

Looking Back and Looking Forward

Michael Devitt

Before I get into this month's column, I wanted to say a few words about Wayne Allen. Wayne was Marilyn Allen's husband. He passed away on September 8 at the age of 66, in the home he and Marilyn shared in Hacienda Heights. He'd had two strokes when he was younger and had heart disease, but I didn't know how serious it was. One thing Marilyn told me was that he didn't suffer when he died. Considering the circumstances, that's about the best one could hope for.

I didn't know Wayne all that well, but I did meet him about a dozen times, and I liked him a great deal. For those of you who didn't get the chance to know him, you missed out on a great person. I was a guest at their home a few times, and Wayne was always a gracious host - very gentle, very soft-spoken. He had a bit of an eccentric streak - he loved collecting things, and the house he and Marilyn lived in had not one, but two full-size pianos set up so that he could play a little Bach whenever he felt like it - but it was tempered by his warm, gracious demeanor. He was one of the kindest people I've ever known, and he didn't have a mean bone in his body.

Wayne also was an excellent listener. Whenever Marilyn and I would go to a conference, I would make it a point to try and speak to Wayne, even for a few minutes. What I liked about Wayne was that we could talk about practically anything - not just work, but sports, politics, relationships - life in general. Even in the last few months, when his health started to fail, he always seemed to be in good spirits, and his eyes maintained this sort of sparkle that you had to see to understand.

Marilyn and Wayne were married for 38 years. I don't know how they met; it's one of the questions I always wanted to know the answer to, but never got around to asking. I do know Wayne and Marilyn loved each other very much. Anyone who saw the two of them together could see that - even if you'd just met them. I see a lot of couples who have been together for years, but don't look like they belong together. You couldn't say that about Wayne and Marilyn; they seemed to be a perfect match. They really were right for each other.

In life, Wayne was a healer. He was a doctor of chiropractic for three decades and helped thousands of people with his hands, helping to relieve everything from shoulder and back pain to the common cold. Even in death, Wayne will be helping others. I was told by Marilyn that after Wayne died, she was contacted by the American Red Cross about the possibility of him becoming a donor. Marilyn consented, and Wayne ended up donating his eyes (to help individuals regain their sight), his leg and pelvic bones (for bone grafts), and patches of skin from his legs, arms, torso and back (as skin grafts for burn victims). All told, Wayne will end up saving or giving help to at least 40 people.

I wish there were more people in the world like Wayne Allen. Take care, Wayne. We're all going to miss you.

An Instrument of Change

And now, for this month's topic. About five weeks ago, I was contacted by a member of one of the

country's largest acupuncture organizations. This person, who shall go nameless, called one bright afternoon and suggested (gently) that from now on, we capitalize terms like Oriental medicine and traditional Chinese medicine into "Oriental Medicine" and "Traditional Chinese Medicine," respectively.

When I asked why, I was told that some people thought "Oriental medicine" was medicine practiced by people of Asian descent, but that spelling it as "Oriental Medicine" would make things much clearer to our readers.

The phone call ended, and I found myself at my desk, thinking. Had we been wrong all along? Should we make these changes as the person suggested, and if so, when? And if we did decide to make these changes, would I have to go back and correct all of the articles that we'd published on *acupuncturetoday.com*?

Instead of getting too stressed out, I decided to conduct a little experiment. We receive dozens of acupuncture publications each year, ranging from peer-reviewed, scientific journals, to college and association newsletters. I went to one of the bookcases where we store back copies of those journals and papers, selected copies of a dozen different publications, and began reviewing the content and format of each. Specifically, I looked to see if certain terms were formatted the same way to see if there was any consistency among publications, and if so, to adopt those changes to *Acupuncture Today* to make things more uniform. Here's what I found:

- The only element of formatting on which every publication seemed to agree concerned acupuncture meridians. Every publication that featured an article on meridians capitalized the name of the meridian (Spleen, Heart, etc.).
- There was also widespread use of the term Traditional Chinese Medicine (in all caps) or TCM, whether as a noun or adjective.
- Nine publications used italics for the titles of books or journals; the other three used italics for some (but not all) references.
- "Chinese Medicine" and "Oriental Medicine" were capitalized, but only when used as part of a school or organization. Otherwise, an article would use terms like "an Oriental medicine practitioner" or "the practice of Chinese medicine." These terms were not considered proper nouns in and of themselves.
- There was a wide variety of formatting for the names of herbs and acupuncture points. Some publications italicized the names of the herbs, but not the points. Some publications used only abbreviations for points, instead of providing the name. Some publications would capitalize or italicize an herb or point the first time it was printed, but not in subsequent appearances. Some publications kept the name of a point as all one word, rather than breaking it up phonetically (e.g., *zusanli* instead of *zu san li*). And some publications used a combination of capitalization and italics that oftentimes varied from one article to the next.
- I found similar differences for terms such as Qi/qi/qi, Shen/shen, Yin/Yin/yin/yin, Yang/Yang/yang/yang, tai chi/taiji, tuina/tuina/tui na, and Qigong/qigong/qigong.
- Some publications listed only the name of an author at the end of an article, with no mention of the person's academic credentials. Others included degree titles. Still others included a brief biography of the author, sometimes with or without contact information.
- In only two publications were people referred to as "Dr." In one of those publications, the articles were written predominantly by medical doctors; in the other, articles were written by a medical doctor (MD), a doctor of chiropractic (DC), a doctor of philosophy (PhD) and a doctor of Oriental medicine (DOM). In an interesting twist, the person with the DOM degree was the only one to be referred to as "Dr."

What this little experiment has taught me is that the way information is provided in acupuncture publications - including *Acupuncture Today* - is, as I like to call it, consistently inconsistent. Aside

from italicizing references, and capitalizing the names of meridians, there don't seem to be any real rules to follow. That being said, I've decided - and Marilyn agrees with me - that we're going to use the same format and style we've been using since day one. The old maxim, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," seems to apply quite nicely.

However, I'm also going to give you, our faithful readers, a chance to shake things up - if you so choose. From the start, Marilyn and I have said that *Acupuncture Today* is your publication. Members of the profession write the columns; supply press releases; provide information on important new items and events; and myriad other functions that go into the process of putting together a monthly newspaper.

So, here's your chance. Do you like things the way they are presented in *AT* as-is, or should they be changed? Should we capitalize acupuncture points? Italicize the names of herbs? Turn *qi* into "Qi"? If you think the format should be changed, e-mail us at editorial@acupuncturetoday.com with your suggestions. If you like things the way they are, send me an e-mail at the same address. I'll keep a tally of the changes you think should (or shouldn't) be made, then announce the results in the January 2004 issue. This way, you'll know that we have your best interests at heart, and that *AT* truly is a publication by, of, and for the acupuncture profession.

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