

Albany Acupuncture Health and Wellness Newsletter

by

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Preparing for a Healthy New Year

Number 10

March 2015

Happy Chinese New Year

According to the Chinese Astrological calendar, we are entering into the Wood Goat Year. I will get into what this year will mean for you in a minute. 2014 was the Year of the Wood Horse. One of the core messages from last year was take special care not to get injured. Well I had one case that dramatically demonstrated that advice.

I have a good friend, Bill who was injured in a paddle board accident in August last year. His doctor originally thought he just bruised his shoulder. However, this incident ended in his having major surgery reattaching two tendons as well as shaving down a bone from an old shoulder injury. Even with opioid pain medicine and a nerve block, the pain became unbearable in the days and weeks after surgery. He had to sleep sitting up and only slept for 1-2 hours at a time. Not good. His medications were changed several times until he found some minor relief from the pain. Fortunately Bill is strong and healthy to begin with and he was able to endure.

Physical Therapy and Acupuncture

Soon as he was able, Bill started physical therapy. His physical therapist told him it would take a year of recovery to get back full function of his arm. He was also told that whatever range of motion he had achieved by week 8 to 10 would be the amount he would have to live with. Bill told his physical therapist that he wanted to get back 100% of his function and that he would do whatever it takes to get there.

At first, he did very gentle movement like taking his arm out of the sling and letting his arm hang down was the only exercise. He did these exercises 4 times per day. During this whole injury and recovery I was treating him with acupuncture and herbs. The acupuncture was helping reduce the pain and speeding up recovery from the surgery; however, when the physical therapist expressed concern that Bill's range of motion wasn't progressing fast enough I decided Bill would do one of his PT exercise sessions while I was treating him with acupuncture. This combination of treatments took the whole PT session to the next level.

The proof that this is working is that Bill's physical therapist is seeing the necessary improvement and he is right on track with his recovery. At two and a half months post-

surgery Bill has started using weights with his exercises and he is progressing quickly towards full recovery and range of motion. I'm telling you this story because if you every need to have surgery and physical therapy think about getting regular acupuncture too. It will make a huge difference as it has done for my friend Bill.

The Year of the Wood Goat

Now on the good stuff for this year. There is a lot to talk about for this year but the main theme is groups. Working in groups will be more productive than working alone. Goats like to be together, they are a herd animal and they love to play and carouse. Unlike the horse who as a new born takes a while to be steady on its feet the baby goat can jump straight up into the air shortly after it is born. So right away this year we can gain the benefit of the group. To partner up with someone is beneficial.

I have just completed the first 21 Day Purification Cleanse Group for 2015 and it was a big success. Working as a group is helpful in a variety of ways. You are not alone, you benefit from the experiences of others and you can get support and acknowledgement for your successes and challenges. I will start my spring 21 Day Purification Cleanse May 11, 2015. Let me know if you are interested.

The Buck Institute – Diet and Dementia

I had the great pleasure of touring the Buck Institute for Research on Aging in January and have just been back to attend a panel discussion on the link between diet and dementia. The discussion was between two scientists from the Buck Institute, Dale Bredesen, MD and Brian Kennedy, PhD as well as Rebecca Katz, MS, director of The Healing Kitchens Institute at Commonweal and author of the new cookbook *The Healthy Mind: Big Flavor Recipes to Enhance Brain Function, Mood, Memory and Mental Clarity*.

The defining message from the talk was what you eat matters in regards to your brain's cognitive functioning. The scientists at the Buck Institute in conjunction with UCLA studied how food affects the brain and they have found that there are 85 foods that effect how we feel and think. Dr. Bredesen stated that when the early signs of dementia appear, we have a decade in which to reverse the disease. Some of you have seen the study published last fall in *Aging*, September 2014, Vol6 N9 *Reversal of Cognitive Decline: A Novel Therapeutic Program* by Dale E. Bredesen www.impactaging.com. In this small study, cognitive decline was improved for 90% of the participants. Dr. Bredesen emphasized that those who followed the dietary advice received the greatest benefit.

So what is the secret? Basically it is a low carbohydrate diet with lots of vegetables, healthy fats and protein from wild or sustainably raised sources. Rebecca Katz emphasized that food needs to taste great and all her cook books are based on getting great flavor. In her *Cancer Fighting Kitchen Cookbook* she points out that if a person is only able to eat one or two bites of a food it should have a great flavor. We need to find what it is in food that excites us and start there. Food empowers us. So check out these books and studies if you want to get a leg up on the latest in leading edge brain science and great, tasty recipes that help combat the negative effects of aging.

In Health
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