EMOTIONS: HOW TO EXPLORE THEIR RICHNESS AND AVOID EXCESS

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Emotions play an important role in Classical Chinese Medicine (CCM). According to CCM, there are two major causes for disease – environmental factors, or post-natal Qi, and excessive emotions which can cause energetic blockages in our bodies. What’s the difference, then, between healthy emotions and toxic ones? Emotions are what make us human, and they can be both beneficial and harmful, depending on how we handle them.

One factor is the effect our emotions have on others, especially if they become excessive. When we act on our emotions, we are still subject to the laws of cause and effect. If we’re angry and lash out at someone, there are consequences to that action. If we constantly worry about our adult children, for example, they often feel we don’t trust them to run their own lives. If we are always fearful about world events, many times, others either buy into that fear or avoid us. If we smother people with love, they usually feel their sense of freedom and independence has been compromised. During times of excessive grief, compassion is often stirred in those around us but, if taken beyond the point of an “acceptable” grieving period, it usually causes more isolation for the person suffering.

What to do then? How do we nurture the richness of our emotions without causing harm to others or ourselves? Emotions can take us into unexplored realms. They are what connect us to our spiritual body and can bring us into multi-dimensional layers within our own psyche and subconscious mind. When we love our emotions and allow them to be – feeling into the deepest portions of ourselves – we create an opportunity for deep inner exploration. When we’re not afraid of our emotions, no matter what they are, following that feeling to wherever it might lead, we honor that part of ourselves. Someone may look at us and not even know what is happening.

This does not mean we are suppressing an emotion. To suppress is to see the emotion as it comes up and refuse to honor it or really feel it, stuffing it down to be dealt with “later” – a “later” that often never comes. This can result in an energetic imbalance in our organs and/or meridian system, depending on the emotion involved. In Chinese Medicine, an over-abundance of grief or sadness can end up in the lungs, if not purged or let go of. Fear ends up in the kidneys, anger in the liver, anxiety in the heart, and worry in the spleen. Once there, we might not even know we have a problem until it manifests into a related disease. Medical Qigong helps people rid themselves of these toxic emotions, and there are also ways to do this work yourself (please see Calendar for classes I offer). During therapy sessions, clients are often given “scripts” in the form of Qigongs that self-empower them to take charge of their own health, either between sessions or when therapy is no longer needed. Both methods can be used to cleanse the body of excessive energetic imprints. A Medical Qigong Therapist assists clients by purging the channels for them through energetic work, adding “clean Qi” to the body and making sure it flows throughout the system, as well as helping clients get to the root of the issue to ensure continued health and well-being.

The key to not building up toxic emotions in our bodies is by cultivating the ability to let go. Whenever an emotion comes up, explore it thoroughly, welcome it, and identify where it’s located in your body. That will help facilitate a better understanding of the emotion. If we feel an ache in our heart, who or what is that situation related to? Don’t hide from it; acknowledge it and explore the feeling, allowing it to come up. Then, decide what can be done about it, if anything. If we’ve had a fight with a loved one, maybe we need to make amends. If the situation is better left alone, then accept that and let it go, knowing this isn’t the time to address the issue.

If we feel a deep sadness and it’s hard to breathe, sending compassion to the lungs and dealing with the grief as best we can allows the sadness to move on. This can be a long process, at times, but suppressing the emotions does *not* make them go away. They just hide inside our bodies, waiting until we’re ready to deal with them. If fear makes our kidneys hurt, face those fears. If we’re feeling angry, is the sensation held on the right side beneath the ribcage (the anatomical position of the liver)? Work through the anger and let it go. Buddha had wise words regarding anger. He said: “Holding on to anger is like grasping a hot coal with the intent of throwing it at someone else; you are the one who gets burned.” If we overthink everything or constantly worry about the past or the future, are there digestive issues? Overthinking and worry cause an imbalance in our spleens which holds the energetic portion of our food.

Getting in touch with our body and emotions is an important first step in keeping ourselves healthy on both a physical and energetic level. Bringing our mind into it, too, is another important factor. There are positive aspects to each organ as well as negative ones. They are: courage for the lungs, wisdom for the kidneys, love for the liver, tranquility for the heart, and trust for the spleen (trusting that everything will work out just fine). When we’re able to add this component, focusing on the positive emotions, once we’ve worked through the negative, we can build up our organs and meridian system to a more peaceful state of equilibrium.

It's always a process but well worth the effort. Dealing with our emotions on a mental, emotional and energetic level nourishes mind, body, and spirit, ensuring our overall health and helping us to enjoy a happy and productive life.

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