

Watering the Seeds of Understanding and Compassion

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We are presented with an array of violence, pain and suffering on a daily basis. Our profession seeks to help those who are experiencing disharmony and pain on many levels: physical, emotional and spiritual. How do we deal with this turbulent sea of trouble? How do we work toward a reasonable goal and not become overwhelmed or caught up in the process of anger and pain ourselves?

Thich Nhat Han, a very wise man of peace and meditation, has made an apt analogy that seems to get to the heart of the matter. He explains that we all carry the seeds of violence, anger and discord in our body. They are our constant companions through life, along with the seeds of love, compassion and understanding. Our power lies in the choices that we make as to which seeds to water and nourish. Nourish those seeds of compassion and love, and they will bear fruit of peace and tranquility. Nourish those of anger, and they bear fruit of violence, discord and disagreement. Every second that we breathe gives us an opportunity to choose.

This concept goes straight to the heart of Oriental medicine and its reliance on the principles of the Tao. The only thing we can count on is change. We use this axiom to understand the flow of energy and how it manifests in our physical bodies. We can take it a step further and say that with such change comes the power to choose, again and again, to water the seeds of caring and love, and let the seeds of discord wither and die.

Misunderstandings, poor communication, blame, and so on, are a part of life for all of us. When dealing with people who are ill, it is inevitable that these issues will come up sooner or later. If we can breathe for a moment and choose wisely, our reactions to these events will be of a more positive nature, in turn, leading to a similar response. As healers we become a mirror for our patients; our behavior and demeanor sets the stage for their healing journey. It is an amazing responsibility that requires a lifetime of experience and knowledge.

There are so many ways to develop these attributes; this is one that has helped me and I would be very interested to hear from anyone who would like to share theirs.

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