

# SPRING 2008 NEWSLETTER

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Hello Friends: Spring is upon us now, a time for "new beginnings". It's time for another newsletter to impart you with the ancient wisdom of Traditional Chinese Medicine into your traditional western existence. We are emerging from winter, a time when we have been inward conserving our energy.



Watch the flowers blooming all around you as you begin to experience a burst of arousal and awareness of things to come in this spring of 2008. Bask in the increasing sunlight that is sparking your yang qi, the vital energy that drives you forward.

Spring is associated with the wood element according to the Law of the Five Elements. The wood element is associated with the liver and gall bladder meridians and the color green. This element signifies growth which you can see manifested in nature in the green appearing everywhere as plants grow and reach toward the sun.

## QIGONG EXERCISE TO SPRING YOU FORWARD

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Take a moment to do the following Qigong exercise to perpetuate your internal growth and balance the qi of your liver and gall bladder meridians.

Stand comfortable with your feet shoulder width apart. Take a slow, rhythmical deep breath in as you reach your right hand up toward the heavens and grasp the Yang energy from above. As you do this movement, feel the stretch in your back, torso and shoulders. Exhale as your hand falls slowly back to your side. Repeat now with your left hand.

Repeat six times and then end this exercise by standing comfortably with your hands resting at your sides and take three slow, gentle and rhythmical deep breaths into your lower dantian located 1 ½ inches below your navel. Remember to maintain an inner smile throughout this exercise as you connect with and ready yourself for new and wonderful things to come your way this spring.

## IT IS DECISION TIME

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According to the ancient principles of Traditional Chinese Medicine, the gall bladder meridian is responsible for decision making so the spring season is an excellent time to hone in on decisions that need to be made. The following is an energetic exercise that you can do to help you make your decisions easier.

- ❖ **Step One:** Sit with a pen and paper and write down three decisions that you have been waiting to make, but keep pushing away.
- ❖ **Step Two:** Write down three reasons of why you think making that decision will be beneficial to you.
- ❖ **Step Three:** Write down three reasons why you think making that decision would be a wrong thing for you to do.
- ❖ **Step Four:** Take three deep breaths and place your hands (palms upward) on your lap. Allow your left hand to represent "yes" and your right hand to represent "no".
- ❖ **Step Five:** Concentrate on your left hand and tune into the feelings of whether or not "yes" is the right choice for you to have about this decision. Notice how connected you feel while you do this.

- ❖ **Step Six:** Concentrate on your right hand and tune into the feelings of whether or not "no" is the right choice for you to have about this decision. Notice how connected you feel while you do this.
- ❖ **Step Seven:** Then sit quietly for a moment to notice your thoughts and feelings about this decision. Which hand felt like it was connected with the way you feel. Make your final decision based on this combined with the written thoughts for each. Remember a good rule of thumb is that "when in doubt leave it out."

## CLEANSING FOR CLARITY

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The Liver organ can benefit during this time with a spring cleaning. You can liken this to the spring cleaning you do for your house – a ritual that is essential for your body as well.

This can be easily accomplished with dandelion root which has been used for centuries to detoxify the liver. Dandelion root can be ingested as a tea, pill or capsule. Dandelion greens can be eaten alone or in combination with other salad greens or even sautéed with vegetables.

In addition to the blood purifying qualities of dandelion, it has also been traditionally revered as a safe diuretic because it is rich in potassium and many other vitamins and minerals such as iron, manganese, phosphorous, protein, vitamin A, cobalt, magnesium, niacin, riboflavin, and vitamin C.

### ***How to make roasted dandelion root tea***

Roasted dandelion root tea not only cleanses the liver but is quite tasty and satisfying. It is often recommended as a coffee substitute as it tastes surprisingly similar to coffee. You can find it in the herbal or tea section at your local health food store.

Simply take place a small handful of the tea into three cups of water and bring to a boil. Then simmer for about twenty minutes, strain off the liquid and drink one cup twice a day for one week. You can drink it as is, or add unsweetened soy creamer or skim milk and add some agave syrup for sweetener if you choose. Agave syrup is an excellent and delicious sweetener that doesn't raise your blood sugar too much.

### ***How to make a dandelion salad***

Dandelion greens make a great salad – a true spring tonic that will enliven and nourish both you and your family. You can find dandelion greens in the produce section of specialty food stores or just go outside and pick from the lush growth of dandelion greens popping up everywhere on your lawn. The



leaves are the tastiest when they are young and tender. If you wait too long to pick them they may taste too bitter. Also avoid dandelion greens in areas where dogs may have been or where pesticides may have been sprayed. Gather them from areas that are at least six feet from roadways to avoid heavy metal contamination.

After gathering or purchasing them, thoroughly wash and dry the greens before adding to your salad.

### **INGREDIENTS:**

4 cups dandelion greens  
 4 cups romaine lettuce leaves  
 1/2 red onion sliced thin  
 2 cups tomatoes, chopped

1/2 cup pignolia nuts  
 1/2 cup chopped chives  
 1/2 tsp. dried basil  
 1/4 cup chopped chives

### DRESSING:

1/3 cup olive oil  
1/4 cup balsamic  
1 tsp. tamari

1 tsp. lime juice  
pepper to taste

Combine all ingredients and whisk thoroughly to blend.

### DIRECTIONS:

In a medium bowl, toss together dandelion and romaine greens, red onion, and tomatoes. Season with basil, add in the nuts, drizzle with the dressing, toss lightly, sprinkle with the chives and serve.

## RELEASE STUCK ANGER ONCE A FOR ALL

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Anger is the emotion of the liver and gall bladder meridians, one that oftentimes makes us feel stuck and unable to move in our life. You can release this stuck anger qi and thus feel a new sense of calm, flow, creativity and well-being.

The purpose of an acupuncture session during the spring season is done to balance and open up the free flow of qi within the liver meridian. Acupuncture opens up the free flow of energy to help you get in touch with your inner "relaxed wanderer".



An excellent treatment with this purpose is called "Four Gates" which includes the acupuncture points Liver 3 (Taichong) and Large Intestine 4 (Hegu).

The point Liver 3 is the "earth point" of the liver meridian and when needed or pressed it functions to pacify the liver, opens the channels, and regulates the blood. Large Intestine 4

which is also known as "the great eliminator" is the "source point" of the large intestine meridian which means it provides a great source of Qi to your body. When needed or pressed it suppresses pain, clears the channels, and increases resistance.



When these "*Four Gates*" points are done together they move the qi and blood in the body to clear stagnation and alleviate pain - a perfect addition to your spring cleaning protocol.

## DON'T SWEAT THE SMALL STUFF

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No matter how much stress you might have it is important to shake it off and release it - please don't sweat the small stuff - keep the "big picture", take a few deep breaths, and bring yourself to a moment of appreciation for life and living.

The simple truths are all around you – so be thankful for them.

Lots of people are sharing the news about a book called "The Secret" that re-affirms the importance of positive thinking. You can make things happen in your life simply through willing them through positive affirmations. When you release pent up, stuck anger and let the qi flow freely throughout your liver and gall bladder meridians you will open up that space for positive, loving thoughts. You will feel better with this free flowing energy - ready to tackle your day!