

Quantum Physics and Oriental Medicine

INTERVIEW WITH MICHAEL WAYNE, PHD

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How does a traditional healing modality such as Oriental medicine adapt to make it in our contemporary culture of changing consciousness? Can we evolve and survive? Do we lead the way or follow? To better help me understand questions like these, I called on Michael Wayne, PhD, author of the book *Quantum-Integral Medicine*.

Wayne has been practicing Oriental medicine for more than 20 years. He is an acupuncturist and herbalist, a doctor of integral medicine and one of the people interested in a call for change in our way of thinking. With the emergence of an ever-tightening global society, how can Oriental medicine do what is best not only for our profession but for all of humankind?

Can you explain what quantum-integral medicine means and how it applies to Oriental medicine?

"Quantum-integral medicine" is a term I coined to stimulate a new way of understanding medicine and the body, and ultimately what triggers our innate healing capabilities. Biomedicine (the current system of medicine) is a model based on linear determinism and reductionism - approaches that see the world in very black-and-white terms. This kind of thinking has gotten us into a lot of trouble, not only with its approach to the human body, but also with its approach to solving world problems. It is very cause-and-effect oriented and always is looking to find the one ultimate cause that has created the dilemma. Once that cause is found, the belief is that it can be eradicated.

Instead, this is a world predicated on the laws of quantum physics, chaos and complexity theories, and the new science of emergence. What this tells us in a nutshell is that everything is interrelated and if you change one part of a system, the entire system will undergo a change. Furthermore, it is not always easy to predict in what direction the change will take place, as there is a certain degree of unpredictability and turbulence that guides our universe.

Quantum-integral medicine has much in common with Oriental medicine because Oriental medicine is based on Oriental philosophy. These are based on ideas that have much in common with quantum physics and chaos and complexity theories. Traditional Oriental scientific belief says life is a great web that moves in wavelike motions; an action in one area of the web can cause an unpredictable effect in another part of the web. This, in essence, is the science underlying quantum physics and chaos theory and also the gist of quantum-integral medicine.

We can say that *qi* moves through the body in wavelike motions; the key to health is for the *qi* to stay fluid and maintain its movement throughout the body's web and the web of the interconnectedness of body to environment, or of microcosm to macrocosm.

The word *integral* means to integrate. What we need to do in order to develop a new medicine is to integrate the best of both Western and Oriental medicine and science. Yet bioscience is not the best of Western science and is only a half-truth. The big picture in Western science is the addition of the new sciences - quantum physics, chaos and complexity, and emergence.

Quantum-integral medicine calls for a change. What needs to change in Oriental medicine? How about what is taught in our schools?

It is my belief that the way Oriental medicine is taught in schools currently, by following the biomedical model as taught in Western medical schools, is shortsighted. Granted, the teaching of the biosciences is essential knowledge for understanding the physiology and pathology of the body. And it is important for developing researchers who understand evidence-based medicine and its application to the Oriental medicine model. But there is more to it than that, as the biomedical model is extremely limited. Yes, it is what is predominantly practiced in the U.S., and yes, the Oriental medicine practitioner needs to be able to communicate with the Western medical practitioner. But what we truly need from the Oriental medicine field are cutting-edge, progressive thinkers; people who can integrate the biomedical sciences with the new sciences of quantum physics and chaos and complexity theories.

I think the Oriental medicine schools, whether in their doctoral programs or master's programs, need to teach these cutting-edge sciences. If they do so, they will be developing the leaders of tomorrow. I say that because the people who are trained this way will know how to think in a more sophisticated manner and will know how the body truly operates and what it takes to trigger the innate healing system. And because students of Oriental medicine already are being trained to see the body in a different way, they are poised to be the leaders of tomorrow, if they are taught the integration of Oriental medicine and the cutting-edge Western sciences.

How do you see raising Oriental medicine to a quantum-integral level will help man, the Earth and the environment?

I believe that by raising Oriental medicine to a quantum-integral level, it can educate health practitioners who can understand how the body truly operates, and they will then be able to convey this knowledge to the general public. These health practitioners will understand a systems approach to the body and how the body is interconnected not only within all its systems, but also to the greater environment.

Once this becomes general knowledge, it can be better understood what it takes to trigger the innate healing system. Lewis Thomas, the late scientist and writer of such brilliant books as *The Lives of a Cell* (which should be required reading in all Oriental medicine schools, along with books by Norman Cousins and Stephen Jay Gould), once said, "The possibility that medicine can learn to accomplish spontaneous remissions at will is surely within reach of imagining." This day will come when Oriental medicine students understand the science of emergence - a science that has garnered the interest of Nobel laureates - and then learn its practical applications, not only to the human body but also to the Earth and the environment.

The ancient Chinese actually understand the concept of emergence. The clue to this comes in the literal translation of the word *qi*. The literal translation is, "the vapors that come off rice when it's cooking." From this translation comes the secret of a lifetime.

When discussing integral theory, one thinks of Ken Wilber and his four quadrants. Can you explain the four quadrants and how Oriental medicine fits into them?

Ken Wilber is the most articulate advocate of an integral theory, and he has devised a system that he calls the four quadrants. This is a systematic attempt to map out the scope of the human existence and the levels of development that people go through in their lifetimes. Wilber is not the first to map out the levels of development we all go through - it has been done by psychologists, educators, philosophers, spiritual teachers and countless others - but his approach is arguably the

most comprehensive, encompassing and embracing.

What the four-quadrants system contends is that there are four aspects of life: the interior/subjective, the exterior/objective, the individual and the collective. The four quadrants are illustrated similar to a graph, with a horizontal line dissected in the middle by a vertical line, thereby creating the four quadrants. Each quadrant represents a different aspect of the human experience. The left hemisphere represents interior/subjective experience and the right hemisphere represents exterior/objective experience, while the upper hemisphere represents the individual experience and the lower hemisphere represents the collective experience.

When we put it all together, what the four quadrants show us is a map of the four aspects of the human experience. From there, the levels of development that people go through and the shared experiences of the human journey can be mapped out according to which of the quadrants they belong.

Biomedicine, by virtue of its non-belief in the role that consciousness and subjective experience play in health, is an upper-right quadrant approach. The more systems sciences (quantum physics, chaos/complexity, and emergence) are lower-right quadrant approaches, because they understand that life is based on an intermingling of various objective systems. Oriental medicine fits into the four quadrants in its current version as a biomedical application, more as a right-hemisphere approach.

Is Oriental medicine as it is currently practiced functioning in all four quadrants?

I would say the answer to that is yes and no. No, in that the emphasis in Oriental medicine is in integrating it into the prevailing biomedical system. There is an emphasis in Oriental medicine research circles on evidence-based medicine and the need for double-blind trials to prove the efficacy of acupuncture. Evidence-based medicine is a right hemisphere approach, a purely objective way of establishing clinical data. This is the direction Western medicine is going, and it is considered the gold standard. The movement in evidence-based medicine is to eliminate the subjective clinical experience; to stop the doctor from applying treatments based on their experiences, intuition and insight. Instead, evidence-based medicine wants the clinician to base all experiences on cold, hard, objective data.

But the clinician's experience, intuition and insight play a big role in Oriental medicine. So the yes part of the answer is that Oriental medicine (in the way it was originally designed and developed) was a medicine that understood that the interaction between consciousness and *qi* was the primary factor in creating health or illness. There are a great many Oriental medicine practitioners who understand this - which is a left hemisphere approach - and practice in this way. But for these practitioners to do so, it has meant they have had to undo the biomedical mindset that has been instilled in them by many of the acupuncture schools.

Another fascinating theory you mention in your book is spiral dynamics. What is spiral dynamics, and what level do you feel Oriental medicine in America is at right now?

Spiral dynamics is a developmental system and has much in common with the integral approach. Spiral dynamics attempts to map out the evolutionary stages people and organizations, both large and small, go through over the course of time. All developmental theorists are in agreement that there is a shared universal developmental arc that everybody goes through. Even our system of education is based on this, due to the theories of the developmental educator and psychologist Jean Piaget.

Ken Wilber simply calls this arc a progression from pre-rational to rational to trans-rational. At one time, we live in a pre-rational world; one we believe is a magical world of Santa Claus and fairies, and things that defy logic. But over time, we become more rational and we realize that some things (to paraphrase Mr. Spock) "do not compute." So we begin to understand the mechanisms of the world and how things work. The trick in evolving to this level of thinking is that we don't become what has been called an "enlightenment fundamentalist" - becoming so enamored by the world of cause and effect. If we stay stuck in the world of pure rationality, we will miss out on the trans-rational; the understanding that this is truly a world where science and spirit intersect.

And so it is with spiral dynamics. It is a many-layered system of stages and tiers that show that our collective journey is one that takes us through stages of life that evolve from pre-rational to rational and ultimately, if we open our minds to it, to the trans-rational.

The level I feel Oriental medicine is at in this point in America is one firmly rooted in the rational and paying only lip service to the trans-rational - the merger of science and spirit - even though the original Oriental medicine doctors were trans-rationalists of the highest order. These doctors were seers and mystics, yet sadly this trans-rational approach has been trimmed from the bone.

In his book, *Worldchanging: A User's Guide for the 21st Century*, Alex Steffen writes, "We need to consciously redesign the entire material basis for our civilization." Is it inevitable that Oriental medicine becomes integrated into Western medicine or does the entire medical system here in America need to be redesigned?

Ideally, we need to redesign the entire medical system as practiced in this country. Can that be done? It's hard to say, because as with anything that needs change, entrenched interests will fight hard to maintain the status quo. Some would say an integration of Oriental medicine into the Western medical system is an easier and more pragmatic goal to accomplish, but all that does is fit Oriental medicine into the Western biomedical paradigm, and it is the paradigm and the mindset that are flawed. That is why we need a new model of medicine. I advocate quantum-integral medicine as the model because it has a very big umbrella that can encompass the different modalities of medicine into a redesigned system.

Spiral dynamics, which we discussed in the prior question, is at its core an approach that advocates change and the redesign of organizations and institutions into a more holistic model. Dr. Don Beck, one of the founders of spiral dynamics, has this to say about redesigning society:

"It's not that we need to form new organizations. It's simply that we have to awaken to new ways of thinking. I believe it makes no sense to spend a lot of time attacking the current realities. It is time to create the new models that have in them the complexity that makes the older systems obsolete. And to the extent that we can do that, and do that quickly, I think we can provide what will be necessary for a major breakthrough for the future."

Dr. Beck has hit the nail on its head. What we need are more visionary and sophisticated thinkers to help lead the way to a more humane system of medicine and a more humane society. Practitioners of Oriental medicine have a golden opportunity to play a leading role in this.

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