

Different Drummer Acupuncture

An Occasional Newsletter



Five Seasons?

Winter with its short days, long nights, and wet cold weather seems to promote feelings of introspection. The ancient Chinese noticed this shift with the seasons and created a system of correspondences pertaining to the world around them. We know these today as the five elements, and they, along with qi and yin/yang, are fundamental to Chinese Medical Theory.

In Five-Element theory, everything in the world is divided into five categories. In this system the year is divided into five seasons; there are also five key elements, five emotions, five pairs of organs, etc. As Glenn Rothfeld puts it in *The Acupuncture Response*, "Linking the seasons of the year, aspects of nature, and the body's organs, the Five-Phase theory reflects the ever-changing and diverse aspects of nature while providing a unified structure to the universe."

I want to point out that in some cases Five-Element theory contradicts other theories in Chinese medicine. The Chinese developed their medical theories over centuries and instead of throwing out the old when new theories came along they layered them on top of the old. In my practice I use some Five-Element theory, but not exclusively.

Putting It All Together

The ancient Chinese observed how winter (water) prepares the plants for spring, thus water promotes wood—the element of spring. Summer follows with its element of fire corresponding to the heat of the summer. Late summer is the added season and this can be thought of as harvest time, hence the element is earth. Deep in the earth metals are formed, so from earth comes metal which is autumn. Metals break down and are an important part of water, thus the cycle begins again.

The Chinese applied this thinking to humans and the rest of nature. We should use the winter to



prepare us for the growth that will naturally occur in the spring. By slowing down now you can build your reserves so when spring comes you'll be ready to burst forth.

The chart on the next page shows that winter corresponds to water and kidneys. The kidneys are the mother organ in Chinese medical theory. They hold deep reservoirs of energy. Just as water is essential to our well-being, kidney energy is critical to good health and vitality. Because they are so critical they are often implicated (directly or indirectly) in most of the ailments that I see in my practice. Common kidney or water energy problems are stubbornness, panic disorders, osteoporosis, memory problems, chronic fatigue, and low back or knee problems. Kidney/water energy naturally declines with age. A good example of this natural decline is when skin gets drier with age. Just as moisturizer can help the skin, acupuncture and herbs can help the kidney/water energy.

Putting It Into Practice

As I mentioned above I don't use Five-Element theory exclusively, actually I only use it a little. But I do find it fascinating at times. I use it to get an overall impression of my patients. Besides asking about food cravings, I notice moods, skin tones, sound and quality of voice, body shape, etc.

One time a patient mentioned that she was craving salty, greasy food as well as sweets. Her pulses and tongue indicated that her spleen (sweet flavor) was weak and also that her kidney energy (salty flavor) was low. I worked on her spleen and kidney energy in the treatment and suggested she satisfy her cravings with sweet and sour Chinese food. By the next day her cravings were gone. I have had more than one patient with some type of lung problem (grief is the emotion for lung) or soreness in the front of the shoulder (a key lung point is located there) and when asked they tell me that someone close to them died recently.

If you are curious about your kidney energy and would like more information on what acupuncture and herbs might do for you, give me a call.

Be sure to review the chart on the next page to find out more about the elements and other corresponding features.

Different Drummer Acupuncture

is located in Raleigh Hills at
7380 SW Gable Park Road, Portland, OR 97225
Phone: 503-291-9116
Email: marcia@ddacupuncture.com
Web: www.ddacupuncture.com



Different Drummer Acupuncture

7380 SW Gable Park Road

Portland, OR 97225

Five-Element Correspondences

Element	Wood	Fire	Earth	Metal	Water
Season	Spring	Summer	Late Summer	Autumn	Winter
Color	Green	Red	Yellow	White	Black
Taste	Sour	Bitter	Sweet	Pungent	Salty
Emotion	Anger	Joy	Worry	Grief	Fear
Organ	Liver/Gallbladder	Heart/Sm. Intest.	Spleen/Stomach	Lungs/Lg. Intest.	Kidneys/ Bladder
Sense Organs	Eyes	Tongue	Mouth	Nose	Ears
Tissues	Sinews	Vessels	Muscles	Skin	Bones
Climate	Wind	Heat	Dampness	Dryness	Cold
Sounds	Shouting	Laughing	Singing	Crying	Groaning

New Web Page

Although still under construction, take a look at my new Web site!

www.ddacupuncture.com

It will have all past newsletters, frequently asked questions, and more! Check it out!



Happy Chinese New Year!

February 1, 2003
Year of the Ram

www.holymtn.com

Relax and Renew

Looking for a way to relieve stress? Restorative Yoga is a great way to unwind. Greg Smoots is having a restorative yoga class on March 2 from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. The cost is \$25. For more information and registration, call 503-255-2597 or email cyc@spiritone.com.

Restorative yoga is a unique and deeply nurturing approach to bodywork that places the body in therapeutic postures, supports it with

blankets, belts, or bolsters, and holds the pose for several minutes. The yoga poses deeply and positively impact the nervous, immune, digestive, and musculoskeletal systems of the body resulting in a deep state of relaxation.

Restorative yoga is especially effective for those in high stress jobs or a stressful life phase. Think of it as a massage for body and mind from the inside out. Restorative yoga is a great way to relax more deeply than you ever have before.



Marcia Mueller
Lic. Acupuncturist

About Different Drummer Acupuncture—From Bandit's Perspective
Marcia considers herself an earth person. She loves chocolate and yellow, and, yes, she does tend to worry. Her Chinese sign is the snake. She insists that I am a water dog. (Funny, she always tells people I'm a cattle dog!) I have hip dysplasia, I'm afraid of fireworks and thunder, and I love bones! My Chinese sign is the boar.

Acupuncture is a midlife career change for Marcia. Previously she worked at Nike. During this time she used acupuncture for a back injury and from personal experience discovered the power in this ancient medicine. She is a graduate of Lewis and Clark College and the Oregon College of Oriental Medicine where she received a Masters degree in Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. Marcia has been in practice since 1998.