

Attuning with Summer – Summer Chronobiology

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Good dietary and lifestyle practices are essential to assure a long, healthy, and vital life. Long before the Chinese developed their understanding of physiology, they studied many natural influences on farming and health throughout each yearly cycle; the legacy of this study comes to us as a complete system for maintaining balance through our diets, our movement (balance of exercise/rest) and attuning with the seasons, aka. chronobiology.

Summer, or the fire phase as it is known in Oriental medicine, energetically starts in early May and waxes up to its high point at the solstice around June 20th. The Oriental medical model associates the qualities of summer and the fire phase with the healthy qualities of joy, laughter, socializing, intimacy and love, the functioning of the mind (memory, concentration, clarity, discernment, etc...) sleep, and clear speech.

From the Oriental perspective, what we feel as emotion or think as thought is not in any way disconnected from the body on an organic level. Medically speaking, an excess or deficiency of these "summer" qualities can reflect an imbalance, or lead to an imbalance in a related organ. The heart is the main related organ for the fire phase in Oriental medicine. It is given the highest importance in the body and is considered, "the emperor" of all the organs. It's associated with the functioning of the mind, and it circulates the lifeblood to all other organs.

In the West, we use language like, "cold hearted," "wearing your heart on your sleeve", and "heartfelt." The prestigious National Institute of Mental Health reports that people who live in a high state of anxiety are 4.5 times more likely to die from a heart attack or stroke. They also note *that up to 80 percent of all doctor visits are for stress-related or stress-induced illnesses*. Our organs are listening to what we think and feel!!!

I've been enjoying a book by Wayne Dyer called, "The Power of Intention." One insight from the book is, "when you change the way you look at things, the things you look at change." This is powerful to me because I see the deepest healing coming from taking on perspectives that seem true in my heart. Truth has a profound and clarifying quality of being about it. I get immediate feedback when I take time to choose truth and love throughout my day. Things stay settled, grounded, calm, peaceful, joyful, and I feel nurtured by everything I'm participating in. Then when fear, worry, and belief in scarcity come into my awareness, they have a very different quality of being about them. I get instant feedback. My feelings tell me that I've traded in my heart connection (based on love) for an idea based on fear. I then can use my free will to once again choose to maintain a heart connection.

This perspective and way of living has everything to do with lasting physical, psychological, mental, emotional, spiritual and social health. Maintaining this heart connection or "self-realization" as Dr. Dyer calls it, is how we receive our highest guidance and live our lives based on deep and abiding truth. In so doing, we keep ourselves well. It's the heart that knows what the mind can't understand, and it's through direct experience of the heart's knowing that wisdom becomes available. Thankfully, this deep peace and joy is available to us always. I intend to enjoy both kinds of warmth this summer - the kind from without and the kind from within.

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