

WALKING ON TWO LEGS
The Art and Value of Medical Acupuncture

Joseph M. Helms, M.D.

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The work carried out by me in this dissertation is original and carried out by me solely, except for the acknowledged direction and assistance gratefully received from colleagues and mentors.

Joseph M. Helms

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ABSTRACT

Walking on Two Legs was created as preparatory reading for physicians attending the “Medical Acupuncture for Physicians” training program developed by the Helms Medical Institute and sponsored since 1983 by the UCLA School of Medicine. It is the result of transcribed interviews with eighteen of the author’s patients, written and spoken narratives from thirty-six graduates of the medical acupuncture course, and the distillation of the core tenets of acupuncture theory.

The document is created in three sections. The first five chapters introduce the reader to the experience of an acupuncture treatment and its consequences, told in the words of the patients undergoing treatment. Chapters six through ten present an organization of the human condition from the perspective of Chinese traditional medicine. The classical Oriental texts explore the notion of *Qi*—vital life energy—and functions of the organs that are more comprehensive than described in Western biomedicine. This material offers the reader a means to identify and organize healthy constitutional qualities as well as pathological disturbances from information typically volunteered by patients, but often overlooked by physicians.

The final three chapters use the words of physicians who have trained in medical acupuncture. These doctors speak of their motivation to study medical acupuncture, the process of learning and integrating it into practice, and the impact on their perception of their patients and themselves as physicians and healers.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAMA	American Academy of Medical Acupuncture
AHMA	American Holistic Medical Association
a.k.a.	also known as
ANS	autonomic nervous system
CEO	chief executive officer
EEG	electroencephalogram
GERD	gastroesophageal reflux disease
GI	gastrointestinal
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
HMI	Helms Medical Institute
HMO	health maintenance organization
IBS	irritable bowel syndrome
MRI	magnetic resonance imaging
PT	physical therapy
PUD	peptic ulcer disease
UC	ulcerative colitis
UCLA	University of California at Los Angeles

PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM DISSERTATION

There are no publications arising from this dissertation.

INTRODUCTION

In the spring of 1968, just before I began medical school, I spent some time in Paris. In that season the City of Light was illuminated with burning barricades and passionate student arguments about the future of civilization. In those heady times I fell in with a small group of French and American graduate students who dissected the daily events of riots and demonstrations. During one of those intense late-night dramas, one of my friends, with a theatrical French flourish, thrust a book about acupuncture in front of my eyes. The cover photograph was of a man's face bristling with a dozen needles. I was stunned by what I saw. I recognized then, without understanding why, that what I was looking at was important.

I bought the book the next day and read it during the next week. (It was the first book I read in French.) What I have come to realize is that what was happening in the streets of Paris in the 1960s was not nearly as important as what was taking place in its prestigious medical schools, hospitals, and clinics. Acupuncture was at that time being integrated into everyday medical practice in France and across Europe. For me, the real revolution occurring in Paris was the teaching and practice of medical acupuncture. I understood this only later, when I had begun to practice medicine.

I started working as a doctor in 1973, initially in emergency rooms and urgent-care clinics, and later in private practice. What I found in those early years was that much of what brought people to the emergency room or drop-in clinic had been ignored in my

classroom and clinical training in medicine. My patients kept telling me that something was wrong with them, yet my conventional medical education had not taught me the language I needed to hear them. Their symptoms were not serious enough or had no laboratory findings to qualify for an orthodox diagnosis and treatment. Consequently, I spent much time listening to complaints, trying to help patients with explanations and reassurances. At best I could alert them to symptoms that, should they occur, would qualify for a “real” diagnosis. Depending on the day, between 30 and 70 percent of the patients I saw fit into this category.

During this same time period, the United States and the People’s Republic of China began to tentatively explore ways of easing tensions. Ping-pong diplomacy was in the air. In 1971, while he was in Beijing reporting about a match between American and Chinese ping-pong teams, the *New York Times* columnist James Reston underwent an emergency appendectomy. Following the surgery, Reston reported that he received an acupuncture treatment to relieve the pain he was experiencing and that the treatment was entirely successful. A routine procedure in Eastern medicine was reported with headlines in the U.S. In the months after President Nixon visited Chairman Mao in 1972, Americans became curious about acupuncture. And like a slowly germinating seed that was bursting forth, I remembered that book I had picked up in Paris in 1968. I finally connected the face full of needles with the faces of all those who had been coming to the emergency room looking for help I could not provide, with problems I could not understand.

There were no serious acupuncture training opportunities available for physicians in the United States in those days. Because I knew that acupuncture had been practiced and taught in France throughout the twentieth century, I decided to arrange my work

schedule to learn what I could about this time-tested therapy. Between 1975 and 1978 I shuttled back and forth between California and France, staying in Paris for periods of three weeks to three months, then returning to the emergency rooms to finance the next trip.

As I gained confidence in my diagnostic and clinical skills, I started treating patients in Berkeley. This was exciting. This was what I wanted medicine to be. It was a wonderful time in my life and in American culture. This was a period of openness and experimentation in so many areas—and medicine was one of them. In 1978 the founding president of the American Holistic Medical Association (AHMA) invited me to organize an acupuncture course for physicians. The first time I gave the AHMA program there were five participants, and no textbooks or material in English. A few years later, the continuing medical education office at UCLA picked up the course and twenty-five students attended the first program. In 1980 I gave up working in emergency rooms, opened a full-time practice combining family medicine and acupuncture, and started teaching regularly.

At first, learning the theory and clinical skills of acupuncture was difficult. As a physician who had been trained exclusively in Western concepts, little about acupuncture made sense to me. Connecting terms like “stagnant liver Qi” to symptoms of anxiety or muscle tension and acknowledging that these might be the precursors of more serious conditions stretched my imagination. But in a remarkably short time I found myself treating those patients I formerly had been sending away with bromides of false support. One of my first acupuncture patients in Berkeley, a high school teacher in her early forties named Mary, had been having explosive and unexplained headaches for years. EEGs, neurological examinations, and other lab workups had never turned up anything

abnormal. While her complaints would not conform to a Western diagnostic model, they fit perfectly into the acupuncture diagnosis of “rising liver fire.” When I asked if she would like to be treated with acupuncture, she was a little hesitant. She did not know what acupuncture was. I explained as best I could, and she agreed. I placed the needles in the appropriate pattern and manipulated them. I gave her several treatments. Her headaches stopped. She said it was like magic. But it was not. It was medicine.

What I learned in France I confirmed in my own practice. I have since been teaching it to doctors in this country. In my physician-students I observe and guide the same learning process I went through. The Helms Medical Institute program—still sponsored by UCLA—has trained five thousand of the six thousand physicians currently practicing acupuncture in this country. This paper, in the widest sense, is an attempt to expand that learning process to people who might today or in the future turn to acupuncture for help. I know now that each patient I have served is really a medical partner. This paper is designed to promote and enhance that sense of medical partnership.

Constitutional Biopsychotypes

Learning acupuncture demands coming to a different understanding of the human body. All people have unique psychological and physical characteristics because of qualities inherited from their parents. The acupuncture tradition describes the healthy makeup of a person without favoring one constitution over another. A person’s constitutional makeup embodies both innate strengths *and* weaknesses, the keys to both health and illness as we pass through the physical and emotional stresses of daily life. As we are made up, so we break down. Our strongest qualities and characteristics often prove to also be our weakest links.

Disturbance in a single organ or in the harmonious interaction among the organs can create symptoms which, depending on their severity, can eventually degenerate into conventionally identified illnesses. But many of these disturbances cannot be discovered in their early stages through Western technology. Before water boils it has a calm surface. The same is true with many brewing problems in the organs treatable by acupuncture but invisible to Western medicine. For example, a muscular, athletic person may suffer from tightness in his jaws and muscle tension headaches. Or a tidy and meticulous bookkeeper might become so obsessed with mincing perfection that worry creates stomach troubles. Over time they may develop more serious problems. In the first case it will probably involve the musculoskeletal system; in the second case, the digestive system.

One of the keys to understanding modern acupuncture as it integrates with Western medicine is the definition of specific constitutional *bio-psycho-types* and their associated strengths and vulnerabilities. Much of the writing about acupuncture from China focuses on acupuncture channels and points without offering any real sense of the way in which these are all parts of a unified structural energy system. Organizing constitutional qualities into three main biopsychotypes is the result of viewing the classical Chinese understanding of our makeup from the perspective of modern Western physiology and psychology. The French conceived this brilliantly during the second half of the twentieth century, and the Americans have confirmed it with three decades of clinical experience.

I have named the three biopsychotypes “Vision/Action,” “Nurture/Duty,” and “Will/Spirit,” rather than using their Chinese names. The divisions include the physical and psychological qualities predominant in the types. Each one of the types represents a duality of positive and negative possibilities, of healthy and less-than-healthy expression.

These types are really exaggerated ideals, and in practical terms most people are mixtures of more than one type. But most people have predominant characteristics linked with one of the biopsychotypes, which will best explain their strengths and weaknesses.

See appendix for a questionnaire to use in determining constitutional biopsychotype.

Acupuncture Treatments

There is no simple model to explain how acupuncture works in Western scientific terms. The acupuncture needle pattern is a gentle electro-energetic stimulation that has an impact on the subtle and gross physical body. This input acts to enhance the body's self-regulatory system, which is necessary to maintain or restore the internal balance we call homeostasis.

We do not completely understand many of these self-regulatory homeostatic mechanisms, nor how acupuncture influences them. We observe that the body has an innate ability to use the signals from the acupuncture needle patterns to help it repair itself and return to its healthy state. An acupuncture needle pattern is designed according to the location, nature, and duration of the problem being treated. The needles stimulate the body to return as best it can towards normal balance and function.

Acupuncture therapy has its strengths and weaknesses. It is most effective to correct the earliest manifestations of problems, because in the early stages of a disease process it is easier to return to healthy balance. As disorders fester and dig in, acupuncture alone may not be adequate to modify the course of a problem. Likewise, if the cause of the problem is emotional turmoil, even if the presenting symptoms are physical, acupuncture alone will not be able to change the cause, even though it can help with the

symptoms. Medical acupuncturists work with patients to plan comprehensive treatment programs that employ acupuncture as well as other conventional and complementary approaches. We want to do whatever we can to help our patients get better.

To illustrate, I'll introduce a patient I have known for years. He was fifty-six years old when he first came to see me, and suffered from a progressively crippling disorder known as spinal stenosis. A tall, thick-set former truck driver named Johnny Maddox, he had visited several of the nation's top medical centers in search of help and had undergone a number of surgeries. Conventional medicine had essentially done all it could for him. His prognosis was bleak, in that he faced a future of increasing pain and debility.

He described the pain in his neck, arms, hands, middle back, lower back, hips, and legs. It wasn't everywhere all at once, but some place in his body was always hurting, with the pains growing ever more acute. He now believed that his surgeries had only complicated his problems. He had recently been thinking about suicide.

By observing him during the interview, I understood his biopsychotype and how it related to his personality and his pain. I also understood that the progress of his disease was inescapable. His problem was complex, dense, many-layered. I started him with a half dozen weekly treatments, then opened the interval between visits to two weeks, then three. As positive changes began to last from one treatment to the next, the break between sessions went to four, and finally eight weeks. For over two decades Johnny has been coming in regularly for treatments. He is neither in a wheelchair nor in a nursing home. Today, in his mid-seventies, he is still a strong-willed man, able to work and to enjoy a good part of life. Acupuncture did not cure him, but it has facilitated the free flow of energy in his body, which is fundamental to sound health. And that flow of energy has

reduced his pain to a tolerable level and allowed him to continue his life productively and with dignity.

Acupuncture Energy

For most westerners, the idea of “energy” is not a medical concept. In Eastern medicine it is the key to understanding and practice. Acupuncture medicine measures health by the vitality of energy flowing from organ to organ in the body, around and around, up and down, following precise, well-described pathways. The word the Chinese use for this potent life energy is “Qi.” The two-tiered Chinese character for the word gives us a sense of its meaning in classical texts (fig. 1). The lower part of the character represents rice, and the upper part, vapor. We interpret the image to mean that the finest substance received from eating and digesting food is transformed into the vitality the body needs for its many complex activities.



Fig. 1. Chinese character for Qi

The concept of Qi separates the tradition of acupuncture from the tradition of biomedical science. Although patients and physicians instinctively comprehend the idea

of “life force,” there is no precise equivalent in Western medicine. As physicians we observe the level of alertness in our patients and easily acknowledge the differences between the vitality of a robust youth and that of a dottering elder. But the Chinese tradition of identifying the different energy-producing processes of the organs, and evaluating the relative balance of that energy, remains an alien concept in the West. The circulation of Qi is at the foundation of the acupuncture tradition. Qi is present in all of life. Moving Qi is essential to devising successful acupuncture treatments.

In Western medicine, patients are passive recipients of the medical services they receive. They come to a doctor’s office expecting to be told exactly what is wrong with them and what the doctor’s plans are for the appropriate therapy. Patients in this setting play little role other than to describe what ails them. The doctor listens and orders tests or prescribes medications or follow-up trips to consulting specialists—often with no sense that the patient might have something more to offer than symptoms.

With acupuncture the relationship between physician and patient is more interactive. The physician acupuncturist needs to know far more than symptoms. The patient needs to understand that his input is essential for the doctor to devise a coherent and successful plan of treatment. For example, when I first saw Johnny Maddox, I needed to know more than his medical record or his symptoms. I wanted to know about his favorite activities, what flavors and colors he liked, whether he thought he got along well with other people, how he handled anger. These facets of personality were essential in formulating a correct diagnosis and plan for treatment—and they depended, quite obviously, on *his* powers of recollection and observation, not mine. The unique attributes of personality are vital to determine the biopsychotype, and defining the biopsychotype is critical to understanding the basis of the person’s problem.

An acupuncture diagnosis takes more time and covers more ground than a routine checkup or visit to a doctor's office. A patient not familiar with the tradition of acupuncture at first might become wary. Questions about lifestyle, moods, temperament, tastes in color, music, food might seem quaint, far-fetched, even irrelevant. But to a skilled medical acupuncturist they are as important as X-rays and blood work.

Physician acupuncturists use the same approach as other physicians to understand their patients, but we do this employing the skills of both biomedicine and acupuncture. We delve deeply into the patient's persona to clarify the most subtle aspects of an illness or disturbance. We can achieve an analysis and plan for therapy only when the patient has provided enough information.

I want this paper to be used as well as read. My goal in writing it is to let those interested in acupuncture see that this time-tested therapy works best when patients themselves become actively involved in their own programs of healing. These are more than words. The design of this paper quite specifically will help readers *use* as well as understand the centuries-old wisdom of acupuncture.

CHAPTER ONE
CIRCULATION OF QI

The Acupuncture Evaluation

One of the most exciting aspects of learning acupuncture as a physician is that what our patients tell us at our initial meeting takes on meaning well beyond conventional medical interpretations and enriches our understanding of the patient as a whole person. In medical school we are taught to interview patients following a format that starts with the chief complaint, then gets to the background of this problem, and follows with an exploration of the patient's past medical history, childhood illnesses, and family health patterns. We ask about the patient's social situation and lifestyle habits, and review each organ system with questions to confirm that we have not overlooked any symptoms or information that could be helpful to establish a diagnosis. This is an orderly and logical process that is very useful for a general medical or an acupuncture evaluation.

With specialization in medicine, however, doctors start overlooking features and symptoms of the patients that don't fit into our information categories. We tend to hear only symptoms and stories that conform to the diagnoses we are considering. We want to arrive at the correct diagnosis of the problem, but can lose sight of the patient in the process. Consider that this challenging intellectual process occurs in the midst of a busy practice: it's no wonder that our patients can feel we are not listening or hearing.

Studying medical acupuncture helps us to understand patterns of both health and

disease. We look at the constitutional makeup of our patients by linking their psychological and physical characteristics with the symptoms that brought them in to see us. In doing this we hear more of the information that they offer spontaneously during the interview, because it makes sense in the expanded context of biopsychotypes. In addition to our queries following the conventional format, we ask questions that sometimes seem strange, like: “If I asked you to choose quickly, without really thinking about it, among red, yellow, green, blue, black, and white, which color would you go for?” And “If you had no dietary restrictions and were going to binge on your favorite treat, what flavor would you be looking for: sweet, salty, flavorful or spicy hot, sour-citrus, or bitter?”

In the tradition of acupuncture each internal organ is described as having a larger territory of influence in the body than the physiological functions we attribute to it in Western medicine. The kidneys, for example, filter blood and make urine, but—in the acupuncture tradition—also produce energy that influences body temperature, bone and bone marrow, the ears and hearing, and hair on the head.

Disorders of Kidney¹ energy can be linked not only to the gross signs of urinary tract disease, but also to subtle symptoms such as internal chilliness, problems with joints or hearing, or premature graying or loss of hair. Each of the body’s dozen internal organs has a similar range of functions and responsibilities that its energy must execute.

Because additional characteristics and influences are attributed to all the organs, listening and questioning during an interview becomes a more dynamic process than simply recording data about medical problems. Including the acupuncture dimension in

¹ I am introducing here the convention of capitalizing the name of an organ when I use it in a traditional acupuncture sense, that is, when it represents its sphere of influence beyond those physiological and pathological qualities typically attributed it in contemporary biomedicine.

our interviews allows us to better understand who the patients are, what their innate strengths and family health trends are, and in what way they are most likely to demonstrate disturbances in their well-being. Each time a patient describes a symptom or feature that is, in the context of acupuncture tradition, linked to the energy influence of an organ, we will pursue other features and disturbances of that organ. By asking these questions we find how strongly represented the organ is in the patient's constitutional makeup and presenting disturbances. At the end of the interview we evaluate all the gross and subtle features and symptoms of the different organs, and thus achieve a comprehensive understanding of both the patient and his or her problems.

Qi

Johnny Maddox, the man with spinal stenosis I mentioned in the introduction, comes for an acupuncture treatment almost every month, "like going to the service station." He considers acupuncture essential to his life because it keeps him in control. He can tell the difference in his body and mind if he spreads out the treatments too long. Because Johnny balances pain and activity every moment of his day, he is intimately aware of his physical and mental energy.

I know what the results are going to be from a treatment. Twenty-four hours after the treatment there is a snap. It kicks in. It's a sudden load lifted off. A sudden wake-up and I'm no longer feeling heavy and numb. It hits all the parts of my body at one time. I get a distance from the pain that gives me the energy and confidence to know I can make it through each day. It's an energy burst in my body, and I feel sharp mentally.

Energy is the word people use spontaneously when talking about their own vitality and their experience with the needles. It is also the word most commonly used as equivalent to the Chinese term Qi. Qi is the vitality the body derives from its nourishment

and circulates to all muscles, organs, and tissues. Likewise, each organ produces an energy quality that contributes to the overall vitality of the body. Qi is not exactly the same as our term energy; however, in our energy-conscious era the common usage of the word energy allows the idea of Qi to be easily understood. Although it is without a precise scientific definition, it is a word that is soon intuitively understood by everyone who hears or uses it.

A person's Qi is perceptible yet is difficult to describe or define. It has to do with the aura of physical vitality and the magnetism of personality. It is a quality you radiate, and a quality that you can sense in the people you encounter. People possessing exuberant personality Qi fill a room the moment they enter, not necessarily by being noisy or seeking attention, rather, simply by radiating their Qi into the room's atmosphere. Those who are more contained or introspective can be equally present and active at a gathering, but their presence is not experienced as intensely. One senses the physical Qi of self-satisfied body builders differently from that of people who simply take good care of themselves. It is easy to discern the difference between the Qi of an eager adolescent and that of an ailing elder. It is not, however, always easy to define these differences.

Students of martial arts cultivate Qi for protection and combat. Take, for example, the movies of Bruce Lee. The rigor of his discipline and the precise application of his mental and physical Qi are evident in his every move. Oriental martial arts are studied throughout the United States for vigorous physical culture or gentle health enhancement. The movements in Tai Chi Chuan and Qi Gong are practiced to enhance the flow of Qi in the body or to concentrate it in specific areas. Qi Gong masters claim to be able to project their Qi outside their bodies for martial or medical purposes. Yoga studios are also commonplace around this country. The postures, movements, and meditations in the yoga

disciplines are also cultivating Qi (although it's called "prana") for physical health, emotional balance, and mental focus.

On a domestic level, a Chinese-American colleague tells me how his mother reminisces about the wonderful "kitchen Qi" in her childhood Shanghai home. In fact, his mother asked for her mother's cooking wok as she departed for America, because of the good "wok Qi" embedded in it. If we substitute contemporary terms like "spirit" or "energy" or "vibes" for the Qi she describes, we easily understand her impressions. We can comfortably expand the vocabulary of our perception as we sense the Qi in the atmosphere of gardens and houses, and the vitality radiating from animals and people. Qi is like electricity: we see how it manifests and know how to harness and direct its power, but we can't really explain exactly what it is.

Many cultures share the concept of an animating life force in people. For example, classical Indian teaching refers to the life force as prana and describes it as circulating through the organs and concentrating in anatomical regions called "chakras." Interestingly, the chakras also correspond to important acupuncture points. When European Jesuits arrived in China in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and discovered acupuncture practitioners and treatises, they translated the concept of Qi as "spiritus," or "spirit," a term equating life force with the holy spirit as it was expressed at that time in the Christian tradition.

In medicine the circulation of Qi is at the foundation of acupuncture tradition and practice. Qi is present in all of life. It generates warmth in us and stimulates the functions and interactions of the organs. It transforms ingested foods, liquids, and inhaled air into blood, fluid, and vitality, and it provides the impulse for respiration, blood circulation, and the movement of fluids. Most patients have no discomfort embracing the idea of a

palpable life energy in their physical and psychological makeup. In order for physicians to understand and use acupuncture well in clinical practice, they must also take the step of embracing the reality and circulation of Qi. For most clinicians, this is not a big step.

*Patients describe the sensation of Qi being activated during an acupuncture treatment in unique yet similar terms. **Katrina Radke**, a swimmer in Olympic training until chronic fatigue syndrome forced her to stop, says she likes to feel the energy going through her, especially when it's enhanced with electrical stimulation and heat. "I like to feel it move left to right, down and up, front and back. When I first came in and my head felt thick and swollen from the illness, the needles in my head relieved the pressure and made me feel clearer." She is very aware of her body and senses the energy movement triggered by the needle patterns, whether in the head or helping "relax the bumps and tensions in my shoulders and lower back." Katrina's fatigue symptoms have responded very well to acupuncture, and she now continues to train for competition swimming.*

***Julie Fox** has always lived her career and home life with a palpable intensity, but now, in her forties, she can exhaust even her abundant Qi. "Acupuncture always helps me get my energy back. I'm mellow for a day or two after a treatment, then the energy comes in. It's like finding my center. I feel ten or fifteen years younger for weeks."*

Acupuncture has evolved over at least two millennia, through refinements based on treatment responses and through adaptations to changing social environments. It continues to evolve in our own medical world as it is integrated into our style of practicing medicine and our categories of medical disorders. The language in the classical Chinese sources is poetic. The metaphors describe a philosophy of the human functioning harmoniously within an orderly universe. Health, disorder, and treatment are explained in terms of the patient's disharmony within this larger order. The human is described as

being placed in dynamic balance between the Qi of heaven and the Qi of earth. An early symbolic representation of humankind's position shows heaven as a circle at the top of the image, earth as a square at the bottom, and a human as a cross linking these two forces (fig. 2).

The Circulation of Qi

Qi flows through major channels in the muscular framework of the body and through tributaries of the major channels out to the level of the skin and deep to the internal organs. These channels follow anatomical pathways that have been consistent in illustrations throughout the 2,000 years of acupuncture's documented history. In acupuncture anatomy the human body is viewed from the front with the arms raised above the head and the palms facing forward (fig. 3). Qi in the channels on the front of the body flows from bottom to top, from feet to hands, from earth to heaven (fig. 4). On the back of the body the Qi flows from top to bottom, from hands to feet, from heaven to earth (fig. 5).

Qi ascends in the channels on the front, changes direction at the fingertips, and continues to flow in coupled channels through the arms and down the back of the body into the legs, where it once again changes direction at the toetips to ascend through the front channels (fig. 6). The classical Qi pathways define three pairs of energy circulation subcircuits, which are created by couplets of front and back channels connected at the extremities. Each subcircuit influences the section of the body's skin, musculature, and structural tissue through which it flows, and transmits the energetic activities of four internal organs (fig. 7). This network of major channels is the same on each side of the body (fig. 8). These channels are called the "principal channels" and can be considered as the interstate highways of the acupuncture road map.

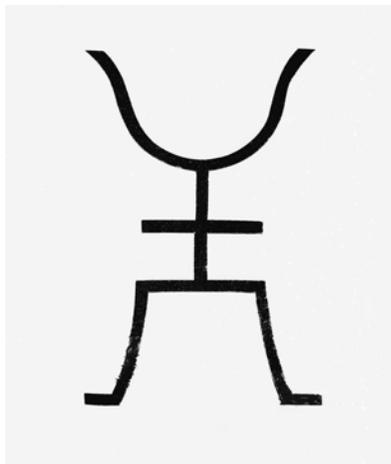


Fig. 2. Early representation of human between heaven and earth

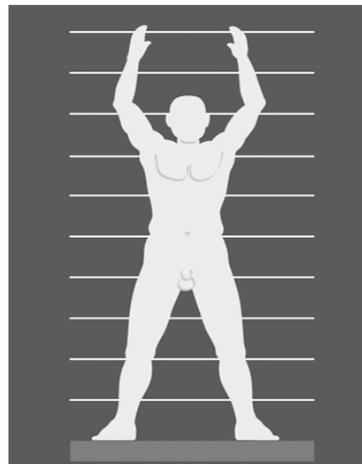


Fig. 3. Acupuncture anatomy view of the human body

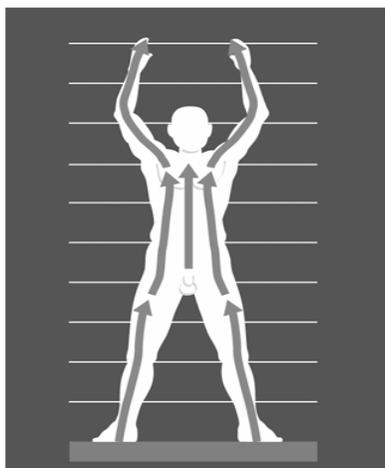


Fig. 4. Qi flow in channels on the front of the body

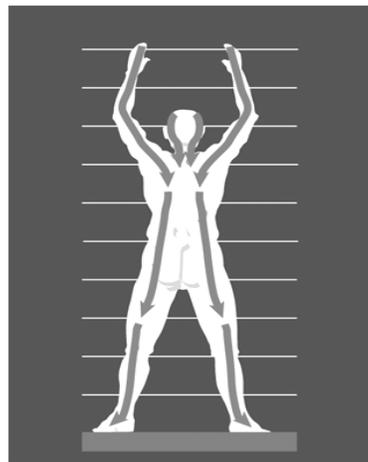


Fig. 5. Qi flow in channels on the back of the body

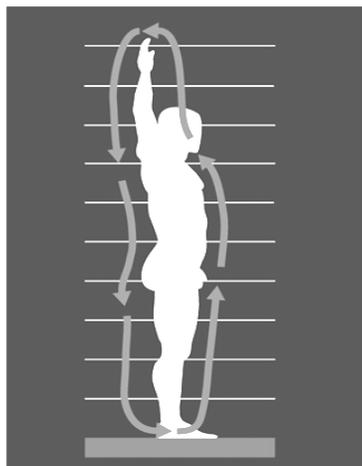


Fig. 6. Flow of Qi through the body

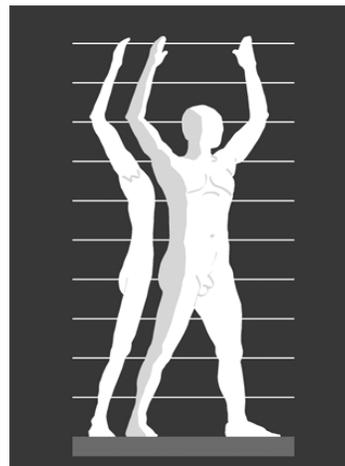


Fig. 7. Energy circulation subcircuit



Fig. 8. Principal acupuncture channels

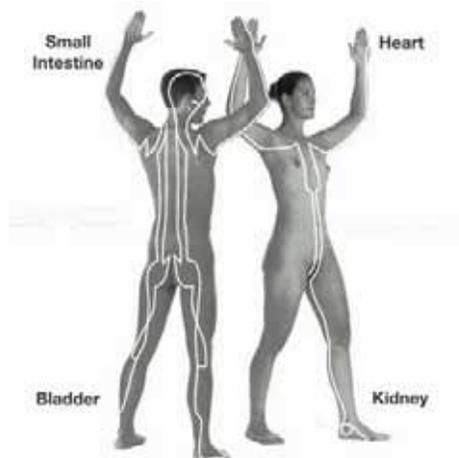


Fig. 9. Principal subcircuit with associated organs indicated

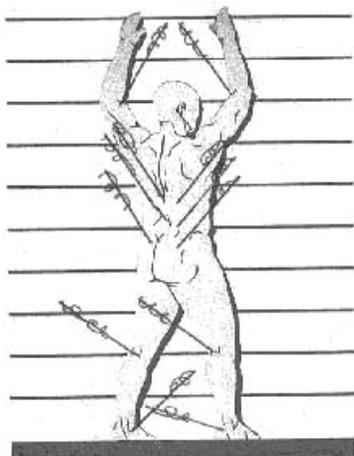


Fig. 10. Needling for chronic lower back pain case

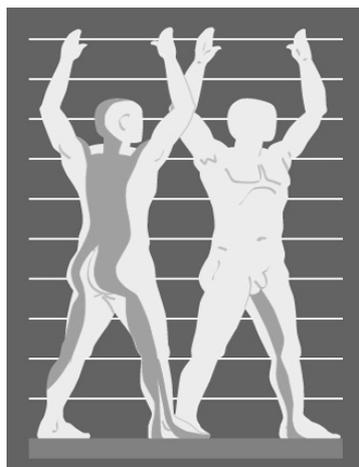


Fig. 11. Surface channels overlying principal channels

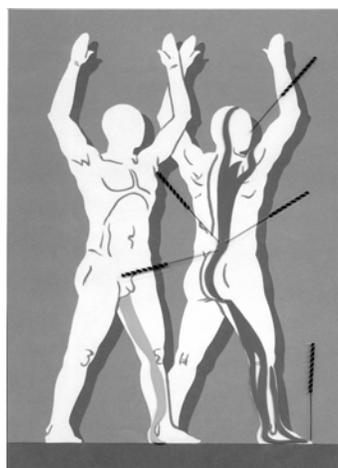


Fig. 12. Needling for acute back pain case

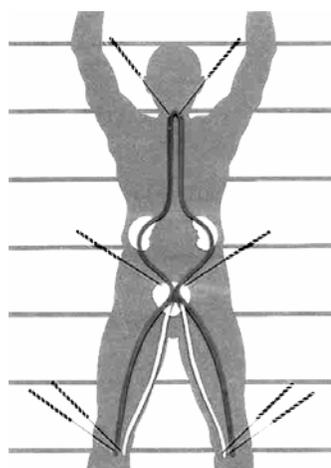


Fig. 13. Organ channels

Each of the three principal circulation subcircuits represents the energetic functions and physiological activities of two organs associated with its ascending front channel and the two associated with its descending back channel. Sections of the channels are named according to which organ is most accessible from that region (fig. 9). Each channel has named and numbered points that, when stimulated, can promote the movement of Qi through the subcircuit and modify the energetic function of the organ it represents. This organization of channels and points creates a surface control grid whereby needles can be placed to affect the energy flow of the subcircuit in which the bulk of a patient's problems are manifesting.

In California, Interstate Highway 5 connects the cities in the south with those in the north. It is our principal south-north circulation channel. It flows without interruption between Los Angeles in the south and Sacramento in the north, two of the "organs" in the California body. I use the highway image to give an example of a treatment using an acupuncture needle pattern. If there is a stalled car in the center lane of a major highway during morning rush hour, the traffic coming from residential regions will be slowed or stopped on its way to the city's business center. When the stalled car is removed the traffic can flow smoothly again. Removing a blockage is the role of the acupuncture needles at the site of pain or malfunction. Inserting needles at the site of energy obstruction unblocks the congestion in the energy flow and allows the movement to balance itself.

An acupuncture treatment pattern typically involves needles in the leg and arm sections of the front and back channels, which, working together, will push energy into circulation up the front and into the organs, and then pull the energy from the upper part of the body through the muscles and back down to the lower part. The needles in the

extremities of the channels are the feeder lights and highway patrol officers that direct the volume and speed of traffic moving into the main circulation route once the obstruction has been removed. The logic of the needle patterns used to modify the flow in a principal channel subcircuit is the same as in this traffic flow example.

Johnny Maddox has chronic pain in his lower back where the nerves and muscles are most affected by his disease. Because the energy flow gets jammed up in that region, I always insert needles deeply into the lumbar muscles, sometimes even deliberately touching the bony protrusions of his vertebrae. I always use heat and electrical stimulation to further encourage the flow of energy through the area and to reprogram the nerve firing patterns that take the pain signals to his brain. But, in addition to the local needles for his pain, I insert a pattern of needles in the legs and arms that pushes the Qi up the front of his body and pulls the Qi down the back, through the subcircuit of channels that flow through this painful region (fig. 10). In the traffic flow metaphor, his back pain is equivalent to a ten-car pileup behind an overturned tractor-trailer that backs up traffic for miles. The needles in his lumbar region are the tow trucks that remove the damaged cars and restore the flow of Qi.

The Tributaries

Surface Channels

Stimulating a sequence of acupuncture points enhances the energy flow through a subcircuit. Specific needle patterns can also open access to other tributaries of energy circulation. For example, needling points at the very extremity of a principal channel—alongside the toenails or fingernails—activates a special “surface channel” that travels along the surface of the body as a broad energy band overlying the pathway of that

point's principal channel (fig. 11). Returning to the traffic circulation image, the surface channel for California is U.S. Highway 1 along the Pacific coast. Highway 1 is a narrower, scenic route that overlooks the ocean defining California's western boundary. The network of surface channels in the skin and subcutaneous tissue creates a protective energy field that surrounds the body and buffers it from the assaults of the external environment. The energy that circulates in these surface pathways is thought of as a defensive energy or shield that protects the internal organs from the extremes of living and working conditions, functioning as a protective acupuncture immune system.

*One day **Bill Kane** came to my office on short notice because he had strained his back while gardening the previous day. He had inflammation and pain from muscle spasm in his left lumbar region that was made worse when he tried to straighten up to walk. Bill has lots of joint and tendon problems, but not chronic low back pain. This was a new, acute problem, not an old problem flaring up. I examined the area of the spasm and identified the two principal acupuncture channels that travel through that region. To activate their surface pathways I needled points beside the fourth and fifth toenails, where the principal channels end.*

Bill doesn't like the needles, and no one likes having needles put into the toes. I convinced Bill that the treatment is very effective, so he figured it was worth tolerating the insertion pain and accepting those needles. Fortunately his pain and spasm were limited to the left side of his back, so I only needed to treat one foot. I had Bill cough while I inserted a needle into each toe. This distracted his attention just enough for him to ignore the discomfort. With the activating needles placed for each of the surface channels, I next put a needle in the left side of his face to pull the energy of the two surface channels to it. It is necessary to needle this point in order to fully activate the

surface pathways. Finally, I placed a half dozen needles fairly superficially—about one-quarter to one-half inch deep—into the flesh over the pain and tight muscles in his back (fig. 12). These were the local focusing needles, inserted to draw the attention of the energy movement to the zone of obstructed energy flow.

A circle of redness formed on the skin around the local needles. To an acupuncturist this means that the excess energy blocked up at the tight spasm spot is being moved and released, and that the heat and inflammation and pain are dissipating. Indeed, after a half-hour of treatment the redness blanched and I removed the needles. Bill was able to stand upright and rotate at his waist without pain. He called the next day to announce that he had slept well and was going to play nine holes of golf that afternoon.

Organ Channels

There are exits from Highway 5 that take traffic into large metropolitan areas, the organs of the state. They are connected to the highways and the body of the state through smaller circulation tributaries. The car pool lanes that allow us to go from the interstate highway directly into the city center without the delays of tollbooths and slow traffic are called “organ channels” in the energy circulation network. They go deep directly to the affiliated organs, exiting from the principal channels at the big joints—knees, hips, shoulders (fig. 13). The organ channels give the acupuncturist direct access to the metabolic and transport activities of an organ. They are reserved in acupuncture therapy for problems that involve the organs themselves, such as inflammation, infection, obstruction, and metabolic malfunction in an organ.

*A few years ago **Mary Wilson** arrived for a three-month follow-up appointment early in December, having successfully survived the autumn, her usual vulnerable*

season, with only a mild respiratory infection. The infection did not require antibiotics, but had evolved into a bothersome laryngitis. Mary feared the laryngitis would prevent her from singing in the Christmas chorale, an activity she loves. Her treatment involved a needle pattern to stimulate the Lung organ channel, which passes through the vocal cords and larynx, plus additional focusing points for her laryngitis. I inserted needles on both sides of her chest and in her neck, and connected them to an electrical stimulation with the idea that this would help break down and move the phlegm and the swelling of the laryngitis (fig. 14).

I left the needle pattern in place for fifteen minutes with the electricity buzzing. Mary rested her body and her voice that day, and by the next day she was feeling back to full strength and was able to participate in the rehearsal for her performance. Three days after the treatment she sang comfortably for the two-hour event.

The Energy Circulation Network

The schematic representation of acupuncture energy circulation in figure 15 shows the relationship among the principal, surface, and organ channels. Understanding the anatomy of this circulation network—the subcircuits and their tributaries—is the key to planning an effective acupuncture treatment. As physician acupuncturists we must identify the location, nature, and depth of manifestation of a problem, and recognize if it is early or chronic, functional or organic. We do this by incorporating as much of the information from our patients as we can elicit and interpret, as well as using all the diagnostic tools and techniques we have available in conventional medicine. Including conventional and acupuncture logic in our diagnosis gives the patient the best of both worlds, an integrated approach to the patient's care.

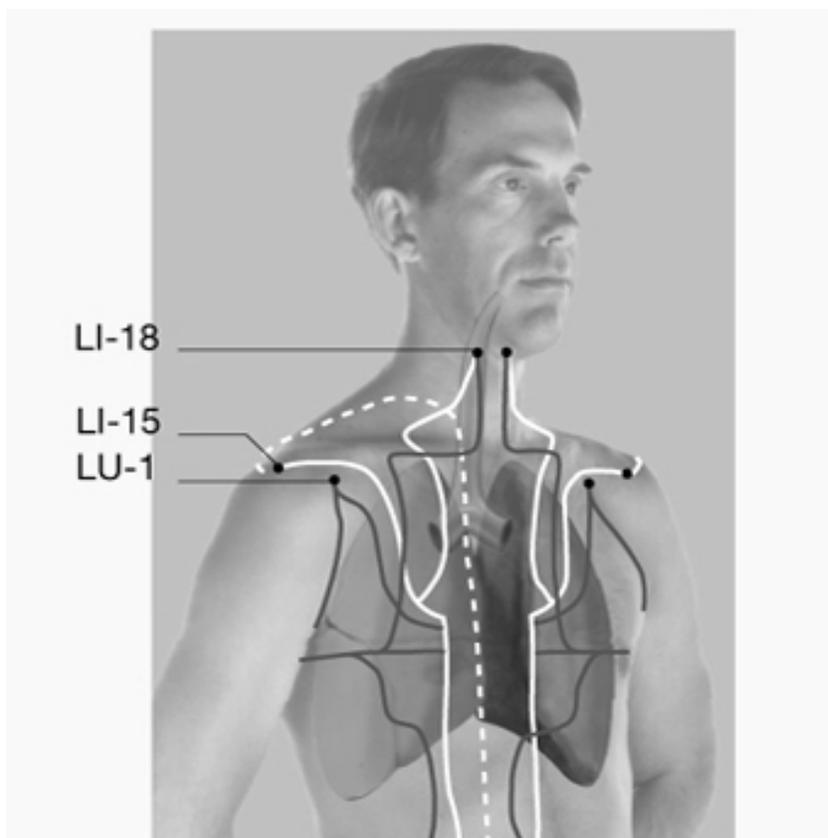


Fig. 14. Points stimulated in laryngitis case

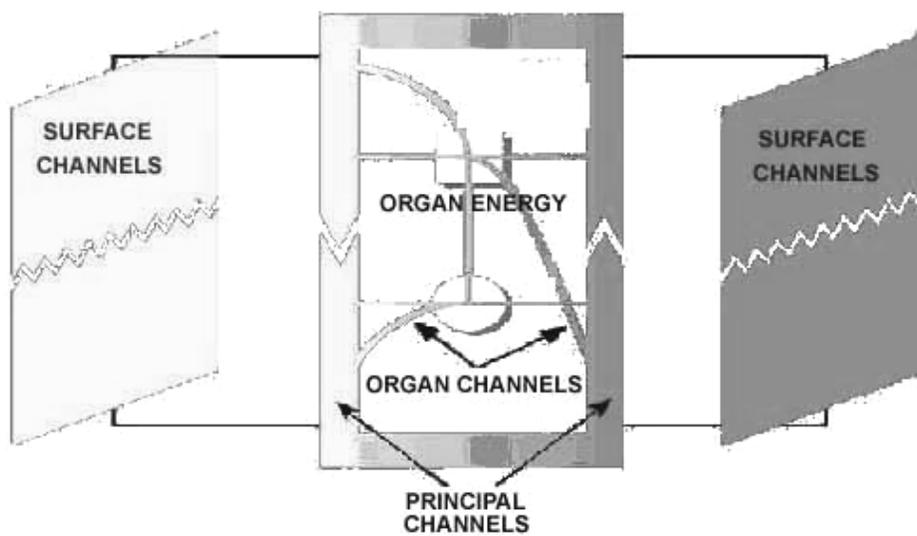


Fig. 15. Schematic of acupuncture energy circulation showing the relationship among the various channels

We then select the acupuncture subcircuit or tributary that will best treat the problem. Surface channels can help relieve recent pains, but not more chronic pain problems. Principal channels move energy through regions of chronic musculoskeletal pain, but deeper organ channels are necessary for chronic organ problems. There is yet another collection of important pathways that can make contact directly with the energetic activities of the organs. The “organ-energy” set is a dozen acupuncture points on the back of the torso and another dozen on the front. Each of these points has a direct connection with the energetic sphere of influence of a specific organ, as well as the organ’s metabolic and transport functions. Organ-energy points can be useful additions in almost any treatment to focus the activity of Qi.

Each division of energy circulation can be activated by using a specific energy-moving needle pattern. The pattern is the minimum number of needles needed to tell the body which level of energy circulation is to be stimulated. Once the pattern is in place, additional needles are inserted to focus the energy. Using needles for both movement and focus impacts the energy balance of the entire body as well as the disturbed organ or muscular region. Understanding how to stimulate the circulation network gives us the flexibility to influence many medical disorders by moving Qi, and to use acupuncture either as the exclusive treatment or as a complement to other approaches. This ancient medical art is remarkably adaptable to modern medical practice.

Traditional Functions, Traditional Words

There are two great assets from the tradition of acupuncture that facilitate its integration into modern medical practice. The first is assigning each organ a sphere of influence that enhances our notions of physiology and pathology. I have mentioned the

value of this traditional asset in making sense of many common but unacknowledged symptoms. The expanded influence and function attached to each organ allows us to categorize and interpret information from our patients that might not otherwise be heard or found useful.

The second asset is the poetic description of the elements that is used to illustrate the quality or behavior of a personality, symptom, or organ. These words are not new to us, but their meaning and value in this context are new and need some exploration. They are words associated with what the ancient Chinese considered to be the fundamental elements composing everything in the universe: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, and Water. They come from the earliest philosophical tradition embodied in classical acupuncture writings, and they have added a valuable sense of metaphor and color to acupuncture literature and practice. They provide the intellectual groundwork from which acupuncture arises.

The images associated with the elements augment our understanding of our patients by providing a rich descriptive vocabulary for our clinical observations. They play an important role in the diagnostic model we regularly use in practice. For example, the curious questions I cite on the second page of this chapter are derived from the elemental images. If a patient has a strong like or dislike for the color or flavor or season associated with an element, or displays a persistent expression of the psychological characteristics associated with one of the elements, this suggests a likely disturbance in the organs associated with that element. Element terms and qualities are applied to organs, channels, points, functions, personalities, and disorders. The following paragraphs contain brief portraits of the general qualities embodied in each element, and identify a patient who manifests the Qi of each element.

The **Wood** image is best represented by a tree, roots firmly embedded in the soil, branches reaching toward heaven. A tree is a living entity that, like human beings, is balanced between dynamic forces as it goes through life's activities. It grows upward at the same time as it grows downward. It is well rooted and firm, yet is flexible and yielding to forces greater than itself. A tree embodies the life cycle in its ability to awaken with vitalizing sap in springtime, to blossom and bear fruit, and to change color and drop leaves before becoming dormant in winter. Wood is the only living element in the collection of acupuncture elements. As such, it is a symbol of the power to come alive, to be infused with energy, and to adapt with creativity and flexibility to the changes imposed by life. The season associated with Wood is spring, the season of budding trees, birth, and new beginnings. Its direction is East, where the sun rises.

*Of the patients you've met so far, **Katrina Radke** embodies mostly Wood qualities. Her body is strong, sinewy, flexible, and energetic, and her personality is equally energetic. Her chronic fatigue forced dramatic changes in her lifestyle, but she adapted creatively and successfully to them.*

The image of **Fire** embodies the sun, blazing light and heat, vitality and warmth, rising energy, excitement, and mental brilliance. The sun gives life, warms and nourishes, and is the constant core of energy in our universe. The sun influences all life. Fire connotes heating and circulation, maintaining and giving physical and emotional warmth, enthusiasm, creativity, and passion. The season associated with Fire is summer, the season of growth and maturation. Its direction is South, where the sun peaks at midday.

***Julie Fox** is our most Fiery patient. One senses her intense presence—voice, laughter, perfume—the moment she enters the office. She brings empathy, direction, and passion to everything she undertakes.*

The **Earth** is the substance from which food is grown to provide all nourishment. It is the symbol for fertility and fullness of provisions. The Earth offers a foundation on which to build and grow, stability, the ground that supports us all. Earth is the source of the four other elements and as such represents the center of balance among the elements. People of Earth composition are centered and sympathetic, and work harmoniously with their environment. The time of year associated with Earth is harvest, or Indian summer, a season of transition and transformation, the mature center of the year.

Bill Kane has the nurturing qualities of a predominantly Earth personality. He radiates the aura of a man who enjoys sensual pleasures to an extreme—music, food, drink, and social gatherings. His magnetic personality and generosity of spirit pull those who meet him into his very pleasant universe.

Metal is associated with structural strength, with support and reinforcement. It is not always warm or life-giving like the above elements, but it is as important as the other element qualities because of its durability and function of creating structure from matter. Metal manifests as granite for building, coal for fuel, iron for implements, and diamonds for utility and beauty. It can follow the form of a mold, and it can become brittle and hard. Duty and responsibility are foremost qualities in a Metal person. The season associated with Metal is autumn, the time of fruition and change. Its direction is West.

Mary Wilson embodies, above all, Metallic qualities in the strength of her character as well as in her physical problems. Although legally blind she taught handicapped children for decades, and, although hearing impaired from a chronic ear infection, she sings in the church choir and takes her grandchildren to the symphony. She has problems with her lungs, which are Metal organs.

Water is essential for life; it makes up much of the body's volume. Water as an

element is the image for movement and change: springs, flowing streams, waterfalls, and oceans. It adapts to fill any container; it refreshes and invigorates; it is placid and also forceful; it bathes and cleanses and nourishes. People of predominant Water qualities can be quiet and adaptable, or can, on occasion, be forceful and clearly noticed. But they are always present and willing to contribute. The season associated with Water is winter, the season of cold and conservation of effort. Its direction is North.

*Kidney is a Water organ, and Kidney energy influences bones and joints. **Johnny Maddox**, with his lifelong history of bone problems and pain, represents many of the Water breakdown effects in a body. In an acupuncture sense, a depletion of Kidney energy has created John's pain and fatigue, which have in turn aggravated the depletion. Despite his considerable constant discomfort, Johnny's exceptional will allows him to adapt to his limitations and create a daily routine that includes work, reading, and comforting others suffering from pain.*

The five elements personify qualities of Qi's activity and manifestation in the physical world, and especially in the human organism. More importantly, they are a critical component of the integrated biopsychotype model. These patients will return as we tour the biopsychotype chapters, where we discover how overlapping layers of information are necessary to fully understand ourselves and others from an acupuncture perspective.

The Integrated Model

Acupuncture has been known in French medicine for two hundred years. French translations of Ming Dynasty texts were published in 1863, and more extensive trans-

lations appeared between 1939 and 1969. Acupuncture has been enthusiastically studied by physicians and comfortably embraced in French culture during the last sixty years.

French physicians learning acupuncture from the 1940s through the 1970s frequently became students of the Chinese language and culture, searching always for the correct interpretation of ambiguities in the texts. They also brought their Cartesian logic and scientific understanding to the practice of acupuncture. Working in study teams and professional societies, they created a new and coherent clinical approach. It combined the written heritage that was just appearing in French with the clinical tradition of acupuncture as interpreted by military physicians returning from China and French Southeast Asia. In this experimentation and refinement process, the starting body of knowledge was filtered through European consciousness and training and was tested in a contemporary medical environment.

An important phenomenon that occurred in France during the period from 1940 to 1970 was the amalgamation of a handful of distinct traditional acupuncture disciplines into a theoretical construct that honors the common core in them all. The theoretical foundations presented in this chapter—Qi circulation network, classical functions of the organs, and elemental terms—were typically maintained in Oriental acupuncture practice as discrete family traditions. Because the French were importing acupuncture from several theoretical and practice sources, they were not bound to abide by only one tradition; rather, their intention was to combine, clarify, and unify.

The entire discipline of acupuncture underwent a transformation in Europe as traditional practice and theoretical models were compared and contrasted with Western medical practice and models. Practitioners attempted to find parallels between the Chinese material and the diverse disciplines of Western science and medicine. One of the

most valuable consequences of this dynamic period was the synthesis of an approach to patient evaluation that includes the three major traditional Chinese disciplines just mentioned (Qi, organs, elements), along with our Western allopathic understanding of physiology, psychology, and pathology. This truly integrated model—the biopsychotype—allows us as Western-trained physician acupuncturists to make the most sense of what our patients tell us, while still working within the comfort of a conventional medical evaluation and treatment framework. Your first exposure to biopsychotypes was through the orientation questionnaire in the appendix.

Moving Qi

Planning the acupuncture treatment involves first linking the most important symptoms to their responsible organs, channels, elements, and biopsychotypes. The goal of the treatment is to enable the organs to return to as full functioning as possible, restoring the balance of energy that defines good health. We select for our attention the subcircuit of the most needy organs. We stimulate energy-moving points in the arm and leg portions of the misbehaving subcircuit, and arrange the needle pattern to encourage an increased Qi flow through the entire subcircuit. The increased flow allows the body to direct and use what energy it needs for repair and healing. Points on the torso, such as back and front organ-energy points, and local points overlying a musculoskeletal pain problem are used to focus the channel flow to the organ or area needing attention.

We insert the needles to a depth where the patient feels a contact with the Qi of the channel. Depending on the point and the patient, this can be $\frac{1}{4}$ inch or $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches. This is a curious sensation for both the patient and the acupuncturist. The patient feels a dull, heavy, aching sensation, quite different from the prick of the needle breaking the

skin as it first enters the body. When the acupuncturist feels a resistance in the flesh to turning or advancing the needle further, the muscle gives the impression that it is grabbing the needle. With the arrival of this sensation we consider that we have contacted the vitality of the channel and the organ. By activating the entire subcircuit with the needle pattern—plus turning the needles, heating them, and stimulating them with electricity—we add more energy from outside the patient into his circulation. The added energy and stimulation help to move the Qi through the subcircuit and, ultimately, to build up the resilience and reserves of the body.

Mary Wilson declares that

The needles are not as invasive as pills. The energy from the acupuncture treatment allows me to take charge and shift the responsibility for my respiratory health to my own body rather than the drugs. The needles make me feel like my body can cope with my illnesses, and I like the idea of enhancing my body's own vitality instead of compromising its response through drugs.

Many patients are not able to express their experience under the needles as clearly as the ones I've selected for this chapter. They commonly use more general terms such as "relaxing," "refreshing," "restoring," and "energizing." Patients vary in how long the effects of enhancing and moving Qi endure. For some it's several days, for others several weeks, and for still others, several months. The duration of a change reflects the complexity of the problem and the Qi within the patient.

Qi is the essence of life and all of life's activities. Tapping into the wisdom of acupuncture means understanding the importance of Qi as it circulates through our bodies, as its qualities are subdivided in the organs and elements and organized in the biopsychotypes. An appreciation of Qi is essential to the interview and evaluation, the diagnosis and treatment plan, and the needle patterns inserted to encourage its movement. Simply put, Qi is the foundation of acupuncture.

CHAPTER TWO

ACUPUNCTURE PATIENTS

Acupuncture patients come from the full spectrum of American society. They are college-age athletes; young adult working mothers and insurance salesman; middle-aged construction workers, small business owners, writers, and professionals; retired cooks, typists, psychologists, teachers, and businessmen. There is no special label that can be applied to every one of them, nor a typical problem that makes them seek treatment.

The patients in this chapter are a good sampling of my patient population. Their problems also are representative of the problems that I treat in my practice. Both patients and problems are typical of a physician acupuncturist's practice in the United States. They are grouped according to the general category of their major problem: musculoskeletal pain, general medical disorders, and psychosomatic problems. The patients explain why they came for acupuncture treatment.

Musculoskeletal Pain

Musculoskeletal pain, acute and chronic, is the number one reason people seek acupuncture from their physicians. It is certainly not the only reason they request acupuncture, nor the only problem that can be successfully treated with acupuncture. The many personal and published reports about acupuncture helping with musculoskeletal pain, however, have made this arena the richest proving ground for acupuncture's value

in contemporary medicine.

In conventional practice we often handle musculoskeletal problems clumsily. For the acute stages we give anti-inflammatory pills and, if bad enough, muscle relaxers and pain pills, and tell the patients to apply cold or hot compresses and rest until it passes. For those who don't recover, we send them to physical therapy. For the chronic stages we increase or curtail the physical therapy, change the medication, and refer for pain-controlling interventions or surgery. Johnny and Mary are good examples of this process.

Pain from acute musculoskeletal trauma is particularly responsive to acupuncture intervention, as can be chronic pain following trauma. **Thomas Donovan** waited until his acute pain transformed into chronic before he sought acupuncture. **Audrose Calhoun** had massive trauma to his muscles with surgery and radiation treatment, and uses acupuncture to reduce the pain. **Paul Bendix** traumatizes his spine and knees by walking with muscles that are partly paralyzed. He comes for acupuncture treatments to assist with the resulting chronic pain.

Thomas Donovan is a fifty-one year-old orthopedic surgeon who received five acupuncture treatments for a muscular pain problem that occurred following an injury in the hospital:

The reason for the referral was the chronic left upper thoracic pain that resulted from an industrial injury about three years ago. I caught a patient with my arm outstretched when she started having a seizure while sitting on the exam table. I pulled all the soft tissues in my upper spine because I was falling forward when I caught her. I had acute burning, flashing pain across my upper back.

The pain on the right side responded well to deep injections under fluoroscopy, but the left pain persisted and was not responsive to physical therapy and two sets of injections. After the second set of injections did not work I requested acupuncture. Prior to this I had occasional low back pain but was able to undertake long orthopedic surgical operations. I never missed any work.

***Audrose Calhoun** is a muscular black contractor who has an affable manner and an almost cocky self-assuredness. The right side of his neck is disfigured from surgery.*

He must cover the breathing hole above his breastbone in order to be heard when he speaks. He started acupuncture treatments at age forty-nine, fifteen years ago.

I had radical neck surgery and radiation treatment for cancer twenty years ago. I had stiffness and pain from the fibrosis in the muscles of my neck and upper back. When I first started coming to see you, I was a miserable individual, day and night, and the pain pills upset my stomach. Since I've been seeing you, you've helped me with the surgery area and my low back and knee pain, and the circulation in my legs.

***Paul Bendix** was twenty-two years old when he was shot in the neck. As a result his muscles are partly paralyzed and partly in spasm. Paul runs a solo technical writing and public relations business. He was twenty-eight when he had his first acupuncture treatments, twenty-six years ago.*

I was skeptical regarding acupuncture. California has seen so many medical fads over the years, and I expected little from my treatment. Furthermore, my situation is unusual. I have an incomplete C4/5 spinal cord injury that allows me to walk short distances. Walking as I do in an unbalanced way with unnatural stresses and body positions, I normally encounter many aches and pains. That is what brought me to acupuncture. I was seeking relief from a particular kind of low back pain.

General aches and pains in the muscles and joints, which many people endure with the passage of time, are also commonly the targets of acupuncture treatments. **Helen Green** comes in for this (as did Esther Hugo, her mother, one of my first patients when I started practice). Every few years **Bill Kane** comes in with a new joint problem, and **Joan Kip** comes for muscle cramps in her legs.

***Helen Green** worked as a typist /word processor while she raised five children. She is an avid tennis player, bicyclist, and bird watcher who works and plays through an assortment of muscle aches and joint pains.*

I was having aches and pains in my lower and upper back. The first problem I came to acupuncture for was hip pain from tennis, hiking, and dancing. The low back pain seemed to be feeding into the hip pain. Then I began trying it out on other sore joints.

My mom paced her retirement by her monthly acupuncture treatments. She looked forward to coming in, starting about a week before, because her hip or back were starting to hurt. She would say it gave her a jump start. When you referred her for hip surgery, your visits to the hospital during recovery helped her with the pain and recovering her stamina.

***Bill Kane** worked in advertising until he retired at age fifty-nine. His retirement is filled with his passions of opera, bridge, and beaches. He wants all the people he loves to participate in his generosity and exuberance for life's pleasures.*

In fall of 1985 I retired and was determined to go fishing the first day of retirement. So I stood there casting all day long, leading the whole body on one leg with every cast. And that just whacked my spine out of joint. The pain was bad the next day, but I had opera tickets. I had to crawl up the opera house steps to use the side entrance because I couldn't lift the leg without excruciating pain. With that my wife said, "You're going in for acupuncture."

Since then you've treated my tennis elbow, right and left, at least three times. After my coronary bypass the scar gave me a lot of restriction in breathing and moving my upper body, and there was one spot that was continually open and raw for over a year. You took care of that. The most important and amazing stuff has been with the chronic arthritis I have in the thumb joints and my knee. My faith is so great that when I feel an ailment of almost any nature starting I try to get an appointment with you to nip it in the bud.

***Joan Kip** started acupuncture at age seventy-four, almost a decade ago. She was referred by her physical therapist with the diagnoses of fibromyalgia and post-polio syndrome. More importantly, she described herself as "a tense and attentive person" whose emotions go into her muscles.*

I wasn't sleeping, I suppose because of these most agonizing cramps. I've never been a good sleeper because I'm anxious much of the time. But at that time I also had a great deal of enormous discomfort, especially with my legs. I had to get up and walk. I had polio at age thirty-two and have been told these cramps and pains can be part of the post-polio syndrome. Everything was getting worse, sleep and cramps.

Lower back pain is, without doubt, the most common musculoskeletal pain problem, and upper back and neck pain is not far behind. Johnny Maddox and Mary Johnson have chronic low back pain with radiation to the hips, pelvis, and legs, and Bill Kane came in originally for an acute low back pain and sciatic nerve pain radiating into his leg.

Another category of pain that can overlap with radiating musculoskeletal pain is neurological pain. **Joe DiPrisco** sought help with the trigeminal neuralgia pain in his face. Headaches can be neurological, or a combination of muscle spasm and inflammation and neurological.

Joe DiPrisco is a professional writer, former professional gambler, former teacher and school administrator, single parent, and body builder. His questions about the acupuncture process are penetrating and philosophical, a style that is the result of his Jesuit training. He started acupuncture six months ago, at age fifty-two.

I came in with a right-sided trigeminal neuralgia that I had had for a month. I was on big drugs and wanted to get off them. Their effects were powerful and their side effects were powerful. I had become habituated to the side effects, but I never was at ease with them. I wanted to get off my dependency on these drugs and had tried cold turkey once or twice, but it didn't work. But I didn't like the torpor that inhabited me each day. I had no anxiety about coming. I was ready, and came in with an open mind.

General Medical Disorders

Musculoskeletal pain is not the only reason people request acupuncture. Many of the problems that are seen in a general medical practice are potentially responsive to acupuncture as an initial treatment or as an adjunct to other treatments being used. In the next group of patients there are problems linked to the respiratory system, the reproductive system, the digestive system, the immune system, and the autonomic nervous system.

Mary Wilson consulted me for recurrent sinusitis and bronchitis and for her

chronic ear infection. **Mary Ellen Hannibal** asked for help with her allergies. She also was fatigued since giving birth over three years before. Women with problems linked to menstruation and reproduction, such as Mary Ellen's, commonly look to acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine for assistance.

Mary Wilson started with acupuncture when she was forty-nine. She arrived with an impressive list of lifelong organic complaints that included chronic phlegmy bronchitis, an ear that intermittently drained pus, and congenital blindness. Mary's personality is forthright and down-to-earth. She does not allow her disabilities to dampen her zest for life and sense of humor.

I came because I had been suffering from respiratory disorders for twenty years and was in a cycle of being really sick. I was down and out, at home from teaching and on heavy antibiotics, or working with fevers and a sense of unwellness with sinusitis and bronchitis interspersed with ear infections. I was concerned that regular use of antibiotics was going to compromise my well-being, and that we weren't getting anywhere. Also there was lots of pressure on me because my mother was ill.

The immune system plays a big role in inflammatory and infectious disorders and is also linked with the body's overall vitality and the balance between emotions and physical body. **Greg Colden** links his shingles not just to his HIV status, but to the depletion of his immune system from the stress of his job and his personal life. The chronic fatigue that **Katrina Radke** describes occurred after she refused to rest during her mononucleosis infection. Mary Wilson's recurrent infections are also mediated through her immune system, as are Mary Ellen's allergies. Immune-system manifestations such as these are frequently the reasons that patients request acupuncture treatment, and fortunately are problems that often respond well to acupuncture.

Greg Colden has a captivating style and personality, which allows his success as an insurance broker to be easily understood. At age thirty-six he was pushing himself

toward professional goals at an unsustainable pace. This exhausted him physically and emotionally. He is direct and candid about the challenges he faces in his relationships and their impact on his health.

I've been HIV positive since 1978 and was asymptomatic for fifteen years. I have a high-stress job and was in a destructive relationship. I got stress-related shingles and my T cells dropped. My doctor was alarmed because I had had such a virulent case of shingles. He didn't want to treat me further and told me to get my affairs in order. At that time I became more aggressive with antiviral and antibacterial therapy, and I came to you.

***Katrina Radke** was a competitive swimmer who trained for the 1992 Olympics. In 1986 she had mononucleosis, and again in 1991, when it developed into a state of chronic fatigue. She battled this condition through the Olympics trials until she collapsed. She was twenty-two when she started coming for acupuncture in 1993.*

I was pretty sick when I first came in here. I used to be an athlete and trained to the point where my body was wiped out. I trained while I had mononucleosis and got really sick. I had to stop swimming. My mind was gone. I couldn't think. I couldn't sleep. I had dizziness, low grade fevers, sore throat, swollen glands, arthritic pains in my joints, and was feeling depressed. I was tired all the time and my endurance was bad. I couldn't go to lecture and then read after class. When I was tired my eyes couldn't focus on the texts.

I had lost weight, both muscle and fat. I was cold all the time, even dressed in two layers of clothing. My organs seemed to be inflamed, and I wasn't able to digest food well. I had major menstrual cramps. As an athlete I was used to handling lots of pain, but I at this time had so much pain I'd want to leave my body. My head sometimes felt like it was bigger than my body could carry or coordinate. I went from world-class athlete to not being able to walk to class. I even got special plates to let me park in parking spots for the disabled.

Psychosomatic Problems

Stress-related disorders are linked with the body's ability to handle, process, and discharge the stresses of professional and personal life. Stress enters our system through our emotions, and our emotions interact with our physical body. ***Julie Fox***, who has an

intense personality and reacts strongly to the events in her life, comes in from time to time for acupuncture to calm the anxiety and agitation that she accumulates and that can give her headaches, insomnia, or digestive upset. Joan Kip's problem with insomnia is linked with her internal anxiety state, and these together aggravate the nighttime cramping she gets in her legs. Greg Colden announced in his first few sentences that he came in for stress reduction and immune enhancement.

Julie Fox grew up in a California Mexican-American family of modest means and, thanks to her determination and entrepreneurial drive, has created a successful business supplies enterprise. Her professional and personal success, however, occasionally is at the expense of her emotional comfort. She was twenty-four and the mother of a nine-year-old daughter when she came for her first series of treatments.

I came in originally twenty years ago for my back pain. After three months with you I was back on roller skates. Since then I've come in for menstrual cramps, old-lady knees, old-lady periods, aches in my lower back, headaches, upset stomach, and unsatisfactory digestion. After I had an abortion the treatment helped me cleanse and balance my body. I've come to you for everything. Like when I had that anxiety attack while I was crossing the bridge.

On the days that I feel two or three inches shorter because of the weight on my shoulders, you put me back together and pour me back into my shoes. I believe acupuncture is a natural way to help me take care of my body. I come in for health maintenance, every two weeks, every three months, every six months, every year, whenever I know my body needs a tune-up.

Getting to the Acupuncture Office

I went through my active patient files to answer the question of how people find their way to a physician acupuncturist's office. Most of my patients have been referred by other patients, or friends of other patients, or sometimes their hairdressers. When I started my practice I was providing family medicine and acupuncture services, and thus I attracted patients in the full spectrum of ages and disorders. Later, when I restricted new patients

to those interested in acupuncture, more patients with pain problems started coming. The pattern of referral, however, has been constant: word of mouth, mostly through other patients. For example:

Two orthopedists wanted me to have surgery. I didn't. I used the yellow pages instead and found a physician who does acupuncture. (**Julie Fox**)

My family physician has a holistic orientation to medicine, and had worked with you in the emergency room in the 1970s. I have also known some of your patients. One I know very well, who improved a lot from the treatments. (**Joe DiPrisco**)

In 1983 I went to a traditional Chinese doctor, and in 1986 I went to a five elements acupuncture person. In 1996 I thought I would like to try a different approach to acupuncture. Friends recommended medical acupuncture. (**Mary Ellen Hannibal**)

The reason I came is that my chiropractor suggested that I go to someone who is a regular doctor and an acupuncturist. (**Audrose Calhoun**)

Johnny and Mary were referred by their primary physician, who is also my friend, and who has had acupuncture treatments from me, as has his nurse practitioner wife.

Other physicians in my medical community refer patients to me occasionally; however, it is usually after the patient has asked for the name of a physician who does acupuncture, rather than a spontaneous referral. It is not uncommon to have patients referred through other practitioners in related medical fields, such as physical therapists, chiropractors, massage therapists, psychologists, and homeopaths.

Referral patterns similar to those I have experienced are reflected in the reports of the doctors in this paper. Those who have specialized in pain management rely on physician referrals for most of their patients. While this does not change by adding acupuncture to the services they offer, they report that acupuncture patients refer other patients directly to them for treatments.

Over the last two decades the public media have given favorable exposure to

acupuncture and other complementary disciplines in medicine. Patients and physicians are much more aware of this and other options when addressing health problems.

National referral networks are in place through the professional society for physician acupuncturists, the American Academy of Medical Acupuncture, and complementary health websites.

CHAPTER THREE

ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENTS

Let's hear what the first appointment was like, from two of the more outspoken patients in the group:

When I got here, somehow I knew this was the right place. I had already been to the UC [University of California] Department of Immune Medicine, and they made me feel like I was just a lamb to the slaughter. I felt you perceived the whole of me, that you saw the many symptoms as making sense. In fact, you elicited these things from me, not just tolerated my tale. I knew on an intuitive level that acupuncture might be of great value to me. (*Mary Wilson*)

My basic assumption about health is that all parts of my health are connected: situation, emotions, body. Taking a drug discourages me from exploring this aspect of myself. Yet drugs were necessary to keep the pain under control. It worked, but it was time to change. (*Joe DiPrisco*)

During the initial interview there were many questions that were surprising to me, many questions that I hadn't anticipated. I couldn't figure out what angle they were coming from. The interview got into areas of emotions and psychological health. It was far ranging, and I found myself thinking about how this condition developed and trying to understand it historically and psychobiologically. My first appointment was at 9:00 A.M. I walked out at 11:30 and had no idea where the time had gone.

What does an acupuncture treatment feel like? Does it hurt? Here are a few reports from our patients.

Well, it doesn't hurt. And if it should, there is the handy bell to ring to have people come to adjust the needle or electricity. I welcome the acupuncture treatment because it is the beginning of better times for me. Submitting to the

needle has to do with how much trust one has. If you are anxious, it will be tough to let go and relax. If you can relax it will be pretty easy. (*Mary Wilson*)

The needles hurt, especially when you twist them. Some hurt a lot more than others, and I really don't know why. Some go in pretty easily. I try to do deep breathing when I know they are going to be painful, and that helps a lot.

One of the things I notice is a need to urinate immediately after the treatment. After the treatment I usually feel like I want to give in to taking a nap, which I don't always do. Sometimes I feel a little sore and achy, but it's kind of a good feeling. Sometimes a bit euphoric, like it's okay for me to give in to whatever this is. (*Helen Green*)

I'm very relaxed when I'm here, so there is no anxiety because needles are being stuck into my body, no fear of the needles at all. They're not too painful when they go in. Except every now and then when you hit a nerve and there is a sharp pain that lasts for a few seconds. (*Audrose Calhoun*)

Many people I know are scared to come for acupuncture. My husband couldn't do it. The very idea of needles! They don't understand that it is a very gentle procedure. It is different, but not unpleasant. You know exactly where the points and channels are, and you can do something about my problems.

It's not like going just to get a shot. I feel that I've been looking after myself, like I've had mother's milk again. There is a profundity that comes with the acupuncture treatment. Like a meditation, a serenity, a kind of spiritual event. (*Joan Kip*)

At first I felt uncomfortable with the needles being put in me. I don't like shots, either, so I was nervous about needles. I was surprised by how long the needles are. And I was curious about where they actually go into the muscles and skin. At first when the needles were taken out it felt strange, because I couldn't see where they were but could still feel the points tingling with energy. Getting needles in the feet still feels funny. They hurt more than elsewhere.

I look forward to my acupuncture appointments. It balances my mind and emotions and body. If I come in heady or emotional it gives me some calmness and distance. (*Katrina Radke*)

When I come to visit you it's not like a regular doctor's appointment, where you spend five minutes and get a prescription. It's a big event, an hour or two-hour experience. You always spend time talking to me about what's going on, because what's on my mind is also affecting my body.

Acupuncture is an intimate experience. The room is pleasing, has good lighting, you often play nice music, and the moxa is a healing element. I become vulnerable, being almost nude. But it's okay because of the confidence I have in you and in your staff. You all are sympathetic to the way I feel. (*Julie Fox*)

It's great. Somehow I can feel the connection between the needles and the channels and the inside of my body. I feel that blockages are being opened and

something is being released. A pathway to my soul is opened, and that appeals to me. I always feel exhilarated, and very hopeful. (*Joe DiPrisco*)

At first your treatments felt very different to me than my previous acupuncturist. With the other technique, one needle goes in at a time with a very intense hit. So to have fifteen or twenty needles in at once with electric pulses was quite a change. Each time a treatment here feels like the most intense of the other treatments, like a really big treatment.

Acupuncture is an awkward and invasive experience. But even in the process of it, it is tremendously relaxing and restoring, refreshing. Just stimulating the energy to move around in the body is useful. The energy knows what to do. The body knows how to heal itself or take what it needs, to a certain point.

It is a strange fugue state to be lying for ten minutes with needles in, with the quadrants pulsing away. It's like a yoga pose that puts you in direct contact with your body, a connection that you have to otherwise make an effort to get to. So it's refreshing for my system, like making a reconnection. It feels like having had a big night's sleep and being really relaxed without any creaks and tensions anywhere. (*Mary Ellen Hannibal*)

Moving the Energy

We use a combination of three methods to stimulate the flow in the channel. The first—the most unpleasant for the patient—is to turn the needle back and forth between thumb and index fingers in order to prolong the ache sensation of contacting the energy. The second—usually the most pleasant for the patient—is to heat the needle and skin at the insertion site with a smoldering cigar rolled of the herb *artemesia vulgaris*, common mugwort. The heat penetrates to the depth of the needle, and the skin and muscle benefit from the increased flow of blood in the capillaries and the resulting muscle relaxation. The mugwort is called moxa. Heating the needle and skin is called moxibustion. The third—most convenient for the practitioner and well tolerated by the patient—is to connect several needles along the flow of the channel to a battery-operated electrical stimulating device, turn the intensity to a perceptible but comfortable level, and allow it to pulsate for the duration of the treatment.

Manipulation and heating are the traditional techniques of stimulating the needles and work effectively alone or in combination. The disadvantage of turning the needles is that the aching sensation from the needle grab is protracted and rapidly becomes an unacceptably unpleasant experience for most American patients. Heating the needles with moxa, provided the patient is not touched with the smoldering embers and ashes do not fall on the skin, is usually received with enthusiasm. Its disadvantage is the aroma. The smoke smells unsettlingly similar to marijuana smoke and is difficult to disguise or evacuate in many professional environments where the practitioner cannot control air circulation. Electricity, the newcomer to the acupuncturist's office, is fairly well tolerated by most patients. It is less uncomfortable than turning the needles, emits no aroma, and provides a continual stimulation during the treatment. Obviously, the physician must be attentive not to increase the intensity of the stimulation too rapidly and induce pain at the needles.

Most patients really enjoy moxibustion, despite its somewhat bizarre application methods and aroma:

I like the moxa. The moxa heats up the needles, it warms the area. It is soothing and calming. I don't care for the smell, so it's not the smell that helps. The heat penetrates through the needles, depending on the vigor of the moxist.

Mom used to adore the moxa. I sometimes thought that was the only reason she was coming. (*Helen Green*)

I love the moxa. I love the smell. I know that I'm healing with it. Acupuncture makes me feel like I'm cleansing my body and rejuvenating it. The moxa takes the kinks out of the armor. (*Julie Fox*)

For me the moxibustion is like having a massage because I get very relaxed. It channels the energy of the doctor and involves me in a cleansing process. The doctor has already established the connection between acupuncture and the patient and has used the needles to put everything back in order. The moxa is the icing on the cake. The moxa person plays just as important a role as the acupuncture doctor does. He must pay attention to everything he does. It also helps if he's cute. (*Greg Colden*)

I love the real moxa, smell and all! The warmth of the moxa with the needles is really great. That kind of heat is really comfortable. The benefits come from being suffused with heat, and the effect is pretty amazing. In the beginning I didn't really experience a one-to-one benefit, but now that I'm healthier I see a more immediate response. I also like the heat lamp on my feet and legs, especially in the winter.

I think that the cone of moxa you lit atop the heap of salt you put in my belly button is the most outrageous thing you have ever done to me. Partly because it tilted over and blistered my skin. But it cured my cramps and diarrhea, thank you very much! (*Mary Wilson*)

The replies to my query about the electricity were also enthusiastic, but lacked the passionate approval contained in the moxibustion words.

I really like the electrical stimulation. It starts off intense for that first minute, but I've learned from doing it that if it's almost intolerable at the beginning, that by three or four minutes it is like a relaxing internal massage. When the needles are in, the only awareness is where they are being electrically stimulated. I've learned that if you don't turn up the stimulation very high at the beginning, it becomes quickly imperceptible. (*Thomas Donovan*)

I like the electricity moving back and forth through my body and brain. Sometimes when I'm tired it feels like you're shocking my body back into activity. Pump, pump, pulse, pulse. When it's hooked up I can feel the pulse going through everywhere. When it stops I feel a huge buzz through my body as if I'd been meditating, or exercising for hours. I feel calmer and more alert. (*Katrina Radke*)

The electricity is an experience. Once the needles are inserted and the electricity is applied, it gives a sensation in the muscles and nerves. The deep needles in the back are also relaxing with the electricity. When it's hooked up to the needles, there is a sensation that relieves all the pain. It is so relieving with the electricity that I have my own machine now. (*Audrose Calhoun*)

The electricity is good especially for the tiredness that comes when the pain is acting up. When I'm lying down and you do the treatment with electricity, I notice how I can relax more, especially with the buzzes. I think it's from the vibration. I've never had much problem with the buzz [high frequency stimulation]. The beeps [low frequency stimulation] build up the strength, but can be unpleasant if I'm feeling sensitive.

So the combination of the needles and the beeps and buzzes and moxa is the whole treatment of acupuncture. And when I'm hurting I know I need all of it. (*Mary Johnson*)

CHAPTER FOUR

ACUPUNCTURE EFFECTS

At the end of the first acupuncture session, it is my habit to talk with my new patients and describe how they might feel the effects of the treatment. I explain first that they might feel a bit drowsy, giddy, or spacey for an hour or so immediately after sitting up, and that this is a common effect from the treatment, especially the first one or two times. My staff and I are on the alert for people who need to sit or lie down for awhile before driving, if they do not have anyone to drive them. I also explain that they should move gently through the rest of the day: no exercise more vigorous than a stroll, avoid big meals and alcohol, avoid extremes of hot and cold in any food they eat, and postpone sexual activity until another day. The treatment has started to stir up and move around the body's energy, and to jar this delicate process risks losing the benefits to the balancing and healing that the acupuncture stimulates.

I forewarn my patients that they might feel tired after the treatment, and that if they do, they should rest if at all possible until the tiredness passes. It is not unusual to have a change in the experience of sleep on the first night. This can occur as either a very profound sleep if sleep had been disturbed prior to the treatment, or a fitful sleep, sometimes described as watching yourself sleep. The latter experience, curiously, does not seem to result in mental or physical fatigue the next day. Occasionally patients return after the first treatment complaining that they felt wiped out for a few days after the

treatment, but typically this does not last more than forty-eight to seventy-two hours.

I also tell my patients that they might feel some emotional churning or expression for a day or so, such as crying or a sense of vulnerability, and not to resist whatever happens. This is another healthy sign that change has been triggered and rearrangement is taking place on the emotional level.

The impact of acupuncture on the presenting symptoms can vary. It is possible that the first treatment will produce a dramatic improvement in the disturbed condition, whether it is a pain or an organic problem. We consider this a good response. Sometimes the improvement will last through to the next treatment, but if the problem has been with the patient for any length of time, more commonly the original symptoms begin to return by the time of the second visit the following week. It is possible that the first treatment will produce a dramatic worsening in the disturbed condition, whether pain or organic. We also consider this a good response, because it indicates that our needle pattern has touched and changed the condition. Any worsening will not become permanent, and usually returns toward the starting condition within a few days. Sometimes a dip of aggravated symptoms is followed by an improvement that lasts into the following week.

Thirdly, it is possible that nothing at all happens. This response is the most difficult to interpret. Was the treatment strong enough? Was the correct pattern chosen? Can the problem respond to acupuncture? Can the patient respond to acupuncture? Typically a problem that has been with the patient chronically needs a few treatments to start to change and may change quite slowly until maximum improvement has been achieved. In such cases, if I am confident that I chose the best treatment pattern, I continue with what I started and remind the patient that patience is necessary. Sometimes the patient's basic vitality must be reinforced before addressing the presenting problem. After two or three

times with no response, I will do this for several visits. If a sequence of six treatments aimed at the presenting problem and any underlying energetic weaknesses proves completely unsuccessful at provoking any change, then I will recommend that we discontinue the treatments. On the other hand, if my clinical judgment tells me that the beginning change offers the possibility of further improvement, I ask the patient to continue. In either case, the decision is made by mutual agreement following a discussion to evaluate the progress.

Here are accounts from our group on the results of their treatments:

The acupuncture relieved the pressure and tension in the muscles in my neck. It worked right away, even with the first treatment, when it gave me relief from the pains I was having since surgery many years before.

I've had thirty or forty treatments with acupuncture. Each one relieved tension and pain in the muscles in the neck and back. When I first started, my neck was such that I couldn't turn it forty-five degrees in either direction. Now I can turn it ninety in both. I could not lift my right arm above my head. Now I work twelve hours a day using my arms and shoulders and neck without pain. If the pain returns, I make an appointment to have acupuncture, and the pain gets under control again. (*Audrose Calhoun*)

The biggest global event was to accept the fact that I was really sick. I had to learn to be less stubborn and proud. Having to go from Olympic athlete to needing disabled parking permits was difficult. I'd feel really down when I was so tired. The acupuncture helped stabilize my mood, because I had more energy and because it just made me feel better.

The thing I noticed in general when I left was that my mind was clear. I was less stressed, more relaxed. My immune system felt improved. Usually acupuncture helped me read and focus, but sometimes the treatments made me tired and I had to sleep. Sometimes the benefits lasted three days, but then I'd overwork or overstudy. Now treatments last four to six weeks.

I used to hold a lot of tension in my stomach. When I'd leave I often felt emotional, and the acupuncture allowed the emotions to come out. If I were constipated I'd start having better bowel movements. The stomach cramping calmed after a series of treatments. If my eyes were tired, they would become clearer and whiter.

I love the treatments for my neck and upper back. When you put the needles in the neck, my body starts to relax. As the electricity is turned on I feel my tension dissipating. My body begins feeling like it is melting into the table. I let go and gradually feel my whole back relax more. I enjoy this blissful place as my mind slows down and my body feels more energy flowing through it.

I am more grounded now. I feel more balanced and mature as a result of this experience and these treatments. I am much more aware of my physical condition and how to take care of it. I've gotten married and had my choice of jobs. I've gotten promoted recently, but need to be careful about how much I take on. Some of that old competitive drive is still there, so I am still learning the importance of balance in my life. (*Katrina Radke*)

Usually after the treatment I welcome a nap. Often I go home and sleep for an hour if it has been an extensive treatment. However, I know I always can function for other activities if necessary. A nap would not be mandatory. But I try not to schedule acupuncture on a day I'm going to play bridge in the afternoon.

The most gratifying effects I have ever gotten from the treatments was when I asked you to help me with the circulation in my legs. The femoral arteries were occluded beyond the reach of arterioplasty, beyond the reach of balloon or surgery. I take coumadin because of a plastic aortic valve. Surgery on the legs was out of the question, or very dangerous. Through a series of aggressive treatments you were able to relieve the pain in the feet, which hurt badly all the time, especially at night.

We did about six treatments in a series. I don't welcome the needles in general, but with each treatment I was able to walk farther, to do more. In two months the nocturnal pain in both feet was relieved by 90 percent, and it has stayed improved. There is still very little pulse to be felt in my feet, but the circulation has improved and there is no pain. You did that! I was able to fly in comfort after about three months, and I now use the treadmill in short spurts every day. (*Bill Kane*)

Overall my health now is in good shape. I still occasionally feel like heat is traveling through my body and making me itch, but only in one spot or another, not all over. My main complaint, fatigue, has been greatly addressed by the treatments. My baseline is 85 percent better than when I started. I still get tired but can come back now with a good night's sleep or an afternoon off to read a book. I was starting to get alarmed that I couldn't get my vitality back, and now it is back.

Although the symptoms with which I presented were consequences of my first pregnancy, they were made worse by the stresses of my daily life. I feel that the stresses are still there but that I am in a much better position with respect to them. We have even been talking about having another baby. I would husband my resources differently this time. I would be more vigilant over my body, take more time off, and not push through it to return to work. (*Mary Ellen Hannibal*)

I had instant results from my first treatment. I found immediate relief from the pain in my back, and a welcome absence of side effects. The absence of the grogginess from pain medications was an eye-opener because for someone like me, whose stamina is already severely taxed, even the effects of aspirin can be unwelcome.

Pain relief has always been an issue for me. I face certain tradeoffs in this regard. Pain induces spasm, which in the case of my right leg can make the limb either stiffen or collapse. So significant pain in the affected leg must be controlled, but controlled without drowsiness. For this reason acupuncture has been a very useful tool at certain points in my rehabilitation. I've had to get over a couple of orthopedic surgeries, and acupuncture has given me a way to exercise with reduced pain and therefore reduced spasticity.

You also gave me treatments to help with healing after surgery. I did heal quickly and without complications each time. On several occasions I've been plagued by insomnia, and acupuncture has offered immediate relief. In fact, to my surprise it provided relief of very specific symptoms such as waking at 4 A.M. and not being able to return to sleep. Any one of these successes might be attributed to some sort of placebo effect, but I have had too many good results consistently over decades to be anything but convinced of the worthwhileness of the treatment. (*Paul Bendix*)

I didn't notice anything terribly remarkable after my early treatments in that I didn't feel tired or wiped out, except the evening of a treatment I might go to bed earlier. It used to be a flat, bland experience. Now I notice a clearer response. I attribute that to being healthier. Sometimes I feel like I've been run over by a truck, and as a result I want to go to bed. And the next day I feel vastly better.

I really think that the acupuncture helped me start to get somewhere with my health. The important change has been being able to rely on the body's response rather than on antibiotics. Acupuncture has taken me from a sense of ill-being to a point where my body is in charge again. That is the most remarkable effect I have had. It takes me from being sick at one moment to being well, usually an overnight experience. The problem is not fixed, but I feel like I've taken a turn for the better.

I feel that as I am healthier, I can perceive phases of unwellness that I wasn't able to perceive before. And thus I can ask for help before the symptoms get out of control. Like I might feel depressed or get a premonitory headache, and know these are usually the early symptoms of debility and thus get to the echinacea or to the Oscilloccinum. Or if they don't help, get to acupuncture for treatment.

I have had some spectacular on-the-table experiences: goopy ears drying up, chest releasing congestion, and sinuses draining. And the famous immolation of Mary with the cone of salt and the cone of moxa in the belly button which stopped everything in my GI tract for two days.

And I tell the story of my grandson's reversal in the womb. My daughter Ann was having a hard time. The third baby was due on Monday but was positioned with head down but face up. The plan was to turn it externally. Ann came and sat in the waiting room with needles in her toes and jumper cables attached. She felt the baby turning, and the obstetrician confirmed it by a sonogram. She went on to a normal birth. An acupuncture miracle!

Then there was the time Ann came in for an acupuncture treatment, and I was holding the baby. He was fussy, and you put a needle in his head and he

went out like a light and slept on my chest. He was eight months old. Big enough to cause trouble, which he didn't.

And there was the miracle of bleeding my fingertips. I really felt very sick: upper respiratory goop, and felt toxic to the core. You bled me, stuck me, ran all sorts of juice through me, and the next day I felt marvelously better.

Also in the realm of musculoskeletal medicine. This is not the primary area that I've used it, but it has been very useful. Once I splayed myself doing yoga, sitting on the floor meditating with the Buddhists. That really screwed up my spine for a few months. It took acupuncture, epidurals, and physical therapy. Next time I'll know to stick with those Christian chairs!

I've had a lot of good knee effects, my old-lady knee. I cracked it once while I was backpacking, and some arthritis settled in. The acupuncture really helped.

Then there was the famous voice treatment, where I was well along in the process of laryngitis and you did something miraculous that allowed me to sing in the chorale that weekend.

Acupuncture has enhanced my recovery response after surgery. It has minimized the downside of surgery while enhancing the upside. For example, I had that bladder repair. And you needled that incision when I got out of hospital. I've never seen anything heal so fast. Flat, none of the raised scar tissue. No pain at the incision.

I have sometimes felt that I'm fine and I don't need to come back at six weeks or three months. Then I find myself crashing at four months. Soft signs of impending doom, headaches, non-well-being, which I can now perceive that I was never able to perceive before. I'm able to catch the soft signs earlier on. I'm starting at a higher level and getting to the dips sooner. (*Mary Wilson*)

At the first treatment, after the needles were taken out I immediately had a sense of well-being, a sense that there is something other than a pill to help keep me well. Coming for acupuncture makes the HIV a more palatable malady to deal with. It gives me a balance in my day-to-day life. It also took care of the pain in my feet coming from the medication.

The acupuncture can keep life regular, and that's all you ask for. Nobody will be cured from HIV with acupuncture, but it is a method to empower the person to keep himself well by balance and energy. (*Greg Colden*)

The first night was a bloody miracle. I just slept. I hadn't slept for months. You saved my life.

My friends say I look wonderful, and I tell them that this is the most important thing that helped me. I wouldn't be walking as well if I didn't have acupuncture. It opens up my entire body.

When I'm having a treatment, I'm lying down and taking care of myself. I have stopped my life for an hour and a half. There is a great sense of relaxation after every session, and that I'm flowing again.

Let's say I come to you and say my legs hurt. I know I won't have as many cramps. I know it's going to work, that it's working through, that I will sleep. I feel much more whole starting the next day, and that maintains itself for

at least a month. I believe that if I can go once a month, my arthritis goes better, my sense of self is better, everything works well. It helped me enormously to deal with the grief of losing my husband.

Acupuncture gives me value because I can see my body—which is deteriorating in many respects—I can see it responding. It is also a belief in the process, the unblocking of energy obstructions in the body. As a psychologist, I do a lot of work with unblocking the psyche and soma together, and for me the acupuncture is a tremendous assist in that work. (*Joan Kip*)

The first day, the first week, I felt shaken up internally, but in a good way. I didn't feel destabilized, but jostled, and I liked that. It felt like it was the right thing to do. I felt a little bit exhilarated, a little bit tired, and very encouraged.

At first the skeptical side of me said it was delusional. Yet it felt like I was making progress myself rather than just taking a pill. I became involved. I started taking Tai Chi classes. I felt the change in the consciousness that I bring to my body. I was also doing massage, which I started because of a jammed-up back problem after an injury when I had been working out too hard and too long.

These three things—acupuncture, Tai Chi, and massage—in concert were complementary and supportive, and I wasn't regarding myself any longer with the Catholic split between mind and body.

Then there were victories that were encouraging. I dropped the first drug, and thus lost the fatigue that came with it. My son said I was much clearer thinking these days, especially in the afternoon. And that was encouraging.

The improvement arc was steep and fast, and then it leveled off. The internal cost I paid for withdrawing from the other drugs was higher. I had some depression coming off the second drug, and I wondered if acupuncture had led me into a place where my illnesses are not so much on the surface, rather are part of a deeper process.

Always on the day of the treatment I felt expectant and hopeful during the experience. Often the treatment was painful, especially on days when I didn't expect it to be painful. And yet when I walked out I felt that there had been progress. Sometimes I have felt drained after the treatment, sometimes emotional, sometimes weak.

I have had only a few moments when I've felt, oops, something's flaring up here. When the needles hurt I just say to myself that I wanted that to happen, that I needed that treatment in that area.

The process acupuncture has created is a state of clear-headedness, the kind of moments I get when I'm writing well. There is a translucency, a transparency, and I feel wonderful, entranced. I need to get up and move around. I recognize my limits and boundaries but do not feel my expectations and possibilities restricted by them. And that is very different from how I felt when my pain problem was being treated with drugs. The big questions in one's life are about letting go of the impurities and baser emotions, and affirming who you are and what our life is. It's about self-knowledge. (*Joe DiPrisco*)

When the acupuncture works it usually holds for two to three weeks. There are times when I will be sore for two or three days after the treatment, and

then it eases up and I don't notice the pain. There are times when I get instant relief. I walk out of here and all parts feel better. There are times with my thumbs when they will be sorer for a few days, and then they calm down.

One thing it really worked well on was a plantar fasciitis that was really bothersome. You put the needles directly into the heel, and from then on the heel started improving.

Also there was the time I had wrist surgery, and you told me to come by after the surgery. I was kicked out immediately after surgery with a general anesthesia. My husband brought me straight to your office. He dragged me to the table and you put in some needles, and I became clear, alert, and energized within five minutes. This impressed even my husband, who had been skeptical. And, I left without any pain from the surgery. (*Helen Green*)

The acupuncture really made a difference in letting me start feeling better physically. For example, I had started physical therapy for my back, but I had given up on it because it wasn't working and it hurt. After two or three acupuncture visits I went back to PT and was able to move forward. I was able to do my exercises and deal with my kyphosis, which helped the soft tissue component because it had become a vicious cycle. After the PT work with deep tissue, plus the acupuncture, the soft tissue component of the pain has been minimized. The acupuncture served as the catalyst to move to better response from other maintenance treatments.

Although I came in for my upper back, I think the best benefit I've gotten from the acupuncture is a sense of general physical well-being. My mood has also been stable, and for two or three days after the treatment my libido was increased. It had been dropping because of the pain in general. I sense that I have more energy to do things longer during the day, and more energy to begin projects and whatever needs to be done. I don't get tired as quickly when I start something new. (*Thomas Donovan*)

CHAPTER FIVE

PATIENTS' PERSPECTIVES

Acupuncture aiding my body, to me it seems very reasonable. After many years of different acupuncture approaches not solving everything I wanted it to solve, and wanting to sustain the effects it can give, the basic question for me becomes, "What is the interaction with the doctor going to be?"

My interaction with my regular doctors is a disconnection between who I am, what I feel, and my body. My internist is never really looking at me; he is sending me to get blood tests. When I tell him what is going on, he has a good response to show he is keeping up with the journals, but it is more theoretical and detached and it doesn't feel like he relates to me.

So being treated physically with acupuncture, even though it hurts for a moment, is a bonus because it feels like a healing can go on here. I know from my Western doctors I will get Tetracycline or some other antibiotic or a steroid. I am grateful for Western medicine and what it can do, but I've never had any other kind of transaction than this. My gynecologist takes an interest in my body and my reproductive state only.

Making a connection with my body and the person who is assisting me with it is very important. Listening to pulses and looking at the tongue, these are important. Listening to me, seeing me, what I say, seeing through your own eyes, makes a huge difference. It makes the idea of coming to acupuncture more attractive than going to the internist.

I'll see a conventional practitioner if I have an acute symptom that I can't stand living with, because he will put it under control. But in fact I know that I am not healing from that, and that what they give me may make my problem worse. I will see an acupuncturist for no matter what goes on, acute or chronic, just to get my body going.

For my fatigue, I know that regular Western medicine doesn't have anything to give me. I want to protect my health against Western medicine. I'll use it for profound problems or to save my life, but with acupuncture, where there is a resolution possible, I'll use it to help my health. Like with my skin, where there is no cure and I will live with it, the acupuncture helps me live with it rather than suppress it and see it come up elsewhere and move around.

Acupuncture I believe in for a first approach for everything. I'm not a holistic junkie. I didn't use a midwife; I wanted to give birth in the hospital. Everything doesn't have to be natural. Acupuncture is more about healing and less about getting rid of symptoms. So no matter what the complaint, I want to

see the acupuncturist. If it's a severe symptom I will also want to go to a specialist if the acupuncture doctor can't figure it out.

I take the best of what's around. I don't feel myself an extremist, rather a rationalist. I'm not against these acute symptoms being taken care of: I'll use a steroid for my eyes, but I know it's going to be a problem until my own system takes care of it, or it resolves over time. I like the discipline of medicine for safety and limits.

I love acupuncture. It makes total sense to me. It has done me a lot of good. I've advocated it to other people. It is a body-mind-spirit approach. The whole idea of who you are, the energy in your body, is a deep ontological proposition, and healing is integral to that.

That the multilayered system can heal itself partakes of the reality of what is given to us, mysterious and concrete at the same time. It makes sense to approach it from different levels at the same time. I have a keen perception of the differences among mind and emotion and body in me, and have the intuitive knowledge that they are connected. Acupuncture helps integrate those connections. (*Mary Ellen Hannibal*)

I was probably more liberal and more physical-medicine-minded than my colleagues, but just being an orthopedic surgeon makes you fairly closed-minded to things like acupuncture. From that perspective, if we couldn't deal with a problem with a scalpel or physical therapy, then we send them away with anti-inflammatories. Most of my colleagues do not understand the limitations of their discipline. There is a blindness of absolute self-confidence. They really do believe that they are God going into the operating room.

At some point I think that conservatively and traditionally trained physicians involved in the physical modalities ought to be exposed more to the benefits of acupuncture if it can be done in a way that isn't threatening to their egos and their training. Maybe medical school is the place to expose students to it. (*Thomas Donovan*)

If I had never gotten chronic fatigue syndrome or acupuncture treatments, I'd still be on the fast-paced track. I became content with me, and was happy just to survive.

To someone who is just beginning acupuncture, I'd advise going with the flow and trusting in it. Do not expect a quick fix, as what took years for you to feel a certain way may not be a one-stop, quick-fix treatment. I believe (I didn't before, as I was looking for a quick fix.) the patterns are embedded in the body and memory. Thus, if you have a chronic condition as I did, you may need to recondition not only your body but also your mind, so that the body can eventually create new patterns versus the old ones that may not be the healthiest. (*Katrina Radke*)

My general feeling is that I can't understand why there are so many disbelievers when the proof of the pudding is so evident in the healing. People look askance when I tell them of my success or my wife's success with acupuncture.

However, skepticism has diminished appreciably in the last four or five years. Acupuncture has become almost white bread. (*Bill Kane*)

Acupuncture facilitates my body's ability to cope. It's not like putting something into it. It makes me feel less invaded. It is a much friendlier kind of therapy. The needles are not going to do for me what my body can't muster itself to do, but they will enhance whatever vitality I have. Acupuncture will allow me to take charge and shift the responsibility to my own body, which gives me a sense of feeling less invaded and more empowered.

Of course, I like doing acupuncture with a doctor because I have the benefits of modern medicine as well. If it needs to get cut out, acupuncture is not going to cut it out. I've had some surgeries; I haven't had to give them up because I'm doing acupuncture.

I like coming here because you listen to my complaints. You ask to look at my tongue and fingernails and eyelids. I, my body, my self, am giving you information that you are going to use in the treatment. A standard issue doc hardly looks at you. They take some blood and send it to the lab, and therefore think they know everything about you. I don't think this is all there is.

I think the psychological impact is my ability to identify a depression or a down feeling as an early symptom. I was never able to notice that before because I had to deny that it was there, because before I didn't have anything but mega antibiotics to treat me. I have a more refined range of symptoms to read, and thus intervention can be more timely and effective.

I can remember saying to you in an early interview, when asked about my emotional state, that I can get depressed, not a depressive personality, but that I can get depressed. I am fascinated at the Chinese ability to group these families of symptoms just through observation. Doctors are now scientists instead of artists. The art of healing seems to be reemerging in your acupuncture.

I've gone through my cycle of feeling better, then feeling worse, and know that I can trust the acupuncture to help me out, that I don't have to fall apart, that I have a way out. This is very important for my sense of confidence, of being in charge, of not letting the disorder take over me.

You put the Western expertise and the Oriental expertise together in a way that makes you an exceptional doctor. And of course the metaphysical aspect of you is the mortar that glues the two together. (*Mary Wilson*)

I want my neighbor to know the phone number of my doctor acupuncturist. I have already sold him on the value of acupuncture on a man who was given up on, because they used to wonder how I kept going with all these problems.

My acupuncturist is a first-class M.D. I'm not recommending the guy down the street with a sign out. It's too precious a thing to not have the best. Call your doctor, not just anyone. (*Johnny Maddox*)

You really have to believe to take that first step, but once it works for you, you just know that it is good. For me the first step was to trust my doctor and come to the referral. You are a doctor and you first administered acupuncture to

me. I think having the right person giving the treatment plays a big part. I don't know if I would have had the confidence if it had been just a licensed acupuncturist doing it. (*Mary Johnson*)

I don't like to take pain medicine. Therefore when I use the acupuncture, I can go and do my daily occupation and not have pain. I can sleep in a comfortable position and not have pains from the surgery. I can sit and stand for long periods without having pain. Plus it gives me the mobility in the parts where the muscles were removed, and I can move the upper extremities without pain.

When I went back to the hospital last time, they gave me sixty Tylenol with codeine. I still have fifty-five. When I'm regular with my acupuncture treatment, I don't even have to take a regular Tylenol, no painkiller at all.

I think that the acupuncture has increased my productivity at work. I don't get tired as easy. I can work all day without pain. I can even sit and do paperwork at night for hours. Before I started with the acupuncture, I would sit for a half-hour and I'd have to move and stretch until I could sit and relax enough to do some more work. My energy level is up 150 percent at least.

My attitude and my disposition is much more pleasant now because I don't get irritated nearly as quick. My wife notices that I've calmed down and I'm more patient with her and with the employees. I think it has increased the overall quality of my life after surgery because I was kind of into a mood of "It's not going to get any better." It gave me a better quality of life that I could look forward to doing things that I could do before surgery. In that respect it increased my attitude and gave me a much better life to look forward to. And you can't ask for much more than that.

When I tell my friends about acupuncture, I tell them I'm going to get relief from pain by having pain induced. Then they ask if it hurts and how many needles go in. And I tell them that the number of needles depends on the day and the problem, and how deep the needles are put and the electricity connections change each time. It works and it changes the pain. They are amazed. They want to know how I prepare myself to get stuck that many times, and I just tell them I don't even think about it. (*Audrose Calhoun*)

Your office and business was like family for my mom. She made you strawberry jam. She liked some employees and not others. She thought some did moxa better than others. That is very important, the people who are here and the people who are helping. It's not just the needles, but the people who are doing the moxa and the people at the front desk.

I found that acupuncture didn't work for some things I had, but at some point along the line I stopped worrying about how much money I was spending, because I was balancing how well I felt against the cost. I just decided that I was going to have a once-a-month tuneup. And I'm glad I made that decision. (*Helen Green*)

Part of my receptivity to acupuncture is that I am now middle-aged, and I'm damned if I'm going to let that beat me down. I don't want to feel at the mercy of the now vulnerable body, the body that was once invulnerable. I

mention this because I think that my embracing acupuncture and its effects represents a response to those changes. I feel that in middle age I can see things with fewer delusions, with a clearer sense of limitations of the physical body. I recognize that I'm not invulnerable, I'm not immortal.

Acupuncture has a different take on the exploration of the soul and sense of "Know yourself." My Catholicism and Aristotle and Aquinas made me comfortable with the difference between mind and body. But that can be inverted in a second, in all these metaphysical ways. Acupuncture is kind of different. Qi is not the soul. But I know it is contacting something in there. I know that because I've experienced it.

I never think of myself as a patient in acupuncture. In this process I feel like I'm a partner. I can help the process along with how I take care of myself, or I can jam it up if I wanted to. It takes a different level of commitment of the patient. Americans think of the body as a machine, and therefore love pharmaceuticals and surgery. People need a different vision of health. Acupuncture can help with that vision because in some mysterious way it serves as an instrument to open health and life.

I have a good friend who is an acupuncturist. But I wouldn't go see him because he is not a physician. I would not have felt comfortable seeing someone who would examine without understanding Western biomechanics and pharmaceuticals. Seeing you felt to me like the only way to do it.

I think that the experience of acupuncture patients in the American public will help lead physicians into seeing the difference in vision. It is important to delink acupuncture from Laetrile and other hocus-pocus. There is a cultural fear operating here, and the sooner we can identify medical acupuncture as something that has been incorporated into medicine rather than embracing something Chinese, something alien, we will have a stronger medicine. (*Joe DiPrisco*)

I went to another acupuncturist, and the effect was just not there. She wasn't a healer. She was too gentle for me. I think it's important to have faith in the healing power of the person doing the acupuncture. You are a regular doctor and you are an acupuncturist, and that's where it is different from visiting a regular doctor who doesn't do anything special. I'm there and feel I can't take up more than ten minutes of his time, nor that I can bring up anything else with him. It's not a personal experience. Acupuncture is a personal experience, an intimate experience.

I think the insurance companies should take a step further and offer acupuncture as preventive visits. I know that if I come in every three or four weeks it keeps me away from the more expensive visits to other doctors and procedures. I strongly believe that the insurance companies should sponsor this. (*Julie Fox*)

The acupuncturist must do his job right. But in order to put the patient at ease there is an interchange, humor, laughter, an emotional component that transcends the clinical professionalism. The treatment is individual, and the humanization of the physician encounter is critical. The doctor needs to be able

to put the patient at ease and to take control, while being very conscious of the person's mental state at the time.

Humor can neutralize the situation and take away from the pain of the experience. The doctor needs to understand the connection in order to keep the patient healthy. Humor keeps me alive. If I can't find humor in facing a life-threatening illness or pain, then I am going to live a miserable life. (**Greg Colden**)

Acupuncture for me became a spiritual adventure. When you become whole, then it is a spiritual enterprise. I can depend on the acupuncture to help with the coming together. I feel myself flowing, despite age impediments, keeping open. I sense it. It flows. I just sense it.

It is like a meditation. It helps me be creative because of that. I believe if the body is rested and not stopped up, the energy flow allows creativity to flow along the same lines. There is more energy to be creative. Acupuncture brings us back to our self. (**Joan Kip**)

CHAPTER SIX

THE VISION/ACTION BIOPSYCHOTYPE

Constitutional Biopsychotypes Revisited

The principal channels of Qi circulation define three symmetrical pairs of energy subcircuits. Each subcircuit influences the section of skin, musculature, and structural tissue through which it flows, and represents the energetic activities of four internal organs. The principal subcircuits also define the three biopsychotypes that I mentioned in the Introduction—Vision/Action, Nurture/Duty, and Will/Spirit—in that each biopsychotype embodies the qualities of the four organs in the subcircuit. You already had a taste of these qualities when you filled out the orientation questionnaire.

In medical acupuncture we use the constitutional biopsychotype to understand how we are constructed, how we work, and how we break down. The step from three principal subcircuits of Qi circulation to the biopsychotypes is not difficult. Simply put, the subcircuit defines the musculoskeletal territory through which flows the energy produced by its four organs. The biopsychotype combines in its concept the region through which the channels flow, the traditional and contemporary functions of the four organs associated with the channels, the elemental qualities affiliated with the four organs, and the psychological characteristics commonly attributed to the organs. The biopsychotypes organize the multiple expressions of the human condition, in its glory and its disarray.

The biopsychotype is the foundation of the integrated model of acupuncture diag-

nosis and treatment. Let's take the segments of this term one at a time. We start our observation of a patient's body, his morphology. You need only to go to a public event or shopping area to recognize the diversity in body types and shapes. What you don't see is how those different bodies work inside, what their internal strengths and internal weaknesses are. This is the "bio" part of the term: the biological functions of the internal organs. Much of this aspect is inherited from our parents; some of it is influenced by our life circumstances and the diseases and physical challenges we have faced. The "psycho" part involves the innate psychological characteristics that contribute to our personality, plus our emotional balance and responses to internal and external stresses. Together these qualities create biopsychotypes and a descriptive framework to collect and organize and interpret information from our patients into meaningful acupuncture associations and patterns.

The three biopsychotypes identify and group normal and abnormal qualities of human composition, and serve as an exquisitely valuable organizing matrix for physicians practicing acupuncture. During the initial interview we encourage our patients to speak candidly and thoroughly about their presenting problems and medical history. We mentally link each symptom to its responsible organ and subcircuit. Then we inquire about other symptoms and characteristics of the organs responsible for the presenting problems. For example, a bone or joint problem would lead to questions about Kidney influence, such as internal chilliness, and then to back pain associated with the Will/Spirit subcircuit. How many times an organ appears in the tally at the end of the interview tells us if the subcircuit under consideration is participating strongly or in a minor way in the patient's problem.

It is common for adult illnesses to occur within the functional sphere of the organ

or subcircuit that manifested disturbances in childhood. A profile of the probable strengths and weaknesses in a person can be obtained from a review of family characteristics, illnesses, and behavior patterns. Most people express a constitutional composition similar to that of one or both parents; they have a range of normal qualities and strengths, with a weakness in one area or several areas that can often be seen in their progenitors.

Your constitution is likely to be composed of qualities of several biopsychotypes. But one biopsychotype embodies the majority of your makeup. Your constitution is composed of strong and normal characteristics along with the weak ones. The latter are the seeds for expressing disturbances and deterioration. Throughout life most people express disorders in the biopsychotype that is most predominant in their constitution. The timing and intensity of the symptoms are a function of your basic vitality, age, and the events that have occurred through the course of time that add to or detract from your native resilience.

Between Psyche and Soma

The interface between psyche and soma, between our emotions and our bodies, finds expression in the organs and functions of the **Vision/Action biopsychotype**. How well balanced we are in our emotional and physical lives is a reflection of how well the physiology and psychology of this constitutional division execute their specific responsibilities. The Liver, the Gall Bladder, and the autonomic nervous system (ANS) are the organs and functions associated with the Vision/Action biopsychotype. Many people in our modern society experience disturbances in the Vision/Action sphere.

The Vision/Action Biopsychotype

People who have a strong and balanced presence of Liver, Gall Bladder, and autonomic nervous system characteristics in their constitution are generally comfortable and directed with decisions and planning. They are usually full of movement and projects, can be muscular in build and agile in sports, and are blessed with good energy and good digestion. Warm and spirited, they are confident that everything will work out. Their innate talents can be visual or manual. They are independent, courageous, and loyal.

At the active end of this constitution's spectrum, people with a predominance of the Vision/Action biopsychotype in their makeup can be highly motivated and always on the move, putting their projects in place, or pursuing sports for the love of activity, competing for the joy of moving. At the quiet end of the spectrum they can use their lively intellects and visual talents to creatively resolve organizational problems or to design exceptionally functional living and working spaces. They are reluctant leaders, not because they shirk responsibility, but because they prefer to work independently or in a team as an equal player.

Traditional Functions of the Vision/Action Organs

In the acupuncture model of health, Liver and Gall Bladder vitality allows us to make decisions, initiate activity, complete projects, and adapt to life's challenges with flexibility and creativity. Wood is the elemental quality attached to Liver and Gall Bladder energy. The Wood image is best represented by a tree, roots firmly embedded in the soil, yet with trunk and branches flexible and yielding to forces greater than itself. This image can be expanded to suggest that the Wood qualities in this biopsychotype help our

bodies and psyches accommodate to the physical and emotional stresses we must endure. Thus the energy in the Vision/Action circuit is indispensable in maintaining physical and emotional well-being.

The autonomic nervous system quietly maintains and regulates the essential but usually unrecognized activities of blood circulation, body temperature, transit of food through the digestive tract, and absorption and distribution of fluid in the body. The traditional acupuncture names for these functions are the “Master of the Heart” and the “Triple Heater.” Master of the Heart is referred to variously in translations as “Heart Protector” or even “Pericardium.” The Chinese character is a hand enclosing and protecting the Heart. Master of the Heart allows the Heart to perform its function of pumping blood through the lungs, brain, and all the tissues of the body.

The concept of the Triple Heater is that the body’s trunk contains three cavities—chest, abdomen, and pelvis—in which the digestion, absorption, assimilation, and excretion of ingested liquids and foods takes place. The combined functions of the Master of the Heart and Triple Heater, in effect, equate to the contemporary physiologic responsibilities of the autonomic nervous system, the unsung hero of internal movement, metabolism, regulation, and homeostasis. Master of the Heart and Triple Heater are associated with the elemental quality of Fire, as is the Heart that is protected by their functions. The image of Fire embodies the sun and illumination, vitality and warmth, rising energy, excitement, and mental brilliance. Fire implies heating and circulation, physical and emotional warmth, enthusiasm, and passion. Qualities of both Wood and Fire are present in the characteristics, influences, functions, and disturbances of the Vision/Action biopsychotype.

These all sound pretty good as core characteristics. So how is it that this circuit

commonly causes our emotions to wreak havoc in our muscles or our digestive tracts?

The answer to this question lies in understanding the traditional influences and functions of the Liver and autonomic nervous system. Once we embrace the traditional terms and images, we can comprehend the disturbances that we feel in ourselves and others. Each organ's functions are important in the overall energetic balance of the body, but those of the Liver are the most vital to maintaining a harmonious interaction between our internal and external states.

Functions and Exaggerations of the Liver

Liver influences muscles and tendons, the eyes and vision, and fingernails and toenails. Liver and Wood are associated with the season of spring, blue-green colors, and sour or citrus flavors. The most important function of the Liver is to assure the smooth movement of Qi throughout the body. By nourishing the skin and muscles with Qi, the Liver enhances the body's resistance to potentially harmful external conditions, and allows it to recover from injuries. Further, the Liver regulates the quantity of blood and body fluids in the circulation through release and storage during moments of activity and rest, and during menstruation. This function contributes to the body's daily capacity to recover and restore energy. The Liver influences ligaments, tendons, and muscles, the tissues responsible for movement. A healthy Liver allows flexible joints and good muscle action, along with good nails and good vision.

In acupuncture physiology, the Liver does more than move energy and blood smoothly to organs and muscles and skin. It also enables a strong spirit and drive to express itself through clear planning and direction. The vision that Liver supervises is not limited to what we see with our eyes; it also involves the clear sight of creativity and

confident self-expression. In fact, the role of the Liver in the body's energetic ecology is likened to that of a general responsible for the overall planning and execution of a campaign. If our Liver is functioning well and our Qi is flowing smoothly, our personality will be easygoing and happy with freely expressed emotions. If it is not functioning well, the Liver can create a physical expression of our emotions through the Vision/Action acupuncture energy circuit.

A disturbance pattern called "stagnant Liver Qi" occurs when the Liver does not adequately promote the smooth movement of Qi and blood. Emotional tension, if intense and prolonged, can initiate or aggravate stagnant Liver Qi in our physical bodies. Reciprocally, stagnant Liver Qi can produce or exaggerate emotional agitation in us. We can experience stagnant Liver Qi at one or multiple points along a physical-to-emotional spectrum of symptoms. Physically our muscles may feel stiff or contracted when we move because the Qi and blood are not moistening and nourishing adequately. Muscles may become painful or inflamed, even to the point of tension in the jaw, eyelid spasm, or a facial tic. The emotions of frustration, impatience, irritability, and resentment become prominent when Liver Qi is obstructed. The dynamics act in both directions; emotional tension can be both the effect and the cause of stagnant Liver Qi.

Christine Lee comes to mind as a patient complaining of symptoms typical of the early stages of Liver Qi not moving smoothly through muscles and emotions. She came to see me for help with a prominent trigger finger on her left hand, a condition where the sheath that surrounds one of the tendons that flex her fingers becomes thickened and causes the finger to take on a hooklike shape. Over a period of a few months, as that problem was resolving with acupuncture and electrical stimulation on her hand, plus a series of injections of homeopathic products, she explained that she was feeling tightness

and tension in the muscles of her upper back and neck. She reported that this discomfort was not going away as it had in the past, and that she was beginning to have headaches in the back of her head.

I worked on the muscles in her neck and back with acupuncture needles and a massage technique called spoon scraping. Spoon scraping involves massaging the tight muscles with the smooth edge of a Chinese soup spoon, pressing firmly enough to force the blood to move through the muscles. (This technique might sound strange, but for those who need it, the deep massage feels as if it's warming and relaxing the muscles, like it's a "good hurt.") As Christine relaxed her muscle tension, she recognized that the tightness began when she started a new job that was more demanding on her patience and emotions than her previous work, and that she was internalizing this stress in her muscles. I concluded her acupuncture treatments with a needle pattern designed specifically to move energy through the Vision/Action circuit. I also insisted that she schedule a thirty-minute walk in the middle of every working day and that she return with her husband, to whom I wanted to teach the spoon scraping technique.

Fight or Flight, Recover and Restore

The autonomic nervous system (ANS) is an important part of the Vision/Action equation. When working properly, it keeps our important internal activities moving smoothly and in balance. The ANS has long been acknowledged as the division of the nervous system that most quickly manifests emotional distress or well-being. This is our fight-or-flight and recover-and-restore mechanism. It makes our hearts beat fast when we are chased by angry dogs, or slow down when we are deeply relaxed. In response to our work or home environment, our autonomic system can be set too high and be overly reac-

tive to physical and emotional stimuli. Or it can be set too low and become exhausted, when we are aware that everything inside us moves slowly. The symptoms generated from an off-kilter autonomic nervous system are remarkably varied, from feeling the heart beating very intensely to a vague sensation of low energy or digestive sluggishness.

It is the autonomic nervous system that adds Fire qualities to the Vision/Action biopsychotype. Fire connotes summer, red, and bitter or burned flavors, and is associated with the Vision/Action organs of Triple Heater and Master of the Heart. The Triple Heater oversees the production and distribution of energy in the body, the nourishing, moistening, cooling, warming, and movement necessary to maintain life energy.

Stagnation of the Liver moving Qi through the body, a Fiery state in the emotions, or an increase or decrease in the functions of the Vision/Action organs can affect our personality, vision, neck muscles, heart, or digestive system. Stagnant Liver Qi creates physical symptoms that are unique for each person; the range of possibilities is immense. When the circuit is out of balance, however, there is always frustration or anxiety.

The characteristics and symptoms cited in this chapter's checklist can occur in almost any combination in people of all core constitutions. An individual's genetic constitution and psychological balance determine whether a disturbance remains as a manageable habit or personality trait, or evolves into an annoying physical or psychological symptom. The intensity of expression is also influenced by the individual's other strengths and weaknesses that might soothe or inflame the disturbance. Here are four common patterns that occur in Vision/Action people.

Four Common Patterns of Disturbed Liver Qi

Clicking and Tapping

People who have a dominant constitutional makeup of Liver and Wood might express the early presence of stagnant Liver Qi by tapping their fingers or feet, clicking a pen, or getting up and pacing. These behaviors are expressions of frustration or anxiety, stuck Qi trying to move. They know that, if they can run or pick up a basketball game later in the day, most of this tension will be discharged. In fact, they must exercise regularly and vigorously to maintain their sense of balance and well-being. Not to exercise increases the fidgeting and can lead to holding tension in the upper back and neck muscles. The tension and impatience cause sudden eruptions in an otherwise easygoing personality. These people are likely to have a sense of order that is unique to themselves, invisible to those around them. Disturbing their order risks injury to the relationship with the disturber.

You certainly have lived or worked with someone like this, or you might have these habits in your own makeup. It is one of the most common and banal expressions of disturbed Liver Qi and can usually be brought back into balance through increasing exercise and limiting ANS irritants such as caffeine and alcohol. It is unusual for these symptoms on their own to bring a person to acupuncture for help, but they are seen quite commonly accompanying more serious complaints.

Impatience and Tight Muscles

Someone of similar constitution but more on the quiet end of the spectrum might automatically doodle on scraps of paper while talking on the telephone. In those who have not recognized the importance of exercise or who are unable to include enough

movement in their daily lives, stagnant Qi can lead to increasing impatience and irritability in their personalities and to chronic muscle tension patterns in the upper back, back and sides of the neck, or the jaw. They can be seen frequently twisting their heads and rubbing their shoulders and the back of their neck and head. More advanced states include a silent but chronic criticism of others and holding grudges. Their experience of frustration and impatience with situations or coworkers might pass without being expressed verbally, but the energetic dynamic can somatize as muscle tension, headaches, insomnia, or digestive disturbances.

*A few years ago I had an office manager named **Samuel Morris**. He took on his job responsibilities following a rapid turnover of employees who were unsuited for the position and who had left his office in chaos. He jumped into his work and, with little supervision and in a remarkably short time, had created a new organization for the projects involved in our teaching activities. He created a very tidy computer filing system and formalized protocols for activities we repeated during the teaching seasons. Samuel is a doodler and a tapper. Any spare scraps of paper on his desk were covered with artistic doodles that he executed while talking on the telephone. When not doodling he taps his pen against the desktop, twitches his feet, and crosses and uncrosses his legs. He has worn glasses for reading since early childhood. Samuel also got very bad headaches, sometimes preventing him from doing any work, that clearly were triggered by very tight muscles in his mid-back and neck. When working under pressure for a long period he became impatient and even rude with me and with the students on the telephone, and his muscles got tighter and his headaches worse.*

He allowed me to treat him from time to time with needles in his back, spoon scraping, and energy-moving needle patterns in the Vision/Action circuit. This always

helped, but Samuel's biopsychotype persistently catapulted him back into active symptoms whenever we were working against a deadline. He instinctively resolved much of his problem with two lifestyle decisions: he cut back to part-time work and he got a dog. Bringing the dog to work required that he walk him several times during the day, and he also had the time to take the dog for a run in the park at the end of his work day. I still see him from time to time for acupuncture, whenever his muscle tension symptoms interfere with his comfort and activities. But not very often.

Grudges and Explosions

People with a bit more Fire in their constitution will progress more quickly from frustration to irritability in their personality and be less professional in keeping these features in check. These sorts of people have difficulty keeping criticism of coworkers and bosses private. They will have an uncanny ability to recall, without apparent thought or effort, any and all past insults and injuries, as if they had been catalogued in an emotional database. They may explode in anger when they hit a stress overload or perceive one more insult to their excitable psyches. Such people can be productive in an office or team situation but can be unpredictable and sometimes unpleasant. Or the irritability and resentment escalate to become full-time and thereby limit them to self-employment or independent contractor work. The evolution from frustration and irritability to explosive anger is called stagnant Liver Qi creating Liver Fire. Fire's nature is to rise, hence the brutal shift from grudges to unrestrained anger.

I once had an emergency physician from the Midwest as a student in my medical acupuncture training program. Part of the training experience is for each physician to be a patient and be interviewed, evaluated, examined, discussed, and treated by a group of

physician colleagues in the class. This student lived on a thirty-acre farm that he completely surrounded with a border of trees. The driveway to his house was over a mile long. He took pride in his abilities as an emergency physician and as the founding administrator of his emergency room. He also held a certain pride in the distance he kept from other people. "I see enough of them at work. I'm happier with my animals when I'm at home." The problems he presented during his interview as the patient included headaches, insomnia, and intermittent but vague problems with digestion, such as bloating one day and diarrhea the next. He also acknowledged that he was commonly impatient working with nurses or other doctors and preferred to rely on his own competence and independence. And he clearly remembered the insults and offenses that he perceived from others in his life, at work and in his family.

The examination after the interview showed that the muscles across the front of his chest; his shoulders; and the front, sides, and back of his neck were firm and tightly contracted. They were painful to our probing fingers, and they limited how far he could turn or bend his head. We discussed his history, the physical findings, and his work and social situation as a group, listening to each student's observations and proposed diagnoses and treatments. After forty minutes of this discussion our patient stood up, eyes bulging and head red, and shouted with clear frustration and anger, "Will you please finish your fucking talking so we can get on with the fucking treatment!" We concluded our analysis and treated him with a needle pattern to calm rising Liver Fire.

Anxiety and Emotional Paralysis

Just as stagnant Liver Qi can evolve externally into anger, it can also manifest internally as intensifying anxiety. This anxiety occurs in people who have constitutions

similar to our emergency physician above but lack the innate confidence of their more outgoing counterparts. Their anxiety increases internally as timidity and inhibition of self-expression, and can evolve into a state of emotional paralysis. Anxiety drives them to use guises to minimize being noticed, especially avoiding eye contact: blending invisibly into groups, covering their eyes with tinted or dark glasses (often with a statement that they suffer from “sensitive eyes”), wearing their hair long over their eyes, or using hand gestures to cover the mouth or face while talking. In such people it is also very common to have ongoing physical symptoms of stagnant and obstructed blood that come as a consequence of the stuck psychological Qi. The usual symptoms of stuck blood are chronically tight and woody muscles, headaches, or unpredictable menstrual or digestive disturbances.

Pam Goodman, who retired early from her nursing supervisor position when her physician husband retired from his practice, came to see me with a thirty-year history of crippling migraine headaches. They started when she was raising her young family as a divorced working mother. At the time she saw me she would have headaches as often as four to six times a month, each one putting her to bed for one to three days. They were triggered by direct sunlight, inadequate sleep, chocolate, and coffee. She did not consider herself an anxious or tightly wired person. She held a lot of tension in her neck and shoulder muscles, and could describe the headache pattern as originating in the muscle just over her right shoulder blade, then rising to the back of her neck, and through her head to the eye.

Pam had spent her life trying to keep everything moving: her family, her hospital staff, the demanding schedule of her second husband, and her crippling headaches. She does not show her frustration, irritability, or anxiety, but she certainly experienced these

emotions during the different stages of her life. Rather than reacting to her difficult circumstances with explosions of impatience or anger, she forced those emotions inside, only for them to come out as a headache. She responded very well to treatment, which included a needle pattern very similar to that for rising Liver Fire, along with needles plus electrical stimulation in the offending muscles of her back and neck, and intermittent scraping.

Professional people with prominent constitutional features of the Vision/Action circuit usually are aware when they are anxious or irritable and, for professional interactions, keep these tendencies in check. Depending upon the intensity of the anxiety and their state of fatigue, they might not be as diligent reining in these dynamics in their personal lives. Others who have not been required to develop a professional or social persona might not recognize the role that anxiety plays in their internal and social dynamics. They might simply consider it as innate timidity or reluctance to draw attention to themselves, or, at the opposite extreme, as impulsiveness or bad temper.

The constitutional expressions and early disturbance patterns of the above four Vision/Action types are the most common presentations that I see in my practice. As I teach this biopsychotype to physicians, there are always nodding heads and smiles of recognition as doctors identify themselves or their spouses in this circuit, or as the description makes sense of the behavior of colleagues and patients. Most of us can see some part of ourselves in these descriptions; some of us will recognize a good deal of ourselves in one of them. Certainly we can all recognize people we know in some of the more exaggerated forms.

Potential Behavior in the Vision/Action Biopsychotype

With all three acupuncture circuits, however, there are no absolute and fixed patterns of manifestation. There are no rules that require a standard combination of characteristics and disturbances to qualify for a Vision/Action constitution. Each individual is composed of unique qualities and characteristics, and an equally unique collection of disturbances and symptoms. Understanding our own constitutions and disturbances gives us an appreciation of our family health heritage and of how our health may evolve through time. No one is created in isolation. Biopsychotypes are inherited. We all arrive with body types, organ strengths and weaknesses, and personality traits that are largely derived from our parents. Family members typically share physical and psychological characteristics.

Each of the four common Vision/Action patterns above, or any other combination of these patterns, can occur intermittently and transiently in an otherwise healthy and balanced person. They can also be the norm of a person's character. Or, with time, stress, illness, and fatigue they can evolve in intensity, duration, or complexity of symptoms, both psychoemotional and physical. One of the remarkable features of this circuit is the variability, and sometimes vagueness, of symptom combinations. This phenomenon is especially challenging when most of the symptoms are showing in their early stages without an organ being clearly disordered. Such people risk being labeled as hypochondriacal, whereas they are probably showing disturbances in some of the quiet functions of the autonomic nervous system at the same time as suffering from muscle contractions and other problems of obstructed Qi.

Stress and Tension Exaggerations

The Vision/Action circuit is usually the first of the circuits to express symptoms triggered by the stress and tension in our lives. I began with these four patterns because their progressions occur commonly in the general population. There are other features of this circuit, however, that people in any of these pictures may display. The symptoms do not have special affinity for one end of the Vision/Action spectrum or the other, and they may appear as single features or in clusters. Each symptom is linked to the Liver, Gall Bladder, or autonomic nervous system spheres of influence: muscle and movement, frustration and anxiety. Many will be obvious as exaggerations of the psychological or muscle features of the circuit. Some symptoms occur, however, because of diminished or absent vitality in the circuit's energy. Fatigue is a common symptom of diminished energetic vitality in one or several organs, including the Liver. More specific symptoms of diminished Liver vitality are lack of direction, inability to plan, and indecisiveness. Liver-depleted people can express anxiety by finding problems with every situation, continuously analyzing, but not resolving the problems and moving forward.

In the sphere of personality and comportment, terms like “ambitious” and “competitive” are sometimes used for the decisive and driven qualities of the biopsychotype. In sports the competitiveness is usually expressed in the passion for movement and challenge rather than as an indomitable drive to win. The anxiety and anger that accompany chronic Liver Qi stagnation are commonly described simply as a moody, critical, and irritable personality, or, in more pronounced states, as a foul-tempered or bloody-minded character, which can even involve recurrent violent eruptions.

The most extreme disturbance in the Vision/Action circuit takes place as an expression of rising Liver Fire. This occurs when internal tension that has accumulated

from longstanding stagnant Liver Qi mounts and externalizes in a violent or brutal expression. It is characterized by extreme and uncontrollable anxiety and frustration, and can start as distension in the abdomen, fullness or pain below the ribcage, or a lump in the throat. It moves rapidly to create red eyes or a red face and culminates in a crippling headache or explosive and unrestrained anger (whence the expression “blowing your top”). Rising Liver Fire is also the energetic mechanism behind impulsive, offensive driving and road rage.

Liver energy rules the eyes and vision, fingernails, and toenails. Therefore, problems with vision are not uncommon in people of this constitution. The disturbances can mean needing reading glasses when in primary school or for distance vision at the time of puberty. It can mean dry eyes, floaters, and blurred vision when fatigued, or, in later life, cataracts, retinal detachment, and macular degeneration. The vitality of the Liver is reflected in the strength of the fingernails and toenails. Common complaints in patients with disturbed Liver function are soft nails that bend or break easily, ridged nails, and cuticles that become inflamed easily. Patients often complain of soft nails following prolonged courses of medications such as antibiotics or corticosteroids. The nails might never return to their pretreatment condition. In acupuncture physiology, the medications have altered the vitality of the Liver, which is in turn reflected in the nails.

Muscles, tendons, and ligaments, the tissues that allow us to move and be active, are the most common targets of stress and tension. The sides of the head, trunk, and legs—the lateral surfaces of the body—are nourished by the acupuncture channels in this circuit (fig. 16). In a more general way, however, the energy of this circuit influences the quality and behavior of all muscles, whether or not they lie in the pathway of the channels. Liver–Gall Bladder energy allows for the physical movement so characteristic of

this circuit, as well as the agility and confidence often perceived by others to be physical recklessness.

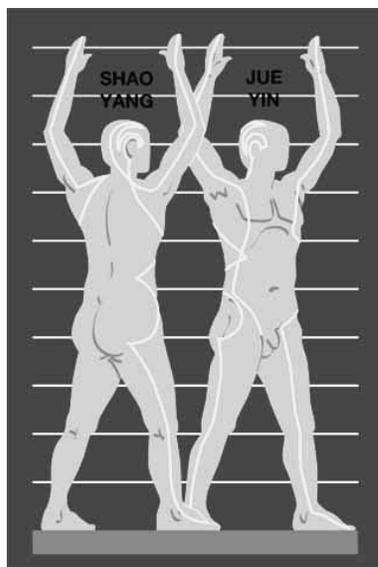


Fig. 16. The Vision/Action subcircuit

*I knew **Bill Marlow** in medical school. He was focused and ambitious as he defined and executed each step that led him to qualifications in ophthalmology. He was an accomplished athlete and received a partial scholarship to play lacrosse while in medical school. He also had worn glasses since puberty and was aware enough of internal tension to learn transcendental meditation to help him relax during medical training.*

Bill appeared in my office thirty years after our graduation. His wife, a professional dancer familiar with the value of acupuncture for the muscular problems encountered in her discipline, forced him to make the appointment. He related his story in crisp medical terms: recurrent low back pain, now chronic and prohibiting him from playing competitive racquetball; and burning pain radiating into his buttocks and thigh while sitting in administration meetings at his medical group, helped temporarily with anti-

inflammatory drugs and sedatives that relax the muscles.

He had already dismissed physical therapy and acupuncture as being of no value after two treatments of each approach and, impatient to make the pain go away, had a vertebral disk surgically removed. The surgery also did not help the symptoms; fortunately it did not make them worse. “Does the stress of your surgical or administrative duties affect the pain?” “Yes, of course. Especially when I’m frustrated dealing with the stuffy bastards I have to work with in administration. But I’d never let them know they were the cause of the pain in my ass.”

As he relaxed into our new relationship, Bill revealed more features of his psyche and soma that are a perfect match with the Vision/Action biopsychotype: glasses since puberty; dry eyes as an adult; chronic fungus under four toenails; always active in competitive sports and frustrated when can’t be physically active; rapidly insightful in organizational planning and impatient with colleagues who don’t perceive his way as correct; prone to foot tapping, sweaty palms, and pacing; pounding heart when under pressure; several recent bouts of atrial fibrillation (a deregulation of the heart’s rhythmic beating, under control of the ANS) when especially anxious; and everything made worse by more than one cup of coffee a day.

He noticed improvement after his first treatment, even though he was very skeptical of acupuncture’s value for his condition. I had him keep a pain diary so we could track the circumstances when the pain disappeared or intensified. Keeping the diary for two months confirmed that the greatest triggers were the administrative meetings and confrontations with colleagues who did not see solutions as quickly as he did. He started having long pain-free periods after three treatments and gradually returned to more physical activity. He now understands how his sitting posture and his psychological

tension affect the back pain, and that acupuncture can help relieve and prevent emotional and muscle stress and irritation. He returns periodically for treatment when he is anticipating a stressful event or when he is recovering from one. He's also playing squash again, pain free.

In addition to injuries that occur while in motion, the muscular problems seen most frequently in this circuit come from inflammation and spasm. These conditions are the consequences of sluggish Qi not moving blood through the tissues, and becoming stagnant and irritated. This state creates the muscle tension patterns that can originate in the middle of the back and climb to the shoulders and neck, and just stay there feeling stiff and achy. Or they can get worse and cause a muscle tension headache that starts in the back of the neck and moves over the scalp to the eye. Or they can move over the sides of the neck, tightening the muscles of the jaw, causing jaw clenching during the day and teeth grinding at night. Or they can start in the middle of the belly and climb to the chest and create symptoms similar to an ulcer or a heart attack. Or from the chest to the front of the neck. Or anywhere else that there are muscles. Once a myofascial (muscle and connective tissue) spasm and inflammation pattern is set up, it loves to return to the same place and intensify when we reach a state of stress or fatigue, especially if we have not been stretching or exercising regularly. And it can stay around for such a long time that the texture of the muscle tissue changes from soft and flexible to hard and knotty.

Because the Liver stores and releases blood during times of rest and activity, it plays a role in menstruation and should be considered as a potential culprit in patients with premenstrual pain, scant or heavy bleeding, irregular periods, fertility problems, and endometriosis.

Other general features of the Vision/Action circuit are linked to agitation of the

autonomic nervous system and its interaction with Liver Qi. These symptoms include nervous sweating, moist palms, and a jumpy restlessness that involves nervous habits such as nail and cuticle chewing, fussing with hair, twisting fingers, wringing hands, and sighing, in addition to the very common finger tapping, pen clicking, and foot bouncing. Dizziness, insomnia, frequent tension headaches, easy sensitivity to foods and medications and changes in the weather, and a sensation of pounding or racing in the heart are also potential symptoms. And, finally, an imprecise migrating abdominal discomfort can occur when under stress, along with other digestive symptoms such as sensitive appetite, belching, regurgitation of food, nausea, or churning in the abdomen.

Wood and Fire, Alcohol and Coffee

The Wood and Fire elements that are affiliated with Liver–Gall Bladder and Master of the Heart–Triple Heater explain qualities that are seen in people of the Vision/Action constitution more frequently than in those of other constitutions. Among these qualities are the innate affinities for the colors, flavors, and seasons attached to the elements, as well as frailties in the organs under their supervision, and sensitivities to the external climatic conditions that are most likely to penetrate and damage the organ.

Wood is the dominant elemental presence in this biopsychotype, with a splash of Fire to make life more intense. The color affinity acknowledged by those of predominantly Liver or Wood makeup is blue, or blue-green, a turquoise color rather than a midnight blue. Their flavor affinity is for sour or citrus, such as grapefruit, vinegar, or an acid taste. The preferred season is spring, or spring is the season in which symptoms are noticeably either better or worse. Sensitivity to the wind can also be a feature in this constitution, with a feeling of being either exhilarated and invigorated or exhausted and

fatigued after a walk on a windy day. People of predominantly Fire Vision/Action biopsychotype tend to prefer the color red, bitter or burned flavors (such as heavily roasted chiles, very dark toast, and well-grilled vegetables), and summer, and will love or hate a hot climate. The Fire affinities are seen less commonly in the Vision/Action constitution than are those of Wood.

Alcohol is the mood changer of choice in many people with this anxiety and anger quality because alcohol temporarily calms the Liver, relaxes emotional irritability, and moves Qi and blood. The impact of alcohol on Liver energy and tissue, however, is not salutary when used regularly to excess, for it creates a chronic inflammatory condition that accentuates the irritability caused originally by stagnant Liver Qi. Interestingly, patients who have taken a prolonged course of a medication that is potentially toxic to the liver, such as some antifungal, antiviral, or anti-inflammatory agents, report being aware of an increase in irritability or anxiety. This can occur while they are using the medication or after they've stopped, even if the liver function blood tests have remained normal.

It is common for people made up predominately of Vision/Action constitutional qualities to flirt dangerously with caffeinated products: coffee, black or green tea, cola and other caffeine-fortified carbonated drinks, and dark chocolate. It is their physiologic and energetic nature to be attracted to these stimulants. Most will insist that a cup or two of coffee is indispensable in the morning just to get going. Others will have an additional cup if they wake up with a headache, knowing that the extra shot of caffeine has a good chance of lifting the headache. And many will candidly say that they crave the buzz, the charge, the focus of attention that comes from the caffeine. It helps them get their projects done. But many of them know that the extra caffeine adds to their muscle tension,

their jaw clenching, their headaches, impatience, insomnia, and blood pressure problems. Yet, changing their caffeine habit is a challenge most are reluctant to take on.

How To Use This Piece of Acupuncture Wisdom

Persons of the Vision/Action biopsychotype manifest their qualities in balanced characteristics, symptoms of early disturbance, and symptoms of chronic and severe disturbance—physical, emotional, or combined. As you read through the chapter and reviewed the features in the questionnaire, you developed a sense of how strongly your constitutional makeup and your weak links are associated with the activities of this subcircuit. Symptoms in this subcircuit drive people to seek professional attention outside conventional medical services for two main reasons. First, the symptoms, while not life-threatening, become chronic and interfere with quality of life and effectiveness at work. Second, conventional medical therapies offer little that directly affects these conditions without unpleasant or limiting additional effects.

Understand

Understanding where you fit along the Vision/Action balance-to-disturbance spectrum allows you to plan your personal and professional activities to accommodate your individual strengths and inconveniences. Simply being aware that your confidence and drive, your organizational skills, or your potential for irritability or timidity are part of your constitutional makeup should encourage you to work with your strengths while accommodating and overcoming your weaknesses. Understanding your characteristics and disturbances means that you can incorporate common-sense changes in your personality and your physical condition. For example, seeing how you affect those around you

ideally should lead you to gain greater control over bothersome impulsive behavior patterns. Or recognizing that you feel most clear, energized, and productive if you exercise daily should lead you to reliably incorporate physical exercise into your work and home schedule.

If you have trouble interpreting signals from your friends or work colleagues about habits and personality qualities that they consider less than desirable, or if your impatience or anxiety constantly interferes with your interactions with these people, you can gain insight about yourself by keeping a journal. A journal does not have to be an elaborate or time-consuming project. When you feel out of sorts or wonder why people are reacting to you in a way that unsettles you, create a dialogue with yourself in the privacy of your journal. Try to identify the feelings or difficulties you experience and describe them in writing. Ponder it, think about creative ways to overcome the obstacles you identify, and write it down. You can make this an ongoing process to clarify your internal emotional and personality issues, or you can return to the journal dialogue only as your unsettled thoughts take you there. The act of putting words to your emotions stimulates a dialogue with your subconscious that continues even when you are not writing or thinking about writing.

The issues that you, as a Vision/Action type, are likely to face in your emotional life and your journal dialogue are the psychological consequences of stagnant Liver Qi. You are challenged to overcome frustration and irritability with flexibility and gracefulness, and to overcome anger and grudge holding with patience and forgiveness. Your timidity can be addressed with your innate courage, and the confidence derived from that courage allows your vision and insight to become plans and action. Develop an arms-length distance from your emotional impulses so you can evaluate their impact before

you speak or act. Keep up your internal dialogue with your journal. Your subconscious can often come up with suggestions and solutions that emerge as you continue your writing. Follow them. Keep the Qi moving.

Relax, Exercise Exercise, Relax

A relaxed psychological and physical state is essential for Vision/Action people to function effectively at home and at work. The agitation triggered by ambition and activity easily creates an emotional environment of frustration, anxiety, impatience, and irritability. These unpleasant and unproductive emotions can in large measure be countered through relaxation and exercise. If you live at the active end of the Vision/Action spectrum, vigorous physical exercise is indispensable. You have already found your favorite and most effective sports or workouts, whether basketball, racquetball, tennis, running, biking, swimming, judo, aerobics, stair climbing, or ski machine. It is critical that you do something regularly, minimum three times a week; even better, five. Even exercise as gentle as walking can create the necessary relaxed state.

If you live at the quiet end of the spectrum, you may prefer relaxation techniques such as meditation, biofeedback, or self-hypnosis as tools to contact a calm center inside the turmoil of constant ideas and activity. Yoga breathing and postures are another route to the calm center, and they have the added value of stretching joints and muscles. Qi-moving martial arts such as Tai Chi Chuan and Qi Gong are especially valuable if you have tight or stiff muscles. For all Vision/Action types the opportunities for movement must be established in your lifestyle routine. It is critical that you maintain a balance of activity and rest each day at work and at home. Go for a walk after lunch or on your

morning and afternoon breaks. Join the gym close to work. Exchange massages with family and friends to reduce the muscle tension and inflammation that come with this constitutional territory. Even on your own you can have good benefit from electric massaging equipment now widely available. Keep the Qi and blood flowing.

Eat Well

In acupuncture and Chinese traditional medicine the fundamental concept in treatment is to provide a stimulus that is equal but opposite to the problem being addressed. A needle pattern is designed to move stuck Liver Qi and disperse the Fire of a headache. Herbal formulae are prescribed to address the same disturbed states of stuck Qi and excess Fire. Dietary recommendations are also made to provide nourishment that balances internal irregularities. In Chinese dietary thought great attention is paid to the temperature of food and drink as they are consumed, and even greater attention to the temperature and internal moisture a food produces when it has been digested. Foods are categorized as cold- or cool-producing, warm- or heat-producing, damp-producing, or neutral, depending on the effect they have on temperature and moisture when digested. For dietary therapy, foods are recommended that will help restore the disturbed condition to a state of balance.

If you regularly expend energy and attention keeping anxiety and irritability in check, limit your intake of foods that cause Liver stagnation and Fire. These include rich or fatty meals, high-fat foods (cookies, pastries, crackers, products containing margarine or vegetable shortening), deep-fried foods (including fried fast food, French fries, doughnuts), whole milk and dairy products (such as butter, cream, cheese, ice cream), and hot and spicy sauces and curries. You might crave spicy foods because they stimulate Qi and

temporarily resolve the feeling of Liver stagnation. But too much hot spice risks converting a stagnant Liver condition into Liver Fire.

If your diet must include fried items, be sure to include sour flavors in your foods as well. Sour flavors reduce the excesses in the Liver and help to balance the effects of rich food. Sour foods include lemons, limes, grapes, sour apples, vinegar, pickles, olives, sauerkraut, leeks, tomatoes, and mangos. Liver stagnation can also be helped by eating fresh greens and sprouts and by using pungent cooking herbs such as basil, fennel, marjoram, rosemary, caraway, bay leaf, cardamom, cumin, and ginger. Eat your biggest meal in the middle of the day or in the afternoon, and avoid late-night meals. Beware eating quickly or overeating, which creates a stagnation in the stomach and intestines. Overeating heavy or hard-to-digest food like nuts, nut butters, and meat also slows down digestion and can adversely affect Liver Qi. Likewise, skipping meals or eating on the run adds to autonomic nervous system stress and overburdens the Liver. Sit down and relax during your meals. Moderation keeps the Qi flowing.

As a Vision/Action person, one of your greatest lifestyle issues is your consumption of coffee or caffeine stimulants and alcohol. You probably want the energy kick-start of caffeine in the morning and possibly would like more than a few boosters during the day. Caffeine helps you focus and keeps the day moving, right? But caffeine also taxes the Liver and ANS and, when used to excess, can contribute to all the symptoms of Liver Qi stagnation and Liver Fire that you experience. You know what “excess” is for your well-being. Stay well below that level. Living as intensively as you do, you probably also find alcohol useful as a rapid mood changer when your workday is over. You also might find that when a little feels good, a little more looks even better. Define a safe and reasonable limit to your alcohol consumption. Measure your drinks; stay within your limits.

Excess jams up the Liver Qi. Moderation keeps the Qi flowing.

In general, most people remain healthy if they eat primarily warm food cooked fresh and eaten warm; lots of fresh vegetables eaten warm; grains and fiber; a variety of animal protein; moderate amounts of nuts, seeds, and fruits; and not much concentrated sweets or fats. I recommend preparing your meals with whole foods, that is, food that is fresh, not processed, without preservatives and without refined sugars or carbohydrates. It is important to eat warmer foods during winter months or in cold climates, and cooler foods during summer. The digestive process does not change when we are out of balance, nor do the temperature and moisture qualities of digested food. In dietary therapy it is important not to take recommendations to such an extreme that the demands of the new diet will further tax or deplete the digestive process. For example, although cool- and cold-producing foods are good for a hot summer or a hot internal disease, eating too many cooling and cold foods may slow down the digestive process and diminish the useful Qi derived from the diet.

Seek Treatment

If your muscle tension, headache, anxiety, or irritability difficulties do not come under control with your self-examination, relaxation, exercise, or dietary activities, you should consider seeking professional intervention to help you in your repair process. There are several useful options in the conventional and complementary disciplines.

Acupuncture relieves the acute muscle pains and emotional strains caused by the stresses and tensions of our daily lives. An acute muscle spasm problem can often be relieved with one or two treatments. If your constitution is primarily Vision/Action, however, your acute problems typically occur superimposed on chronic anxiety states and

myofascial pain patterns. If this is your situation, it makes best sense to incorporate regular acupuncture sessions into your health maintenance. Monthly treatments create a useful fundamental rhythm, and additional visits can be requested when you slip out of balance (which will happen when you have a new deadline at work or a difficult personal situation to resolve). The acupuncture for musculoskeletal pain and recurrent headaches includes needle stimulation, often with electricity, and probably other traditional techniques that help move stagnant blood and Qi in the muscles, such as cupping and scraping.

If your muscular problems are recalcitrant to acupuncture therapy alone, look for a practitioner in the manual medicine arts whose work complements the acupuncture. Your physician acupuncturist will probably be able to refer you to a reliable provider. This might be a physician practicing **osteopathic manipulative therapy** whose techniques can influence bone alignment, joint function, and muscle holding patterns better than acupuncture alone. Some registered physical therapists have additional qualifications in osteopathic techniques. The physical therapist, or a massage therapist trained in **myotherapy**, can add deep tissue massage to the equation to help break up the deep connective tissue and muscle holding patterns. You can pursue any of these manual medicine approaches in conjunction with the acupuncture treatments until the pain patterns have been changed or controlled. Of course, during and after the period of acupuncture and manual medicine treatments, it is your responsibility to learn and execute the stretching and exercises recommended for your musculoskeletal problem.

Acupuncture is also effective to reduce the anxiety, irritability, and agitation that accompany muscle pains. A common approach is to treat the agitated state during the first part of the session, then address the musculoskeletal problem during the second part. This way, both psyche and soma are treated with the needle patterns at the same office

visit. While acupuncture can be very effective in creating a psychological “vacation” from the experience of anxiety and inner tension, if the external and internal conditions that drive that anxiety are not modified, the psychological effects of the treatment wear off quickly.

If the emotional symptoms of stagnant Liver Qi have become chronically inconvenient or inappropriate, adding **Chinese herbal prescriptions** to your treatment program can be very effective. There are several U.S.-based companies that produce classical Chinese herbal formulas in safe, effective, and easy-to-use preparations of pills, tinctures, and powders. Herbs are combined to move Liver Qi, move blood and Qi through the channels, or calm Liver Fire. Herbal prescribing is not a standard component of medical acupuncture training for physicians, although physicians are increasingly receiving this training. Many licensed acupuncturists qualified in traditional Chinese acupuncture are also qualified to prescribe Chinese herbs. Herbs can address both emotional and physical symptoms of the Vision/Action biopsychotype. They treat the Liver energetic problem without contaminating the body’s metabolism or nervous system. Typically, when herbal preparations prove effective in improving your symptoms, they require an extended period of use to create an enduring change. The herbs work hand in hand with acupuncture treatments, since they add a biological substrate aimed at changing the same problems being addressed with the needle patterns.

Constitutional homeopathy is another therapeutic approach to consider for the psychoemotional component of Vision/Action symptoms, especially if your anxiety and irritability continue to interfere with your comfortable interaction with friends and colleagues. Homeopathic remedies affect chronic disturbances on an energetic level that is subtler than the energetic dynamics of acupuncture. A well-prescribed homeopathic

remedy may modify the uncomfortable psychological dynamics to achieve a level of greater comfort and function. The homeopathic process does not require inspecting and verbalizing the details of the psychological problem, which is not the case with one-on-one psychotherapeutic approaches. Symptomatic acupuncture for muscular pain can be continued while using a homeopathic remedy.

More deeply seated and troublesome psychoemotional dynamics that keep you frustrated or anxious can, of course, be mollified with **antianxiety and antidepressant medication**. Please consider these drugs only after you have genuinely attempted to help yourself with the approaches already discussed. Don't rush to use them until you have tested the results of the other treatments for your problem. On the other hand, don't be reluctant to use them if your problems are simply not responding to other approaches. These medications are a valuable part of responsible treatments for Vision/Action problems; however, they are accompanied by physiological and psychological secondary effects. Using antianxiety or antidepressant drugs appropriately does not interfere with the acupuncture response. In fact, they can facilitate a longer-lasting change in the muscle pain patterns by modifying your neurological response to the pain.

Because the Vision/Action circuit serves as the sensitive interface between psyche and soma, common-sense health care dictates that we reduce the symptoms of stagnation by maintaining balance in our activities. It is critical that we understand how we function and under what circumstances our disturbances appear. More importantly, we need to know what we can do to return the early disturbances to normal, or at least keep them in check. Maintain a reasonable pace and set limits that reduce the symptoms of stress and tension overload. Relaxation, exercise, diet, acupuncture, manual therapy, herbs, homeopathy, pharmaceuticals . . . find what works for you to keep the Qi moving.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE NURTURE /DUTY BIOPSYCHOTYPE

Creation and Movement of Qi

Qi is considered to be the driving force in all physiological processes. When Qi is ample and flowing there is good health. When Qi is weak or stagnant there is disorder and disturbance in health. The Spleen, digestive system, and Lung are the crucial organs in the creation and movement of Qi. They are also the organs and functions associated with the Nurture/Duty biopsychotype. This subcircuit is concerned with the fundamental nurturing and day-to-day survival of the organism because of Spleen's role in extracting and directing energy generated through the digestive process, and Lung's role in refining and moving that energy as a function of respiration.

The Spleen and digestive territory of this biopsychotype is associated with the element Earth. The Lung and respiratory territory is associated with the element Metal. In people composed primarily of the Nurture/Duty biopsychotype there are typically many overlaps of Earth and Metal qualities, with one of them as the predominant expression. But the characteristics of the two poles are distinct enough to warrant understanding these labels. Simply put, Earth involves stability, being grounded, and creating a nourishing environment. People of predominately Earth composition are balanced, centered, and sympathetic, and work harmoniously with their environment. Metal involves strength, durability, infrastructure, and order. People of predominately Metal composition are

organized, meticulous, honest, precise, and respect order and discipline.

In general, Nurture/Duty people are calm, clean, and neat in appearance, and fastidious regarding their personal environment. They like order and are responsible about fulfilling obligations. Those with a predominance of Earth qualities are usually round and fleshy in build, have soothing and melodic voices, and are sensitive to flavors and odors. They have a psychological predisposition to nurturing and caring for the people in their lives, both personal and professional. Women of predominately Earth makeup hold maternity and the nuclear family above all other commitments and values. There is also an exuberant expression of Earth types as bon vivants, knowledgeable about food and wine, who know how to enjoy and share life's sensual pleasures. They appear with a fullness of presence and spirit that can be quite magnetic.

Bill Kane, whom you met in chapter one with an acutely strained back, described himself at our first interview many years ago as “an Irish-Catholic alcoholic democrat, Wagner-loving, bridge-playing beach bum, someone who has always enjoyed his life (and you may print that, Dr. Helms).” He satisfies the consistent features of the exuberant Earth type; that is, they are lively, inclusive of those around them, and fun to be with.

Those with a predominance of Metal qualities tend to be of thinner build, often with angular features. They have an authoritative, matter-of-fact affect rather than the melodic voice of their Earth counterparts. They are orderly and very conscientious about fulfilling what they or others see as their responsibilities. They are dedicated to participating in good works and have a strong sense of duty, and are often active in civic or religious pursuits, either personally or professionally. The personality of people possessing predominately Metal qualities can be perceived as unemotional, usually because they are so absorbed in the responsibilities of life and duties of work.

Mary Wilson is as close to a pure Lung/Metal type as will walk into a medical acupuncture office. Her initial complaint was thirty years of recurrent bronchitis with regular thick sputum, combined with a chronically draining ear infection. Additionally, she has had mild acne on her face and over much of her chest and back since puberty. Mary's style at our initial meeting was straightforward, no-nonsense reporting, which quickly lapsed into self-deprecating humor. We laughed about the genetic catastrophe underlying her condition and the fact that no one else in her family had been born with such frail health. She called it "piss-poor protoplasm, poorly put together." She spends no time feeling sorry for herself and has always been active in church and community activities, feeling that she wants "to give back and help others."

Traditional Functions of the Spleen and Stomach

The acupuncture tradition describes healthy Spleen Qi as something we can feel throughout our bodies, the energy that provides the mental and physical vitality to take on and complete projects at work and in life. Spleen's sphere of influence includes our capacity for concentrating, focusing, and memorizing. Spleen also influences the vitality of muscles and the lips, mouth, and sense of taste, as well as being responsible for keeping blood inside the vessels. Spleen and Earth are associated with the late summer and harvest season, yellow and earth tones, and sweet flavors. Spleen and Stomach are viewed as one inseparable unit in acupuncture physiology. In fact, the role of Spleen includes guiding the entire digestive tract and all digestive processes from mouth to rectum.

If your constitution is predominately the balanced Spleen/Stomach/Earth form of the Nurture/Duty biopsychotype, you are likely to have a rosy complexion, moist lips,

and welcoming smile. You are full-bodied, easygoing, generous, kind, compassionate, and tolerant. You like to eat and probably enjoy preparing food and serving others. You like to touch and be touched and enjoy a hug when greeting your friends. Your nature is caring, and you find time to listen to your friends and help solve the challenges they face in their personal lives and the challenges your colleagues face at work. You have a good memory for the details in the lives of your family, friends, and colleagues, and you exercise good practical sense as you find solutions to problems.

You love sweet flavors in fruits, carbohydrates, and especially milk chocolate and, because of this, are always struggling to maintain a reasonable weight. You might express your caring and compassion in one-to-one circumstances. Or you might swell with the spirit of the moment and invite everyone near you to participate in your sensual enjoyment, which might be a good meal, a new wine, an opera, another round at the bar, or any other form of pleasure enhancement. If you are this latter type, you believe in the motto that more is better.

Bill Kane has “enjoyed his life” to the limit of the unbridled exaggerations of this constitution. He was alcoholic for many years. By retirement he had liver cirrhosis in addition to emphysema from a lifetime of smoking. He takes good care of his exterior body with some bodybuilding and exercise, and verges on exhibitionism when he gets to the beach. He has a refined taste in food and loves opera, people, drink, and travel; and he wants all those he touches to participate with him in his pleasures.

The Spleen’s most important function is directing digestion, primarily in the Stomach, by moving the nutritional essence from foods and liquids from the Stomach to the Lung. This seems an unusual concept when viewed from our Western understanding of the physiology of digestion; however, it is a critical step in the acupuncture tradition

for creating and moving Qi in the body. When food and drink arrive in the Stomach they are broken down by acids and enzymes. The fermentation process prepares the nourishment for the Spleen, which separates the usable part from the unusable. The Stomach sends the unusable part downward into the intestines, where it undergoes further fermentation, separation, utilization, or excretion.

The Spleen is responsible for extracting the pure, energetic essence from nourishment, and by doing this it generates most of the Qi that flows to the other organs and tissues of the body. This Spleen Qi, in the traditional Chinese concept of energy physiology, is then transported to the Lung, where it combines with the pure energy from inhaled air. The combination of Spleen Qi and Lung Qi makes up the “nourishing energy” that is propelled by the rhythmic respirations of the Lung to the skin, muscles, and organs.

The Spleen fulfills other functions in traditional acupuncture physiology, the most important of which are keeping blood inside the arteries, veins, and capillaries; nourishing the muscles; and lifting and holding the internal organs in their proper place. If the Spleen and Lung function well, there will be good appetite, good digestion, regular bowel movements, healthy organs, easy menstrual periods, strong muscles, good concentration and memory, and plenty of vitality for all of life’s responsibilities.

Traditional Functions of the Lung

The most important consequence of respiration is to impel Qi through the acupuncture channels to all the tissues of the body. The Lung takes in air and extracts pure Qi, combines it with the Spleen Qi sent from the Stomach, and in turn propels it as nourishing energy throughout the body. The Lung helps to maintain the body’s warmth and vitality through the circulation of Qi. The defensive energy in the surface channels flows

through the skin and first layer of muscles. Defensive energy creates an energetic barrier to protect the muscles and organs from being damaged by extremes or changes in climate. Weather extremes of heat or cold, damp or dry, or even wind, can have a damaging effect on an organ that is susceptible to the external condition.

The skin is described as a third lung in the Chinese classics, and the vitality of Lung energy is reflected in the quality of the skin. The Lung spreads Qi and fluid through the body, which gives good complexion to the skin and a healthy quality to the body's hair. The Lung's sphere of influence also includes the nose and throat and vocal cords, the sense of smell, and the strength of the voice. People of Lung/Metal composition will commonly enjoy autumn, and have an affinity for white and a preference for spicy and flavorful seasoning. Likewise, such people may find that autumn is the season when they are most likely to develop their respiratory problems.

If your constitution is the balanced Lung/Metal form of the Nurture/Duty biopsychotype, you are likely to be thinner of build and more angular than your round Spleen/Earth Nurture/Duty relatives, and your hands and fingers are long and slender, not fleshy. Your complexion may be paler and your appetites more restrained, yet you share your relatives' orderliness and sense of responsibility. You are organized, rational, thrifty, and observant. Your strength is your loyalty and sense of duty. You possess, privately or professionally, an affiliation to a pursuit or organization that you consider of greater value than your individual needs and interests. You seek quality and perfection, use words to exactly express your ideas, and have a good memory. You have a keen but restrained sense of humor and give the impression of likeable equilibrium.

You are most likely a creature of habit and routine, and are disciplined and organized in your undertakings. You are meticulous, precise, punctual, and respectful of estab-

lished order. The person others see is calm and reflective and rarely upset, which might cause those around you to consider you to be detached or unemotional. You generally react with reason when confronting conflict and can analyze the problems facing you with an intellectual abstraction. You are likely to be aware of a tendency to a melancholy mood but do not allow this to interfere with executing your responsibilities. You probably have very tidy, small handwriting. When your digestive system is in good order, you like your food to be interesting and flavorful, sometimes tending toward spicy and hot.

Exaggerations in the Mental and Emotional Levels of Nurture/Duty

The diverse qualities of the two subdivisions of the Nurture/Duty biopsychotype overlap in the same person more frequently than occurs between the subdivisions in the two other biopsychotypes. It is very common to find strengths and weaknesses of both poles in one person. But it is also likely that either the Spleen/Earth features or the Lung/Metal features will define the bulk of one's personality and biological traits. If, as you went through the questionnaire, you found many of the Nurture/Duty qualities in yourself, don't be surprised if they represented both the Spleen and the Lung territories of influence. That's the way the body works. Few people are purely one or the other.

Exaggerations of the healthy qualities of this biopsychotype often occur in the personality and behavior of Nurture/Duty types. The common exaggerations rarely lead to serious problems. If they are prolonged, or especially if they are intensified through physical illness, they can develop into more difficult emotional problems or enduring physical symptoms.

Take, for example, the nurturing quality of the Earth Mother type. When her focus is on raising her family and caring for her home, the caring and supporting is the healthi-

est possible expression of Nurture/Duty qualities. If, however, these caregiving qualities are offered to members of the extended family, the neighbors, the church, and people at the office, it is easy for the nurturing type to lose herself in trying to solve everyone's problems and keep everyone happy. At a point along this trajectory of generosity the caregiver starts to deplete herself. Yet she might—because of these very qualities—feel obligated or responsible to follow through with every complicated and needy situation (or worry about the welfare of others if she can't help them), even at the cost to her own emotional and physical well-being. It is this state of emotional and physical depletion that can lead to mental, respiratory, digestive, and menstrual symptoms in this biopsychotype.

Mary Jane Preston now works as a free-lance resource management consultant (a.k.a. "head hunter") for national software firms. Before going free lance she directed the human resources division of a large Stanford corporation. When the company had to downsize its staff, she became very involved in helping the people she had hired during her tenure find new employment, and she spent a lot of time holding their hands in the interim. She left that job after five years because she found herself emotionally depleted from helping everyone else. Now that she's self-employed she can better regulate her professional output. She has, however, taken on the position of treasurer and fundraiser for her choral society, and still spends a lot of telephone time solving her friends' problems.

The exaggeration of concern and nurturing can express itself internally as well as externally. The caregiving that is characteristic in Spleen types can transform into introspection and self-absorption. This can lead to fretting over minor and major problems and may, in its extreme form, lead to serious obsessive behavior. Excessive pensiveness and brooding on ideas and emotions can also weaken Spleen Qi in its role of supervising

thought and mental focus, as can excessive studying and memorizing. People with very weak Spleen Qi look to be nurtured but can never receive enough. They constantly need to tell others about their problems. All these disturbances in Spleen Qi can be described as being ungrounded, unfocused in life, unable to concentrate on the task at hand. We have all encountered such people during their needy periods and recognize that it is difficult to truly help them with consolation or advice.

When Spleen Qi is full and healthy, Nurture/Duty types have great stamina, even a fierce energy in pursuit of duty or pleasure and gratification. When Spleen Qi is less vital these types can develop habits of excess eating or indulging. They can become lazy and negligent: for example, sleeping late and getting up late, lying in bed or napping at any time of the day, only enjoying the moment. They are usually not athletically inclined and easily lose the discipline it takes to exercise and maintain a healthy body. Even the joyfulness of the bon vivant can be cyclical. The appealing and entertaining charmer at the cocktail party might exhibit a foul-tempered irritability the next day. He is at all times obsessive about his bowel habits and will experience bowel irritability during times of pressure.

Nurture/Duty people of predominant Lung/Intestine/Metal makeup can find that their sense of duty includes a quality of self-criticism, augmented because their goals of perfection are impossible to achieve. They can be rigid and judgmental of others to an unpleasant extreme. Their ability to exercise judgment and make decisions in the workplace can be exaggerated to a desire to control everything they do and all those around them. Instead of having an infectious joy in life and pleasure, Lung types can indulge in sadness and peevish bad moods. Their voices become tinged with tones of grief and melancholy. They share the ritual of bowel movements and cyclical mood patterns with

their bon vivant Earth partners, but with a greater tendency to enduring depressed states.

Mary Wilson is especially susceptible to respiratory infections in late autumn and early winter, and must pay special attention to maintaining her health through regular rest and exercise. If she falls ill, she also falls into a self-critical fatigued state that can be colored with mild depression. She always completes projects out of a sense of duty, even if the activities are draining her while she is ill. If, for example, she is not punctual with her home-baked birthday and Christmas goodies for my office staff, she is genuinely upset and apologizes for her tardiness.

Functional and Organic Pathology of the Spleen

When the Spleen is unable to convert solid and liquid nourishment into useful energy and move it to the Lungs for the muscles and organs, a general feeling of lassitude, forgetfulness, stiffness, and fatigue will occur. This can be coupled with a sallow or pasty complexion and pale, dry lips. If the crucial function of transforming and transporting food and fluid is disturbed, digestive symptoms appear. These can include decreased appetite, a sour taste, heartburn, hiccoughs or burping, nausea or vomiting, stomach irritation, a sense of fullness or bloating in the abdomen, gas, and diarrhea or constipation, as well as difficulty in losing weight or maintaining weight.

As physicians, we have difficulty labeling these undifferentiated symptoms during a medical evaluation, and we therefore call them functional problems. We know that something is not functioning correctly, but no organ disorders can be clearly measured or defined. Functional symptoms, if unacknowledged and untreated over a period of time, can develop into true organ pathology. Digestive tract disturbances, when they evolve from functional into more serious pathology, receive official names. From top to bottom,

they include gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD), peptic ulcer disease (PUD), irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), the inflammatory bowel diseases of Crohn's and ulcerative colitis, and obesity. The common gastrointestinal disturbances are most likely to occur in people of predominant Nurture/Duty biopsychotypes.

In the Chinese medical tradition the general symptoms of deficient Spleen activity are caused by an internal state called dampness. This is an extremely common condition in our modern world with our intense activity and pressure, and our indifference to the quality of our food and the conditions under which we eat our meals. It is usually caused by eating excess quantities of what are considered to be cold- and damp-producing foods. Cold- and damp-producing foods create sluggishness and stagnation in the digestive process. A short list of these foods includes raw salads and fruits, uncooked vegetables, vegetable and fruit juices, iced drinks and cold desserts, dairy products, wheat products, and refined sugars. All of these are popular items for the busy working person. Eating at irregular times, inadequate or excessive eating, eating quickly, working during lunch, even reading during meals are culprits in developing dampness in the digestive tract.

Other causes of dampness are prolonged exposure to damp conditions such as foggy mountain or seaside regions, damp houses, sitting or working on damp surfaces, wearing damp clothing after swimming or exercising, or suffering any protracted disease. Chronic worry or obsessive thinking—about self, life situations, or others—or depression can also lead to stagnation of digestion and dampness. The most important causes, however, are cold and damp foods and irregular eating habits, and a constitutional weakness in this domain. Those of other constitutions might never develop symptoms of dampness from a regular diet of cold foods and drinks, to the chagrin of their Nurture/Duty friends and colleagues.

The state of dampness does not interfere only with the digestion activities of the Spleen; but with its other functions as well. For example, the Spleen's responsibility to keep blood in the vessels is also important. Failure in this function results in visible surface capillaries, easy bruising, varicose veins, hemorrhoids, heavy or lengthy menstrual periods, and retaining fluid as swelling or edema in the face, abdomen, or ankles. When Spleen's role in nourishing and controlling the muscles is faulty, especially in the extremities, one experiences weariness and weakness in the muscles, and cold and heaviness in the limbs. General complaints of heaviness in the arms, chest, abdomen, pelvis, or thighs come from this aspect of Spleen's weakness.

Mary Jane Preston, being solidly constructed of Spleen/Earth material, gains weight easily when she overeats or skips her exercise. She lost the weight she gained during her final year at the firm and prided herself on the control she regained by taking charge of her professional life. Within six months she had succumbed to the increased pressure from her successful consulting business and started to gain weight again, as well as develop irritable bowel symptoms. She tried a crash diet of salads and vegetable juice (the worst diet imaginable for a Nurture/Duty–Earth type) but failed to recover mastery of her weight. A year after going into solo practice she was in an unhappy state of being obsessed with work, yet not working effectively; lacking the energy to exercise; and lacking the discipline to diet. She looked heavy and very swollen, and complained of uncomfortable heaviness in her thighs and aching in her ankles. She became uncharacteristically resistant to my recommendations that she rearrange her work habits and obligations to include exercise. Nor would she discuss her weight or listen to diet recommendations. She stopped her acupuncture treatments during this period.

Spleen plays a critical role in supervising menstruation, fertility, pregnancy, and

recovery after childbirth. Of all life functions, childbirth is the most demanding and depleting of Spleen's vitality. Without a fully functioning Spleen and regular, healthy periods, conception and maintaining pregnancies can become difficult. After delivery women risk not returning to their pre-pregnancy state of energy, weight, health, emotional stability, or mental clarity if the Spleen is not well nourished. They are especially susceptible to problems of varicosities, hemorrhoids, and retained fluid. Pregnancy and delivery challenge another important Spleen function, that of holding organs in their proper place. Weakened Spleen Qi and the resulting dampness in the body tissue can cause more than hemorrhoids and varicosities to droop and ankles to swell. The bladder, uterus, vagina, and rectum can all drop, or prolapse, later in life, especially after childbirth or menopause.

Mary Ellen Hannibal is a disciplined and articulate writer and editor. She is also an attentive mother. At age thirty-five she explained that she had not regained her strength and stamina since the birth of her daughter. "I feel like I am running on empty, that I don't have the reserves with which to go about my daily life. I work part time and have a 3½-year-old. It takes everything I have just to keep moving." This is a state of depleted Spleen Qi. Over the course of a year we had a dozen acupuncture sessions and added a homeopathic remedy into her treatment plan. Today she has a second child, feels healthy and energetic, and is able to balance family and work with her own well-being.

Longstanding dampness from food and eating habits; from a constitutional weakness in a Nurture/Duty constitution; or from prolonged worry, chronic illness, maternity, or aging creates a body that feels and looks heavy. It is difficult to remedy this situation with an exercise routine alone. The generalized sluggish movement of energy and blood creates doughiness and edema in the tissue. This state of stagnant circulation can settle in

an area and cause oppression in the chest, heaviness in the abdomen, or pelvic congestion. It can result in chronic mucus in the sinuses, nose, and lungs, and chronic vaginal discharge. As dampness stagnates it can congeal into nodules just under the skin that appear around painful joints or manifest as tissue masses such as fibrocystic breasts and uterine fibroids.

*I saw **Mary Jane** two years later at a social function. She was even more obese than the last time I had seen her professionally. We talked briefly about her year-long battle with irregular periods and pelvic fullness, which had recently been diagnosed as massive uterine fibroid tumors. In her charming musical voice, she declared that she was shopping for a gynecologist who would remove the fibroids without requiring that she lose weight before surgery.*

Functional and Organic Pathology of the Lung

The quality of Lung Qi is determined by its innate strength plus the quantity of Spleen Qi moving into it from the digestion process. Early manifestations of weak Lung Qi can be frequent sighing, breathlessness, and skin problems. (Remember, skin is considered the third lung.) Dampness from deficient Stomach and Spleen Qi will create a condition of dampness and phlegm inside the Lung territory as well. This appears as frequent head and chest colds, sinusitis, laryngitis, bronchitis, asthma, and emphysema. Clogged nasal passages, coughing, and expectoration of mucus are all conditions of Lung dampness.

The Lung is an external organ in the sense that it connects with the world outside the body, through breathing in air. Because of this the Lung is vulnerable to inhaled irritants as well as to extremes of climate conditions. Strong Lung Qi is necessary to

defend the body against illness from climate, pollution, or microbes inhaled into its tissue. Strong Lung Qi is also necessary to move defensive energy to the zone of surface channels in the skin and first layer of muscles, which serves as the buffer between the external environment and the inside of the body.

The role of defensive energy in maintaining the body's good health cannot be overemphasized. The Chinese classics describe certain external conditions as potentially damaging to internal organs. For example, Spleen function is most susceptible to external extremes of dampness, the Liver function to wind, the Kidney to cold, the Heart to heat, and the Lung to dryness. This is not to say that an extreme external condition will affect only the organ of susceptibility or that external conditions will always affect that organ. Rather, it means that if the body's defensive energy is not robust, a climatic condition can potentially penetrate the body and lodge in an organ where it can cause trouble. Each organ has one special vulnerability, but its disturbances are not necessarily caused by just one external condition.

For example, the Lung is susceptible to dryness on the outside and inside of the body. Just as a dry desert climate is not necessarily the best environment for someone with deficient Lung Qi, Lung Qi weakness from unhealthy eating, worry, depression, menopause, age, or chronic illness can create symptoms of dryness such as dry lips and mouth, hoarse voice, dry cough, brittle hair and nails, and constipation.

The Lung can be the first organ to show the symptoms of an invasion of wind-cold or wind-heat. These descriptive terms can be taken literally to mean an exposure to wind or a draft, or as a metaphor which explains that wind symptoms in the body move quickly from one place to another. Wind-cold appears as muscle aches, stuffy nose, itchy throat, coughing, and feeling cold, in rapid succession. This is what we call catching a

cold. Wind-heat, which describes a cold that goes deeper into the body and takes longer to resolve, appears as headaches, body aches, sweating, fever, sore throat, and yellow mucus.

Lung Qi is also involved in spreading body fluids to the skin and facilitating the fluid and temperature equilibration that occurs through sweating. Because the skin is within the Lung sphere of influence, deficient Lung energy may result in too much or too little sweating and lowered resistance. Other symptoms of Lung failure to diffuse fluids are dry or wrinkled skin and swelling in the upper body. Bad complexion and skin eruptions in general suggest the possibility that the Lung sphere of influence is involved.

*Remember that among her collection of weak Lung Qi problems, **Mary Wilson** is persistently bothered by acne on her face, chest, and back, although she is now in her seventies.*

The Lung type person is likely to have had childhood allergies or eczema, frequent respiratory infections, or acne as an adolescent, and as an adult these may continue or evolve into seborrhea or psoriasis. There is commonly a family history of respiratory frailty, emphysema, or tuberculosis. Respiratory infections easily turn to wheezing. Curiously, the Lung-deficient patient may smoke or have smoked cigarettes, even as an adult fully informed of the health dangers of smoking. The reason for this seems to be that the Lung interprets the heat and stimulation of the inhaled smoke as a tonification of its weakness, hence the body craves the effect. While this explanation is accurate for the heat and immediate stimulation, nicotine addiction and tissue damage from heat and smoke are deleterious in chronic smokers. In chapter six I presented the parallel situation regarding alcohol and caffeine in people with Liver Qi problems.

***Steve Fischer** is a fifty-six year-old attorney who had recurrent colds and bron-*

chitis as a kid. As an intellectually driven and disciplined adolescent, he developed bowel symptoms of bloating, pain, constipation, and diarrhea. By the age of thirty he had full-blown ulcerative colitis. He used corticosteroids for fifteen years to suppress the inflammation in his colon, until he had the colon surgically removed to “resolve” the colitis. The surgery did not, however, return him to full and robust health. He came to see me with a ten-year history of chronic bronchitis and years of constant antibiotic use. He continued to smoke cigarettes during the first five years of this new condition.

Steve’s biopsychotype is strongly weighted in the Nurture/Duty–Metal arena. His good intellect and memory, coupled with strong discipline, got him into law school. Through law he sought noble pursuits, working with nonprofit organizations throughout his career. He has followed a devotional spiritual discipline for several decades, and helps with legal matters that involve the ashram as well as constructing a hospital in India. These aspects of his personality can all be seen as the strong qualities of Nurture/Duty. His childhood bronchitis reflects a weakness, probably inherited, in Lung Qi. As an adolescent the Intestine (the other Metal organ) was affected by his inherited energetic weakness, and his symptoms shifted to the digestive system.

When the Intestine did not recover from its disease and was removed, the weakness intrinsic in Nurture/Duty returned to the Lung to create the bronchitis anew. Steve described himself as usually being upbeat and positive, but the year before seeing me he had slipped into mild depression because of the concern for his health. We worked on his Lung vitality, his defensive energy, and his digestive process with acupuncture, then added Chinese herbal formulae to reinforce the needle patterns. After six months of treatments every two weeks, his lungs stabilized without antibiotics and his overall vitality returned. He now continues a low-dose herbal regimen and comes in for tuneup acu-

puncture treatments every two to three months, and thereby maintains his stamina and good Lung Qi even when traveling extensively with his spiritual teacher.

How To Use This Piece Of Acupuncture Wisdom

Nurture/Duty people typically seek acupuncture or complementary medical attention because they are tired of being repeatedly or chronically unwell with digestive or respiratory disturbances. They also are reluctant to accept lifelong prescription of antibiotics, corticosteroids, antacids, antispasmodics, and antidepressants as the solution to their disturbances. Conventional management offers little hope of reversal or cure when an organ-based diagnosis has been established. You can do a lot for yourself, even before looking for outside help, by recognizing early symptoms and dealing with them by common-sense approaches involving understanding, diet, and exercise. The first step is to turn some of your innate caring and responsibility toward yourself. The second step is to learn what foods help maintain a happy Spleen and healthy digestion.

Understand

Start by understanding where your personality fits along the Earth-to-Metal continuum of Nurture/Duty features and, upon inspection, which of your qualities endure as strengths and which can be viewed as indulgences or shortcomings. The compassion and abundance of Earth can convert to overnurturing or deplete to self-absorption. Do you spend a lot of your time being the understanding confidant or solving other people's problems, being everything to everyone? Do you have trouble saying no to commitments that inevitably become more complicated and sticky than you have time for? Or do you tend to excessive brooding and self-pity?

The meticulousness and perfectionism of Metal can become self-critical and judgmental. Do you set impossible expectations on yourself and therefore perceive only your shortcomings? Have you been accused of trying to control everyone and everything around you? Do you slide easily into a melancholy mood? Do you impose this mood on others? Have you noticed that during the past year or so you have been more aware of dissatisfaction than satisfaction with your personality and life? Have you also noticed an increase in respiratory infections or digestive annoyances during this time?

If you answer yes to one or several of these personality habits, but you feel isolated and unable to analyze or break the habit, working with a journal dialogue may give you the insight you need. Putting words to your feelings and concerns about yourself and others will clarify which issues are important for you and which you can walk away from. A dialogue with your journal should help you see aspects of yourself as others see you and thus help you modify your style of interacting with the people who are important to you. If you can confine your impulses to save all your friends only to your journal, you will gain a great deal of reserve energy, balance, and time. If, in the course of your journal dialogue, you recognize that the world will go on without your involvement in every detail, those around you will be able to relax along with you.

The challenges that you, as a Nurture/Duty type, need to address—whether by self-evaluation or journal process—are issues of involvement, control, organization, mood, and indulgence. You must call on your courage to keep your empathy in balance and on your confidence to soften your self-absorption. You need to figure out how to get out of sticky situations without losing your connection with family, friends, and colleagues. You may aim at excellence, but embrace forgiveness and goodwill when you or others fall short of the mark. Use good humor to overcome melancholy; offer a smile

rather than a snarl when you're feeling blue, and you'll get warmth and a smile in return. And, most important and most difficult of all, keep a balance between order and pursuit of pleasure. Nourish the Qi, and keep it flowing.

Eat Well

If you are an Earth–Nurture/Duty person, you already know that you love to eat and spend a lot of time thinking about, preparing, and eating good food. You also know that you can easily slip into overeating and have trouble maintaining a healthy weight. Earth people have big appetites for food and pleasure, especially sweets. Your constitutional tendency to gravitate toward comfort, abundance, and involvement generates an environment for overindulgence and lassitude. These characteristics create a recipe for lifelong conflict between enjoyment and moderation.

Remember, most people remain healthy if they eat primarily warm food cooked fresh and eaten warm; lots of fresh vegetables eaten warm; grains and fiber; a variety of animal protein; moderate amounts of nuts, seeds, and fruits; and not much concentrated sweets or fats. The Spleen supervises the digestive process and is especially vulnerable to cold-producing and damp-producing foods. These foods create sluggishness and stagnation in the Stomach and prevent the Spleen from extracting all the nutrition from the food. To complicate life for Earth types trying to lose weight, popular dieting practices insist that eating copious quantities of raw vegetables and uncooked fruit is unquestionably the most effective regime. This is the worst recommendation possible for Nurture/Duty people. The Spleen and Stomach cannot process so much cold and damp food. A state of digestive sluggishness and tissue dampness results, and little or no nourishing energy is derived from the process.

The American refrigerator syndrome is the most damaging factor in our culture's eating habits. We eat straight out of the refrigerator, add ice to everything we drink, and make uncooked or processed foods the mainstay of our diet. Iced foods and drinks (ice cream, frozen yogurt, iced water and tea, chilled milk and juices, smoothies, sodas) and unheated foods such as raw salads, raw vegetables, and uncooked fruits cause internal cold and dampness and lead to chronic digestive problems. Energetically cool and cold foods include lettuce, celery, cucumbers, watermelon, spinach, and tomatoes. Tofu, the vegetarian's champion substitute for animal protein, is notoriously cold-producing as well. Dairy, wheat, and sugar (milk, butter, cream, cheese, yogurt, white bread, pasta, bagels, muffins, cookies, pies, candy) and citrus fruits and juices are also damp-producing foods and therefore unhealthy for a nourishing Earth/Spleen diet.

The consequences of ingesting cold- and damp-producing foods are not limited to digestive disturbances. If the Spleen cannot clear the damp from the food in the stomach and send nourishing energy to the Lung, the Lung becomes damp as well. Phlegm in the Lung creates thick sputum, chronic cough, and a sense of fullness in the chest. The mucus condition is worsened by dairy products, cold raw food, fried food, and alcohol.

It is not just what we eat that can tax the Spleen and damage digestion. It is also how we eat. Moderation is the most important lesson to learn for an Earth person, since it is very easy to consume too much food, too many sauces, too much sugar, milk, alcohol, and chocolate. Sit down and relax during your meal. Stop worrying about work and discontinue family arguments. Don't eat too fast or too late at night. Eat your food warm or at least at room temperature. Try to have smaller servings and avoid second helpings. Chew your food well. Avoid drinking too many liquids at meals. (Drinking lots of warm fluids is very important to digestive health, but these should be taken between meals, not

while the food is digesting.) Sit for a few minutes to allow what you've eaten to register before asking for additional food. You'll probably find that you don't need more to feel satisfied.

Sweet foods generally have a warming effect when eaten in moderation, but not food sweetened with refined sugar. The natural sweetness of grains, fruits, and vegetables is stimulating to the Spleen and Stomach. Sweet foods include whole grains, peas, beans, lentils, fruits, beets, carrots, onions, squash, parsnips, potatoes, and sweet potatoes. These foods, eaten warm, will stabilize blood sugar levels and reduce cravings for concentrated sugars. But beware: excess sweet, even from whole foods, will weaken Spleen Qi and lead to weight gain and respiratory infections.

Warming foods and spices help the Spleen with its digestive process and are especially helpful when Spleen energy is deficient. Soups and stews with potatoes, leeks, onions, garlic, rice, oats, chicken, turkey, lamb, or beef are recommended. Warming spices include mustard, black pepper, cumin, turmeric, coriander, cardamom, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and orange peel. Warmth and moderation make the Spleen Qi happy and nourishing.

The above recommendations are especially important for anyone with digestive symptoms or symptoms of Spleen deficiency. They are also important for the functions of the Lung, which does not operate well in a damp and phlegm-filled environment. Metal/Lung types can have a metabolism that is contrary to that of their Earth/Spleen relations, even if their psychological and other physical characteristics overlap. They often have strong digestion and hypermetabolism that allows them to be able to eat as often and as much as they want, and never gain weight. Their Earth/Spleen friends and relations find this an unfair genetic trick. On the other hand, the Metal/Lung types tend to be most vul-

nerable to food sensitivities and allergies, and develop hives, eczema, sinus and bronchial congestion, wheezing, bloating, cramps, and diarrhea. Common allergy-producing foods are dairy products, foods with wheat flour, nuts, eggs, shellfish, chocolate, sugar, and citrus.

Relax, Exercise

As a fairly balanced Nurture/Duty person, you probably have a sturdy constitution but are not disciplined about providing your body with regular exercise. Your makeup is different from Vision/Action people, who need a lot of physical activity to keep themselves in balance. You need exercise to remind you that you have a physical body and that this body needs attention. Movement of your body helps your Spleen develop Qi and your Lungs propel Qi. You might need a kick to get going, but once you're involved in some form of regular exercise, you'll recognize its psychological and physical benefits with clearer thoughts, uplifted spirits, and a body that feels lighter and more flexible.

So get off your duff and get outside. Start with gentle walking, and work up to a pace and distance that you can realistically maintain three to five times a week. If the weather is unfavorable to walking, learn a discipline that combines breathing and stretching, perhaps by taking a class or video instruction in yoga or the gentle movements of Tai Chi Chuan. Or take up ballroom dancing, and do it at home as well as in class. As you benefit from these basic guidelines, experiment with more vigorous activities such as bicycling, swimming, hiking, and light aerobic classes or videos. The energy and relaxation you gain from exercise will help with your digestion and will keep the Spleen Qi and Lung Qi moving.

Seek Treatment

If your digestive or respiratory disturbances have been around long enough to dig in and become chronic, the above recommendations may not be potent enough to change the problem. I recommend you continue with the attention to the psychological component of the problem, pay strict attention to the diet and exercise recommendations, and decide which additional approaches to pursue.

Acupuncture can slow down, reverse, or cure many of the *early* functional manifestations seen in the Nurture/Duty sphere. I emphasize “early” because after a disturbance reaches the state of an official diagnosis (GERD, PUD, IBS, UC), it is likely to involve changes to the tissue in the digestive organs. The more severe the tissue changes, the less likely that acupuncture alone will return you to a normal state. Acupuncture is a good first step, however, to test the responsiveness of your problem. An acute respiratory or digestive problem, such as a recent bronchitis or gastritis, can respond promptly to several sessions of acupuncture. A longer-standing problem needs a commitment to a longer series of treatments before the enduring changes can be evaluated. Commit to a dozen visits with your physician acupuncturist.

If, after four to six acupuncture treatments, the acupuncture alone is not sustaining adequate changes in your problem, it is time to include **Chinese herbal prescriptions** in your treatment. There are excellent classical formulas available from American manufacturers that can help with deficient Spleen Qi, stagnation and dampness in the digestive tract, phlegm in the chest, and weak Lung Qi. When including Chinese herbs for Spleen-Stomach problems the first step is to repair the Spleen’s function adequately for the herbs to be digested and assimilated. Only then can the other benefits from the herbal formulas begin to take place. Chronic digestive problems require a long period of herbal therapy

and possibly ongoing administration of a basic formula, depending on the extent and stability of the response. Likewise, when extensive chronic respiratory problems have come under control, a low-dose maintenance schedule is often necessary to maintain the improved condition, with additional dosages or formulas brought in during vulnerable seasons or at first symptoms of change. Acupuncture and Chinese herbal prescriptions work very well hand in hand for chronic digestive and respiratory problems. The herbs create a sturdier response in the tissues to the acupuncture energetic therapy and hold the response with fewer acupuncture treatments than with acupuncture therapy alone.

For symptoms of food sensitivities and allergies, **nutritional counseling** with a physician or acupuncturist trained in nutrition, or a naturopathic practitioner, are in order. This approach will include a supervised elimination and provocation diet that tests your responses to the various common food culprits, as well as nutritional supplements to fortify your digestive and immune systems.

There is a potential role for **osteopathic manipulative therapy** in managing chronic digestive problems. First, the viscera involved with the inflammation or malfunction create a reflex response in the muscles of the back through which travel the visceral nerves. You might not notice the response, or you might experience it as a simple muscle ache or stiffness in your lower thoracic and upper lumbar region. Or it might put you to bed with severe cramping pain. Manipulation of the back muscles and of the stomach and intestines with pressure on the abdominal muscles can offer substantial relief for the muscular component of the problem and can help resolve the visceral problem. Obviously, musculoskeletal acupuncture techniques collaborate nicely with this approach.

Digestion, assimilation, and energy production are the core of our daily physical vitality. There is much in the wisdom of acupuncture to help you assist your digestive and

respiratory functions to gain greatest benefit from them. Remember, moderation in character, eating, and exercise keeps the Qi happy and flowing to nourish all the organs and muscles of the body.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE WILL/SPIRIT BIOPSYCHOTYPE

Biopsychotypes Revisited

Wood and Fire are the elements that describe the organs and functions in the Vision/Action biopsychotype (chap. six). The flexibility of Wood and the excitability of Fire help illustrate the influences of the Liver and the autonomic nervous system in an acupuncture context. The life-supporting qualities of Earth and the sturdiness of Metal are inherent in the characteristics and disturbances supervised in the Nurture/Duty biopsychotype (chap. seven). The Will/Spirit biopsychotype involves the adaptability of Water plus the spark and passion of Fire in its characteristics and their exaggerations.

Just as we rely on all the organs to function well for an energetic and healthy life, all five elemental qualities are also necessary for harmony and balance. They help describe the influences of the organs, and they are woven into the fabric and vocabulary of the three constitutional types. Aspects of the structural, biological, and psychological characteristics of the three biopsychotypes are present in all of us, manifesting in different circumstances and at different moments in life. Vision/Action qualities, for example, are commonly expressed in the vitality of youthful activity and exploration; Nurture/Duty qualities come into focus with work, marriage, and parenting; those of Will/Spirit motivate us throughout life, reaching their peak in our full adulthood and gradually declining with age.

Will/Spirit qualities serve as the backbone of our organism and provide us with the will to live and create, with the spirit of self-expression. Nurture/Duty influences quietly maintain the organism with digestion and respiration by creating energy and moving it throughout the body. The Vision/Action division supplies the muscle and direction to propel us through life's projects and challenges. The contribution of each of the three divisions is necessary for us to move successfully through life.

We rely on the healthy functioning and interaction of all organs and systems. The integrated model of the biopsychotypes is a French derivative, coming from the energy circulation and organ functions described in classical acupuncture texts. Acupuncture energy circulation divides anatomical regions, biological functions, and psychological features into three broad categories—the biopsychotypes—which are simultaneously independent and interdependent. This organization of human construction is remarkably comprehensive and accurate. It maintains its value and integrity in clinical applications that transcend cultural, racial, sex, and age differences.

By virtue of our genetic inheritance each of us has a concentration of one primary biopsychotype in our personality, emotional patterns, and biological strengths and weaknesses. But it is rare that anyone is purely one constitution. Rather, the bulk of our makeup is represented in one biopsychotype, plus we have a handful of characteristics and symptoms that belong to the other types. It is our biopsychotype identity that best describes our core composition and the probable configuration of our breakdowns.

Water and Fire: The Will/Spirit Biopsychotype

At first thought Water and Fire seem an unlikely and strangely incompatible combination to be present in the same biopsychotype. The two other element pairings (Wood

and Fire, Earth and Metal) are less strikingly extreme than this one, and make sense when we understand the influences of the organs and overall responsibility of the subcircuit.

Water and Fire together make sense as well.

The balanced Will/Spirit person has Water and Fire qualities integrated and collaborating. Water and its associated organ, the Kidney, bring will and power to the individual. Fire and its associated organ, the Heart, bring spirit and passion. Together Water and Fire create and maintain the impulse of self-direction and creativity. Predominantly Will/Spirit people are levelheaded, intellectually lively, willful, and decisive. They are often leaders and in this role are balanced and effective. They are usually healthy and assume they can do whatever they set their minds to do. They automatically find themselves the clear-thinking motivators in their organizations, providing structure and direction, and sparking enthusiasm in those around them.

Johnny Maddox is a natural leader. In high school he was student body president and captain of the football team, and he chaired his fiftieth class reunion. He has always been motivated to excel in his work and take advantage of the opportunities presented him. He still owns and supervises his own transmission repair business. He started life with more Fire than Water, but since his third decade the Water qualities have been more prominent. John's Will/Spirit constitution allows him to live day-to-day with the inconvenience of constant pain without falling into depression or despair. His "Grit, God, and Gumption!" motto manifests his will to survive with dignity and his unconquerable spirit.

The image of Water is adaptability. It takes the shape of its container. Water can be still and deep, or powerful and full of movement. Water vitality shows as strength in dealing with challenges, a strength that is not ostentatious, but quiet and internal. People with an abundance of Water energy are respected as reliable members of the team who

will rarely be outspoken or draw attention to themselves. They appear calm, are quiet, and do not make conversation easily. They will speak out, however, when they see it is necessary to do so.

Fire brings to mind sunshine, warmth, joy, excitement, and creativity. People with generous Fire qualities like to be seen and heard, and they bring joy and laughter to those around them. They make quick emotional connections with others and are warm, open, and direct in relationships. Fire types are expansive, talkative, seductive, and happy to be alive. The quality of Fire is associated with ideas and their expression through words. Fire types can have insightful intellects that allow them to quickly comprehend complex situations and act confidently and creatively. The intimate side of a Fire person is empathetic, sensitive, and intuitive.

Julie Fox is fast talking and persuasive. She thinks even faster than she talks and can maneuver a sales interview or social encounter in the direction she desires. She can solve office organization and operation problems while selling office supplies to clients who, before her visit, might not have known these supplies were indispensable. She can pump up her Fire for any encounter but acknowledges she also values her private time, quietly alone with her husband.

Traditional Functions of the Kidney

The Kidney is the organ that is associated with the qualities of Water in the body's ecology. Just as Water is the indispensable foundation of the body's anatomy, physiology, and biochemistry, Qi from the Kidney is the indispensable foundation of energy in the body. Kidney energy brings with it a special life-driving quality called "essence." The traditional texts refer to Kidney as the "root of life" because it is respon-

sible for the core life functions of reproduction and growth, and for animating the Qi in all organs.

Kidney's sphere of influence includes personal, professional, and sexual motivation. Kidney supervises the bones and teeth, the ears, the sense of hearing, and balance. The quality of Kidney energy is reflected in the moistness and strength of head hair. Kidney and Water are associated with the season of winter, dark blue or black colors, and salty flavors. In acupuncture physiology just as in conventional physiology, Kidney and Bladder work together to create, store, and excrete urine, and thus rid the body of impure and excess fluids.

In its role of supervising bones and bone marrow, Kidney is responsible for joints and flexibility. Teeth are surplus of bone and are therefore also ruled by the Kidney. If Kidney energy is strong, the bones will be strong and the teeth firm. The importance of the spinal column and the skeletal structure once again confirm the critical importance of Kidney energy in maintaining the body's infrastructure. The brain is considered to be the marrow of the skull; thus Kidney also nourishes thinking and concentration, and oversees physical movement directed by the brain and central nervous system.

Essence

The Kidney is indispensable in maintaining the body's vitality. Kidney energy nourishes, warms, and activates all the other organs. This critical role is attributed to the Kidney because it stores and distributes life essence. Essence is the condensed and concentrated Qi that we inherit from our parents, our chromosomal charge. It is different from nourishing and defensive energy, which are derived from food and air on a daily basis. Essence is the source of life; all organs need essence to survive. Essence is active

in growth, development, maturity, and senescence. It reaches its peak at puberty and is vital in the functions of conception, pregnancy, and childbirth. Essence diminishes in old age and Kidney energy weakens, the reproductive function declines, and the body and its organs slow down in their activities.

Essence is the hereditary energy that determines the constitutional strength of an individual. It is created at the moment of conception when the male and female reproductive energies merge. It creates the biopsychotype of an individual. Essence works with defensive energy to resist illness caused by external climatic and environmental extremes. The quantity and quality of one's essence is fixed and must be maintained by striving for balance in life's activities.

Kidney Qi and essence determine our will power and motivation. Strong essence creates strong will and the ability to focus the mind on our goals. With strong Kidney Qi we are capable of hard work over long periods of time. Essence provides the impulse for sexual expression, for procreation, for continuing the flow of life from one generation to the next. Kidney Qi and essence are also the source of mental vigor, the expression of which is supervised by the Heart.

Traditional Functions of the Heart

The Heart embodies the qualities of Fire in the body. The active part of the autonomic nervous system—known in acupuncture physiology as Master of the Heart—also pulls Fire into action by protecting the functions of the Heart, but not to the same extent as Heart itself. The most important energetic function of the Heart is housing the spirit. Its most important physiological function is governing blood and blood vessels. In traditional texts the Heart is described as the emperor who rules the body in all physical,

psychological, and spiritual aspects. Thus, governing blood and housing the spirit encompass the critical responsibilities of the emperor: keeping the constitution strong and inspiring creativity and expression.

Spirit

Essence from the Kidney determines the constitutional vitality of an individual. Spirit from the Heart supplies vigor and strength to the constitution. A strong spirit creates a clear consciousness, creative thinking, good memory, balanced emotions, and good sleep. Spirit allows us to be happy in our emotions, actively engaged in our relationships, and at peace with our place in the universe. When Heart energy is in balance the spirit is lively, the mind is open, the eyes are clear and the complexion bright. We can express ourselves creatively and articulately. Spirit refines and manifests the will and focus created by essence. Heart and Kidney thus complement one another in their energetic functions.

When the energy of the Heart is strong there is abundant blood, the blood vessels are healthy, and the pulse is full and regular. Blood is supplied to all the organs and tissues of the body, and its abundance is reflected in a rosy complexion. The Heart creates joy and connectedness among people. The quality of the Heart is also represented in the color, form, and surface of the tongue, especially its tip. The Heart influences speech, which includes laughing as well as articulate verbal expression. The sense of taste is in the Heart's sphere of influence, as is sweating, and dreaming. Heart and Fire are also associated with an affinity for red hues, an affection for bitter or roasted flavors, and a strong like—or dislike—of summer and hot weather.

Manifestations of Will/Spirit Disturbances

Three typical disturbance patterns occur in persons of predominately Will/Spirit biopsychotype, depending on their starting constitutional mix of Water and Fire. The balanced Water-Fire type is vulnerable to backaches. The Heart/Fire type generally shows symptoms of excess activity in Heart's sphere of influence. Kidney/Water energy can become depleted and create symptoms of fatigue and pain.

Water and Fire in Equal Measure

The integrated Will/Spirit person is described in the "Water and Fire" section of this chapter as someone who is levelheaded, intellectually lively, willful, and decisive, who is often in a leadership position. People of this composition are usually confident of their abilities and successful in their endeavors. They often enjoy and can excel at sports. But, unlike their Vision/Action counterparts who play sports for the love of movement and cannot be inactive, Will/Spirit people seek the intensity of competition. If they are overshadowed in their skill, they win by will and drive. Interestingly, however, these people are also protective of their personal life and habits, and are reluctant to reveal anything about themselves that might display flaws or shortcomings in physical health, personal habits, or intellectual accomplishment. They expect perfection from themselves and their colleagues.

Two directions of disturbance can develop in these people, either a Fire form or a Water form. The Fire form typically exaggerates the confidence and authority of the Will/Spirit type and converts them into an imperious, imposing presence, with voice too strong and demeanor too assured. People in this state have the tendency to dominate in relationships of any nature. They display unambiguous impatience and arrogance, and candidly

acknowledge this description as accurate and justified. As the Fire exaggeration takes over the personality of balanced Will/Spirit individuals, they can easily explode into anger or become intoxicated with a sense of invincibility and invulnerability. In extreme cases this will lead to extravagant sexual, business, or political exploits, inaccessible to rational guidance.

We can all recall a recent American president—intelligent, resourceful, and passionate—whose success and arrogance imbued him with a sense of invulnerability to criticism of his extramarital adventures while in office. This is Fire out of control, oblivious to the balancing effects of Water that could constrain and redirect his passion.

The Water form, on the contrary, becomes uncharacteristically indecisive and excessively analytical. A loss in confidence creates doubts and prevents clear decisions and actions in someone who is usually commanding and assertive. These mental and emotional features are likely to be accompanied by a diminished physical vitality, a sense that the body's stamina can no longer be relied upon to execute the habitual workload and responsibilities. The diminished vitality can be accompanied by touchiness or impatience, disturbed sleep, digestive discomfort or diarrhea, bladder or urinary disorders, and an increasing sensitivity to cold. Will/Spirit people in this Water state are likely to be psychologically touchy if queried about their health or decisions and, like their Fire colleagues, will be impatient with the inconvenience of illness and its implied imperfection.

Back Pain

Back pain is the common weak link in integrated Will/Spirit people, whether they tend to exaggerate their nature in the Fire or Water direction. The organs in this energy subcircuit generate and drive our essence and spirit, the psychospiritual infrastructure for

our survival and self-expression. On the physical level, Kidney and Heart supervise bones, bone marrow, and blood, the skeletal infrastructure of our bodies. A healthy back-bone and nervous system are as critical to our survival and self-expression as are essence and spirit.

Look at the channel pathways on the back of the body (fig. 9). After they cross over the head and neck they double up and run parallel to the spine down to the buttocks. They are the interstate highways that deliver energy to the spinal cord, vertebral column, and surrounding muscles, to the mechanism that allows us to stand upright and move. It is logical in an acupuncture anatomical sense that the biopsychotype attached to these channels and their organs exhibits the physical and psychological strength and stability inherent in a healthy spine and skeleton. People of this biopsychotype express their vulnerability through the skeleton as it becomes their weak link.

The archetypal Will/Spirit patient comes to the acupuncturist's office seeking treatment for low back pain. Such patients are either impatient, with very acute spasm and pain, or irritable with pain that has turned chronic (probably because they didn't want to be inconvenienced by seeking treatment earlier). They acknowledge that stresses and worries provoke and aggravate the spasm, but reluctantly, because they see this as admitting a weakness. They answer the interview questions with clarity and directness but are politely impatient with questions that don't seem to them to be relevant to the immediate problem. If this is a second or third episode of low back pain, they accept only with difficulty that it is a recurrent pattern linked to body type, age, and stress.

James P. Moll, CEO of a small but successful publishing company, came to my office with a three-week history of acute back pain. He has had previous episodes of the same pain, each one precipitated by fatigue and stress from the demands of his work.

During the last episode, radiologic studies revealed a bulging lumbar disc. He has pursued treatment from the physical therapist that includes exercise and weight loss. This is the first time the pain has returned since he started this regimen, and he finds himself irritable and impatient to return to work. He has talked with a neurosurgeon on the telephone but will not agree to an appointment for an evaluation, and he still runs the office using his computer and telephone from his bed.

Back pain is often the only thing that ever goes wrong with the person of integrated Will/Spirit biopsychotype. The lower back is by far the most common location of pain, but it can occur anywhere along the vertebral column from neck to sacrum, with or without pain radiating into the arms or legs. This is back pain caused by spasm and inflammation in the muscles and nerves close to the spine. It involves the vertebrae and disks putting unusual torsion on the nerves exiting from the spine, and is as commonly precipitated by tension and fatigue as by strain or deterioration of the spine. This mechanism of pain is different from that of the Vision/Action types, where the muscles are chronically irritable in and of themselves and can become inflamed and contracted without being triggered from the vertebral column or nerve irritation. Backache in a Will/Spirit person can be Fire in nature, that is, acute, spastic, and very painful with movement. Or it can be Water in nature, the persistent ache of a chronic or recurrent problem.

Back pain is not limited to Will/Spirit biopsychotypes; it occurs in people of all biopsychotypes who have deterioration of the spine. If the backache becomes chronic, its very duration creates fatigue and Kidney depletion. The will diminishes because the restrictions in activity also restrict one's ambition and goals, and the spirit becomes flat with the disappointment of chronic pain. This is the weak link especially of the balanced Will/Spirit constitution.

Exaggerations in Heart/Fire

People endowed with abundant Heart energy and generous Fire in their personalities are passionate, have bright complexions, are unreservedly noisy, merrymakers, and good party guests. They are intense in their presence and they like to be seen. Women wear brilliant clothing and sparkling jewels and bangles. Clothing and underwear are frequently reds and pinks. Usually Fire types prefer warm weather to cool, but they are not uncomfortable in cold. They perspire easily and become irritable on hot days.

People on the Heart zone of the Will/Spirit spectrum are quick in everything, and even appear frenzied to those who don't share Fire characteristics. They eat quickly, talk quickly, walk quickly, and get through their work quickly. People with Fire energy in excess can make those around them feel uncomfortable because of their intensity. They can be amusing as the life of the party, but they might continue telling jokes and dominating the situation when it's no longer appropriate. Their laughter might be too loud or too long. Or they might have a short fuse on temper and explode quickly when someone's not living up to their expectations.

Typical Heart excess patients come to see the acupuncturist with complaints of agitation, insomnia, and difficulty calming down. They want to take the nervous edge off their agitated state, but they do not want to be tranquilized. They enjoy the intensity of their life and use their passion in creative work and living. They react to stress and frustration with abrupt outbursts of anger. Their work colleagues have learned to let them blow off steam occasionally because they do not hold on to the anger once they've calmed down, and they are very energetic and productive at work. This is Fire in action, and the spirit of Heart expressing itself.

***Julie Fox** is exuberant, intense, emotionally expressive, and impossible to ignore.*

I've always had an exuberance. When I wake up in the mornings I just want to put on my black seamed stockings and go out and be *me*. Mondays are not an issue for me. It's an opportunity to do it again this week, an opportunity to do it better. My exuberance used to get me into situations when I just didn't think much before I spoke or acted. When I was younger, my passion would reel me into relationships and out of relationships and into moments of pure debauchery because of my wanting to experience things from my toes to my ears.

Even now that I'm over forty and am over forty pounds heavier than I was, I've never had my Fire put out. When there is something on my mind that's nagging me, I talk myself through it, address the situation, make a plan. I'll create a solution to the problem, and then I just get back on track. I might get angry if somebody's being stupid, but after I've blown off the steam it's all over. I don't stew overnight and I don't hold grudges.

Fire out of control leads to restlessness and distraction, fidgeting, difficulty falling asleep, sleep disturbed by dreams, or nighttime wakeful periods of full mental clarity.

These more debilitating symptoms can be induced by the intensity with which Fire types lead their excessively busy lives and be further exacerbated by long periods of stress and high performance. The energy drain from a high-intensity lifestyle depletes the Kidney energy in the biopsychotype equation. In acupuncture terms, Water deficiency fails to keep the Fire of the personality in check. In this situation, ever more intense Fire qualities emerge. If left unchecked, psychophysical collapse or true cardiac symptoms can occur.

The cardiac symptoms can be sharp chest pain or feeling the heart pounding in the chest, rapid heartbeat, restlessness, and dizziness. These symptoms do not necessarily result in true cardiac crisis, although a thorough cardiac evaluation is appropriate at the onset of this state. Men and women living in the extreme Fire state of this biopsychotype tend towards exhibitionism and psychological instability and can live in a perpetual romance or psychodrama. Sexual hyperactivity is a common characteristic. Very exaggerated forms will manifest in irrational or hysterical states.

Heart/Fire types can also develop into a condition of both Heart and Kidney depletion. This might be their innate state, or the state that their Fiery lifestyle led to as

they depleted both Heart and Kidney energy. Early symptoms of this condition are an abruptly appearing fatigue alternating with swings of nervousness. Refreshing sleep is difficult to achieve, and cold feet are the rule. This person feels listless and uninspired, and experiences little joy in life. In contrast to the exuberant Heart types, those with deficient Heart energy lack emotional and physical strength. Instead of a rosy face, the complexion is dull or bluish and the lips pale, and the personality as well is flat and colorless.

When Alice Leigh first came to me she was in full Fire mode: fast talking, exuding heat, red lipsticked, suggestive without being seductive, perspiring. She presented herself convincingly as brilliant, funny, and creative, capable of doing everything in each one of her roles: wife, supermom, full-time office manager, daughter, and daughter-in-law. Her problems were insomnia accompanied by a pounding heart that got worse around midnight, and a rapid heartbeat at work on days when job demands intensified. The acupuncture calmed her symptoms, but, rather than adjust her lifestyle to allow more time for herself, she dug in even more passionately at work. Within six months she returned, burned out, and took off a month to recover at home. Her Fire had depleted itself and was replaced with a Water state. She recovered, then went through another cycle of intensifying her activities, and crashed again.

Following that second physical and psychological collapse, she developed a sequence of cardiac symptoms that were difficult for the cardiologists to diagnose. She had a pacemaker inserted, which didn't seem to make any difference; she was evaluated for abnormalities in her thyroid and adrenal glands and, for a while, was suspected of having a hormone-secreting tumor. It took her several years and many visits to specialists to finally arrive at a conclusive diagnosis and attain a stable cardiac status. Her

personality now is still scintillating with the original Fire, but she has achieved a balance within her psyche and soma that reflects her hard-earned respect for Water as well. And once again the acupuncture can be of value in maintaining that balance.

Exaggerations in Kidney /Water

Kidney energy and essence serve as the pilot light for energy production in all the organs, and thus Kidney maintains the internal warmth and vitality of the body. Kidney/Water problems are associated with depleted energy, not with excess as with most Heart/Fire problems. Deficiency in Kidney Qi can be inherited from parents or acquired from childhood or adult illnesses and lifestyle, or it can be a feature of advancing age. One's constitutional composition and strength depend on the quality and strength of the parents' essences. If the parental essences are weak at the time of conception—because of their age or fatigue or Kidney weakness inherited from their parents or acquired by illness—the Kidney strength of the child will not be robust.

A child born to parents deficient in Kidney energy is likely to have frequent flus and throat, ear, and respiratory infections in the early years. This occurs because essence is not contributing to the protective work of defensive energy, the acupuncture equivalent of the immune system. The child might not display the same fearless curiosity and physical stamina as other children, and can develop a somewhat reticent and awkward personality.

Children who are not innately deficient in Kidney energy can lose Kidney vitality if in childhood they fall ill frequently to childhood infectious or more pernicious diseases, or to malnutrition or prolonged periods of physical or emotional deprivation. It is possible that children whose essence is not strong—by inheritance or by illness—will suffer retardation of their growth and mental development, and start puberty and menses later than

their classmates. They may appear withdrawn, insecure, and easily panicked. They have a lifetime responsibility to nurture and protect their Kidney vitality and essence in order to avoid the greater risks of chronic pain, illness, or fertility difficulties in later life. If the Kidney essence does not adequately nourish the bones and nerves and brain during childhood and adolescent growth, poor memory and concentration can develop. Adults will not have the strength for long periods of work, nor the drive to pursue their full potential in life.

Aaron Steinberg, an intelligent and humorous professor of comparative literature, was born to a forty-six-year-old mother and a fifty-seven-year-old father. His mantra of survival is "It takes me longer to do everything." He is observant, insightful, articulate, and accomplished in academic and professional matters. He can display a cutting wit when in friendly company but is guarded and usually silent in larger groups. He has a lifelong history of limited physical stamina, easy weight gain, food intolerances, distance and reading vision problems, back pain, and low sex drive. He protects himself through careful diet and rest, judiciously guarding his energy output, and the regular practice of Qi Gong. By following these precautions, he is able to enjoy a fulfilling professional and family life.

Any chronic condition, whether musculoskeletal pain from an injury or an arthritic spine, a persistent disturbance in internal organs that requires medical attention, or even chronic depression, will debilitate the Kidney vitality. Kidney essence is the source of life. It participates in nourishing and activating all other organs. When Kidney essence is weakened, other organs are vulnerable to expressing their disturbances. When another organ is disturbed, its problem drains Kidney energy. The fatigue and discouragement that comes with chronic pain is the clearest example of this phenomenon. The

injury, age, and deterioration that allow musculoskeletal pain to endure drain the Kidney and inhibit full recovery. The more chronic the pain, the more depleted the Kidney and the greater the resulting fatigue and discouragement.

Lifestyle also influences the quality and quantity of essence. In our American culture Kidney depletion is commonly caused by the extended periods of physical and mental overwork that are expected of us, and that are eagerly sought by strong and willful people. The long hours, constant stress, irregular eating, and lack of physical exercise can take a toll on the Kidney from which it might be impossible to fully recover. If excessive sexual activity is included in the equation, the cost in essence is even higher.

In adults, an early sign of Kidney energy fatigue is the dark or puffy circles that appear under the eyes when someone has been working very hard or has not been sleeping well or long enough. These circles can be accompanied by an increased sensitivity to cold, needing to put on extra clothing during the day and use additional blankets at night. Such a person can feel chilly all the time and is most comfortable curled up under a blanket with a hot water bottle or heating pad. There is a general sense of exhaustion that never is relieved, which, in turn, can lead to discouragement and lack of interest in outside activities. The exhaustion can extend into the reproductive sphere as well and create a diminished interest in sexual activity or difficulties in sexual function. The quality of quiet caution that is characteristic of the healthy Kidney/Water personality can evolve into a fearfulness that inhibits interacting with other people. Such a person might be secretly jealous or misanthropic and will be perceived as detached, cynical, and even paranoid.

Kidney-deficient people characteristically prefer clothing that is dark blue or black, have a strong craving for salty food, and can easily slip into speech patterns that

sound groaning and complaining. They can appear pallid or gray and chronically tired.

The salt craving, whether it is acted on or not, is the body's innate attempt to nourish or stimulate the depleted Kidney. The quality of Kidney energy is reflected in the thickness, moistness, and color of the head hair. Poorly nourished hair is dull, thin, and brittle.

Those who gray or bald before their fifth decade are probably demonstrating an inherited Kidney deficiency or have acquired this state through illness, trauma, overwork, or over-indulgence. We have all observed people graying suddenly during or following a period of great emotional stress.

Of course, the Kidney also supervises filtering blood to remove impurities and to maintain electrolyte balance and the balance of fluid in the body. Kidney stones, urinary tract infections, prostate swelling and inflammation, and urination problems of dribbling and incontinence are all under the direction of Kidney energy. Finally, Kidney nourishes the ear and the sense of hearing. The Kidney/Water type can be very sensitive to sounds and noise and music. Hearing loss, balance problems, and ringing in the ears usually reflect a disturbance in Kidney energy. This is especially the case if the hearing loss comes on early in life.

Kidney vitality diminishes with age, and many of the changes associated with aging are caused by this deficiency. These can include gray hair, decrease in hearing, diminished sexual function, and osteoporosis. One of Kidney's most important responsibilities—the bones and joints—reflects these gradual changes. As we age we become increasingly aware of stiffness and contractions in our bodies. The joint aches are worse in the morning and worse in cold weather, better after a hot shower or bath and some gentle movement, less bothersome in warm weather. Although the joint pains can be erratic and migrate from one location to another, the knees are the classical first site to

demonstrate Kidney-related joint discomfort. Then the low back and the upper back and neck become involved. The back pain typical of Kidney deficiency tends to be recurrent or chronic, and dull and aching in nature. It is commonly accompanied by deterioration in the bones of the spine when viewed on X-rays. Onset of these chronic arthritic problems earlier than the fifties or sixties suggests Kidney fatigue early in life.

Helen Green embodies all the favorable qualities of the Water constitution. She worked for years as a professional typist and word processor, and spent many weekends bird watching and bird counting with the Audubon Society. She is reliable and quiet, and imposes her perspective only when she sees it is necessary for the family or group to accomplish its goal. She also embodies the signs and symptoms of the Water biopsychotype as she moves through her sixth and seventh decades. She comes in to be treated for arthritic pains in her neck, low back, thumbs, and knees. She feels chilly more easily now than in the past, gets fatigued from large family gatherings, noticed a decreased interest in sexual activities in her mid-forties, and has trouble hearing some of the birds that she used to be able to recognize easily. Most recently she came in with a urinary tract infection that was caused by not drinking enough and voiding enough during a long bird-watching outing. Her mother was my patient for the twenty years before her death and manifested the same Kidney/Water constitution with low back and hip arthritis.

How To Use This Piece Of Acupuncture Wisdom

If the tally of your biopsychotype includes a good measure of Will/Spirit, you have already developed a sense of how much of you is Water and how much is Fire. Understanding your constitutional components is the first step to using the wisdom of acupuncture to help you with your health and happiness. In addition to evaluating some

of your personality and lifestyle habits, you must consider what exercise best suits your needs and if your diet is helping or hindering your health.

Understand

You have found that the impulses of will and spirit in yourself are hard to ignore, and you have been told by friends and colleagues that these impulses from you are hard to be ignored. You may be in the time of your life where you can or need to evaluate your impact on the other people in your life. You can't do this by writing in a journal. Rather, you need to observe, rehearse, and change your approach. Use your powers of perception to take in the responses you create in other people; look for patterns of your behavior that put people off, or, if they are your subordinates, that make them quietly hold their words. If someone close to you makes a suggestion about how your interaction might be made gentler, don't brush it off. Listen to it. Take it in. Think about it. And try a different style next time you're with that person or in that situation.

Achieving an understanding of your impact on other people is the greatest challenge for your Will/Spirit personality. The competence, insight, creativity, enthusiasm, and authority that have gotten you where you are, are your greatest assets. They are also qualities that can get in the way of your personal comfort and productive relationships when they are experienced as arrogance, imperiousness, and unsettling intensity. Temper some of your arrogance with modesty, your imperiousness with humility, and your intensity with warmth and patience. You still have enough essence and spirit to do everything you want to do. If you are on the excess and Fiery side of your Will/Spirit qualities, pause to consider the effect of what you are about to say or do. Get some distance from your impulses and use common sense to decide if they are worthwhile. This is especially

necessary when dealing with the passion of anger or sexual opportunity. Your Qi will move, but please keep it in balance.

If you are on the depleted and Water side of your Will/Spirit qualities, consider creating a journal dialogue to explore your sensitivities and vulnerabilities. Through the journal you can retrieve the stability that your depleted state has damaged and the strength to overcome any fear that is inhibiting you from pursuing your goals. Listen to the music of the classical and romantic masters and draw inspiration and courage.

Chronic pain and the fatigue from the constant compromise of your activities can dampen your spirit and deplete your essence. Indifference, despair, and depression are the psychological risks in this circumstance. If, despite all the efforts you and others have made, you are forced to live with chronic pain, do not lock yourself away from people and life's activities because of your limitations. Tap into your inner core of will and spirit and stay in touch with what you like to do and those whom you like to be with. Accept the limitations that pain imposes on you, and incorporate graciousness and good will into your interactions with the people in your life. Keep your essence warm and your spirit moving.

Relax, Exercise

If you burn your candle from both ends, you will burn through your essence and diminish your spirit. Will/Spirit people need to take time out for mental and physical relaxation. Be sure to get enough sleep. If you spend most of your time revved up, learn breathing exercises or meditation to calm your spirit. Learn to sit, stand, and carry carefully to protect your vulnerable back. At a minimum, keep limber with stretching, yoga, Tai Chi Chuan. Find an activity that matches your needs and that you enjoy, something to keep your Qi moving. Walking is always a safe, basic exercise. This can evolve to fast

walking or biking. If you like friendly competitive sports, try volleyball or basketball. If you need to win and your back can handle it, take up racquetball, tennis, or golf. If your back tends to act up, try competitive swimming.

For both Fire and Water conditions, dancing and singing are great equalizing activities. Fire types dance to disperse pent-up energy and sing to express their passion. Water types need to dance in order to warm up and move their Qi, and sing to break out from self-imposed isolation. Dancing and singing bring you into contact with others and create bonds of companionship.

If you are on the Fire end of the Will/Spirit biopsychotype, your innate creativity and drive put you at risk of depletion from willful overwork. When you are involved in an activity, you easily overlook the importance of maintaining an even pace and taking time for rest and recovery. The only position on your transmission is full speed ahead. While the exhilaration of accomplishment is personally and professionally fulfilling, the energy cost to get there can be energetically depleting. Learn your limits and work within them. You need to rest to be able to keep your spirit burning.

If you are on the Water end of the biopsychotype, you are at risk of the consequences of depleted Kidney energy and essence. You already recognize some of these characteristics and want to protect yourself from any others. You must be especially conscientious about how you use your energy, how you exercise and rest, how you eat. If you always feel chilly, move into a house that is well insulated and can be well heated or, if you can, move away from the cold climate. Stay away from air-conditioned buildings and automobiles, and protect yourself from drafts. Follow a martial art such as Qi Gong that helps develop and move energy in your body. Do not indulge in sexual activity more frequently than your body can recover from. You can judge this by your sense of overall

safe vitality, independent of your sexual interest. Protect your essence and keep the Qi flowing.

Eat Well

The Chinese dietary recommendations for Fire and Water conditions are straightforward: add cooling foods to the basic diet for Fire, and add warming foods for Water. Remember, most people remain healthy if they eat primarily warm food cooked fresh and eaten warm; lots of fresh vegetables eaten warm; grains and fiber; a variety of animal protein; moderate amounts of nuts, seeds, and fruits; and not much concentrated sweets or fats. Also, remember not to take the recommendations of cooling or warming foods to an extreme such that the new diet will further tax or deplete the digestive process. Too many cold-producing foods will slow down digestion, even in a hot Fire person, and too many heat-producing foods will create internal heat symptoms, even in a cold Water person. Moderation is important when making adjustments to the basic healthy diet of whole food.

If your Fire features are feeling heated up and agitated, and especially if this is aggravated by summer heat, add cooling foods like raw vegetables (especially cucumbers, celery, and tomatoes), salads, uncooked fruits (especially watermelon and other melons), unsweetened fruit and vegetable juices, yogurt, and tofu to your meals. Bitter vegetables (such as endive, kale, chard, spinach) are considered cooling as well. The state of increased internal heat does not, however, justify returning to the habit of eating straight out of the refrigerator or adding ice to all your drinks. Stay away from greasy foods such as hamburgers and fries, which produce heat, and cut down on red meat, eggs, and dairy. Finally, refined sugar, pepper, chilies, garlic, ginger, coffee, and alcohol will

aggravate a heat condition. Drink plenty of water between meals.

Dealing with a cold internal state is not exactly doing a diet opposite to that for the hot state. The most important aspect of supporting Kidney energy with diet is to provide the Stomach and Spleen with nutrients they can thoroughly digest and extract energy from. Eat soups and stews and cooked vegetables. Add more meat and animal protein (red meat, organ meat, chicken, fish, eggs) that supplement the Kidney, and use nuts, seeds, and warming spices (such as garlic, black pepper, cinnamon, cloves, anise, ginger) to warm the Stomach. Warm oatmeal and sweet rice add warmth. Avoid damp- and cold-producing foods such as raw vegetables, salads, and fruits, which can further chill the body. Steam or wok-fry your vegetables to make them easier to digest. A little salt is okay, but more than a little is not good for Water types even if you are craving it. Avoid potato chips, pretzels, ham, bacon, sausage, and canned or processed foods. And, once again, avoid refined sugar, caffeine stimulants, and especially chocolate. And drink plenty of water between meals.

Seek Treatment

More people come to **acupuncture** for their back pain than for any other musculoskeletal, functional, or organic disorder. Most of these people inhabit Will/Spirit bodies and personalities, although back pain from injuries or the arthritic deterioration of age occurs in the two other biopsychotypes as well. Acupuncture is well suited to serve as the initial approach to pain in the upper back and neck or in the lower back. It is a therapy that adapts well to the needs of the patient, and its effects can be enhanced by adding electrical and heat stimulation to the needles. Patients in states of Kidney energy deficiency especially welcome the heat, which we provide by passing a smoldering cigar of

rolled mugwort near the needles and over the painful region. Acupuncture may be the only therapeutic approach necessary in many new back pain cases. Maintenance acupuncture visits will most likely be necessary in chronic pain cases.

Acupuncture is also useful to calm agitated Fire states in the Will/Spirit population. Commonly the Fire symptoms of agitation, insomnia, and quick anger occur because the patient has lost the balance between Water and Fire. In these cases the Fire and spirit are easily calmed with acupuncture needle patterns, but Kidney points must be stimulated to prevent a rapid return to the disturbed state.

Musculoskeletal pain problems that do not thoroughly resolve with acupuncture within a half dozen treatments should be evaluated by other disciplines that complement acupuncture. **Physical therapy techniques**, for example, work well during the same period the patient receives the acupuncture treatments. Usually physical therapists are responsible for providing movement therapy and workplace training, both of which are indispensable to prevent recurrence of back pain. Of course, **osteopathic manipulative therapy** and deep tissue **myotherapy** are superb complements to the acupuncture treatments as well. Difficult musculoskeletal pain problems can require intervention of **pain management specialists** who are qualified to perform pain-relieving interventions such as nerve blocks, epidural infiltrations, and the insertion of dorsal column stimulators. They are also qualified to manage the medication requirements of complex cases. Physicians with added qualifications in musculoskeletal pain management usually are trained in the disciplines of physical medicine and rehabilitation (physiatry) or anesthesiology.

The role for **Chinese herbal prescriptions** in Will/Spirit problems is twofold. There are excellent formulas to stimulate Kidney energy that can enhance the vitality necessary to repair and move forward from a chronic pain problem. In fact, some

approaches to Chinese medicine encourage anyone over fifty years old to routinely take herbal Kidney tonics, whether or not there are symptoms. There are also very effective formulas to calm excess Fire and ease the spirit for those dealing with the inconveniences of being overcharged and hotheaded.

Constitutional homeopathic remedies can modify emotional disturbances that prevent an agitated Fire person from contacting a calm emotional center. Obviously, in deeply set problems, **psychopharmaceutical products** can be used to calm agitation of excess Fire or to ameliorate the depressive component in a Kidney-depleted chronic pain problem.

Back pain and agitated states are common in the Will/Spirit population. Through understanding the underlying energetic dynamics in this biopsychotype and acting on the acupuncture wisdom of this chapter, you can create a more comfortable physical and psychological life for yourself. Remember, moderation keeps the Qi flowing happily.

CHAPTER NINE

FIVE PHASES IN ACTION

This chapter changes pace. The context steps away from movement of Qi and the energy circulation network as the organizing principles for acupuncture diagnoses. It retains the vocabulary and images that were developed in chapters six through eight. It is connected to the elemental terminology that I introduced in chapter one. The five phases graph is a very important model for understanding energetic dynamics. It is a circular graph that organizes phenomena and processes into five affiliated groups distributed around five organizing positions (fig. 17).

The Cycle of Evolution and the Cycle of Control

Evolution

The assumption in the five phases graph is that there are several observed laws of interaction among the five organizing groups and that each subset of a group will follow the laws in the same way as do the other subsets. The first of these laws is called the *cycle of evolution*, or cycle of creation. Look at the first graph of five phases subsets, the annual cycle of seasons (fig. 18). Starting at the ten o'clock position with the pole that contains spring and moving in a clockwise direction around the graph, the other seasons follow in sequence: summer, harvest (or Indian summer), autumn, and winter. This subset best demonstrates the cycle of evolution, the intrinsic law of interaction of a continual

engendering of each position by its preceding neighbor around the graph. The consecutive movement from position to position represents the cyclical nature of the day, of the year, and of life, whereby one position promotes, or creates, the following position. This symbolic relationship among the positions around the circle is constant for all subsets of the groups represented in this model. The relationship serves as a pattern, a law of dynamics, whereby one phase generates the following phase (fig. 19).

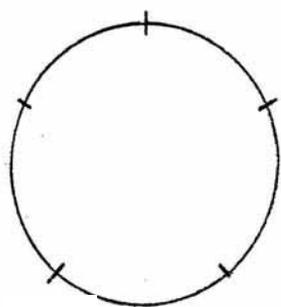


Fig. 17. Five phases:
basic graph

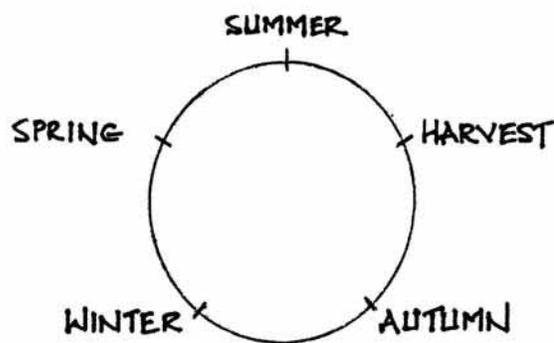


Fig. 18. Five phases:
cycle of seasons

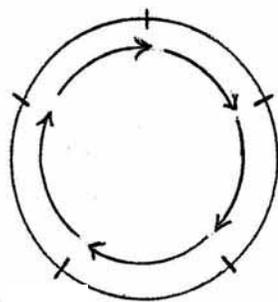


Fig. 19. Five phases:
cycle of evolution

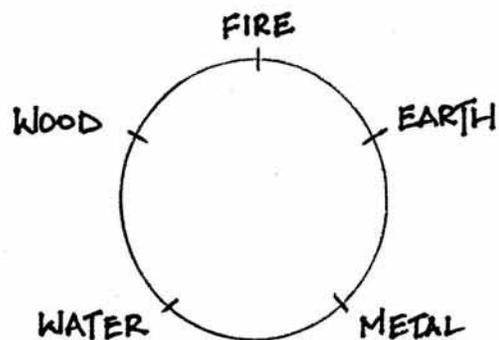


Fig. 20. Five phases:
elements

The notion of a creative cycle of evolution that involves the movement of the sun and the passage of the seasons is easy to comprehend. Some poetic imagination is necessary, however, to justify the creative cycle applied to the elements positioned around the graph. To start at Wood (fig. 20), saying that Wood engenders Fire is an acceptable image. Moving in a clockwise direction, Fire creates Earth in the form of its amassed ashes. Earth creating Metal is also acceptable, when one considers that minerals come from deep within the Earth. Metal creating Water is metaphorically difficult: water seeping from rocks in the ground to create wells, or molten metal becoming fluid and therefore waterlike. Water creates Wood in the sense that all living things depend on water to grow.

The most important clinical value of the creative cycle as applied to the elements involves the relationships among the channels and their energy-moving acupuncture points on the arms and legs. The channels have the same elemental affiliation as their organ (for example, Kidney organ is associated with Water, as is the Kidney channel). Five extremity points frequently selected to move energy through a subcircuit have elemental qualities attached to them. The relationship between the element of the point and the element of the channel is taken into consideration when deciding the desired effect of the needle pattern.

Control

The cycle of evolution is complemented by a *cycle of control* or cycle of transformation. This follows observed laws of nature in which creation is balanced by destruction, evolution is balanced by transformation. The rule of interaction is that the position two intervals ahead from a given position in the clockwise direction is controlled, or kept

in check, by that given position. The controlling dynamics connect every other position and create a star pattern on the inside of the circular graph (fig. 21). The control cycle represents the balancing force for the generative cycle. In the five phases model each position can generate or control other positions, and each position can be enhanced or diminished in its energetic activity according to the overall balance necessary within the body.

The elements attached to the positions lend poetic imagery to the inherent energetic dynamics (fig. 22). The Wood position controls Earth, with the image that forests cover the earth and keep it contained. Earth controls Water, just as riverbanks and

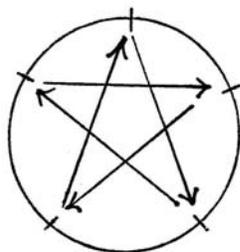


Fig. 21. Five phases: cycle of control

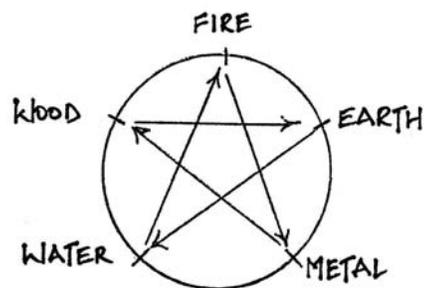


Fig. 22. Five phases: cycle of control of elements

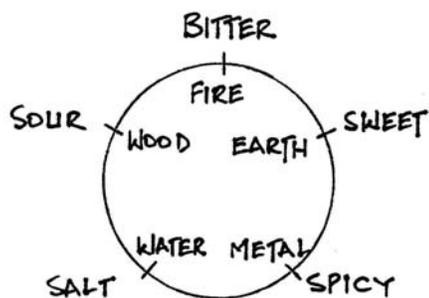


Fig. 23. Five phases: elements and flavors

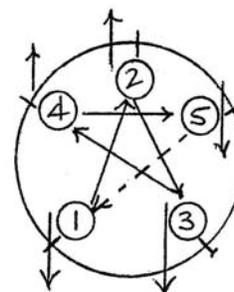


Fig. 24. Five phases: changes resulting from deficiency at position 1

dams keep water contained. Water controls Fire, with an obvious image of water extinguishing fire. Fire controls Metal by melting it to shape it. Metal controls Wood by cutting it with axes and saws. These natural metaphors fit this dynamic of interaction more convincingly than in the cycle of evolution. The demonstration I recommend that you try involves first the cycle of control, and gives you a living experience of these dynamics.

Dynamic Interactions of Flavors

Each element, each five phases group, has a flavor described in its realm of affinities (fig. 23). If the assumption of the interactive five phases graph is accurate, flavors as one subset in each of the five groups will behave according to the same dynamic laws of interaction as do any other subset. Let's prove this hypothesis through a practical demonstration.

We all know what it means to overseason a dish, where a flavor is present in excess of the desired taste. In five phases dynamic interactions, excesses are addressed by stimulating the position that controls them, located two positions before them in the clockwise direction. Let me give you a few examples of this law in action, and, after you have tasted for yourself, you can apply this model to other challenges that involve correcting exaggerated flavors.

Water Dominates Fire: Salt Controls Bitter

It happens, even in these days of designer coffee blends, that a cup of coffee has a bitter taste. The American impulse is to add sugar, and more sugar, and then drink an overly sweetened coffee that is still bitter.

Try this. Taste a cup of bitter coffee from a notoriously biting blend. Rather than using sugar to modify the taste, crumble a crystal or two of sea salt into the coffee, stir, and taste again. A few small crystals are adequate to effect the change you want. The goal is not to make the coffee salty, rather, to use the dynamic influence of the salt to control the bitterness.

There is a lemon tree in our garden in California, and I am spoiled by having fresh lemons available almost year-round for lemonade or my favorite Brazilian rum drink. Sometimes I am impatient for the lemons to ripen to use in a drink, and I juice them while they still have a green and bitter quality to their flavor. The bitterness is from picking them too soon, different from the tart flavor of some lemons that have an exceptionally sour flavor. I have saved many noontime picnics and evening gatherings with the pinch-of-salt trick. Try it yourself.

Fire Dominates Metal: Bitter Controls Spicy

It can happen that some of your guests don't like their food as highly seasoned or piquant as you have prepared. You would like, within reasonable limits, to serve them something that they can enjoy, but the hot spices have already been added to the pot. You can quickly prepare something different for the sensitive guests, you can tell them your dish is mild and watch them suffer, you can dilute the sauce and give more rice to absorb the flavor, or you can take their portion of the dish aside and fix it.

Try this. crush a few roasted coffee beans, preferably strong, bitter coffee beans, and add them to the sequestered portions. Or splash angostura bitters into the portions while they are still cooking. With either addition, have a neutral party taste the revised food before serving it.

An amusing incident happened with one of my patients who had prepared a Mexican mole dish (mole is a sauce containing roasted chili peppers and chocolate, usually served with meat) for a committee dinner meeting, when she was informed that most of the committee members were not fond of spicy food. She mentioned this in lighthearted exasperation on her way out of the office, thinking she would get some sympathy from us and then buy a different meal from the delicatessen. Without giving her a lesson on five phases flavor balancing, I told her to add bitter chocolate (not more of the sweetened Mexican chocolate she started with) and five crushed coffee beans. She called the next day to tell the office that the remedy had worked.

Metal Dominates Wood: Hot Controls Sour

It happens that grapefruit juice can be too tart for breakfast guests, the vinegar too acid for the vinaigrette, or store-bought lemons too sour when juiced for the whiskey sour. Now that you are catching on to the formula, look at the chart and decide what you'd use to adjust these situations.

That's right. A splash of Tabasco. It will control the sour and not be detected as a piquant spice in the mix because so little is needed to achieve the result. My advice is to fix the sauces and drinks out of sight of family and friends. Many will not understand or be comfortable with the idea of Tabasco in grapefruit juice at breakfast. But I recommend that you try it.

Wood Dominates Earth: Sour Controls Sweet

This one's easy, and you've probably discovered it for yourself. Take a sip of a cola drink. Very sweet. Now squeeze a wedge of lemon into it. Better balance, not too sweet, and the lemon does not dominate the flavor.

Lemon is probably the best sour agent for drinks. It works in cooking as well, but consider also vinegar or tamarind paste when you need the controlling effect in a dish that has gotten too sweet in preparation.

Earth Dominates Water: Sweet Controls Salt

This one is obvious as well, but there must be some limits in your expectations. A dish that has too much salt sometimes simply cannot be corrected. Slightly salty soup, however, is easy to correct with a small amount of sugar. For minor adjustments, refined sugar is usually adequate. I find that a richer sweet flavor such as palm sugar, unrefined cane sugar, or even honey can work more effectively. Again, the challenge is to add just enough to trigger the flavor control without dominating the end product with the new flavor.

I married into a family of accomplished cooks, several of them professional chefs. Possessing little intrinsic talent in the kitchen, and being overshadowed by accomplished semiprofessionals, I contented myself with preparing drinks and setting the table. Several years ago I went to a series of classes in Thai cooking and developed a zeal for cooking and blending flavors. In the introductory lecture the instructor explained how Thai dishes are blends of five basic flavors—sour, bitter, sweet, hot, and salty—and that they take their character from the flavor or flavor dynamic that is emphasized within this fundamental matrix. What she was teaching from her family and country tradition was a living

embodiment of the five phases in action. She was unaware of the formal model of flavor interactions; rather, she knew it intuitively from her childhood training. I felt that I had finally found a small but safe haven in the kitchen, as well as an experimental laboratory for the creative and controlling cycles.

Sour comes from lime or tamarind paste, bitter from various herbs and garnishes, sweet from palm sugar, hot from chilies, and salt from fish sauce. Most Thai dishes have a little bit of each of these flavors but concentrate on featuring one, or featuring the interaction of two. Thus a soup might have a predominant hot and sour flavor dynamic spread among its other ingredients, and a sauce might feature the interplay between sour and sweet. These two examples feature the controlling cycle interactions where the dish contains a tension between two competing flavors.

The creative cycle is featured behind the scenes in the kitchen, and generally the supporting flavor does not get a mention. For example, if a dish is to be predominantly hot and spicy in flavor, it is easy to add so many chilies that the quality and pleasure of the flavor is obliterated by the experience of burning and sweating. Solution: choose only a few of the most flavorful chilies, enough to bring in the spice but very little heat, and add some palm sugar while cooking. The sugar, being the supporting flavor, opens and expands the spice of the chili without making it hotter. Try it, and remember you can always tone down excess heat with a splash of angostura bitters. Another example is using a splash of fish sauce to enhance the sour flavor in a vinegar and lime salad dressing.

In the cooking applications of the five phases model, as in the medical applications, the controlling cycle embodies the more visible and dramatic manifestations of interactions and transformations. The nourishing cycle of evolution continues quietly,

consistently helping and supporting, but draws little attention in orderly or disorderly conditions.

Medical Applications: The Theoretical Foundation

The five phases graph is described and demonstrated in the oldest classical acupuncture texts. It is one of the enduring models in the tradition of acupuncture and has withstood interpretations and criticisms in the course of two millennia of clinical practice. In daily acupuncture practice the most practical and comprehensive approach to diagnosis is to categorize clinical information according to the structural biopsychotypes. In the context of the six energy axes, treatments involve needle patterns to stimulate movement through the selected subcircuit. Some patient cases, however, are too complicated to be explained as a malfunction within only one of the three energy subcircuits. This occurs when problems involve several organs or manifest in unrelated organ systems during different stages of life. The five phases model creates a context in which such complex medical disorders might be organized and interpreted, and treatments be designed using its two intrinsic laws.

The five phases model describes the interactions that occur in the subtle mechanisms of the body to regulate and adjust changes and disturbances in any system or subset. This is a model of functional interactions; the organs along the cycles of evolution and control are not linked by tissue or channel connections. The five phases model is a step removed from the circulation of the acupuncture energy network; it is not an anatomical or channel chart.

The self-regulating aspect of the five phases graph can be demonstrated in the abstract by tracing a deficiency disturbance originating at position 1 (fig. 24). Follow the

changes step by step. Because the energetic presence at position 1 is not adequately controlling the activity at position 2, position 2 becomes excessively active. This condition of excess creates an enhanced control by position 2 over position 3, which in turn becomes deficient in its energetic presence within the ecology of the body. The deficiency at 3 diminishes its controlling interaction with position 4, which, like position 2, becomes excessively active. The excess condition at 4 has a dampening effect on position 5 and results in 5 becoming deficient. The energetic responses from one position to the next through these four steps create a deficient controlling presence in the dynamic between position 5 and position 1, which thus allows position 1 to return to equilibrium in its energetic presence.

A minor original disturbance corrects itself through this five-step balancing process by the dynamics of the cycle of control. This homeostasis occurs on an ongoing basis within the body. When a disturbance is profound or strong, or has been present for a prolonged period, the self-correcting effect can fail to create an adequate change and the disorder becomes a fixed pattern in the patient's energy dynamics. An exaggerated quality can be propagated from one position clockwise along the cycle of evolution or star-wise along the cycle of control. Enhancing qualities that are nourishing in nature are generally propagated along the evolution sequence; pathological qualities that change the balance of the organs' functions are propagated along the control sequence.

An exaggerated quality may appear as an affinity or aversion for a color or flavor affiliated with one of the groups, or as a change in the strength or character of the radial pulse associated with an organ's energetic activity. It may manifest in the patient's emotions, especially if the motion corresponding to one of the phases has been taken to extremes in the patient's life. The exaggeration may also manifest as a physical symptom

that is vague in nature but is attributable to a disturbance in one group, or as a physical symptom that announces an organ disorder. Likewise, an exaggeration may manifest as a laboratory finding indicating a mild imbalance in one of the subsets or as a tissue or radiologic finding that indicates true organ dysfunction. In the next chapter I give you a demonstration of the practical medical applications of the five phases model.

CHAPTER TEN

A CASE IN FIVE PHASES

Patient Case: Bryan Bownik

At one of the UCLA medical acupuncture programs in 1999 I supervised a small group of physicians who were rehearsing the interview process that we encourage. The patient was also a physician in the course, since our habit is to practice on each other for the first eight days of the intensive clinical session. I find it a superb case to illustrate the thought process leading to a five phases diagnosis and treatment. Below is a narrative of the interview, including in parentheses my cataloguing the information as it is presented.

Bryan Bownik, 53 years old at the date of the interview, is an internal medicine physician specializing in treating severe heart problems and cancer. He presents with a chief complaint of constant fatigue and the inability to build up any muscle mass. He also states that a gentle game of tennis causes asthmatic wheezing. *(Fatigue is too broad a term to link to a specific organ, but ongoing fatigue will most certainly involve diminished vitality in the Kidney and probably other metabolically important organs. Muscle mass is under the supervision of the Spleen. [Muscle and ligament movement is under supervision of Liver.] Asthma is linked with Lung and, usually, Kidney. Three organs of potential participation in his disorder are identified with his first three sentences.)*

The history of his present illness is connected to an abrupt and life-threatening case of acute leukemia that was diagnosed in 1994. He was treated with chemotherapy

and then with attempts to induce bone marrow growth:

I experienced almost every horrible side effect of chemotherapy imaginable. My white blood cell counts were very low because the treatments had actually wiped out my bone marrow. I was so weak that I felt hollow, hollow like a bamboo shoot. I truly felt a loss of essence, of Jing. I was often near to death. My priest anointed me for the last rites so many times I still leave an oil slick when I go swimming.

The chemotherapy, or a yeast infection while his white cells were not functioning, had created a softball-size defect inside the tissue of his liver, which caused him severe pain. *(Spleen is involved in blood production, and Kidney is the original source of blood in the bone marrow. So, these two organs show another degree of importance in his problem. Liver is introduced as yet a fourth solid organ to be affected by the disease and treatment process. The job of the physician during the interview is to gather information but not to force a conclusive model for the information until as much as possible has been gathered.)*

During the year of chemotherapy Bryan realized that there were treatments that could complement the conventional approaches to his leukemia. He incorporated diet changes and nutritional supplements, Chinese and American herbs, acupuncture, and guided imagery. He comes from a community of Polish Catholics and worked with his priests and spiritual community with individual and group prayer. During that time his interest in acupuncture was born, “more out of desperation than any belief system or intrinsic open-mindedness.”

By the time he started the medical acupuncture training program, he had already had two years of acupuncture and herb treatments from a local physician acupuncturist. His white blood counts had more than doubled, the liver pain abated, and the defect in the liver tissue repaired itself. He was still very weak, quite withdrawn, sensitive to noises,

and sleeping poorly. *(These are general symptoms of a thoroughly depleted vitality, which involves, at its core, Kidney deficiency.)* His hearing acuity had diminished during the chemotherapy, and he had lost interest in sexual activity. *(These two symptoms are also associated with Kidney energy.)* He also listed sinusitis; pain in his lungs with any exertion; spontaneous sweating, especially at night; and a risk of bronchitis at the time of season changes, especially going from Indian summer into autumn or autumn into winter. *(These symptoms are all associated with the Lung sphere of influence and are due to the Lung not being able to fulfill its functions.)*

To bring the history of his present illness to conclusion, Bryan stated that he now has occasional discomfort from the reflux of stomach acid into the esophagus *(Stomach Qi not moving downwards)*, a few varicose veins on his legs, and a sensation of heaviness in his legs. *(These last two symptoms are linked with Spleen's responsibility to keep blood within the blood vessels and reinforce the Spleen's role in his illness.)* And finally, he complained of intermittent red eyes and difficulty with his vision while driving at night *(Liver again)*. He had returned to work, splitting practice time with administration time and incorporating morning and afternoon rest periods in his new schedule.

He revealed so many symptoms in the story of his present illness that there were only a few areas remaining to explore in his past medical history and review of organ systems. He reported that prior to 1994 he suffered from frequent respiratory infections and sinusitis, more than his family members and professional colleagues. He was especially susceptible at season changes and during cold weather *(Lung, and defensive energy in general)*. At the end of his internship at age twenty-six he contracted viral pneumonia that left him fatigued and depleted *(depleted Lung, further depleting Kidney)*. He was also discovered to be anemic at that time and was treated with iron supplements *(Spleen,*

Kidney). He went straight into his residency and then into practice. Between ages forty and forty-five he experienced another round of fatigue and had his first diagnosis of asthma (*Lung, Kidney*). As a child he suffered many sore throats and colds that went to sinusitis or settled into his lungs as bronchitis. (*Frequent respiratory infections in childhood suggest that he came into this world with less than an ideal complement of Kidney vitality or that his early illnesses created an enduring Kidney weakness.*) His vision became severely myopic at adolescence (*Liver territory*). Using acupuncture terms, he described his mother as Nurture/Duty, mixed Metal and Earth, and his father as Nurture/Duty, Earth. He identified his flavor preferences as “sweet first, then spicy, but very close” (*Earth and Metal*). His color affinity is black or dark blue: “I drive a black car” (*Water, Kidney*).

On a personality level Bryan has strong Metal characteristics of being very responsible, having a deep sense of duty to serve as a physician who takes on difficult cases, and participating faithfully in his religious community. (*Metal is his core psychological identity.*) He described himself as being a leader in school and his medical community (*leadership and drive are Will/Spirit characteristics; all physicians must possess enough Will/Spirit in their personality to start and endure medical training*), but that there was always an element of fear mixed in his leadership activities (*Water, Kidney*). He also acknowledged that he carries anxiety as part of his psychological makeup and that he turns anger inside rather than expressing it. He finds church and prayer calming for the anxiety and anger (*relative excess in Liver, calmed by increasing Metal*).

The physician-acupuncturists-in-training asked him to describe his lifestyle prior to the acute leukemia onset.

My lifestyle, like most of my contemporaries, was stressful and conducted at a hectic pace. It was manly to work beyond one's limits. I remember making over 140 hospital visits one weekend. Lack of sleep and chronic fatigue were badges of honor. When markedly fatigued there was always caffeine, sugar, and alcohol to see one through. There was never time for reflection, meditation, or spirituality. That's not what real men do.

In our discussion of the information gathered in Bryan's case at this point in the interview, the doctors in the group felt they had a good understanding of his immediate problems, background problems, and constitutional makeup. I was not yet satisfied that I understood why such a catastrophic life event occurred at the time in his life that it did. I asked him what else was going on in his life during the year prior to the leukemia, such as increased difficulties at work or home, and other preoccupations or physically or emotionally charged events. During the entire interview process, which you can see is a thorough inspection of a person's life, he had been composed and matter-of-fact in his replies and explanations. This new question provoked a change in the tone of his voice, which wavered as he spoke. His cheeks reddened and tears welled in his eyes.

He explained that during the year prior to his illness he endured his only malpractice suit and his mother's persistent interventions "to make sure the children were brought up correctly" (*Metal gene pool*). He recalled feeling confident he could handle these two circumstances, but then his wife's mother began pressuring the family to participate in her commitment to the religious group that she had joined. He felt her insistence to be invasive and interfering. He became irritable, even angry, but did not express his feelings to her. His mother-in-law's relentlessness created conflict between him and his wife and within the family. His leukemia occurred before this family dynamic was resolved. This was the key I was looking for to understand the pathodynamics of his case.

Bryan has a Metal morphotype: tall, thin, and looking somewhat dry and gaunt

even through his good will and positive engagement in the interview process. His pulses and tongue revealed findings of generalized chronic deficiency in all the Yin organs. Our conventional physical evaluation was not especially remarkable: slightly enlarged liver and spleen borders with tenderness to palpation over both organs, and not much else except an eczematous rash on his legs (*consistent with frail Lung energy*). Upon closer inspection we found that the rash was very clearly located over the Kidney, Spleen, and Stomach channels. (*The location of eruptions of the skin can reflect a disturbance in the organ that is providing the energy for the channel flowing through that zone. In this case, the rash confirmed the weakness in Kidney, Spleen, and Stomach that had been identified in the history.*)

If Bryan had been the patient in a similar group exercise before he was forty years old, the conclusion of Nurture/Duty Metal biopsychotype would have been quickly established from his parents' constitutions, the childhood and adult history of recurrent respiratory infections, his Metal body morphology, and his dedication to service and duty. Tonifying the appropriate organ-energy points on the back with needles, moxibustion, and electricity would treat the background of Kidney deficiency and weak defensive energy. To increase the energy in the Lung, the Nurture/Duty subcircuit of principal channels would be activated with needles in points on the extremities of the channels. This needle pattern could also help protect him from another episode of anemia, his first acknowledged Spleen symptom. The organ-energy points on the front and other points on the midline Conception Vessel would also be stimulated to focus the attention of the activated subcircuit. He would promptly report feeling more energetic, being more resistant, and having fewer infections. Had he recognized the importance of changing the pace of his life at that time, quite probably he would have lived out his life with his medical

symptoms being contained within the Nurture/Duty subcircuit.

But we were thirteen years and a complicated illness from that stage in his life. During those years he continued to tax his core vitality through extreme expressions of his Metal duty and Earth nurturing. In the interview he reported more pathology than could be contained in the Nurture/Duty axes, although the majority of the symptoms were still linked to Lung and Spleen, and now Stomach. He told of Liver symptoms of increased anxiety and irritability, redness in his eyes, and poor night vision. The Liver was vulnerable enough that a hole was burnt in its very tissue. The Kidney deficiency had advanced to a more predominant energetic role with the fatigue episode at age forty to forty-five, and, because he pushed himself to work through those symptoms, he burned out Kidney resilience along with a good quantity of essence. It's a fact of life in medicine that anyone who survives the rigors of medical school and residency training does so at the expense of some essential energy, and practice styles after training rarely allow time to replenish it. Drive and dedication protected Bryan from breakdown earlier in his life, but in his late forties his reserve energy was not as abundant as in earlier years.

Bryan Bownik's illness illustrates a patient case that is too complicated to be explained as a malfunction of only one subcircuit. His case is an example of five phases in action, and the five phases model serves well to understand his story. Look at the graph of the dynamics that we assembled after the interview (fig. 25). We can immediately place a down-going arrow at the positions for Kidney, for Lung, and for Spleen. We also know that something has been going on in Liver, the anxiety and suppressed anger. Even though his entire vitality is depleted, the behavior of Bryan's Liver is relatively excessive compared to the clear underfunctioning of the three other organs. So we place an up-going arrow at the Liver position.

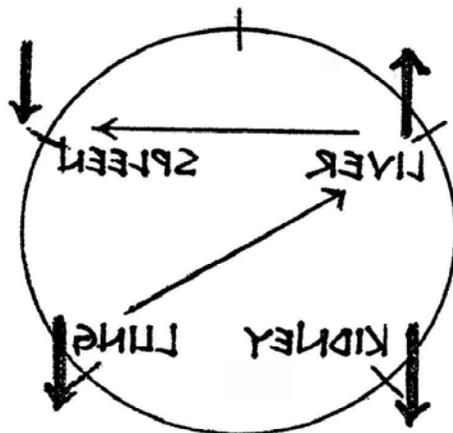


Fig. 25. Five phases dynamics in
Bownik case

Now look at the interactions suggested by the symptom arrows, remembering that pathological events are transmitted initially along the cycle of control. In his childhood he had frequent respiratory infections, which either were caused by or caused a Kidney deficiency. Lung is only two control steps away from Kidney. The early disturbance might have been transmitted in this fashion, then regulated in the Nurture/Duty subcircuit until further weakening and insult occurred. There is one control step between Lung and Liver. Clearly Kidney and Lung energies were further weakened during the fatigue at age forty to forty-five, which allowed an energetic transmission of the Lung weakness in the form of diminished control on the Liver activities. The undercontrolled agitation of the Liver caused symptoms of irritability and anxiety, which in turn required more of Bryan's effort to keep in check.

Enter his mother, the malpractice suit, and his mother-in-law with her religious demands. With his Lung-Liver dynamic already in place, his psyche absorbed her assault into the Liver sphere. By containing the irritation and anger, the Liver activity increased

and exerted excessive control on the position of the Spleen. Spleen's functions were weakened and thereby allowed the leukemia to precipitate.

We designed a series of treatments for Bryan that started with strong Kidney and essence tonification circulation to address the core of his weakness. The second treatment took advantage of the five phases diagnosis and involved the tonification of the organs that were underactive in their energy participation in his system. The third treatment involved back organ-energy point tonification followed by an energy-movement stimulation in the Nurture/Duty subcircuit. We gave these treatments to him during the course of the ten-day program, a large dose of acupuncture in a short time! We then sent him home with recommendations for his acupuncturist in Kansas City to continue with our sequence.

The follow-up reports from Bryan are favorable:

Because of all the attention I had paid to my health between my diagnosis and coming to the UCLA course, I had already felt markedly improved. But from a point of view of energy or confidence I was still far from my old self. With the new treatments I have felt better than I have since before my diagnosis. My energy has returned. I no longer feel hollow. My sexual interest has returned, and even my hearing is improving. The effect is truly startling. There was also a 30 percent increase in my white blood cell count. Even the peripheral blood smear has returned to nearly normal, with new cells having normal morphology. This is not supposed to happen following my kind of leukemia.

Most cases are not as complex as Bryan's is. Like his own picture before the leukemia, most patient stories fit into a biopsychotype diagnosis and treatment. When an illness reaches a certain chronic level, when Kidney and Jing have been sufficiently depleted, when additional external forces affect the psyche or soma, an organ can transmit its disturbance outside the containment of its subcircuit. In such cases, the five phases model is usually very helpful to understand the pieces of the puzzle and to provide a framework for therapy.

Bryan's story, while very strong, is not unique among the physicians who have participated as students in the HMI/UCLA course. Fortunately, not all physicians require a life-threatening illness to precipitate their decision to train in acupuncture. The third section of the paper tells the story of doctors who practice acupuncture, how they got there, and how it has influenced their lives.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

ACUPUNCTURE PHYSICIANS

For this section of the paper I interviewed or requested narrative reports from thirty-six physicians who completed my HMI/UCLA medical acupuncture training program. I asked them how they became interested in acupuncture, where they learned about it, what the experience of the training program was like, how the expanded approach to evaluation and treatment affected their perception of their patients and of themselves as physicians. What follows in this and subsequent chapters is the synopsis of their stories, using their words as much as possible.

Frustration

The physicians' accounts reveal that inspiration and frustration are the greatest motivations for their seeking acupuncture training, with frustration slightly outweighing inspiration. Many express frustration of their desire to treat their patients effectively. They speak of a helplessness to diagnose a disorder from the patients' symptoms and an inability to treat the symptoms with or without a diagnosis.

The experience is expressed simply and clearly with:

Ten years after starting the practice of family medicine I found myself becoming frustrated with my inability to effectively treat many of my patients' pain and functional complaints. (**Michael Coomes**)

It is repeated in:

I emerged from an uneventful conventional background of surgery, anesthesiology, and pain management. When I entered practice, it soon became obvious that the system I was trained in was completely inadequate in caring for many of the patients I was seeing. (**Todd Lininger**)

And echoed by:

During my first eight years practicing osteopathic manipulation I had good success with most of my patients who had musculoskeletal pain, but I was vexed at the number of people I still could not help. (**David Teitelbaum**)

Some expressed an intellectual exasperation at the limits of the conventional medical model, which uses Newtonian mechanistic and biochemical phenomena to explain health and disease:

I realized soon after entering medicine that a large percentage of patients encountered in primary care practice come with problems that are not adequately explained by our conventional biomedical model. Many of them defeat our attempts at categorization with our diagnostic nomenclature and conventional treatment modalities. If a patient has a clinical presentation that cannot be explained or treated by the current model, the blame is placed on the patient who does not fit the prevailing view.

In addition to the unsatisfying daily encounters with these patients with so-called “undifferentiated” medical problems, I also became increasingly frustrated with our medical system’s dependence on pharmacological treatment as the principal modality of intervention. I gradually developed the need to explore other modalities of treatment for my patients that did not depend on prescribing a pill and that also would fit better with their complaints. After all, it seems more consistent with the scientific tradition to question your model if it does not explain what is observed. An alternate model is good—even if not yet fully understood—as long as it explains the observed phenomena. (**Iván Iriarte**)

Others express in clear and emotionally charged terms their dissatisfaction with the limits of the biomedical model:

I have practiced emergency medicine for twenty-five years and have seen many changes in therapies and drugs. What has not changed are the patients. They come in with pretty much the same diseases, the same tales of woe, the same color blood, the same sick organs. I had nothing to offer those who are in chronic pain for whom pain medication no longer works, those who have chronic abdominal complaints and no physical changes, those who have chronic

headaches without brain tumor, those who are simply agitated, or depressed, or whose every muscle hurts, or who wheeze, or itch. (**Martha Grout**)

And others take a matter-of-fact approach to the necessity of learning new skills:

After several years of practice I started to feel the burden of the majority of the patients who came to the emergency room not having true emergencies, rather having chronic problems for which I had very few tools to deal effectively. I really felt the need to learn a hands-on skill besides writing prescriptions, repairing lacerations, and doing minor outpatient surgeries. I needed some other skill to deal with these people, many of whom had chronic pain problems. This is when I decided to do my acupuncture training. (**Brian Bouch**)

I am struck by the complaints of a chronic nature that I see on a daily basis. I should imagine that these chronic conditions have plagued mankind for centuries, but seem to still evade us in modern medicine. There is a lack of consistent treatment for many of them, such as irritable bowel or general gastrointestinal problems, tension headaches leading to migraines, fibromyalgia and chronic fatigue, back pain, and overuse syndromes of the shoulders, elbows, wrists, and knees. As I am exposed to some of the older traditions in medicine, such as acupuncture, I realize their applicability for these and other common problems. (**Donald Counts**)

The disappointments that the doctors report are not only dissatisfaction with the biomedical model that cannot offer diagnoses or treatments to match the patients' complaints. There are broader issues involving the context in which physicians are expected to practice medicine:

Sometimes it's easy. A patient with a strep throat gets penicillin. A patient with acute back pain gets some Vicodin and a few days off work. The patient may be happy, but I feel more like a waiter than a doctor.

Sometimes it's considerably more difficult. There are many people whose problems are much more complex. These are people whose complaints do not fit into the precise categories defined in the medical texts. They may be tired all the time, cold, sleepless, suffer from abdominal pain or headaches that have defied diagnosis and resisted treatment. With each successive visit to the doctor they become more frustrated and angry, feeling betrayed by the medical establishment in which they have placed their trust. They had come to believe that physicians, with years of schooling and access to ever-improving technologies, should be able to solve just about any problem.

Patients with these difficult problems are a struggle for the doctor as well. Forced into the lock step of a tight appointment schedule, the doctor knows very well, before even walking into the room, that he will fail. He will not have the time necessary to engender the trust needed to foster the right relationship. Often

the patient has decided on a certain drug or fancy test which his search of the Internet has assured him will offer relief. The patient sees the doctor as an adversary, someone whom he must convince or bully into doing his will. Some doctors, feeling their professional egos assaulted, react with hostility, while others acquiesce, looking for the quickest and easiest way to end the appointment. This is not why we went to medical school. (**Richard Zweig**)

Some physicians cope by creating new organizational strategies in their working environment, as in the case above. Others walk away from conventional practices in order to regroup emotionally:

The turnoff to allopathic medicine came largely from what is imposed: a compartmentalized set of diagnostic codes and permissible complaints and problems. This includes how a patient is supposed to present, how he is supposed to get better, et cetera, et cetera. The other problem is what is ignored or disallowed.

The combination of this control over what is allowed and repression of what is disallowed in a simple doctor-patient encounter I feel does violence to the natural presentation of the patient in his dilemma. There is a disconnect and distortion between the patient's experience as reported and the diagnosis and treatment plan.

I feel the art of medicine is denigrated to the clever manipulation of palatable precepts, done with the collusion of our colleagues. I also feel that there is little if any room in this allopathic formula to create homeostasis. In the orthodox attitude, the implicit definition of quackery or unacceptable behavior is valuing the patient's complaint or perception more than the preconceptions of our medical specialty. (**John Giusto**)

Physicians practicing technical disciplines of medicine, such as surgery and anesthesiology, feel deprived of meaningful contact with their patients because of the emphasis on technical advances in their work environment.

My anesthesia colleagues around the operation rooms seem strained, less secure, more focused than ever on the technical, and they haven't a clue who their patients are. (**Kathy Bishop**)

As a neurosurgeon in practice since 1950 I have done procedures, all justified on the basis of the research of their day, that would now be grounds for a few years in a jail cell. No consideration is given to the patient as a human being or to individual emotions, responses, and reactions to their various illnesses and situations. (**Charles Baran**)

And many recoil from the absurd extremes to which the norms of practice are commonly taken and the complications that these norms can produce:

One of the problems with our Western system is that the right hand often has no idea what the left hand is doing. In my prior practice, my patients would see a specialist for arthritis. The arthritis doctor would give them an arthritis drug. They would see a heart specialist for angina, and that specialist would dispense another drug. I would see them for some gastric upset, and, you guessed it, another drug. The interaction of all these drugs, prescribed by caring and well-intentioned physicians, often caused more problems than the patient had to begin with. I was open to a new approach to providing health care. **(Marshall Sager)**

In such a situation the acupuncture microbe operates as an “opportunistic” infection, moving in when the resistance to it is low because the doctor’s psychological defense has been worn down. The infection causes a shift in the way doctors look at their practices and the professional and personal fulfillment they are seeking.

I took an alternate road in medicine because of multiple disasters I witnessed—patients unintentionally being killed—in medical school. Everywhere I turned it was iatrogenic mayhem. So I decided that I would do a path of medicine that honored the Hippocratic oath and at least didn’t hurt anybody. **(John Adams)**

Physician frustration is linked not only to the limitations of the Western model of diagnosis and treatment or the shortcomings of how it is practiced. There is also dissatisfaction with what some patients bring to the interaction with the doctor, especially when attempts to create an idealized practice are undertaken:

I had been caught up in the holistic medicine movement of the 1970s and took on the challenge of providing general preventive medicine to my community. It seemed to provide a way for me to apply my interests in nutrition, exercise physiology, counseling, and general medicine. Little did I then realize the power of the disease model in medicine. People go to doctors when they are sick, not when they are well or in anticipation of illness. Taking a comprehensive course in medical acupuncture added needed tools to my medical toolbox. **(Allen McDaniels)**

Conventional practice offers similar frustrations for those physicians who expect responsible behavior from their patients:

Just picture being up all night with a patient with emphysema who is struggling to breathe. You took care of him last month with the same problem. After he left the hospital, on oxygen, he continued to smoke and developed a new pneumonia. This is the kind of inefficient, wheel-spinning treatment process that is disillusioning and discouraging to young doctors. Confronted by this level of dissatisfaction as a resident, I looked at a variety of holistic and alternative approaches. Stress management, acupuncture, herbs, and other natural approaches always made more sense to me than much of the after-the-fact medicine we practice in the academic centers. (**Victor Sierpina**)

There are brave doctors who acknowledge that they are weary with their professional lives in conventional medicine and then look for a way to improve things. They might create a different focus to their practices and announce this to their patients:

I decided to shift my practice away from general surgery and more heavily toward medical acupuncture. (**Hiroshi Nakazawa**)

Or change career direction entirely:

I was bored with medicine, especially general practice, and I felt that a lot of the interventions I provided did not make much difference to the quality of life of those to whom I provided them. I considered retraining for another profession, such as law. Instead I followed my urge to expand my diagnostic and therapeutic options by studying acupuncture, in the hopes that I would enrich my clinical satisfaction. Acupuncture has worked since the beginning, even when I was just starting after some fairly rudimentary training. Learning the material in the UCLA course enhanced my results dramatically and gave me the confidence to make the full shift in my practice. At a minimum I'll now have something to do in retirement besides tending the garden. (**Patrick Magovern**)

Although the term “frustration” has a negative flavor, for the above doctors it was the negative that served as a catalyst to create the positive. Frustrating professional circumstances provided the insight and motivation for these physicians to redirect their careers.

Inspiration

Inspiration is the other motivation for physicians coming to acupuncture. This term has a positive ring. It contains the two divisions of inspiration from internal sources and inspiration from external sources. For most physicians who complete the medical acupuncture training program, the philosophy and practice of acupuncture fulfills the common-sense logic inherent in their expectations of medicine and medical practice. Medical acupuncture is a good fit for them.

Internal Sources

Some doctors seem to be born with a genetic predisposition to growing the acupuncture seed, or perhaps to have inherited genetic fragments from parents. For them, recognizing the good fit of acupuncture can come without torment and transformation. Various routes lead to the fit, from spiritual to intuitive, philosophical to practical, and body-mind practices to martial arts.

Spiritual:

I think that some of the reasons that motivated me to study acupuncture may have similarities with why the public is hungry to be informed about acupuncture. It has to do with the yearning for finding inner peace and deeper meaning in life. Modern styles of living do not necessarily promote these lofty goals. (**Roberto Jodorkovsky**)

Intuitive:

I wanted to learn acupuncture since I was a seventh grader at grammar school. Where I heard about acupuncture I can't say, but I know that I did my science fair project on the topic using a stuffed animal and a couple of hatpins. When I was in college and medical school I began to follow any acupuncturist who would suffer my questions and presence. I looked far and wide until I found the right acupuncture course. (**Nancy Cotter**)

Philosophical:

As my own philosophy of health and healing evolved, I sought traditions that respected man as an amalgam of body-mind-spirit, an intricate interlacing of energetic patterns, which, at a base, solid, and slower vibrational level materialized into the actual physical beings we are on this earth level. Energetic patterns for the body are intuitively obvious to me. Becoming functional in understanding and manipulating them has led me to explore acupuncture's wealth of theory and practice. (**Terry Bugno**)

Or, stated differently:

The whole acupuncture cosmology, the step-down transformer and electrical engineering of our human physiology, is a bridge from the conceptual to the physiological. Acupuncture satisfies my need for a method that works metaphysically as well as physically. (**John Adams**)

Some are attracted to acupuncture by way of an interest in Oriental philosophy:

My attraction to acupuncture came in a gradual and natural way. I have been interested in the Oriental way of thinking since my adolescence and have read about Oriental philosophies and martial arts for many years, long before becoming a medical doctor. During my adult life my personal concept of man and the Creation has gradually evolved from the Christian-Catholic conception of my childhood to one that is more attuned with the ideas expressed in the Oriental philosophy texts. (**Iván Iriarte**)

Practical:

Osteopathic medicine was a good fit for me. I was interested in osteopathic philosophy and its attention to prevention and encouraging the body's intrinsic systems to function optimally. I did a fellowship in biomechanics and osteopathic manipulative therapy. The role of palpation, structural diagnosis and treatment has been a significant part of my practice for twenty-five years. Acupuncture fits perfectly into this philosophy and practice.

I read about acupuncture's effects on the nervous system, the effects on neurochemicals in the brain, its effect on consciousness and on neurophysiology. I was interested in acupuncture as a tool for treatment at multiple levels, certainly for symptom management, but more significantly with the potential for preventing illness. (**Mitchell Elkiss**)

Body-mind practices:

I have trained in and done energy healing for the past seven years and love the quietness and the blending and connection with the patients that acupuncture allows. (**Noel Nowicki**)

In college and medical school I studied biofeedback and relaxation techniques. During residency I attended a demonstration of Tai Chi and started studying regularly with a master. We had many hours of discussion about the nature of Qi, and that naturally branched into the medical side of Oriental thought. (**Victor Sierpina**)

Martial arts serve as a fertile ground for the acupuncture seed to take root:

When I started practicing Tai Chi, I wanted to learn more about the body's energy channels and the principles of Oriental diagnosis and treatment. Thus I gravitated toward acupuncture. (**Iván Iriarte**)

For some the seeds of interest take longer to bear fruit:

My fifteen-year practice of karate taught me that much of the success of karate performance, of the body's inherent abilities, depends on the movement and utilization of the energy force called Qi. Qi was a great mystery to me, and I became obsessed with a desire to learn more about how to strengthen it, control it, direct it. Therefore it seemed reasonable to enroll in an acupuncture class which taught about Qi. Until this point I had never considered using acupuncture in my gynecology practice. (**Robert Chase**)

External Sources

External inspiration can strike as abruptly as internal. The consequences depend on the receptivity of the host's intellectual and emotional terrain. It might take only a word or two from a few patients, or a friend or family member reporting good results from a treatment. Watching or receiving an acupuncture treatment, reading an article, or attending a lecture could also be all that is necessary for the seed to be planted.

Physicians are influenced by their patients:

I decided to take the acupuncture course after three patients in one day asked for a referral to an acupuncturist. Surprisingly, at least to me, these three were patients I actually thought I was treating adequately. (**Todd Lininger**)

I took the UCLA course because two of my patients in the same week asked if acupuncture might be useful for their problems. This I interpreted to mean that they were going to look elsewhere for medical care. (**David Teitelbaum**)

When I started medicine I practiced in a very protected environment, a large group practice in Los Angeles. The appeal that group practices and HMOs have for physicians is camaraderie and the comfort of knowing that they are practicing scientifically sound medicine.

When I moved to the west side of L.A., I met patients of a different bent. All of a sudden all the stuff I was confident about because I read it in the *New England Journal of Medicine* was near useless. People weren't interested in when they should have their sigmoidoscopies or what the current thinking on prostate cancer screening was. They wanted to know how some bag of dirty-looking herbs that they dragged into my office from their Chinese acupuncturist would affect the medications they were on. And what did I think of their acupuncture treatment protocol? **(Norman Solomon)**

Or by a family member:

One evening at dinner my father mentioned that he would be home late the next day, since he was going to travel to Chicago to see an acupuncturist. Each week he would see Dr. Lu, an internist who had trained in China, and slowly but surely his joint pain from lupus lessened and his function improved. As a teenager I had little awareness or appreciation for such things, but it did register on a deeper level. A seed had been planted. **(Howard Silverman)**

The doctor can take the first step:

I decided to try acupuncture for my esophageal reflux problem, which hadn't done well with Western treatment. To my amazement, after a month my symptoms disappeared. I had to know more. **(Norman Solomon)**

A physician I knew casually performed a local treatment on my shoulder. The sensations I experienced during her simple treatment and the relief I felt afterward definitely got my attention. When the brochure for the first UCLA acupuncture course arrived, I was ready. **(Allen McDaniels)**

Some physicians have acupuncturists in their families:

When I was little, my grandfather was a famous acupuncturist in a small town of southern Korea. He made his living with acupuncture all through his life. In junior high school I injured my thumb during sports. It was a swollen joint, painful and sore. Three weeks later I came back home during vacation and asked my grandfather to do acupuncture for me. He put the needles around my finger, two needles, and then he put a couple on my foot. The next morning I found that all the swelling and pain was gone! I could not believe this, but it had happened.

I never learned this kind of treatment method in my medical school, but after I studied acupuncture I understood what had happened at that time. Now I can treat the same problems with only acupuncture needles. **(Byoung K. Lee)**

One was catapulted into acupuncture in extreme urgency:

I had had acupuncture several times and knew of its efficacy. My inaugurating experience as an acupuncturist, however, was with my daughter. She was born at twenty-six weeks and required surgery to close an open duct in her heart. She couldn't be weaned off the respirator after surgery because half of her diaphragm was paralyzed. Presented with a list of horrible options, we decided to bring an acupuncturist into the intensive care nursery. He worked out a treatment plan to be done by tapping at points on her back with a tiny hammer that had needles in it. He wanted this to be done between three o'clock and five o'clock in the morning, which is the time of maximum energetic activity of the lungs.

Every other night I trotted into the intensive care nursery and tap-tap-tapped at the points. After doing this for a week we started to see return of function. In another week she was off the ventilator and went home after she gained weight. She has turned out okay. **(Brian Bouch)**

Physician acupuncturists report watching senior staff perform acupuncture during their residency training, or watching colleagues work:

Dr. Byrns learned acupuncture during World War II and the Korean conflict. He had thirty or forty patients waiting for him when he arrived home after his regular eight-to-five job at the county health department. **(Donald Counts)**

My original interest in acupuncture dates back to my baptismal days as an intern in 1975 with the famous David Simons [co-author, with Janet Travell, of the seminal texts on trigger point deactivation as an approach to musculoskeletal pain management] as my first-ever attending physician. He seemed convinced that musculoskeletal pain could be vastly decreased by the judicious dry needling of ubiquitous trigger points. Through him I met Janet Travell and rapidly realized that she was describing something that I had not been taught in medical school. It became clear to me that the simple act of inserting a needle often gave relief to patients, though no actual injection had taken place. Soon after that I read an article in a pain journal reporting the high correlation between acupuncture points and trigger points, and suddenly a light came on for me. **(Michael Acord)**

In the mid-1970s the American Holistic Medical Association created an environment of professional interchange that was pivotal in many physicians' decisions to modify their practices. Medical acupuncture has been a feature in their core curriculum since their founding.

The first breakthrough I had in my medical odyssey was attending a workshop by the psychiatrist Elizabeth Kubler-Ross. This was my first indication that perhaps biomedicine, with its wide separation of the physical body and the mind, needed reconsideration. It was only a few steps from there to developing a strong interest in acupuncture, initially as a way to treat the perplexing chronic pain problems that refused to respond to our wondrous skills. **(Charles Baran)**

The American Academy of Medical Acupuncture, created in 1987, is today the professional society for physician acupuncturists. Their national educational activities have provided interested physicians with their initial exposure to acupuncture:

I attended the AAMA annual symposium and observed the results acupuncture could offer neurology-related problems. It was clear that I had to pursue training in acupuncture if I was going to offer further effective treatment options for my patients. **(Jack Anstandig)**

Whether by inspiration or frustration, all the physicians represented in this chapter provided fertile ground for the acupuncture seed to grow and flourish. Some arrived at the HMI/UCLA training program in full bloom. Others didn't quite know why they were there, but soon found out. The experience of acupuncture training is the topic of the next chapter.

CHAPTER TWELVE

LEARNING THE ART

All the doctors contributing to this paper are graduates of the Helms Medical Institute “Medical Acupuncture for Physicians” program that I have chaired since 1983 through the Office of Continuing Medical Education at the UCLA School of Medicine. The program is rigorous. Physician-students commit to regular study and active participation in all stages of the training. We start the program with a four-day event, during which time the students are introduced to all the science, anatomy, traditional theory, and treatment rationale that they are expected to learn as the program unfolds. The organizational intent of the introductory weekend is to create an intellectual matrix into which the details of the course can be integrated, and to launch the manual skills necessary for palpation and needling.

Students depart with textbooks, atlases, software, video material, and a recommended study schedule. They return three to six months later for the ten-day hands-on clinical unit where teaching preceptors supervise them in interviewing styles, patient examination, treatment design, point location, and needling. Everyone is asked to serve as both physician and patient during the unit, so that no one leaves without experiencing the interview and treatment process. This is an excellent incubation environment for those newly exposed to the acupuncture microbe.

A cadre of enthusiastic and well-trained preceptors guides the students and

addresses their individual learning needs. The course demands much of the participants. The rewards for conscientious work are an expanded comprehension of diagnosis and treatment, and the clinical training to immediately apply acupuncture skills in practice. The course has been constantly refined since its debut in 1980. One of the most gratifying aspects of my work is receiving comments and letters from graduates reporting on their experience of the course and how acupuncture has affected their practices and the quality of their professional lives. This feedback helps to shape changes in the course content and delivery. It is also the principal means of promoting the program to other doctors: word-of-mouth from satisfied physician.

Participants' ages span the full range of practice years in age, from twenty-eight to seventy-eight years old. There are three general clusters of career stages in the students: (1) newly minted doctors just out of residency who want to start their practices fully armed and who recognize that acupuncture is a valuable tool in almost every practice environment; (2) middle-aged doctors who—now that they know their discipline, are in stable practices, and have their kids' tuitions paid—acknowledge that they are less passionate about their professional careers than they once were and see the potential in acupuncture to stimulate new interest in their practices; (3) doctors in perpetual semi-retirement who will continue practicing until they die. Learning acupuncture late in the medical career can allow physicians to enjoy practicing medicine without the physical demands of a full specialty practice.

The course participants represent all medical specialties, from primary care and pain management to psychiatry and pathology. Most physicians come from the primary care specialties (family medicine, general internal medicine, pediatrics, women's health, geriatrics) and the pain management specialties (physical medicine and rehabilitation,

osteopathic manipulative medicine, anesthesiology, neurology, general and orthopedic surgery, psychiatry). There are two pathways of study, one for primary care doctors who need to know the full range of acupuncture's clinical potential, and one for pain management doctors whose application of acupuncture is limited to musculoskeletal pain. Eighty percent of the core curriculum overlaps in the two pathways; some of the home study videos differ, and the practical emphasis changes at the clinical unit.

Acupuncture is the first step into the world of complementary and alternative medicine for many participants. It might be the only nonconventional discipline they learn and incorporate in their conventional practices, or it might be the groundwork for combining several compatible modalities into a new practice format. For all students the medical acupuncture training is an educational program unlike any other they have attended. The following passages describe the perspectives of an internist and a pain management physician on the first day of the introductory weekend:

I was expecting an elderly, bespectacled Berkeley ex-hippie when Dr. Helms arrived with the demeanor of someone in the British admiralty. In a logical and orderly fashion, he quickly mapped out what was expected of us and what the course entailed. I was amazed at its lucency, considering some of the rambling and incoherent acupuncture courses I had taken. I remember looking at the startled faces of the participants when they began to realize the scope and rigors of the discipline.

But we were all delighted to see that the course was built into a framework that was familiar to us. Although the language was new, at least the system was familiar to those we had experienced in other disciplines of medicine. Equally exciting was the quality of the preceptors Dr. Helms had gathered around him. **(Bryan Bownik)**

I was certainly one of the most traditional physicians in my clinical section. I think half the other physicians in the room were into some type of complementary practice and were merely adding acupuncture to their armamentarium. I remember the gasp I heard when we were introducing ourselves on the first day and I mentioned that I implanted spinal cord stimulators. You would have thought that I was the quack in the group!

I also realized that many of the people in that room were more interested in caring for their patients than in making more money. It was very refreshing. **(Todd Lininger)**

Physicians consider most continuing medical education programs to be impersonal and perfunctory in their delivery of material, necessary pauses in their professional schedules to consume new information and skills. The medical acupuncture program offers a different environment. The students are open to new ideas, new techniques, new experiences, and new friendships. The spirit of interaction is one of openness and mutual encouragement among students and between students and teachers. Skills and learning are shared generously. The class dynamic quickly engenders the atmosphere of a large family reunion.

The training process is an open forum where there are no bounds on what can be discussed and worked out within the groups. The training encourages a path of personal and professional development, the use of empathy, evaluating problems in their context, and, dare I say, integrity. Mentorship is an important and active part of acupuncture training. In the medical acupuncture teaching community the common denominators are personal involvement, genuineness of interactions, common purpose, and having fun during the learning process. **(John Giusto)**

I have found the world of physician acupuncturists to be a helpful, communicative group of individuals, backgrounds being different, philosophies being variable, techniques being individual. Most of them are interested in sharing their ideas, their experiences, and their innovations. An abiding feature is their concern for patients, their wellness, and their education. **(Mitchell Elkiss)**

The content of the program is not restricted to one tradition in acupuncture.

Rather, the best of many traditions are combined into a comprehensive approach. The medical acupuncture course encourages physicians to creatively incorporate the discipline into their daily practices. The learning process is intense and produces fascinating and diverse reactions:

I listened to the first few days of explanations about the basic principle of energy and how its flow bounded, controlled, and created all life and health and illness. These classes completely blew my mind. They opened me up to vast fields of thought which were truly stupefying. The principles stated, the hypotheses drawn, the conclusions arrived at were all totally logical. But this created for me two worlds of logic, one Western, one Oriental, and initially it seemed impossible to meld them into one logic of life. **(Robert Chase)**

My training was arduous, but only because it was self-induced. I came home every evening, plopped a TV dinner in the microwave, made a salad, and sat down in front of the TV to watch the videos and study. I was alternately scared that I would never understand it or know it, and also hungry for the information. **(Noel Nowicki)**

It was the first acupuncture course I had taken that was organized for the medically trained Western mind, and it integrated the eastern approach in a scientific fashion. What I had been trying to synthesize over the years and what I had been seeing in my clinical practice became distilled and distinct. The UCLA acupuncture course helped me to define years of study and patient care in a most meaningful way. I can safely say that it is the single most important course I have taken in my postgraduate years of medical training. **(Donald Counts)**

It was the most intriguing, demanding, and rewarding experience since medical school. The program integrates so much, from the cellular level to the energetic. It offered a bridge out of the materialistic reductionism perspective we learned in medical school. I had always known that real medicine and healing were more important than statistics and dosages, that there was another, more important level to being a physician. The course satisfied the intellectually rigorous part of my mind at the same time as making legitimate the energetic level of being. **(Kathy Bishop)**

Walking around the small groups at work during the clinical unit, one encounters guffaws of laughter from some tables as a student or preceptor makes light of part of someone's story or clumsiness at needling. At other tables the interviews proceed with intense silence in the group as the student-patients reveal personal information as background to their medical problems. All students quickly perceive that the environment is very safe, that anything can be discussed and examined without awkwardness or judgment. And it's okay to have fun while learning. This is certainly not the atmosphere they experienced during medical training:

The ten-day clinical portion was wonderful and inspiring. It was one instance where the reality actually exceeded expectations. Being away from home allowed total immersion in the acupuncture paradigm of medical care. Spending time with intelligent, similarly focused physicians of different specialties and personalities provided an intellectual stimulation not present during the routine workday. The group meals and happy hours encouraged

socialization and helped forge long-term collegial and friendly relationships that continue across time and geographical barriers. (**Steven Braverman**)

As I worked through the course and the videotapes, I was taken with the paradox of the simplicity and complexity of acupuncture. In stark contrast to much of what I was force-fed in medical school, it was a system that made sense to me intuitively. I could have explained most of it easily to a ten-year-old.

For some of the doctors at the clinical unit acupuncture was simply a new tool set, but most of the participants were searching for something, and the course offered a supportive environment for them to reinvent themselves as healers. We all worked closely together and soon were wandering around in undershorts and bathing suits, marking points and drawing lines on each other.

While I was establishing my basic acupuncture skills and knowledge, something else was occurring on a deeper level. In a very real sense I was recapturing my enthusiasm for clinical medicine. By the end of the course I had the tools and the attitude, and I nervously awaited what my first clinical encounters with my own patients would bring. (**Howard Silverman**)

I have made some of my best friends through the acupuncture course. For the most part we are explorers, willing to take a risk and willing to invest ourselves in hundreds of hours of study to improve our patient care. At the introductory weekend I noticed immediately that the atmosphere was different from other courses I had been to. There was an air of anticipation and excitement, not competition. For once, the first question after a lecture was not “How do you bill for this?”

Needling trigger points is especially satisfying for me. It’s as if I can find a knot that holds the patient back from wellness and wrest them free, armed with only my bare hands and a needle. Once, during a pain management practical, we were investigating the needling of trigger points. A student was lying on the table, and I was standing across from Dr. Helms. Our fingers found the same big juicy trigger point at the same moment. I was itching to put the needle in. I put my hand over the area as if to claim it, and before I could stop myself I looked up at him and said, “Mine!” He knew exactly what I meant. This is what acupuncture does to you. (**Nancy Cotter**)

I was extremely impressed with the academic quality of the course, its organization, and the instruction. Had this been taught at the same level as most of my other clinical training, it would have taken years. (**Norman Solomon**)

For the participants the thrill of the clinical unit is their colleague-patients reporting changes, especially improvements, following the treatments executed by the small groups. More thrilling is being treated and experiencing the changes firsthand. The responses to treatments are discussed and compared in the classroom. By the end of the

clinical unit the physicians have both an intellectual understanding of and a visceral feeling for the variations of a treatment experience and its possible results.

There is something sacred about putting needles in someone and how you treat them after the needles are in. After I contact the Qi, I always put a calming hand on the patient so they know that I know what they felt, and I get it. That's very calming for them. **(Kirk Pappas)**

The moment of truth for me was to insert one of those sharp, shiny, filamentous needles into a few acupuncture points and see if anything really happened. I happen to be one of those people especially sensitive to acupuncture, so my questioning mind, my doubting thoughts were soon answered. "It works!" Again, "It actually works." These little needles produce changes in my body which I can unquestionably feel. From this time on, the study and practice of acupuncture was filled with delight. **(Robert Chase)**

I am very kinesthetic, so for me acupuncture is perfect. I can feel where the points are, I can feel when the energy starts to move through them, and I can feel the releases that occur. For me, acupuncture has been a breath of fresh air and a whole new system of medicine, a real symbol of hope for the future of healing. **(Martha Grout)**

I can't describe the excitement I felt the first time I treated one of my classmates. The hours in front of the videotapes, the months of preparation, gave me an intellectual grasp of what was going on. But nothing could have prepared me for the exhilaration of designing and inserting my first needle pattern. Fortunately for my psyche, my patient suffered my needling in silence and had the courtesy to report feeling better by the next day. I trembled with excitement! I was hot!

I tend to get pretty aped up and then get tension in my muscles and have trouble sleeping. Two days after giving my first treatment, I was treated myself. Again, none of the reports in class adequately described the relaxation and clarity that occurs during and right after the treatment. Endorphins, yes, but a lot more than that. The treatment made me calm, and at the same time I was more energetic and my mind was clearer than since I started the course. This time I was mellow and I liked being there. I've made myself a regular acupuncture patient since then. **(Gary Kaplan)**

The medical acupuncture training program, being an incubation period for most of the physicians, provokes periods of confusion and disorientation as well as flashes of insight and clarity. Here are a few comments showing the directions that the internalization and integration process can take.

As I took the acupuncture course, I realized how readily it adapts to osteopathic philosophy. In fact, it occurred to me that osteopathy is in a sense recreating the wheel. This is especially true when one considers that acupuncture grew out of a system of medicine that included nutritional counseling, natural substance prescriptions (herbs), lifestyle modification, exercise prescription, and massage and manipulation. To this extent the only thing that differs between Chinese medicine and osteopathic theory is the use of needles. (**David Teitelbaum**)

What was utterly fascinating to me was that while I was going through this educational process I was getting information that began to put all of medicine together for me as far as understanding patient problems and how these problems evolved. It was as if in medical school we all learned the pieces of a vast puzzle to the point that we could take the pieces and break them up into smaller and smaller pieces. But we learned nothing about putting the puzzle together, and it wasn't until I was in the acupuncture training program that medicine began to make true sense to me. (**Lowell Kobrin**)

My favorite image from the collection of reports is associated with the Dutch painter M. C. Escher:

My years of education and medical training had made me a Cartesian, a linear thinker constantly seeking cause-effect relationships. Early in my acupuncture training I was compelled to think about patterns and relationships, be they simple using Yin and Yang relationships, associating symptoms with structural biopsychotypes, or more complex five phases correspondences. At times I felt uneasy and confused, but I hung in, anticipating some revelation that would ease my discomfort.

It did not come until months after the course's end, when gradually my schizoid medical thinking became more facile, able to switch easily between my allopathic thinking and acupuncture thinking, and back again. At first it was like switching from one circuit to another, from an old-fashioned linear electrical circuit to a modern solid-state circuit with an induced electromagnetic field.

Then, as I practiced acupuncture more, the experience became more like viewing an Escher painting, able to see first the fishes, then the rabbits; first the causal, then the pattern. Mastering the new medical history and physical examination proved invaluable because, in the process of tending to every allopathic and acupuncture detail, my mind eventually performed its natural integrative function. And I became more proficient in Escherian switching. (**Allen McDaniels**)

The study and practice demanded by the course triggers the process of internalizing the new discipline, and a transformation is thus begun. Each physician embraces this process differently, depending on that physician's need to change and comfort with the changes. The next chapter gives stories of transformation.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

TRANSFORMATION

When the physicians return to their medical communities and practice environments, they are eager to start needling their patients. In this setting they gradually overcome their insecurities and doubts about the skills they've just learned. They also face the unknown and unanticipated reactions of their professional peers and their patients. Whether or not they feel confident in the role of physician acupuncturist, this is the identity they now embody. The following reports are of initial professional encounters.

Encounters with Fellow Physicians

One of three responses by one's peers is the norm: benign indifference, cool indifference thinly disguising hostility, or collegial comfort and interest. In some cases returning doctors were surprised by their reception.

Benign Indifference

In time benign indifference can turn to acceptance and support within the medical community. Pain management doctors must educate their referring colleagues about early intervention with acupuncture for musculoskeletal pain problems. Referrals to the primary care physician acupuncturist, however, frequently come too late in the patient's illness for acupuncture alone to make a significant change:

After word had gotten around town that an M.D. was practicing acupuncture, I sensed a benign acquiescence by my colleagues and perceived no active resistance. Of course, I did not receive physician referrals during the first several years of acupuncture practice, although I had a few physicians or their spouses as patients. I plied my trade quietly and conscientiously, intending to avoid controversy. The strategy paid off because I built a practice limited to acupuncture and complementary modalities of treatment. These days I get physician referrals, too. (**Allen McDaniels**)

I was the first physician in Oregon who was trained in acupuncture. My hospital accepted my credentials because the training was a UCLA continuing medical education program, but it took a long time for physicians to refer patients to me.

Now that is changing, and more of my colleagues are sending patients to me; albeit the ones they send are often people at a very end stage in their disease process and I can give only limited help. My patients accepted acupuncture eagerly and my practice grew quickly because the acupuncture was doing what it is supposed to do. (**Lowell Kobrin**)

Colleagues had mixed responses. We have a pain management anesthesiologist who told me acupuncture is a crock, it's all placebo. (His attitude is that if an epidural won't help the problem, live with the pain, and above all don't take any narcotics.) At the beginning the doctors in the group uniformly sent their pain patients from him to me. Now the patients are sent to me first, and the few I can't help are sent to him. My colleagues also feel good about sending primary care patients to me. Usually they are happy to refer patients that have frustrated them. (**Norman Solomon**)

Thinly Veiled Hostility

Compared to the number of reports of neutral or favorable reception, there were but few mentions of overt peer disapproval of acupuncture. The concluding sentiment by those who experienced objections is that there is little that can be said to change a negative opinion. Occasionally time and exposure to favorable patient results can soften the harshest critic:

I expected my fellow physicians to have minds open enough to trust me and my medical judgment, even if they thought acupuncture was strange. I made low-key attempts to encourage my physician friends—many of whom had entrusted their wives to my care for maternity and gynecological surgery over a period of fifteen to twenty-five years—to give acupuncture a chance to help some of their difficult cases which were not responding to Western treatment.

These attempts were met with cold stares or words to the effect “I think the results are probably due to suggestion.” (**Robert Chase**)

In my opinion there are many physicians who are working more as niche mechanics rather than desiring to help people. For them, only time and the marketplace will drive the value of acupuncture into their understanding. Because acupuncture has been consumer driven, ultimately even the skeptical physicians will learn to respect its value. (**Terry Bugno**)

My hospital told me that acupuncture was interfering with my job and asked me to either give it up or go elsewhere. They gave me a six-month grace period, then reversed themselves and built me an office within the building. After two years there my fellow doctors are using my services, and I have residents from several programs spending time observing me. (**Noel Nowicki**)

I get a variety of responses from other physicians. Some think that I am practicing voodoo and won't listen to anything I have to say about any matter at all, including the weather. Others respond with a wary comprehension that I have somehow escaped the problems of medicine today and insulated myself in an esoteric practice. They do not appreciate medical acupuncture and are merely envious that I have found a way to avoid the hassles of the managed care mess. The third response is from a few physicians who understand that Western medicine is not the only medical modality that has merit. They refer patients to me or come themselves. (**Marshall Sager**)

Collegial Comfort and Interest

The reaction of my medical community to my acupuncture practice has been favorable. Many of my patients are my colleagues, residents, and medical students. Experiencing the beneficial effects of acupuncture treatment can make people accept at least that there is something to this, even if they cannot fully explain how it works. (**Iván Iriarte**)

The welcome reception and positive response by both patients and colleagues surprised me. There has been very little in the way of negativity. Mostly there has been curiosity, interest, and support. I believe doctors in general have a positive intuitive feeling about the value of acupuncture because of its long history and its relative benignity. Also, their frustration with patients who were untreatable or could not tolerate their medicines or who did not respond appropriately could be reinvestigated in a new paradigm. (**Mitchell Elkiss**)

Acupuncture has been very well accepted in my medical community and by my patients. My colleagues in neurology know that the treatments have been able to help patients with intractable pain problems that previously were unresponsive to conventional therapy and medication. They acknowledge that one form of treatment is not mutually exclusive of the other. (**Jack Anstandig**)

Encounters with Patients

I met with little or no reluctance. Patients seemed eager to try acupuncture, either as part of an orthodox medical treatment or as the sole treatment modality. Through their easy acceptance I was encouraged to incorporate acupuncture into my practice more quickly than I had anticipated. (**Allen McDaniels**)

Patient reception is consistently euphoric. They don't consider acupuncture as alternative; rather, they ask for it as first line. Even the people I don't help thank me for trying. (**Kirk Pappas**)

Within a year my practice of acupuncture had grown by leaps and bounds to the point where it was difficult to find time for it and a straight gynecological office practice and surgery. I gradually phased out the surgical part of my practice. It amazed me from the outset how willing and eager patients were to completely accept an entirely new and different method of relieving their illnesses. (**Robert Chase**)

The reports uniformly exclaimed that patients were very receptive to medical acupuncture. The first reason given is that the acupuncture process honors the patients' symptoms and perspectives in a way that rarely occurs in the conventional setting.

My patients feel that I care about them more because I am willing to try something like acupuncture with them. Acupuncture helped me understand that the signs and symptoms the patients present with are very important and need to be addressed in the treatment, even prior to our labeling them as a particular disease. My patients certainly appreciate that together we can work on the things that are bothering them, and that I do not just feel that it is all in their head. (**Todd Lininger**)

I always thought my rapport with patients was good, until I started doing acupuncture. Allopathic medicine is so number/technology/chart review intense that the patients themselves can get lost. Medical acupuncture is symptom oriented; it lives with what a patient comes in for in the first place. For those patients with fatigue and normal labs that I never had anything to offer, I now have some new tools in my doctor's bag. Everyone instinctively believes that anger, fear, depression, and overworking can cause illness, so it's nice to have a system that automatically incorporates these factors into a syndrome instead of declaring whether the illness is organic or psychosomatic. I have found that patients are so receptive to me now just because I do acupuncture. (**Norman Solomon**)

Now I have an entire world of pathophysiology that explains things to me and to the patients so we can begin to intervene. Acupuncture has taught me patience. I understand the time lines of illness, the root and branches of illness, a unifying theory for someone's eighty-five different complaints. Sometimes I am ahead of them and go through their biopsychotype and tell them other things that

they may be prone to, and they are amazed and imagine that I am wise or psychic, or listening to them. **(Noel Nowicki)**

Patients not only accept the acupuncture paradigm but actively seek out those techniques and approaches which seem to strike a common, familiar chord, reuniting the myriad parts of the whole which scientific medicine has gone to such great pains to fragment. Many of my patients are hungry for an explanation of their lack of wellness. They sense a need for a wholeness to their lives and, having failed to find relief from tablets and technology, are anxious to try something new. **(Michael Acord)**

Patients see that the doctor shares the joy of a successful treatment. This brings a sense of great awe for acupuncture to both parties:

At the end of the course we were admonished to start doing treatments as soon as possible so we would not lose the momentum of our training. As fate would have it, my teenage daughter suffered a severe ankle sprain the day I returned. She was desperate, since she could not afford to miss any of her physical education class at school. I offered to treat her, and to my surprise she exclaimed, "Needle me, Dad!" So I did. At this point I was still skeptical whether such a treatment would work. I would have expected the swelling and tenderness she had to remain for at least a week or two, maybe more. After two treatments her pain and swelling subsided, and in three days she was as good as new. Most amazing! **(Howard Silverman)**

I began offering acupuncture as a possible method of therapy to a few patients who had problems that Western-type practice could do nothing for. To my total surprise and great joy, these treatments really and truly worked. They worked so well on so many complex and difficult problems, it felt like magic. And it was a type of magic, just like the first time I looked through a microscope and could see a whole world I had never known existed. **(Robert Chase)**

I started working with a number of patients who were waiting for me to finish the course. The first few had positive responses, and I was hooked. I still smile every time a patient I treat does well, because what is really going on is still a mystery to me. I have come to believe that not knowing has been one of the greatest gifts that I could ever have received. **(Todd Lininger)**

As I began to take expanded acupuncture-style histories with an open demeanor as a physician, I noticed that patients often presented unusual symptoms, ones that might be frequently dismissed as psychosomatic or neurotic. If I teased out more from the history and formatted it into an acupuncture template, and treated the axis of the predominant symptom-presentation, lo and behold, very often the other so-called neurotic symptoms would resolve with the treatment. I became aware of what a powerful therapeutic tool acupuncture is. **(Patrick Magovern)**

Acupuncture treatment normalizes people. It gets them to lie down for a half-hour or forty-five minutes. It stops their world. They get to experience a period full of wonderful healing molecules and deep rest and balance. Instead of a state of aggravation or agitation, it is a state of wholeness and wellness. Being able to stimulate this state makes me feel like the doctor I want to be. (**John Adams**)

Both physicians and patients appreciate the intimacy that acupuncture evaluations and treatments bring to their interactions:

I like to say that Western medicine treats problems people have, while Eastern medicine, acupuncture, treats people with problems. Now I get to really know my patients. We become partners in healing, and I share their joy in recovery.

Learning and practicing acupuncture has made me more perceptive, more thoughtful, a better listener, and has deepened my understanding of people and the world around me. It has made me a more compassionate person and a better physician. (**Marshall Sager**)

After thirty-six years as a surgeon, I learned that I can serve my patients better by simply listening, questioning, and palpating them at tender points in their tissues. A thin, tiny needle is the communicating tool between me and them. (**Hiroshi Nakazawa**)

One benefit of doing acupuncture is that my patients who use other complementary therapies came out of the closet about them. They were afraid to discuss them with other doctors for fear of ridicule. They concluded, rightly, that since I did acupuncture I would be more open to discussing and using other approaches as well. This helped build my practice in a positive way, often with people very interested in primary prevention, healthier lifestyles, and taking responsibility for their health. (**Victor Sierpina**)

I find that the laying on of hands necessary to do acupuncture is useful in itself. I had almost forgotten how to touch patients. It is both a means and an end in acupuncture, at times as therapeutic as putting in needles. Once I touch the patient clinically, the discussion becomes entirely different from sitting across from one another. Those who are vulnerable to discussing deeper issues of family life, depression, anxiety, or problems with work can open up during the treatment. (**Shotsy Faust**)

I feel a shift in the relationship as I begin an acupuncture treatment. It feels as if I am more deeply connected with my patient and that we are truly working as a team. It's almost as if I am engaged in performing energetic surgery on them. There is an easy intimacy that develops, and patients relish the sense of well-being and relaxation that accompanies the treatments. (**Howard Silverman**)

The language of acupuncture is completely different from conventional medicine. As an acupuncturist, I can ask questions that, if asked in a conventional format, would provoke the “So you think it’s all in my head” defense. I ask about personal preferences—taste, color, flavor—which may sound nerundial and charming to the patient. I can allow patients to go on at length about their lives. Taken off their guard, people often reveal the issues that are the basis of their problems.

I run my finger along a channel, applying gentle pressure at points very close to each other, asking at each point, “Where do you feel it more?” In so doing, the patient might well feel that I have made a careful and deliberate attempt to find out what is really wrong with him. None of my acupuncture patients has ever asked me for an MRI, which is a patient’s way of saying, “I don’t believe you know what’s wrong with me, so I want the machine to tell me.”

The treatment itself can actually be pleasant, which is delightful for patients and liberating for doctors. I extinguish the glaring overhead light, turn on a low side light, and apply the needles. I manipulate the needles, attend to my patient’s comfort, and gradually withdraw myself, allowing the patient to enter his acupuncture space. Frequently they fall asleep. One patient told me that during her treatment she dreamed she was in a Swiss village with a quarter-inch of snow over everything, shining in the moonlight. I consider that a job well done. **(Richard Zweig)**

Transformation of the Physician

With a few months’ experience and increasing ease with the new identity as physician acupuncturist, course graduates express great comfort and satisfaction with the comprehensive perspective of the acupuncture diagnosis and interaction. After being exposed to treatment results, they recognize that incorporating acupuncture into their practices makes their professional work exceptionally fulfilling. The transformation is a one-way street. They can’t go back to the way they practiced before, nor do they want to.

My formal education in acupuncture has added an incredible dimension to my medical practice. I now have additional resources in my repertory of treatment modalities to offer my patients. If it were only that, it would be good enough.

In addition, the incorporation of a new model that takes into account energetic as well as material and mechanical phenomena has allowed me to explain what is happening with patients whose cases previously did not make sense. The frequency with which patients present with patterns and disorders

that fit with the acupuncture conceptualization of structural biopsychotypes and energy circulation is too great to be explained by chance. (**Iván Iriarte**)

It is exciting to be able to make sense of the information my patients give me when in the past there seemed to be no connections. Acupuncture integrates organs, tissues, emotions, thoughts, and spiritual influences that are not visibly connected in a physical sense. This opens the door for a more expansive and functional treatment system that is surprisingly simple and elegant. (**Howard Silverman**)

Learning medical acupuncture taught me to see patients. It has reshaped the way I think about patient diagnosis and treatment. It has not negated anything I learned in medical school; rather, it greatly expanded my medical consciousness. Before I took medical acupuncture training, I saw the patient from the bottom of the mountain. After I took it, I saw the patient from the top of the mountain.

The training allowed me to integrate emotions and behavioral patterns with illness and disease of a denser nature. I was able to understand why problems are present, even if the X-rays or lab data indicate that nothing is wrong. It allowed me to see that we cannot lump everybody into one big statistical group. We must take into consideration the constitution and lifestyle of the patient as well. (**Lowell Kobrin**)

When I learned acupuncture, I felt as if I had arrived home. Here was a formal and tested method of bringing all aspects of the patient into diagnosis and treatment. I have been on an acupuncture high ever since. Although I have certainly found situations where acupuncture did not help a problem, these situations are by far the minority. Even when I'm not using acupuncture, I look at patients in the context of an acupuncture evaluation. This is so much the case that, when I'm listening intently to a patient history, I can be heard to mumble, "Hmm, Kidney deficiency," or "Rising Liver Fire." I feel as if I have been given the opportunity to rise to a higher level of practice, for which my patients and I are grateful. (**Nancy Cotter**)

When I add acupuncture to my family medicine practice, I gain a new, deeper dimension. Within the system of acupuncture practice there is a place for all the parts that the patient presents to me. Spiritual and emotional issues have as important a role as the purely physical signs do. And the treatments can produce positive changes on all these levels as well. Intuitively, both the practitioner and the patient gain a deep, full satisfaction from a therapeutic interaction that engages all of these levels.

Medical school lectures were dry material, laid out in cookbook fashion in tables and graphs, to be applied uniformly to each patient having a particular label. In the study and practice of acupuncture, the physician learns to skillfully evaluate each patient's patterns and to create a unique and effective treatment plan. This contract changes everything. The process is not at all static. It is alive, waiting to be shaped by the practitioner and the patient. (**John Foxen**)

AFTERWORD

My thirty years in clinical practice and twenty-five years of teaching medical acupuncture to physicians have convinced me that this discipline is one of the most effective vehicles to reintroduce humanitarian and spiritual qualities into the daily practice of medicine. The technological and pharmacological elegance of contemporary biomedicine, when combined with the economic exigencies of managing health care delivery, has allowed physicians in our era to become depersonalized, detached from the intimacy of connecting with their patients. Many of my students have expressed an inability to make this contact—even when they would like to—because of the rigors of our required diagnostic procedures and time constraints. Others are simply unaware of what they are missing.

The acupuncture experience is humanizing and spiritualizing for both patient and physician. Physicians get to know their patients' psychospiritual strengths and vulnerabilities at the same time as they explore their physical composition and flaws. This occurs by the very nature of the acupuncture interview and the interchange needed to arrive at an appropriate medical acupuncture diagnosis. Patient evaluation and treatment require time, attention, and touching, the simple elements that allow the alchemy of caring and healing to take place.

The time-tested art of acupuncture integrates itself with the science of biomedicine in physicians' offices. From the patients' perspective, acupuncture is already “white

bread” in that it is no longer an exotic curiosity; it is increasingly demanded as a clinical service from physicians. Likewise, in the spirit of American pragmatism, acupuncture itself is undergoing an evolution that is not possible elsewhere in the world. Its vocabulary and philosophy are opening our eyes to new ways to perceive health and illness, and the techniques of its practice are being modified and adapted to fit into many disciplines of medicine.

Indeed, through the transformation that occurs in physicians embracing medical acupuncture and in patients receiving treatments, many of us in the country have finally begun Walking on Two Legs.

APPENDIX

WHAT'S YOUR CONSTITUTION?

How to use this questionnaire

Place a 1, 2, or 3 for each item that represents a quality you recognize in yourself, even if it is only approximately accurate in its description. If the item does not seem to apply to you, leave the space blank or place a "0" in it. Be honest. Try to separate what you would like to be from what you really are.

- "1" indicates that you are familiar with this quality in yourself but that it is not present at all times or a predominant part of your makeup.
- "2" indicates that this quality is present most of the time in your makeup and life activities.
- "3" indicates that the quality is strongly characteristic of who you really are, or that it is a predominant part of your makeup.

What are your strong points?

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | I am good at making decisions and planning things. |
| _____ | I have a lot of energy and am usually in good spirits. |
| _____ | I am well organized. I keep my possessions and my activities in order. |
| _____ | I am conscientious and responsible. If I am supposed to do something, I do it and I try to do it right. |
| _____ | I can work hard for long periods of time. |
| _____ | I am an effective and balanced leader. |

What do you enjoy?

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | I like to play sports because I like to be moving around. |
| _____ | I enjoy having a project to work on, either at work or at home. |
| _____ | I like to take care of people. I am nurturing. |
| _____ | I like the good things in life—good food, good fun, and so on. I like to have a good time. |
| _____ | I feel fulfilled being a useful member of a team. |
| _____ | I am expansive. I like to include others. I can get them interested in talking with me or doing things with me. |

How is your health and physical well-being?

- _____ I have problems with my eyes.
- _____ I suffer often from headaches.
- _____ I suffer often from insomnia.
- _____ I suffer often from muscle tension.
- _____ When I was a child, I often had allergies or respiratory infections, eczema, or acne.
- _____ I have problems with my skin.
- _____ I have chronic digestive problems and sometimes get concerned with my bowel habits.
- _____ I feel heavy and I look heavy. Getting exercise doesn't seem to help very much.
- _____ I had frequent throat infections as a kid or have gone through a severe or prolonged illness in my life.
- _____ I have problems with my hearing.
- _____ I must be careful with how I use my back or it can give me very bad pain, especially my lower back.
- _____ I don't seem to have the stamina and drive I once had. I feel more fatigued than I think I should feel.

How do you feel?

- _____ I find myself feeling anxious, frustrated, or agitated more often than I would like.
- _____ I feel better if I get some exercise or play some sports.
- _____ I can be self-critical. I want to do things well and am mad at myself when I don't do them well enough.
- _____ I like to touch and be touched. I like to hug my friends.
- _____ I don't have a problem with self-confidence.
- _____ I commonly feel chilly inside myself, even when those around me don't.

What are your worrisome or unhealthy habits?

- _____ I have nervous habits (such as tapping my fingers or feet, pacing, clicking a pen on and off, doodling on pieces of paper, biting my nails, and so on).
- _____ I need my coffee to get going or keep going.
- _____ I try to be everyone's helper and get too involved in other people's problems.
- _____ I go overboard with the good things in life—eating and drinking too much.
- _____ I do outrageous things because I feel like I can do anything and get away with it.
- _____ I doubt myself. I don't have the confidence that others seem to have.

How are you at getting along with other people?

- _____ Normally I get along with people, but I can have outbursts of anger when I'm irritated with someone.
- _____ If I get mad at someone, my resentment can last a long time.
- _____ I am loyal. I don't abandon people or responsibilities for my own convenience.
- _____ I am involved in community activities. I try to do some good in the world.
- _____ I am intense and can seem frenzied to other people. They think I move and talk very quickly.
- _____ My self-confidence sometimes strikes others as bossy or arrogant.

What are your color and flavor preferences?

- _____ I especially like blue, blue-green, or turquoise colors.
- _____ I especially like yellow and earth tones.
- _____ I like the color red.
- _____ I especially like dark blue and black.
- _____ I especially like sour, citrus, or acid flavors.
- _____ I especially like sweet flavors.
- _____ I like food that has a lot of flavor, even spicy, but not necessarily hot.
- _____ I like to put extra salt on my food and eat salty snacks.
- _____ I like foods that have a bitter or roasted flavor.

The Next Step

Tally the number ratings in each of the three columns. The numerical total will reflect the relative percentage of your constitution that is affiliated with each of the three biopsychotype categories.

- The first column is linked with the Vision/Action biopsychotype.
- The second column is linked with the Nurture/Duty biopsychotype.
- The third column is linked with the Will/Spirit biopsychotype.

If you understand your own constitutional makeup, you will be better able to recognize biopsychotype characteristics in your family, colleagues, and patients. And you will be able to relate more intimately with the patients described earlier in this paper.