



HEALTH & HEALING

Global Reintegration: Our Opportunity

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If not now, when? The need to bring traditional Chinese medicine into the lives of individuals globally has never been more crucial. With COVID-19 uprooting all sense of normal this past year, many families have been struggling and will feel the effects for some time. As we all emerge from isolation, our reintegration process begins. Individuals have been challenged emotionally, mentally and physically. As practitioners, we can offer coping strategies and simple healing techniques, rooted in self-cultivation, to help others feel heard and guided.

Emotionally

When a person is stuck in any one emotion, it is often a sign of imbalance indicating help is needed. Self cultivation routines such as *qi gong*, *Dao-In* and acupressure, with immune-boosting exercises such as tapping and wiping down the channels, will directly impact and benefit human health.



The widespread current state of emotional uncertainty is a call to us to offer easy-to-follow techniques for instantaneous relief. By teaching how to simply pause and become fully present in the moment, and guiding patients inward with mindfulness tools, like introspective body scans, we can create a platform for improving health.

We can also offer a guided meditation of color and sound associated with the *Zang Fu* organs and channels. The individual will feel more connected and balanced as they acquire new skills to strengthen their inner health and move into the outside world.

The exercises we can offer are geared toward shaking the immobilized *qi* and creating more emotional flow. The benefits of teaching others a path of awareness has a positive ripple effect throughout the community. It draws families together and offers coping skills when faced with the challenges of the present moment.

For example, local public schools have begun to reopen. Children have returned with their typical overflowing excitement, which can sometimes manifest as nervousness. Using acupuncture and a healing tuning fork, I often show them how to open the point on the bottom of the foot that helps the earth's energy "come on in!" (KD 1 Bubbling Spring.) I subsequently observe intrigue in their eyes and exuberance in their smiles. Suddenly, a fun tool that feels like their very own superpower resides in the palm of their hand.

The result is an overwhelming sense of independence and empowerment. With this "magical wand," the child learns how to become aware of their own body nature. Through such surface sensations, they begin to cultivate a connection to their own inner alchemy. The power these youth have to change what is going on inside by affecting the surface of their bodies empowers and captivates them immediately.

Mentally

Mental exhaustion is naturally a common result of the past year. As normal, predictable schedules turned to a stay-at-home orientation, many people have expressed sadness and inability to focus on common day-to-day tasks. Vibrant and productive individuals, many rooted and aligned with concepts like growth mindset, are now faced with the new challenge of reintegrating into society after this long hiatus. We can inspire hope by activating *qi* and creating free flow in areas of blockage. Energy flows where the mind goes, and the self-healing techniques we can offer engage the will to facilitate movement and action.

By creating energetic flow through easy-to-follow exercises, the individual flushes the organs with *qi* and blood. By rooting the *shen*, the flood of creativity and the hope of endless possibilities returns. In a way, our whole country has been in a state of post-traumatic stress disorder since March 2020. COVID-19 arrived and pulled the rug out from underneath us all.

It has felt a lot like being grounded as a teenager - when you weren't allowed to go out and socialize with your peers. The confinement and isolation we have all endured may be more triggering for some. Feelings of overwhelm are exacerbated if depression or anxiety were pre-existing. We as health care providers have a wide variety of mindfulness and visualization exercises to alleviate the mental struggle; and to restore a fluidity that guides the individual toward internal balance and mental harmony.

For example, if we have the individual place their hands on their belly and breathe deeply into the lower *dan tien*, we have sent the mind on a specific task. What results is a settling of mental overthinking and agitation. This feels amazing to the participant. A noticeable tranquility results simply by sending energetic focus to below the navel.

To add to this effect, we can guide the meditation through the meridian and organ systems by using the Five Element-associated colors and healing sounds. To breath in the fresh color of the organ, and to exhale the stuck, dark and cloudy, is not only effective as a way to help someone learn how to settle down, but is also extremely therapeutic, as the mind draws *qi* to the area and creates flow where blockages were just seconds prior. A feeling of relief and an uplift of their mental state results.

Physically

As reinforced by David Seaman's recent article "The Elephant in the COVID Living Room" [January 2021 digital issue], obesity is a growing issue. We are all living more sedentary lives due to the pandemic - especially children. Lack of movement has aggravated many patterns of disharmony, one of which is liver *qi* stagnation with a flaring of anger, frustration and irritability.

Previously, when school was in session, movement was a natural part of our children's schedule. There was time to walk and meander around campus before, between and after classes. Children participated in physical education during the school day, and played sports outside in sunshine and fresh air after dismissal. The past year's mandated distance learning eliminated any direct need for kids to move and has made them extremely sedentary.

We as practitioners of TCM have the skills to directly connect with children's families by inspiring change and offering relief. To begin, we must partner with the public school PE departments and offer self-cultivation classes as part of the curriculum. This will hugely impact kids physically, and subsequently benefit their emotional and mental health.

Embrace our Opportunity

It is clear that the planet is sick and humans are struggling. We all need healing. It is our job to

serve and nourish our communities. By extending ourselves into the world, we can directly impact and create global positive change.

Being stuck at home with one's parents for over a year is probably any child's worst nightmare. Let's rejoice as we reintegrate! Helping kids thrive as they leave the nest and safely explore with other adults and peers at school is within our reach. Simple awareness tools will empower others as increased *qi* circulation promotes balance, health and longevity.

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