

## New Ideas for an OM Practice

Kabba Anand, DAc, LAc, Dipl. Ac., Dipl. CH

My practice has evolved to a rhythm and pace that allows me to rarely feel fatigued or stressed and keeps me looking forward to my days in the office. Although I frequently work with patients dealing with cancer, autoimmune disorders and other chronic illnesses, I see fewer and fewer insurance patients and no longer accept any managed care clients. As I have been hoping, my clientele has shifted to include more patients who seek preventative and maintenance care. I am honored to serve the health needs of those that come seeking support and guidance. Over a year ago, I began to channel my energy into three new areas, which you also might want to explore within your practice. I have found them to be stimulating and nourishing to me, as well as being supportive and informative for my clients.

I now offer *qigong* classes twice a month - only for my patients and their family members. The class has been popular, and although people drop in, there is a core group that has participated on a regular basis. As you know, in order to receive the maximum benefit possible with Chinese medicine, patients must often be willing to modify their lifestyle. This can include changing their sleep cycle, use of drugs, diet, breathing, exercise and their mental outlook (internal dialogue). I have found that instructing patients in beginning *qigong* exercises creates a solid foundation upon which an improved lifestyle can be built. They gain greater awareness of their bodies and learn how to relax, while gently stimulating and harmonizing energetic flows and circulation. This has proven most helpful with deficient *qi* patterns and *qi* stagnation, especially related to emotional holding. Patients are then able to regularly practice quieting their mind, arriving in the moment and gathering *qi* while gently releasing stagnation.

In a group situation, explaining seasonal influences, sharing general dietary recommendations and presenting positive attitudes toward life experience are efficient and effective ways to guide and instruct your clientele. Instead of working one-on-one over and over, you are able to reach a larger audience and share simple, yet easily applied, principles of Chinese medicine.

I began writing as I shifted my professional focus toward education, in the hopes that I could impart knowledge leading to improved lifestyle and self-care. I write about diet during seasonal changes, techniques for stress management and introductory Chinese medical theory as it applies to preventative medicine. Those patients that have expressed interest in receiving a bimonthly electronic newsletter, including class times for *qigong*, are sent out a brief but informative few paragraphs.

The positive feedback from my clientele has been tremendous, and we now have a regular group that gathers to practice *qigong*, meditation and breathing practice, as well as a growing number of people who understand seasonal influences (yes, we have seasons in Hawaii), the etiology of illness within Chinese medicine, and the energetics of food as it relates to their health.

The third area I've explored has been within the media of film. After a brief training in digital media at the local public access television station, I've begun producing documentary films with the goal of familiarizing the public with Chinese medicine. The first film I produced demonstrates

advanced *qigong* in a beautiful environment with soothing music, to which I recited ancient Taoist poetry. Thus, not only does the community watch *qigong*, but I am also nourished through the creative process. Public access TV exists all across the U.S., and although they cannot broadcast advertising, they are a great forum for educational and artistic expression. If you're not a film person, but have an interest in creating educational media, go down to your local station and introduce yourself. There is a high likelihood that you can find producers willing to help you get your message across to your community.

I encourage you to diversify the way you present your services and share your knowledge. I'm happy to hear of other approaches and ideas that are working well in your practice/community.

MAY 2006