



Cultivating the Power of Joy

by Shoshanna Katzman

Throughout the world, people of every walk of life seek a state of joyfulness. According to the ancient principles of Chinese medicine, balancing the energetics of the heart is an essential component for establishing the power of joy. This is based on the Law of the Five Elements teaching us that joy is the positive emotion of the heart. On the opposite side, the negative emotion of the heart is said to be excessive joy or over-elation. This can be better understood to think of such excess as a form of anxiety.

A cornerstone of Chinese medicine treatment encompasses methods directed toward creating heart health to increase one's emotional, spiritual and physical wellness. It further serves as a preventative measure for establishing a long and healthy life, where treatment protocol includes caring for the whole body. Traditional methods include acupuncture,

Chinese herbal medicine, therapeutic massage, food therapy, lifestyle recommendations and the exercise practices of tai chi and qigong.

When the heart is in balance the power of joy is enhanced. A person subsequently enjoys a life filled with greater ease, a jubilant spirit and a 'spring in their step'. In addition, they display greater compassion, genuine sharing and kind interaction with self and others. This includes increased mental clarity combined with a robust level of insight.

Moreover, a balanced heart results in strong mind intent, will power and ability for deep reflection. Many of these positive outcomes stem from the heart's role to store shen, also referred to as spirit. Whereby, abundant shen substance promotes adequate nourishment of blood and flow of qi - both necessary components for a body free of pain on a multitude of levels.

On the other hand, a heart in disharmony leads to energetic imbalance accompanied by unfavorable symptoms. Some of these symptoms include a fast pulse, eating too quickly and inappropriate expression of joy. Moreover, other behavior that signifies heart disharmony includes lack of boundaries and unexpressed desires and feelings. To make matters worse an individual tends to overcompensate for their imbalance by overworking, which in many cases leads to burn-out, high blood pressure, and even heart attack or stroke.

A disharmony that is commonly at the root of these symptoms is traditionally known as 'excess heart fire' - a condition resulting in the acceleration of body and mind due to increased energetic expansion. Excess heart fire is said to be the underlying root cause of anxiety, along with disharmony between the heart and kidneys. The following Tranquility Qigong Exercise can be practiced to rectify such a pattern. The primary goal is to slow an individual down to re-establish harmonious flow. This serves to nurture heart and spirit and increase the power of joy - while allaying anxiety and feelings of sadness or depression.

Sit comfortably on a chair with feet flat on the floor, back straight, shoulders relaxed and head erect. Keep eyes open and looking downward throughout this exercise. Imagine there is a golden thread extending upward from the crown of the head up to the sky above. Place right hand over the 'sea of tranquility' energy point located on the center of the chest between the breasts. Traditionally this point is said to calm the energetics of the heart, which 'houses the mind'. Next place left hand over the 'sea of energy' point located 1 1/2 inches below the belly button. This point is reputed for nourishing the energetics of the kidneys which is the 'root energy of the body' - one responsible for revitalizing the energetics of all vital organ systems and effectively reducing fear. Continue by concentrating the mind on the belly and take three sets of three deep, slow and rhythmic breaths. Do so by expanding the

belly upon inhalation and contracting it inward upon exhalation. Reciting a positive affirmation to oneself before and at the end of this exercise is also helpful - filled with assuring words such as "I am safe, centered and secure". Be creative and stay focused and intent on achieving the desired goal.



Practicing this exercise a few times a week (or daily) will do a world of good. Living a life in balance maximizes chance for healthy heart qi and sustainable level of joy power. This empowers an individual to exhibit behavior that honors their true and authentic self and a sure way to inner peace and manifestation of the 'power of joy'.



Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. is an acupuncturist, Chinese herbalist, Tai Chi and Qigong Instructor as well as director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center in Shrewsbury, NJ for the past 30 years. Shoshanna is author of Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to

Cultivate Your Vital Energy and co-author of Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness. For more information, be sure to visit www.healing4u.com and www.qigong4.us.

