the uterus to return it to its normal state), discharge

of lochia (vaginal discharge of blood, mucus and uterine tissue which occurs for 4 to 6 weeks following childbirth), warming the uterus, dispelling pain and generating Blood. It is a great formula to also strengthen the immunity of the mother.

Sheng Hua Tang can also be given to women suffering from post miscarriage, abortion, dilation & curettage (D&C) or after heavy bleeding.

The ingredients of this incredible formula are listed below but please keep in mind that TCM doctors often modify it customizing it to the individual. This allows for even greater effectiveness.

INGREDIENTS:

- Dang Gui (angelica) 24gm
- Chuan Xiong (ligusticum) 9gm
- Tao Ren (prunus) 6-9 gm
- Pao Jiang (zingiber) 1.5gm
- Zhi Gan Cao (glycyrrhiza) 1.5gm

Traditionally, the decoction is prepared with equal parts yellow wine and young boy's urine (under 12 years of age). While all the herbs in the formula are warming, boy's urine is actually nourishing to the yin, has a cooling nature and directs fire downward. In present day, you obviously would not use urine and can substitute it with Xuan Shen or Mai Men Dong for example. The reason for preparing the decoction with wine is to enhance the active and moving nature of the formula. In present day, adding wine is optional.

A couple of interesting notes on this formula is that the dosage of Dang Gui is quite high.

This shows that in this situation, tonifying the Blood is highly important and more necessary than moving the Blood. "If one desires to unblock, it is first necessary to make full" is an important adage in Chinese medicine.

Also, Pao Jiang is used instead of Sheng Jiang or Gan Jiang as Pao Jiang has a greater warming effect and enters the Blood aspect.

At the same time that Sheng Hua Tang is so often used for almost all women immediately following childbirth, it is advised to not be used unless there is Cold, Blood stagnation and Blood deficiency present; otherwise you can run the risk of causing Yin deficiency.

It is recommended that this formula is started two days postpartum and taken continuously for one week. Following Sheng Hua Tang, I often switch to a modified Ba Zhen Tang unless their pattern at that time demands a different formula. Pattern differentiation is of the utmost importance.

I take the time to educate my postpartum patients on proper nutrition and advise that Sheng Hua Tang can be taken as a tea and can even be added to nourishing soups and bone broths. The patients are generally very compliant and see positive results.

In conjunction with Sheng Hua Tang, I give my postpartum patients acupuncture at least once per week following childbirth for several weeks. This will help move and nourish the Blood of the mother, bring in breast milk (increasing let down and supply of breast milk), support the mother's emotions and support physical healing.

I recently saw a 28 year old woman one month postpartum who was referred to me by her midwife. She had bleeding and upon ultrasound, it was confirmed that there was retained product in her uterus. She had moderate breast milk, bright red blood with small clots, fatigue, cold hands and body, puffy purplish tongue with teethmarks and a bowstring pulse. There was evidence of cold, blood deficiency and blood stasis with underlying spleen and kidney deficiency so I saw it appropriate to use

a modified Sheng Hua Tang. I added Wang Bu Liu Xing, Gui Zhi, Niu Xi, and Che Qian Zi. I also gave her acupuncture using Liver 3, Spleen 6, Stomach 36, Ren 4, Ren 6, Ren 12, Stomach 28, Large Intestine 4, Du 20 and Yintang with Infrared heat on her abdomen. She came back 7 days later with no more bleeding or discomfort and adequate breast milk. After administering two more weekly treatments, I decided that she had a successful outcome and to discontinue treatment. She responded very well to the treatment plan thanks to this remarkable formula.

- Maryam Mahanian

Chinese Herbal Medicine Formulas and Strategies by Dan Bensky & Randall Barolet

A Handbook of Traditional Chinese Gynecology - compiled by Zhejiang College of Traditional Chinese Gynecology

Topics in Chinese Medicine Blog/Whitepine Institute : Postpartum use of Sheng Hua Tang by Sharon Weizenbaum



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Dr. Maryam Mahanian is a registered doctor of TCM. Her private practice in North Vancouver BC focuses on infertility, pregnancy, women's health, skin disorders, and cosmetic acupuncture. When she is not seeing patients, she is trying to keep up with her energetic two children.

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A Western Girl, in an Eastern World

Shanie Rechner, recent Dr. TCM Program Graduate

PHOTO: Laura Breeden

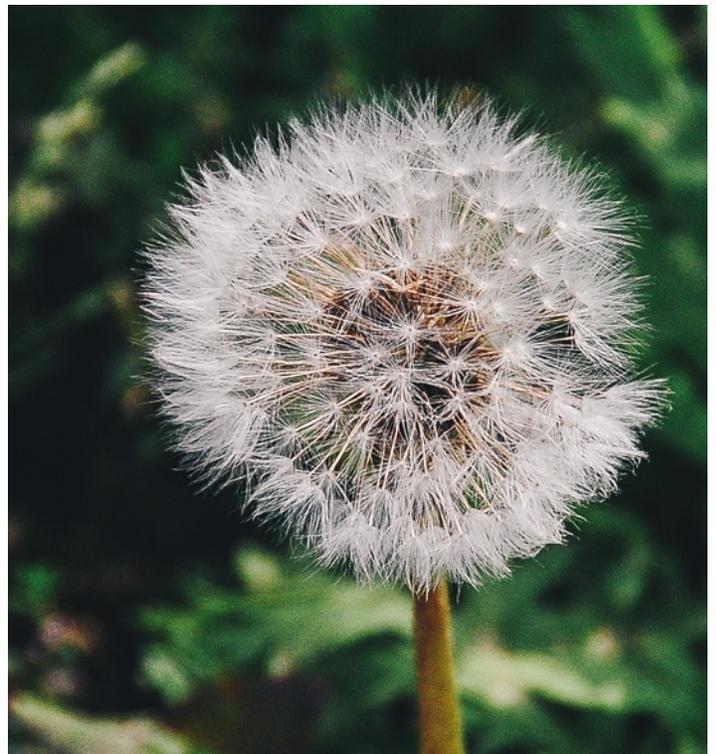
What are you studying in post secondary?" I cannot tell you how often I've been asked this question over the last 7 years of my studies. Yet, never once did I become tired of the reaction my response would elicit. "Traditional Chinese Medicine!" I would reply enthusiastically.

After my follow up explanation of what this entailed, the initial look of confusion would fade from their face and, almost inevitably, some form of the query "What lead you to study THAT?" would follow. In my opinion what they were really asking was; How did a western born, Caucasian, 20 year old female from a conservative oilfield province, who had no ties to Chinese culture whatsoever, end up in Traditional Chinese medicine school? I used to rattle off some superficial anecdote about a sports injury that was poorly treated by western medicine and my search for something more well -rounded landed me in Chinese medicine school. While I can't entirely dismiss that experience from playing a role in my discovery of TCM, it has become much more apparent to me over the course of my education that it was always about something much deeper; the resonance of shared philosophical beliefs.

For as long as I can remember nature has always held a great importance in my life and nature holds that same focus in TCM (Traditional Chinese medicine). "From ancient times it has been recognized that there is an intimate relationship between the activity and life of human beings and their natural environment." (Ni 8) This phenomenon resonates with me deeply as I grew up playing outside and spending weekends camping in the woods. The natural world quickly became a key lifestyle piece for me and to this day I realize, now more than ever,

it is paramount to my overall wellness. With theories like the 5 Elements (Ni 16) and many discussions on the seasons (Ni Chapter 2) forming the framework for Chinese medicine, it's no wonder that a self-proclaimed naturalist type , would find herself fascinated with the inner workings of TCM. "... they lived in accordance with the rhythmic patterns of the seasons...they...lived plainly" (Ni 4).

Just as TCM reflects my value for the human-nature relationship, it also embodies my value of holism. Holism as a concept was formally introduced to me 7 years ago through my studies and with that introduction I experienced a reverse realization; how has there ever been any other way to look at one's life other than as a whole? What I considered to be common sense was being taught as though the idea of mind, body, and spirit was some new found wisdom. The fact that this is ancient wisdom, and that TCM has holism as one of its central tenets, is found in this passage from the Neijing "Health and well-being can be achieved only by remaining centered with one's spirit, guarding against squandering one's energy, maintaining the constant flow of one's qi and blood, adapting to the changing seasonal and yearly macrocosmic influences, and nourishing one's self preventively." (Ni 265) An author of a Suwen translation further exhibits this in his summary of the Neijing when he states "discussed in a ... context that says life is not fragmented, as in the model provided by modern science, but rather all the pieces make up an interconnected whole."(Ni Back cover)



My shared ideology with TCM with respect to energetics was the final draw to the medicine. As quantum physics dictates, everything in our universe is energy.

When we go down to a sub-atomic level we do not find matter, but instead, pure energy. Chinese medicine is an entire system built around working with that invisible, but prominent piece of our make up. Gui Yu Qu declares this when he explains to Huang Di "There are 365 energy points in the human body that are in concert with the philosophy with the human being as a microcosm of the macrocosmic universe"(Ni 36) Later on, in chapter 66 - Energy Almanac, it's mentioned that, "The universe potentiates change, which allows all things to manifest and prosper with unlimited energy." (Ni 235)

Parallels with my way of life and "The Way" of life made a career in TCM for this westerner a no brainer. I chose TCM because it is so much more than the linear idea of illness and medicine. It is a bigger-picture way of living. It is the dynamic between a human and their environment, a mind-body-soul

connection and the acknowledgement and action of energy as the building blocks for life. So the next time someone considers my contradictory demographic to Chinese medicine and asks me "How did you end up studying THAT?" I'll simply respond with "Philosophy."

- *Shanie Rechner*

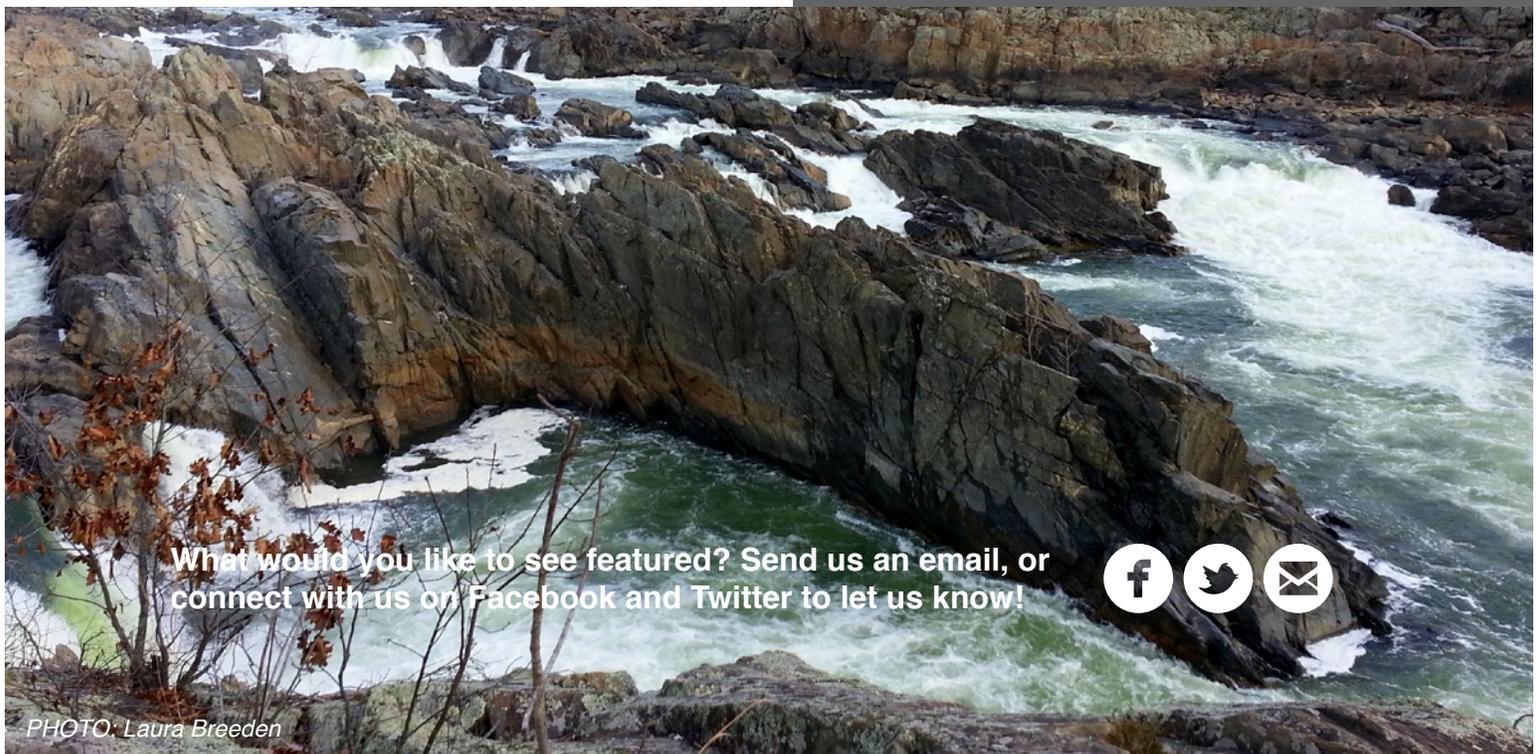
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Shanie Rechner is a recent Dr.TCM graduate of the International College of Traditional Chinese Medicine in Vancouver, Canada, and MRM's Social Media Manager.

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PHOTO: Laura Breeden



Time to Flip the Script

Christine Lang, R.TCM.P

PHOTO: Christine Lang

Is there anything more celebrated in Canada than the transition from winter to spring? Well, except for hockey and the Stanley Cup that is.

Neighbours we haven't seen in months start peeking out of their homes, robins and other birds return to wake us earlier than we'd like each morning and plants begin to reach for the warmth of the sun. Our dramatic, clearly delineated seasons in this country assist us with learning about patterns of cyclical change yet many are naïve to the valuable life lessons that nature so readily shares.

Nature doesn't think about what to do or when to do it. It just does it. Like tulips that know when to start growing up and out through the soil, if we align ourselves with the overall energetic potential and thrust of not just spring but any season, we can grow toward achieving our true, innate purpose in life. It's much easier to go with the flow than trying to swim upstream. If you don't believe me, or the ancient Chinese sages, watch the annual struggle of the salmon.

I would be amiss to exclude wind in any discussion of the spring season, as it is prevalent this time of year. And while many Canadians are eager to quickly shed the clothing layers of winter, it is wise to remain covered until temperatures are more moderate.

The study of Chinese medicine teaches that wind is the cause of 100 diseases and is viewed as the vehicle that facilitates entry of other pathogens such as cold or damp into the body. I challenge those that deny weather can aggravate or impact certain conditions within the body such as arthritis or migraines to explain why we shiver when it's cold outside.

During spring months, wind can negatively impact the upper and outer aspects of the body including the head, skin or sense organs as Yang begins to rise and expand with increasing temperatures.

In acute, exteriorly contracted conditions, this may manifest as a cold, flu virus or rash, which can not only come and go quickly but move around, just like wind. Chronic, interiorly engendered conditions such as migraines, tremors or spasms and seizures can

also become more frequent at this time of year.

In China, many follow the way of the Tao Teh Ching or book of change. Often referred to simply as the I Ching, it is an ancient text about Chinese philosophies. The tome, which has 81 verses is said to have been written by Lao Tzu around 600BC but there are countless English translations for those like myself, who are unable to read Chinese character. An interesting translation and introduction for those new to the Tao is 'Change your Thoughts, Change your Life' by the late Dr. Wayne Dyer. Specifically I find his translation of the 8th verse timely not only for the changing of seasons, but the tense political and social climate we find ourselves in today. Dr. Dyer has titled this verse 'Living in the Flow':

***The supreme good is like water,
which nourishes all things without trying to.
It flows to low places loathed by all men.
Therefore, it is like the Tao.***

***Live in accordance with the nature of things.
In dwelling, be close to the land.
In meditation, go deep in the heart.
In dealing with others, be gentle and kind.
Stand by your word.
Govern with equity.
Be timely in choosing the right moment.***

***One who lives in accordance with nature
does not go against the way of things.
He moves in harmony with the present moment,
always knowing the truth of just what to do.***

I don't know about you but the collective stress levels of most are palpable to me. In addition to the fast paced, over indulgent lifestyles many lead, we have continued humanitarian crises around the world in countries like Syria, drought causing starvation throughout Africa and closer to home, the unstable political climate in the United States. There's a great deal of aggressive, anxious energy building attributed to the liver or wood element according to the five element theory which can be magnified

with the natural growth of the spring season. As such, utilizing various techniques to counterbalance this potentially disruptive, excessive liver energy is well advised. This can ensure it does not lash out or attack the digestive organs of the earth element, namely the spleen and stomach.

Further, since the liver is said to control tendons, why not get out and move! Stretching, tai chi or yoga especially when done in nature, can help keep your joints and tendons well lubricated and ready for action come summer, while meditation can help calm the mind. Better yet, why not use the energy of change to your advantage!

As we charge forward into the season of growth and realization during these unsettled times, flip the script. Start a new project around the house or your community.

Find a creative outlet like painting, gardening or music. Keep your Qi moving and grooving rather than stale and stagnant.

I flipped that script several weeks ago with a recent solo trip to San Jose del Cabo in Baja Sur, Mexico, which re-ignited my passion and love for Mexican cuisine. With Cinco de Mayo and warmer weather just around the corner, it's time to get back to creating in my kitchen. Since I hope to have lots of leftovers after sharing some of my favourite Mexican



PHOTO: Christine Lang

dishes like pork carnitas with friends, why not make them do double duty? And what better way to align with the growing Yang energies of spring than a post party brunch of pulled pork eggs Benedict over a sweet potato biscuit!

According to the Inner Classic or Huang Di Nei Jing, 'when the Liver suffers restlessness, use sweetness to moderate it'. Chicken eggs in general are neutral and sweet. They tonify blood and Yin as well as lubricating dryness, which if you're like me after the long, cold and oh so dry winter months is welcome. According to www.acupuncture.com, egg whites are cool and can lubricate the Lungs, detoxify as well as benefiting the throat while cooling hot sensations. The yolks on the other hand are neutral and have an affinity for the heart and kidneys.

Sweet potatoes, being orange in colour, can support and strengthen the spleen of the earth element to ensure the digestive core can withstand any insult that may come from the liver/wood. Dr. Henry Lu notes that pork is be neutral, sweet and salty and has an influence on the spleen, stomach and kidneys.

The butter in the hollandaise sauce provides a nice balance to the other neutral to cool ingredients in this meal, as it is warm and sweet, can tonify Yang and blood as well as promoting blood circulation. Lightly toasting the biscuit halves before piling on the pulled pork, perfectly poached egg and easy blender hollandaise sauce will ensure they don't get too soggy. Although around me this meal wouldn't be around long enough to get soggy. A side of simple mixed greens, like romaine and/or dandelion if you can find them, balances out the sweet, richness of this meal. The greens also support the health of the liver, who so appreciates that leafy goodness.

It's not just humans that are feeling the tension. Mother nature is stressed as evidenced by the aforementioned droughts, melting polar ice caps and dramatic weather occurrences. She needs as much love and attention as our spleen and stomach to have any chance of withstanding the brutal attacks of the collective human race. Get outside. Plant a tree or wild flowers to help the bees. We need to nurture not just our internal environments for long term health and wellness but the external environment as well. As Deepak Chopra so eloquently states, 'No matter how much it gets abused, the body can restore balance. The first rule is to stop interfering with nature'.

- Christine Lang

Sweet Potato Biscuits

Recipe from Paula Deen's Southern Cooking Bible By Paula Deen With Melissa Clark. Copyright (c) 2011

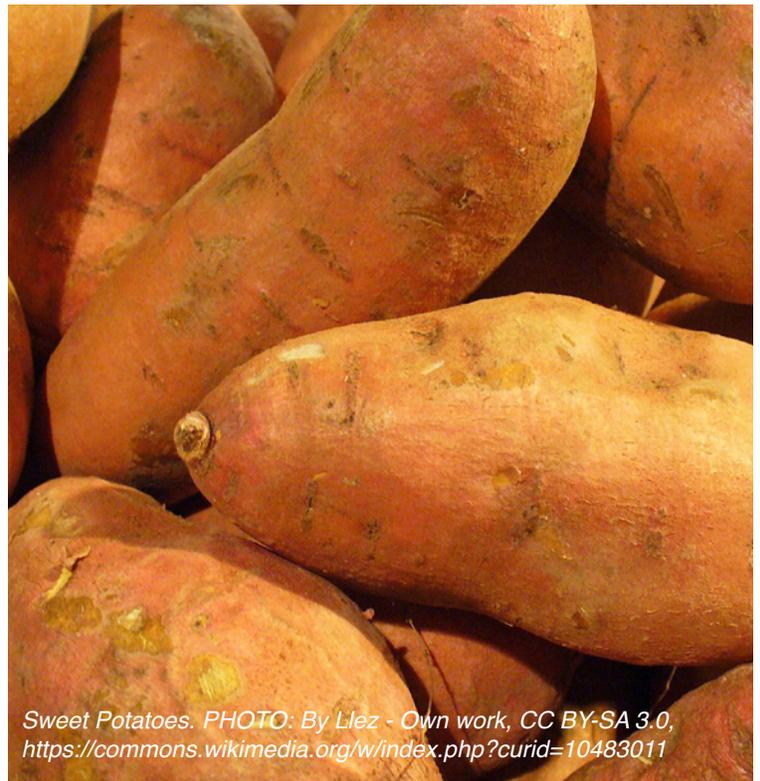
Ingredients

- 3/4 cup cooked mashed sweet potato (about 1 large sweet potato)
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup whole milk, as needed
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons cold unsalted butter, cut into small bits

Preparation

1. Place a rack in the center of the oven and preheat to 425 degrees F. Grease a baking sheet (with butter, oil or cooking spray).
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the sweet potato and 1/3 cup milk. Set aside.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut in the butter with your hands, a pastry blender or two knives until the mixture resembles coarse meal. Add the sweet potato mixture and fold gently to combine. Add the remaining milk a little at a time until all the flour is moistened. The amount of milk you will need will depend on the moisture of the sweet potato.

4. Sprinkle a small handful of flour on a work surface. Turn the dough out onto the surface and knead lightly 2 to 3 times with the palm of your hand until the mixture comes together. Pat the dough out into a 1/2-inch-thick round.
5. Using a 2 1/2-inch-round biscuit cutter, cut the dough into biscuits. Gently reroll the scraps and cut out more biscuits. Place the biscuits on the prepared baking sheet and bake until light golden brown and firm to the touch, 12 to 14 minutes. Serve these fluffy biscuits warm or at room temperature.



Sweet Potatoes. PHOTO: By Llez - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=10483011>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Christine Lang is a Registered Acupuncturist and TCM Practitioner in Barrie, ON a rapidly growing city just north of Toronto, Ontario that's enjoyed by outdoor enthusiasts. A self professed cookbook addict, she enjoys nothing more than sharing her love of healthy food with friends and family. Christine advocates spending time not only preparing your food but savouring the nourishment you are providing your body. With an undergraduate degree in Honours Kinesiology from the University of Waterloo, Christine's passion for health and wellness has always been paramount in not only her life but is shared with her friends, family and patients.

Pork Carnitas à la Instant Pot

by Jennifer Sierra-Quick on allrecipes.com

Ingredients

- 1 (6 pound) pork butt roast
- 1 1/2 tablespoons salt
- 1 tablespoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, or more to taste
- 1 cup orange juice
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, diced, or more to taste

Preparation

1. Trim excess fat from pork butt; cut pork into 2-inch cubes and transfer to a bowl.
2. Combine salt, oregano, cumin, black pepper, chili powder, and paprika together in a bowl. Rub pork cubes with spice mixture.
3. Coat seasoned pork cubes lightly in olive oil; place in pressure cooker. Cover pork cubes with orange juice, onion, and garlic.
4. Place lid on pressure cooker and lock; bring to full pressure over medium heat until pork is no longer pink in the center, about 60 minutes. Let pressure come down naturally, about 15 minutes.
5. Remove pork from pressure cooker and shred.



Cumin Seeds. PHOTO: By Sanjay Acharya - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=1605537>

Blender Hollandaise Sauce

By chellebelle on allrecipes.com

Ingredients

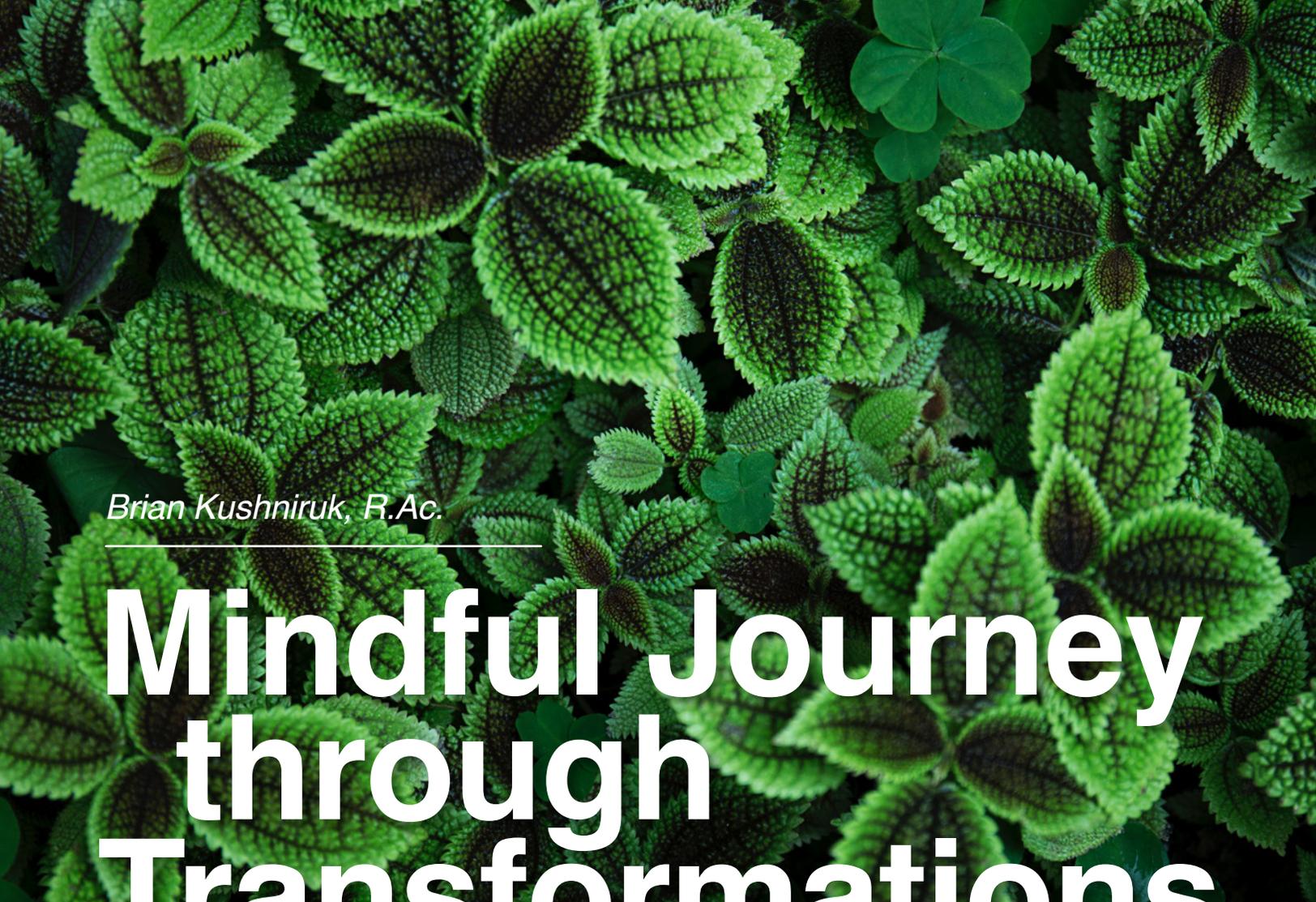
- 3 egg yolks
- 1/4 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 dash hot pepper sauce (e.g. Tabasco™)
- 1/2 cup butter

Preparation

1. In the container of a blender, combine the egg yolks, mustard, lemon juice and hot pepper sauce.
2. Cover, and blend for about 5 seconds.
3. Place the butter in a glass-measuring cup.
4. Heat butter in the microwave for about 1 minute, or until completely melted and hot.
5. Set the blender on high speed, and pour the butter into the egg yolk mixture in a thin stream. It should thicken almost immediately.
6. Keep the sauce warm until serving by placing the blender container in a pan of hot tap water.



Lemon. PHOTO: By Kiyochan50 - Own work (□□□□), CC BY 3.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=3542384>



Brian Kushniruk, R.Ac.

Mindful Journey through Transformations

Last year I spoke at a conference about my journey related to my “Professional and Personal Transformations”.

In preparation for this talk, I looked at the path that I travelled leading to the present and was surprised to see clear patterns concerning the role that mindfulness played along way and was fascinated as to how those patterns related to TCM. Let me share two examples of my experiences.

With one of my careers as a graphic designer, the first step was normally to meet with the client to find out what the client needed. I might discover that they wanted a logo etc. but I would also find out what market that client was targeting and also find out the energy and message that the client wanted to get across to that market. If they were a financial institution, the logo would need to have a different look and feel than if they were selling children's products. From there, I would draw upon my training as a designer and as a result, come up with a logo that reflected my style and that also resonated with the spirit and intention of the client. The logo would be the end result of a transformative process that involved my mindfulness of the clients needs and my study and practice of design. If I was not “mindful” of my clients "state", I might have designed a very beautiful image that was not very effective as it didn't meet the requirements of the client.

With one of my passions of African drumming, an important step in being able to play music with others was to be able to “hear” the music around me. Ideally, whether I was drumming with one or twenty other drummers, it was important to be able to focus in on the rhythm that each drummer was playing as the song progressed. From there, I would draw upon the experiences I gained through learning from great drumming teachers and as a result would be able to play a part that reflected my nature and that was in harmony with the other drummers around me. The new music that I was now apart of, was the end result of a transformative process that involved my mindfulness of the music around me and my study and practice of the drum. If I was not “mindful” of the “state” of the sound landscape around me, I might play a very nice rhythm that sounded out of place as it didn't fit the environment it was being played in.

THE BOOK OF TRANSFORMATIONS

Traditional Chinese Medicine is said to have emerged from the underlying philosophy of the “I Ching” or “Yi Jing” (which some translate to “The Book of Changes” or “The Book of Transformations”). This book outlines 64 “states” and gives guidance as to how to transform gracefully from one state to another in the progression of life. When working with the Yi Jing, it could be said that the basic first step is to become aware or “mindful” of the state that we find ourselves in. It could be a state where the energy in our life promotes new growth (where we might train for a new job or learn a new skill), it could be a state that promotes turning inwards (where we might take time for quiet reflection and meditation), etc. Once we know where we are, the Yi Jing then gives some clear guidance as to what would be the best action to take. It also tells you what state you will transform into should you take advice (and will also tell you the new state you will end up in the event you decide to take a different step forward).

When we look at the influence that the Yi Jing has on TCM, we not only see the cycle of the 64 states, but we also see transformation in the cycles of the day, seasons, etc. Here we learn to understand or be “mindful” of the the energy of a particular stage of the cycle that we are in and learn what to do at that time in order to best foster our journey as we transform into the next stage of the cycle.

THE SEASON OF SPRING

In the spring we are in the state of renewal where we see new life all around. It is a time to plant seeds and start new projects. We normally see the spring energy most dominant in the early part of our lives where we are growing and learning and freshly experiencing life.

In looking at my life, I was aware of how many times I found myself studying new careers of teaching, graphic design and TCM, while also being aware of time spent learning and practicing photography, drumming, martial arts, meditation, cycling, etc. I reflect that I was afforded the opportunity to be aware of both my unique spirit and the state of spring energy that was present in my life. I was able to explore my interests, attractions, goals and priorities and then was able to learn and practice vocations and hobbies that allowed me to express those aspects in my life.

FOSTERING TRANSFORMATION IN OUR LIVES

Life in the yin and yang of the Tai Ji world is a life of constant transformation. When we begin to become stagnant, we are not in harmony with the universe and become unhealthy. When we have complete lack of movement we have death.

As I look back, the first step I found to be the most useful in facilitating meaningful transformation in my life was to be "mindful" of whatever “state” I happened to be in. By “mindfulness” I am meaning simply to have an awareness of how “things” are in the moment.

I could also say mindfulness is to be aware of what kind of energy is manifest in a particular moment of life and to be aware of how that energy is flowing. Mindfulness here is not about pretending

or visualizing that we are feeling or experiencing something that we are not, and is not about trying to change the present situation into something that it is presently not.

In meditation, we see mindfulness as being aware of how we are breathing, where we have pain when we are sitting, where our mind wanders when we are quiet, etc. The opposite of mindfulness here would be to force our breath in some way, to actively try to avoid awareness of pain for some reason or to try to control our thoughts in some way. In pursuit of a career, this could be experienced as allowing ourselves to be aware of what we like to do, what we feel drawn to do and what our dominant needs are.

The opposite of mindfulness here would be to allow ourselves to be blown in the wind by being overly concerned with what others think we should do, what others value as being important, by not allowing for real self discovery, etc. In health care, we see this as being aware of how we are feeling mentally and physically and possibly allowing good health practitioners into our lives allowing for deeper exploration into the state of our health.

The opposite of mindfulness here would be to not allow for real reflection in terms of our health condition and to not allow for awareness of what sort of situations we find yourself in health wise (leading

to delusion or at the very least ignorance in terms of the awareness of your state of health).

Again looking back, when I was mindful of the state I was in, it become possible to take actions that where harmonious with that situation, allowing for graceful transformation to the next state. Knowing the proper actions needed for a particular state is of course another step in the process. In the spring season of growth, it would usually involve much time and effort dedicated to study and practice.

WORKING WITH CLIENTS AND FACILITATING TRANSFORMATION

As TCM doctors or practitioners, we have the opportunity to facilitate transformation in the lives of our patients. We of course, have already spent mindful time in the spring state discovering our passion for TCM and our desire to help people. We have also spent many hours studying various theories and techniques of TCM allowing us to diagnose and treat our patients.

With that, I find that the most important next step in our process of treating our client is to be mindful of the state that our patient is in, allowing us to have our treatment be in line with that state. Given the culture we live in and the primary style of medicine



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In 2002 after completing his studies in Traditional Chinese Medicine, Brian began a career in acupuncture working with Vancouver Coastal Health, primarily treating patients dealing with addictions and mental health issues. Brian is a Registered Acupuncturist and a Registered NADA Trainer, living in North Vancouver, BC.

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practiced here, I believe that although we are taught to take a TCM based step by step analysis of our patients “state” of health, we habitually fall back into deeply rooted western modes of approaching healing and transformation. I was profoundly struck by Dr. Janice Walton-Hadlock’s description in her book titled “Tracking the Dragon”, of how some therapists “push” on patient’s channel Qi. Walton-Hadlock teaches her students to “feel” the Qi of the patient, instead of “forcing their own Qi onto patients” or trying to “influence the patient’s channel Qi”. I find that this resonates very much with my experience of facilitating deep and meaningful transformation. In this perspective, healing is not something that “I do to my patient”, it is more accurately something that I facilitate in the presence of my patients.

In such a short article, I don’t want to sound like I am oversimplifying a very comprehensive topic, but as facilitators of transformation, ideally our mindful presence acts somewhat like a light, that simply by it’s presence, allows our patient to also become more mindful of the “state” that they are in.

Mindfulness here means that we “feel” the patient instead of trying to “influence” the patient.

I believe that our awareness of our patient's “state” naturally deepens our clients awareness of that state, providing an environment of healing which the patient more fully participates in, allowing for a deeper transformation to occur. With this environment established, we bring our chosen methods of treatment to our patient, where we participate together in the process of transformative healing. If we are not “mindful” of our clients "state", we might perform a seemingly wonderful treatment that ends up not being as effective as it could be as it didn't meet the real need of the client. As TCM practitioners, we can strive to embody the energy of the Yi Jing and help our clients to become more mindful of the state that they are in and have them be more aware of the best actions they need to take to allow for transformation in their lives regardless of our continued presence or not in their lives.

- *Brian Kushniruk*



PHOTO: Kim Graham

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