



CLINICAL CORNER

Depth of the Points: Hidden Potentials Revealed Through Challenging Times

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Practicing acupuncture during the pandemic has presented many challenges. Many clinicians were unable to see patients in person for several months. We had to get creative and inventive. The gift of a crisis is the innovation that can come from it.

As always, my patients teach me about healing methods and their processes. Their needs can give birth to new methods, practices and insights.

The power of the acupuncture points and channels revealed themselves to me through working with a patient from across the country. We were unable to meet in person, so we began doing virtual sessions. This is not something I usually did in my acupuncture practice, but Robert was insistent that I was the person who could help him. He asked me to find a way.



I had worked with Robert (in person) years ago, before I was an acupuncturist, when I was using a combination of *reiki* and *qigong* energy healing to help people. We had not been in touch for a long time. When Robert was researching ways to treat his severe, chronic autoimmune issues, he came across several of my articles online and immediately reached out.

Virtually, Robert and I explored the acupuncture channels and their points. He'd present his daily symptoms and I'd lead him through a self-administered acupressure protocol that we'd organically create in the moment. I had limited experience with healing that lacked physical contact; and yet the resonance created through the online "presence" generated with Robert allowed us to achieve some of the most effective sessions I've witnessed.

One day, Robert shared an experience he'd been having with a particular acupuncture point I had suggested. Robert's experience gave me a deeper appreciation for what the acupuncture points really are and what they can do.

Robert said he'd started "entering" into the point HT 8 (*Shao Fu*) during his workouts with his trainer. Robert frequently had difficulty with his vitality and endurance, especially when required to exert himself physically and mentally. He found if he "went inside" HT 8, he could get through many moments that were usually too grueling for him, without becoming fatigued or defeated.

The imagery generated by the name *Shao Fu*, translated as the "lesser palace," is a safe refuge. J.R. Worsley described it as a type of "haven and source of riches for those who arrive here." I'd always appreciated the imagery and poetry of this point's name, but focused more on its capacity to calm the spirit and clear heat. Without telling him, Robert showed me that HT 8 can be exactly as Worsley described it.

I recall Jeffrey Yuen teaching that acupuncture points were classically known as "*kong*," as in the acupuncture point LU 6 (*Kong Zui*). *Kong* means hole, as in an empty space where hidden potential

lies.

The *Ling Shu* teaches that the practice of acupuncture lies in finding the empty space within the point, entering into it and waiting for the *qi* to arrive. This description presents the acupuncture points as meditation holes, like caves where mystics can enter to commune with the deeper aspects of themselves, their spirit, nature and the cosmos.

Chapter 13 of the *Ling Shu* describes how people are not only connected to nature and the cosmos, but are also a part of it. Each of the acupuncture channels is like a river, resonating with earthy elements, while the human spirit (also contacted through the channels) resonates with the cosmic spirit. The acupuncture points are not only switches to regulate physiology and resolve pathology; they are also portals where we can communicate with the energies of the universe: Heaven and Earth - or if we wish to be less esoteric, the deeper aspects of ourselves.

For many people, physical intervention with an acupuncture needle is necessary to activate the "empty space" of the point or *kong*. The points are filled with potential: they contain *qi*, which is transformative capacity. However if resonance and presence are strong enough, the acupuncture points can be activated through non-physical intention and focus.

Through our virtual work together, essentially placing attention and intention into the acupuncture points, Robert began to develop a deep relationship with his body. We'd explore and classify the points based on what they did for him. We'd discuss the quality of the points and the effects they'd generate.

Robert began learning several protocols and individual points he could massage and meditate on to treat the various difficulties he'd encounter with his immune system, digestion, sleep, body temperature, anxiety and body pains. The results were often immediate and highly effective.

Working with Robert was a powerful experience - teaching a patient to learn to treat himself. Our work was highly focused on unlocking the hidden potential for self-regulation and self-care within Robert's own body. We'd connect symptoms and imbalances with points, channels and protocols so Robert could identify what was out of sync and correct it. Since body energy (*qi*) regulation was Robert's chief issue, merely activating and moving energy often had strong results.

Robert's extreme body awareness and sensitivity was the root of his suffering, yet it also became the way in which we discovered he could heal himself. Through increased understanding of the acupuncture points and what they can do to regulate his energy, Robert gained a method for helping himself through many difficulties brought on by his autoimmunity.

During our sessions, I'd ask Robert to go into each of the acupuncture points and describe what they felt like, what they did to his energy; as well as any other insight he could glean from them. When a point would "light up," through his own self-awareness or through my insight, intuition or knowledge-based choosing of the points, I'd ask that we "go into" the point and allow images, sensations and energetic changes to teach us.

Each acupuncture point became a mystical meditation cave for us. After several months, Robert remarked that he had come to believe his body really was able to heal and self-regulate itself. The answers he needed were within. As he learned to follow the messages and directions from his body, and go into the acupuncture points for guidance, he started to get to know the points and channels as allies that he could call upon when needed.

