

The Power of a Smile

by Shoshanna Katzman



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The act of creating an “inner smile” is an ancient practice with Daoist roots. An inward smile ignites mindfulness, effortless focus, self-integration, and a more positive state of being filled with peace. It can be further directed to aspects of the body such as internal organs to cleanse them energetically. This includes anger from the liver, grief from the lung, worry from the spleen, fear from the kidney, and overjoy and sadness from the heart.

The Daoists have known for millennia that “smiling down” into the body has profound healing results. Researcher James Laird posed the question as to whether people were happy because they smiled or smiled because they were happy. Through application of electrodes on the participants’ foreheads and cheeks, Laird found that those who were tricked into smiling were significantly happier.

A University of Michigan study used photography as a cover story taking pictures of people saying “ee” or “ooo” to exemplify cheer or disgust and found that those who said “ee” were happier. And French research physiologist Dr. Israel Waynbaum found that facial muscles used to express emotion trigger specific brain neurotransmitters. He established that frowning triggers secretion of stress hormones, while smiling lowers those of cortisol, adrenaline, and noradrenaline. It also signals pain-relieving endorphins, immune boosting killer T-cells, along with producing hormones that stabilize blood pressure, relax muscles, improve respiration, accelerate healing, and stabilize mood.

There is no better time than now to begin putting the “inner smile” into practice:

- ✿ Sit comfortably, hands resting on your lap and feet relaxed on the floor
- ✿ Ground into the earth through the soles of your feet
- ✿ Hold your spine upright, lift the crown of your head upward

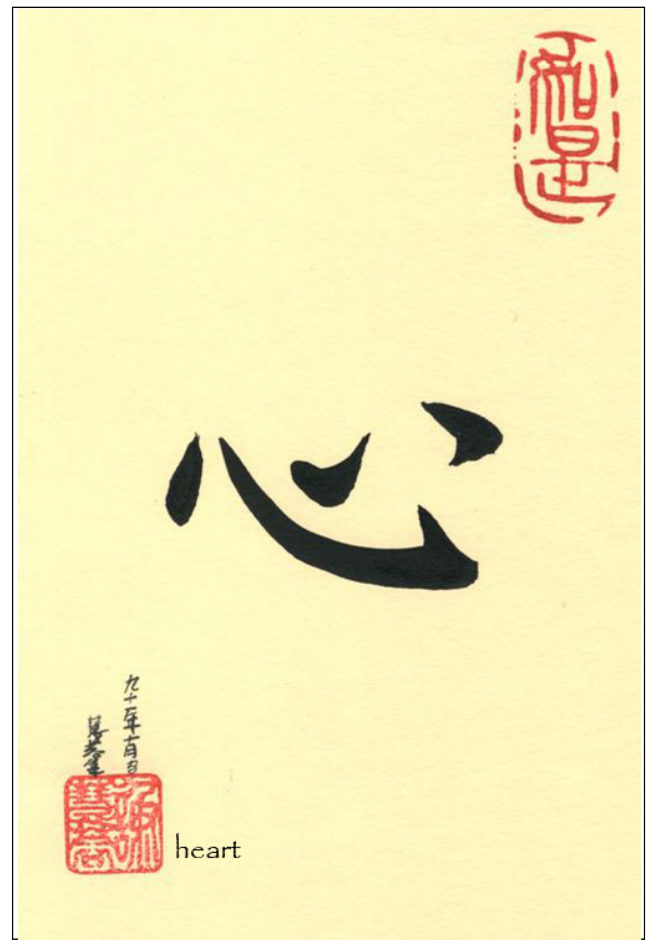
- ✿ Connect with the heaven through the crown of your head
- ✿ Relax your neck muscles and gently place your tongue on the roof of your mouth
- ✿ Soften your eyes, center yourself and look within
- ✿ Take three slow, gentle, and deep breaths into your lower belly – expanding upon inhale and deflating upon exhale
- ✿ Relax your forehead and brow, becoming mindful of your “third eye”
- ✿ Gently lift the corners of your mouth
- ✿ Draw your cheeks back as though they are heading toward a smile
- ✿ Then extend your smile into your entire body
- ✿ Feel the vibrations of your entire body being raised
- ✿ If so inclined, send your smile to any place in your body that needs extra healing
- ✿ Continue “smiling into your body” for up to fifteen minutes
- ✿ End by taking three slow, gentle, and deep breaths into your lower belly once again



Staying relaxed, patient, & compassionate with yourself throughout this mindfulness exercise is important.

If your mind wanders, direct your intention to drawing it back upon realizing that it has drifted away. Practicing this meditation technique teaches you what it feels like to “smile into your body.” It can be practiced at any time, and no one will notice – except for feeling the positive vibes. Enjoy the process and know that it will have an everlasting impact on your health, healing, and wellness.

Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. has been director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center (www.healing4u.com) in Shrewsbury, NJ for thirty-five years. She provides acupuncture and Chinese herbal consultation along with her associates Kelly Van Sickell and Heather Quinlivan. Shoshanna also offers private and group classes through her Two Rivers Academy of Taiji & Qigong. She is author of “Qigong for Staying Young: A Simple 20-Minute Workout to Cultivate Your Vital Energy”, co-author of “Feeling Light: The Holistic Solution to Permanent Weight Loss and Wellness” and recently released “Center of Power: Life Mastery through Taiji” a comprehensive online curriculum (www.yourcenterofpower.com). For more information call or text 732.758.1800.



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