



ACUPUNCTURE TECHNIQUES

Behavior as Symptoms of Energetic Imbalance

Felice Dunas, PhD

Karen and Josh said they wanted me to help them fix their marriage. That is why they were sitting on the couch in front of me, complaining about each other. She was too domineering, he said, overly controlling and bossy. "Well, I wouldn't need to be if you would just pull your own weight around the house. You leave everything up to me and then get upset if I am not cheerful when I try to get it all done."

"What are you talking about?" he bellowed. "You are such a control freak; I don't get to contribute to anything in our lives unless it is on your terms." This is the kind of dialogue you would expect to hear if you were a fly on the wall of a psychologist's office. But would someone in our field consider these appropriate patients with problems readily addressed by OM? From my perspective, absolutely.

We learn early in our studies that there are emotional expressions of the major medical theories of OM. For example, Five Element Theory suggests that each element includes not only organs, grains, colors and directions, but correlating experiential states as well. Yin yang theory differentiates between experiences by defining them as negative or positive. Zang Fu Theory gives a doctor the ability to predict a patient's experiential tendencies, the patterns governing mental state and behavior, through diagnosis of the internal organs.

For every organ, chi or blood related syndrome, you will find correlating behavioral and attitudinal changes, as well as physical symptoms. The patterns of expression can be dramatic, as exemplified by the argument quickly developing between these spouses. Alternatively, subtle changes can seep into one's thoughts without much notice. As imbalance progresses, a patient may come to experience their entire life through a symptomatic web of thoughts and feelings.



My first experience working with marital problems was in 1984. Julie and Jeff had come to me for help with two physical health problems. He had a shoulder injury from falling off a ladder and she was a migraine sufferer. While their marriage had become comfortable and neither had severe complaints, the spark had vanished years ago and, try as they might, they could not re-ignite it. There was bitterness below the surface of their every day dialogue and activities. They touched this pain gingerly, without much skill and only infrequently, as they had no idea how to heal it.

Typically, a couple with this situation might just consider the problem something to avoid as the marriage slid, very slowly, downhill. Or, if more assertive in wanting to reclaim their passion, seek the support of a psychologist. However, four months into their individual treatment plans, I began to see changes in the way they interacted. Through strengthening with OM modalities, the energetic dynamic within each individual became more grounded, functional and attractive to the other. Their marriage naturally began to run more smoothly. They told me the bitterness between them was more easily approached and more readily overcome. I never discussed my intention of addressing their marital woes with them. My agenda was to support their chi and a bi-product of that process would be the improvement of the relationship between them.

Following my observations with Judy and Jeff, I noted that many patients suffered with behavioral symptoms. Darwin was the CEO of his own company. He had achieved significant success and was at the top of his industry. Now in his late 40s, he complained of a rift developing between himself and his wife, Angela. His sexual desire for her had increased substantially over the past few years. While he insisted that this was a compliment to her and a testament of his loyalty, she felt used and angry. Neither understood why his amorous yearnings created distance between them. She insisted he was "taking advantage" of her, while he felt rejected for wanting to give his beloved of 18 years his affections. Several sex and relationship therapists had failed to help them and their marriage was seriously breaking down over this issue. He came to see me for aid with his chronically high blood pressure. The medication given to him by his physician was having sexual side effects, which further exacerbated this situation.

When men or women live workaholic life styles, there are energetic ramifications. One that you may be familiar with from your practice is yin deficiency. When the body runs too quickly and too hard for too long, it will begin burning yin as fuel for the production of yang. Anatomical soundness is sacrificed for extended physiological capacity. The endocrine system is often utilized in this pattern because it is the chemical means by which the body communicates with itself. In Darwin's case, one part of his body needed to tell another part to acquire more energy or the entire machine would begin to break down. So his body began over producing testosterone. Testosterone is the hormone primarily responsible for increasing sexual desire. Sex, according to OM theory, can then be used as a means of acquiring yin chi from one's partner as men have less yin chi than women. Women may also express this symptom. Though he did not intend to, Darwin was using the act of intercourse to extract his wife's chi, replenishing his own overworked system. She was correct. He was taking from her. However, the level of the exchange was unfamiliar to both of them.

Our work lowered his blood pressure, thus decreasing his need for medication. It took only a few short months of treatment to begin replenishing the yin that had been sacrificed in the building and running of Darwin's company. As a result, his desire level became more comfortable for both of them and harmony was restored. He, Angela and I had a single discussion during which I explained the situation to both of them. They left relieved and no marital therapy was required.

You will find that many of your patients present with behavioral and attitudinal symptoms. Being well educated in the area of energetic diagnostics as it pertains to the "non-physical" aspects of a patient's health will serve you well as a practitioner.

The way I define the experiential aspect of our work using Zang Fu Theory is to say that each organ provides one with an entire range of experience, from negative to positive. Kidneys, for example, express their range from abject terror, on the negative side, to complete acceptance of the moment and the cultivation of wisdom on the positive side.

The Liver ranges from anger and rage, to warmth and kindness, The Heart provides us with hysteria and a loss of healthy views of reality (as in mental illness) on the negative side and joy and love and optimism about life on the positive. Lungs bond us to life so their range incorporates deep sadness and a sense of isolation on the negative side to quality intimacy and the ability to feel intimacy with others on the positive. And lastly, the Spleen's range swings from a complete lack of focus (ungrounded thought) or obsessive tendencies on the negative side to comprehensive understanding and high levels of concentration on the other.

By viewing the experiential aspects of organ function as ranges rather than static or individual feelings, you can view your patients more effectively and resolve the difficult emotional and attitudinal symptoms that express themselves. You can include behavior as being an aspect of a patient's life that is both treatable and potentially curable.

JANUARY 2015