

The Cutting Edge

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In my last column, I questioned how far Oriental medicine can go to create a more harmonious and healthy world. For this column, I wanted to examine what some other professionals on the cutting edge of thought had to say on the subject. It wasn't hard deciding with whom to start. Lonny Jarrett is the author of *The Clinical Practice of Chinese Medicine*, but is most known for his book *Nourishing Destiny*, which discusses using the inner traditions of Chinese medicine to assist with personal transformation. He is an international lecturer on the subject, a past student of J.R. Worsley and Leon Hammer, and presently a student of Andrew Cohen (the driving force behind the *What Is Enlightenment?* magazine and the leader of many worldwide spiritual communities).

Lonny's office is in Stockbridge, Mass., a town right out of a Norman Rockwell painting. Located on the main street, Lonny has been in the same office for more than 20 years. Turning the rickety brass knob to enter from an alley, the musky smell of the 150-year-old building immediately hits you. A staircase spirals up three floors to the top of the building, leading to Lonny's office and school. As I arrive, Lonny is behind his desk, smiling. An electric guitar is hanging on the wall next to him, with pictures of Jimi Hendrix and Krishna on the wall behind him. We have to conduct the interview over lunch, so we settle into the café next to his office. I asked the hardest questions I could think of about the future of Oriental medicine. Lonny pulled no punches.

Gregg St. Clair (GSC): *The Clinical Practice of Chinese Medicine* is dedicated "To the Revolution." What did you mean by this?

Lonny Jarrett (LJ): John Lennon said, "You say you want a revolution? You better free your mind instead." Let's just remove the word "instead." Ken Wilber said, "Transformative spirituality, authentic spirituality is therefore revolutionary. It does not legitimate the world, it breaks the world; it does not console the world, it shatters it. And it does not render the self content, it renders it undone." The greatest contribution a human being can make in their lifetime is the willful liberation of consciousness so that it's free to act in this world, unimpeded by the fears and desires of the ego. It's truly heartbreaking to see the condition that this planet is in now at the hands of unenlightened consciousness. My life's work is dedicated to a revolution in consciousness and culture; a revolution that acknowledges the sacred obligation of humanity as vessels for the evolution of consciousness and its emergence into this world through us as spirit.

Specifically, in the worldwide community of Andrew Cohen's students, we refer to ourselves as "the revolution." We live a continuing experiment of conscious evolution, in a collective, beyond ego. Our goal is to attain a critical mass of enlightened consciousness at the leading edge that will move the whole spiral of development forward. The renaissance was ignited by a core of only about 500 motivated people. We're trying (heart and soul) to do something similar, but many orders of magnitude greater. This better happen fast.

GSC: Wow - that is a mighty goal. How do you see this helping the world, the environment and humanity?

LJ: Reflection reveals that our intellectual and technological level of development has far out-paced our ethical development and, as a species, we lack the wisdom needed to live in the world we've created in a responsible fashion. Since the Industrial Revolution, human choice has been the greatest selective pressure on humanity. We can only live with integrity to the degree that our choices are clear and our motivations are conscious. Currently, the choosing faculty is compromised by thousands of years of cultural, ethnic, nationalistic and gender-based conditioning. It's plain to see many problems in the world today are caused by conflicts between anachronistic forms of tribal and ethnic levels of development.

There is only one consciousness in this universe, and when we make the decision to consciously evolve, we literally change consciousness itself in real time. The notion that a shift in a small part of a whole can create a significant global movement toward integrity and sanity should be a truth that is self-evident to anyone who understands the basics of functional medicine.

GSC: So, that small shift can help the rest of world. Any shifts in perspective that need to happen in TCM to keep us in line with those goals?

LJ: TCM is comprised of a hierarchy of value systems that have arisen evolutionarily over a 4,000-year period. I covered these levels of development in my clinical practice text. The furthest the leading edge seems to have gotten is to the level of an intellectual understanding of world-centric, holistic and integral systems theory. Even this is a small percentage of those in the field, and many still seem to be rooted in lower forms of development. For example, animistic forms of consciousness that are 20,000 years old are present in the New Age as crystals, belief in demons, incense, "shamanism," healing rituals and other such superstitions. Fundamentalism, a value system based on a form of consciousness dating as far back as 700 B.C., during the axial age, is present in those who look to the classics and "tradition" as the basis of their authority. ("See! It says it right here in the book.") Many people have made it as far as the Industrial Revolution (1860-1920) and their core values lie in "scientifically" objectifying Chinese medicine (pulse machines, standardization of the profession according to what we can "prove" as the physiological "basis" of acupuncture's action).

Almost every practitioner in the West was influenced by the egalitarian consciousness of the 1960s. This is present in CM as the adoption of the "sensitive self" core values of the humanistic psychology and New Age healing movements. We might state these values as: "You have your truth, I have my truth. My thoughts and feelings create the universe. No one can judge me because all truth is relative. There is no such thing as hierarchy and we are all equal because all perspectives are relative. I am a victim of my life circumstances and I need more time to heal."

Let me point out that this last stage is a relatively high stage of development. Eighty-five percent of the education in American TCM schools still is focused on the classics, what the Chinese are doing, and is based on a Cartesian view of the world that also is perpetuated by the Chinese materialistic culture of dialectical materialism of these last 60 years.

Finally, there is the influence at the collective leading edge of holistic/integral systems theory of the last 30 years that has flourished in the democratic West. Of course, it's one thing to intellectually understand systems theory, which most of us practitioners do, to some extent, but it's entirely another thing to have penetrated the deeper non-dual implications of integral thought and literally be living them! How many of us do that? Very few.

The great step now for our medicine is out of the relative and into the absolute. You simply can't have a truly holistic/integral medicine without spiritual realization and a serious practice. I'd say the giant leap now has to be from a merely systems theory "holistic" perspective to an absolute,

impersonal, cosmo-centric perspective. The great step now is beyond the small self to the One Self. What is the relevance of one-on-one medicine when the existence of the patient's species is seriously threatened? Over time, I have come to see that there is only one patient, one movement of conditioned mind, one ego and one authentic self. We need to jettison 4,000 years of classical mess, at least for a moment, to see the way we can best serve right now. Of course, institutionalized ego in the profession always will endeavor to preserve "what is and what has been" and resist change. So, if we want to change the profession, the country and the world, the real revolution is to seriously take ourselves on as practitioners.

GSC: This evolution in consciousness and individuals about our responsibilities to the Earth is happening right now around the world. How do you feel TCM must evolve in the future?

LJ: The *telos*, or direction, of creation is toward increased states of complexity and integration. The evolution to world-centric consciousness you are referring to is occurring in a minority that represents maybe 1 percent of the people on the planet. And how many of us who understand these principles actually embrace them in the way we live our day-to-day lives? Very few. As survival pressure is exerted on the whole, this evolution toward the recognition of a collective solution is accelerating. As some of the most advanced system thinkers on the planet, practitioners of CM should be literally leading this revolution by pushing our own development seriously. My evidence is that most time spent on "self-development" in our culture of healing, by both practitioners and patients, is spent in the pursuit of merely feeling better. What does it say about us that we are the most well-educated, well-nourished people, possessing the most political and religious freedom in history and our main interest is our own "healing" while the planet is dying? This suggests a rather large degree of narcissism that has to be overcome for us to actually make a useful contribution.

GSC: I agree with you completely about CM being one of the most advanced systems. In fact, in my last article, I called it one of the jewels of the world. I also said, it is our leaders who must direct us in the future. What do you feel the profession, schools and managing organizations need to do?

LJ: A profession, school or organization always is going to reflect the collective level consciousness of those involved. Collective ego is exponentially more powerful than a single individual's. Historically, organizations have existed to resist change, preserve themselves and preserve the past. For example, as far as I can see, the national licensing exam tests the applicant's knowledge of medical anthropology. A fast pulse means heat and a slow pulse means cold? Really? That hasn't been the main clinical interpretation in the developed world since the industrial revolution!

As holistic thinkers, we understand the dynamic, spontaneous and flexible nature of natural systems that allow for evolution (vertical development toward increased states of integrity and wholeness) to occur. Unfortunately, most organizations still are based on value structures that emerged hundreds and even thousands of years ago. We could have designed the accreditation of our profession in America in a much more integral and creative way. The knowledge was present in the 1970s to do so. It's a tragedy that we didn't and instead based the profession on the failed medical model of the 1950s. Even today, the main current of interest in the profession is toward homogenization of our medicine for the sake of power and money. It's quite sad really, and in no way respects or even acknowledges the higher potentials of our medicine to affect profound changes in consciousness right now. We should be leading a revolution and instead, we're merely trying to fit into a system that died 30 years ago.

GSC: You teach a private two-year apprentice class. Does it focus on these issues?

LJ: I teach a clinical integration course that entails 12 weekends spread out over two years. Technically, it involves a comprehensive integration of a five-element constitutional approach

combined with the pre-TCM system of pulse diagnosis that I learned from Leon Hammer. I emphasize diagnosis in a black-and-white context, self and not-self, and teach students to understand the fundamental mechanism of mind that sustains both the five-element constitutional types, as well as the eight-principle syndrome patterns. The heart of the course lies in the recognition of that place in us, where nothing ever happened as a context for the absolute healing that's possible at the level of consciousness. People come in from around the world for the class and I'm totally engaged with it.

GSC: How can individual practitioners manifest these concepts in their daily practice?

LJ: New students always ask me, "How can I do this with my patients?" There seems to be a great mechanism of mind that avoids actualizing what one knows by trying instead to do it to others. There are two momentums competing for our attention. The ego represents all that is false, wrong and untrue. It's the illusory sense of a separate, created self that is manifested in a moment of early trauma. The ego always sees itself as a victim in relationship to creation. This is the part of us that will never heal because it is the disease itself. And there is the authentic self that manifests as the spontaneous arising of the *jing*, *qi* and *shen*. The authentic self has no problem because it's the living manifestation of the creative impulse. It's eternal, and it's only concerned about living the potential of a more wholesome and integrated future right now.

One of the main qualifications that a practitioner should have to possess to actually be considered a "healer" would be the renunciation of the right to take any more time to heal based on the discovery of, identification with, and absolute conviction in that best part of him or herself that doesn't need healing because *nothing ever happened there*. And this is the only place that will afford the absolute perspective so desperately needed to carry the medicine forward out of the flat land, egalitarian value system it now seems mired in. It's not what a practitioner *knows*; it's who he or she *is*, as evidenced by the degree of integrity actually manifested as living action, that matters most in healing.

GSC: I feel one of the biggest problems facing the world today is the extinction of species, which applies to wildlife, herbs, habitat and even humanity. How do you feel TCM can help prevent these things?

LJ: Every one of these challenges is an issue of consciousness. Human choice has been the main selective force on the planet for the last 150 years. The question is, "How conscious are the choices we are making?" The human capacity for choice is the single highest attribute manifested by the universe to date. A most significant aspect of "healing" lies in the liberation of the choosing faculty from a conditioned relationship to thoughts and feelings toward that of an increasingly objective relationship.

Chinese medicine has the potential to be a profound tool to support the evolution of consciousness. Evolution means the vertical development of consciousness from a lower to a higher stage of development. Such a progression involves both the recognition of a higher potential by a patient and the willingness, through action, to actualize that higher state seen in a moment of clarity as a new stage of development from which to live. Chinese medicine *only* is relevant now to the degree it can contribute to the evolution of consciousness. Who cares if selfish, self-centered narcissists feel better?

GSC: Do you think TCM should be integrated into Western medicine? What about insurance coverage?

LJ: Chinese medicine can't be integrated into Western medicine. An integral perspective is a four-

quadrant, four-level perspective (see the work of Ken Wilber in this regard). This perspective honors the simultaneous arising of form and function. Only from the perspective of non-dual consciousness can such integration occur in a human being's heart and mind. "Integral" means the individual can think synthetically, causally, deductively and inductively; use the principles of biomedicine, functional medicine, the five elements and the eight principals; and understand the unity of form and function simultaneously with no apparently perceived contradiction, all in real time.

As to insurance coverage, why would any practitioner committed to the higher principles of healing want to sacrifice his or her autonomy and the beauty of our medicine to the killing influence of bureaucratic ego? Why should the most sophisticated functional medicine that has ever evolved on the planet constrain itself with a form of health care administration that died 30 years ago? Insurance is a corrupt system that places the practitioner, patient and company in collusion with each other. I've never heard a single argument for coverage that wasn't motivated by a practitioner's bottom line. Generosity, an army of 50,000 licensed practitioners, and fee for service is the way to go!

GSC: In your first book, *Nourishing Destiny*, you talk about how the potential of the individual would be similar to a seed's potential of becoming a tree. What is the highest potential TCM can strive for?

LJ: Humanity needs a core value system that recognizes the primacy of consciousness and spirit without the myths and superstitions found in the perennial traditions. In such a value system, the objectivity of enlightened awareness is the benchmark of health as it's synonymous with sanity. Enlightenment is the collective destiny of humanity and we'd better manifest it quick if we are going to survive.

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