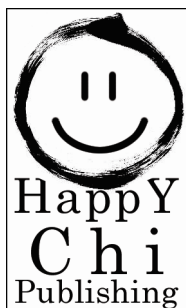


SMILING FROM THE HEART

Qigong Healing Techniques for Emotional Well-Being

MARCUS SANTER



Second Edition 2013

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vip@smilingfromtheheart.com

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Foreword

When Marcus Santer came onto our radar here at the Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi (IIQTC), the earliest impression was that he was, like many, opening a wider gate to the arts of personal cultivation and energy awareness – Qigong. Here and there his message came through – always fair-minded, accessible, informed.

At the IIQTC we are sincerely devoted to supporting the ever widening global community of Qigong practitioners in a “Way” where specific schools, methods and allegiances are less prominent and an open system of sharing, learning based on honoured principles and world wide citizen empowerment are of greater prominence.

For better or worse and largely due to influences from several rather domination oriented, highly imperialistic eras in China, Qigong (Chi Kung) and associated arts (Tai Chi and Kung Fu) often have a lingering aura of exclusivity. While this is honourable in a sentimental way, the much more powerful and profound “Way” is inclusivity – a kind of democratization of the Qi and of Qigong.

Marcus Santer, it is apparent, is a genuine foster person of the emergent inclusive Qigong “Way”. Impressive! At the IIQTC we call this “integral” – drawing from bedrock principles, embracing the many streams of knowledge and practice and based in archetypal (widely agreed upon and ancient) principles.

In the remarkable Tang Dynasty there was such openness to the many schools and streams, it was declared then – “May a thousand flowers bloom.” In our own time, there is such a blossoming and Marcus Santer’s open sharing of knowledge, wisdom and practice is one of those flowers blooming.

May many be empowered!

Dr Roger Jahnke, OMD

Institute of Integral Qigong and Tai Chi, Santa Barbara, California

<http://IIQTC.org>

About the Author

Marcus Santer began his Qigong training in 2000, when he discovered 4th Generation Shaolin Grandmaster Wong Kiew Kit. He knew immediately that he had to learn from him. He began teaching Qigong in the Shaolin Wahnam Institute (SWI) in 2003 and went on to become the Chief instructor in the UK. He published his first book '*Shaolin Chi Kung – 18 Exercises to help you live a longer healthier and happier life*' in 2008. It is still the most comprehensive English language resource available on the famous *Shaolin 18 Lohan Hands Qigong set*.



In 2009 Marcus left the SWI to explore ways of using Internet technology to make learning Qigong more accessible to a wider audience.

Marcus's aim has always been to help people take ownership and control of their health, happiness and inner peace. He believes that Qigong is the best tool available for the task. His mission is to make Qigong as well known and as popular as Yoga and Tai Chi.

In 2009 he founded Qigong15, an online project dedicated to spreading quality information on all aspects of Qigong. He also created the Qigong365 project, an online resource of daily Qigong posts to inspire and motivate Qigong practitioners of all schools and styles. He offers a free 21-day online Qigong course as well as his 22-week *Qigong Secrets Home Study Course* which is the most comprehensive home study course on Qigong available today.

Acknowledgements

This is always my favourite part of a book to write. My name may be on the front of it, but the only reason you're holding it in your hands now is because of an army of friends, family and professionals that have helped to keep me on course. This is my chance to thank them.

To my wonderful wife Clare who kept me inspired and made sure I was fed and watered during marathon writing sessions. To Jordan for helping me to stay sane when I thought this project would never reach a conclusion, your friendship means the world to me. To Michael who not only did all the photographs for this book, but who also provided much needed feedback, thank you for your friendship.

To Dr. Roger Jahnke, Al Simon, Eric Thomas, Lisa Spillane, Geoff Thompson, Dr. Rick Hanson, Grayson Wood, and Matthew Wood – thank you for your feedback, peer review and editorial contribution of the material in this book. Your input has helped me to create a truly valuable resource that I know will be of benefit to many people.

And finally to all the people on my Facebook page who contributed ideas, gave vital feedback during the early stages of the manuscript and helped me to shape the contents of this book. A special word of thanks to Rodrigo Marina for suggesting the title for this book.

I owe you all my deepest gratitude.

Marcus – 20th March 2012

Disclaimer

This book is designed to provide information about the subject matter covered.

Every effort has been made to make this book as complete and accurate as possible. However, there may be mistakes both typographical and in content. Therefore, this text should be used only as a general guide and not as the ultimate source on Shaolin Qigong.

Websites and telephone numbers listed in this book were correct at the time of printing.

The purpose of this manual is to educate. The author and the publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused or alleged to be caused directly or indirectly by the information contained in this book.

This book, and any associated website, is provided for information only. It should not be treated as a substitute for medical, legal or professional advice. All information is provided in good faith and is researched to the best of my knowledge.

If you do not wish to be bound by the above, you may return this book to the publisher for a full refund.

Part 1

Introduction

Overview: In this part you will discover why I have written this book, why it is needed and understand how to use it to gain the greatest benefits in your life. If you are expecting a scholarly tome on Qigong, stop reading now. The guiding principle I have used whilst writing this book is that it is filled with tools you can use quickly to awaken, enhance and improve your body's natural ability to heal. In today's increasingly busy and demanding world, you need to be able to do more, do it better and do it faster - without burning out. Qigong is an excellent tool for surviving and thriving in the 21st Century.

“When our hearts are well regulated, our senses are well regulated too. When our hearts are at rest our sense organs are at rest too. What regulates them is the heart. What sets them at rest is the heart.”

Extract from “The Heart” by Claude Larre

Introduction

My name is Marcus Santer and in the next few minutes you will discover why the tools in this book are essential to your continued good health, happiness and peace of mind. Or if you are currently experiencing some form of health, happiness or peace of mind challenge you will discover why the tools I will share with you in the remainder of this book will help you back to where you want to be.

You will discover how to:

1. Increase your resistance to stress, how to thrive in spite of what is going on in the world around you.
2. Overcome mild to moderate depression.
3. Free yourself from uncontrollable worry, fear and anxiety.
4. Improve your sense of self worth and develop bulletproof self-esteem.

Life in the 21st Century is characterised by a lack of proper rest, too much stress and poor diet. You're expected to do more with less, to do it quicker and to do it better. The result is that your health, happiness and peace of mind are neglected. This is clearly demonstrated by the unprecedented rise in the number of people experiencing unmanageable stress, mild to moderate depression and uncontrollable worry, fear and anxiety. Here are the statistics for the US:

1. 55 million US adults experience an anxiety disorder in a 12 months period. [1]
2. 29 million have mood disorders.
3. 10.7 million suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
4. In 2007, over 34,000 Americans committed suicide.
5. A recent study showed that chronic pain (*often related to stress*) is experienced by 100 million Americans, at a cost of around \$600 billion a year in medical treatments and lost productivity – according to a report from the Institute of Medicine June 2011.

6. \$300 billion or \$7,500 per employee is spent annually in the U.S. on stress-related compensation claims, reduced productivity, absenteeism, health insurance costs, direct medical expenses (nearly 50% higher for workers who report stress), and employee turnover. (Sources: *Centre for Disease Control and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.*)
7. The *European Agency for Safety and Health at Work* reported that over half of the 550 million working days lost annually in the U.S. from absenteeism are stress related.

As I write this book in 2012 the current global recession certainly isn't doing anything to help, but these figures seem out of proportion to the events in progress. Despite the wonderful benefits we have access to like clean water, sanitation, easy access to food, advances in technology and medical science too many of us find ourselves "living lives of quiet desperation" as Henry David Thoreau once put it.

It doesn't have to be like this

In the West we make a fundamental error in that we tend to focus *only* on our physical immune system. As you read through this book you will understand why unmanageable stress, depression, anxiety, worry, fear and low self-esteem are all symptoms of neglecting what I refer to as your '*Emotional Immune System*' (EIS). Your EIS is vital to your ability to live a long, healthy and happy life, in spite of what the economy might be doing. Yet many of us do not have the tools available to keep it strong and resistant to the stresses and strains of modern life. As you will discover from your own direct experience, Qigong is one of the most powerful tools for working directly with your EIS to strengthen it and to keep it strong.

This book is packed full of simple, powerful Qigong exercises and healing techniques that you can use almost immediately. There is no fluff and no mystical mumbo-jumbo to confuse you; just a large toolbox full of powerful tools you can use to enhance your EIS.

Knowing what to Do vs Doing what you Know

Before you start working with the tools in this book I need you to make an important distinction. If you read this book from cover to cover you will know *what* to do to enhance your EIS, you will know how to raise your self-esteem and how to increase your resistance to stress. But knowing what to do is not enough. *You must do what you know* if you are to stress proof your life, overcome mild to moderate depression, remove unmanageable worry, fear and anxiety or develop bullet proof self-esteem. This is not a theory book, it is a workbook, and it is a toolbox crammed full with powerful, valuable tools. But you must apply what you will learn in this book if you want to gain all of its benefits.

Many years ago, a few months after I had first learned authentic Qigong, I had a panic attack. At the time I didn't know I was having a panic attack. I thought I was having a heart attack because of the numbness in my left arm. Yet, in the midst of this terrifying experience, I was able to get up, walk around the room and start practicing Qigong. Within seconds of practicing I was amazed to discover how quickly the numbness in my limbs and my panic went away. But I was only able to do this because of the few months of regular practice I had under my belt. I had been doing what I knew; I had been using the tools I had in my possession. If I hadn't I would not have been able to apply them. My wish for you is that you will apply the material in this book to the best of your ability. Then not only will you know what to do, but you'll be one of the few who do what they know.

How this Book Works

“A small change in one area of your life can have big results.” - ‘Coach’ John Wooden

As I have just mentioned this is not a theory book. Think of it as a toolbox containing many powerful tools. My motivation is not to entertain you or keep you distracted for a few hours. I want you to *use* this book. I want to see the spine cracked and creased. I want to see pages with folded over corners, text underlined or highlighted and notes scribbled in the margins.

In order to get the most from this book, I recommend that you read through it completely first, feeling free to skim any material that you don't find of interest or which obviously doesn't apply to you. But do still give it a look. Then re-read Part 6 - 'Putting Your MAP Together' – and create your own personalised Massive Action Plan. It's important that you follow this instruction. Each part builds on the one before it. Trust me, I've spent many hours working out how best to deliver the material in this book so that it is easily accessible for you and avoids information overload.

In this book you'll find many '*suggestions*' for tools you can use to strengthen your EIS. Don't attempt to use all of them! If you do, then there's a good chance you'll quickly feel overwhelmed. In my experience overwhelm leads to giving up. Even if you only use one tool from this book to benefit your EIS, but you use it every day, that's an improvement. Gradually you can add to or subtract from the tools you use as you develop and fine-tune your own daily practice.

Learning Qigong exercises and healing techniques from a book can be challenging. Mapping the written instructions over to the photographs, working out how to get from one photograph to the next can make something as simple as raising your arms above your head seem complex. That's why I use the propriety *Transition Shot Technology* (TST) in this book to make life easier. But to make your life even easier, where appropriate I have included links to short videos you can watch and use together with the instructions in this book to pick them up faster and gain the benefits more quickly. If a picture paints 1,000 words, then a video playing at 25 frames/pictures per second paints 25,000 per second. No wonder videos are easier to learn from than books!

Requirements for Success with this Book

There are two requirements for success with this book:

1. You **MUST** *want to get well* if you are ill, or want to prevent illness by strengthening your Emotional Immune System.
2. You **MUST** be prepared to *take action*.

If you can meet these two vital requirements, you are ready to proceed and gain the benefits from the material in the rest of this book. I know this material works because I used Qigong (with the assistance and approval of my doctor) to overcome my own depression and get off anti-depressants. Furthermore, I was able to do it using only a handful of the tools I'll be sharing with you in this book.

Since then I have been able to use these tools to significantly increase my resistance to stress and have more sunny days than rainy ones. I have also had the great honour of sharing share these tools with my students to help them to live happier lives, experience greater contentment and peace of mind. I absolutely guarantee that if you will apply the tools in this book to your life, you too will live a happier, healthier and longer life in spite of what is happening in the world around you.

Finally, as your trusted advisor, I must point out that the aim of this book is not to show you how to be happy all the time. This is neither possible nor healthy and trying to be happy all the time is a great cause of stress in itself. Healthy people realise that life has its ups and downs. Or, as Henry Wadsworth Longfellow put it:

“Into every life a little rain must fall.”

This book will show you how to increase your resistance to the stresses and strains of life in the 21st Century. This book will show you how to be more content, how to have more peace of mind, how to flow with the times of your life and how to keep moving forward when it's raining. Think of this book as your giant golfing umbrella that will protect you when it is raining.

Start now. I wish you well.

[1] These figures are calculated using percentages attained from the US National Institute of Mental Health and applying them to the 307, 006, 550 population of the USA – source 2009 US Census Bureau.

Summary

In this part we discovered:

1. Life for many of us in the 21st Century is characterised by a lack of proper rest, too much stress and poor diet. We also have the handicap of living in a culture that places little to no value on emotional, mental and spiritual health.
2. In the west we tend only to focus on our physical health. The term Emotional Immune System (EIS) is used in this book to mean our self-esteem and resistance to stress. By strengthening our EIS we can overcome mild to moderate depression, anxiety, worry and fear.
3. There is a huge difference between knowing what to do and doing what you know. We make a commitment to being one of the few who do.
4. This book is a workbook, not a theory book. Merely reading it will not help us to strengthen our EIS. Only by using the tools in it will we gain the benefits of living a longer, healthier and happier life.
5. To gain the most from this book it is important to read through it completely first, if necessary skimming those areas that don't seem to apply to you and then starting again with Part 6: 'Putting Your MAP Together'.
6. There are two requirements for success with these tools:
 - 1) You must want to get well if you're ill or prevent future illness by strengthening your EIS.
 - 2) You must be prepared to take action and put in the effort.

Now it's time to look at the theory that underpins Qigong...

Part 2

Qigong and the Heart: The Theory of how Qigong Prevents and Overcomes Emotional Problems

Overview: In this part you're going to discover why Qigong is such a simple, direct and powerful tool for overcoming and preventing emotional illnesses. You're also going to understand how Qigong works and why this is a book on the Heart.

“The idea of biological energy is developed to a greater or lesser degree in different therapies, but probably finds its most sophisticated expression in Traditional Chinese Medicine where the energy is termed chi. It comes as something of a surprise to realise that conventional medicine is the only medical system ever known to man which has no concept of biological energy.”

Dr J Kenyon MD MB ChB.

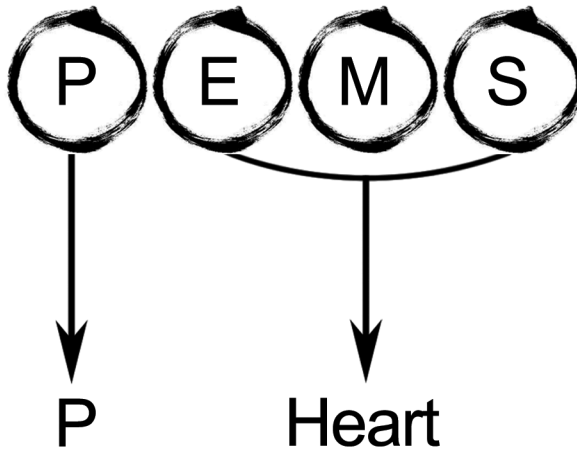
Founder President of the British Society of Integrated
Medicine (BSIM). Founder Chairman of the British Medical
Acupuncture Society.

A Holistic Approach to Health

In the West we view holistic health as being composed of four areas:

1. Physical health.
2. Emotional health.
3. Mental health.
4. Spiritual health.

From a Qigong perspective we have only two areas: the Physical and the Heart. As you can clearly see in the diagram below the emotional, mental and spiritual health aspects map over to the Heart in Qigong.



The Western view of holistic health considers four aspects: Physical, Emotional, Mental and Spiritual. Qigong considers only two: the Physical and the Heart. Notice how the Emotional, Mental and Spiritual aspects correspond to the Heart.

As you can see, the Western models of health treat the emotional, mental and spiritual aspects of our existence separately.

But in the Qigong model, these three are seen as interconnected. As such we use the term ‘Heart’ to refer to the psycho-spiritual aspects of our existence. Now, as a true holistic system, Qigong doesn’t really treat the Physical and the Heart separately either. We see the Physical and the Heart as interconnected too. That’s why even when we are focusing on emotional well-being Qigong includes physical practices and exercise. But since our focus is on emotional well-being, we will focus more on the Heart aspects in this book. After all there is a Chinese saying that:

“Problems of the Heart are best overcome by the Heart.”

Or in other words, emotional, mental and spiritual problems are best overcome by using qigong exercises and healing techniques that work directly on the Heart system. Doing so will help you to quickly overcome mild to moderate depression, anxiety, fear, worry and raise your resistance to stress and help increase self-esteem. In essence working with the Heart helps you to strengthen your Emotional Immune System (EIS).

Before you look at what to do to enhance your EIS, you need to understand how Qigong works and why it is such a valuable and effective tool. In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) the Heart is known as the Emperor, because it is the supreme controller of all the systems of the body. When it is ‘open’ it benefits ALL the emotions, which means it is vital for a healthy EIS. TCM views health very differently to Western Medicine (WM). In TCM organs are ‘functional’ and this function is usually much broader than the term used in Western medicine. e.g. The Heart:

The Western Medicine view of the Heart:

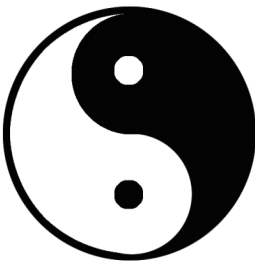
- The heart is a four-chambered muscle that pumps oxygenated blood throughout the body and deoxygenated blood to the lungs.

The Traditional Chinese Medicine view of the Heart:

- Governs the balance between the formation of blood and Qi (vital energy).
- Supplies the power that controls the movement of blood in the vessels.
- Houses the Shen (Mind/Spirit), controls the way the brain thinks and feels.
- Opens into the tongue - the Heart is closely linked with the sense of taste.
- Sleep is always related to the functioning of the Heart. If you dream a lot or have frequent nightmares then your heart energy is out of balance.

As you can clearly see, the TCM view of the Heart is very different to that of the WM view. In TCM the functions that an organ performs are more important than what it is. Before we look at some core principles for working with the Heart, we need to understand three very important concepts of TCM.

1. Yin/Yang and Health



Yin Yang Theory - I'm sure you recognise this symbol and have heard of Yin and Yang. But do you know what it really means? You cannot go to the shops and buy a bag of Yin or a Kilogram of Yang. They are just symbols and it is important to know right from the start that nothing is completely Yin or completely Yang.

Yin Yang theory is a theory of relativity. At its simplest something is either Yin or Yang *when in relationship to something else*. For example in a relationship between a boy and a girl, the boy is more Yang (male) compared with the girl who more is Yin (female). But if we take a different relationship say comparing the physical strength between a boy and a man the boy is more Yin compared with the man who is more Yang. Yin and Yang can be used in all relationships. For example: front/back, night/day, slow/fast, chronic (long term)/acute (short term) etc. So remember: *Something is only Yin or Yang in relationship to something else*.

In TCM, we use Yin and Yang to describe contrasting characteristics that are relative to each other. When we look at health we use Yin to represent our body's natural ability to respond to our constantly changing environment and Yang to represent all the factors that may cause illness. From the TCM viewpoint there is only one illness and that illness is Yin/Yang disharmony caused by blockages to harmonious energy flow through the meridians of the body. But what does this statement mean? To make sense of it we need to look at two more important TCM principles.

2. Qi - Your Vital Energy

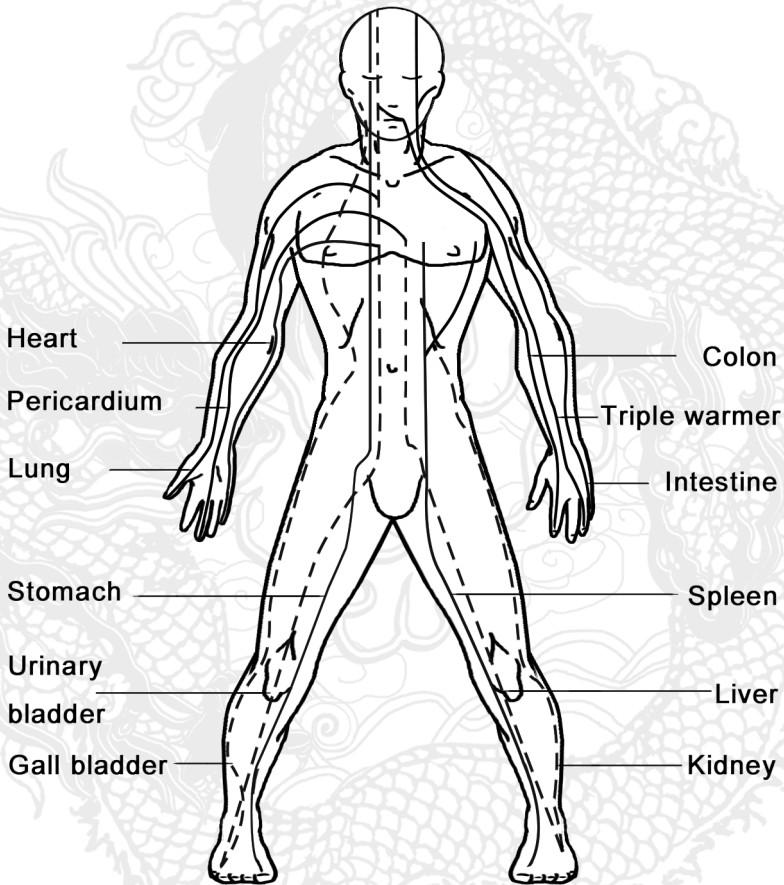
Qi/Chi/Ki or Vital Energy is the force that enables all the functions of your body to work and for you to be alive. There are four things that every Qigong student should know about Qi:

1. **Qi is energy.**
2. **Qi has material reality** – The world that we experience through the five human senses is just a tiny fraction of the world that is currently known. Even though Qi is invisible to the human eye it is real.
3. **Qi is the basic building block of the universe** – If you had the most powerful microscope (which doesn't currently exist) and you kept looking for smaller and smaller building blocks, you would eventually come to Qi.
4. **Qi fills the whole universe** – If the basic building block of the universe is Qi then it follows that Qi fills the whole universe. This is true regardless of whether through our human senses we label it an apple or a car.

The Qi in your body flows through energy streams. These energy streams are called meridians and they are the third TCM principle you need to be familiar with.

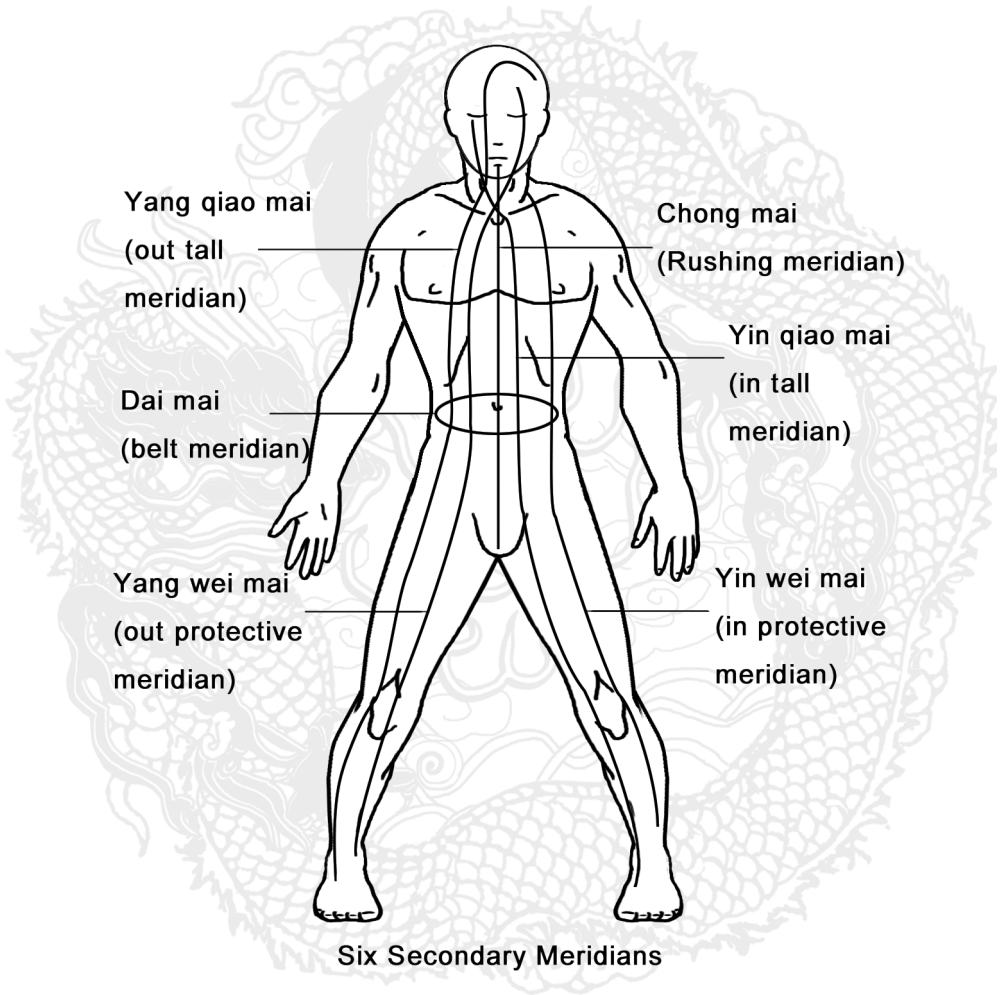
3. Meridians: **The Energy Streams and Reservoirs Within Your Body**

There are 12 pairs of primary meridians and eight secondary or 'wondrous' meridians. The primary meridians flow through the internal organs of the body, from which they get their name.



The Twelve Primary Meridians

Whilst the primary meridians are likened to streams the secondary meridians are likened to lakes or reservoirs. They are like energy grids and they help to protect the body.



The problem is that for most of us, life in the 21st century is characterised by lack of proper resting, too much unhealthy stressing, poor dieting and burning the candle at both ends.

This results in blockages to harmonious energy flow through the primary meridians and a depletion of the back up of energy reserves in the secondary meridians.

The forte of Qigong is two fold. First it removes blockages and then it increases the flow of energy. There are three stages of Qi flow that we work through as we continue our practice of Qigong:

1. When your Qi flows harmoniously through the meridians you will have good health.
2. When your Qi flows harmoniously and vigorously you will have good health and vitality.
3. When your Qi flows harmoniously, vigorously and abundantly you will have good health, vitality and longevity.

In a Nutshell: Yin/Yang Theory, Qi and the Meridians

Consider the following conditions: Asthma, diabetes, heart disease, ulcer, indigestion, insomnia, depression, phobia, anxiety, addiction, aggression, back pain, eating disorder, obesity, migraine, chronic fatigue, kidney stones, arthritis, acne, eczema, allergy, fibromyalgia, bowel problems, sexual problems and so on.

Regardless of how we label the symptoms, the root cause from the TCM perspective is always Yin Yang disharmony. Or in other words our body's natural ability to respond correctly to our ever-changing environment has failed. As a result we have blockages to the harmonious flow of energy through the meridians of the body.

In TCM the methods for removing blockages to harmonious energy flow are many and the diagnosis and application of a cure (that is restoring Yin/Yang harmony) can be very complex. But we are lucky. We are going to practice Qigong. Through the practice of Qigong we benefit from TCM, but we have a much simpler time of applying an effective cure for removing blockages from the meridians and hence restoring harmonious energy flow.

Qigong allows us to generate healing energy flow. Your energy or Qi will always flow to those areas of low energy and work on removing blockages. If you let it, Qi will do the healing for you. All you have to do is let go.

We'll look at this in more detail in the next part of this book – Core Principles. But for now let's focus on answering the following question:

What makes Qigong so effective?

The reason why Qigong is much more effective is because it makes a distinction between 'empty illness' and 'solid illness'. Let's look at this in more detail:

- **Empty illness** – The cause or the symptoms of the illness are not clear and we cannot define the site of the illness. Empty illnesses can sometimes be worse than solid illnesses because we don't know the enemy that we're fighting.
- **Solid illness** – The cause and/or symptoms are clear and we can define the site of the illness.

Don't take the terms empty and solid literally, they're just the terms used in TCM. Western medicine is brilliant for treating 'solid illnesses' e.g. contagious diseases, bacterial attack, physical cuts and breaks etc. These are all things where we can clearly define the cause of and the site of the illness.

But unfortunately, when either the cause or the site of the illness and/or the symptoms are not obvious western medicine can have a hard time providing an effective treatment. For example, where is the site of anxiety? What is the cause of depression?

Qigong is much better for treating empty illnesses like depression, anxiety, worry, fear, and for increasing resistance to stress. This is due to the way Qigong works which can be explained through these five principles for working effectively with empty illnesses:

- 1. Unity of Soma and Psyche** - *Soma* is the physical body and *Psyche* is the mind. It's only in the last few decades that western medicine has started to agree with what many other medical systems have known for millennia and that is that there is a mind-body connection. Chinese masters teach us that the body is alive because of the mind and that the mind operates through the body.
Some say there is no such thing as a mind-body connection. To them I say: "lemons!" Imagine a ripe, juicy, tangy, lemon. You cut it in half and then squeeze the juice over your tongue. Can you visualise how refreshing and zesty that would taste? Is your mouth watering yet?
- 2. Harmony of Jing, Qi and Shen** – *Jing* is the physical body, *Qi* is vital energy and *Shen* is the Mind/Spirit/Consciousness. These are also known as the three treasures of a human. *Jing*, *Qi* and *Shen* are all interconnected. If your Shen is weak then it will have an adverse affect on your vital energy and your physical body.
- 3. The Heart is the Seat of the Mind and Emotion** – As I'm sure you know by now, the *Heart* I'm referring to here is not just the 4 chambered muscle in your chest. It's the TCM view, the *Heart System* that this principle refers to.
- 4. Onus of Maintaining Health is on Nurturing Mind** – i.e. The Heart, Shen, Spirit, and Consciousness. As a Qigong healer this is one of the main points I like to focus on. Activities such as *mindfulness*, *mediation*, *Qigong*, *Shaolin Kung Fu* and *Taijiquan* are excellent examples of ways you can deliberately nurture your Shen/Mind. Therefore they are also great ways of working with 'empty' illnesses.
- 5. The Importance of Virtue in Mind Cultivation** – If someone is virtuous then the mind is not polluted by 'wrong' thought. If we look at the mind-body connection we can see that if the mind is full of unwholesome thoughts then this will have an adverse affect on the health of the body.

Before we continue I'd like to make two points very clear:

1. Qigong is Spiritual not Religious

Whilst Qigong does come in Buddhist, Taoist, Confucianist and other strong 'flavours', you do not need to practice or believe in Buddhist, Taoist or Confucianist principles. Qigong can be practiced by anyone of any religious faith and background. It can also be practiced by anyone without a religious background and the benefits will be the same. Qigong is non-religious, but it does give spiritual benefits. By spiritual I mean being in touch with the deepest part of you, who you really are. Nurturing the spirit is so very important to our health and happiness and yet it has become the most neglected aspect of what generally passes for health in the West today.

2. TCM is Not Better than WM (and vice versa)

I always listen with amusement when I hear TCM and alternative health practitioners explaining how TCM is 'better' than WM. By the same token I'm disappointed when WM rejects TCM as nonsense. For me it has never been a question of which is best (though I'm frequently asked), it's a question of which approach best addresses a person's immediate needs? If I was in a car crash, I'd want the paramedics at the scene as soon as possible and I'd want to be taken to casualty to benefit from the finest medical care that WM has to offer. However, if I'm suffering from depression, stress, anxiety, worry, fear then you can keep your pills; I'd be practicing Qigong instead. I'm a great believer in benefiting from the best of both worlds and I suggest that you do too.

Summary

In this part we learned:

1. **PEMS** - Holistic health in the West is viewed as being physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually healthy. In Qigong holistic health is viewed as being physically healthy and having an open Heart. This book's focus is to work on the Heart using Qigong, Qigong healing techniques and other non-Qigong tools. If you want to focus on Qigong for physical health you will be better served by reading my book "*Shaolin Chi Kung*".
2. **More than One** - Western Medicine (WM) is only one of many ways of viewing health. Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) is another and Qigong theory is firmly founded on TCM principles.
3. **The Only Illness** - In Qigong the only illness is Yin/Yang disharmony which is caused by blockages to harmonious energy flow through the body's meridians. If we can restore harmonious energy flow then we can restore health in all its aspects.
4. **Empty vs Solid** - Qigong is excellent for overcoming 'empty' illnesses where the cause, site or symptoms are not clear. Western Medicine is excellent for overcoming 'solid' illnesses.
5. **5 Basic Principles** - There are five basic principles for overcoming Empty Illnesses:
 - i) Unity of Soma and Psyche, ii) Harmony of Jing, Qi and Shen, iii) The Heart is the seat of the mind and emotion, iv) To maintain health nurture the mind, v) Virtue is important when cultivating the mind.
6. **Spirit** - Qigong is a spiritual practice, not a religious one.
7. **Which is best?** It's not a question of whether TCM is better than WM or vice versa. It's always a question of which approach best meets your immediate needs.

Now we know how important the Heart is for our Emotional Immune System, let's focus in on three core principles for working with it.

Part 3

Core Principles

Overview: In this part we look at three principles for working with the Heart. I'll also explain why I have chosen the Qigong exercises and techniques that are in this book.

“All healing begins with the Heart.”

Chinese saying

Introduction

There are a number of powerful principles a Qigong healer can use for working with the heart and in this part we're going to look at three. Why three? I have chosen these three because they're the simplest and you'll be able to use them straight away. These are the three principles we'll be exploring in more depth:

1. **Opening the Heart** - If you want to be happy you must Open Your Heart.
2. **Calming the Mind** - If you want to be happy you must Calm Your Mind.
3. **Generating Energy Flow** - If you want to be happy you must be able to Generate Qi Flow.

Recall, from the TCM viewpoint stress, depression, anxiety, worry, fear - regardless of what label we put on the symptoms - the root cause is Yin Yang disharmony. Yin Yang disharmony is caused by blockages that prevent harmonious energy flow through the meridians (energy streams) of the body.

The Qigong exercises presented later are designed to help you get rid of these blockages. Whether, physical, emotional, mental or spiritual - it doesn't matter. You don't need to know where the blockages are. You just need to be able to generate energy flow and let your energy/Qi do the work for you.

In order to gain maximum leverage from Qigong we can also benefit by specifically targeting the Heart System, as this has a major influence on ALL the systems of the body. That is why it is known as the Emperor, because it is the supreme controller. When the Heart System is functioning well we have a strong sense of serenity, calmness and peace of mind. In TCM, the Heart houses and controls the Shen. The term Shen describes the way the 'brain/mind' thinks and feels. Shen is responsible for the following functions:

- **Spirit** – That which makes you uniquely you.
- **Consciousness** – Awareness of the world around you.
- **Articulating thought** – The ability to express yourself clearly.
- **Memory** – Your ability to remember and recall facts, figures, faces etc.
- **Intelligence** – The power to reason, problem solve and acquire knowledge.
- **Creativity** – Using your imagination to create solutions, artwork etc.

Your Shen shows in the sparkle of your eyes. If that sparkle isn't there, then you might have weak Shen. Due to the interrelated nature of the functions of the body, when your Shen is weak it is very likely that your Jing and Qi will also be weak and need nourishing. Qigong exercises that focus on the Heart System are exactly what you need to overcome all of these problem areas. One of the best exercises for this purpose is *Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers*, which you'll find in this book.

Why have I chosen these Qigong Exercises and Healing Techniques?

These techniques have been chosen from the 1000's available because they all share three vital characteristics. 1) They are simple to learn. 2) They are direct. 3) They give effective results. But don't worry; you won't need to learn all of them.

Principle #1: If You Want to be Happy You must Open Your Heart

開心
开心

Cantonese: hoi sum
Mandarin (Pinyin) kai1 xin1

The Chinese language is full of surprises if you know where to look. For example, the word 'Kai xin' is used for 'happy'. But if you take the words apart you discover that it means 'open heart'. If you look closely you'll notice that the 'kai' character (on top) shows a double-leafed door with the character for 'spread equally' between the two doors. It indicates both doors being open equally.

There is a saying that '*All healing begins with the Heart*'. When the Heart is open it benefits all of the emotions. From a Qigong healing perspective the following Qigong exercises and healing techniques are beneficial for opening the Heart.

1. **Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers** – This Qigong exercise is well known for inducing Qi flowing from the Heart. We'll cover how to practice this in the Generating Qi Flow section.
2. **Smile From The Heart** - This is such a vital skill and we'll be covering it in greater detail in the Generating Qi Flow section.
3. **Emperor Walks Heart Opens** - See instructions below.
4. **Nature** - Go out into an open space and smile, preferably far from the madding crowd.
5. **Be Kind To Yourself** - Make an effort to do something you like.

Emperor Walks Heart Opens

There is a saying that: '*Our physiology affects how we feel*'. So many physical blockages to harmonious energy flow through the meridians of the body are caused by poor posture. Our bodies were not designed to sit down behind a desk for 8+ hours a day, to slob out in front of the TV or to drive everywhere instead of walk. When the chest area is collapsed or sunk, when your shoulders are rounded forwards Qi/energy can easily get locked up and the Heart becomes closed. In your minds eye, get an image of a depressed person. Close your eyes and visualise them. What do they look like? Are they standing tall ready to face the day? Or are they slumped as if they're carrying a great weight? Yes, you know what I'm getting at. *Emperor Walks Heart Opens* is a great, simple exercise for opening the Heart. Here are the instructions on how to practice it:

1. Stand upright and clasp the hands together behind your back as in figures 1 and 2. The fingers are interlocked - see figures 4 and 5.
2. Figure 3 shows you how NOT to do it. This exercise is called Emperor Walks, not Peacock Sticks His Chest Out!

Emperor Walks Heart Opens



fig.1



fig.2



fig.3



fig.4



fig.5



A picture paints 1000 words – For a video of this tool visit:

www.smilingfromtheheart.com/ewho

Try it as often as you remember for the next three weeks and experience for yourself the benefits of an open Heart.

Principle #2: If you Want to be Happy you must Calm Your Mind

A calm mind allows you to see more clearly allowing you to discover elegant solutions to your problems. When the mind is calm it allows the Spirit to be nurtured and as a result emotional problems are much easier to manage. From a Qigong healing perspective the following Qigong exercises and healing techniques are beneficial for calming the mind.

1. **Meditation** - I like to use the '*Ultimate Mind Calmer*' technique. It is simple and very powerful. You can find full instructions below.
2. **Take a walk in the countryside** - I use this technique a lot. I'm lucky because I have a dog who wants at least two walks a day and I live in the country. I wish I could make this technique sound more mystical and complex but it really is that simple. When the mind is full of rubbish it simply isn't possible to sit down and meditate. A brisk walk can really help to calm the mind. It is safe, you can do it as often as you like and it helps to produce endorphins, your body's natural 'happy' pill.
3. **Listen to calming music** - As Aldous Huxley said: '*After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music*'. If you're a music fan, make listening to calming music a scheduled part of your day. But make sure it's calming music and not banging techno!
4. **Watch fish swimming in a tank** - Simply hypnotic.
5. **Inner journey** - Lie down and go on an inner journey of relaxation. Try not to fall asleep. You can find full instructions for a suggested journey below.

6. **Exercise** - Your mind naturally rewards you for exercise. Serotonin and other endorphins are released when you exercise. These are your body's natural mood enhancers and pain medication.
7. **Simple chanting or prayer** – This is specific to you! Remember Qigong is non-religious.
8. **Make a cup of tea** - Be mindful from start to finish. Feel the tap under your fingers as you turn it on and listen to the sound of the water as it fills the kettle and so on. I'm a great fan of green tea. You can find out more in the resources section at the back of this book.
9. **Face and head massage** - Excellent for calming, feeling good and relieving depression. Personally I'd recommend you pay someone to give you a professional massage. Alternatively you can give yourself a quick massage. We'll cover this in the Generating Qi Flow section.
10. **Flying Kites** – Seriously, I suggest that you make an effort to do anything that helps your mind to relax (naturally) on a more regular basis.

Meditation

It's impossible to say how many thoughts a day you have. Estimates seem to range between 3,000 and 60,000. Whatever the number is we are unconscious of most of them. When you start to practice meditation it can quickly feel overwhelming, because for the first time you are suddenly thrown face to face with your mind and you can be forgiven for thinking that it will never stop spewing thoughts and settle down.

Meditation is simple, but it is not easy. If it were easy then the world would be full of enlightened Zen masters. A quick look around you will confirm that this is not true. Numerous studies provide scientific evidence that meditation dramatically lowers stress and stress-related physical and emotional problems. Here are a few of the findings:

The National Institute of Health reports that regular meditation can reduce chronic pain, anxiety, high blood pressure, cholesterol, substance abuse, post-traumatic stress response and blood levels of stress hormones.

Frank Treiber, Ph.D. of the Medical College of Georgia says that meditation lowers blood pressure, even for healthy young people, creating a 12.5% lower risk of stroke or coronary mortality in adulthood.

Researchers at the University of Maryland's School of Medicine reported that meditation relieved stress, reduced rheumatoid arthritis symptoms, reduced cardiovascular risk factors, decreased psychological distress and improved sleep patterns.

Studies at University of Toronto, Oxford University and Cambridge University found that 66% of those recovering from depression, who also meditated, remained stable (without relapse) over a year.

Dr Herbert Benson of Harvard Medical School found that mediation releases tension, creates the willpower and consciousness to be in control of one's life, and alleviates depression, loneliness, hopelessness and despair.

Dr Adrian White of the University of Exeter reported that meditators showed increased activity in the frontal lobe of the brain, which is associated with lower levels of anxiety and a more positive emotional state.

Meditation is definitely worth your investment in time and energy. Every time you practice Qigong, you are also practicing and gaining the benefits of meditation. I'll explain this in more detail in the Generating Qi Flow section.

Always remember that something does not need to be complicated to be beneficial. In fact it is my belief that the simpler something is, the more likely you are to do it and the more likely you are to get benefits from it. So just follow the instructions below to the best of your understanding.

- If I haven't mentioned something then assume it is not important. Should you find yourself with questions like: '*where do I put my tongue?*' or '*how quickly do I breathe in and out?*' and so on, then assume they are not important and don't be concerned about them. This kind of mental activity is your mind distracting you from the work you're doing.

Just smile and continue. Stilling the mind is very hard. For many of us living a fast paced life in the 21st Century, the mind is over-stimulated and has become addicted to stimulation. The last thing it wants to do is to be still. It's going to take effort on your behalf, but the rewards are certainly worth it. The solution is to focus on *quality* and not *quantity*. Five minutes of working with the mind is much better, far more desirable and will lead to greater results than 15 minutes of wrestling and struggling with it. I promise. Here is a simple way to practice meditation and I call it 'The *Ultimate Mind Calmer*'.

The Ultimate Mind Calmer (UMC)

1. Find a place where you will be undisturbed for the next three to five minutes.
2. Get comfy, standing, sitting or lying down and gently close your eyes. See figures 1 to 4.
3. As you breathe in gently through your nose be aware of your breath coming in and say the words (to yourself): 'In deep'.
4. As you breathe out gently through your mouth be aware of your breath coming out and say the words (to yourself): 'Out slow'.
5. Keep your awareness solely on your breath.
6. Repeat steps 3 and 4 for a maximum of five minutes.

Feel free to practice the UMC two or three times a day but only practice for around five minutes. You don't need to set a stopwatch or obsess about the time. That will defeat the purpose of the exercise. Remember we're interested in quality, not quantity. The UMC practiced at a high level for five minutes provides far more benefits than practiced poorly for 15 minutes.

The Ultimate Mind Calmer

fig.1



fig.2



fig.3



fig.4





A picture paints 1000 words – For a video of this tool visit:

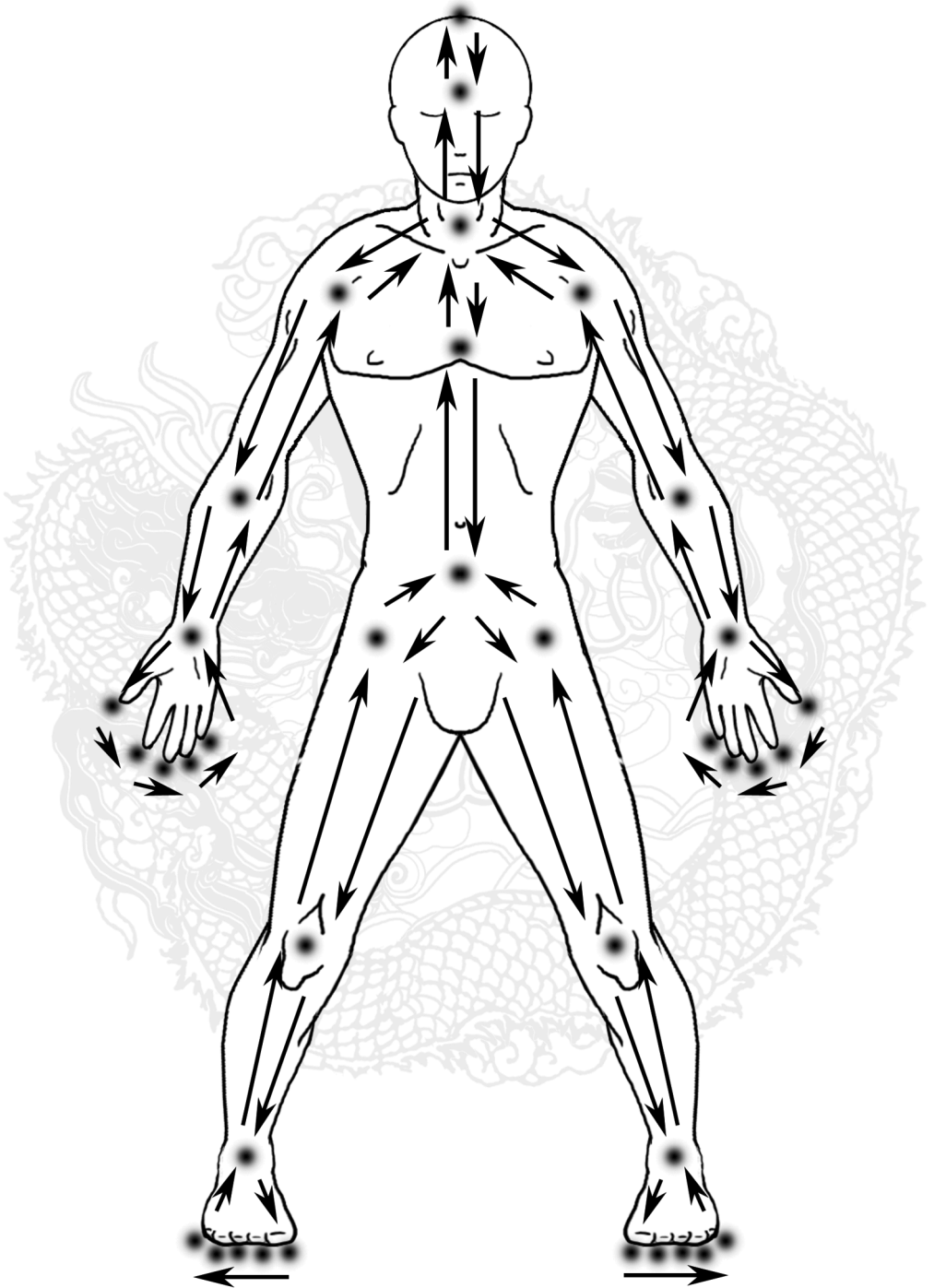
www.smilingfromtheheart.com/umc

Take an Inner Journey

1. Find yourself a comfy place to lie down where you won't be disturbed for the next five to 10 minutes.
2. Close your eyes and begin the *Inner Journey*. I've suggested a route for you in the diagram on the next page.
3. The journey starts at the top of the head and travels down to the centre of the forehead, down to the throat, over to the right shoulder, down to the right elbow, right wrist, to the thumb, to the tip of each finger, back to the wrist, up to the elbow, to the right shoulder and then across to the left shoulder where you repeat the journey through the left arm.
4. When you get back to the left shoulder you come down to the centre of the chest, down to a point just below your navel and then across to the right hip, down to the right knee, to the right ankle, across to the tip of the right big toe, across the other toes, then back to the ankle, up to the knee and back to the right hip and then across to the left hip where you repeat the journey through the left leg.
5. When you get back to the left hip move back to the point just below your navel, back up to the centre of your chest, up to the throat, up to the centre of the forehead and finally back to the top of your head.

Phew! That's quite a journey! At each stop on the journey you want to bring your attention mindfully to that point. Don't do anything. Just be mindful of that point. Whatever you are mindful of, just be mindful of it. Do not seek to change it. And don't worry if you get lost or fall asleep. Aim to do better next time. Make certain you will not be disturbed during the *Inner Journey* and only practice once or twice a day. Many of my students have found the *Inner Journey* useful as a tool to help them get to sleep at night.

Take An Inner Journey





I've made a simple recording of this *Inner Journey* for you that you can listen to for the first few times, until you're familiar with the route. You can find it here:

www.smilingfromtheheart.com/inner

Exercise

“Just as a door, which is not frequently used, will rot, a person who does not regularly exercise will be sick.”

Hua Tuo

Famous 2nd Century Chinese Physician

The meditation practices we've just discussed are an obvious way of calming the mind and increasing our happiness. But perhaps less obvious, exercises can also be used to improve us mentally as well as physically. The scientific literature to back up the value of exercise for the mind is vast.

A study published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine a few years ago discovered that there are other reasons why exercise is such a powerful mood enhancer. Professor Ellen Billett and her colleagues at the Sports Science Department of Nottingham Trent University discovered that levels of a chemical called 'phenylethylamine' - which is similar in chemical structure to amphetamine - increases significantly during training and has a substantial mood lifting effect.

Deborah McCullough, a sports psychologist at the University of Surrey said: "Often, the mere fact that you are doing something positive, rather than sitting behind your desk, will raise your self-esteem."

Researchers at America's Duke University found that working out three times a week had a greater effect on reducing depression than drugs from the same family as Prozac. Six months after 156 people had completed 'Dukes' 16-week study, only 8% of the exercisers saw their depression return.

For me, the key to success with exercise is to avoid over doing it. The popular exercise mantras like ‘feel the burn’ or ‘no pain no gain’ or ‘pushing through the pain barrier’ have no place in Qigong.

They lead to injury, fatigue and unless you’re a masochist this approach to exercise eventually means you give up. If you’re interested in starting exercise I suggest walking regularly. If you want something more demanding then swimming and cycling are fun. But my personal favourite form of regular physical exercise is good old-fashioned callisthenic exercise, or bodyweight training. I love this form of exercise and if you’re interested the best source I’ve found for this material can be found here: www.qigong15.com/blog/bwt Don’t let the name put you off.

Principle #3: If you Want to be Happy you must Generate Qi Flow

Being able to generate a Qi flow during your Qigong practice is what makes Qigong such a powerful tool for health and happiness. Recall that blockages to harmonious energy flow through the meridians of the body cause Yin/Yang disharmony that manifests as some form of illness. It is Qi flow that removes these blockages.

Authentic Qigong is a composite of:

- **Form** – Externally visible body movements, as you can see in Tai Chi.
- **Energy** - Qigong literally means ‘energy work’ which includes a variety of techniques for improving and maintaining Qi flow.
- **Mind** - A Qigong practitioner enters a heightened state of consciousness, known as a Qigong State of Mind (QSoM) at the start of their practice and maintains it for the duration of their practice.

To practice Qigong correctly you need to be familiar with and work towards mastering its three core skills:

1. **Entering a QSoM** - Achieved by relaxing physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually at the start of your practice.
2. **Qi Flow** - More poetically known as Flowing Breeze Swaying Willows. Once the most jealously kept and closely guarded secret of an elite few, this is the part of your practice where you allow your generated Qi flow to remove energy blockages from the meridians.
3. **Cosmic Balance** - Also known as Standing Zen. This is done at the end of your practice to cultivate the mind and consolidate the results of your Qigong practice.

The following Qigong exercises are beneficial for Generating Qi Flow and working with the Heart System.

- Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers.
- Lifting the Sky.
- Lohan Embraces Buddha.
- Dancing Lohan.
- Be Happy Qigong Set - An example of medical Qigong, where more than one Qigong exercise is practiced during a single Qigong session. In this type of Qigong we use only the forms to generate *Energy Flow* and our breathing is spontaneous and not coordinated with our movements. Remember to slowly increase the momentum of your movements.

Before we look at these Qigong exercises in more detail I need to introduce you to a powerful tool called:

PERFECT

PERFECT is a tool I use with my Qigong students to help them quickly learn the correct sequence for Qigong training. Using PERFECT, they know step by step what to do from start to finish. They don't have to disturb their training by trying to remember: 'What comes next?' This means that they can start mastering the three core skills of Qigong sooner and gain the benefits of Qigong more quickly.

Seven Steps To PERFECT Qigong - PERFECT is an acronym that stands for:

- **P** – Preparation.
- **E** – Enter a QSoM.
- **R** – Really Smile from the Heart.
- **F** – Form.
- **E** – Energy Flow (Qi Flow).
- **C** – Cosmic Balance.
- **T** – Time to Complete.

Let's look at each step in more detail.

Step 1 - Preparation

Before you start any activity it is important to prepare so that you are able to get the best from what you are about to do. The same holds true for Qigong.

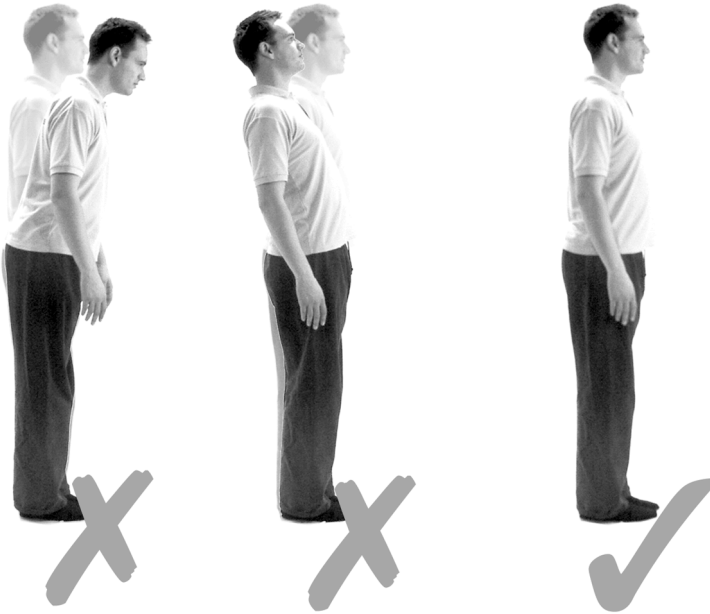
- **Safety First** - Make sure that where you are going to practice is safe from sudden drops, breakable items, dustbins or objects to bump into. For more information on the best places to practice Qigong please refer to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section at the back of this book.
- **Walk Around** - Walk around briskly for at least 30 paces, swinging your arms and loosening yourself up.
- **Wuji Stance** - This is an important stance for your Qigong as it allows your Qi to start flowing harmoniously so spend a little time making sure you get it right. The key to this stance is to stand upright and balanced with your feet close together. Make sure that your nose, the centre of your chest and your navel are in a straight line with your arms hanging relaxed at your sides. Make certain that your weight is distributed 50% in the left foot and 50% in the right. See '*Wuji Stance Front*' diagram below. Now make sure you weight is evenly distributed between the heels and the balls of your feet. See the '*Wuji Stance Side*' diagram below.

Wuji Stance Front



Note: It is important to keep the spine 'long'. Some students find that this posture causes their lower back to ache; this is usually because they have a tight curve there. The solution to this is simple, if a little coarse: Imagine you are gripping a wallet between your bum cheeks. This will cause your pelvis to tilt forwards and take the curve out of your lower spine (make sure to relax again).

Wuji Stance Side



You are now ready to start your Qigong practice and move onto:

Step 2 - Enter a Qigong State of Mind (Core Qigong Skill #1)

The condensed version of this step is to relax physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually. For those who need it, the full version is on the next page:



I've made a simple recording of entering a Qigong State of Mind for you that you can listen to for the first few times, until you're familiar with the instructions. You can find it here: www.smilingfromtheheart.com/qsom

Entering A Qigong State of Mind (QSoM)



- **Relax Physically** - Start at the top of your head and work down through your body. Be mindful as you journey down. When you find an area of tension like the shoulders or the stomach spend a few moments relaxing that body part. Once you reach your toes go back to the top of your head a second time and try to relax even more.
- **Relax Emotionally** - Let go of any worries, fears, stresses and concerns. For the duration of your practice allow yourself to take some time off from your worries. Holding onto them is like carrying heavy weights. Just put them down for the next 10 to 15 minutes. *Note:* Feelings are not facts.
- **Relax Mentally** - Clear your mind of all thoughts; stop thinking about whether you are doing things correctly, stop thinking about

what you're going to have for tea today, stop thinking about the phone call you received earlier. Imagine your mind as a crystal clear mountain pool. Each thought is like a ripple on the surface. Gently clear your mind of thoughts and let the surface become smooth.

- **Relax Spiritually**- Relaxing physically, emotionally and mentally is preparation to relax spiritually. To achieve this you need to do Step 3:

Step 3 - Really Smile From Your Heart

Really Smiling from your Heart is very simple. In fact it is so simple that you must resist the urge to make it more complicated than it is. The key is to not think about how to *Smile from the Heart*, but just to *Smile from the Heart*. If it helps, some students put a big cheesy grin on their faces. Others imagine a beautiful flower blossoming within. Others think of a loved one. Try each one and see what works for you. You'll know when you've got it right because it is a big, expansive feeling.

When you *Smile from your Heart* it feels like you are bursting beyond the boundary of your skin. Do your best.



A picture paints 1000 words – You can watch one of the best videos I've ever seen on *Smiling from the Heart* at the following link:

www.smilingfromtheheart.com/sfth

Once you have completed Step 3 you are ready to begin:

Step 4 - Form



Qigong is not just the form.

I need to make a very important point now, so pay close attention. Qigong is not just form. If you only practice Qigong forms you will not gain any additional benefits than you would get from any other form of gentle exercise. If you're going to invest 15 minutes daily in your Qigong practice you might as well practice Qigong and gain the benefits of Generating Qi Flow. The next important point I need to make is that this step is the only one that will change when you practice Qigong. In a moment I'll be explaining the Qigong forms:

- Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers.
- Lifting the Sky.
- Lohan Embraces Buddha.
- Dancing Lohan.
- Be Happy Qigong Set.

You will choose just one of these Qigong forms and use it during this step. To clarify, if you choose to practice the form *Lifting the Sky*, you will still use the seven steps of PERFECT. If you choose to practice the *Be Happy Qigong Set*, you will still use the seven steps of PERFECT. The only difference will be the *form* you are practicing; all the other steps remain the same.

Once you have completed the recommended number of repetitions of the *form*, or when you feel ready to (if this comes sooner), lower your arms and enjoy:

Step 5 - Energy Flow (Qi Flow - Core Qigong Skill #2)



Energy Flow - Simply Let Go and Do Nothing

Now the fun really begins. All you have to do is let go and let everything be done for you. Or as Lao Tzu put it: "*By doing nothing, everything is done.*" Letting go is simple but not necessarily easy for everyone. It comes with practice. The aim of practicing Qigong is to generate a healing flow of Qi that removes physical, emotional, mental and spiritual blockages from the energy streams (meridians) of the body. By performing your chosen Qigong form in a QSoM and co-ordinating the movements with the breathing (where applicable) you will Generate Qi Flow.

If you're a beginner you will likely notice this first as a tingling sensation in the fingers and hands. As your proficiency with this core skill deepens you will notice that your body starts to gently sway (hence the name: *Flowing Breeze Swaying Willows*), you may laugh, you may cry, you may move in a multitude of different ways. The key to this instruction is to let go and do nothing. For more information on Qi Flow please refer to Appendix A at the back of this book.

After enjoying *Energy Flow* for about five minutes it is time for:

Step 6 - Cosmic Balance (Core Qigong Skill #3)

Energy Flow is movement - yang. We restore balance with stillness - yin. We achieve this through *Cosmic Balance* also known as Standing Zen.

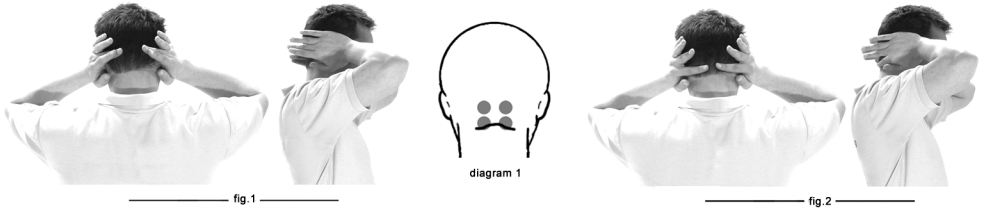
1. **Dan Tien** - The dan tien is an important energy point located just below the naval. When you've finished your *Energy Flow* gently bring your attention to the dan tien. This will bring any movements to a slow, graceful and gradual stop. Never stop suddenly.
2. **Stand Upright and Balanced** - After *Energy Flow* you may find yourself lying on the floor, or in any number of strange positions. Before continuing with standing Zen you need to be standing upright and balanced. Just like you were in Step 1 when you started your practice. Note: if you ended *Energy Flow* on the floor, feel free to do this step on the floor too. Just make sure your body is symmetrical and comfortable.
3. **Think of Nothing** - If you find this difficult, don't worry you're in good company. I advise my students to begin this by using one thought to overcome 10,000 thoughts. And what is this one thought? Simply this: as you breathe in through your nose be mindful of breathing in through your nose and as you breathe out gently through your mouth be mindful of breathing out through your mouth. If random thoughts enter your mind, or you become aware that you have lost concentration, simply bring your mind gently back to being mindful of your breathing.

4. **Dan Tien Again** - After three to five minutes of mindful breathing or nothingness, bring your attention down to the dan tien for a brief moment and then you are ready for:

Step 7 - Time to Complete

It is important to complete your practice correctly. Not doing so can leave you feeling slightly dazed and confused. Fortunately completing correctly is easy:

1. **Send a Blessing** - This is entirely optional. However it is beneficial to send a gentle blessing or kind thought to someone, even to yourself if you need it. It only takes a few moments, but only do this step if you want to. We are all connected to one another like branches on a tree, though the connections are invisible to the human eye. A kind thought has a positive energy and can travel through these invisible connections. Try it for yourself and if you find it beneficial, use it. If not leave it out.
2. **Facial Massage** - Rub your hands together firmly and briskly until they are quite warm. Now dab the palms gently on your eyes, open or closed, nourishing your eyes. With your eyes open, use your fingertips to make small circular massaging movements around the eye sockets. Gradually make these circles bigger until you are gently massaging your head, face and neck.
3. **Point Massage** - Another optional choice. Acupuncturists know that along each meridian there are specific points which when stimulated with a needle help to improve Qi Flow. You can gain similar benefits by stimulating some of these points with your fingertips. You can find full instructions below.
4. **Bang The Heavenly Drum** - Place your palms over your ears and either 'flick' or tap your fingers against the back of your neck. See the diagram below. Whether you choose to flick or to tap make sure you 'bang the drum' 24 times. Why 24? Because 15 isn't enough and 40 is too many. The number 24 also corresponds with the Chinese solar year that is divided into 24 seasons.
5. **Walk Around** - Walk around briskly for another 30 paces and get ready to enjoy the rest of your day.



Banging The Heavenly Drum - 24 Times

Point Massage - Optional

The face and head have a large number of very beneficial energy points which when stimulated, either by a finger or a needle, can directly influence the flow of Qi in a particular meridian. The point massage routine described here is entirely optional, but by adding it to your Qigong practice it stimulates those points that can help you to develop a youthful appearance. I like to think of it as cosmetic surgery without the surgery. Using the tips of your middle fingers gently massage the following points:

1. Inner part of your eye socket (fig 1).
2. Start of your eyebrows (fig 2).
3. Wipe the fingers briskly across your brows (fig 3).
4. Middle of your eyebrows (fig 4).
5. End of your eyebrows (fig 5).
6. Outer point of your eye sockets (fig 6).
7. Lower, middle point of your eye sockets (fig 7).
8. Back to the beginning - the inner point of your eye socket (fig 8).

Refer to the diagrams 1, 2 and 3 on the next page for a pictorial representation of steps 1 to 8.

Point Massage (part 1)



fig.1

fig.2

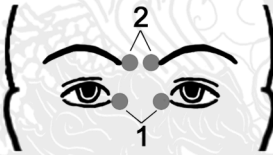


diagram 1



diagram 2



diagram 3



fig.3

fig.4

fig.5



fig.6

fig.7

fig.8

9. Sweep the fingers down the sides of your nose (fig 9).
10. Press firmly on the indents of your nostrils (fig 10).
11. Gently massage your temples with the soft fleshy part of the base of your thumbs (fig 11).
12. Press the fingers into the backs of your ears. Where the top of the jaw meets the back of the ear (fig 12).

Refer to diagrams 4, 5, and 6 on the following page for a pictorial representation of steps 9 to 12.

Point Massage (part 2)



fig.9



fig.10

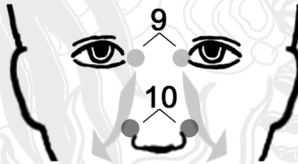


diagram 4



fig.11



diagram 5



fig.12



diagram 6



A picture paints 1000 words – You can watch a video where I demonstrate the facial massage, point massage and banging the heavenly drum here:

www.smilefromtheheart.com/massage

PERFECT Conclusion

Your Qigong practice should only take around 15 minutes from *Preparation to Time to Complete*. It will take some time and repetition for you to become familiar with the seven steps that make up PERFECT. My advice to help you get going with your Qigong practice quickly is to spend the first 3 or 4 days practicing *Preparation, Enter a QSoM and Really Smiling from your Heart*. After this time, or when you're happy to continue add your chosen *Form* and practice PERF for the next 3 or 4 days. Finally add *Energy Flow, Cosmic Balance and Time to Complete* to your practice. This week of preparation - contrary to what you might think will not hold you back. Whilst you may appear to be 'starting later' you will 'arrive earlier' at your destination: practicing Qigong properly.

Qigong Forms

Choose one of the Qigong forms below to 'plug in' to the *Form* part of PERFECT. When I teach Qigong forms to students I do so in three steps:

1. **Form Only** - I always start by focusing on the *Form* only. In this step I tell students not to worry about the breathing. Breathing is spontaneous for now. When you need to breathe in, breathe in through your nose, when you need to breathe out, breathe out through your mouth. When learning the *Form* there is no need to worry about coordinating your breathing with your movements. Keep your attention on learning the mechanics of the *Form*.
2. **Form plus Breathing** - Not all Qigong forms have specific breathing patterns attached to them, but many do.

Where appropriate, once students are comfortable and confident with the *Form*, the next step is to add the correct breathing.

3. **As Qigong** - The final step is to practice the *Form*, with the correct breathing in a Qigong State of Mind (QSoM). This is Qigong. This step should only be practiced once you are comfortable and confident with the *Form* and if appropriate the correct breathing. When you are you can slot the *Form* into PERFECT and practice Qigong.

I will follow a similar format in this book. First I will introduce you to the *Form* only and where necessary I will make important notes that will help you to perform it correctly. You should practice it until you are comfortable and confident that you can execute it to the best of your ability.

Next, I will share the correct breathing pattern (if applicable). Again, practice the form and the breathing until you are comfortable and confident with the execution. Then you can practice the *Form* as Qigong by slotting it into PERFECT.

I'm a big believer that whilst a picture paints 1000 words, a video running at 25 frames (or pictures) per second paints 25,000 words a second. So at the end of each set of individual form instructions I have included a link to a short video where you can watch me demonstrating that *Form* correctly.

Before we look at the individual forms, here are a number of important principles that apply regardless of which form you choose.

Important Principles

1. **Never stop abruptly** - Whenever possible make sure you finish your practice with *Time to Complete*.
2. **Don't allow any movements to become too vigorous** - If during *Energy Flow* your movements become too forceful, simply tell yourself to slow down. The body will always obey the mind.
3. **Avoid disturbances** – Turn off your phone and if you live in a shared house ask not to be disturbed for the next 15 minutes.

If you are disturbed and have to stop your practice unexpectedly make sure you at least bring your awareness to the dan tien and give yourself a facial massage.

4. **Safe place to practice** - Avoid practicing Qigong near steep drops, breakable objects and unhealthy environments. Always think safety first and use your common sense. For example, a balcony on the top floor of a building is not a smart place to practice your Qigong.
5. **Play Your Edge** - Always work within your bodies *current* boundaries or restrictions, but each time you practice aim to stretch, to move, to reach just a little tiny bit more. This is what I call '*playing your edge*'. It is safe, it is sustainable and it leads to growth. Remember we are practicing Qigong. There is no place for "pushing through the pain barrier" and the concept of "no pain no gain" is not welcome here. In Qigong, pain is not "weakness leaving the body"; it is a signal that you are doing something wrong.

Butterfly Dancing In Front Of Flowers



Also Known As: Butterfly Dancing

At A Glance:

**Excellent for the Heart meridian
Can help overcome depression**

Form “Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers”

1. Stand upright and balanced in *Wuji stance* (fig. 1 front and side).
2. Bend forward allowing your arms to drop forwards and tuck your chin in towards your chest. This is start position (fig. 2 front and side)
3. In one continuous and smooth movement, straighten up and open your arms wide like a butterfly’s wings. Continue to lean slightly backwards and look up towards the sky (fig. 3 front and side).
4. Now reverse the movement, flowing smoothly back to the start position (figs. 4 and 5 front and side).
5. Repeat steps 3 and 4 for 10-15 repetitions.
6. On your last repetition lower your arms (fig. 6 front and side) and enjoy *Energy Flow*.

Important Notes:

This is not an exercise in “touching your toes” and you don’t get any extra merit points for doing so. Look closely at where my hands are in fig.2 front and side. There is no need to move any further forwards than this. The movements from figs. 2-5 front and side are continuous flowing movements. Avoid bending forwards and backwards too fast. You are like a butterfly opening and closing its wings gracefully and gently. You’re not trying to scare a herd of cattle!

Breathing

1. Breathe in gently through your nose as you bend forward (fig. 2 front and side).
2. Breathe out through your mouth making an audible ‘Haaaaaaaa’ sound as you straighten up (fig. 3 front and side).
3. Breathe in gently through your nose as you bend forward (fig. 5 front, fig. 4 side).
4. Repeat from step 2.

Butterfly Dancing In Front Of Flowers (front view)



fig.1



fig.2

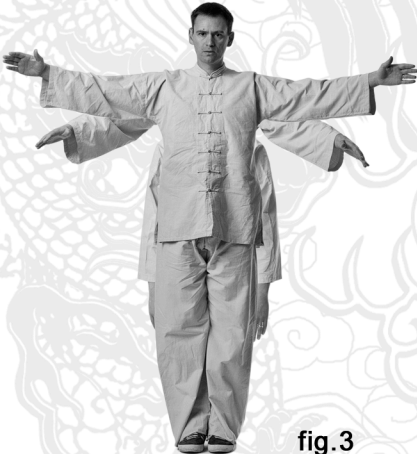


fig.3

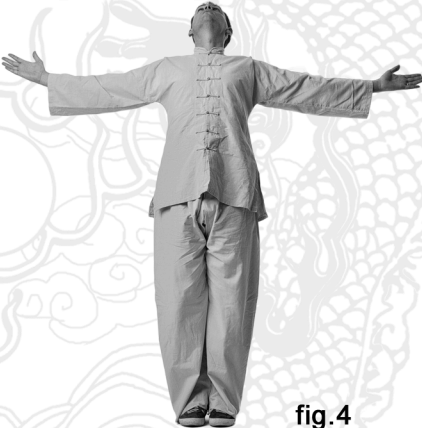


fig.4



fig.5



fig.6

Butterfly Dancing In Front Of Flowers (side view)



fig.1



fig.2



fig.3



fig.4



fig.5



fig.6

Why choose to practice **Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers?**

Butterfly Dancing is one of my favourite Qigong forms. It works on the Heart meridian and is well known for opening the Heart. As a result it is a good choice for those who currently experience depression. It is a very safe form to practice and gives good results.



A picture paints a thousand words – You can watch a video of me performing *Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers* *here*:

www.smilingfromtheheart.com/bdifof

Both Hands Lift Sky



Also Known As: Lifting The Sky

At A Glance:

**Excellent for generating Energy Flow
Improves health in all its aspects**

Form “Lifting the Sky”

1. Stand upright and balanced in Wuji stance (fig. 1).
2. Move your hands so that the palms face the floor and the fingers point towards each other. Look down at your hands (fig. 2).
3. Keep looking at your hands as you raise your arms above your head (fig. 3 fig.4 shows the side profile of this movement).
4. Gently push the palms of your hands towards the sky (fig. 5).
5. Lower your arms smoothly back to the side of your body, head back to the level position (fig. 6 and 7).
6. Pause
7. Repeat steps 2 to 6 for 10-15 repetitions.
8. On your last repetition lower your arms and enjoy *Energy Flow*.

Important Notes:

Your eyes follow your hands. Feel free to close your eyes (once you're comfortable with the form) but your head continues to move as if you were looking at your hands. When 'Lifting the Sky' the lift comes from the shoulders and not the elbows. You'll feel a gentle stretch down both sides of your body.

Breathing

1. Breathe in through your nose as you raise your arms (fig. 3 and 4).
2. Pause as you Lift the Sky (fig. 5).
3. Breathe out gently through your mouth as you lower your arms (fig. 6 and 7).
4. Pause in Wuji stance. Continue to pause as you move the hands to face each other and look down at the hands (fig. 1 and 2).
5. Repeat from step 1.

Note: The pauses are important and should only last a few seconds.

Lifting The Sky



fig.1



fig.2



fig.3



fig.4



fig.5



fig.6



fig.7

Why choose to practice **Lifting the Sky**?

Lifting the Sky is excellent for generating *Energy Flow*. It overcomes posture problems and is beneficial for those with back problems. It can help with relaxation, overcoming worrying and increasing mental focus.



A picture paints 1000 words – You can watch a video of me performing *Lifting the Sky* here:

www.smilingfromtheheart.com/lts

Lohan Embraces Buddha



Also Known As: Two Circle Stance

At A Glance:

**Excellent for generating Energy Flow
Overcomes chronic back pain**

Form “Lohan Embraces Buddha”

1. Stand upright and balanced in Wuji stance (fig. 1).
2. Raise your arms in front of you, parallel to the floor, as if carrying a large barrel (fig. 2). The hands are held as if carrying a ball (fig. 4 shows hand detail).
3. Turn your upper body to the right, keeping your feet flat on the floor (fig. 3).
4. Turn your upper body back to the centre (fig. 5).
5. Turn your upper body to the left (fig. 6).
6. Turn your upper body back to the centre (fig. 7).
7. Repeat steps 3 to 6 for 10-15 repetitions.
8. On your last repetition, lower your arms (fig. 8) and enjoy *Energy Flow*.

Important Notes:

It is only your upper body that is turning to the right and left. Your feet should stay firmly flat on the floor. Play your edge, but don't try to copy an owl's ability to turn its neck through a wide range of motion. Keep your shoulders relaxed to avoid locking up energy in the neck and upper back.

Breathing

1. Breathe in gently through your nose as you raise your arms in front of you (fig. 2).
2. Breathe out gently through your mouth as you turn your upper body to the right (fig. 3).
3. Breathe in gently through your nose as your upper body turns back to the centre (fig. 5).
4. Breathe out gently through your mouth as you turn your upper body to the left (fig. 6).

Lohan Embraces Buddha



fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3



fig. 4



fig. 5



fig. 6



fig. 7



fig. 8

Breathing (continued)

5. Breathe in gently through your nose as your upper body turns back to the centre (fig. 7).
6. Repeat steps 2 to 5 for 10-15 repetitions.
7. On your last repetition breathe out gently through your mouth as you lower your arms (fig. 8) and enjoy *Energy Flow*.

Note: Let your breathing guide the speed of your movements. By the time you have exhaled fully through your mouth whilst turning, your upper body should have finished its turn. By the time you have turned your upper body back to the centre you should have comfortably fully inhaled. If you're a Yoga master or a free diver then you may need to speed the movements up a little in order to really get your energy flowing, but for the rest of us this Qigong form gives us a great opportunity to slow things down.

Why choose to practice Lohan Embraces Buddha?

Lohan Embraces Buddha is excellent for calming the mind. By slowing the movements down and coordinating the breathing it is possible to enter deep mental calmness. Qigong is a composite of form, energy and mind. *Lohan Embraces Buddha* is a fantastic form to let beginners really get a taste of what this means.



A picture paints 1000 words – You can watch a video of me performing *Lohan Embraces Buddha* here:

www.smilingfromtheheart.com/leb

Dancing Lohan



Also Known As: Dancing Fairy

At A Glance:

**Excellent for generating Energy Flow
Good for a revitalizing pick up**

Form “Dancing Lohan (footwork)”

In an attempt to make *Dancing Lohan* as easy to learn as possible I have broken it down into two parts. In the first set of form instructions you will learn and practice the footwork. Then I’ll teach you the full version.

1. Stand upright and balanced in Wuji stance (fig. 1).
2. Step your right foot out so your feet are shoulder width apart, weight evenly distributed (fig. 2).
3. Transfer your weight onto your left foot, turn out your right foot 90 degrees by pivoting on the heel. Turn your upper body to the right (fig. 3).
4. Turn your right foot back to its original position, again pivoting on the heel (fig. 4).
5. Transfer your weight into your right foot (fig. 5).
6. Turn out your left foot 90 degrees by pivoting on your heel. Turn your upper body to the left (fig. 6).
7. Turn your left foot back to its original position, transfer the weight back to your left foot and turn out your right toe (back to fig. 3).
8. Repeat steps 4 to 7 until you are comfortable and confident with the footwork for this form.
9. When you’re finished come back to the starting stance (fig. 7) and step your right foot back next to your left (fig. 8).

Note: When your toes are turned back to their original starting positions (i.e. pointing forwards), it is okay to point them in closer towards the centre line of your body instead. This will reduce discomfort in your knees should you experience any. If you watch my feet closely in the video you’ll see what I mean.

Dancing Lohan (footwork)



fig.1



fig.2



fig.3



fig.4



fig.5



fig.6



fig.7



fig.8

Form “Dancing Lohan”

1. From *Wuji stance* step your right foot out so your feet are shoulder width apart and your weight is evenly distributed between your feet (fig. 1).
2. Transfer your weight into your left foot and turn out your right foot by pivoting on the heel. Raise your left arm above your head while the right arm stays at hip level. Turn your upper body towards the right (fig. 2).
3. Turn your right foot back to its original position, transfer your weight to your right foot and turn out your left. At the same time lower your left arm in a smooth arc whilst raising your right above your head and turning your body to the left (fig. 3). Make sure your fingers are pointing in the same direction as you are facing and check that you end up positioned like fig. 4.
4. Turn the left foot back to its original position, transfer the weight to your left foot and turn out the right. At the same time lower the right arm in a smooth arc whilst raising the left above your head and turn your body to the right (fig. 5). Make sure you end up as in fig. 6.
5. Repeat step 3-4 for 10-15 repetitions.
6. On your last repetition bring your body and your feet back to the start position, lower your arms (fig. 7) and enjoy *Energy Flow*.

Important Notes:

Find the right speed for this Qigong form. It's just like Goldilocks and the Three Bears - not too fast and not too slow, but just right.

Breathing

The breathing in this pattern is spontaneous, meaning there is no need to coordinate the breathing with the movements for this Qigong form. Breathe in through your nose when you need to breathe in and breathe out through your mouth when you need to breathe out.

Dancing Lohan



fig.1

fig.2

fig.3

fig.4



fig.5

fig.6

fig.7

Why choose to practice Dancing Lohan?

Dancing Lohan is a fun form to practice. Because of its large movements it is excellent for generating *Energy Flow* and for loosening up the body. *Dancing Lohan* is also brilliant as a revitalising pick me up. Forget caffeine drinks and practice *Dancing Lohan* instead.



A picture paints 1000 words – You can watch a video of me performing *Dancing Lohan* here:

www.smilingfromtheheart.com/dancing

The Be Happy Qigong Set



Also Known As:

At A Glance:

Excellent for generating Energy Flow

Excellent for overcoming empty illnesses

Form “Be Happy Qigong Set”

1. Stand upright and balanced in *Wuji stance* (fig. 1).
2. Begin *Lifting the Sky* for 10-15 repetitions (figs. 2-4).
3. Switch to *Lohan Embraces Buddha* for 10-15 repetitions (figs. 5-9).
4. Switch to *Dancing Lohan* for 10-15 repetitions (figs. 10-12).
5. Lower your arms (fig. 13), let go and enjoy *Energy Flow*.

Important Notes:

Please, listen up because this is important. There are three very different ways to use this *Be Happy Qigong Set*:

1. **As Self-Manifested Energy Flow** - This is what I refer to as medical Qigong. If you are ill, especially if you are ill with an empty illness (see p. 78 if you need reminding what this is) then using this set as medical Qigong is the most effective way to practice this set.
2. **As Dynamic Qigong** - Instead of practicing 10-15 repetitions of each form, you practice 4 repetitions. But each repetition is coordinated with the breathing where applicable.
3. **Separately** - You practice one form during your practice for 10-15 repetitions; movements are coordinated with the breathing where applicable. This is what I've taught you in the explanations of each form above.

Whichever option you choose, you still use PERFECT, slotting your chosen practice option into F(*Form*). In this section I will be focusing on Option 1. If you want to use the *Be Happy Qigong Set* as explained in Option 2 then make sure you are confident and comfortable with each form before adding the breathing and make certain you only practice each form for 4 or 5 repetitions. If you practice each one for 10-15 repetitions your practice will take longer than 15 minutes and you will be wasting your precious time. If you want to practice the *Be Happy Qigong Set* as explained in Option 3, simply follow the instructions for your chosen form as explained above.

Be Happy Qigong Set



fig.1



fig.2



fig.3



fig.4



fig.5



fig.6



fig.7



fig.8



fig.9



fig.10



fig.11



fig.12



fig.13

When practicing Qigong as *Self-Manifested Energy Flow* (SMEF) you are using the form to generate *Energy Flow*. When practicing *Lifting the Sky* and the form is coordinated with the breathing, you are using the form plus the breathing to generate *Energy Flow*. At the highest level of Qigong we use the mind to generate *Energy Flow*. All Qigong, regardless of the level we are practicing at needs to be practiced in a Qigong State of Mind.

Safety First:

1. At the beginning of your SMEF practice, do not let go completely. If we use a sliding scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is no *Energy Flow* and 10 is an all out frenzy (think of the Tasmanian Devil in the Bugs Bunny cartoons), aim for a maximum of 4 at the start. As your practice develops over time you can gradually increase the intensity.
2. Always make sure that the environment where you are practicing Qigong is safe. This is especially important when practicing SMEF. Falling over a chair, hitting a part of your body on a hard corner or breaking a loved ones treasured piece of object d'art is not good for your health.
3. Always aim to reduce your *Energy Flow* intensity slowly and gracefully. Never just stop abruptly and move onto *Cosmic Balance*. When you are ready to move on, bring your awareness to your dan tien and allow your movements to come to a slow, graceful and gradual stop. If you ever have to stop abruptly, because of a fire alarm or an emergency – do not worry. Simply aim to do a mini *Energy Flow* session as soon as possible afterwards.

Breathing

When practicing Qigong as SMEF you don't coordinate your breathing with your movements. Instead you allow your breathing to be spontaneous. That is, when you need to breathe in you breathe in gently through your nose and when you need to breathe out you breathe out gently through your mouth. Because the breathing is not coordinated with the movements you can practice the forms at a much faster rate. But the key is to increase your speed slowly and to avoid 'throwing yourself around'. This means that you still keep control of your movements.

For example when practicing *Lohan Embraces Buddha* you do not allow momentum to pivot your upper body past the point of comfort. It is my belief that pain is a signal that you are doing something wrong. By all means play your edge, but don't overdo it.

Why choose to practice the Be Happy Qigong Set?

The *Be Happy Qigong Set* practiced as SMEF encourages more wild and free *Energy Flow*. This is because more meridians and energy points are 'hit' by your Qi (energy) due to the combination of the forms. You can help your *Energy Flow* by relaxing the hips and the knees. Each of the separate Qigong forms in this set is excellent for generating *Energy Flow*, but when you put the three of them together, they become more than the sum of their parts. The *Be Happy Qigong Set* is brilliant for overcoming empty illnesses where the cause and/or symptoms are not clear and we can't define the site of the illness.



A picture paints 1000 words – You can watch a video of me performing the *Be Happy Qigong Set* here:

www.smilingfromtheheart.com/bhq

Summary

In this part we looked at the three core principles for working with the Heart:

1. **Opening the Heart** – There is a saying that ‘All healing begins with the Heart’. When the Heart is open it benefits all of our emotions. Our physiology affects how we feel. *Smiling from the Heart* and *Emperor Walks Heart Opens* are simple and powerful ways to open your heart.
2. **Calming the Mind** – A calm mind allows you to see more clearly allowing you to discover elegant solutions to your problems. When the mind is calm it allows the Spirit to be nurtured and as a result emotional problems are much easier to manage. Meditation and exercise are just two ways we explored for effectively calming the mind.
3. **Generating Qi Flow** – Blockages to harmonious *Energy Flow* through the meridians of the body cause Yin/Yang disharmony which manifests as some form of illness. It is *Qi/Energy Flow* that removes these blockages. When practicing Qigong, it is *Energy Flow* that is important, not which forms you practice. Whether you generate *Energy Flow* by SMEF or Dynamic Qigong methods is not important.

Note: The number of repetitions given in the instructions are only guidelines. As your practice deepens you will experience *Energy Flow* more and more quickly. You may only need to do five repetitions before feeling your *Energy Flowing*. The important thing is to experience *Energy Flow* and not completing the desired number of repetitions.

Now that we’ve looked at both Qigong and Qigong healing skills and techniques for repairing and enhancing our EIS, I’d like to share some Non-Qigong tools with you. I have found that they really complement and speed up the results of Qigong.

Part 4

Non-Qigong Tools

Overview: In this part I will present you with a selection of tools that whilst not part of Qigong have proven their value when it comes to working with the Heart to heal and enhance your Emotional Immune System.

“The expectations of life depend upon diligence; the mechanic that would perfect his work must first sharpen his tools.”

Confucius

Introduction

I have drawn on my experience as a counsellor, Qigong teacher and Qigong healer to choose the tools in this part. If this is your first time through this book, feel free to skim through. When you come to putting your Massive Action Plan (MAP) together (Part 6) you should spend more time selecting the best tools for you.

Having said that, you won't need to use all of them and I recommend that you choose those that you like. However it is my duty as your guide to tell you that if you want to improve your ability to succeed you must make use of the first two tools:

1. Tool #1: Clarity
2. Tool #2: Progress Chart

These tools are vital and you'll understand why as you read more about them.

Tool #1: Clarity

This is an essential tool that you must use. When you start putting your MAP together, you must set clear aims and objectives for your Qigong practice. They will be totally unique and individual to you and there are no right or wrong answers. The key to success with your MAP is to remember that: *Clarity* is King.

But what are aims and objectives and how can they help you to get better results from your practice in less time? Aims are long term and are usually not very specific. For example these are the main aims that people who practice Qigong are often seeking to achieve:

1. Health and Vitality
2. Longevity
3. Internal Force (think of this as abundant energy)
4. Mind Expansion
5. Spiritual Cultivation

By contrast objectives are short term and specific. Here are some examples of objectives that people who practice Qigong may have:

1. To cure a particular illness
2. To improve concentration
3. To increase resistance to stress
4. To wake up in the morning feeling more energetic
5. To increase stamina for a particular sport or activity

If you want to succeed with the tools in this book you must be clear on what your aims and objectives are. Follow this simple set of instructions and give yourself the gift of clarity. By doing so, you increase your chances of success significantly.

1. **Start with the end in mind** - Spend up to 10 minutes thinking about and writing down what you want to achieve from the material in this book. Consider this question: when you bought this book, how did you hope it would help you? Write it down.
2. **Look at your list** - Split your list into aims, those achievements that you think will take longer than 6 months to achieve and objectives, those that you think will take less than 6 months to achieve.
3. **If you have several objectives choose just one to focus on** - I remember someone telling me once that I could have anything I wanted but I just couldn't have everything I wanted. Now is the time to choose what you want the most.
4. **Get SMART** – Ensure your objective is:
 - Specific** – If your objective is to be richer and I give you a penny then you've achieved your objective. Oh, but you wanted more than that?

Then you need to get specific.

Measurable – How will you know when you've achieved your objective?

Could you produce some proof that you have achieved it?

Achievable – Is your objective realistic?

Relevant – Does your objective support your overall aim?

Time Bound – Is your objective framed in a set period of time?

See if you can spot which of these two objectives is SMART:

a) I want to stop feeling so stressed all the time.

b) After 3 months of practicing the *Be Happy Qigong Set* on a daily basis, I want to feel calmer and have more peace of mind when facing the stresses of my job.

Which objective do you feel is more likely to be achieved? What makes you think that? Now take your own objective and rewrite it to make sure it is Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time Bound.

5. Read your objective daily to help you stay focused and on target.

Clarity is a 'must have' tool for your MAP. When you combine it with the next tool you have a powerful combination that will increase your chances of success beyond the vast majority of students who practice Qigong.

Tool #2: Progress Chart

This is an essential tool you must use. There is a saying that "*What can't be measured can't be managed.*" I couldn't agree more. The practice of Qigong is all about results. You have bought this book and you have invested your valuable time in it because you want a specific result. If you follow the instructions in this book to the best of your ability you will get results you wish for. But there is an aspect to this that can be a problem for some people.

Often the results, the improvements and the positive changes that come through practicing Qigong are gradual.

For example, every time my son goes to visit his relatives ‘*up North*’, they always comment on how much he’s grown since the last time they saw him. My wife and I don’t notice this growth because the changes are gradual and we see him every day. It’s the same with Qigong.

I can remember when I first started practicing Qigong. After a few months I began thinking that nothing was happening. I was focused solely on overcoming my asthma. I hadn’t even noticed that I was making improvements in other areas of my life. In fact I was considering giving up when luckily for me, one day my wife happened to say:

“Marcus, I don’t know what it is, but you’re just so much nicer to be around these days - calmer, less angry and less volatile.”

I was stunned. She was right. I did feel calmer and I was slower to anger. But I hadn’t noticed these things because I had been focusing solely on my asthma. This is where the *Progress Chart* earns its weight in gold. I’ve been so impressed with the usefulness and value of this tool that I use it with every single student. It is powerful because it helps you to notice improvements, often in areas you’d never think to look.

However, for the *Progress Chart* to work you must get into the habit of filling it out on a weekly basis. When you do something wonderful starts to happen. As you start to see the progress you are making you become more enthusiastic about your practice. The more enthusiastic you are about your practice, the more likely you are to practice regularly and the more progress you will make. It’s a powerfully motivating tool to use.



There is a sample *Progress Chart* on the next page. To download your own copy, with detailed instructions on how to use it visit:

www.smilingfromtheheart.com/progress

Qigong15 Progress Chart

Instructions: Remember to complete weekly. Preferably on the same day each week. I've filled in some of the common areas that people want to track but there is space in the 'ailments' column for you to add your own specific areas you want to track.

	WK 1	WK 2	WK 3	WK 4	WK 5	WK 6	WK 7	WK 8	WK 9	WK 10	WK 11	WK12
Ability to cope with stress												
Ability to enjoy food												
Ability to shrug off hassles												
Ability to enjoy daily life												
Afternoon energy levels												
Ability to cope with Anxiety												
Appetite												
Athletic performance												
Bowel regularity												
Ability to cope with Chronic pain												
Concentration levels												
Ability to cope with Depression												
Ability to cope with Emotional unrest												
Ability to cope with Fatigue												
Feelings of Self Worth												
Immunity to colds & flu												
Ability to cope with Menstrual Pain												
Morning energy levels												
Productivity at work												
Recovery from colds & flu												
Sexual fulfillment												
Sleep quality												
Spiritual fulfillment												
Ability to cope with worrying/thinking too much												
Zest for life												

Mark each category on a scale of 1 to 10 (1 = the worst you can imagine; 10 = the best you can imagine). When in doubt, start with a 5.

Whatever tools you choose to use when you're putting your own MAP together, the *Progress Chart* and *Clarity* are must haves if you want to gain the full benefits from this book. Being able to measure your results with the *Progress Chart* allows you to see if you are moving closer to or further away from your aims and objectives. If you are moving closer: "very good, carry on". But if you discover that you are moving further away then you can make changes to your practice. Without this feedback you can waste many years and never even realise it.

The tools that follow are optional. When you start to create your MAP, only choose those that appeal to you and leave the rest. You do not need to use them all to heal and enhance your Emotional Immune System.

Tool #3: HALT!

Whenever you become conscious enough to realise that you are not feeling good, remember *HALT!* I've lost count of the number of times this acronym has saved my day. It stands for:

- **H** - Hungry?
- **A** - Angry?
- **L** - Lonely?
- **T** - Tired?

Here's an example. I'm going through my day and I become aware that I'm not feeling very good. I remember *HALT!* I ask myself "Am I hungry?" Yes. "Am I angry?" No. "Am I lonely?" No. "Am I tired?" Yes. I've just realised that I've been working on this book for five hours solid without a break and I'm hungry and tired. Now I have a solution to my not feeling very good. By using *HALT!* I've noticed that it's not always just one area that is affecting my feelings. So always check all four areas.

Don't let the simplicity of this tool put you off using it.

Tool #4: Don't Wrestle with Pigs

Don't wrestle with pigs. The pig loves it and you get covered in s#*t – sorry to be rude.

“Trying to get everyone to like you is mediocrity.”

Colin Powell

I get a lot of 'hate' as a result of my work promoting Qigong. It used to really upset me, sometimes for a whole day. I'd often spend hours crafting the perfect retort to their hate, giving my side of it, addressing each point and explaining what was wrong with it. All that happened was that I got more and more worked up and upset.

Then a friend told me not to wrestle with pigs. He also suggested that I create a list of at least 20 reasons why I was a good person and why what I was doing was important. Things like:

1. I have paid over £18,000 and invested over a decade of my life to learn the Qigong skills that I share with others.
2. I have published over 560 free, quality blog posts.
3. I am a business and not a charity. Anyone who doesn't appreciate my work or respect my right to feed and provide for my family is not worth my time.

Now when I get hate I just delete it and move on. It's that simple, but I had to work at it. It took a long time reading the list of my positive attributes before I developed this skill.

Tool #5: Perspective

There is a story of a woman whose child died. Consumed by grief she went to the Buddha and asked him to give her medicine to heal her child. The Buddha told the woman he wanted a handful of mustard seeds.

He told her to go to every house in the town and to collect a single mustard seed from each person that had never been touched by the death of a child, husband, wife, parent or friend, and bring them back to him. But she couldn't find a single house that had not been touched by death. The woman realised that in her grief she had lost perspective, and went to bury her child.

Now please don't misunderstand me. I'm not diminishing the severity of anything undesirable that is occurring, or has occurred in your life. But it has been my experience that losing *Perspective* only serves to make whatever it is even more unmanageable. Losing *Perspective* is like walking around holding a sheet of paper in front of your face. You can't see anything but the paper. When you have *Perspective*, you still have the sheet of paper, but now it's held at arms length and you can see around it.



When you lose perspective you can see nothing but the problem. Speaking with friends, a trained counsellor or a volunteer can help you to understand your problems better and regain perspective.

When I lose *Perspective*, I'm in trouble. But I can quickly regain it by talking with my friends. *Perspective* is vital for me. I remember once, talking with a friend about a life problem I was experiencing. I wanted him to come up with a solution that would make me feel better. But he just wouldn't. He kept forcing me to stay objective, to explore the issue. Gradually I noticed that even without being given a solution, or even finding a solution myself to the problem I felt better about it. I felt better about it because I had regained my *Perspective*. Yes, the situation was still difficult, but now it was manageable. I had blown it out of all proportion when I lost *Perspective*.

If you think you may have lost your *Perspective* then I would recommend talking with a friend to regain it. However you do need to be careful that you choose the right person. You don't want to have a conversation that makes things worse. Avoid speaking with "*Negatrons*", people who will tell you how terrible it was when they went through a similar situation, or how terrible it was when someone they knew went through such a situation. That kind of conversation will not help.

It is important to '*get things off your chest*', to get them out of your head by articulating them to another person. If you cannot think of anyone suitable to talk to then consider visiting: www.samaritans.org On their home page you'll see an '*international*' option so no matter where in the world you are, you can talk, write to or email someone.

Remember, problems are a sign of life; if you're alive you're going to face problems. There is no escaping that. Whether they are physical, emotional, mental or spiritual in nature, if you keep them bottled up inside it is very easy to lose *Perspective*. When you do life can quickly feel unmanageable. Sharing with friends, a trained counsellor or volunteer can help you to understand your problems better and regain *Perspective*.

Tool #6: One Day at a Time

"Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery, but today is a gift. That is why it is called the present."
Kung Fu Panda 2008 - Oogway to Po

I once found a note that someone had left on a bus. It read:

"Just for today I will try to live through this day only and not tackle my whole life's problem at once. I can do something for 12 hours that would appal me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime."

This quote had such a profound effect upon me. I carried it around with me for a long time and read it whenever I felt fearful of the future. I kept bringing myself back to this day. I truly believe that we can do something for 12 hours that would be impossible to do if we thought we had to do it for a lifetime.

Every day when I wake up I like to spend at least 30 minutes reading and meditating. I always end this time by reaching into a large coffee mug that sits on my desk, and randomly pulling out a small piece of paper with some words written on it. Whatever is written on the paper, I try to live it for that day only.

If this sounds like a tool that would be of value for you, then I suggest typing out the following 10 statements, printing them off, cutting them into separate pieces, folding them up and putting them into a container of your choice. Each morning pick one out and do your best to live it for that day only. The 10 statements below are just suggestions so feel free to swap them for your own.

1. Just for today I choose to believe that I live in an abundant universe.
2. Just for today I choose to believe that I matter and I am enough.
3. Just for today I choose to believe that I am getting better and better.
4. Just for today I will not worry. I know that whatever happens, I can deal with it.
5. Just for today I will accept that I am doing my best.
6. Just for today I will focus on this day only and leave tomorrow alone.
7. Just for today I choose to focus on the positive not dwell in the negative.
8. Just for today I choose to believe that I love and I am loved.
9. Just for today I will let go of any regrets, fears and anxieties.
10. Just for today I know that I am an important part of the bigger whole.

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone on my Facebook page that helped me to compile this list.

Tool #7: TCAR

“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so.”

William Shakespeare

“All that we are is the result of what we have thought. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.”

Buddha

Look carefully at the diagram below:

Thinking → Choices → Actions → Results

The lesson I want you to get from the diagram above is this: it all starts with your thinking. You are exactly where you are today (your *results*) because of the *actions* you have taken. The *actions* you have taken have been influenced by the *choices* you have made and the *choices* you have made have always been governed by your *thoughts*.

“You are exactly where you are today – physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually – because of how you think.”

Whether you like it or not your life is a reflection of your most common thoughts. I know that sounds harsh. I certainly found it a bitter pill to swallow when I first became aware of this concept. How did I become depressed and overweight because of my thinking? When I stepped back and looked closer I realised that to think it was okay to drink heavily three or four nights a week was setting a whole train of consequences into motion. If you had had my problems then you'd have drunk as much as I did too. Or so my thinking went.

With a bottle of wine, or four cans of beer inside me what kind of choices do you think I made? Midnight snack anyone? Yeah, go on then, I'll have another cake, bag of crisps, bar of chocolate and so on. My actions often involved going to the kitchen and loading up with junk. So what kind of results do you think I ended up with?

Hangovers in the morning, ridiculously high grocery bills, self loathing, feeling ill, and damaging my health – I'm sure you get the picture. And that was only one strand of my life. Like you my life is multi-faceted. Waking in a morning with a hangover, what do you think the quality of my thinking was? How do you think I chose to interpret the events occurring around me, what choices do you think I made, positive or negative? What kind of actions do you think I took, positive or negative? What kind of results do you think I regularly achieved, positive or negative?

No wonder I was over-weight, broke and depressed.

The smart question to ask is, if it all starts with your thinking, how do you change your thinking? You start by becoming aware of how important your thoughts are. If you've read this far I'm certain you've achieved that and you're ready for the next step.

"The mind is like a fertile garden in which anything that is planted, flowers or weeds, will grow."

Bruce Lee

Imagine that your Mind/Heart is like a fertile field, with the earth freshly turned and ready for planting. The thoughts you have are like seeds. If you plant potatoes you will grow potatoes. If you plant corn, you will grow corn. If you plant carrots and then expect to harvest parsnips you're going to be disappointed. If you allow the fertile soil of your Mind/Heart to be filled with 'negative' thoughts and expect to be able to make positive choices, take positive actions and experience positive results, well you're going to be disappointed. It's not personal; it's simple cause and effect.

It's more accurate to say that your Mind/Heart is already full of seeds; negative seeds like fear, anger and jealousy and positive seeds like joy, happiness and hope. It is the type of thinking you do that determines which type of seeds (negative or positive) are nourished and eventually grow and become strong enough to affect the choices you make.

“The practice of mindfulness helps us identify all the seeds in our store consciousness and water the ones that are the most wholesome.”

Thich Nhat Hanh

Mindfulness is a book in its own right and there are a number of really good ones that I recommend in the resources section if you wish to pursue this subject in more depth (and I recommend that you do). In a nutshell, I'd sum mindfulness up as the practice of remaining in, and returning to the present moment.

As you read this sentence become aware of your thoughts. What do you think about what you are reading? Be mindful of how your body is positioned, where are your legs, your hands, your feet? Notice your surroundings. What about your breathing, is it deep or shallow? The next time you make a cup of tea, be mindful of everything involved in the activity. Be present in what you are doing.

Qigong, mindfulness and meditation are powerful tools for changing your thinking. Nobody really knows how many thoughts we have in a day. When you start to practice Qigong, mindfulness or meditation and deliberately set out to quieten, focus or still the Mind/Heart, you quickly become aware that you have a lot of them and they are quite unruly. It is with good reason that Buddhist, Taoist and many other texts make reference to the '*Monkey Mind*' (xinyuan literally Heart/Mind monkey). The Monkey Mind represents the endless chattering and jumping from thought to thought that is the starting state for all of us.

With regular Qigong, mindfulness or meditation practice the Monkey Mind can be calmed and the benefits are huge. The quality of your thinking improves which allows you to make more wholesome, positive and healthy choices.

Better choices will result in better actions and whilst we cannot control the results of our actions you know that you have done the best that you can. As a consequence you can take comfort in the knowledge that a positive result is more likely than a negative one. The key with *TCAR* is to realise that you have to shift what's going on inside of you to shift what's going on in your world. It really is that simple. But it is not easy. If it were easy everyone would be doing it.

Tool #8: Gratitude

*"I was sad because I had no shoes until I met the man
who had no feet."*

Attributed to Sa'di a Persian poet

Practicing gratitude helps you to focus on what is in your life instead of what is missing. The daily practice of gratitude helps you to become more grateful for the blessings in your life. Blessings that are often taken for granted until you are consciously aware of them.

Focusing on what you do have instead of what you don't is a powerful way to positively influence your thinking. And if you remember Tool #7: *TCAR* you'll know how important that is. Even spending just five minutes in the morning before getting out of bed focusing your thinking on gratitude can have an intensely beneficial effect.

I have noticed that when I am grateful for something or someone in my life I am much less likely to take it for granted. If it's a person I'm grateful for I naturally want to do more for them. If it's a 'thing' like a roof over my head then being consciously grateful for it stops me wishing I had more toys or money etc.

Here's a personal example of the power of gratitude.

Shortly after my son was born I was very angry. A specialist had informed my wife and I that our son had cerebral palsy and the injustice, stress and fear – a powerful cocktail of negative emotions – literally knocked me to the floor.

I was especially angry, because every day since we knew our child was on his way I had prayed for him and my wife to be healthy and safe. So when the results of his tests came through I was raging and felt let down by my faith.

Shortly afterwards whilst talking with another specialist about the way forward with our son, the specialist looked up from his notes and said: 'You do realise how lucky you are? Looking at these results it is amazing that your son is alive'. That's when I first became aware of the power of gratitude. I discovered that feeling gratitude for my son being alive and having a future was far more comforting and beneficial than being angry that he had cerebral palsy.

A Simple Way to Practice Gratitude

The best way to practice *Gratitude* is to spend five or ten minutes in the morning writing down all the things you are grateful for. I wish I could make it sound more profound and complex for you. But that's all there is to it. You don't even have to write them down. The next time you feel like life is unfair or you catch yourself moaning about something or other, just look at your hand and start counting off your blessings:

1. I have a roof over my head.
2. I have clothes on my back.
3. I have fresh, clean, drinkable water on tap.
4. I have a family that love me.
5. I can read.

Bringing out into the open and being clear on the things, people and places in your life that you are grateful for is powerful medicine.

Tool #9: The Emotional System Check (ESC)

This is another deceptively simple tool that I call the *Emotional System Check* or ESC. Here's how it works:

1. Each morning spend a few moments checking in with how you feel.
2. Give names to the feelings: happy, sad, angry, lonely etc. Don't worry if you can't name them.

The benefit of this tool is that it will help you to recognise danger signals before they get out of control. For example, if you are aware that you are feeling angry you can take steps to change this feeling. If you are aware that you're feeling something you can't name, but you're feeling a little vulnerable about it you can act accordingly. This tool helps you to increase your awareness of what's going on inside you. You can then decide how best to proceed with that awareness.

Tool #10: Not as It Is, But as We Are

"We see the world not as it is, but as we are."

Anais Nin

Your life literally is a mirror image of your thinking. The thoughts you are regularly entertaining in your consciousness are creating the life you are experience now. This is one reason why depression is such an insidious illness. Dark thoughts literally feed on themselves and keep your Spirit pressed down and locked up.

*"If you think you can do a thing
or think you can't do a thing you're right."*

Henry Ford

Is the glass half full or half empty?

You see a picture of a glass filled to the halfway point with water. You're then asked: Is the glass half full or half empty? Whatever your response, you're right. We don't see life as it is. We see it as we are. Stop and re-read that last sentence. Think about it, because I don't know about you, but when I'm in a hurry (usually because I miscalculated the time) everyone seems to be going slowly.

When I'm feeling irritable and angry (probably something to do with *HALT!* p.89) people seem less friendly, less helpful etc.

I've already shared a number of tools with you that will help you to change your thinking and your perception of your world. But I know that there will be times when even though you know using a particular tool will improve your situation - whether it's practicing Qigong, writing a *Gratitude* list, meditation or whatever it might be - you won't even feel like you're able to stand up or move. I know this because some days during my depression just getting out of bed felt impossible. For most people, this inability to take the kind of actions that will improve a situation is known as procrastination. Here is a powerful tool that can cure procrastination. I call it OSS:

Tool #11: One Small Step (OSS)

*"You don't drown by falling in the water;
you drown by staying there."*

Edwin Louis Cole

To demonstrate the power of OSS I'll apply it to the experience I still occasionally have, which is not feeling like doing my Qigong practice.

1. Ask yourself this simple little question:
"What's the smallest step I'm willing (or able) to take?"
It might be just to stand up, or it might be to stand up and walk to where you do your Qigong practice.
2. Whatever it is, once you've decided on what your smallest step is, do it.
3. When you've done it, ask the question again:
"What's the next step I'm willing to take?"
4. Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you've either done your Qigong practice or until you can go no further.

Now here is the most important factor to using this tool effectively. Make sure you catch this: ***as long as you have taken the first step - there is to be NO recrimination or beating yourself up.*** If the first smallest step was to 'stand up' and that's as far as you got, then that's an end to it.

Let me also say that merely reading this and understanding it will not help you. It's only when you take action that you start to benefit from it. The next time that you don't feel like doing something, even though you know it is in your best interests, then use this tool. I use it daily. In fact the only reason you are actually holding this book in your hands now is because of this tool. There have been far too many times when I didn't want to write, or I didn't feel like writing. Then I would use OSS. I would ask myself: 'What is the smallest step I'm willing to take?'

My smallest step was to write for 15 minutes. I'd set my timer and off I'd go. Nine times out of ten I'd write for much longer. But that one time when I just did 15 minutes of work, it was fine – no recriminations and no beating myself up.

This book is proof that this tool works. Now I encourage you to use it yourself and let it work for you too.

Summary

1. In this part we looked at Non-Qigong tools that you can use to enhance the healing benefits of your Qigong training. When you start to create your own personal action plan (Part 6 of this book) you'll want to review this part.
2. I recommend two essential tools: *Clarity* and the *Progress Chart*.
3. Use the other tools in this part on a regular basis or as-and-when they seem useful. It's your choice.

Now let's look at specific '*problems of the Heart*', caused by a weakened Emotional Immune System, and the recommendations for tools that you can use if you are currently experiencing one (or more) of them.

Part 5

Specific Strategies

Overview: In this part we will look in more depth at common ‘empty illnesses’ that are caused by a weak Emotional Immune System.

“When you are weak everybody looks like devils, when
you are strong everybody looks like angels.”

Anonymous

Introduction

This part describes some of the most common empty illnesses caused by '*problems of the Heart*'. The tools in this book fit into four different categories of toolbox:

1. Opening the Heart.
2. Calming the Mind.
3. Generating Qi Flow.
4. Non-Qigong Tools.

For each 'empty illness' I will suggest strategies for overcoming it and list those tools that I have found most effective when working with private clients and students to overcome these illnesses. I will list tools from each of the four boxes and I recommend that you choose one from each box. Feel free to use other tools that are not listed for a specific problem if you would prefer.

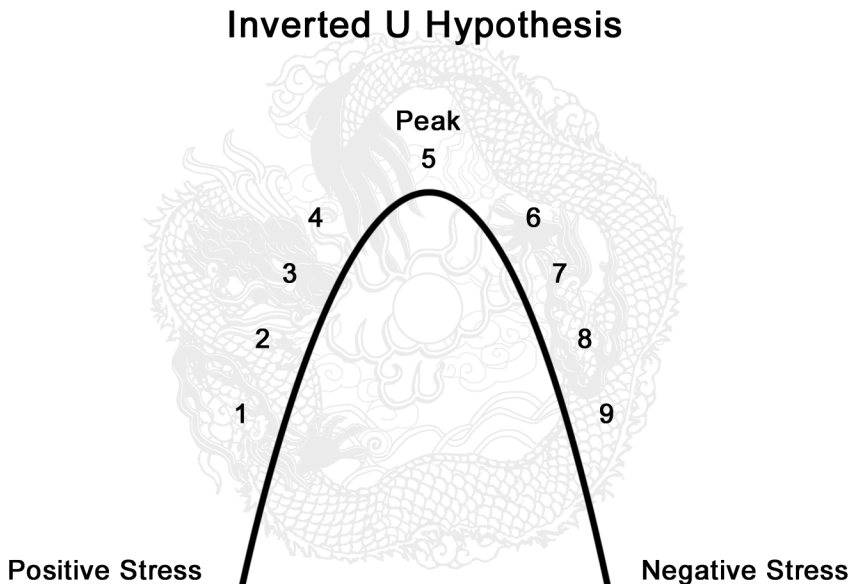
This is a subjective program that aims to improve qualities such as the way you feel about and respond to the events in your life. It is not designed as a "one size fits all" solution. Choose those 'tools' that feel right for you. The tools that I suggest are just that - suggestions. You are the expert on you. You are better placed to know how to work with your problems of the Heart and to strengthen your Emotional Immune System.

Stress

Before we begin, let's be very clear on what we're dealing with here. There's more to stress than most people realise. For a start there are two types of stress:

1. **Positive Stress** - Eustress. This type of stress helps you to push through, rise to the challenge, to achieve and to raise your game to a higher level.
2. **Negative Stress** - Distress. This type of stress leaves you feeling overwhelmed, burnt out, over reactive and can make you very ill.

In his book '*Stress Buster- how to stop stress from killing you*', Geoff Thompson uses the 'Inverted U Hypothesis' to explain this topic. Please refer to the diagram below:



Everything on the left of the upside down U is Eustress or positive stress. We need some positive stress in our lives to help us take action, to help us realise our dreams. Everything on the right is Distress or negative stress.

Using the scale in the diagram as a guide, when you're at 3 or 4 you are at your most productive. You might feel 'in the zone', you're fired up and you can still think and reason clearly. At 5 you're very vulnerable and on the verge of entering into negative territory. If you're dealing with just one or two stressful situations you'll probably be okay. But if one or more stressful situation suddenly enter your life you're very quickly heading into overwhelm. Situations that are easy to manage at 3 or 4 on the scale now become unmanageable. If you're not able to move back into the safe zone, your ability to reason and think clearly decreases, which results in yet more stress and it becomes a pretty vicious downward journey from there.

Being on the negative side of the upside down U can be very harmful to your health, as you'll discover in the next few pages. If you are on the negative side you need to get back to the positive side as quickly as you can. It starts with awareness of the situation and the 'Inverted U Hypothesis' is a useful tool to achieve this. The next time you are experiencing stress, be sure to check where you are on the curve. If you become aware that you are on the negative side then take conscious steps to get back to the positive side. The rest of this section will show you how.

*"Stress is not the enemy.
A lack of refuelling and renewing and recovery against
the stress you face is the enemy."*

Robin Sharma

If you live your life constantly exposed to stress, then it is up to you to make sure that you relax, recharge, renew and recover from the negative effects of overwhelm and burn out. You would not expect your car to keep running without putting fuel in it. You would not expect your mobile phone to keep functioning without recharging it.

Yet many of us expect to be able to perform at optimum levels without taking time to rest, refuel and recharge. It is simply not sustainable to operate flat out at your best unless you do so. Qigong is a brilliant tool for recharging, refuelling and reenergizing. And it's quick once you know how.

As a society we place a high value on expending energy, but virtually none on renewing energy. We tend to think that activities that help you to recharge (like taking a nap in the afternoon) means that you're '*lazy*' or a '*slacker*'. Think of your Qigong practice time as '*recovery*' time; a time for renewal, a time to recharge, to come back to the positive side of the curve and get you ready to play life at your best. It is important to understand that you cannot get rid of stress. Stress is a sign of life. Trying to live a stress free life can become a significant cause of stress in itself. Let's start by getting clear on what stress is and the negative effects of it because there is no denying the fact that the world and everybody in it is experiencing a number of major challenges – economical, environmental and ecological. As a result, an increasing number of us find ourselves having to manage increasing levels of stress on a daily basis. How many of us have been directly affected by the death of a friend or loved one, work overload, legal problems, relationship concerns, increased worries about job security, being able to meet financial commitments and debt management?

The General Adaption Syndrome

In 1936 Hans Selye (1907 – 1982) '*the father of stress research*' introduced the world to the General Adaption Syndrome. He had observed that the body goes through three phases as a result of long-term exposure to stress:

Alarm Phase – Your body senses a threat of danger and prepares to deal with it. George Chrousos, professor and chairman of the Department of Paediatrics at the Athens University Medical School describes it in this way:

“A threat to your life or safety that triggers a primal physical response from the body, leaving you breathless, heart pounding and mind racing. From deep within your brain, a chemical signal speeds stress hormones through the blood stream, priming your body to be alert and escape from danger. Concentration becomes more focused, reactions become faster and strength and agility increase.”

This is the ‘fight or flight’ response that our ancient ancestors used to avoid real life or death situations. When they heard the roar and the rushing of footsteps heading through the bushes towards them, stress hormones filled their bodies and they were ready to fight to the death or do whatever was necessary to quickly escape from the threat to their lives.

Resistance Phase – With the threat or danger resolved, your body strives to restore homeostasis by releasing hormonal signals that turn off the stress response and your body attempts to return to normal. This takes time during which your blood stream is still full of stress hormones and you are in a very vulnerable position.

I recall a situation recently where I was uploading some important data files to my website and my Internet connection simply died half way through. As a solution continued to elude my grasp I became more and more stressed. Finally I established that the fault was with my Internet Service Provider and not with me. But the stress hormones were still in my body. Shortly afterwards when my wife came home from work and asked me, quite reasonably, to ‘turn the kettle on’ I lost my temper and shouted at her. Fortunately my understanding of stress quickly allowed me to quickly realise that I wasn’t angry with my wife at all. She had just become the focus of my stress. Once I had apologised and explained the situation we were both able to carry on.

When you are regularly over exposed to stresses and you do not take, or perhaps are unable to take the time to relax, recharge, renew, refuel or reenergise what happens? The hormonal signals that turn off the stress response never arrive and as a result the toxic stress cocktail stays in your bloodstream, tissues and organs. Your body remains in a state of arousal.

If you find yourself repeating the 'Alarm Phase' and the 'Resistance Phase' too often, without any recovery you will move into the final phase.

Exhaustion Phase – Your body is no longer able to resist because you have run out of the energy required to deal with stress. This is often called 'burn out' or 'adrenal fatigue'. This situation creates a number of negative effects:

- Cortisol is one of the stress hormones. At continued high levels it increases the appetite which in turn can lead to an increase in weight. Over eating is a common feature of people under stress which can lead to many serious health problems. Because cortisol also turns off your disease-fighting white blood cells this can leave you vulnerable to a range of serious health problems.
- By restricting the release of stomach acid, stress hormones are responsible for many digestive problems.
- Stress has a negative effect on the sexual reproductive system, interfering with the production of the sex hormones testosterone, oestrogen and progesterone.
- Continued exposure to stress weakens the auto immune system, which lowers your resistance to coughs, colds, infections and fatigue.

All of which can lead to serious physical health problems.

Thankfully today it is very unlikely that a Sabre Toothed Tiger will jump out from behind a door and try to eat you. A more likely scenario might be that your boss tells you that your performance is not up to scratch, or that the company needs to streamline and you're in the firing line. But the same physical response occurs. You're not facing a life or death situation, but your body reacts in exactly the same way. As the stress hormones fill your body, do you leap over your boss's desk and tear him limb from limb? Do you run out of the office, leap out of the first floor window and keep going until you reach safety? No. You're more likely to stand there and absorb it and so the powerfully toxic 'stress cocktail' isn't used up. It sits in your blood stream making you feel dreadful.

If some minor situation occurs whilst you're in this state, you can bet that you're going to over-react. And if you don't take deliberate steps to rest, recharge and renew than you can easily end up burnt out.

Instead of only feeling stress when a real life or death situation occurs, we feel stress about events that are completely out of our control, about events that haven't happened yet and even about events that may never come to pass. Many of us worry about financial problems, personal relationships, job performance and the future. These are not life or death events that need to be dealt with right now, but they still evoke the same stress response. If you want to stay healthy, you must take steps to restore your supply of energy in order to deal with future stresses.

Chronic stress can result in melancholic depression. If the fight or flight mechanism is prevented from being turned off due to sustained exposure to stress, then this can lead to constant anxiety and over reaction to stimulation. Hallmarks of this form of depression include anxiety, loss of appetite, loss of sex drive, rapid heartbeat, high blood pressure, high cholesterol and triglyceride levels.

Whilst anxiety is a normal reaction to stress, constant and repeated exposure can result in difficulty controlling it. It is clear that too much stress can cause very serious problems. We need to take steps to rest, relax and recharge or face the consequences.

Qigong has been shown to be a powerful antidote to the chemical changes caused by long-term exposure to chronic stress. How does Qigong counteract the destructive effects of high cortisol levels in the blood stream? Recall from the Theory Section (Part 2) of this book that from the TCM viewpoint there is only one illness. Regardless of the symptoms, it comes down to a lack of harmonious energy flow through the meridians (energy channels) of your body. Because your physical, emotional, mental health and spiritual health relies on harmonious energy flow, anything that affects this harmonious flow will impact your whole experience of life. This is why it is important to learn how to manage your own energy system.

Qigong is a simple, direct and effective way to achieve this. The following comments reflect the impressions and conclusions of Kenneth M. Sancier, Ph.D. in a scientific report, "Medical Applications of Qigong", published by Alternative Therapies in January 1996:

1. **Stroke and mortality rates decrease** - In a study of hypertensive patients, the mortality rate in the Qigong group was nearly half of the group who did not practice Qigong.
2. **Blood pressure stabilises** - Over a 20 year period, blood pressure of the Qigong group stabilized, whereas that of the control group increased.
3. **Sex hormone levels improve** - Oestrogen imbalances "can be reversed by Qigong exercise."
4. **Blood flow to brain increases** - Memory improves, Insomnia, Numbness, Vertigo, Headaches and Cholesterol decrease. Two studies show that Qigong increases blood flow to the brain.
5. **Alpha brain waves increase** - Alpha brain waves are the key to stress relief, health, vitality and longevity.

"The main conclusion from many studies is that Qigong enables the body to heal itself."

Kenneth M. Sancier

Here are some other comments on the benefits of Qigong:

- Qi-training improves anxiety and has a significant effect on the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis. – *Myeong Soo Lee et al – Effects of Qi training on anxiety and plasma concentrations of cortisol, ACTH and aldosterone. Stress and Health 20(5):243-248. Aug 2004.*
- Qigong was shown to be a promising alternative intervention for elderly people with depression and with chronic physical illness to improve their bio-psychosocial health and possibly reduce their suicide rate. The improvements resulting from Qigong practice included feeling more relaxed, more comfortable, sleeping better and being more optimistic.

All of these reported improvements in psychosocial functioning are indicative of less depressed mood and improved quality of life. - *H.W.H. Tsang. - Qigong and suicide prevention. The British Journal of Psychiatry 182: 266-267. 2003.*

Meditation has also been proven to be a powerful tool for lowering stress levels and overcoming stress related physical and emotional problems. The scientific research to back this statement up is huge. Here are a tiny selection of findings from various studies:

1. The National Institute of Health reports that regular meditation can reduce chronic pain, anxiety, high blood pressure, cholesterol, substance abuse, post traumatic stress response and blood levels of stress hormones.
2. Frank Treiber, Ph.D., of the Medical College of Georgia, says that meditation lowers blood pressure, even for healthy young people, creating a 12.5% lower risk of stroke or coronary mortality in adulthood.
3. Researchers at the University of Maryland's School of Medicine report that meditation relieved stress, reduced rheumatoid arthritis symptoms, reduced cardiovascular risk factors, decreased psychological distress and improved sleep patterns.
4. Studies at the University of Toronto, Oxford University and Cambridge University found that 66% of those recovering from depression that meditated remained stable (no relapse) over a year.
5. Dr Herbert Benson of the Harvard Medical School found that meditation releases tension, creates the will power and consciousness to be in control of one's life, and alleviates depression, loneliness, hopelessness and despair.
6. Dr Adrian White of the University of Exeter reported that meditators showed increased activity in the frontal part of the brain which is associated with lower anxiety and a more positive emotional state.

When you practice Qigong correctly, you are also practicing and therefore gaining all of the benefits of meditation. But what is really interesting is that Qigong has a major advantage over meditation. Dr. Sancier referenced two studies that show alpha brain waves (*the key to stress relief*) dominate beta waves (*alert, working state*) and spread to the frontal areas of the brain during Qigong practice.

One study found differences between the practice of Zen (meditation) and the practice of Qigong. Dr. Sancier writes:

"...these differences in brain function suggest that Qigong is a semiconscious process that involves some awareness and activity whereas Zen meditation is a neutral process that releases the meditator from all concerns. Perhaps because of this difference, Qigong is considered a healing art, whereas Zen is generally not."

Dr Sancier's comments above demonstrate that Qigong is much more than meditation. This is one reason why long term Qigong practitioners are largely unaffected by stressful situations. Understand this: stress is a sign of life. Whilst I don't believe it is possible or healthy to live a stress free life it is possible to reduce the negative effects of too much stress and quickly move back into the positive side of the stress curve. Learning how to deliberately calm the mind is scientifically proven to help you reduce stress, anxiety and worry. The world does not change when you learn Qigong. Things will still happen to you that you'd rather wouldn't and sometimes people will still behave towards you in ways you don't deserve. Whilst the world does not change, something even better happens when you practice Qigong. You change - for the better.

I have found the following techniques, tools and strategies useful when helping students to overcome the effects of negative stress and to help them move quickly back into the safe zone:

Opening the Heart

Emperor Walks Heart Opens p.31

Smile from the Heart p.46

Calming the Mind

Go for a Walk p.33

The Ultimate Mind Calmer (UMC) p.36

Generating Qi Flow

Butterfly Dancing in front of Flowers p.58

Be Happy Qigong Set p.77

Non-Qigong Tools

Clarity p.84

Progress Chart p.86

HALT! p.89

Gratitude p.97

Depression

From a Qigong point of view, depression is a spiritual illness. It is literally where the Spirit is being pressed down. When the Spirit (*Shen*) is weak this affects your concentration, your ability to articulate thought, your memory, intelligence and your creativity. It can also cause insomnia and nightmares. Because the body is an interconnected system, a weak Spirit will also have a negative impact on your energy (*Qi*) and your body (*Jing*). Qigong is a drug free depression cure, but if you are currently on prescription medicine for depression then make sure you work with your Doctor as you implement any Qigong techniques or other tools from this book. I recently had an interesting conversation with an experienced TCM professional who expressed concern about his depressed patients using Qigong to overcome their depression. He wrote:

"I have reflected quite a bit on Qigong and depression and am concerned that excessively internal practice - especially solitary and without a teacher and a class - can risk enhancing the 'closed in' nature of depression. For that reason, in my own medical practice, I have tended to recommend more external practices including sport, dancing etc. to depressed patients."

I agree wholeheartedly with this statement and I would strongly recommend that if you are experiencing depression then you go and learn Qigong in a group environment and not on your own. If you are unable to find a Qigong class then join a Tai Chi, Yoga or meditation class. The benefits to be gained from practicing these arts in a group setting are very worthwhile.

Many years ago I used to be an active Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) practitioner. There is a saying in NLP that:

“Our physiology affects how we feel.”

I have found this to be true. If I were to ask you to describe what a depressed person looks like you would probably describe them as looking pressed down, slumped over or scrunched up. When the body is slumped and the chest area is collapsed, the Heart is closed and energy can easily get locked up in the chest. In fact poor posture is one of the leading causes of physical blockages to the harmonious energy flow through the body's meridians. A very effective Qigong technique for improving posture and *Opening the Heart* is *Lift Arms Above Head*. Here are the instructions:

Form “Lift Arms Above Head”

1. Stand upright and balanced (fig. 1).
2. Interlock the fingers (fig. 5) with palms facing upwards. Look down at the palms (fig. 2).
3. In one smooth motion lift the arms above the head, keep looking at the palms (fig.3, fig.4 shows the side profile of this movement).
4. Turn the palms to face the sky and gently stretch them upwards (fig. 6).
5. Unlock the fingers and allow the arms to lower gently to the sides of the body (fig. 7).
6. Repeat steps 2 to 5 for five to ten repetitions.
7. Finish (fig. 8).

Important Notes:

This tool improves your posture and helps to open up the Heart. There is no need to practice it using PERFECT as described in the *Generating Qi Flow* section of Part 3. Use this tool once or twice a day, or whenever you feel the need to gently stretch your body out. Because we are not practicing this tool as Qigong there is no need to co-ordinate the movements with your breathing. Simply breathe in and out when you need to.

Lift Arms Above Head



fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3



fig. 4



fig. 5



fig. 6



fig. 7



fig. 8



A picture paints 1000 words – You can watch a video where I demonstrate Lift Arms Above Head here:

www.smilefromtheheart.com/laah

I have found the following techniques, tools and strategies useful when helping students to overcome mild to moderate depression:

Opening the Heart

Emperor Walks Heart Opens p.31

Smile from the Heart p.46

Make an effort to do something you enjoy every day. Schedule it if necessary.

Calming the Mind

Exercise p.40

Pray

Listen to uplifting music

Have a face and head massage

Generating Qi Flow

Lifting Arms Above Head p.115 – practice for a week then practice:

Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers p.58

Non-Qigong Tools

Clarity p.84

Progress Chart p.86

HALT! p.89

Perspective p.90

Gratitude p.97

ESC p.98

Not as It Is p.99 – read daily and practice its principles for at least a week.

OSS p.100

Worry

First of all I'd like you to consider **why do you worry?** Please stop reading for a moment and spend 30 seconds considering whether there is a positive reason for worrying about anything?

When I was a counsellor I learned that everything we do, we do for a reason. Everything we do, we do because we hope to gain some positive outcome. Even if what we are doing may seem crazy or "bad" to somebody else. Drug users take drugs because for many, doing so transports them instantly out of pain and into pleasure, even though taking drugs ultimately leads to more pain. The point I'm making is that at the root of every activity or thing we do *there is a positive reason*. The reason may seem ludicrous to somebody else. We may not even be consciously aware of the reason ourselves. All we know is that it feels better than doing nothing and the quicker we can feel better, the better we feel.

*"It only seems as if you are doing something
when you worry."*

Lucy Maud Montgomery (1874-1942)

So what is the positive reason or outcome you hope to achieve by worrying? I believe that when we worry we are looking for a solution to something we perceive to be a problem. Personally I have found worrying to be a very inefficient way of finding solutions. But there is no doubt that it can be very seductive. The appeal of worry is that it tricks us into believing we are busy looking for a solution. Because it easily consumes the attention of our conscious minds we mistakenly believe that we are doing the best we can.

*"Worry is like a rocking chair – it gives you something to
do but it doesn't get you anywhere."*

Anon

Worry can be like a flame to dry wood. Very quickly it can get out of control and take over causing a lot of damage to your health, happiness, relationships and Spirit and can leave you feeling like a helpless victim.

“There is nothing that wastes the body like worry.”

Mahatma Gandhi (1869 – 1948)

The ultimate solution to worry is not to do it. If you are running towards the edge of a cliff and you don't want to fall, you stop. It's the same with worry. As soon as you become mindful that you are worrying, acknowledge the fact and stop. Realise that there is a much more effective way to find a solution and follow these four steps:

1. **Get Clarity** – Clearly identify the root cause of your worry. Is it financial debt? Have you been diagnosed with an illness? Is someone you love in trouble? Is an important relationship falling apart? Whatever it is be *very* clear on what is causing you to worry.
2. **Become Solution Focused** – Now you know the cause of your worry focus on as many different solutions to it as you can. Get creative. This is not the time to judge your ideas. This is the time to list anything and everything that comes into your awareness as a possible solution. If you get stuck go for a walk, pray for guidance, speak to a friend, contact an expert on the subject, “google” it, search the Internet. Be solution focused. Believe that there is a solution and that you will find it. List as many as you possibly can, no matter how absurd some of them may seem.
3. **Evaluate** – Now is the time to rate your list of possible solutions. Work through your list. Some of them will be instantly dismissible, whilst others will bear further investigation. The key here is to single out those you connect with. There will be 1 or 2 that appeal to you as offering the best quality solution for you. Remember that you are looking for *your* solution, not somebody else's! If there is nothing on your list that inspires you, **go back to step 1** and make certain you have identified the root cause of your worry. If you have then brainstorm more possible solutions. *If necessary speak to as many experts as you can to discover possible solutions you didn't even know existed.*

4. **Take Action** – When you have identified at least one possible solution, or course of action that you feel promises the best outcome for you, take **massive**, inspired action. *Make your plan and then work your plan.*

Inspired Action is the Antidote to Worry

Now you know the antidote to worry. But always remember that knowing the solution is not enough to stop the problem. You have to apply what you know. Knowing how to do something means very little. In fact I'd go so far as to say that *until you do what you know, then you don't really know it at all.*

“Nothing diminishes anxiety faster than action.”
Walter Anderson, Author

I acknowledge that some problems may not have a complete solution. In such a situation do all that you can, accept that you have done all that you can and let go of the problem.

“Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.”
James Baldwin (1924 – 1987), Author

I have found the following techniques, tools and strategies useful when helping students to overcome worry:

Opening the Heart

Emperor Walks Heart Opens p.31

Smile from the Heart p.46

Do something you enjoy at least once a week for no other reason than you enjoy it.

Calming the Mind

Go for a Walk p.33

Pray

Exercise p.40

Generating Qi Flow

Be Happy Qigong Set p.77

Non-Qigong

Clarity p.84

Progress Chart p.86

One Day at a Time p.92

TCAR p.94

Gratitude p.97

Fear

“Fear is a poor chisel with which to carve out tomorrow.”

Andy Andrews

From the TCM perspective the emotion of fear is connected with the kidneys. If a person feels fearful, often for no apparent reason, the problem can be overcome by practicing Qigong forms that are known to help with unblocking the kidneys and related meridians. When the kidney energy is strong a person becomes confident. Perhaps the best form to practice if you want to benefit your kidneys is the appropriately named form: *Nourishing Kidneys* that I describe in great detail in my first book (Shaolin Chi Kung - 18 Exercises to Help You Live a Longer, Healthier and Happier Life p. 81).

Other Approaches to Overcoming Fear

Fear comes in different forms. There is the nameless, unidentifiable fear that can incapacitate us for no obvious reason. Then there is the fear associated with some anticipated task, project, meeting, confrontation etc. There is also the massive dump of adrenaline into your blood stream when something unexpected happens, like a violent confrontation (see the section on stress for more information on this).

“While fear is a deep seated and adaptive evolutionary drive for self preservation, it makes it impossible to concentrate on anything.”

Dr Gregory Berns

I used to live my life in constant fear. I was scared of everything and everyone. I was virtually paralysed by fear and often I couldn't even point to any specific cause. So I began a quest to find an antidote to fear.

“FEAR is an acronym in the English language for ‘False Evidence Appearing Real.’”

Neale Donald Walsch

I truly believe that it is possible to overcome the effects of fear using Qigong alone. But why would you want to? I'm a great believer in having my cake and eating it (just ask my wife). I like to benefit from the best of both worlds. I have discovered three particularly powerful and useful antidotes to fear, which will complement your Qigong practice:

1. Faith - as an antidote to fear

When I say 'faith' I am not necessarily referring to religious faith. I've tried many of the different mainstream religions and philosophical approaches to life and none of them have stuck with me for very long. Eventually they felt like being a round peg forced into a square hole. But that's just me. If you find a mainstream religion or faith that works for you then that is wonderful, carry on. Just remember that the Qigong in this book has a spiritual aspect to it, but it is not religious. Anyone can practice it and gain the benefits from it, regardless of faith, religion, political or philosophical view. These days I subscribe to the view of the Buddha:

1. Avoid evil.
2. Do good.
3. Cultivate the mind.

That said, let's look more closely at how faith can be the antidote to fear. I knew about the relationship between faith and fear for years before I was able to apply it. I just couldn't get my head around the concept of faith and what it would mean for me. I just couldn't seem to acquire it. The first step towards turning this around was when someone pointed out that I did indeed have faith. I began to argue with them, but they told me that if I drove a car, then I had faith. I had faith in those thin white lines on the road. I had faith that the other drivers on the road would not cross them. If I didn't have this faith then I wouldn't have been able to drive. This was the seed that helped me understand how to develop faith. So how do we develop the kind of faith that overcomes fear? You start with a simple belief. For me it was '*everything is going to be okay*'. I'd repeat this hundreds of times a day to myself, like a mantra. But instead of just repeating it at a surface level, I'd really chew it over, I'd say it slowly, I'd ponder it and contemplate it. Gradually I began to have experiences that backed up this belief and gradually this belief became faith that everything will be alright. This is the kind of faith that overcomes fear. But it didn't happen overnight. If fear is limiting and damaging your life my recommendation would be to practice Qigong and when not doing your training repeat your personal mantra, ponder it, contemplate it and let it blossom into faith.

2. Preparation - as an antidote to fear

In his book '*Fear, the friend of exceptional people*', Geoff Thompson tells us that preparation can be a cure for fear. He has reached this conclusion from his own violent confrontations as a 'bouncer' and from interviewing Special Forces veterans and professional boxers.

Personally I have found this solution very useful for dealing with the fear of my son's seizures. After he'd had a couple of seizures very late at night or early in the morning I found that I couldn't sleep at night. Every night I was fearful that he'd have another one. I closed my eyes and 'slept' with one eye and one ear open. Every unexpected sound brought me wide-awake as I lay in bed trying to work out if it was the sound of my son having another seizure. After reading Geoff's brilliant book I decided to research seizures, to rehearse the procedure to follow if he ever had another one. I learned about seizures and I prepared myself to be able to deal with the 'event' when it occurred.

As a result, when I woke up with a start wondering whether tonight would be the night, I was able to remind myself that whatever happened - I could deal with it. Now I sleep soundly at night again.

3. Knowledge - as an antidote to fear

Another type of fear is the fear of doing something outside your 'comfort zone'. If fear is holding you back from taking the steps necessary to start a new career, write a book, find the relationship of your dreams and so on, then there is something you really need to know. I'm certain that once you have this knowledge (the easy part), and you apply it (the hard part) then that career, that book, that relationship will suddenly appear much more real and achievable.

You see there is something very powerful holding you back from taking steps outside of your comfort zone and it's called the reptilian complex. The '*Triune brain*' is a model of the evolution of the brain and human behaviour proposed by American physician and neuroscientist Paul D. Maclean.

According to this model we have three main parts to our brain:

1. **Reptilian Complex** - Its focus is primarily physical. Its job is to ensure your continued survival and it's good at it. It is linked with the following emotions: revenge, anger, hunger, fear, selfishness and feeling horny.
2. **Paleo Mammalian Complex** - Also known as the limbic system, its focus is emotional. It is linked to emotional states relating to sharing and connecting with others.
3. **Neo Mammalian Complex** - Also known as the neocortex, its focus is logical, mental and creative. It is linked with: planning, creativity, perception, rational and analytical thought.

Because the reptilian complex is survival focused, it will try to block you from anything that *it* perceives as a threat to your life. Whilst its job is your continued survival, it mistakes being laughed at, getting into trouble, being embarrassed and failing as life threatening. There are no half measures with the reptilian complex.

It takes its job very seriously and does not mess around. It has a million and one ways to shut you down or to block you and the result is often that you self sabotage, don't step up or don't follow through. If you know logically that following a particular course of action is going to benefit your health, wealth or improve your family's well being and you're not following through, the chances are that it's the reptilian complex holding you back. The solution to this is to become aware of the reptilian complex, to have knowledge of it and understand its purpose. So the next time it tells you to watch TV instead of making 'that' call you can ignore it, distract it, or soothe it so it doesn't freak out. You also need to realise that everyone experiences this reptilian complex at work; it's just that some are better than others at managing it effectively.

The Most Powerful Tool in the Universe?

I believe that of all the material in this book, the secret to living a long, healthy, and happy life can be summed up by this single principle:

Do what is right; do not do what is wrong.

If you can do this, you will drastically reduce the amount of emotional suffering in your life. Now I need you to hear me when I say that this is not a moral judgement. Only you can know what is right or wrong for you. I'm certainly not able to tell you. However, if you continue to do the right things and avoid doing the wrong things you can be confident that your situation will improve. Doing the right thing for you is rarely the easiest option in the short term. But in the long term it usually is. Here are a few examples from my own recent experience:

1. **Taking my dog Louis for his morning walk** - Even though it is sheeting with rain outside it is the right thing for me to do.
2. **Eating a whole chocolate orange** – This is the wrong thing for me to do (but I still did it).
3. **Skipping my morning Qigong practice** - This is the wrong thing for me to do.

4. **Spending three hours this morning writing more of this book** – This is the right thing for me to do.
5. **Spending four hours of my life playing computer games** – This is the wrong thing for me to do.

I'm sure you get the picture now. You won't always know what the right thing is for you to do in a situation. Situations change, playing four hours of computer games may be the wrong thing for me to do today, but tomorrow it might be the right thing for me to do. When in doubt, if you're anything like me, I'm certain you will know what the wrong thing to do is. Not doing it is a great place to start.

Warning - This tool has nothing to do with religious or moral views on what is right or wrong (though it can if it's right for you). It's not a tool to use to beat yourself over the head with when you do the wrong thing for you. That isn't helpful and nobody is perfect. This tool is a compass, a SatNav that will help to keep you on the path to freedom. It has been my experience that as I do more of what I know is right for me and less of what I know is wrong for me, fears grip on me weakens.

My Personal Experience

As I put this material into action I started to gain freedom from the fear that was destroying my quality of life. I started to gain freedom from the fear of other people, fear of financial meltdown, fear of failing, fear of rejection, fear of the sky falling down on my head. As I continued to do more of what I knew was right for me and less of what was wrong for me, I developed faith that whatever happened I could deal with it. This reinforced my knowledge that the reptilian complex had been too much in control of me. I noticed that I began to have small 'gaps' in my fear.

At first these gaps terrified me. I was convinced that if I let my guard down, if I started to enjoy life, to fully engage in it and believe that things were going to be okay, then something would come and get me and wipe me off the face of the Earth with extreme violence.

Despite this new fear I kept walking the path, I kept doing what I'd been doing and I discovered that not only had I gained significant freedom from my fears, but I was gaining freedom to enjoy life, to be myself, to express my thoughts, to be a part of the world. It was like the clouds were parting and sunlight was bursting forth into my life.

Reality Check

“Be FEARLESS! Bad idea. Don’t be fearFULL but don’t be fearLESS either. There are plenty of legitimate things we should all be afraid of.”

Larry Winget

You’ve got to remember that this is life we are dealing with here. You are not an actor in some fictional Hollywood movie. In life, bad things still happen. Working through the material in this book is not going to make you immune from bad things happening to you. That’s just not possible nor is it desirable. The bad things in life can be the catalyst for change and growth in your life. I say ‘can be the catalyst for change’, because bad things don’t have to happen in order for you to change.

Working with the material in this book will help you to live your life fully; it will improve your ability to respond more appropriately when something bad happens. It will also help you to increase your resistance to the stresses and strains of life in the 21st century. If fear is keeping you locked up in an emotional prison, know that as you work through this material you are walking a path to freedom.

I have found the following suggested techniques, tools and strategies useful when helping students to reduce fear’s grip on their lives:

Opening the Heart

Emperor Walks Heart Opens p.31

Smile from the Heart p.46

Calming the Mind

The Ultimate Mind Calmer (UMC) p.36

Exercise p.40

A cup of tea

Generating Qi Flow

Be Happy Qigong Set p.77

Reverse Hands Bend Waist (not in this book, on page 81 of my book

Shaolin Chi Kung – 18 Exercises to Help You Live a Longer, Healthier and Happier Life).

Non-Qigong Tools

Clarity p.84

Progress Chart p.86

Perspective p.90

TCAR p.94

ESC p.98

Not as It Is p.99

Self-Esteem and Self-Compassion

When the Heart is open, joy is your natural state. In this state your sense of self worth is high. The three principles for working with the Heart contain many tools and techniques for helping you to open your Heart, fill your life with joy and hold yourself in high regard.

When I used to think of self-esteem, I felt that at its root it meant being able to compare myself with someone else and come out on top in that comparison. Occasionally I did, but more often I didn't and the problem with this view was that my self-esteem was up and down like a roller coaster and my sense of self worth was very unstable. Unhappy with this I set out to learn more about this subject. My research led me to the work of Lisa Merlo-Booth and Kristin Neff. Thanks to Lisa Merlo-Booth my understanding of self-esteem has been corrected. Here's what I discovered:

"You are worthy because you are human."

Lisa makes it clear that the only qualification required for self worth is that you are human. You're not worthy because you have a lot of money, you're not worthy because you do a lot of charity work, you're not worthy because you have a lot of anything. You are worthy because you are human. You cannot increase your self worth by doing more, being more, giving more or having more. And perhaps more importantly you cannot decrease your self worth by any of your actions. We are all worthy. As Lisa states it:

"A life is a life is a life."

When thinking about self-esteem I find the image of a ladder helpful. Unhealthy self-esteem can manifest as '*grandiosity*'. That's when you think you're better than the people on the rungs below you. When you catch yourself saying statements like: "*You're stupid, you're lazy, you're no good, you're a loser*" and so on about others, that's grandiosity.

Unhealthy self-esteem can also manifest as '*toxic shame*'. That's when you feel less than the people on the rungs above you. When you catch yourself saying statements like: "*I'm stupid, I'm lazy, I'm no good, I'm a loser*" - that's toxic shame. Life on this ladder is an isolated and unhealthy experience because you can only have one person on each rung of the ladder. Here are some specific types of unhealthy self-esteem that you might recognise:

1. **Performance based Self-Esteem** - Example: *"I feel worthy because I make more sales than everyone else."* The problem is you're only as good as your last performance. Everything you've done or achieved before counts for nothing.
2. **Attribute based Self-Esteem** - Example: *"I feel worthy because I have the latest iPhone."* Lisa refers to this as "keeping up with the Jones's".
3. **Other based Self-Esteem** - Example: *"I feel worthy because she's going out with me."* But what happens if the significant other leaves or has an affair?

All of these types of self-esteem are unhealthy and very fragile.

Healthy self-esteem consists of getting rid of the ladder altogether. It is a much friendlier experience because with everyone being on the same level you are free to move around and mix with others without grandiosity or toxic shame. Healthy self-esteem is recognising that you are worthy because you are a human and holding yourself in high regard in spite of the mistakes, errors or screw ups you may make. Healthy self-esteem comes from the inside out.

Give Yourself Healthy Self-Esteem

Healthy self-esteem is remembering that you are worthy because you are human and so is everyone else. Yes someone may have more money or more qualifications, but that does not make them more worthy than you or me. Remind yourself of this fact as many times a day as it takes for you to own it. I still have to work on staying away from unhealthy self-esteem but reminding myself frequently that being human is the only qualification I require for self worth has helped me to hold myself in high regard. No more feeling like dirt because I don't feel like I'm succeeding, measuring up or making the grade. Taking this fact into my own Heart has been nothing short of miraculous for me and that's why I'm sharing it here with you.

My research into self-esteem also introduced me to the concept of Self-Compassion and the work of Kristin Neff PhD.

Whilst the importance of compassion is well established in Eastern philosophy, it is a new concept to Western psychology. But what does self-compassion really mean?

“Self-compassion is a type of open heartedness.”
Kristin Neff PhD.

Self-compassion consists of three main parts:

1. **Self-Kindness** - Instead of being harsh or self critical when we screw up, experience pain or failure, we go easy on ourselves. We forgive our failings and faults and seek to improve them by being gentle, kind and patient with ourselves. It is helpful to remind ourselves that we are human and to accept what that means, warts and all.
2. **Common Humanity** - Instead of seeing our experiences as separating or isolating we view them as part of a larger human experience. Self-compassion means accepting fully the fact that you are a human being. Allow me to remind you that humans are not perfect and there is a limit to what we can do. We all experience suffering and fear. We are all waves on the infinite ocean. We are all branches of the vine. We are not separated or alone, despite what our limited human senses might tell us.
3. **Mindfulness** - Instead of wallowing in painful thoughts and feelings we take a more balanced approach to them. Through mindful awareness we can walk a healthy path between ignoring pain and being consumed by it. We can observe it with openness and clarity.

To be self-compassionate is to have a healthy attitude and relationship with yourself. It does not judge and it does not compare. It is about keeping it real.

Give Yourself Self-Compassion

The next time you become mindful that you are in a really difficult situation or start feeling a wave of painful thoughts and feelings as a result of failure or disappointment, practice this simple and powerful two step exercise:

1. Stop and acknowledge to yourself: “This situation is really hard right now. I’m going to give myself compassion, concern and caring for the fact that this is really hard right now”. This is so powerful because it is the ‘child’ part of us that suffers the collapse. By addressing them directly with the “It’s okay little one, this is really hard right now so you have every right to feel...” we allow the grown up part of us to take care of the child part of us. To put it another way we often abandon ourselves to catastrophe and we leave our inner child to pick up the mess as opposed to showing up as a grown up.
2. As you take the next steps in the situation, whatever they may be, stay mindful and carry them out with as much compassion, patience and kindness as you can manage.

This will take practice and you’re going to find it difficult to start with. I know I did. But I believe this exercise has helped me to become a better father to my son and husband to my wife. It’s also improved my relationship with myself. Through exercising self-compassion I started to notice how harsh and critical I am of myself. I was shocked at how horrible I can be to myself. I would never speak to anyone, or treat anyone the way I speak to and treat myself. Once I became aware of this behaviour and began to notice it more and more, it was easier to be more compassionate to myself. The benefits have been profound.

The following techniques, tools and strategies will be useful when working on self-esteem and self-compassion:

Opening the Heart

Emperor Walks Heart Opens p.31

Smile from the Heart p.46

Calming the Mind

The Ultimate Mind Calmer (UMC) p.36

Inner Journey p.38

Exercise p.40

Generating Qi Flow

Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers p.58

Non-Qigong Tools

Clarity p.84

Progress Chart p.86

HALT! p.89

Don't Wrestle with Pigs p.90

Perspective p.90

TCAR p.94

The ESC p.98

Confidence

Can Qigong really increase confidence? This is a question I'm frequently asked by people new to Qigong. They can understand how cleansing the meridians and promoting harmonious energy flow will improve health, but boost confidence? Come on, you've got to be kidding?

大膽
大胆

Cantonese: tai tham

Mandarin: (Pinyin) da4 dan3

The Chinese language is very interesting. As we discovered earlier the word for 'happy' in Chinese can mean 'Open Heart'. Another interesting discovery is that the Chinese word for 'courage' is Da Dan which translates literally as 'Being Courage/Big Gall Bladder'. In other words being courageous or having confidence means having a large gall bladder.

Here's a picture of the Chinese characters for courage - please note that the first and second set of characters are the traditional and the simplified characters respectively. Hence, if we practice Qigong forms that are known to benefit to the gall bladder we can increase our courage, which in turn will increase our confidence.

There are two Qigong forms from the famous Shaolin 18 Lohan Hands Qigong set that are well known for working with the gall bladder. They are *Plucking Stars* *Change Galaxies* and *Nourishing Kidneys*.

I have covered these two important exercises in my previous book: '*Shaolin Chi Kung - 18 Exercises to Help You Live a Longer, Healthier and Happier Life*' and interested readers should look there for more information on how to practice these forms correctly.

However the ultimate Qigong form for boosting confidence is *Pulling Body*, exercise number six from the 12 Qigong exercises that make up the set known as 'Sinew Metamorphosis' or *Yi Jin Jing*. *Yi Jin Jing* was the forerunner of Shaolin Qigong and forms the basis of internal force training in Shaolin Kung Fu.

In my opinion Sinew Metamorphosis exercises must be learned directly from a Qigong teacher. These exercises are very powerful and need to be performed correctly. The Qigong forms in this book and from my book '*Shaolin Chi Kung*' are very safe to practice. If you accidentally make a few mistakes no harm will be done. However in my opinion this is not true with Sinew Metamorphosis exercises.

The following techniques, tools and strategies will be useful when working to increase confidence:

Opening the Heart

Emperor Walks Heart Opens p.31

Smile from the Heart p.46

Calming the Mind

The Ultimate Mind Calmer (UMC) p.36

Inner Journey p.38

Exercise p.40



The ultimate Qigong form for increasing confidence is Pulling Body from the Sinew Metamorphosis set.

Generating Qi Flow

Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers p.58

Lifting the Sky p.63

Be Happy Qigong set p.77

Non-Qigong Tools

Clarity p.84

Progress Chart p.86

TCAR p.94

Don't Wrestle with Pigs p.90

Perspective p.90

Not as It is p.99

OSS p.100

Summary

In this part we looked at specific strategies for overcoming common illnesses caused by a weakened Emotional Immune System (EIS).

1. **Stress** – Stress is a sign of life but too much stress is harmful to health. The key to increasing resistance to the stresses and strains of modern life is to take time to implement the 5 R's: rest, relax, recharge, refuel and reenergise. Qigong is a quick, simple, direct and powerful way benefit from the 5 R's.
2. **Depression** – Depression is known as a spiritual illness; it is when your Spirit is literally pressed down. Qigong is powerful tool for releasing your Spirit from the grip of depression. If using Qigong to overcome depression it is wise to practice in a group to overcome the 'closed in' nature of depression.
3. **Worry** – Worrying gives us the illusion that we are doing something useful to solve a problem. But the true solution to worry is action.
4. **Fear** – Fear is usually linked to the Kidneys in TCM. Whilst Qigong is a brilliant tool for overcoming fear that has become 'out of control', *Faith*, *Preparation* and *Knowledge* can also be powerful antidotes. The aim is not to be fearless; there are plenty of genuine things to be afraid of. The aim is not to be filled with fear.
5. **Self-Esteem** – Self-esteem and self-compassion are closely linked. They are both ways to improve feelings of self worth. Healthy self-esteem is remembering that your only requirement for feeling worthy is being human and that we are all worthy. Self-compassion is about having a healthy attitude and relationship with yourself, in spite of the fact that being human means you're occasionally going to make mistakes and screw up.
6. **Confidence** – The Chinese word for courage is Da Dan, which translates as 'Big Gall Bladder'. By focusing on Qigong exercises that benefit the gall bladder we can improve our confidence.

Now all the pieces are in place, you're ready to put your own 'bespoke' Massive Action Plan (MAP) together to work with the Heart and enhance your EIS. So now turn the page and let's get started.

Part 6

Putting Your Massive Action Plan Together

Overview: Now you're familiar with the theory, tools and suggestions for enhancing your Emotional Immune System (EIS), the time has come to create your own personal, unique Massive Action Plan (MAP).

“Trust yourself, then you will know how to live”

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Putting Your Massive Action Plan (MAP) Together

If we were sitting together creating your MAP, I would make these suggestions to you. The core of your MAP should be focused on Generating Qi Flow and supplemented with Qigong techniques and Non-Qigong Tools of your choosing, according to your personal needs and preferences.

Prioritise

First decide what your priority is. Are you going to focus your practice on overcoming stress? Overcoming depression? Or something else? Choose just ONE area to focus on first. I've suggested a variety of tools for you in the Specific Strategies section (Part 5) of this book. Please note that they are only suggestions, they are not commands. I recommend that you develop your own MAP from the materials in this book, using my suggestions as a start if you wish.

When creating your MAP, pay attention to each of the four 'tool boxes' that I've presented. A good MAP will have at least one tool from each box. But don't overwhelm yourself. If you only use one tool, but you use that tool daily, it will bring you more benefit than using 10 tools but only using them haphazardly for a few weeks and then giving up.

Before you decide which tools to include in your personal MAP I'd like to offer some guidelines to help you.

General Guidelines:

1. If your focus is on overcoming depression I strongly advise you to practice in a weekly group. Even if it is a Yoga or Tai Chi group, isolation is often a contributing factor to depression and so group practice can be invaluable.
2. If you are currently on any prescribed medication keep taking it! I strongly urge you to discuss the material in this book with your Doctor and ask for their advice. Remember I am not a doctor and I cannot give you medical advice.

Guidelines for your Massive Action Plan

1. **Opening the Heart** - With the exception of *Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers* you can practice the techniques in this 'tool box' as often as you like and whenever you like.
2. **Calming the Mind** - *The Ultimate Mind Calmer* (UMC) meditation exercise and the *Inner Journey* exercise should only be practiced a few times a day. You should focus on quality and not quantity. The rest of the exercises in this 'tool box' can be practiced as frequently as you like.
3. **Generating Qi Flow** - Make certain that you follow the instructions to the very best of your ability. Don't worry about making mistakes at the beginning. Everybody does, it's natural. Just try to get better with each practice. Your practice will consist of ONE of the following patterns: *Butterfly Dancing* **OR** *Lifting the Sky* **OR** *Lohan Embraces Buddha* **OR** *Lohan Dancing* **OR** the *Be Happy Qigong Set*.

My recommendation is to aim for 15 minutes practice first thing in the morning and the same last thing at night. If you like variety, please feel free to mix up the patterns between practices. i.e. *Butterfly Dancing* in the morning followed by *Lifting the Sky* in the evening, or *Lohan Dancing* in the morning with the *Be Happy Qigong Set* in the evening. It's entirely up to you. If you can only manage to practice once a day, that's fine too.

Caution - Please do not do this: *Butterfly Dancing* then *Lifting the Sky* followed by the *Be Happy Qigong Set* in the morning. And later *Butterfly Dancing* then *Lifting the Sky* then *Lohan Embraces Buddha* then *Lohan Dancing* then *Be Happy Qigong Set* in the evening. This is not following the instructions. *It is vital that you choose and practice only ONE Qigong exercise or set per session: Butterfly Dancing OR Lifting the Sky OR Lohan Embraces Buddha OR Lohan Dancing OR the Be Happy Qigong Set.* Sorry to labour this point, but it is very important and worth repeating.

4. **Non-Qigong Tools** - I believe there are two vital *Non-Qigong Tools* that everyone should have as part of their plan:

Clarity p.84 - You would be wise to start by spending at least 30 minutes getting clear on the aims and objectives for your Qigong practice.

Knowing specifically what you want from your practice is essential to your success with the material in this book.

Progress Chart - I also recommend that you print off a copy of the *Progress Chart* p.86 and review it regularly (e.g. monthly or weekly) to keep an eye on your progress.

The rest of the tools in this toolbox can be used as often and as frequently as it makes sense to you. Remember, it's *your* MAP.

Select Tools

Start by revisiting 'Specific Strategies' (Part 5) and review the tools I suggest for each one. These are the tools that I have found particularly effective. Then for each tool you are thinking of using, refer back to the relevant section and make sure you understand how to use it. If none of the symptoms described in the Specific Strategies part seem to apply to you, then simply look through each tool box in turn Opening the Heart → Calming the Mind → Generating Qi Flow → Non-Qigong Tools and pull one or two tools from each box that appeal to you. Here are two example MAP's to help get you started:

Example MAP #1

Graham has been diagnosed with moderate depression and has been prescribed anti-depressants by his doctor. After reading through the material in this book - and in consultation with his doctor - he has selected the following tools to create his MAP:

1. **Opening the Heart** - *Smile from the Heart* and *Emperor Walks Heart Opens*.
2. **Calming the Mind** - *UMC*, *Going for a Walk* and *Listening to Soothing Music*.
3. **Generating Qi Flow** - *Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers*.
4. **Non-Qigong Tools** - *Clarity*, *Progress Chart*, *HALT!*, *Gratitude*.

This is what Graham's MAP looks like in action:

AM: First thing in the morning, straight after getting out of bed:

1. Write a *Gratitude* list of 10 'things' he is grateful for.
2. Practice *Smiling from the Heart*.
3. 15 Minutes of *Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers* using PERFECT.

During the day Graham practices *Emperor Walks* whenever walking. He makes an effort to be sensitive enough to use *HALT!* and he *Smiles from his Heart* whenever he remembers to. He practices 5 minutes of *UMC* at lunchtime and often ends with a simple prayer.

PM: Just before going to bed:

1. Listen to some soothing music for 10 minutes.
2. 15 Minutes of *Butterfly Dancing in Front of Flowers* using PERFECT.

Graham became clear about his aims and objectives for his practice. His objective was to get off medication with the help of his doctor within the next three months. He started attending a weekly Tai Chi class and is enjoying spending time with a group of people. Every week he fills out his *Progress Chart*. It's only week three, but already he's starting to see a positive shift in the numbers.

Example MAP #2

Victoria is in relatively good physical health, but feels that her emotions are up and down like a roller coaster. She is also dealing with a massive increase in stress due to recently being made redundant. She selects the following tools to create her MAP:

1. **Opening the Heart** - *Smile from the Heart* and *Emperor Walks Heart Opens*.
2. **Calming the Mind** – *The UMC, Exercise, Inner Journey*.
3. **Generating Qi Flow** - *Lifting the Sky, Butterfly Dancing*.
4. **Non-Qigong Tools** – *Clarity, Progress Chart, Perspective, One Day at a Time, Gratitude, OSS*.

This is what Victoria's MAP looks like in action:

AM: First thing in the morning straight after getting out of bed:

1. Read inspirational material for 10 minutes and write a *Gratitude* list of 10 things she is grateful for.
2. Randomly select a guiding principal from her *Special Tea Cup*.
3. 15 Minutes of *Lifting the Sky*.
4. Take the neighbour's dog for a brisk walk.

During the day Victoria makes frequent use of the OSS tool as she often finds it hard to start taking the actions she knows she needs to in order to find new employment. Every other day she spends time taking an *Inner Journey*. She *Smiles from her Heart* as often as she can and takes the neighbour's dog for a brisk daily walk out in the countryside. This is an excellent opportunity for her to practice *Emperor Walks*, to get out into the country and to benefit from the *Gentle Exercise* of a brisk walk.

PM: Just before going to bed:

1. 15 Minutes of *Butterfly Dancing*.
2. 5 Minutes of *The UMC*.

Victoria is clear about her aims and objectives for her practice. Her objective is to stay upbeat and active whilst finding suitable new employment.

Her aim is to get off her emotional roller coaster and feel more rooted and balanced. She completes her *Progress Chart* each week and is happy with her progress.

I'm sure you get the idea. There is no right or wrong MAP; there is only *your* MAP. Feel free to change it after a few weeks if you think another tool might be a better fit for you. The adage "little and often" beats "lots and infrequently" in this arena.

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit." **Aristotle**

We are defined by our habits. So choose those tools you enjoy the most from the toolboxes available. Avoid using too many to start with. If the tools in your MAP are enjoyable you're far more likely to work with your MAP and to succeed with it. If you do what you enjoy, you'll enjoy what you do.

How you start the day...

"In chaos theory, the butterfly effect is the sensitive dependence on initial conditions, where a small change at one place in a nonlinear system can result in large differences to a later state." **Edward Lorenz**

The term butterfly effect is related to the meteorological work of Edward Lorenz. The key point to remember is that small changes in the right places can cause big things to happen elsewhere. You can use this principle by realising that how you start the day has a MASSIVE influence on how that day is going to turn out. True, you can't stop bad things happening, but when you are working with your MAP you can certainly help to stack the odds of having a good day heavily in your favour. Without a MAP it is too easy for a bad moment to get out of hand and become a bad day.

Summary

In this part we looked at how you can put your unique MAP together.

1. Your MAP should focus on the *Generating Qi Flow* toolbox and be supplemented by the other toolboxes available.
2. *Clarity* and *Progress Chart* are two essential tools for your MAP.
3. Ensure that you can work with the MAP that you create.
4. When in doubt choose tools that you enjoy, prefer or most like the look of because you are more likely to do those things.
5. There are no 'right' or 'wrong' MAPs. There is only *your* MAP. The best MAP is the one you are able to put into action.
6. The *Specific Strategies* (Part 5) part of this book offers *suggestions* for tools that I have found beneficial when working with students. But please remember that they are just suggestions and you are free to create your own MAP.
7. If you get bored, or your MAP isn't working for you, feel free to substitute the tools in your MAP for others. A MAP is not carved in stone it is flexible and adjusts to your changing needs and requirements.
8. How you start the day has a massive influence on how the rest of that day is likely to turn out.
9. Small changes in the right places can have massive results.

Once you've created your MAP all that remains for you to do is to put it into action.

I wish you every success!

Afterword

“You never step in the same river twice.”

Heraclitus

Life is an unfolding story. A sequence of chapters. You never know what is going to happen next. There is a story of a man called Paul who liked to observe a fast flowing stream for an hour each day. Always he sat on the same rock and he always thought that he was observing the same water. Day after day. Month after month. Year after year.

Of course, we would laugh at such a thought. Clearly it's not the same water. The water he was observing yesterday is miles downstream today. Yet this is what many of us do when we observe our lives. We think that we are seeing the same story each day, especially if it's a story we're not enjoying. A lot of the pain and discomfort that we experience in our daily lives is caused because we mistakenly think that what is happening is permanent, personal and pervasive.

99 times out of a 100 it simply isn't. We have taken the flowing stream and tried to freeze it in time. The trouble is, sometimes we succeed.

I remember many years ago whilst experiencing my own depression, I was sitting upstairs on a double-decker bus travelling home from work. Nottingham was in the freezing icy grip of winter. Outside it was cold, dark and sleeting. As the bus slowed down for some traffic lights along Castle Boulevard, I wiped the condensation off the inside of the window and looked outside. A few feet away a street lamp lit up the dark skeletal trees and I noticed something. In the depths of this winter the trees were investing energy into growing buds. Buds that would at some point burst into life covering the trees in leaves and blossom. I felt humbled by this show of faith, by nature's wisdom that nothing lasts forever and brighter days are just around the corner. I resolved there and then that I would get better. I would have faith that despite all the evidence to the contrary I would laugh and be happy again.

Listen closely. Nothing lasts forever - not the mountains on the horizon or the stars in the sky. If you're experiencing tough times, if you're going through hell - *keep moving forwards and know that this too shall pass*. Thank you for sharing this chapter of your life journey with me and I wish only the best for you.



Marcus James Santer - Devon April 2012

Appendix A

How does Energy Flow work?

It's important to state that your vital energy or Qi is flowing all the time. When your Qi stops flowing death quickly follows. So the good news is that if you are reading this then you are alive and your Qi is flowing. You can start from where you are now and work on increasing the flow of vital energy through your meridians.

I like to think of our bodies as being a complete record of everything that has happened to us so far in our lives. All your life experiences have had an effect on your Jing (physical body), Qi (energy) and Shen (Heart/Mind) – both positively and negatively. Using PERFECT to practice Qigong allows you to enhance the flow of vital energy/Qi flowing through the meridians of your body. When you let go and enjoy *Energy Flow*, this enhanced vital energy flow will automatically flow to areas of low pressure. Vital energy/Qi, like water, flows from higher to lower levels, from higher pressure to lower pressure. Lower levels of vital energy are where the blockages are. The wonderful and incredible thing about Qigong is that we don't need to know where these blockages are. You simply practice Qigong using PERFECT as outlined in this book, then let go and allow your vital energy/Qi to flow to these areas of low energy and remove the blockages. It really is that simple.

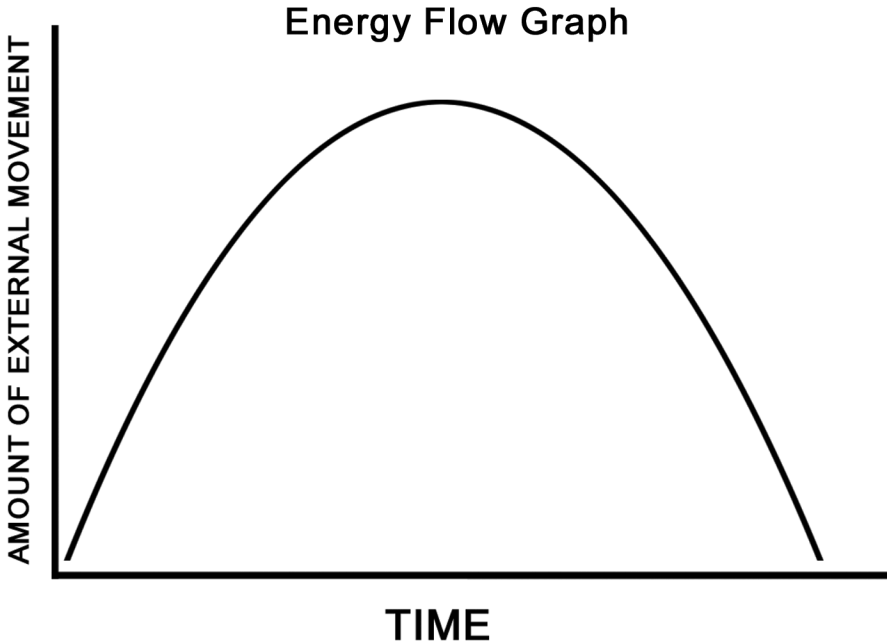
How your energy blockages will be removed in your personal situation I cannot say. There are some common traits like stamping the feet to get rid of toxins and hitting parts of the body to remove blockages. But you never think, 'Oh, I'll just stamp my feet' or 'I think I'll start laughing or crying'. No. All you have to do when you've finished with the Form part of PERFECT is to lower your arms, let go and allow everything to be done for you. If that means you start laughing, crying, rolling on the floor, jumping up and down or anything else then that's fine, but you don't consciously *do* anything.

Watching a class of students enjoying *Energy Flow* can look quite alarming to someone who doesn't understand what is going on. But the important thing to keep in mind is that letting go does not mean losing control. If you find that your movements or actions are becoming too vigorous or extreme you can simply and gently command them to slow down. The body will always obey the Heart/Mind.

Generally when you start practicing Qigong and when you complete the form and enjoy *Energy Flow* (E in PERFECT) your body will probably not move at all. That is completely normal. Gradually as you continue your practice you will start to notice common Qi effects like warmth or pleasant tingling sensations in parts of your body. Over time your body will start to gently sway on its own and you may find yourself moving around. It is important that you simply follow these movements. If your body wants to move forwards, allow your body to move forwards and so on.

As your practice deepens your movements may become more vigorous. You might make noises, you might roll around on the floor, or you might not. I knew of one practitioner who broke his bed during *Energy Flow*, another who nearly got evicted from his flat for making so much noise during *Energy Flow* and still others who claim to have been visited by deities from the Buddhist pantheon during *Energy Flow*. I'm more of a gently swaying kind of guy and whilst I haven't experienced any of these I do enjoy great health and deep peace of mind. Everyone is different.

Take a look at the diagram on the next page. I use it to illustrate to new Qigong practitioners how *Energy Flow usually* progresses over time. When you start your practice (bottom left) the amount of external movement is *usually* nil. Over time, your movements *usually* increase. Then, as your practice deepens and you have cleansed the meridians and enhanced the level of your natural Qi flow your movements will *usually* decrease. If you watch a Shaolin Cosmos Qigong master practicing you may not notice any externally visible movements at all. Please note that I have used the word '*usually*' a lot here. The reason for this is that you are unique and your *Energy Flow* may not necessarily follow this pattern. The *Energy Flow* Graph used here is a generalisation and is used for educational purposes only.



I feel very strongly that Qigong has so much to offer the Western world, but due to the secrecy that has surrounded *Energy Flow* or to give it its correct names: “Yew Foong Pai Lau” (Flowing Breeze Swaying Willows) or “Lau Sheui Harnng Wan” (Flowing Water and Floating Clouds) – it is now virtually unheard of. *Energy Flow* has been one of the most closely kept, jealously guarded secrets of an elite few and this needs to change, which is why I have shared it with you in so much detail in this book. *Energy Flow* is one of the three core skills of Qigong that make it such a powerful tool for enhancing your EIS. Without *Energy Flow* you are missing out on perhaps as much of 80% of the benefits you can get from the practice of Qigong. Without *Energy Flow* Qigong is little better than gentle exercise.

Appendix B

5 Motivational Tools that Actually Work

Richard Wiseman PhD ran two large scale studies into the psychology of motivation, tracking over 5000 people from around the world. These people were attempting to achieve a wide range of goals (aims and objectives), from weight loss to becoming more environmentally friendly and everything in-between.

These studies revealed some startling discoveries. Those who:

1. Used a celebrity or great leader as a role model
2. Thought bad things would happen if they didn't achieve their goal
3. Tried to suppress unhelpful thoughts
4. Relied on willpower
5. Fantasised about how great their life would be when they achieve their goal

were unlikely to achieve their goals. Whereas, those who:

1. Made a step-by-step plan
6. Told other people about their goals
7. Thought about the good things that will happen if they achieve their goal
8. Rewarded themselves for making progress towards their goals
9. Recorded their progress in a journal or on a chart

significantly increased the likelihood of achieving their goals. The results are clear. If you want to succeed with your Qigong training then you must:

- **Have a Step-by-Step Plan** – The whole purpose of this book is to give you that plan.
- **Have Clear Aims and Objectives** – This is why *Clarity* is on the essential tools list.
- **Share Your Aims and Objectives with Others** – This is another reason why face-to-face classes are the best way to learn, practice and succeed with Qigong.
- **Think about the Good Things you'll be able to Feel, See, Hear or Do when you Achieve your Aims and Objectives** – It's a good idea to spend a few seconds at the end of your practice to contemplate this.
- **Reward Yourself** – Have you completed a week or a month of twice daily practice? Reward yourself. Rewards don't have to be expensive. Use your imagination.
- **Record your Progress** – This is why the *Progress Chart* is on the essential tools list.

Integrate as many of these tools into your Qigong training as you can and see for yourself the improvement they bring you.

Appendix C

10 Ways to Set Up a Regular Daily Qigong Practice

Many Qigong practitioners have difficulty setting up and maintaining a regular daily practice. It can be particularly hard at the beginning. I know it was for me! So here are 10 methods I've used over the last decade to help me start up and maintain a regular daily Qigong practice.

1. Set a Time – Set a time each day for your Qigong practice when you know you are unlikely to be disturbed. Negotiate with family and partners if necessary. Set a time and *STICK TO IT* – i.e. “It’s 8pm. Time for my Qigong practice”. Don’t think about it because I have discovered from my own direct experience that when you start to think about doing your practice, it’s too easy to talk yourself out of it or convince yourself you’ll do it later. The problem as I’m sure you realise is that “later” rarely happens. Just get up, get out and do your practice at your set time.

2. Get Out of Bed Earlier – We spend a third of our lives sleeping. Getting up 15 minutes earlier or going to bed 15 minutes later is easy to do. Set your alarm and when it goes off, don’t think about it just get out of bed and do your Qigong. Get your clothes and everything you need ready the night before, so that when your alarm goes off in the morning you can just roll over, get dressed and get out. You’ll feel glad you did because it really sets your day up right. Trust me, that irresistible, gorgeous, warm, cosy “I can’t get out of bed to do my Qigong” feeling evaporates as soon as your feet touch the floor. It is then replaced with a delightfully satisfied feeling, knowing that you’re doing the right thing, that you’re doing something that is helping you to get the best out of your day. This feeling is priceless.

3. Make a Contract – I recently wanted to get up at 6:00 am every morning to go swimming at my local swimming baths. I told my wife what I was doing and I said that for every day I didn’t get out of bed at 6:00 am I would give her £10. I also made a pact with myself that if I did get out of bed at 6:00 am every day for a month, then I would treat myself by going for a massage.

I had made a contract with my wife that was as binding to me as any legal contract. 28 days later I didn't have to pay my wife a single penny. The thought of having to give her £10 was enough to get me out of bed on those days when discipline was lacking. And the massage was even more wonderful – because I had earned it. I recommend that you get yourself an accountability partner. Agree with them the penalties if you don't do your Qigong practice once/twice a day and agree the rewards if you maintain your Qigong discipline for 28 days.

4. Increase your Understanding – The main obstacle to establishing a daily Qigong practice is doubt about the effectiveness of what you are doing. You can reduce this doubt by increasing your understanding of Qigong. Review the material in this book regularly. It's not meant to be something that you read once and then put on your shelf to gather dust. Write to me and ask me a question. Do your own research on the Internet. Get involved.

5. Be Realistic – Qigong is not a 30-day miracle cure. It is powerful and you can feel benefits immediately, but in order to experience a major change or transformation takes regular, correct practice. You didn't get into your current state of health and happiness (or lack of it) overnight. You will not achieve your desired state of health and happiness overnight either. You've got to work at it.

6. Get Clarity – Remind yourself *WHY* you decided to invest in this book. What pain will you experience if you don't continue your Qigong practice? What experiences and joys will you miss out on if you don't give the tools you have learned a chance?

7. Your Sacred "Me Time" – Many successful Qigong practitioners view their practice time as their special sacred time. It is not open for negotiation. If the phone rings or the doorbell goes then that's just too bad. You probably dedicate a lot of your time to the well-being and happiness of others. Doesn't it make sense that if you are happy and well then you can do this even better? You are the most important person in your life. You are with yourself every single day of your life and no matter where you go, you are always there. So make your health and well-being your top priority.

8. Like-Minded People – Practicing Qigong regularly with a group of like-minded people is not only enjoyable, but it helps to sustain your practice and it's great to be able to discuss your practice with people who know what you're talking about! Find a Qigong class and practice with people who feel the same about Qigong as you. I bet that if you stopped 100 people on your local high street, I bet 96 of them will never have heard of Qigong! Slightly off topic, but I've discovered that the best 'quick' explanation you can give to people about what Qigong is, is to tell them it's Chinese Yoga.

9. Start Again – Every time you find you have stopped your practice start it again as quickly as you can. Forget feeling guilty about it. If you enjoy your practice you are more likely to keep it up. If you find that you are forcing yourself to do it, change your *MAP*. Erratic practice patterns will not give you the results of Qigong, but who knows, the next time you start may be the time that it really sticks for you. I'm reminded here of a slogan used to help people give up smoking: "Never give up giving up". One of my father's favourite sayings is, "If you fall off the horse, get back on it again as quickly as you can". The Chinese define success as this: "Fall over seven times, stand up eight". Never give up on anything that is important to you. If it isn't important, let it go and focus on the things that are. Enjoy your life, don't waste it by feeling bad about things that you know you should do but aren't doing.

10. Sometimes You've Just Got to Quit – Listen, I believe that whilst everyone can benefit from practicing Qigong, Qigong is not for everyone. One size does not fit all and if anyone ever tells you that their 'way' is the only way, or the best way, then I suggest that you smile politely and walk away. Qigong is the art of energy and I believe it gives better results than Yoga, Tai Chi, Meditation and Reiki all put together. But that's just my opinion, and opinions are like belly buttons – *everyone's got one*. So if you find yourself having to really force yourself to do your Qigong practice and you hate it then stop it. Find something else that is a better fit for you. Life is too short and precious to waste it doing things you don't want to. We all get just 24 hours a day so make sure that you are investing your time wisely.

Appendix D

Frequently Asked Questions

Here are 11 of the most frequently asked questions I receive:

Q: Where's the best place to practice Qigong?

A: The best place to practice Qigong is on a beach facing the sea with large hills in the not too far distance behind you that curve gently down to the shore. Failing this anywhere outdoors in nature is good. Remember that when you are practicing Qigong, you are not only breathing in air but you are also breathing in Qi. Practicing where the air is stale or dirty (like next to a dustbin) will cancel out any benefits you may gain from your practice. Safety first, last and always. Make sure that your practice area is free from sudden drops, breakable objects and other hazards.

Q: Can I practice Qigong barefoot?

A: Short answer, no. Longer answer: The full name for the type of Qigong in this book is *Shaolin Cosmos Qigong*. The philosophy of this style is that mankind is sandwiched between the Heavens (Cosmos) and the Earth. Because we aspire to the Heavens it is preferable to take in energy from the Cosmos than it is from the Earth. It's not that Earth energy is bad, it's just that Earth energy is better for creatures that live in the Earth than it is for humans. Hence when practicing *Shaolin Cosmos Qigong* we do not practice in bare feet if we are outdoors, thus we reduce the risk of Earth energy coming in through our feet. If you are indoors and you are practicing on carpet, it's fine, practice in bare feet if you must.

Remember this is the *Shaolin Cosmos Qigong* view on how best to practice Qigong. It is not carved in stone. So if you have experience of other practices that involve harnessing Earth energy that's great. Just make sure that when you practice *Shaolin Cosmos Qigong* you don't mix it up with your other practice.

Q: How can I tell if I am practicing Qigong correctly?

A: If you regularly feel better at the end of your practice than you did at the start this is a good sign that you are practicing correctly.

Q: Do I have to breathe in through my nose and out through my mouth when practicing Qigong?

A: Yes. Practitioners of *Shaolin Cosmos Qigong* believe that this is the best way to breathe when practicing. Because what you breathe in is not just air, it is also Qi. What you breathe out is not just air with reduced oxygen, it is also Qi. In other words when you breathe in you are breathing in positive energy and when you breathe out you are breathing out negative energy. The most efficient way to get rid of this negative energy is to breathe out through the mouth. In fact, if you find that your practice is giving you headaches, or if your thinking is 'foggy' when you complete your practice the most likely cause is that you have been breathing out through your nose and not your mouth.

Q: Can I practice for more than 15 minutes twice a day?

A: Not deliberately. If you find that your practice naturally lasts longer than 15 minutes every now and then, that's fine. There is no need to practice for longer than 15 minutes and doing so can actually be counterproductive. If you are used to having 50 units of energy flowing through your system and you start practicing Qigong as outlined in this book gradually the number of units of energy will increase and your systems will naturally adapt to this increase of energy. But if you try to be clever and overdo things this increase in energy may not be gradual. You may experience a sharp spike in the amount of energy and the result can be damage to the system.

But do not worry. The Qigong in this book is incredibly safe. It is common for students to notice that when they start practicing Qigong they feel more tired than usual. How can this be? Qigong is supposed to increase your energy, not make you feel more tired. This tiredness is normally a sign that you are over doing things and the best course of action is to take a day or two off.

Always remember that you are practicing Qigong to enrich your life, not to become a slave to it. Invest 15 minutes in your practice once or twice a day and enjoy the rest of your time.

Q: When is the best time to practice Qigong?

A: The best times to practice Qigong are at sunrise and midnight. Good times to practice Qigong are between 5am and 9am and between 5pm and 9pm. Avoid practicing at noon, when it is very hot or in direct sunlight.

Q: Should I practice with my eyes open or closed?

A: When you first start practicing a new Qigong *Form* you will probably want to keep your eyes open to check that the positioning of the various parts of your body are correct. If you're practicing outdoors in a park or a public space, you may also want to practice with your eyes open to 'keep an eye on things'. Ideally you want to practice with your eyes closed. A lot of distraction comes in via the eyes and by closing them you shut it out. This allows you go deeper into your practice. Though feel free to open your eyes every now and again just to check your surroundings if you wish.

Q: What about sex?

A: Many schools and teachers of Qigong advise against sexual relations for weeks or months if you want to gain benefits from your practice. Whilst there may be certain benefits to be gained from abstention I do not believe they are worth damaging a healthy relationship with your partner. I recommend that it is best to wait at least 30 minutes after your practice before having sex. If you are male, practicing Qigong as soon as is polite after lovemaking will help you to recover quickly.

Q: What should I wear to practice Qigong?

A: You can wear anything you like as long as it is comfortable. Avoid tight belts and clothing that restricts your movement and *Energy Flow*. Wear flat-soled shoes.

Q: What visualisations can I add to Qigong?

A: I recommend that you don't bother with visualisations during your Qigong practice. I have found that visualisations add a layer of complexity that is more likely to reduce the benefits of Qigong than enhance them. The Qigong in this book is simple, direct and effective and I recommend you keep it that way.

Q: How long before I notice results from my practice?

A: Once you have created your *MAP*, got a grasp on the mechanics of practicing Qigong using PERFECT and you are practicing daily you can expect to see the following results as soon as you finish each practice session: increased peace of mind, feeling relaxed and refreshed, greater mental clarity and lifted spirits. These results are unlikely to last for very long though. As you continue your practice you will notice that these results do start to last longer and longer.

If you are currently experiencing some form of long-term illness then expect it to take at least three months for you to notice significant results. This is where the *Progress Chart* is so invaluable. Make sure you fill it in weekly so you can notice the progress you are making in other areas of your life that you might otherwise not have noticed.

Resources

Part 2 - Theory

Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) Resources – I refer to these two resources most frequently:

The Complete Book of Chinese Medicine by Wong Kiew Kit - This is the clearest and most comprehensive work I have read on TCM.

The Foundations of Chinese Medicine by Giovanni Maciocia - This is a great reference tool but very expensive. I notice second hand copies are available.

Part 3 - Core Principles

Music – Any music that helps you to feel uplifted.

Meditation Tools – More tools:

www.qigong15.com/blog/relax - These recordings are powerful tools for guided relaxation and meditation.

Green Tea - Green tea is high in vitamin C and Polyphenols (antioxidants that have many health benefits). Preparing tea can be an art form. For best results turn off the kettle just as the water begins to bubble and add to a pinch or two of your favourite tea. Don't add milk or sugar.

China Life – www.chinalifeweb.com - based in London. If you can visit their shop you should. I highly recommend their Dragon Pearl Jasmine and Osmanthus Oolong.

Exercise - The evidence for the value of exercise in physical, emotional and mental health is legion. If you're looking for something more taxing than a gentle walk or a swim I recommend Bodyweight Training. The beauty of Bodyweight Training is that you don't need a gym or any expensive equipment to train. Your body is the gym. The best resource on Bodyweight Training and one that I use myself is:

Convict Conditioning – www.qigong15.com/blog/bwt - Don't let the name put you off, this material is gold.

Further Qigong Resources – Here's a list of other websites and products that I offer that can help to support you on your Qigong adventure:

www.qigong365.com - Daily Qigong inspiration for Qigong practitioners.

www.qigong15.com/blog/ - My Qigong blog, with over 200 posts on all aspects of Qigong training and practice.

www.enjoyqigong.com/qshsc - 22 week *Qigong Secrets Home Study Course*. It's the next best thing to learning directly from me. A \$4.95 two-week trial is available.

www.shaolinchikungbook.com - My first book and still the most comprehensive English language resource available on the famous Shaolin 18 Lohan Hands Qigong set.

If you wish to take certified Qigong or Tai Ch teacher training I can wholeheartedly endorse Dr Roger Jahnke's teacher training courses. Visit: <http://IIQTC.org>

Part 4 - Non-Qigong Tools

TCAR - Being mindful of what you are thinking and doing helps you to stay in the moment. Staying in the moment helps you to maintain perspective and can eliminate many sources of stress, fear, worry and anxiety. Here are the resources I have found most beneficial when it comes to changing and improving the quality of your thinking:

Anything by *Thich Nhat Hanh* - I don't really know what to say about this man that would do his work justice.

My favourite books of his are: *The Heart of Understanding*, *The Miracle of Mindfulness* and *The Heart of The Buddha's Teaching*.

Rick Hanson is a great author specialising in the art and science of changing your mind to change your life for the better and his website offers a wealth of valuable information. Make sure you've plenty of time when you visit.

Part 5 - Specific Strategies

Stress - So well known, so often referred to and yet so misunderstood. Here is a valuable resource that I recommend you study if stress is ruining your health and your enjoyment of life:

Stress Buster - How To Stop Stress From Killing You by *Geoff Thompson* - Geoff helped me enormously with the stress section of this book. His book is clearly written and easily understood. I highly recommend it to you.

Fear - Fear was a major challenge for me. If it is for you too I recommend the following resources:

Fear: The Friend of Exceptional People by *Geoff Thompson* – By my good friend Geoff again, this book really helped me to understand and come to terms with my reaction to fear.

www.vimeo.com/5895898 - *Quieting The Lizard Brain*. A great video that clearly explains why the reptilian complex wants you to be fearful, and what you can do to overcome it.

Self-Compassion and Self-Esteem – If you can't hold yourself in high regard how can you expect any one else to? Here are some powerful tools that will help you understand the mechanics of self-compassion and self-esteem:

www.qigong15.com/blog/self-esteem - My very good friend, relationship expert Michael Myerscough interviews Lisa Merlo-Booth on healthy self-esteem and boundaries. If self-esteem is an issue for you, you must listen to this recording.

www.self-compassion.org - The website of Kristin Neff one of the pioneers for bringing Self-Compassion into Western psychology. I'd also recommend her book: *Self-Compassion, Stop Beating Yourself Up and Leave Insecurity Behind*.

Motivational Resources - For those of you that need help in staying inspired, motivated and on course I recommend the following resources:

www.etthehiphoppreacher.com/ - The online home of Eric Thomas. I have often watched Eric's *Thank God It's Monday (TGIM)* YouTube videos whilst writing this book. They have helped me to keep pushing forward to the completion of the project. They are a very powerful motivator and I highly recommend them.

www.larrywinget.com - *Larry Winget* is not called "The Pit Bull of Personal Development" for nothing. He doesn't sugar coat his message. This content, whilst recommended, is not for those that are easily offended.

Note: some of the Internet URLs (links) to resources in this section were very long and complicated. In order to make them easier for you to type them into your computer I've made them shorter for you. They will still take you to the right place though. I have also used affiliate links and I will get paid a percentage for any purchases that you may make. Please rest assured that the only motivation I have for including a resource in this section is because I have personally used it and found it to be of value.

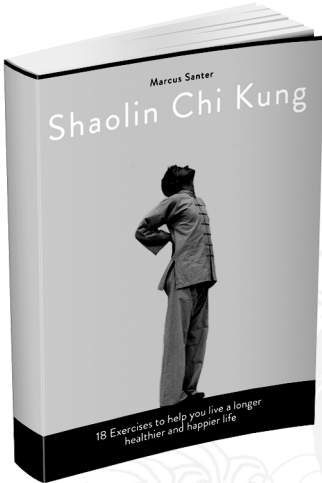
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Further Resources

Good Health is Your Birth Right

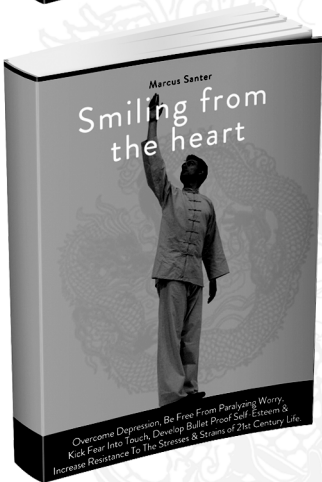


The Shaolin 18 Lohan Hands is a famous set of Qigong exercises taught by the Venerable Bodhidharma (28th Patriarch of Indian Buddhism, 1st Patriarch of Chinese Chan/Zen) to the monks of the Shaolin Temple 1500 years ago. For the first time in one volume this set is fully explored along with important Shaolin Qigong principles. It's the most comprehensive, English language resource available on this famous Qigong set.

Available for immediate download here:

<http://ShaolinChikungBook.com>

Discover a Simple Way to a Happier Life



Inside this book you'll find 29 simple Qigong healing techniques and non-Qigong tools that you can use to naturally overcome mild to moderate depression, anxiety, worry and fear, that promote healthy self-esteem and increase your resistance to the stresses and strains of modern life. You'll discover how to strengthen your Emotional Immune System and create your own program tailored to your individual needs. Use it and you can live a happier, healthier and more fulfilling life, in spite of what life may throw at you.

Available for immediate download here:

<http://SmilingFromTheHeart.com>

Daily Qigong Meditations and Inspiration



Inside this book you'll discover ingenious solutions to vexing Qigong problems, including how to make your practice work for you, how to get better and faster results, suggestions for ways to stay motivated and inspired, dangerous Qigong myths busted and so much more. The objective of this unique book is to provide you with a single Qigong meditation every single day for a whole year. This book is a beacon of daily inspiration and will help you to maintain and deepen your Qigong practice.

Available for immediate download here:

<http://Qigong365.com/qigong-daily-book/>

Further Resources

Qigong Secrets Home Study Course



Now you can benefit from my 20 years of Qigong experience learning from some of the worlds greatest living Qigong masters. Delivered in 22 weekly lessons that you can access on your computer, in the privacy and comfort of your own home.

Full details and to sign up:
<http://enjoyqigong.com>

Watch on Your TV Screen

All 22 lessons of the Qigong Secrets Home Study Course now available as a 6 DVD box set. Over 8 hours of video that you can watch on your TV, 214 pages of Pdf notes you can read on your computer and \$185 of free bonus material. But hurry, limited stock available.

Full details here:
<http://qigong15.com/blog/6dvds>

"Be Happy" Workshop

I recently taught a 6 hour "Be Happy" Workshop and recorded the event. I have edited it down to just over two hours of video that you can watch through your DVD player or computer. You'll also get the full colour notes from this workshop with your DVDs.

Full details here:
<http://qigong15.com/blog/bhw>

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