

Turning Over New Leaves for Fall

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It does not seem possible that 2007 is drawing to a close. Time has passed so quickly. For me, the start of autumn has been a time to attend seminars. Tony Robbins reminds us that we must grow, which is why the information presented in the seminars and symposiums I have attended is so valuable.

In September, I had the privilege to attend the seminar conducted by Stephanie Kimber, LAc, the professional trainer and coach for Steiner Leisure. This is the organization that recruits and places acupuncturists on cruise ships around the world.

The time spent in class was a great experience. I met people who were training to deliver acupuncture services to passengers during cruises. I was a guest on a cruise ship last year and received some of these services. The spa and acupuncture services do enhance the pleasure of a cruise. In addition to treating passengers, the acupuncturists who are on the cruise ships are medical professionals. The acupuncturists present lectures to passengers explaining how acupuncture and herbal therapy work and what conditions are treatable by acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. They are helping to educate the passengers about the healing and restorative powers of acupuncture. They are doing a service for the entire profession.

The students in the class were trained in the art of public speaking. Stephanie uses a very masterful PowerPoint presentation to help educate the audience. It is well-accepted that one of the best methods of marketing is to present a short talk about acupuncture and Oriental Medicine somewhere in your own community. Many people have a fear of public speaking, and this class presents a foolproof method of presenting a talk about a subject you enjoy. This class included the practical experience of standing up in front of the audience and giving your own rendition of the presentation. Congratulations to all the people who took the challenge and did it!

I also attended several classes with Sam Collins, the columnist from *Acupuncture Today* who writes about insurance and reimbursement. His talk was about the new guidelines for acupuncture in relation to evidence-based medicine. I have used the term *evidence-based* on numerous occasions. I have referred to this concept numerous times in classes, seminars and general conversation. It was just this past weekend that I came in contact with a very simplified definition for this term. I thought it might be helpful for you, so I am passing it along. The basis of this explanation comes from the definition section of the Medical Treatment Utilization Schedule for the state of California's Department of Industrial Relations. This document outlines medical treatments for workers' compensation for which insurance companies will pay. Evidence-based medicine is defined as treatment supported by a systematic review of literature published in medical journals in MEDLINE.

This same document includes a section on "Acupuncture Medical Treatment Guidelines." It states that acupuncture can be used to reduce pain and inflammation, increase blood flow, increase range of motion, decrease the side effects of medication-induced nausea, promote relaxation in an anxious

patient, and reduce muscle spasm. This same document also includes a section that indicates that acupuncture or acupuncture with electric stimulation can be used for the following presenting complaints: neck and upper back, elbow, forearm, wrist, head, low back, knee, ankle and foot pain, suffering and the restriction of function. Guidelines for treating shoulder complaints have already been addressed in another document. These new guidelines, adopted by the state of California, are based on ones already in use in Colorado. This is a very positive accomplishment for the profession. There is now documented evidence that acupuncture works, and the information comes from within the United States.

Finally, ABC TV just recently reported on a German study of almost 1,200 patients. The study states that "Six months of traditional Chinese or even sham acupuncture treatment appeared more effective than conventional treatment for low back pain. Acupuncture gives physicians a promising and effective intervention for chronic low back pain, with few adverse effects or contraindications."

All in all, the current fall season seems to be bringing good things to the acupuncture and Oriental medicine profession!

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