



INTEGRATIVEALTERNATIVEHEALTHCARE

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Acupuncture By Christina Fick, L.Ac.

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There is an old Chinese proverb that states, “Be not afraid of going slowly; be afraid only of standing still.” As the new year is here, it’s the perfect time to set some goals and get yourself and your health to where you want it to be. Goals are the first step of accomplishing a change. Oftentimes I hear about a person who has a symptom or problem with their health, and that person does not take action to fix it. The common health ailments I see over and over are mini signs of imbalance and precursors to bigger disease patterns.

Squeezing headaches that feel like you’re wearing a hat that is too tight are a sign of inflammation, which is usually dietary related but also can be due to stress. Insomnia and waking up between 1 and 3 am is often due to a complicated pattern of problems that eventually lead to your adrenals spiking in the middle of the night,

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waking you up. The most common culprit is stress and overwork, potentially causing adrenal fatigue, insulin resistance and, even worse, your thyroid shutting down.

Bloating and stomach distention, especially after eating, are signs that your food isn’t digesting correctly. Bloating eventually can lead to acne, liver/gallbladder disharmony or colon problems. Your stomach and core organs are vital to your whole body health. The good bacteria in your guts make up 70 percent of

your immune system, so if your organs aren’t working at their prime, you are just setting yourself up for immunodeficiency. Cold hands and feet are another very common condition that tells me that your circulation is poor and can indicate a deficiency pattern, meaning you’re losing more than you’re replacing. Cold extremities can prelude things like depression, cysts or even infertility. Red

A New Year For New Goals

cheeks or flushed face is a condition that we call ‘malar flush,’ which means there is ‘Yin deficiency,’ which can come from poor diet or eating the wrong types of foods for your body. Lastly, fatigue between 2-4 pm is another sign of overworked and burnt out adrenals. Just like insomnia, afternoon fatigue can lead to a smorgasbord of other health conditions.

The bad news about these conditions is that they are signs of major imbalances in your body. The good news is, our bodies are smart enough to give us warning signals when something is off, and if you pay attention to them, they are easily reversible. All of these conditions are very treatable with acupuncture. Once the initial ‘relief care’ is given and your symptoms are less, we tackle the lifestyle change to keep them from happening again.

Here’s a good test to see how your health is doing: look at your tongue. The tongue is the only muscle in the body we can see and tells us a lot about the status of your health. Get in front of a mirror. Stick out your tongue gently and relax it so you can see most of it but not too far so you are stretching it.

1. Look at the color: is it deep red or purple? Is it pale, or does it look palish-red like fresh meat? It should be pale red. If it’s too pale, it could indicate a deficiency; if it’s too red, it could indicate inflammation or too much heat.

2. Look at the coating: is it thick or thin, and is it yellow or white? Where is the coating? Is it in the front, back, or is it peeled and spotted coating over your tongue? Ideally, you want a very thin white coat all over. Yellow coat is the most concerning, while a peeled or spotted coating also indicates major imbalances.

3. Look at the characteristics: Are there small red dots over your tongue? Is the tip significantly more red? Are the sides red, wet and smooth with no coat? Do you have any dips in your tongue or cracks that look like canyons? These are all signs of potential disease imbalances. Ideally, you want no red tip, normal looking sides and no cracks or bumps.

With the new year here, it’s a great time to get your health where you want it. Make some goals for yourself and list off the changes you want to see. Acupuncture, Chinese medicine, massage, nutrition and coaching can all help you get clues about what is going wrong and get your body to where you want it.

Take care of your body. It’s the only place you have to live. —Jim Rohn

From For The Love of Dog

were like two pieces of a whole, those two, and inseparable.

There are great times to be had between a boy and his dog, but there are also times that require no small amount of patience, and those times are perhaps the most valuable for teaching life lessons. Just off the top of my head, I can recall many legendary Jasper tales. I remember them mainly for the inconvenience of having to change plans—15-year-old girls are not keen on waiting until the next showing of a movie because of a dog, and I have to admit, I was that girl.

There was the time when he came home from school to find that Jasper had completely gutted the padded lawn furniture. It looked like the entire backyard had ‘snowed’ stuffing, and he wasn’t allowed to go anywhere until it was completely cleaned up. It took hours. Another time, Jasper ate an entire cake that had been painstakingly decorated by his mother to look like a panda bear. Not only did he suffer great digestive distress, it turned out that the panda

was a project due to be graded in cake decorating class the next day. The boy wasn’t out of hot water until he baked—and decorated—its replacement. It was not a skill he embraced into adulthood, but it certainly forced him to learn something new. I’ll have to ask my mother-in-law sometime what the grade was that she (they) got on that project.

Jasper got into many tight situations in the presence of cats, the likes of which he could not tolerate. Some of the stories surrounding his cat antics are better left unwritten, so I’ll spare the details. Suffice it to say, no cat was safe in his presence, even when seeking asylum on the top of a fence or in a tree. There’s a picture somewhere of Jasper climbing a tree—a sight certain to strike fear in even the cockiest of cats.

Birds had a similar effect on Jasper’s sensibilities. Backyard songbirds were fine, unless they tried to steal from his dog bowl. Then, quicker than expected, Jasper would pounce, and the bird would fly out of reach... most of the time. Sadly, some were too slow. And don’t

even get me started on chickens. Chickens, who gave great chase, were the most fun of all to a dog like Jasper. I know; my mother kept chickens, and Jasper diminished her flock on at least one memorable occasion.

Perhaps the most legendary Jasper tale occurred a few years after he was found. The boy found himself in the unenviable position of being outnumbered and threatened by a group of thugs. The trouble makers had a couple of Dobermans and threatened to let them off leash to attack him. Knowing he was in trouble, the boy let out a lone whistle. Jasper heard it, and cleared the 6-foot fence of his backyard and raced full-throttle toward the call. As Jasper was running through the neighborhood, zigzagging around obstacles in hot pursuit of justice, the boy’s situation was becoming dire. Then, just as the Dobermans were unleashed and began prowling menacingly forward, teeth bared, Jasper burst onto the scene. He leaped in the air, clearing the hedge overhead, landed on his feet with a grunt and then ran at one of the Dober-

mans. He body-checked the fearsome dog with such force that it was knocked unconscious. Then he ran after the other and had him on his back in a submissive posture in no time. Jasper ran to the boy’s side and together they wasted no time scrambling out of the creek and home to safety. The thugs were busy shouting reprisals and looking after their injured dogs, but that’s the last the boy saw of them.

Jasper was like that—there when the boy needed him at exactly the time in his life when he needed it most. I think that no-holds-barred relationship filled with loyalty and glory helped shape the boy into the man he is. Later in life, when the boy’s dad needed the companionship, Jasper became his trusty side-kick, and they built their own treasure trove of stories to tell. Albeit more tame, the relationship was still one of a boy (if you can call a grandpa a boy) and a dog devoted to being a great companion. I believe it’s true that every man, no matter how old, is still a boy at heart, and every boy needs a good dog.