

Qi Gong: Inherited Depression

This is the third article in a three part series related to different aspects of depression

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When a patient comes to see me for concerns about depression, I always ask when it started and what the circumstances were at that time. If they tell me it started after a serious loss in their life, I know that their depression involves Lung

energy imbalances (see NHD July/Aug. 2005, *Depression and Loss*). If they tell me it started when their stress level shot up or during puberty, I know that their depression involves Liver energy imbalances (see NHD Sept. 2005, *Depression and Stress*). But, if they tell me they have been depressed as far back as they can remember, well into early childhood, I know that their Kidney energy is out of balance.

People with Kidney energy related depression will often describe themselves as having had difficulty feeling good their whole lives. Many have the sense that others seem to have an easier time being happy than they do. Some people have combinations of these three types of depression and would need to follow the Qi Gong exercise and meditation recommendations for all the systems involved.

In Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM), the Kidney energy is considered the root of the whole body, governing all growth and development as well as any inherited problems. The Kidney energy also controls bones, teeth, hair, fertility, sex drive, and urinary problems. Other symptoms that might occur with Kidney energy imbalance are ringing in the ears, low back pain, coldness in the hands or feet, or pain in the knees or feet. The meditation listed below will help to significantly improve Kidney energy and aid the treatment of this type of depression.

With depression or any other medical problem, it is always wise to consult your doctor on your options, but that is not the end of your responsibility. Antidepressants can be very necessary for your management of depression but they are not happy pills. Qi Gong is an

amazingly adaptable adjunct to whatever other modalities you are using and can really add to your sense of well-being. To find wellness each person has to be involved in their own healthcare as much as possible.

The Dantian Meditation

To do the Dantian meditation, sit with your hands on your lap, palm down or facing your belly. Do not interlace your fingers, though. Feet flat on the floor, knees at a 90 degree angle. Keep your back straight and relaxed. Shoulders should be relaxed and chin in slightly. The arch in your lower back should be flattened slightly as well. The teeth are together without clenching the jaw. Touch the tip of your tongue to the roof of your mouth unless you have high blood pressure. If you have high blood pressure, place the tip of your tongue behind your bottom teeth inside your mouth. Put your mind on the Dantian which is about 1 ½" below the belly button and centered inside the body. Breathe slowly and smoothly. Picture that the air goes all the way down to the Dantian. As you inhale, the belly expands, as you exhale the belly sinks back in naturally. Picture the coals of a fire glowing brightly deep in your belly. Imagine each breath you take is blowing on these coals making them brighter and warmer.

Continue this meditation for as long as is comfortable. You'll know that you are done if you feel like you need to get up and move around. Your mind will wander, but this is normal. Try not to be distracted by the thoughts that arise. Just let them go. The trick is not to create an entire conversation in your head. For example, when you remember you forgot to go to the grocery store, don't start planing what you'll get for dinner, just tell yourself you'll take care of it in a few more minutes.

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