

The Yin and Yang of It

Though acupuncture, or more broadly speaking, Chinese Medicine has been a complete health care paradigm for anywhere from 3,000 to 5,000 years, to the modern day person seeking a solution to their health problem it may seem to odd to think of it in the scope solutions they are seeking.

Let's be honest. Their first consideration may be the concern over the very concept of sticking needles in the body. The second may be that it is too foreign and too dated to be applicable to their problems in today's world. When you look at old issues of health magazines and look at all the so-called revolutions in health that we've gone through for the last forty years or so, most of them are fads and no more proven to have the answers to real health now than they were before.

The activities of man have changed greatly over this time, but the basic truths about the ways of sickness and health have basically remained the same.

The Body Has a Head

Outside of the specter of an accident or outward injury, no dysfunction of the body is simply all physical or all emotional. Every sickness, though it finds its roots in either the *psyche* or *soma*, will not remain there, but be shared by every aspect of the mind-body. Think of it, heartache, or frustration may drive us to over eating or not eating at all. Our reactions to stress may make our muscles tense and eventually cause us to suffer physically. On the other hand, physical strain may put us in a state of pain or unrest, causing us to lose sleep perhaps or be irritable. In either case when this incipient cause is left ignored, additional things come undone. This is called an imbalance.

Imagine a line drawn down the center of you, perfectly balanced, symmetrical and functional body-mind. Then start putting a lot of stress tension and weight on one side of the body. The body quickly loses symmetry and compensates, strategically starting to add counterweight and tension to places on the other side. This becomes an odd bit of symmetry and in fact as this attempt to gain balance continues, it drives us further away from center. Clearly, you can see and understand how this concept of centeredness is one of both mind and body and the two are so intertwined that to try and treat one, either the mind or the body without regard to the whole self, rarely does anything but lead us to treat only the outward symptom, the headache, or the back spasm, repeatedly without ever escaping the consequences entirely.

The Excess and the Deficient

In the west we are conditioned to believe that mind-body dysfunction is a *new* addition. One that wasn't there before, so consequentially..., *new*! It is a condition that we don't want, so we go to the doctor or health practitioner to take it away. Sometimes, however, we find that it is not new, but for awhile it was small and we didn't really notice it until just recently becoming so big that we want it out of our lives. If we were to take this same analogy and let's just say that it is a small crack down the wall in the center of our house, and for awhile easily ignored. When it becomes bigger and really unsightly if not downright worrisome, we may call a professional in. The first professional may just tell you that you can fill it with putty and paint it and you won't notice it at all. Then he'll leave you with a lifetime supply of putty and paint so that you can continue the therapy. The second may let you know that it is your house splitting in two and put

a board across it to hold the two sides together. As it continues to split he will come back weekly to replace the boards. The third professional may in fact clearly tell you that the foundation is not solid and must be treated at the foundation to keep the house from splitting, and that the crack in the wall is not the problem itself but a symptom of the deeper problem.

I find that most patients want you to patch the walls constantly but never want you to shore up the foundation. Everyone wants to see their health problems as new and no deeper than the symptom that is presented. Too much of our health system is guided to this approach, but eventually that house will fall apart.