

Raising Hopes for 2004

THIS IS THE YEAR TO TURN YOUR HOPES INTO GOALS

As we look back over the past 12 months, so many events have happened that will change or lives forever, from the horrors of war and death to the joys of new life and embarking on a new career. This truly is a season to be thankful, hopeful and expectant, as we look to the new year and the great challenges and excitement it brings.

At times like this, I like to look back and see what we've published in *Acupuncture Today* during the previous year. I continue to be amazed by the quantity, and quality, of news and information we're able to provide. You - and by "you," I mean the people who make up the acupuncture and Oriental profession - make that possible. Our columnists and contributing authors took considerable time out of their schedules to write and share their ideas with our readers. We appreciate the effort you put forth this year, and we look forward to more of the same in 2004.

We also want to recognize the value of the companies and individuals who dug deep into their pockets and advertised their wares in *Acupuncture Today*. The products and services you offer provide invaluable support to acupuncturists, students and other health care professionals. You help the practitioners and students function on a daily basis: Without your services, they would have few alternatives to turn to. Let's also not forget that if it wasn't for our advertisers, you'd probably be reading something other than *Acupuncture Today*. To our advertisers, thank you, thank you, thank you.

Last but not least, I want to recognize the unceasing efforts of Michael Devitt, his editorial staff, and everyone else at MPA Media. These are the people who put *Acupuncture Today* together each month. Michael's the real "brains" behind *AT*: He contacts the schools and associations; searches the Web and reads journals for the latest news and research; and attends several meetings a year to establish relationships with people. He's smart, objective, professional, and dedicated to seeing that *Acupuncture Today* remains a publication of high quality. Thanks to Michael and the rest of the staff at MPA. We appreciate your ideas and your efforts.

This issue completes our fourth year of the publishing of *Acupuncture Today*. Everywhere I go, I receive comments and warm wishes from acupuncturists, who thank us for the publication. I sometimes have to remind them that *AT* isn't my publication, it's our publication. It's a product by, of, and for the AOM profession, and it is my hope that it will remain that way.

The holidays always create a feeling of hopefulness. I think that feeling of hope fits our profession particularly well this year. Many people turn to acupuncture because they've tried using the Western medical system of healing, and it has failed them. They've given up: They've lost hope.

The good news is that there's an alternative to Western medicine, which is spreading across the country like wildfire. Acupuncture is providing hope for hundreds of thousands of people: hope that the pain they've been suffering for years will go away; hope that they won't have to live the rest of their lives taking drugs that cause nasty side-effects; hope that they'll be able to have a child; hope that they'll be able to kick that addiction to nicotine, or alcohol, or some other bad habit - in short, the hope for a better life.

Walt Disney said that your thoughts and hopes turn into feelings, your feelings turn into actions, and those actions turn into results. What are your hopes for next year? Do you hope for a larger patient base, and more people to serve? Do you hope to expand the size of your office? Are you hopeful that the new doctoral program will live up to its expectations? Now is the time to turn that hope into reality.

How do you begin that journey? By giving your hopes a new name - goals. Goals have been expressed as hopes and dreams that have deadlines, and unlike hopes and dreams, goals are usually written down. That makes them tangible.

There are seven categories for hopes/goals: family, business, money, health, social, religious, and fun. Now is the time for you to think (and then rethink) your hopes and goals. There's an old wives' tale that for your goals to come true, you have to write them down on the back of your business card or piece of paper, wrap it in a \$100 bill, and read them aloud for at least four times a day. Will this guarantee that all of your hopes will come true? I can't say for sure, but I would like all of you to at least write your goals down, store them in a safe place, and look at them from time to time.

This is our year. This is the year another people learn about the benefits of acupuncture and Oriental medicine. This is the year the doctoral program moves forward. This is the year a record-breaking number of students embark on a career in acupuncture. This is the year our leaders finally put their professional differences and work for the betterment of the entire profession. And this is the year for your hopes and dreams to come into reality.

Happy Holidays!

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