

The DRAGON

Newsletter

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The Way of the Dragon---School for health, healing and martial arts

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Greetings from Master Wu

As we complete week five of our stay at home, we are getting a bit silly. My marvelous daughter, Morgan and my wonderful wife, Maureen were having a “crab dance off.” Literally, moving side to side like crabs! I am not much better in refraining myself from doing the silly dance too. It brought a much needed laugh. My eight year old son, Gabe, is relaxing the family by saying “chicken” in the middle of a discussion that was too serious for him. “Chicken” has become his magic word to let us know that things are getting too intense---to lighten up, he implies. In turn, when he is having a hard time centering his mind and body, I will say the word, “chicken”, to him as a reminder for him to calm his body. He will also massage the middle of his palm to assist him in calming his mind.

Lately, I have found the need to remind myself more often to stay motivated and focused! For many years, I have been trying to KEEP IT SIMPLE, with a less is more attitude. I have found myself getting more distracted with minutiae and becoming more apprehensive by the trivia. I keep reminding myself of the life philosophy, “Don’t take corners; don’t take short cuts. Do what you can and the best you can at this moment. The future, the outcome is determined by what I do today. I do what I can with what I have and what I know today.” Like an amazing friend and engineering/construction mentor articulated to me numerous times, “Do it right the first time.” Although it may take more time initially, it will be worth the effort because you will not have to redo the work at a later time.

It is fitting to do more and take more time in doing the work that used to be straightforward before the pandemic hit. People that are able to do more, are doing more, because there are those that can’t do their part due to circumstances out of their control. The even flow, the balance of life continues, otherwise, things will fall further apart for all of us. There are amazing people that are working extra hard to keep the world moving. Like the school teachers, working harder to teach with less down time and coming up with new and ingenious ways to teach. And, like the parents, doing double and triple duties, juggling working from home and helping their kids with Distance Learning ... How can we do more, when we may feel that we are already stretched thin with limited resources? I believe, we can remind ourselves that we are more resilient than we have given ourselves credit for. We are “inherently enlightened.” We can tap into our inner resources by raising our *shen*, the spirit of vitality, the living quality of our being, and continue to do the best we can.

If you are not on Master Wu’s email list and would like to join his on-line classes please email him: masterwuwenching@gmail.com

*Heart and Dragon drawings by Viktoria O.
(Thank you! Viktoria)*

In last week's online classes, I have been directly and indirectly working on this model for our classes. To raise our vitality of spirit, we need to first relax the mind and the body. Otherwise, the tensed body and stressed mind can be magnified negatively. We want to raise the good qi (energy) to boost our vitality, not giving more fuel to the stress. In the Eastern medicine, when energy is scattered, it will rise. When this happens to our body, our body-system is experiencing *entropy*.

In the relatively distant past, when I was studying and working as an engineer, the term *entropy* was used in physics and in thermodynamics. Entropy is a measure of disorder that exists in a system. It is also a measure of wasted energy. That is, the energy that is unavailable to do the task at hand. It is lost due to inefficiency. In Tai Chi, Qigong, Liuhebafa and Kung Fu practices, we are also trying to reduce entropy. To achieve that, we learn to *actively* relax our mind and body. Then, we raise our spirit of vitality to become more focused and effective in what we want to manifest, whether it is for work, family, health or martial arts. Once we have reduced entropy in our body, our training and any other tasks that we do become more efficient and effective.

I hope the *Active Relaxation Qigong* described below will be of help to keep entropy in your body low, help you be more relaxed, and allow your vitality of spirit to be high!

Active Relaxation Qigong

The three concepts:

1. **Relax from top of your body down to your feet.** When energy is scattered, it tends to rise. We may become *hotheaded* because our qi is getting stuck in our head!
2. **Focus on exhalation.** To inhale, we increase the volume in our lungs by raising the rib cage. To do that, our intercostal muscles, the groups of muscle that help form and move the chest wall, will contract. It is much easier to relax during the exhalation stage when the muscles are not contracting. Perhaps, that's one of the reasons why people say, "Laughter is good medicine." When we laugh we are exhaling more. Let's laugh more!
3. **Visualize your body expanding.** Expansion is loosening. Think of the bigger picture. The sea is far-reaching; and the sky is all-embracing (Chinese idiom). We will get thru *it*.

Description:

1. Start visualizing and relaxing from the top of your head down the front of your body to your toes. As detailed or as general as you want. At each section of your body, pay attention to exhaling to that part and visualize it expanding and loosening. You can take 3 breaths or 10, or more, from head down to toes.
2. Next visualize and relax similarly down the back of your body to the bottom of your feet.
3. Take a deep breath. When you exhale, make the sound *song*, extenuating the ending for a few seconds. The sound you produce should be similar to a mallet hitting a gong. Mentally scan down from your head to your toes as you exhale. Visualizing your body as a glass of water. The vibration of the *song* sound gently vibrates and loosens all the stuck fragments (energy) and allows them to settle down to the bottom of the glass (out of your feet). The *song* sound is like a calming church bell ringing peacefully.

It can take you 1 to 5 minutes to do this Active Relaxation Qigong sequence. Do this exercise throughout the day. It is not natural to be in a stressed state 24-7. Recognize when you are not in a relaxed state and try to consciously reduce the length of your stressed state each time it arises. Take a break from your stress! Your mind and body will thank you.

