



Points To Ponder

Healing, Health, & Well-being Through Acupuncture

Summer Time 2007

*With the past, I have nothing to do; nor with the future.
I live now. ~Ralph Waldo Emerson*



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Summer is a Time to Celebrate Life

Enjoy Summer's Gifts: Compassion, Warmth, Playfulness, Joy, Connection

Hooray! Hooray! Summer is here in all its splendor. The awakening of spring is behind us and everything is more pronounced now—colors, temperature, sunshine, and heat. We have moved from the delicacy of spring, the re-birth season, to the intensity of summer. It is similar to the transition from a fragile newborn to a rambunctious two-year-old full of energy (but in a much more compressed timeline, of course).

Summer is the season of peak energy. Fueled by the sun and long days, we are in the perfect position to embrace life and to celebrate our existence. It is also a time to tend to relationships...a time to follow the heart, one of the officials of the season. The small intestine is the other official, helping the heart discern who and what is supportive and loving in our lives.

As you might expect, according to Traditional Chinese Medicine, fire is the element of the season—bringing us warmth in body and spirit...warmth figuratively and literally.

In the summer, if the fire element is not in proper balance, however, there are often relationship problems, and a flatness to one's emotions prevails—all contrary to nature.

For some people for whom the fire element is not balanced, the heat and longer days actually create tension and stress. They become explosive and relationships suffer.

Some of the stress experienced by people in summer is a result of their choice to use the extra hours of sunlight to work harder and accomplish more projects. In contrast, a person with the fire element in balance may embrace summer as a time of work and play. They may work their normal week (or even less) and save the balance of the day to play more during the season of extended sunlight.

We also see this in nature in the hotter climates, including some weeks during Maryland summers; when the temperatures and humidity get too high (out of balance), we are uncomfortable and edgy. Rather than complain about the heat and dwell on the discomfort, change the situation and find the positive. Seek shade, go toward water (mountain streams, the Chesapeake Bay or rivers, the ocean), and drink refreshing drinks (lemonade, mint tea, flavored waters).

Take the time also to tend to relationships. Use the energy of the season and the strength of the complementary officials (heart and small intestine) to let go of anger and replace it with a positive attitude with a goal of Carpe Diem (Seize The Day). Be determined to beam as brightly as the sun. Such positive energy and an "in control" feeling will make you feel alive and energized, and your exuberance will be contagious.

Tips To Celebrate Summer & Embrace The Season's Energy

- Make time to play and think consciously about how it feels to be so alive.
- Take in deep breaths, close your eyes, and turn your face to the sun as you envision your stress rising to the sky.
- Stop and smell the roses, literally.
- Spend time with friends and family outdoors.
- Eat meals outside.
- Get out of town for a few days.
- Watch the stars at night, pondering the universe and the privilege to experience life.
- Send handwritten notes to a dozen friends, just to say hello.
- Walk along the water's edge and be sure to get your toes wet.
- Hold hands with your partner when you go somewhere.
- Tell someone, "I love you."
- Rent a convertible and feel the wind in your hair.
- Do something you enjoyed as a child (ride a bike, fly a kite, throw a frisbee).
- Stop everything, close your eyes, and listen to the birds sing.
- Read a good book (The Secret and The Purpose Driven Life are great!).
- (Get an acupuncture treatment if you're not feeling awesome and truly embracing summer!).

Wellness Center

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A Matter of Perspective

Imagine for just a minute that you have been diagnosed with a terminal illness. After the shock wears off, would you go into a deep depression and give up? Or, would you choose to fight your illness with tenacity and passion? And, a third alternative may be that you fight the disease with a positive attitude and the tools of Western and Eastern medicine combined, without obsessing, and allow enough time and energy to truly enjoy the time you have left with your loved ones.

If your choice was the latter, why wait? Since none of us has any clue about how much time we have on this earth, now is the time to follow the advice given in Tim McGraw's popular country song — live as if you're going to die tomorrow.

The choice is yours.

You also have a choice about how you think about and take care of your body. Do you take its function for granted or do you marvel at your body and take care of it—body and soul?

Just as you take your car in for regular maintenance to prolong the engine life, what do you do for *your* body? for your heart (physically, emotionally and spiritually)?

Also, do you perceive the changes associated with aging as a negative or just as a part of life? Think about menopause or the feeling of some joint stiffness that most middle-age people experience at some point. Do you dread it or is it just part of life, with any symptoms being your body saying, "Hey, you...I'm in change...feel it" Your attitude and some preventive "maintenance" will make all the difference in the world.

Rather than waiting until you have some diagnosis of disease or health problem, make a proactive choice to take advantage of what CS Lewis refers to as the "head and heart."

Make a choice to always pay attention to what your heart and head tell you in combination. Too many of us let our heads overpower our instincts, and we ignore what our hearts are trying to tell us. We need to resist over-thinking and analyzing our lives and let our hearts guide us on many occasions, especially when it comes to relationships and keeping your body healthy (physically, emotionally and spiritually).

In this season of the heart, here's your homework: Work on relationships, exercise, eat healthy, and pursue preventive healthcare—taking advantage of both Western and Eastern medicine. And, for individuals in pain or feeling in less than optimal health (physically, emotionally or spiritually), get to the root of the pain with acupuncture, rather than continuing to take medicines to just address the symptoms instead of the cause.

What's the downside?

Start now as you read this newsletter. Make with a commitment to live in the present as if you only had a day to live, yet be practical enough (yes, using the head to guide the heart) to make choices that will pave the path to the future you envision. What do you want tomorrow, next week, next year... 20 years from now to be like and what do you need to do to make your vision a reality?

With a Carpe Diem attitude and an arsenal of preventive healthcare/wellness choices, life will undoubtedly be brighter, more energized, and happier whether you have one day or 10,000 left on this planet.

As you can see, you have this choice about how you embrace life every day. Make it a good one.

A Wedding Wish of the 5 Elements

Like the tree...

Be rooted and firm in who you are as individuals.
But also like the tree, be not rigid.
Both in the soft breezes and the winds of storm, be willing to bend with each other.

Like the fire...

Be light, lively, and playful with each other.
Allow and relish the flames of passion.
Take and give of each other warmth, especially in times of need.
Be compassionate.
Speak always from the Heart.

Like the earth...

Nourish each other.
Bring sustenance and a sense of abundance to your home and your families.

Like the rare metals of the earth...

Sparkle and shine.
Respect your own worth. Keep your partner's value always in mind.
Take time to commune with your deepest self, your Spirit.
Protect your life together as you would a rare jewel.

Like the waters of a lake...

Be quiet. Be Still. Just Be...together.
In these quieter moments rejuvenate your commitment to each other.
Above all, be reassured by the unending cycles of nature.
It is during the deepest, darkest, coldest times that light, warmth, and love are most near.

Hope Finn Gilbert, a TAI faculty member