

An Interview with Amanda Shayle

Jennifer Waters, LAc, Dipl. Ac

JW: Can you share with us some of your history and how you became an acupuncturist? What did you do prior to becoming an acupuncturist? Where did you go to school?

AS: My background is classical ballet and choreography, followed by a long career in media sales (design exhibitions - which led me to also train as an interior designer, consumer outdoor advertising and business-to-business publishing). I was ad manager for a professional security magazine and this led to me training in Korean Hapkido back in the 1990's. My tai chi teacher in later years treated my injuries with acupuncture during my transition to Chinese Tai Chi fighting. I began studying acupuncture with him as part of my passion for Asian tradition and realized it was becoming more than just something to learn as a benefit myself and my family. The school was The College of Chinese Medicine in London. Quickly, I became student representative, followed by Secretary to The Acupuncture Society (their Professional Association). Since 2007, I have been Vice Chairman, actively involved in working toward statutory regulation and liaising with other professional bodies in the U.K. and worldwide.

JW: What is the greatest discovery you have made while working on someone or while teaching?

AS: Teaching has been an incredible tool to research and test new ideas. Apart from the needle development, my greatest discovery was from research in the cadaver room with Gil Hedley. I now realize there is no suture line/zip between facial tissue and the rest of the body. I see incredible results with scarring such as atrophy with acne scarring where I seem to be "cutting the fibrous grass" below the surface with the intradermal work I do. From my work, I see how our treatments, which stem from constitutional work, really improve our skin all over. I can tell what a persons issues and face look like just from feeling the skin on their wrist. The issues with botox, et al, is that people have young (sometimes strange-looking) faces and old bodies. This is why some stars are now dropping such treatments, followed by their faces dropping. My long term case studies over eight years show how lasting our treatments are. I always say to my patients, "you will never be the same again - but in a good way!" They laugh and then tell me 6 months down the line that I was right.

JW: Share with us your evolution from being a one-on-one practitioner to teaching around the world?

AS: As a freshly qualified acupuncturist, I was almost immediately assisting my teacher in clinic, clocking up 100s of hours of additional clinical practice and also sorting out his herb room - learning new things all the time. It was an apprenticeship role and really helped me to apply my training. As I began helping new students, I gained confidence both as a clinician and as a trainer - something I had also been doing with my martial arts. Very quickly, I began teaching cosmetic acupuncture for the college with many overseas students traveling to learn with me. The first international opportunity was to teach in Japan in 2011. My first trip was to train my assistants and to learn to work with their translator. I then returned later in the year to run the workshop. It was baptism by fire and I was both

nervous and excited. Everyone said to me it was like selling ice to the Eskimos! I remember being asked by the Japanese who my famous teacher was. I said this was my material but maybe I would be famous one day! Both trips were a great success and this was followed by teaching at the TCM Kongress in Rothenburg in 2013 - again a great success. After that, word spread and I have been teaching overseas ever since - and I love it!

JW: What drew you into the field of cosmetic acupuncture?

AS: I was taught acupuncture by three men and every time some reference was made to beauty or regeneration I was all ears! I even purchased a carp head and made soup with it as they had told me it helped with memory and brain health!

I recall looking in the mirror at the hairdresser in my 40s around that time and to my horror I saw my face was sagging and I was beginning to age. Hairdresser mirrors are brightly lit (not flattering) - but that was it I was determined to do something about it. I noticed how much younger I looked 10 years later when comparing two professional shots with my kids. Even my beauty therapist at that time noticed how much tighter my skin had become and when I bumped into a school mother in the street several years later she could not believe how my skin had improved.

JW: What should be required of anyone who wants to represent your work? Any acupuncturist in general?

AS: I used to just teach acupuncturists who can draw on their particular skills in TCM to improve constitutional issues. I do, however, teach a protocol and immediately teach how to differentiate from patient to patient. More recently, the science I teach evidence-based links and the simplicity of the work which I think of as sculpture has appealed to doctors and other medical professionals across Europe. I taught in Slovenian Hospital last year in an ex-intensive care unit. The medical team loved the work as did the research team from a famous U.K. cancer research hospital, The Christie, where I have taught twice.

Graduates from our courses can do their own thing with their new skills. Also, the techniques fit in well with other systems so I encourage people to train with others and make it their own. Those who want to become part of my brand need to attend more of my classes and assist and develop their skills. My new U.K. Academy makes this possible. I do have overseas colleagues who come and learn together as well. I don't charge for this - its about us working as a team moving forward. Their vision and values needs to match mine so we can deliver a truly branded service to the public. I will support them with referred clients and more. My "Uber team," as I call them, are amazing and part of the Acuregen family. They help me teach internationally and in the U.K. and attend public exhibitions such as The Anti Aging Show at Olympia in 2015. We are having loads of fun as the brand develops. I have "Uber" colleagues in the Middle East as well as Europe. The U.S. is next and I hope to run a workshop later in the year.

JW: Tell us about your company and how you came to develop the Thrive Intradermal needles.

AS: Teaching has been an incredible tool to research and test new ideas. My interest - no passion - with trying out different needles is to establish comfort and effectiveness. As my work with facial acupuncture evolved, I realized that everyone just used needles available in the marketplace. The really fine intradermals were fiddly to use, invisible and actually potentially dangerous while trying to teach others as they would drop them - sometimes in peoples hair on their face. Also, there were times

when I could not get hold of the needles I wanted as they were not available. I decided, with feedback from student groups, to develop my own needle - the Thrive range - now patent-pending and with registered designs worldwide, including China, Japan and the U.S. Incredibly, the first draft was on the back of a beer mat in an English pub! I still have the original needle board that I used to present to everyone so they could see the differences and then try them out. Since then (2012), I have developed a natural skincare range and evolved Acuregen as an international Cosmetic Acupuncture Brand. The last six months have been spent promoting to the consumer market in the U.K and there is chatter all over the blogger sites now - more to come - so very excited and loving it even though its been really hard work and long hours.

JW: Share with us the benefits of working with these needles vs. other facial needles.

AS: The little handles are tweezer friendly and finger friendly which is particularly helpful when you remove them from the eyebrows. Not only can they be seen, they stand slightly proud of the skin enabling removal without plucking eyebrows. Traditional intradermals are designed to stay in and so by design they are tiny and sometimes almost invisible. These needles are designed for purpose. They do not drape over the eyes! The 4mm version is truly gentle. It is .12 gauge and has silicon so it is virtually painless. The 3mm and 6mm are .18 and the three sizes enable practitioners to deal with different tissue types and monitor results as they are colour-coded handles. All are embedded in a single pad and can be handled easily. When packed onto the skin, they are easy to remove without contaminating the tweezers with blood. Also, they enable me to use my special treatment masks and LED light on top. I had a Trigeminal Neuralgia patient the other day who was needle shy, but was not scared by the look of them and was able to palpate her own face to tell me where the pain was - even with needles around the area she was touching. I think the hedgehog look is a thing of the past as facial tissue is so superficial and my techniques do the job - I base a lot of this effectiveness on skin rolling research. Long handles get in the way and we all hate the thought of someone knocking them when working! In a nutshell, the Thrive needles not only help me work more quickly and safely they enable me to deliver three treatments in one: acupuncture, facial treatment mask (fertilizer) and light (to encourage cellular function and vascular development).

JW: What is the best way to train with you?

AS: We run both courses close together (Core 1 and 2) monthly in the U.K. with 4-day events for those who have traveled. I can also do one-to-one training. Overseas trips are on my calendar with the U.S. being planned for early November 2016. Online teaching is not possible as I cannot teach these techniques this way. Maybe in the future we will do the theory online, however, but as you may have gathered, I am all about applied learning and hands on.

JW: What modalities do you employ other than needles? What is the most effective and why?

AS: Apart from the results I see from using my skincare range, my most amazing/favorite tool is LED light therapy. Collaboration with In Light Wellness Systems since 2014, has enabled me to explore this technology and see the results for myself. We are inducing new collagen and improving cellular function in the whole body. Light is a fantastic way of supporting this and actually works on its own for those who do not want needles. LED light oxygenates the blood, releases nitric oxide (nourishes blood vessel development) as two of the many functions it promotes. If we are improving skin by initiating healing cascades (aka collagen induction) then this maximizes our results. After all, you don't plant a seed in poor soil and then starve it of water and light if you want it to grow and flourish into a mature

plant.

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