

NUHERBS SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

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Being a great Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner is not just about empathy, compassion, interaction, intention, presence, and awareness. It is a continued and dedicated practice of cultivating these aspects within in order to hold the space of healing and possibility for another. Based on the concept of qi, this medicine inherently reflects the importance of relationship, whether it is between yin and yang, internal and external, or self and others. In order to be a great practitioner, an enriched understanding of relationship begins with personal cultivation as an integral aspect that allows for self-growth and reflection. This further enhances interpersonal relationships and therefore resonance with a patient, improving the ability to approach all interactions with a compassionate heart and a clear and open mind. In addition, since cultivation addresses the heart and mind, it improves mental clarity and therefore the ability to understand Chinese medicine on deeper levels as part of a continual process.

Chapter 8 of the *Huang Di Nei Jing Ling Shu* states all methods of needling should be rooted in spirit. Cultivation serves the spirit and allows one to better serve patients through multiple ways. First, it allows for a more grounded and clear interaction, the optimal space to be in when working with a patient, helping to establish trust and open communication. Immediately after practicing some type of cultivation, like Qigong, energy is more settled, leading to a space of clarity and calm. In addition, cultivating mindfulness and compassion has a cumulative and exponential effect on healing, improving health, vitality, longevity, and burnout prevention, all while addressing one's own spirit, heart and character.

Cultivation of a healing presence is a self-empowering process of reflection, internal work and observation. It allows for the space to connect to oneself and others at the highest vibration, giving the space to breathe and relax around any inner turmoil, blockages or obstacles in the mental, emotional and even physical spheres. This allows for the healing process of

discovering, owning and continually growing in a natural authentic alignment through holding a space of love and acceptance. This space helps raise the vibration from illness to wellness, where having a healing presence begins from within.

The process of self-cultivation is continual and therefore essential to the makings of a great Traditional Chinese Medicine practitioner. It is where one can ponder and reflect on questioning the transpersonal process of healing in terms of discovering how to hold a place of universal consciousness, for oneself as well as others. It allows one to see patterns that are not working, particularly mental and emotional issues that are not being addressed. Belief systems and perspectives will either feed and nurture connection to self and others or create distance from it and these inform understandings of relationship with self, others, and this medicine.

The more one can deepen the ability to hold a space of love and compassion, the more one can see how it is always a choice to recognize when pain and disease is an opportunity for growth and healing. The HeartMath Institute's study *The Electricity of Touch: Detection and Measurement of Cardiac Energy Exchange Between People*, determined that the heart's electromagnetic field, which can be measured by an electrocardiogram (ECG) in one individual, could be detected and measured in another. The results of this study show that "when people touch or are in proximity, a transference of the electromagnetic energy produced by the heart occurs." Further research shows that negative emotions and stress result in erratic and disordered heart rhythm patterns that in turn upset the nervous system, impairing judgment and mental clarity while positive emotions have the opposite effect. This means that during more positive emotional states, like when cultivating a healing presence of mindfulness and compassion, the heart's pattern is more ordered and stable, resulting in the enhancement of cognitive function, reinforcing positive feelings and emotional stability. These findings show

that a healing presence can therefore not only benefit how an individual perceives, thinks, feels, and performs but those who are in proximity of that individual as well.

If positive emotions increase the brain's ability to make good decisions creating psychological and physiological benefits that affect everyone, then it is imperative to continue a practice of cultivating a healing presence. By continually creating a space where mindfulness and compassion can reside from one heart to another, one can be a positive influence that uplifts and serves patients and the community in the best possible way, encouraging meaningful changes in the lives of others and in the world, ultimately empowering all to become happy, healthy individuals.