

Welcome Spring in February!!

Now that we are a few weeks into the New Year, how are you doing on those New Year's resolutions? You know, lose weight, exercise, organize your finances, quit smoking, spend more time with your family, etc. Are you still on target? No? Maybe this is why...read on.

According to the Chinese, Spring began in mid-February! Unlike in the West, where we go by a date on the calendar, as well as by *visible* signs of Spring, in the East the Chinese go by what is actually happening in nature, the most subtle changes, to mark the beginning of a new season. Therefore, long before the snow melts, the ground softens or the bulbs start popping up from hiding, spring is beginning. In early or mid-February, if we really pay attention, the signs of Spring are already starting to show...the birds are singing a new song, the light has lengthened in the sky and has become brighter, and under the ground, the movement of roots and shoots has begun, creeping toward the strengthening sunlight.

Spring is the season of birth, new life, explosive growth and increasing light. You can almost watch the leaf buds forming, flowers blooming and the grass turning green. Spring calls us into action, new creativity, and movement out of our cocoons, our recliners and wintertime hibernation. Remember? As I wrote in my last article, Winter is the time for hibernation – a time of stillness, restoration, renewal, and deep listening. If we have truly experienced Winter in our beings, we will be ready for the call to action of the Spring.

Now back to my question regarding your new year's resolutions. When we make New Year's resolutions on January 1, it is in the very depth of the Winter, the time, as I said, for rest and renewal...a time of stillness, which implies non-action. The Chinese New Year, however, usually celebrated at the beginning of February, marks the beginning of Spring. If we made our New Year's resolutions at this time, we might have more chance for success. We have rested, renewed our strength, allowed ourselves to just "be" so that in the Spring we will be ready for new possibilities, new projects, new life! Now, our intentions for the new year will be better able to take root

and grow, just like the flowers and trees which can't help themselves...it just happens as part of nature's plan.

In Chinese medicine, good health is a measure of how well we have been able to live according to the Laws of Nature. The more we are able to follow them, the healthier we will be. Of course, there are some forces over which we have little control, and that is why regular acupuncture treatment and other forms of self-care are designed to keep up moving through, rather than getting stuck in unhealthy patterns and behaviors, or succumbing to environmental or other assaults.

Your first lines of defense against illness are things you can do yourself. Of course, regular exercise, nutritious eating and some form of daily meditation or quiet time are essentials at all times of the year. In Chinese medicine each season relates to certain aspects of our beings, physically, mentally and spiritually. Below are some suggestions of ways that you can attend to yourself during the Spring months to maintain good health.

- Begin some exercise, using ligaments, tendons and muscles to keep them strong and flexible;
- Begin keeping a planner so you can stay focused and organized, and plan in some fun time to enjoy the season;
- View every situation in from *at least* 2 points of view...creating more possibilities for your life and health!
- Think about your future; are you doing what you need to be doing to reach your goals? Where do you see yourself in 5 years?
- Take a walk outside; look at nature bursting forth; notice how the tiniest seedlings and grasses push up through anything, even rocks and sidewalks, and grow around any obstacle;
- Schedule an acupuncture treatment as part of a regular self-care routine to support you in staying healthy through all the seasons.

Kate Carter, Licensed Acupuncturist
Acupuncture with Kate ~ 5 N. Bentz Street ~ Frederick,
Maryland 21701 ~ 301-631-2936, x. 260