



Painting the Rainbow Newsletter

<http://www.paintingtherainbow.co.uk>

Community Based Tai Chi & Chi-Kung for everyone

Improvement cannot always be measured, it is something you feel

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Press Pause - Learning to Relax

Relaxation can be thought of in many ways to many people. Rest, refreshment, recreation, chilling out, switching off, talking five, or maybe hanging loose.

In other words taking a break from an activity that requires concentration or hard physical effort, and doing something enjoyable or nothing at all. Giving yourself time and space to recover physically and mentally from situations that cause stress and anxiety. Clearing the mind of unhelpful thoughts, giving it time to "re-group" and reassess what is going on.

So how about at these times pressing the pause button in your head?

When people feel pressure, they may also feel mentally and physically threatened. Our instincts are to resort to our inbuilt "fight or flight" response for survival.

When the perceived threat/pressure diminishes, the body tries to restore order. So often, the body is not allowed to do this. You may feel and be exhausted but you keep pushing yourself harder and then wonder why you always feel "one degree under" and seem to acquire illnesses more frequently.

Research seems to show that many people no longer know how to switch off. The good news is even just 5 minutes a day of relaxation can make a difference to how you feel and behave.

It will help stop the flow of stress hormones and eventually strengthen the immune system.

Are your muscles relaxed or taut? How much physical tension do you have in your body?

Try this little relaxation technique to start. You can do this every day and it can be as short or as long as you want. When you first start find a place that is relatively quiet and where you will not be interrupted.

Darken the room.

Light a candle

Get comfortable

Gaze at the flame.

If your mind wanders, bring your focus BACK to the flame.

Do this for as long as you wish

Your mind will feel calmer now and thus so will your body. It has taken its "time out".

Initially, you may feel uncomfortable about practising relaxation. Or maybe your busy mind will not allow you sufficient time and space to relax. This is not unusual.

If you find this happening to you try pausing a few times during your day to encourage your mind to stop thinking about anything in particular—and simply slow down.

Many opportunities occur naturally throughout the day that enable you to do this, such as when you are—

Cleaning your teeth

Waiting for the kettle to boil

Waiting for your toast to cook

Waiting at traffic lights

Waiting for the train/bus

Standing in a queue

Booting up your computer.

Try and slow down the pace at which you do everything too, Eat and drink more slowly, walk more slowly feeling your

feet connect with the floor, take in more of your surroundings and savour moments. Do not make your life a race to beat self-imposed and often unachievable targets.

Start the day with a cup of lemon and ginger tea (lemon to uplift you and ginger to settle the stomach) and maybe end the day with a cup of chamomile tea to promote calm and soothe you to sleep.

Whatever age you are sometimes all you need to feel better about life is to just press that pause button once a day and take a deep breath in and a slow exhale. You know it makes sense so why not give it a go?

Oh I nearly forgot I have been told TAI CHI is a great pause button !!!!!!!!



Life's Little Lessons

So often, it is those apparently insignificant things that can be important - like a smile from a stranger or compliment from a friend—that little ingredient that can brighten a day. In the same vein, it is often the seemingly little lessons that can be gained from the study of Tai Chi that makes all the difference to how one views the world, and more importantly to how one responds to it. With this in mind, I would like to share some of the little, but fundamentally important, lessons that I have learned from my journey along the Tai Chi path.

Do not be taken in by appearances—look beneath the surface:

Probably the first lesson we learn from Tai Chi is not to take things at face value; we learn to look beneath the surface.

This lesson is learned through a simple examination of the yin and yang nature of Tai Chi. By embracing and

understanding its fundamental underlying concept of duality—that Tai Chi is both for health and relaxation and for self-defence; both passive and violent.

How many people are initially surprised, if not disappointed to discover that the root and function of these slow, flowing, gentle movements of relaxation are deeply grounded in civil combat and self-protection? I have had prospective students walk out of a trial class in total disgust at being told that part of the Brush Knee involved a strike to the face.. Who would suspect that the graceful dance-like movements, both aesthetically pleasing and calming, could be a devastating code of self-defence moves-in effect a long graceful kata?

By accepting that Tai Chi is outwardly apparently very yin but contains the possibility of extreme yang, we learn to see a deeper significance in Tai Chi-and by extrapolation, we can learn to see a deeper significance in the world around us.

We learn not to assess people by outward appearances-their physical appearance, their clothes, or even what they have to say. We learn to look deeper, into the heart and soul of the person; and if we choose to judge at all, we judge them by their actions. What they do to make the world a better place. Clothing and fashion statements are irrelevant. We learn to look past that outward protection of 'self' until that projection becomes like emperor's new clothes. We learn that a smart new suit looks good, but holds no more promise or honesty or reliable service than a well-worn, outmoded suit.

We learn, quite simply, to see beneath the carefully created image that people choose to project and to tell the difference between people who merely talk the talk (or dress the talk) and those who truly walk the talk.

We become discerning when listening to conversation: Aware of the nuances below the surface; reading the unconscious signs of body language; aware of the verbiage and political

expediencies so easily so easily promised-and forgotten just as fast. We learn to listen for the truth.

We learn to look within ourselves too. We see through the constant interplay of emotions and fleeting thoughts and learn to get to know our true selves through quiet introspection and contemplation. We look below our own projected image of self and get to know our true inner nature, enabling us to act in accord with our deepest principles and beliefs.

While we learn to look beneath the surface on an individual and group level we can also learn to look beneath the apparent chaos (wu-chi) the world around us, and slowly discover a cyclical orderliness of some personal change-cycle of growth, death, and re-birth. As we see the greater picture of Tai Chi and understand its form, so we can gain an understanding of the natural pattern of the world around us and learn to live in harmony with man and the world around us.

LESSONS TO FOLLOW:

- Be present in the now - the only moment in time that exists is the present.
- The earth experience is one of duality - of good and bad; yin and yang.
- Going with the flow - be flexible, yet centred.
- There is power in softness - yielding.
- Fast does not mean better - avoiding the rat race .
- Embrace Tiger - facing your fears.
- Never be double-weighted - the intelligence of not opposing force with force.
- Ride the Tiger - embracing a weakness and turning it into a strength.
- Meditation in motion—mindful movement and body awareness.
- Non-confrontational, yet effective - using your adversary's force against him.
- The stillness at the centre of the circle

- Wu-Wei - not doing, but being done.
- Monkey mind - quieting the chatter.
- Maintaining balance and perspective.
- Breathe deeply.
- Poise and posture - avoiding unnecessary strain and fatigue.
- The cyclical nature of life.



PLEASE NOTE:
Please send your Newsletter contributions for future issues to markpeters@kaiming.co.uk

Tai Chi Camp

August 4th & 5th 2018

Weoley Hill Village Hall, Bournville
£40 members £60 non-members

Each year we have a focus for the weekend camp and this year is Professor Cheng Man Ching's three levels – Heaven, Man and Earth. I briefly explored the Heaven level in this newsletter but the camp will give us the time to explore each element in more detail through mindfulness, exercises and applications.

Saturday will start with chi-kung and mindfulness and build gradually throughout the day. It will be suitable for all levels and is intended to deepen our love and understanding of Prof. Cheng's unique approach to tai chi.

Sunday Will be Weapons Day. I will be teaching tai chi Fan form. The form is relatively simple to learn and was taught to me by Grand-Master Tan Ching Ngee of Singapore
DVD's will be available at £20 and fans (by order) at £15.

I look forward to hearing from you. Contact details at the top of the newsletter.