



HERBAL MEDICINE

Be the Light: The Way of the Superior Herbalist

PROVIDING GREAT CLIENT SERVICE

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The qualities of a superior herbalist are well described in ancient texts that all of us involved in the Asian health arts love and respect. The Yellow Emperor's Classic, especially Chapter 8 of the *Lingshu* portion, details the attributes and character of the "superior doctor." I have based my personal practice on the teachings of this section for over 30 years, and I have found it to be a profound guiding light to me and of almost unlimited benefit to my clients.

My great Daoist Master, Grandmaster Sung Jin Park, once gave me this simple instruction: "Do not focus on being the healer - be 'the Light'." This metaphorical instruction may seem out of place in the world of the healing arts, but it is not. We all have "healer" in our blood, and that is why we are involved in the Oriental health arts. But according to the true Daoist teachings, "healing" is not as important as being the light. It is just like the old saying, "give a man a fish and he eats for a day, teach a man to fish and he eats forever." "Healing" is often (almost always) something of an illusion. If you "heal" a client but they go back out into the world and do the same stupid things, and do not support and protect themselves, they will soon lose their balance and become ill again, and will simply accumulate more disharmony in their lives.

The true master of the health arts serves their client by guiding them to become a healthy member of the Earth, a harmonious being who develops both health and wisdom through their thoughts and actions, on a moment-to-moment basis throughout their lifetime. Whatever "healing" we do is but a nudge in the right direction. Thus the master knows that "healing" can be important, "healing" can forestall and relieve misery, "healing" can change a person's life for a short time, but being the Light toward radiant health is the pre-eminent goal of every superior practitioner of the Oriental health arts.



I'm sure you know about Li Shizhen, the most famous herbalist in Chinese history. Nobody has ever known more about Chinese herbs than Master Li. He studied and documented thousands of herbs, formulations and protocols, and left us the great herbal classic *Bencao Gangmu*, a text that has benefited the lives of millions of people. Interestingly, much less well known to most modern practitioners of Oriental medicine, is the fact that Li Shizhen personally avoided medicinal herbs. He was a practicing Daoist who revered tonic herbs and a range of supportive herbs that helped open the Eight Extraordinary Channels, the framework of the Daoist health system. For his personal life, he followed the Light of the great Daoist herbal masters. The same was true of the "Herb King," Sun Simiao. Master Sun lived to be over 100 years old, relying on tonic herbs as his personal herbal protocol.

I would be the last person to suggest you abandon your knowledge and application of the principles of Chinese medicine, including the principles of Yin and Yang, the Five Elements and the principles of differential diagnosis and treatment. The Oriental medical system is indeed profound. I am suggesting that you use this great knowledge to promote radiant health rather than just chasing the eternal tail of disease.

On that note, I will provide you with some tips on how to become a Superior Herbalist. This is a lesson in attitude.

The Way of the Superior Herbalist

The calling to become a Superior Herbalist is a very high one. Superior Herbalism is a proactive, positive, highly effective way to help people establish radiant health, and to help people to grow, evolve and transform into their higher selves. Superior Herbalism encompasses the use of all three levels of herbalism - tonic ("superior"), preventive ("general") and medicinal ("inferior"). The Superior Herbalist may start off using medicinal and general herbs, but very quickly proceeds to supporting the root of the client with appropriate tonics and general herbs. I believe that using

medicinal herbs for an extended period of time is a path to failure. People who spend their lives "healing" eventually die at an early age from disease, while those who promote their health and become radiantly healthy can live to be very old and wise. So I encourage you to become a Superior Herbalist, for the sake of your clients.

The amount of knowledge one must learn to be a real tonic herbalist is surely significant. One must learn the principles, traditional theories, the herbs, formulations, art of personal analysis, and how to put a person on an appropriate herbal program, as well as the ethics and responsibilities of being a Superior Herbalist. The Superior Herbalist must also understand Nature and the interaction of a human being and Nature.

However, in the big scheme of things, these things are sometimes easier to learn than the art of being "the Light," that is, being a wise and effective teacher and guide to their clients. Superior Herbalism is not a purely clinical practice. It is a way to guide clients to develop on every level, starting with their physical health, but ending with sublime transformation on all levels, including the mental and spiritual levels.

It becomes clear that to be a true Superior Herbalist, one must be patient, humble, intelligent, deep, insightful, compassionate, respectful and wise. In addition, a Superior Herbalist will be passionate about the art of tonic herbalism. Excellent communication skills are necessary because communication is the primary means by which we educate and guide those who seek our guidance. We also guide by example and by the nature of our presence.

If the client does not use the herbs, the herbs will not be of any use to them. It is imperative that the Superior Herbalist learns the art of connecting with the client - as a guide, confidant and teacher. Natural ability is a definite factor, but most of the requisite skill can be developed. Being a Superior Herbalist is an art that must be developed and honed, just as becoming a gongfu or Daoist master is cultivated over the span of years.

This is a lesson in how to interact with clients so that they develop trust in you in such a way that you can become their guide on the path to radiant health - how to become their "Light." These are lessons in how to build a relationship with the client so that you can gain essential knowledge of their real condition, life history and nature, so that you can best serve them and aid them on their path. This ability to become "the Light," to be able to successfully guide people on their path to radiant health, is what distinguishes the master, the Superior Herbalist, from other practitioners of herbalism.

Help The Client Attain Radiant Health

One of the great secrets of a long, satisfying and happy life, according to Eastern wisdom, is to focus on health instead of disease. This is the psychological basis of the "way of radiant health." Develop the attitude of radiant health and radiant health can be attained surprisingly easily. Once we have trained ourselves to focus on the attainment and maintenance of radiant health, and have acquired the tools for accomplishing our goal, the functions of the mind, body and spirit can flourish. Once we have achieved a state of radiant health, the bodily functions cannot easily fall into disharmony, disease cannot readily arise in the body and, from the perspective of our physical, mental, emotional and spiritual health, we are indeed beyond most dangers.

The attainment of radiant health is definitely attainable by most people who have not already severely damaged themselves. And it is also attainable by many who have severely damaged themselves through abuse and wrong living but have the will to regain true health. In life, it is sometimes necessary to hit a low point before we discover the motivation to work at attaining

radiant health. Complete success takes determination, knowledge, discipline and skill.

But we cannot do it by "ourselves." We need help. Nature can provide that help. One of the ultimate sources of help from Nature lies in dietary resources. The tonic herbs, being one of the richest sources of protective and supportive bio-nutrients, are used to promote overall wellbeing, to enhance the body's energy, and to regulate bodily and psychic functioning, resulting in radiant health.

"Radiant health" is the highest level of health to which a person can attain and is defined as "health beyond danger." In other words, the person is so internally strong and adaptive that they are able to adapt to virtually all normal stresses, as well as many extreme stresses, and is thus capable of overcoming most serious dangers. My teacher, Sung Jin Park, emphasized that protection is one of the primary characteristics of health and the higher the level of protection the better. When one's protection has reached the stage of "health beyond danger," then that person has achieved radiant health.

Elements of Great Client Service

Enjoy Your Work

- Enjoy your work as a tonic herbalist, or select a different profession. This is a special profession. It is not suited to just anybody. It requires evolved sensibilities and deep intelligence. It requires the patience of a saint. It requires physical and mental strength. But more than anything, it requires deep, genuine, innate compassion.
- See your job as an opportunity to serve people. Don't blow the opportunity.

It All Begins With First Impressions

- Most of us form quick first impressions. We often subliminally decide whether we like people, feel good about them, or want to do business with them in the first few seconds.
- Make them feel appreciated for coming to see you in some way.
- Do not waste any time in greeting them warmly - they may form an impression before you get to them if you don't.

Greet Clients Warmly

- Cause people to immediately feel comfortable (smiling really helps).
- Cause people to like you (smiling really helps).

Establish A Connection

- Focus your attention on the person. Get eye contact. This is very important. Don't wait - get it immediately, or as soon as you're within six to eight feet or closer. Really notice them. Take a good look at them. Pay attention to their physiognomy and to their energy.
- Warm up to them quickly and get engaged right away. Practice your art of personal analysis. Feel your intuition.
- The idea is to establish a connection with the client. "Connecting" is accomplished by communicating from the heart. Effective communicators listen to people's emotions, their pace, tone and attitudes.
- Tune the world out and them in. Break preoccupation. Pay complete attention to the client.

In summary: It all begins with the way you greet people. So much is expressed in the first few seconds: Your sincerity, your love for what you do, your genuine interest in people, and your satisfaction with who you are. These expressions produce the effects of putting people at ease and making them feel welcome. They are the underlying basis of your communication with the client.

Value Clients

Remember, from a "business point of view," the client is your business. The client pays your salary, so treat them very well.

- Fundamental principle #1: You're not in the business to sell and deliver products and services; you are in the business to help people enjoy end-result benefits of those products and services - to enjoy as much satisfaction as possible.
- Fundamental principle #2: Give the client more than they expect. To new clients, offer them a booklet, maybe even an elixir or cup of herbal tea. To loyal clients, upgrade their product, give them something small for free, a bonus, a small gift - always with a comment.
- Fundamental principle #3: If you don't value your client, they will know it and they won't return, even if your technique or product is good. There is plenty of competition out there. If you value your client, they will almost always return, and you will build your practice.

Determining People's Needs

It is our responsibility to determine what our client's needs are. People's needs aren't always logical.

Sometimes people's real needs have little to do with logic. Often their real needs are emotional. It may be that people who contact you or come in to see you are unsure of what they want. That's where you can fill a very valuable role and fulfill important human needs.

Here are some of your client's needs:

1. To feel comfortable and non-pressured
2. To feel that you care about them and that you are serious about helping them
3. To be valued by you
4. To have your focused attention:
 - For you to focus more on them than on your work activities, rules or schedules
 - For you not to ignore them in favor of someone who you may think is more valuable to you, or for some other reason may attract your attention
5. For you not to judge their ability to buy whatever you're selling (although, at the appropriate moment, you should allow them to indicate to you what they would feel comfortable paying for your products and service so that you can adjust accordingly)

Fundamental Goal: Develop Trust

A genuine desire to understand a person's needs (or wants) will impact your client and place you ahead of most of your competition. By "connecting" with the client, you develop deep trust. A connection develops between you and the client based on your depth of eye contact, mind contact, emotional contact; and by sharing insightful comments, wisdom and stories that you understand, on an emotional and intellectual level, both the nature of the problems and the answers (within reason).

When you develop trust with people you'll find they'll accept your ideas better and will want to return to see you.

Whenever possible, if you sense that a person needs to open up, let them. Don't unconsciously cut them off. Let the person talk as long as they want (provide facial tissue if necessary). Try to be perceptive enough to help the person discover their real needs. The need many people have is to find someone they can trust to help them. Many people are lost. Many people don't know what they're looking for - they just know they need help because their health is poor or they are

unhappy or unsatisfied. It is okay to set boundaries, so this does not have to be interminable.

Know this: Clients are very sensitive and know whether or not you really care about them. If you really gain a person's trust, price will prove to not be a dominant factor in what they purchase, even though the person might have previously thought so and told you it was.

How To Help Clients

Your client's needs aren't for the product or service! Rather their needs are for what the product or service will do for them - the end-result benefits it'll give them. How it will help them be happier, healthier, wiser, more lovely or handsome, more creative and more successful. Remember, it's important to understand that people don't buy products or services. They buy products or services in order to fulfill NEEDS they have, to satisfy wants or gratify desires they have.

What the product is, how it's made or how you perform your service is only of secondary importance. Clients really appreciate information because it will help them make good decisions in their quest for satisfying end-result benefits for themselves or people they love.

Information serves three purposes:

1. It stimulates confidence in the depth of knowledge, wisdom and caring of the practitioner (you).
2. It stimulates confidence in the quality of your products and services, and this in turn will give them confidence that they will achieve the end-results that they are looking for. As a result, they will give your services and products a good try.
3. When the client recognizes the value of your products and services in comparison to what they would get elsewhere, they are less likely to shop elsewhere for cheaper products that are in fact of less value.

In other words:

1. People consume what you are providing because they want to enjoy an end-result benefit for themselves.
2. It is your job to find out the payoff the client wants from what you offer

Action Guides For Finding Out How You Can Help People

Your main objective is to focus on understanding what the client wants. Clichés such as, "May I help you?" aren't as complete as, "How may I help you?" The first question calls for a quick turn-off response ("I'm just checking this out"); the other calls for an explanation. What are they looking for from you (and from herbs)? Take them on a little journey. Help them figure out what they really want. Take them beyond their surface desires into the realm of deeper desire and need. Introduce a bigger dream.

Remember - People don't buy products or services just to have the products or services. They buy them in order to satisfy needs, fulfill wants, solve problems, or gratify desires. They want a definable end result. With education, the end result they desire may change or expand, but right from the beginning they have a target. It is your job to discover this first target or goal.

Asking open-ended questions and listening to people's responses can help you enjoy trust and rapport with them. Asking open-ended questions will not only help you understand people, but it can help you demonstrate your concern and care for their needs. Asking open-ended questions helps YOU to further understand their needs. Part of your role in satisfying clients is to first understand their needs. You do this by asking "open-ended" questions. Open-ended questions get

you lots of information and encourage conversation. Open-ended questions are ones that call for explanations.

"Close-ended" questions are ones that call for "yes" or "no" responses. They don't get much information for you and they tend to stall conversation.

Not only will these questions help you get information to understand a person's needs, you'll also strengthen your rapport by showing your concern and by actively listening to the client or prospective client provide an answer. These questions provide an avenue of huge insight.

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