

Find Sunken Treasure: Fall into Winter

Winter represents the Water Element and it is the most intangible of all the elements. Water can hold any shape, yet we can't grasp it and hold on to it. It has no boundaries and can find its way into the smallest of cracks. In nature it can be unstoppable and extremely fearful as we witnessed the tsunami in India a few years back.



Water is the most yin of all the elements, meaning it is the most still and internally felt. Our energy is focused inward into the darkness of our subconscious. This inward journey can feel fearful and very uncomfortable for those who cannot look inside themselves, or who don't have the ability to reassure themselves. A person with a Water imbalance is always looking ahead for a danger and calculating every possible way out of a situation in case of a perceived threat. They always plan far ahead for emergencies and are over-cautious in almost every situation. They question and double check answers with all their projects. There is also the other side of an imbalance in the Water Element where the person seems "fearless."

Most journeys through life can be fearful because we don't know what lies ahead. However, feeling fear doesn't mean there's a big bad wolf lurking in the unknown ready to jump out of the dark corners of our subconscious and devour us. What's most often lurking in those unfamiliar, dark corners could be a part of ourselves that needs healing, or even a very creative part of ourselves that could launch a whole new wonderful way of life for us.

When not faced fear can be paralyzing. That place of stuck-ness can bring up depression and even despair. During the winter and the holiday season more people are depressed and suicide is more prevalent than any other time of year.

Facing the Demon

There is a wonderful Buddhist story told about a young female warrior who has to do battle with FEAR. She was told by her teacher that she was to be ready for this battle in the next few days. The young warrior begged her teacher to not make her go through this battle because she didn't feel prepared for this terrifying event. But, the teacher insisted and so the fateful day came and the young warrior felt very small as she stood terrified in front of the huge, fierce-looking opponent – FEAR. She summoned up all her courage and slowly moved forward and asked in a shaky voice, “May I have permission to go into battle with you?” FEAR answered, “Yes, and thank you for showing me so much respect.” The young warrior then asked, “How can I defeat you when you are so much bigger and stronger than me?” FEAR replied, “My weapons are that I talk fast and get very close to your face. Then you will become completely un-nerved and do whatever I say. You can listen to me. You can be convinced by me. But, if you DON'T do what I say, then I have NO power.”



The battle began and FEAR loomed over the young warrior and got very close to her face and quickly spat out the words, “run for your life, little one, I am FEAR and I will chew you into tiny pieces and spit you out!” The young warrior stood her ground and said, “I will not run. I will not obey you. You will not scare me!” FEAR rose to his full height when she spoke those words, his eyes were red and bulging and foam was spewing from his mouth. The ground shook, the sky turned black and ominous and lightning struck all around the young warrior, yet she stood her ground and just continued to stare FEAR directly in his face, and within a few seemingly endless moments FEAR transformed into a beautiful white dove and flew away!

It was truly a day of victory for the young warrior. She had stood her ground, and FEAR was defeated!

Joyful Heart Acupuncture • Classical 5 Element Acupuncture *Harley Duff Bogley, A.P., Dipl. Ac. (NCCAOM)*

I have found that many times in my life when I too, faced my fears, that they were not nearly as scary as they appeared, scurry around in my mind. Certainly, we live in uncertain times, just turn on your TV or radio and you can receive a huge dose of fear shoved down your throat. The Chinese believe that all crises are opportunities in disguise. Fear is only a wall that blocks you from seeing the life you are meant to have. A life you can build with positive thoughts. Don't let anyone take that away from you. Like the young warrior defeat you own fear! There are great rewards that come from this battle.

Fully Immersed In the Flow

When water is flowing smoothly and not obstructed, it can yield to any structure. It is formless and yet can assume any form. Learning to “go with the flow” is part of a healthy Water Element. Being able to call forth our inner strength during difficult times is an important part of well-being.

Winter is a quiet and reflective time. Our body, mind and spirit have the space and time to replenish before spring arrives. When this element is healthy, you know your limits. You listen to your inner voice, and stop when you need to rest. The balanced Water Element manifests itself as courage, cleansing, flexibility, ambition and integrity, which lead to an upright and sparkling clear body, mind and spirit.

Our bodies are made up mostly of water. We can go many days without food but only a short time without water, which leads to dehydration. Dehydration causes extreme exhaustion. When your body is hydrated, you feel more energy. I stress the importance of drinking water in my acupuncture practice. I see it as part of the healing process that most patients desperately need.

Water Officials (Organs)

The Officials of this element are the Bladder, The Official Controller of Storage of Water, and the Kidney, The Official Controller of Water.

Iced Over: Imbalances

Typical problems for patients with a Water imbalance are that they are emotionally inaccessible and undemonstrative. They are isolated and lonely. They also can be tactless, unforgiving, and suspicious. Physically: they can suffer from hardening of the arteries, deterioration of teeth and gums, backaches, chilliness, and loss of libido. They can also suffer from kidney stones, urinary problems, low back pain, and hair loss, fatigue, hearing problems, constant thirst, edema and a host of other related problems.



Trust is a major issue in building rapport with a patient with a Water imbalance. It is difficult for them to talk about their issues because most of them have an intricate system built up inside them that covers up their fears and allows them to “look” like they are in control of their lives. They have strong wills and a huge determination to accomplish what they set out to do in life no matter what the cost, they forge ahead relentlessly. Over time these patients pay a huge price because they drain their precious reserves of energy far sooner than most.

The pendulum can swing the other way too and some of these patients have no drive or will. Most of these patients are just too scared to try any new challenges.

Most of the Water imbalances that I have seen over the years have been so riddled with fear that they are “stuck” in their lives. They are too afraid to follow their deepest desire. It’s even hard for them to visualize their dreams because their thoughts are constantly invading their minds with fear, like a machine gun with unlimited ammunition.

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Melting and Calming:

You can help support your Water element by:

- ✓ Sleeping more; go to bed earlier and get up later.
- ✓ Participate in more quiet, reflective activities
- ✓ Drink hot liquids such as soups and hot teas.
- ✓ Eat foods that are more warming like curries. Also eat seafood which nourishes the Water element.
- ✓ Drink more water.
- ✓ Meditate.
- ✓ Keep a gratitude journal.

Water, Water, Everywhere

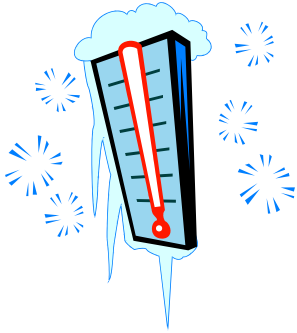
We are made up of approximately 86% water. We can live many days without food but only a short time without water because it leads to dehydration. Exhaustion is caused a lot of the time from you being dehydrated. The influence of water on your energy level is the reason I am always emphasizing the importance of drinking water. When your body is hydrated, you feel more energy.



One of the reasons swelling occurs in the extremities is because the body, in an effort to protect itself from dehydration, stores water in between the cells which causes the swelling. The rule of thumb as to how much water you should drink is to divide your body weight in half; that's the number of ounces of water you should drink a day. So, bottoms up, and DRINK YOUR WATER!

Out of the Depths of Despair:

Spirit Point of this Season



Located on the upper chest, *Spirit Burial Ground* is on the Kidney meridian.

This point is used in extreme cases of depression and feelings of hopelessness. It can literally resurrect a patient's spirit and give them the hope they need to get themselves back on track. Many times, I have seen this point lift patients out of the depths of despair and put smiles back on their faces. They report that they feel a renewed sense of hope and well-being.

Patient's Question of the Season

You once said that the Chinese based their theory of acupuncture on the Tao. What is the Tao?

The Chinese perceive themselves as being a part of the whole of the universe, a part of a one, unbroken, interconnected whole. The Tao (pronounced Dow) is how the universe works;

for this reason, it is called the way or the path. When you are living in the Tao, you are living in harmony with the universe. This way involves spontaneity, intuition and wisdom.

We experience the Tao when everything makes sense, and we feel connected with everything around us. We feel we are part of the oneness, the life force, the universe. Such an experience can also feel like falling in love for the first time. It's having a moment of absolute trust, a sense that everything will be made right because we feel protected and abundant.



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All of us have experienced this feeling, no matter how fleeting it may have been. We might have experienced it while walking through a forest, in awe of its beauty and the feeling of being part of such a magnificent view. Our eyes are filled with its beauty; our noses smell the fresh earth; our ears hear the sounds of forest life, and we can touch anything within our reach and feel its life force. All our senses have become one with nature at that moment. That is the Tao. It is about unity; our unity with all of life.

When we think dualistically in terms of exclusive opposites – either/or, right/wrong, good/bad, we create disharmony and are not living in the Tao. When we live our life with trust in our hearts and a feeling of connection to all beings and to nature we are living in the Tao.

A wise sage once said, “As soon as we trust ourselves we will know how to live.”

I send my heartfelt wishes for all and
have a very happy and prosperous new year!