



ARE YOU AFRAID OF ACUPUNCTURE?

I would be too if I knew that it would change my life. Ten years ago, I was a software development executive in Washington, D.C. I was 70 lbs overweight, addicted to caffeine and sugar, and felt constantly anxious and depressed.

Quite frankly, my standards of feeling good were set so low that I had no idea what feeling good could look like. Because I heard acupuncture was good for stress relief, I wandered into a small acupuncture clinic, peeked through the window at the five patients looking relaxed in their chairs, and worked up the guts to go in.

That night I slept better than I had in weeks. In the days that followed, my life at work began to change. Things that would irritate me no longer seemed to, and my cravings for sugar started to subside. I had no idea how a few tiny, painless needles made this possible, but I found it easier to start

changing my habits. Within several months of treatments, I lost the excess weight, and felt younger and more vibrant.

Fads come and go, but if a profound teaching, as old as the Bible itself, has survived 5,000 years of oral tradition, it must be something truly special. It has remained relevant throughout all of recorded history.

Eight years ago, my curiosity finally got the better of me, and I resigned my position as VP for a publicly traded company to pursue a master's degree in acupuncture. My continued quest for answers led me to the clinic of Dr. Chieko Maekawa in Kona, Hawaii, where I entered into an apprenticeship.

Dr. Maekawa is a short, 80-year-old woman from Tokyo, Japan, and a devout Christian. She's a vibrant powerhouse, and stronger than most 30 year olds. She shuffles from room

to room in her tiny green shoes and long white lab coat. Her clinic is always full, with people coming from all over the continental U.S., Europe, and Japan to this remote island for treatment.

She says, “I’m just a small person, and I don’t do anything. You don’t have to believe or trust anything I say. Come see for yourself how God heals these people, and how wise He made their bodies.”

Sure enough, I’ve witnessed people standing from wheelchairs, forgetting their canes at the door, recovering from chronic pain and sports injuries. HIV patients’ viral loads drop, failing eyesight starts to return to the aged, and people with chronic depression and grief find a renewed appetite for life again.

I asked her how all this was possible. She said, “Acupuncture is simple. Health results from good circulation of healthy blood throughout the body. When fresh blood circulates to every cell, and thoughts don’t get stuck in the mind, illness has no place to hide. With good circulation, pain disappears, and the body takes care of cleaning up problems on its own. Muscles rebuild, tendons reshape, bones heal, growths and lumps are dissolved, and God’s temple is cleansed. Health is sustained through teaching the patient to move correctly, eat correctly, and think correctly. Their new lifestyle gives illness no place to develop, so everybody gets healthy and stays healthy according to God’s natural laws.”

Western medicine often treats the body as a collection of parts rather than an integrated whole. Eastern medicine looks at the body in terms of tending a garden.

When a gardener looks at a piece of land, they see pure potential. At first, they examine the health of the soil, clean out the weeds, dead growth, and any garbage that’s blown in from the neighborhood. The gardener does not make the plants grow themselves. The sunlight, wind, and rain provide the plants everything they need, and the health of the garden is a natural result of good tending.

We read in I Corinthians 3:16 that our body is a temple for the spirit of God, and “no one will get by with vandalizing God’s temple” (The Message). Let’s consider that rather than a man-made structure, perhaps the temple is better

thought of as a garden. Could illness simply be the natural process of decay that takes place when we stop tending and watering it? Conversely, could health be simply the result of following the proper rituals, at the proper time that a living temple requires for a vibrant life to naturally flourish?

When asked how illness develops, Dr. Maekawa says, “Your mind moves your body. Every movement starts with the movement of your mind. People react from their mind and not from what their body is telling them. When the

We read in I Corinthians 3:16 that our body is a temple.

mind and the body are not in agreement about what needs to be done, illness develops. Therefore, don’t compromise with the God-given wisdom of your body, even on small things. If you do, you are creating your own sickness. Listen to God’s small voice in your heart, listen to your body, and it will not lead you astray.”

Her advice to an acupuncture practitioner? “Your job is not done until you have taught each patient how to tend their own garden and follow the natural order of things. After you treat their body, and help clean their garden, guide the patient and instruct them in the ways to heal themselves, to study their own lives, and become good caretakers. Trust that God will do the rest.”

Before each patient leaves the clinic, Dr. Maekawa places her hand on their back and says a silent prayer: “May they turn their heart to You, and be guided in Your ways. Help them heal their life, and their relationships. May they always walk with You.”

As the New Year approaches, and we spend time reflecting on our lives, consider the health of your garden. What sacred rituals do you practice to tend it? Can the Holy Spirit find rest in your branches? **RMC**

Michael Dabrowski, L.Ac., practices outside Boulder, Colorado, specializing in musculoskeletal injuries, chronic illness, and mental health conditions—www.WholePersonAcu.com.