

New Year, New You

by Shoshanna Katzman

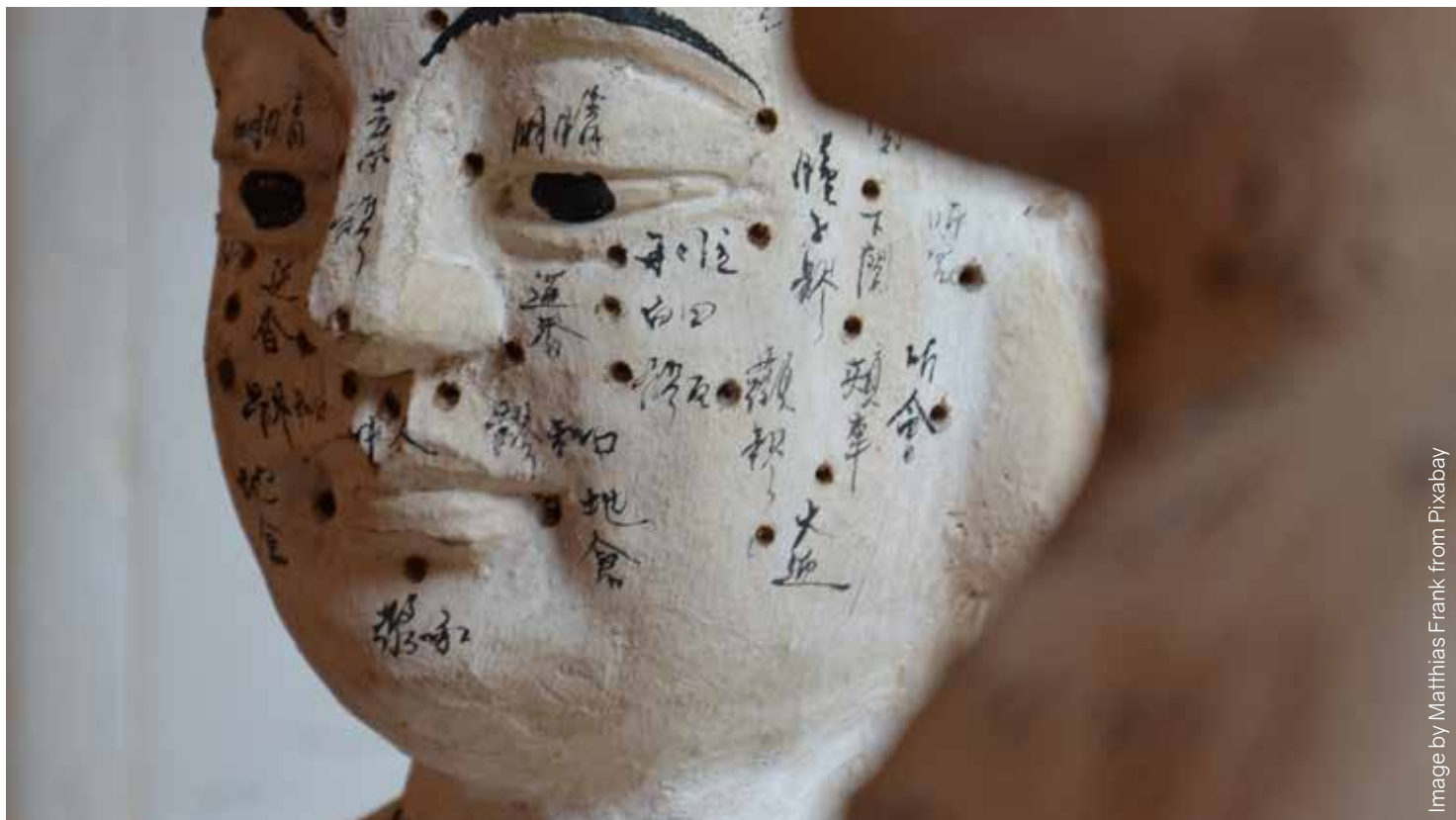


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Here we go again, it is the time of year once again to reassess one's life and set sights high for creating a plan to increase exercise, eat healthier, establish better boundaries, have more fun and the list goes on and on. Creating a list of goals is the easy part, the challenge comes with carrying them through. Doing so on a consistent basis takes a certain amount of clear focus and will power.

In Chinese medicine, mental clarity is related to energetics of the Spleen and will power to that of the Kidney. A balanced Spleen ensures that clear qi (vital energy) raises to the head and brain without becoming obstructed. While a balanced Kidney as the root energy of the body strengthens a person's will to turn "a yin idea into a yang reality". This is exactly what it takes to get the job done.

Acupuncture can help build mental clarity and strengthen Spleen energy. There are specific acupoints such as one on the crown of the head (aka Governing Vessel 20) treated with acupuncture to clear the mind, calm the spirit, and benefit the brain and sensory organs. Tai Chi and Qigong exercise is further effective for opening flow within this point as a practitioner "raises their crown by a golden thread".

Eating a predominance of warm foods and drinks is further recommended to strengthen the Spleen known as "the source of life" as it transforms and transports nutritional substances within the body. Whereas cold raw foods can be difficult for the body to digest and

diminish Spleen function. Overthinking, worry, and taking in too much information can also wreak havoc with this organ system. It is therefore recommended to take regular mental breaks to give your mind and your Spleen a much needed rest. Chinese medicine also offers Chinese herbs to build energetic function of this vital organ as well as that of the Kidney.

Many things can be done to build will power through maximizing Kidney energy. This begins with a simple Qigong exercise first thing in morning to warm-up the Kidneys (as they love warmth!). It entails forming fists and circling them over the lower back nine times in one direction, then nine times in the opposite direction while standing up or laying down.

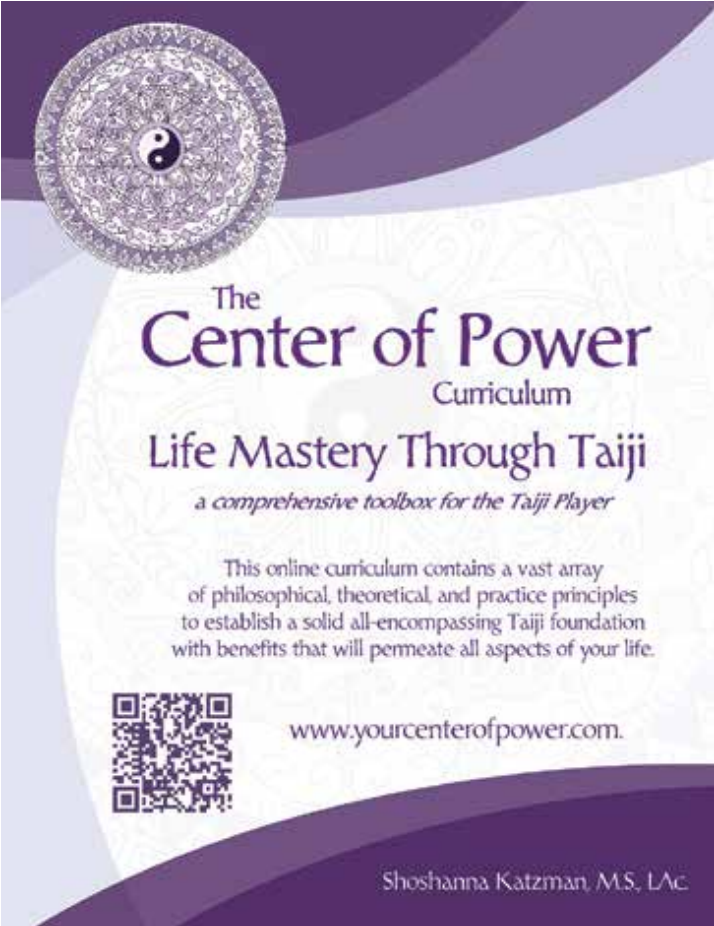
There are many acupoints treated to enhance the Kidney as the "root of life". This

includes a point a hand's width below the umbilicus known as Conception Vessel 4 which "fortifies the original Qi and nourishes the kidneys". This point can also be activated through a simple Qi-gong exercise performed while laying down – whereby palms are placed over the lower abdomen while taking three deep breaths into the belly and concentrating the mind on this point.

Eating warm foods and drinks is also recommended to keep kidney energetics strong. And keep in mind that an inordinate amount of stress, excessive fear, too much sex, and working too hard drains the Kidneys. Therefore, find ways to rest and relax and maintain a healthy work-life balance. Dressing properly during cold weather is essential as covering the lower back keeps the Kidneys warm. While wearing socks and avoiding walking on cold floors protects the Kidney 1 acupoint on the soles of the feet thereby nourishing Kidney Qi.


Allow yourself to benefit from the holistic ways of Chinese medicine. They are a sure way to reconnect with yourself and re-establish balance and vibrant energetic flow throughout your entire being.

Shoshanna Katzman, L.Ac., M.S. has been director of Red Bank Acupuncture & Wellness Center (www.healing4u.com) for 35 years in Shrewsbury, NJ providing acupuncture, Chinese herbal consultation along with Taiji and Qigong private and group classes. 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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