

Constitutional Complexity

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For my mother - Beris Evelyn Whelan
hill-walking octogenarian, avid bookreader, teacher
of history and archetypal EB
with deepest gratitude for love and life

Introduction

In my mind, as I have been writing this material, I have been addressing two kinds of readers. One is the student of holistic medicine, perhaps studying with me in the Southern Institute of Medical Herbalism, or perhaps from some other path of study, the other is the person who has come upon this work from the living book of my website and, for good reasons, for their own health journey, or to help someone they care for, they want to deepen their understanding of the fascinating subject of the Constitution, and the many layers of complexity that come with it.



In either case, I have imagined a keenly interested reader, someone who wants me to go into depth, to not hold back and, most importantly, someone who wants to learn what can actually be done with this knowledge. A person who wants to learn what follows so that they can put it to some good use. To that end and, because I am certain that the best learning happens when we experience for ourselves how something works, there are a number of key

points throughout this work that I speak to the reader, as if they were with me in a room, when I ask them to try one or another kind of ‘thought experiment’ to make what I have been talking about become real, and palpable.

The essence of these ‘experiments’, using different methods for different subjects, have the same objective. It is to get you, the reader, to connect with, and grow your relationship with, your own ‘Nature’. Which we could also describe as the self-healing intelligence that lives within every cell and part of you.

This subject is at the very heart of holistic medicine and it is at the root of all the old ways of healing, wherever they developed in the world. Every ancient tradition of medicine describes the same thing in slightly different ways. In Latin we called it the ‘*vis medicatrix naturae*’; which means the ‘healing force of nature’.

Whatever we choose to call it, It is not something that you have to go anywhere to find, it is already in you, in a great many ways it is you, and yet the vast majority of us do not understand it, or know how to connect to it, at least not without fear and misunderstanding.

From a lifetime of interest, study and practice, I will love to, and I will be deeply honoured, to be your guide into the fascinating material that follows. Of course, no-one except you will ever know whether

you do the exercises, but when I get to the parts where I ask you to pause and take some breaths to think about or feel something within, I do hope you will play along. It will be so much more powerful, and fun, if you do and, whilst this whole subject is a most interesting one in any case, if you own it for yourself, by having your own experiences with it, then it can literally be life-changing.



WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

—WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

Healthy Doubt

The better you can understand your Nature, or someone else's Nature, the better you can work with it. Knowing this, all the ancient traditions of medicine evolved ways to describe what they observed as some key differences between people to help better understand, and work with, their Nature.

In the tradition of the Western Herbalist, as distinct from, for example, the great traditions of Ayurveda or Chinese medicine, we follow a thread back to the Ancient Greeks and the Egyptians before them. They described some of the key differences between people in how everyone always tends to be at least a little more to one side or another of two important spectrums. One that ran from hotter to cooler, and the other that ran from dryer to damper.

You may have already covered this ground, through study, or the introductory material on my site that led you to this work. If you have gone through the 'working it out' process you might already have some idea of what constitution you are. I say *might*, because it can be fiendishly difficult to work

yourself out for sure. In fact, it is usually harder to work yourself out than anyone else. There is, therefore, a good chance that you have some doubt about exactly which constitution you are. If so, good. We do not need to rush to get rid of those doubts in this important matter. They are healthy doubts, they will help you to find the truth of the matter.



In a few moments, I will ask you to stop reading, close your eyes, and simply take a few deep and slow breaths, in and out, while you embark on the first of the ‘thought experiments’ in this living book. Closing your eyes and breathing deeply is all you will ever have to do to bring your awareness inwards when we make these inquiries, There will be no special technique to learn. Closing your eyes and focusing on your breathing will easily and quickly work.

The first question, which I will ask you to ask yourself shortly, after talking about the process a little more, will be *‘do I think I am more of a cooler or a hotter person and, at the same time, do I think I am more of a dryer or a damper person?’*

You may already know the answers to those questions, but I will still encourage you to try this exercise in a few moments anyway, because thinking you know and actually feeling you know are not always the same thing and ‘who’ we are

asking the question of here, is our innate, feeling, intuitive ‘intelligence’; our Nature.

The answers you get by appealing to this force of Nature generally come back in the form of intuitive feelings that we then interpret into thought. If we give such feelings a chance to exist beyond their first impression, it can be felt how they can run quite deep and be rather complex. It will be exceptionally helpful, for anyone, to get better at listening to these feelings, for all kinds of good reasons.

Initially, with this first inquiry, when we are reaching inwards to get a sense of our own constitutional tendencies, the most common outcome for a person doing this for the first time, or even the first few times is that, whilst there may initially be a sense towards one side or another, there will also come back a feeling of uncertainty, of doubt, because the true answer is likely to be complex. We are hotter in some ways and cooler in others and, at the same time, we are dryer in some ways and damper in others.

We don’t like doubts, we don’t like how they feel. We don’t like it when we don’t know the answers, when we feel unsure. However, most things that are really interesting are not simplistic. They are not black or white, yes or no, they are complex. In fact, it is their complexity that makes them interesting!

You’ve heard of the force of entropy in the Universe,

how everything, including energy itself, gradually declines. Yet there is an opposing force that can be seen in the way that life evolves from the simplest organisms to more and more complex forms of life. There is a world of difference between the blade of grass and the ant that crawls upon it. Between the wriggly worm and the human being reading and writing these words!

The truth is that everyone has both hotter and cooler elements within themselves and everyone has both dryer and damper elements within themselves. We all occupy both sides of both spectrums to at least some degree therefore, depending on what you are focusing on, you could potentially see either side as being dominant.

What I am saying here is one of the hardest lessons for any student of holistic medicine to learn and, if you can get it now, right at the beginning, then everything that follows will be a hundred times easier. What I am saying is, even though of course it is uncomfortable, and challenging, that doubt is not your enemy, that it is in fact your friend. You don't need to get rid of it. Far from it, if you learn to make room for it, and accept it, then it can guide you on the most important quest of all, to find the truth!

THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

Please try the exercise now, or as soon as you are ready. Take as many breaths as you need and take as long as you like. These are beautiful questions, they will bring you into the murky, uncertain but also wonderfully alive and complex being that is within you. In your own words, in your own way, ask yourself




‘do I think I am more of a cooler or a hotter person and, at the same time, do I think I am more of a dryer or a damper person?’



— CONTINUING

Healthy doubt

There are a number of ways that we will examine the constitutional spectrums in the writing that follows. Even if you have healthy doubts now, there is a high likelihood, by the time you go through this work, that you will reach a point of certainty about your constitution.



Many times, a person who is rather close to the middle on one spectrum is clearly much further out to the edge of the other, hotter to cooler, or dryer to damper spectrum. However, everyone always has a tendency to be more to one side than the other on both spectrums, always. Therefore, everyone always belongs to one of just four constitutional archetypes and, by at least 18 years of age, often less, it can always eventually be worked out which one it is. However, it can take time, and it can be complex, and you have to be prepared for your first impression to be wrong.

Doubts can be healthy, and they can certainly be necessary, but they never need to be permanent. However much doubt you have about any of this, including what your own constitution is,

including how good you can be in working out the constitutions of others, I can promise you, if you keep an open mind and keep taking in the information, that you will eventually come to a place of certainty, both for yourself as well as anyone else whose Nature you seek to see.

And then, something very interesting and actually rather exciting happens, which is you will start getting insights. You will see qualities in yourself, and people around you, that will show you how profoundly influential the Constitution is to our Nature, to who we are and how we are. Your initial doubts will have been like a light that illuminated your search for the truth and, once you start seeing the truth, you won't stop seeing it!

My goal in this work is to provide you with a good map, and some useful tools, to help you get oriented into this terrain, but this will be your own journey of discovery, and you will get insights about yourself and others that will entirely belong to you. Your journey will be uniquely your own and you will see complexities within the Constitutions that I have never seen because both you, and the people who are close to you, are going to give you your archetypes of what each Constitution is like in real life.

You have to start with yourself, but the more people you do this with, the more you will be able to confidently, and even quickly, identify a person as one constitution or another. Each person will be different to anyone else, of course, but there will be

many distinct patterns that you will increasingly recognise as belonging to their constitutional nature that you will be able to identify, and identify more and more easily, the more you do it.

I can also promise you that this will not make you close people into a box. Quite the opposite phenomenon will occur, you will find that it helps you greatly increase your understanding and acceptance of people and so you actually see a lot more of them.

People are actually very interesting, they contain all kinds of qualities and depths that we simply cannot see once we cast judgement on them. When we judge people we stop being open to them and we stop being able to see who they really are. When we judge people we close our hearts to them. Why do we make so many judgements and close our hearts so much? Oh, there are surely 10 thousand reasons that people choose to dislike one another. Mostly, I think, it is because we see them as too different to ourselves. Once we categorise someone in a way that we don't like, then they become one of '*them*', rather than one of '*us*'. I have heard it said, and I believe it to be true, that the root of all evil in the world comes from this thought '*me, and people like me, are better than you, and people like you*'.

One of the greatest gifts of the constitutional model is that you get the opportunity to accept a person's nature so much more easily. A huge part of why people are the way they are is simply

because of their constitution; i.e. whether they are predominantly cooler or hotter, dryer or damper, with all the marvellous complexity that spreads from there. People don't choose which constitution they are, it is in their genes, their Nature. Once you see this, and really understand it, you have an entirely practical and usable way to stop judging people as being better or worse because they are different. You cannot choose your Nature, but you can choose to understand the Nature of both yourself and others. This opens a path to the kind of deep understanding that can lead to true acceptance.

When you understand people, and accept them, you will find that they will instinctively trust you and open up to you. They can intuitively feel that you are seeing them and hearing them as they are, and that you are not sitting in judgement on who they are and what it is in their nature to be like. People can feel that, and they love that.

I have said very little about the personality traits in the base pages on the constitutional section of my website, just picking out a few qualities, the smallest pittance, even though I wanted to describe a hundred attributes for each of the constitutions as I have seen them in my family,

friends and patients.

I wanted to write more but kept getting in my own way and, eventually, I realised that the block was there for a good reason. Because my detailed perspectives were based on the people I had got to know the most, and so were as unique to me as those people themselves are unique in the world. The more detail I would go into, to describe how the constitutional tendencies were manifesting in the personalities of those particular individuals, the more I could be creating room for unhealthy doubt. Because, of course, other people from the same constitution would not have all of those same, individual qualities, and so could think *‘well I can’t be that constitution because I am not exactly like that...’*

Therefore, throughout my work, I have been drawn to keep to the broad strokes, the generalisations in such matters, so as not to get in the way of the experiential journey of understanding of those people who also want to rediscover this ancient system. Perhaps so they can better understand and help themselves, perhaps so they can better understand and help others.

The people who are closest to you will initially be the ones who you will be able to work out for sure. Those people are going to become your role-models, your ‘archetypes’ for each of the different constitutions as you get to know them in real life.

Then, as you widen your circle of awareness and start looking more closely at other people and start working out what constitutions they are, you will recognise many patterns and similarities to the people who you first got to know in this light.

I say again, those insights, those recognitions of the constitutional patterns, starting with the people you know, and then spreading from there, will be unique to you. Your insights will belong to you. You will see things that will help you to better understand both yourself and others.

For now, in the early stages, if you still have healthy doubts about which constitution you are, or which constitution someone close to you is, then that's ok. Let those doubts make you keep questioning and let them make you keep opening your mind. But have no doubt that it will eventually become clear!

As it becomes clear, then you will find that it is a wonderful thing to know which of the four constitutions you are. It will open up many further realisations and understandings. The same process of insights and understanding will happen, and keep happening, with the people close to you and around you as you get to know them, and their Nature, better as well. Personally, I still find I learn more about all of this every day and, joyfully, I see no end in sight to it!

— WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

Oneness vs Duality

The constitutional model, like practically everything else in our Universe, is centred on duality. We're going to talk about constitutional duality more in a moment, to explore further what it means to be hotter or cooler, and dryer or damper, and then go into some of the complexity that can make working it out for sure so tricky.

Firstly, however, I want to put an ancient, and modern, and very beautiful idea to you, which is that the endless duality, the contrasts, the variety that we see in us and around us, is all an expression of a singular, underlying oneness. That all life, all matter, all existence, started as a

‘singularity’ and that this ‘Oneness’ still resonates within us, and everything else, all at the same time. We are

returning to the core premise of this work, that there is an intelligent force within us, and it is this that mends us when we are broken, heals us when we are sick, and it is this that is at the very core of our being.



When you hear those words ‘intelligent force’, if you have any kind of religious upbringing, or any kind of spiritual faith, you will probably think I am talking about the soul, or the spirit, and you would be 100% correct. However, unlike the usual viewpoint, to understand this force within the constitutional model, we must not create any kind of mystical barrier between the extraordinary ordinariness of being, and an exalted, invisible, and altogether mysterious ‘soul’. Quite the opposite, what I am talking about and wanting us to get in touch with is at a purely physical, experiential level. This is not the kind of ‘soul’ that you can think your way towards, it must be felt to be known and it must be felt in the body to be real.

Learning how to better get in touch with, and to understand the *vis medicatrix naturae*, the healing intelligence of Nature, is a core goal of this work and it will lead to a number of further internal inquiries, what could also be called ‘thought experiments’. These inquiries allow for experiences that can make that inner force something that is real, and tangible. Something that can then be understood and truly owned by virtue of having been experienced for yourself.

Most people relate to their inner spirit as something rather intangible, at best a mystery that they might finally get to connect with when they die, at worst really nothing at all, a figment of imagination of a species all too aware of its own mortality. I want to put an entirely different premise to you, which is

that there is nothing supernatural, or intangible, or even untouchable about the life force, the spirit, the being that lives within us. It is our felt experience, it is our flesh and our spirit, completely entwined for every moment while we live, always there, however conscious or unconscious we are of it.

It is, in every sense, the true you, the you who you really are. You do not have to go anywhere or change anything or achieve anything to be in touch with it. It is the 'you' who is already here. Aware, feeling, being, moving, alive.

In a few moments, I am going to ask you to do the second of the 'thought experiments' and, if in the first one I was happy if you just came away with a slightly disconcerting sense of doubt, in the second I think we will have perfectly achieved our purpose if you come out of it with the most ordinary and uneventful of experiences. In fact, if all you find, when you look within, is a small dark light of some slightly increased awareness of your inner state, then we will have made an excellent start indeed.

Before we go on and get ready for the experiment, here is a small statement with a big consequence; You are not your thinking mind.

Do you understand this, really understand it? Your thinking mind is a construct that forms in your early years of life. Your mind is an extremely useful tool, an essential tool to be a human in the modern world, and it is most certainly a hugely important

part of you, but it is not the essence of you. You came into this world without any mind whatsoever, but you most certainly came into the world with that living, feeling, intelligent Nature, that we could just as well call a soul as anything else, because it is rather unnameable, meaning whatever we call it will never be quite right.

Incidentally, hanging out with babies is one of the best educations on earth about what it means to be truly human, about who we really are when you strip away all the conditioning. Minus a mind, babies are just pure flesh and spirit combined. They are mindless and thoughtless and yet they are every one of them completely full of life, spirit, and humanity.

Ask yourself, if you have had children, or ask any parent, from any walk of life, if they have had more than one child; *‘how different was each baby to the others from the moment of birth?’* They will all give the same answer in different words. They will say that each baby was as different from the others as any two things can be. Every different baby has no mind, no thoughts whatsoever. They have the same, truly human essence, and yet they are so different. How can that be? That is the nature of the life force, that it is like an ocean which contains everything, and yet every drop that comes out of it has its own unique nature and freedom of being.

I say that the ‘soul’ is not something abstract, and



nor do I think it exists outside of the flesh. I know many people would disagree with me about that but this is not important to our inquiry here. Perhaps we could agree that the drop returns to the ocean, and loses all its individual differentiation in the process, and that such a view, if you get past the constructed mind's yearning to never cease, is not a renunciation of spirit, rather it is a celebration of its source...

My key point is that we are talking about an energy that is real, entirely palpable and immediately reachable by the simplest of practices of awareness. I don't want to say too much more about it before asking you to try such a practice, but I will just illustrate my point by way of a dark example, which sometimes makes things clearer than the light ones! When you are sick, when you have symptoms, when something hurts or feels bad within you, what you are feeling is your *vis medicatrix naturae*, your healing force of nature, trying to correct what is wrong. The symptoms, the pain, the discomfort, are the expressions of how your innate intelligence is trying to heal you.

In a moment, when you cast your attention inwards like a fisherman casting their net into the water, you may feel nothing much, as I mentioned earlier, but it is also quite possible that you will feel something stronger in any places where you are sick or wounded. This is because that is where your healing intelligence is already focusing its energy.

This is not something to avoid, despite what practically all of pharmaceutical-based medicine would have us believe, in literally giving a pill for literally every ill, with the ultimate goal to never have to ever feel anything bad. To the contrary, if you can understand, then accept, and so go with, rather than against, your own innate healing force, you will heal much easier and faster. All animals know this and do it without thought, as do little children, which is largely why animals and children can usually get better so quickly.

Later in this work, I will ask you to guide your awareness within in a similar way, but with more specific inquiries, for example to learn the ‘Map of your Body’, and to better understand ‘Emotional Healing’ within the constitutional archetypes.

However for now, this second inquiry, or ‘thought-experiment’, is quite different because it is, quite literally, pointless. You are not trying to answer any questions or discover anything new. You are simply allowing yourself to feel whatever your body presents to you as the dominant experience that draws your attention.

If you have an ache or pain, if you have an active illness right now, then this will presumably be where your attention will mainly want to go and again, if so, please don’t resist it, however much your mind protests. However, if there is nothing

especially sore, or wrong right now, then your awareness will go wherever it wants to go, which is wherever it needs to go.

You might need to do this more than once to get the feel for it. It is a deceptively simple practice that has many layers to it. Especially when you start noticing your own mind's reaction to what you are feeling and how it constantly wants to tell a story about it or pass judgement on it.

Your mind will frankly want to distract you from what you are feeling because it really struggles with not being in command and control at all times.

When you give your entire awareness to your spirit, i.e. your inner physical sensory and felt experience, the mind can frankly rebel after a short while. It doesn't help to fight with it, but if you can see it happening then it quietens down again quickly too, and you can return to just feeling, and being for a little while.



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

What you are about to try is both the easiest and the hardest thing in the world to do and again, please note, you may get some fleeting or strong awareness of that cogent inner force, it's certainly there if you are still alive, but if there is nothing more than a vague, rather mobile and utterly ordinary sense of some part or parts of your body then that's perfect too. You will be doing it right if you let your body, your inner intelligence, take you to wherever it wants to go. Many great friendships start with the most ordinary of beginnings.



Close your eyes and take a few breaths now to just allow yourself to be and feel whatever there is to feel for a few moments.



If we are, in a sense, all one. If we contain all the elements of cooler to hotter, dryer to damper, then what is the benefit of branching out into duality with all the complexity, and therefore potential confusion and conflict, that all that branching can bring?

Life, the Universe, whatever you want to call it, clearly did not wish to stay in the utter simplicity of singularity. It exploded, it branched, there was light and so there was darkness, there was space so there was time and eventually, miraculously, there was life, so therefore there had to be death.

I certainly don't know why it all began, or even why anyone needs to know why. Just that it is, very clearly here, is surely enough to know. Moreover, you can see its own Nature, namely that the Universe, that Life, simply loves to be creative. Hence we have endless duality, and endless variety. Life loves to be creative, it created us, and now we are looking back at it and trying to understand it a little better!

Back to the Constitutions, let's try to get some sort of a sense of the core dualities we are dealing with here before we go further into why it can be so complex to work someone's constitution out, and let's start with coolness.

COOLNESS

No-one wants to be thought of as ‘cold’, hence many people struggle with owning how cool they are and rather look to see the evidence for their heat-signs in order to more happily identify as a ‘hottie’. But coolness is wonderful and, if it is in your inherent nature to be cooler rather than hotter, then this is something to absolutely and wholeheartedly embrace.



Coolness is not the same as cold, it is not frozen, in fact it is immensely and enduringly inhabitable. The cool places are where life can flourish and evolve. Coolness is the early morning and the late evening and the timeless night where you are free to be anything you want to be under the moonlight. Coolness is the Yin, the feminine, the inside and the underneath.

Coolness goes within, it finds the unlit way back to the roots of things, back to Mother Nature herself. Coolness is the rest and digest, after the fight or flight. Coolness is the repair of the wear and tear. Coolness is nourishing digestion, it is relaxation, it is introspective thought, it is creative awareness.

Coolness is utterly essential to life, without its duality there would be nothing but the heat and the fire in which everything is eventually consumed. Everyone, from every constitution, must have

coolness to be happy and healthy, and it is also true that some people have the nature to be cooler than hotter.

By rights I should now talk about ‘hotness’, using opposites to the above to highlight the relative contrast on the cool to hot spectrum. I prefer to come to heat in a moment and will instead briefly say something now about the two sides of the spectrum that no-one wants to be on, at least until they give it some thought, because really, ask yourself, would you rather be a dryer person or a damper person? They both sound terrible, right?

In fact, where people sit on the dryer to damper spectrum can influence their personality, their body, and their health, just as much as anything on the cooler to hotter spectrum, but it is a lot more complicated to explain how.

When you get into this more yourself, and so start working out whether the people around you are dryer or damper by things like looking at their skin or listening to how they talk, then you will see for yourself what a great difference there is on all sorts of levels, it’s truly fascinating, but not simple to explain.

There are lots of health related differences that I will get into shortly that will show some of the contrasting dualities within



the dryer to damper spectrum but for now, just to try to get some sense of the spirit of the thing, I will ask you to think about the contrast between water (damp) and air (dry), between things being connected and bound to each other (damper) and things being free to go where they will (dryer) between a pot of chaotic, multi-ingredient soup (soaking damp) and a clothes-line with everything pegged in its proper order and right place (bone dry).

Of course, there is far, far more to it than any of that, but I think that at least some of the key differences that demonstrate the duality between dryer to damper will better unfold themselves as we go into the examples of the constitutions themselves.

H E A T

Heat, constitutionally speaking, is not the opposite of cold, rather it is the presence of life. Heat is life. It is the movement of the primal forces that make stars create constant nuclear explosions to heat their solar systems and shed light in every direction. It is expansive, Yang, masculine, striving, evolving, wanting, seeking.



Heat is also creative, in a different way to the creativity of the cool. Heat harnesses energy from the Sun, from fire, from the alchemy of activation, the transformation of matter from one form to another, all of which releases heat.

Everyone, from every constitution, must have heat to be alive, to be happy and to be healthy. I never tire of the paradox of needing to use all the sensitivity I have at my fingertips to feel the coolest softest whisper of the cooler and dryer Elephant-Butterfly constitution's pulse, only to then switch to the stethoscope to hear the heart-beat of the same person ringing out as loud, clear and steady as footfalls of the great beast that gives them half their name.

The cooler constitution still runs at 37 degrees Celsius, the same as everyone, they just hold their heat more within, and for those who are naturally hotter, it just naturally radiates more outwardly, that's all.

— WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

Challenges



From patients who have gone through the ‘working it out’ section on my website before they meet me, and from my herbal students who do the same thing but also have further material in writing and videos, I estimate that only about two in three people are able to accurately work out their constitution. Maybe I am being optimistic with that two in three. I can honestly say that it is at least a little better than half the time that people are able to get it right through the process of questions and answers, Q & A, as I have outlined them on my site. My estimate would be that it was about the same in earlier versions too, and I can tell you that a number of improvements in the Q & A have been attempted over the years!

I feel terrible about those numbers. Not so much for the patient who has tried to work it out before they came to meet me and got it wrong. They aren’t usually at all bothered by being wrong and, if they were, it would be easy to show that their misplaced choice came, for example, from a symptom of the health problems they have, and that it was an expression of their condition that made them think

they were hotter, cooler, dryer or damper than they actually are by Nature.

Who I feel bad for is the reader of my work that I can't meet and so might always have it wrong and who I feel especially bad for is my own student of holistic medicine who has really invested their time and energy into getting it right. For my students, the first time we meet is usually on a video call after they have handed in their first assignment in the Certificate program, and so I have already read their thoughts about what constitution they think they are. Then it happens, all too often, that I feel some healthy doubts about what they have thought they are start to bubble up inside me as I listen to them, and go on looking at them and, once those doubts start, usually soon enough, I just know that they almost certainly aren't the constitution they think they are.

Of course, I have to share the doubts, and of course that can be rather demoralising, however much I try to soften the blow. Then, to make it even worse, I almost never say which constitution I think they are instead! Don't you think that's mean? I think it is, but I don't say it because I honestly think it is healthy for them to have doubts about it and, also, I just can't say it unless I am 100% certain, and for that I usually need to feel a person's pulse, look at their tongue, and spend enough time with them to have that sure and certain feeling about which one they are.

So we go on to talk about other things, such as what are their challenges, what are their hopes and dreams, and we eventually finish the conversation with them now left in doubt about which constitution they are for sure.

I know that people don't like having doubts about things, I really do know that. But I can tell you for a fact that quite a few of those exact same students have become exceptionally good at working out other people's constitutions and have done so at a much faster speed than average. Their doubts about themselves have bothered them enough to want to look more closely at others, to keep their minds more open, to not fall into the trap of confirmation bias but to question everything, and so they get good at searching out the truth.

In fact, I am fairly sure that it is the trap of 'confirmation bias' that is the primary downfall of my system of working it out as it is written up on my site, i.e. the series of questions that seek to find out whether a person is cooler, hotter, dryer or damper.



Confirmation bias, in this context, means that if you get an early answer to one of the questions that seems really unambiguous, you can easily make a snap decision that you, or the person you are asking, is therefore clearly on one side or another of one of the constitutional spectrums and you then proceed to only take in further data that

supports your opinion and don't see or hear any information that might contradict it.

In other words, confirmation bias is only taking in the information that confirms your earlier opinion and ignoring anything that challenges it. Confirmation bias is a huge problem in our world, in medicine and in every other field of endeavour. It is the exact opposite of having an open mind and entertaining healthy doubts. I highly recommend learning how to recognise confirmation bias in yourself, because then you can stop doing it, or at least reduce doing it!

Believe me, I entertain many healthy doubts about my system of working it out as I have presented it on my site in the form of a Q & A. My method fails to achieve its objective at least a third of the time and I'm not happy about that. I have gone over the series of questions multiple times to try to improve, edit, add, subtract, and generally just explain things better, but it still fails far too often.

It is a flawed system because

- a.** people can and will demonstrate conflicting constitutional signs according to a number of key factors; including their current health condition and including the influence of their lifestyle and habits
- b.** people are complex, they all have hot, cool, dry and damp elements in them and if you are looking for signs of any of them then you will surely see

them at least somewhere

c. we are all guilty of being prone to confirmation bias, no matter how much we know what a problem it can be. We want to be right and, once we start to form an opinion, we want to get evidence to support it, not prove it wrong.

This long-lost, ancient system of constitutional medicine is an incredibly powerful and helpful tool, but it is also highly dependent on knowing which constitution you are working with! The working it out process as it stands, via questions and answers, is clearly lacking and my own healthy doubts about its flaws and inadequacies have been one of the main fuels under the fire to create this work that you are reading right now! Constitutional medicine was not in my training, virtually no school in Western Herbalism anywhere in the world has taught it for a very long time. When I started to learn and practise it, I used a great many questions, and lived with a great deal of doubt about the answers too. Of course, I just did the best I could at the time, as we all do, but looking back I see that it was those doubts about the usefulness of the questions that made me look much more closely at things that you can't get from any amount of interviewing people.

It made me learn to just really look at people; their skin, their complexion, their tongue. It made me learn to listen to them; the timbre of their voice, not

just what they say but how they said it. It made me learn to literally feel them, their skin, their pulse, and maybe their back or belly. What I learned is that the process of looking, listening and feeling gave me far more reliable and consistent insights, and correct answers, than I ever got from asking questions.

Oftentimes, these days, I ask nothing at all, I just look, listen and feel and there is a point that I know that I have it. But how do you teach that to others? I am working on that challenge, and this work is part of that, but I still don't think that just writing or talking to people is enough, they have to experience some things for them to make sense and to stick. Hence another reason for a key theme in this work, that from time to time I ask you to try to experience something for yourself by going within. I do this because I want the knowledge to become yours, so you can own it and really use it.



—WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

Quirks & Conditions

The experiential learning in the chapters on the Cycle of Healing, the Maps of the Body and Emotional Healing that follow this section should help shed further light on working out your own and other constitutions but now, for this last part of the ‘working it out’ chapter, I want to describe some common quirks that can throw a person off the scent, as well as briefly talk about some of the health conditions that can also serve to illustrate the constitutional tendencies.



TIGER QUIRKS

Tigers are usually the quickest and easiest constitution to work out. There are plenty of exceptions to this, but being both hotter and damper at the same time can give immediately visible or palpable clues. You can often see a redder complexion with a sheen of moisture on the skin, you can often see a tongue that is redder, fuller and damper looking than average, and you can often feel a greater warmth and dampness than average

in their skin of their palm and a fuller, hotter and damper pulse at their wrist.

(Tongue and pulse analysis is a deep subject for the student of holistic medicine. Some of what it means to have a damper, dryer, hotter or cooler pulse and tongue is described in a separate article on my site found [here](#))

However, it isn't always that easy to identify the Tiger by its stripes. Especially because some Tigers have a strong tendency to muddy the warm waters of their innate constitution by getting blocked up or dried out. It is less common to have doubts about whether they are on the hotter side of the spectrum but there can certainly come a cloud of uncertainty over whether they are more naturally dryer or damper.

The wrong kind of food for the Tiger, who typically thrives with a hunter-gatherer type diet, can especially throw you off the scent. In particular, this can be from either food intolerances or from excess sugars in the diet in the form of refined carbohydrates, either of which can cause a dry condition in the body, especially in the bowel, or the skin.

In that instance, the Tiger tongue that, in good health, would have looked moist and full can appear dryer and smaller and the Tiger pulse that, in good health, would have bounded along with plenty of

fluidity under your fingers can become edgier, punchier, more separated by space when they have gone too far to the dry.

Food matters to this, but excess ‘dryness’ can equally be manifested by what is going on in their inner life, especially if they are not connected to who they want to be with and what they want to be doing. The disconsolate Tiger, trapped in a cage of an unhappy relationship or career path can lose their ‘juice’, their mojo, the ineffable spark of warm, life-affirming passionate creativity that makes for a happy Tiger.



The innate quality of a healthy abundance of Dryness in a naturally dryer constitution can translate as a lightness of being, an airiness of freedom. By contrast, excess dryness in a naturally damper constitution can appear as a flat, disconnected, wandering kind of purposelessness. They lose their direction, and it can even start to feel like they are heading for a bad fall.

If you know for certain what a person’s true constitution is, and you come to hear that they think they are something else, then you are probably getting a valuable clue as to where their core imbalance is manifesting itself. To put it another way, we can learn a lot from our mistakes.

The Tiger who mistakenly thinks they are dryer, or cooler, probably has an imbalance that is showing you something important.

TIGER CONDITIONS

A ‘Tiger condition’ is one that is marked by excess heat and dampness. I will talk a little about what that means in a moment but a key point to get across right away is that anyone, from any constitution, has the capacity to get a condition that is marked by excess heat and dampness.

That said, Tigers are clearly the most likely of all the different constitutions to be troubled by problems that involve too much heat and dampness. They obviously already tend towards being hotter and damper, so they can more easily tip over into imbalance in those areas than others.

So what is a Tiger condition? In its essence, the presence of excess heat and dampness in the body is experienced as acute inflammatory disturbances with an element of congestion.

Also, because heat rises, it is typical for the hotter, damper, ‘Tiger condition’ to be one that comes hard and fast into the upper body or even all the way up to the head. Similar to the constitutional signs, excess heat and dampness can also be the easiest of the conditions to see because they create symptoms that are so palpable and hard to miss.

For example, in the head; sinusitis, migraines, ear infections, dental problems, in the chest; acute bronchitis, pericarditis, mastitis, in the upper gut; gastritis, gall-bladder colic, pancreatitis, in the lower abdomen; colitis, cystitis, appendicitis. The two syllables ‘itis’ at the end of most of these conditions translates from the Greek for a ‘*disease characterised by inflammation*’.

Before I go on, for some necessary balance here after such a terrible list, I want to mention that heat and dampness are not inherently bad. Yes heat, in disease, manifests as some kind of excess inflammation but ‘heat’ in itself is essential. Even inflammation is a nuanced subject. Not so long ago, one of the core guiding principles of conventional medicine was to suppress inflammation at any cost, and probably far too many practitioners still hold to that, but in recent years a far more detailed view has evolved, which understands how some inflammation is an entirely necessary part of the body’s self regulation and self-healing processes. Heat is not the enemy, without the heat of the sun there would be no life. Everything that lives or moves generates some degree of heat. Without the heat generated by the million million internal fires of our own metabolism we would simply cease to exist. Heat is life-giving and life-sustaining, it is a sign of life. It is



only when heat is in excess that it becomes harmful.

Likewise dampness, although it doesn't sound like a good thing to have, and which in disease may manifest in some kind of excess and unpleasant congestion, is not whatsoever inherently unhealthy. Dampness in its most basic form is simply water, something utterly essential to life. Dampness is the ocean from which life on Earth first came, the proof of which in us is reflected in our blood being exactly as salty as the sea. In good health, dampness relates to the essential movement of fluids in the body where, right at the core of our being, dampness moves in our blood, our cleansing lymphatic fluid, our circulating hormones and where, out nearer the surface, it protects us from harm in our damp mucus. Dampness allows us to release our excess heat in sweat and it can, for some lucky ones amongst us, release our hardest feelings in tears. Dampness has other fascinating emotional qualities, which I will talk about later on, but the key point is not to see it as inherently bad.

So again, do hotter and damper Tigers experience more hot and damp conditions, such as those listed above, more than the other constitutions? Yes, they certainly do. Of course, I can only draw on my own experience to make that statement and, whilst it is a reasonably extensive experience after more than 3 decades of full time practice, I am acutely aware that I have only met with a few drops of an ocean of humanity, and my view is entirely limited

to those drops. But yes, I think it is certainly the case that acute, damp, inflammatory conditions are seen significantly more often in Tigers than others. That said, I must again emphasise that all the constitutions have the capacity to experience all types of problems.

What also marks a Tiger out, when they have a hot, damp condition on top of their already hotter, damper constitution, is just how acutely and severely the problem tends to manifest. The facial and upper body acne becomes highly inflamed, cystic and infected. The period becomes heavy, clotting and painful to the point of debility. What could have been a mild and self-resolving pericarditis in a cooler constitution becomes an acute medical emergency, as it appears as if a full blown heart-attack is in process.

Tigers are typically ‘glass half-full’ optimistic, purposeful people, but if their condition overwhelms their ability to maintain good spirits then they can plunge faster than just about anyone into a melancholic state from which they may feel (temporarily) that there can be no escape. Then the Tiger who has become trapped in a cage can be a torture to everyone, especially themselves.

In the acute, crisis state, many people will turn to conventional medicine, which may be exactly the right thing to do. Conventional medicine’s greatest

strength is in meeting the emergency and taking over when the *vis medicatrix naturae*, the self-healing intelligence, is overwhelmed and unable to correct the course of events.

However, there are also many times when an acute health crisis can be just as well met with the old ways, especially from herbal medicines; our first medicines. Staying with the example of a hotter and damper condition, i.e. a condition marked by excess inflammation and congestion, this is where you will see one of the great strengths of Constitutional Medicine. Because if you can recognise that a person is either a Tiger who has become too hot or damp, or a person from any constitution who is suffering from excess heat and dampness, then you can give them Tiger remedies, which are herbs that have cooling, and cleansing properties. It can be quite extraordinary how even just one or two herbs, when they are what the person really needs, can help the natural healing intelligence to make short work of all kinds of awful conditions that previously seemed quite stuck.

Rather than wait till the end of this section to show you the chart that gives examples of such herbs, I will invite you to have a look at it now. This chart can be a tremendous aid to the person who wants to use the Constitutional model to work holistically with herbs. We send a laminated copy of it to our SIMH students along with the 20 herbs in their student pack to start their experiential journey but,

whoever you are, you are very welcome to print it out and use it as a study guide if you are drawn to learning and using this material in your own life, or to help people who are in your care.

Jump ahead to the Constitutional Medicines Chart by clicking on **page 75**. (note the link at the bottom of page 75 which will bring you back here, to Tiger conditions on page 47)

You are also welcome to print a PDF of the Constitutional Medicines Chart by clicking [here](#).



Please take careful note of the very summarised notes in each corner of the chart. Namely that the herbs that can help in these areas can be for the constitution *or* the condition.

A herb that helps excess heat and dampness (*whether it be the constitution or the condition or both*) tends to be cooling, activating or cleansing or some combination of those actions.

A herb that helps excess heat and dryness (*whether it be the constitution or the condition or both*) tends to have qualities such as cooling, relaxing or moistening or some combination of those actions.

A herb that helps excess coolness and dryness (*whether it be the constitution or the condition or both*) tends to be warming, nourishing or moistening or some combination of those actions.

A herb that helps excess cool and dampness (*whether it be the constitution or the condition or both*) tends to be warming, cleansing, activating or some combination of those actions.



— WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

Quirks & Conditions

EAGLE QUIRKS

Eagles are full of interesting quirks and characteristics.

They are also frequently blessed with rude good health and don't have much of a health history until something goes wrong, at which point it may go wrong somewhat spectacularly. You wouldn't say that they were Eagles, but many children are naturally hotter and dryer and only start visibly or palpably going towards the damper or the cooler sides of the spectrums as they get older. In good health, there can be an element of eternal youth in the Eagle constitution, a vitality, a readiness to set their sights on some new goal or path with the same freedom we usually mostly associate to the young.

In terms of the quirks of working it out. Every constitution is markedly different from the others but there is something about the Eagle, hotter and dryer, that is especially distinct. I've actually been paused in my writing for a couple of days now whilst thinking about how to describe some further ways to better distinguish Eagles from others and all



I've really come up with is that you just need to get to know a few to be able to much more easily spot others!

Google says *'there are about 10,000 different types of bird, almost all of which can fly'*. Assuming that the number of people in each constitution is roughly even, and it does seem to be that way at least from the window of my tiny corner of the Universe, then that would mean there are close to 2 billion Eagle-natured people on planet Earth. Every single one of them is undoubtedly and certainly unique, yet they all have a certain, hard to describe, but very distinct quality to them.

Not at all like a damp person and not at all like a cool person, there is an element of air, of flight, of heat, that is very particular to the Eagle constitution. I am sorry, I know that what I am saying isn't practically useful and it's certainly not learnable from the written word but, after much reflection, I honestly believe that anyone will be able to increasingly easily recognise an Eagle once they can get certainty on even just a few of them. There is such a distinctive feel to the Eagle and it really does get easier to recognise it with practice. Just as you would be in no doubt with any of those 10,000 different kinds of birds about what sort of creature you were seeing. As different as they could be from each other, you would always still know that they were a bird.

In the meanwhile, as the benefit of that practice unfolds, I will share something more practically useful in the nature of constitutional quirks, which is that many Eagles have a horror of being cold! This can throw a person off right from the start, especially if you've begun with one of the typical questions such as '*is it easier for you to get too hot or too cold?*' or '*what affects you more, getting too hot or too cold?*'

The fact is that, whoever they are and whatever constitution they are, no-one wants to feel too hot or too cold and all constitutional types are prone to answering the questions on the hot to cool spectrum dependent on the time of year you are asking, on how well their home and work-places are currently being insulated against the cold or being refreshed from the heat, on how thin they are or how much extra weight they are carrying, or even just on what they are used to. They have adapted to a hotter or cooler world based on where they grew up, or where they have lived for a while.

Many Eagles love to feel warm and hate to feel cold. They wrap up as warm against the cold as anyone from a cool constitution, often even more so. So they then compare themselves to others who don't feel the cold as much as they do, or hate the cold as much as they do, and form an opinion that they must therefore be a cool constitution.

This is the main mistake that people make with working out the Eagle constitution and one way to prevent it, which is recommended to try if you are learning this in order to practise holistic medicine is, before you ask any questions, to firstly have a good look at the tongue and a feel of the pulse.

A good look at the tongue can best be done by taking a close up photograph of it, because then you don't have to feel any pressure to be in any hurry. I also like to get a good long feel of the pulse at the same time, which is easily done if you have a photograph on your phone in your other hand. This lets me take in second, third and fourth impressions from both the pulse and the tongue without any of the sense of pressure that you would get with someone having to hang their tongue out for more than a few seconds.

Getting to that wonderful feeling of being certain about any of the constitutions, including the Eagle, will come a lot faster to the person who practices looking and feeling before asking questions. As you get used to trusting your instincts from what you can see and feel, as well as from what you then hear, it will get easier to see the constitutions clearly.



Eagles, who especially dislike to be cold, but know they are dryer, are most likely to mistake themselves for being cooler and dryer and so can most commonly mistakenly think they are an Elephant -Butterfly. More rarely, they will actually know they are hot but, because they are being plagued by a damp condition, they can think they are a Tiger. Most rarely, they will have flown so far from their home territory as to think they are a Bear. Again, if you learn what they thought they were, then you are probably getting some useful information to understand some of the key challenges they may be experiencing.

EAGLE CONDITIONS

An ‘Eagle condition’ is one that is marked by excess heat and dryness and remember that anyone, from any constitution, has the capacity to get a hot and dry condition, even though it will be Eagles that are especially prone to them.



Hotter and dryer conditions especially involve the ‘nerves’ and the ‘army’. The ‘nerves’ means the nervous system, which includes the health of our physical nerves as well as such core matters as how we work and rest. The ‘army’ means the immune system, the watchful and potent defences of the body.

Hotter and drier conditions include things like

- Restless, busy-minded Insomnia
- Auto-immune conditions such as a hyperactive thyroid, rheumatoid arthritis, psoriasis, inflammatory bowel disease. All constitutions can suffer from auto-immune conditions but it seems that Eagles get them the most
- Heart troubles such as congestive heart failure and arrhythmias.
- High blood pressure (which is also a common Tiger issue but in the hotter and damper person it is much more related to the metabolic syndrome whereas in the Eagle the high blood pressure seems more related to the heart getting worn and strained by inadequate rest
- a dry hot arthritis or tendonitis, different to the way inflammation manifests in the cooler or the damper conditions and constitutions, whereby the pain and loss of movement in a hot dry condition or constitution is more in the nerves than something that shows in x-ray, plus it is much more often found in the arms and shoulders than in the lower parts of the body or legs. If it is an Eagle I think, perhaps privately, that they have been ‘winged’.

- cancer, sorry to say, but far too many cases have been seen to not acknowledge the pattern. Those healthy Eagles whose immune army got blindsided by a cruel and unexpected mutation. Any constitution can get cancer but it seems to strike at Eagles the hardest and fastest. It is something to watch for.
- exhaustion, every constitution can get fatigue, but they all experience it differently and need different approaches to get well. The nervous exhaustion where heat and dryness has come to the fore can be especially hard to remedy. In a child it can be diagnosed as attention deficit disorder, in an adult the experience is described as feeling ‘wired and tired’. An edgy, tense and seemingly endless exhaustion.

It is a grim list, any one of those conditions could cause great suffering. As I said earlier, most Eagles enjoy better than average health and have less battle-scars than average, but when they do get sick they can go down hard.

Again, I recommend to the Eagle who is reading this, or to the person who recognizes one of those hotter, dryer conditions in themselves, or someone close to them, as being a call to use one or more of the herbs that can help hotter, dryer conditions because, for example, they have cooling, moistening or relaxing

actions. To see some examples of such herbs, jump ahead to the Constitutional Medicines Chart by clicking on **page 75**. (note the link at the bottom of page 75 which will bring you back here, to Eagle conditions on page 56)



— WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

Quirks & Conditions

ELEPHANT/BUTTERFLY QUIRKS

The enigmatic Elephant Butterfly (EB) is next for discussing the quirks and complexities of working it out. Again, like the Eagle, and the others, it will get a great deal easier to quickly see the EB with practice because they really are such distinctive and eventually unmistakable creatures!



However, the most commonly confusing quirk that can throw you off being on the track of the Elephant butterfly is their disproportionately adverse reaction to the presence of dampness in their body.

Some EBs present with a damp ‘condition’, for example something such as sinusitis, or heavy periods, or spots, or migraines, or abdominal bloating and, as a consequence, at least from their symptom picture, you might conclude that they were damp when in fact it is their very nature to be cool and dry that makes the presence of things of a damp nature to be so intolerable to them!

If you question just how much gooey dampness is present in the sinuses, the skin, or the belly, you begin to see that, in the normal scale of things, it really isn't much, but for them a little dampness can feel like a lot. Excess dampness can be their nemesis because it weighs them down and makes them acutely uncomfortable. It pins their wings.

For example, most EBs do not have a lot of mucus running around their sinus passageways and don't usually have to blow out phlegm from their nose but, usually because of an infection, when they get even a moderate amount of blockage in their nose or sinuses they can feel like a catastrophic invasion is under way. Whilst a damper constitution would be much more able to take such excess dampness in their stride, and it wouldn't even especially bother them, the cooler and dryer person, many of whom are not at all inclined to take drugs unless truly desperate, become dependent on inhaling steroids up their nose so they can clear the damp and breathe the air again!

Another example is that, usually, the EB woman will have a relatively light period and, if anything, their cycle length can be a bit longer than 28 days but when she starts getting a heavier period, one with excess heat and dampness, meaning there are more inflammatory prostaglandins in circulation and the endometrial tissue has built up more thickly, which is a condition that most



dampener constitutions are rather used to, the EB can find the whole process utterly debilitating and demoralising. Also worth noting that they are, by far, the most likely constitution to get anaemia from having heavier periods too.

It is not just damp conditions or symptoms that can throw you off the scent. It has often happened, perhaps having already taken in a subconscious impression that there is an Elephant in the room, that I have asked the person to poke out their tongue only to be surprised by how swollen, coated and damp it looks. So now I will probably have some healthy doubts but I know that's ok. I have met such complexities many times now and have learned to relax into not knowing rather than getting tense or worried about it. You learn to trust that you will keep taking in information from other sources and that there is no hurry to get it right. Then it always comes through eventually.

Back to the tongue, it is most interesting to be able to compare before and after photographs in such cases because, when they are a dryer person by nature, but have been beset by damp congestion and so, for example, we have gone through a cleansing process which has helped them to let go what was troubling them, the tongue typically returns to its normal state, which is much less coated and much less swollen ('much less' being a relative term, I know that I see the differences much more than

someone who isn't used to studying tongues)

Further to the physical, the confounding presence of dampness in an EB's being, and by 'being' I mean that which is within but also beyond the flesh alone, i.e. their lives, their mind, their emotions, can be an 'energetic dampness' which shows itself within the body in some subtle way but is primarily there in how they feel.

Healthy dampness is a flowing, fluid river of life. Stuck and unhealthy dampness feels heavy and congested. It feels like you need cleansing, even when you might actually be following a rather healthy lifestyle. In fact, this is a common conundrum for the EB. I meet many who are following the purist, least toxic diet imaginable but they show, and feel, clear indicators of internal toxicity. How can that be?

I think that the same intolerable sense of 'dampness' from excess mucus or fluids in the physical body can come from stuck and heavy feelings in the emotional being. Emotional burdens are real, they exist, they live in the body. Not in the form of something you can see on an X-ray or an MRI, but they are there in the subconscious 'body' just the same.

This important subject is explored in more depth in later chapters but I will just say here that I have had to accept that using some cleansing herbs can be the only way to start to get a shift in such instances.

Even if you know, and sometimes even if they know, that the burden, the ‘toxicity’ is not a consequence of anything such as a bad diet, let alone anything like drugs or alcohol, but that it comes from the Elephantine memory. From holding on to hurts from the past and needing to go on a healing journey to let go of the burdens and remember how to be like a Butterfly, at least some of the time!

With the great working it out challenge, I would say to especially take time with the pulse to find your way with the EB and, as mentioned earlier, I really encourage the student who is ready for this, to take the plunge into listening to the heart directly, with a stethoscope. There are some exceptions to this, but they are few and far between, because it is a highly typical pattern for the EB to have the lightest, most hard to catch and hold, pulse at their wrist, and then, as if by some sort of magic, when you listen to their heart through the stethoscope, you get a remarkably strong, palpable and vital heart beat at their chest. The feel of a butterfly at the pulse, the sound of an elephant on a long steady trek in the heart. The EB constitution and character is full of such unlikely paradoxes.

Pulse taking is an exceptionally useful tool to get confidence with, for all kinds of reasons, including gathering sub-verbal impressions on the constitution, but it is by no means the only or even the best way, beyond the useful but also potentially confounding questions, to get certainty for an EB.

Their innate sensitivity will often come to the fore when they start talking about their condition. Their innate stamina can soon become apparent when they start talking about their work, or their family, or their chosen form of favourite exercise.

EBs typically have a lot of layers and, if they chose to trust you, they can have a lot to say too. Most EBs are not people who wear their hearts on their sleeves, they are typically intensely private and so hold a lot in, at least until they are finally ready to talk and then the dam can burst and a great deal starts to come out!

Learning anything is always hardest at the beginning. Once you have successfully identified just a few EBs it will start getting a great deal easier to see them more quickly and surely. In any case, there is no rush to come to the point of certainty. I will happily take all the impressions and further information that comes to hand in the generous time that we have for a first appointment (up to an hour) and be open to changing my mind at any point up until that inner, gut-level, heartfelt point of '*ah, that's it and it could not be anything else*' certainty comes to me. Whereupon further insights as to what to do with the information usually soon follow.

ELEPHANT/BUTTERFLY CONDITIONS

The higher intolerance of the EB to excess dampness in particular now noted, I want to talk some more about things on their usual sides of the spectrums, the ‘home territory’ of coolness and dryness.

The Elephant-Butterfly constitution can be well described as ‘enigmatic’, which means mysterious, difficult to interpret or understand. Both coolness and dryness take some thought to appreciate within the constitutional model. Coolness is far more than just the absence of heat and dryness is far more than the absence of moisture.

Coolness is ‘rest and digest’ after ‘fight or flight’.

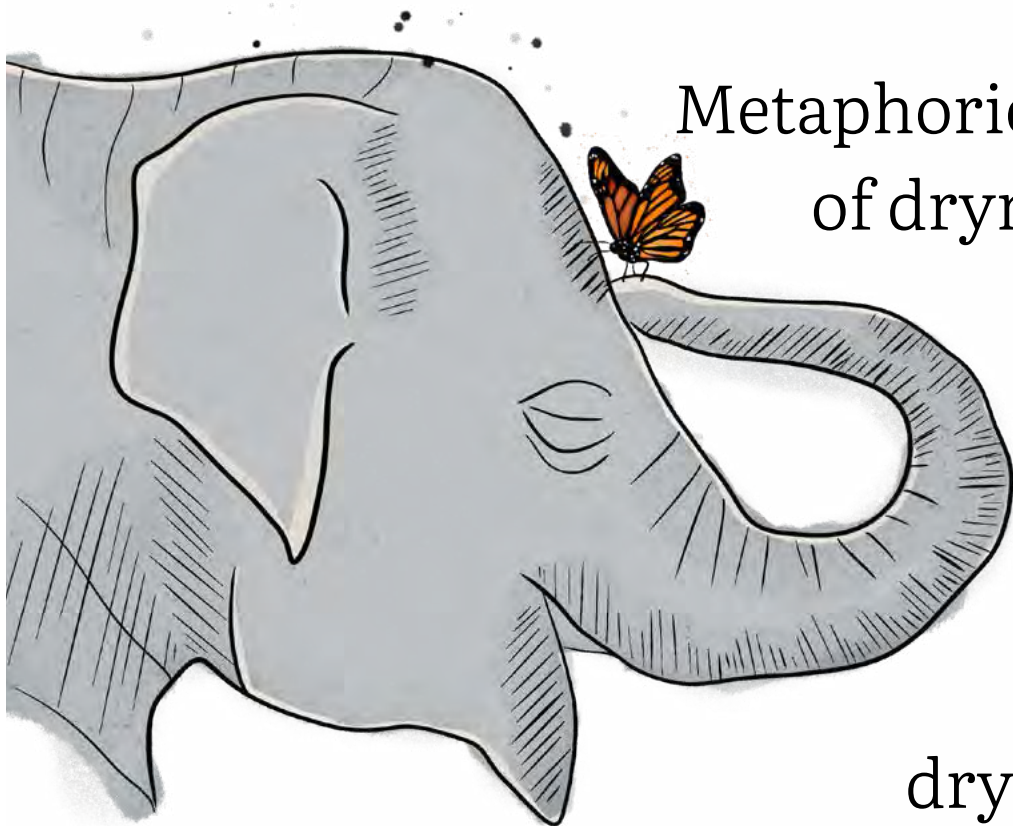
Coolness is the repair of the wear and tear.

Coolness is nourishment and relaxation. It is sleep, meditation and introspective thought.

Everyone, from every constitution, must have at least some coolness to be happy and healthy. Cooler constitutions are more comfortable being in a cooler state more often than a hotter one. Hotter constitutions can struggle against being too cool. They can resist it, especially when a sickness has triggered their innate intelligence to lead them towards being cooler than they are used to.

For any person, whether because they need to be cooler but are fighting it, or because they have just gone too far to the cool, an excess of coolness is a loss of warmth and vitality, a loss of the ability to get

up and get going, to push on, to get activated. Excess coolness is sinking back to the root too much, too often. Excess coolness is not the peace of old age, when even the hottest person begins to palpably cool down, but an untimely loss of life force. The grave is, obviously, very cold, we should not hasten there before our time is up!



Metaphorically, the quality of dryness represents freedom, itself a deep subject and one of especially profound importance to the dryer constitutions.

Physically, in the body, if dampness is the blood, the lymph, the sweat and the tears, then dryness is the nervous system where, exactly like electricity, our nerves send sparks of energy through every part of us to give movement, direction, purpose.

Dryness is part of the nature of the very air that we must breathe to live. We, all of us, have a metabolic fire within every cell that is fueled by the oxygen that we must take in with every breath or soon perish. A dry fire, lit by the life-force of our nerves, fed by the oxygen of the air, and utterly essential to the damp soup of our every cell, tissue and organ.

Everyone, from every constitution must have

that air, and that fire within, to be alive and to be in health. Dryness is never inherently bad, it is only in imbalance that too much dryness can equate to a lack of something essential, to some kind of deficiency, or it can equate to a condition of imbalanced nervous energy, a state of becoming ungrounded, unrooted.

What follows are some examples of some conditions that reflect an *excess* of coolness and dryness. Remember that anyone, from any constitution can suffer from any of these but yes, the Elephant-Butterfly does certainly appear to have a significantly greater propensity to them.

- Infertility
- Underactive thyroid
- Osteoporosis
- Low-grade osteo-arthritis
- Chronic Fatigue
- Reduced appetite and digestion (often coupled with multiple perceived food intolerances, even though the EB is the least likely of all the constitutions to have actual food allergies)

There is an Elephant within the EB constitution that, in a great many cases met by this author, somehow just keeps going with one of the above or one of another hundred ways in which going too far to the cool and dry can cause problems. If a person has been depleted and unwell for a long time then it can feel like a journey of a thousand miles to get back to good health but all they have to do is start with the first step, and then keep going!

Someone outside of them might see it quite easily, but Elephant -Butterflies can find it the hardest of all to be sure of their constitution themselves. They can often see or feel at least some signs of heat or dampness and they can acutely feel the conflict of their inner complexity. Many EBs think they are Bears, especially because of a health condition that brings dampness. Next most commonly, they will know that they are dry but think they must be hot and so mistake themselves for Eagles, especially if they cannot stand to be stuffy and so are opening windows to get ventilation, even in the cold. It is rare to meet an EB who thinks they are a Tiger.

EBs are the most likely of all the constitutions to resist being categorised into their particular corner. They don't want to be sensitive, they don't even necessarily want to be introspective. They see people who live life more easily on the surface and can struggle against their Nature to be more serious, more sensitive. For anyone, but especially for the EB, the acceptance that comes from understanding

their Nature is essential to the search for health, peace and love.

To see some examples of the kinds of herbs that could especially help the EB, or a person who has gone too far to the cool or the dryer sides of the spectrums, jump ahead to the Constitutional Medicines Chart by clicking on **page 75**. (note the link at the bottom of page 75 which will bring you back here, to EB conditions on page 67)



— WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

Quirks & Conditions

BEAR QUIRKS

I love Bears. For all that they can be maddeningly difficult to work with, because they get stuck and then are ridiculously good at getting in their own way, I find the great majority of Bears to be complex, sensitive, reflective, deep and interesting human beings. When I reach the point of certainty and tell them ‘you’re a Bear’, I feel like I am giving them both a prize and a booby trap. An ancient Chinese curse used to be ‘*may you live in interesting times*’. It is a rare Bear who doesn’t end up with an interesting life, with all the challenges, and growth, that such a journey inevitably brings.



In terms of working it out, whilst the EB can be the one who finds it the hardest to identify themselves, the Bear is the one who can be the hardest to be identified by others. Students especially, please note, I cannot overemphasise the point that this kind of learning will always be hardest at the beginning. Once you have been able to successfully identify a

good handful of Bears then it really will get much easier to recognise the innate Bearishness of the Bear. I even think you will start to notice how they have a characteristic kind of aura, a gravitas, a solidity to them, that will give you your first clues, consciously or not.

In the meanwhile, take your time, this is the constitution that you will most likely mistake for something else, don't be in any hurry to be sure. Bears come in many shapes and sizes, they can have a lot going on and they can give the most contrasting answers to the constitutional questions and answers, including some potentially conflicting answers on the dryer to damper spectrum but especially including some confusing answers when you are trying to work out whether they are hotter or cooler.

It may be easier to work out that the Bear is damper than dry, but their answers to questions about their heat or cold tolerances, their weather preferences, their more 'comfortable' or 'comparative' levels of clothing or bedding etc. may give a bewildering range of responses. The answer to the last question contradicting the answer you got to the previous question before that!

The main reason for this is that, just as many Eagles simply hate to be too cold, many Bears cannot stand to be too hot. One of my own sons, Oliver, is a perfect example of this, now a father himself, a

person who is as undoubtedly as Bearish a Bear who has ever walked the earth, and yet one who walks it in shorts and sandals most of the year round.



If you began your constitutional assessment with that (often highly helpful) question ‘is it easier for you to get too hot or too cold?’ and the Eagle emphatically answers ‘too cold!’ and the Bear emphatically answers “too hot!” then it can be hard to go back from there. Remember, we are all very prone to confirmation bias, we want to get it right and then stay that way. You must be ready to be wrong when you are working out the Constitution. In fact, you must be ready to be wrong about a lot of things when you work with people. We call it ‘practising’ medicine because you can never be perfect at it. The worst practitioner is the one who gets invested in his ego, in always being right, in always having the answers. When you really see the true complexity of people, of life, and of health, you know you can never have all the answers, and that you must have healthy doubts to even begin to find the truth of things. Then you can be a safe person to help guide others.

Bears most often think they must be Tigers because they know they are damp but think they must also be hot because of how much they are affected by the heat and how much they hate to get too hot.

Sometimes they know they are cool but get dry conditions on their skin or in their bowels, so they think they are EBs, and then rather rarely they will stray so far from their home territory as to think they are an Eagle.

Bears can get especially out of balance with their inner 'fire', I talk about this in different ways a lot more later on, and I think it is the main reason that they can be the trickiest to work out for sure. Those cool vs. hot inner elements are getting stuck or moving in a way that can obscure the underlying constitutional nature. They are also probably showing us exactly where the attention needs to go.

BEAR CONDITIONS

Whether it be a Bear or someone from another constitution, let's list some common health conditions that come from cooler and damper Bear territory. Before I write the dreadful, partial list, just to explain, in a nutshell, that the combination of excess coolness and excess dampness is the perfect breeding ground for a low-grade inflammatory process that never quite goes anywhere.

Unlike the hotter damp inflammation of the Tiger, where the troubles go upwards and outwards, where they tend to be acute and rather nasty for a while, but where they also have a good chance of going

past the boiling point and quickly getting better, when you combine coolness with dampness you get troubles that go inwards or downwards and tend to become chronic, congested and seriously stuck.

Some common examples of conditions that reflect stuck, cooler and damper problems include:

- Irritable bowel syndrome (aka irritable Bear syndrome because when it is true IBS, and not just food intolerance, dysbiosis, or constipation, it actually only ever affects Bears)
- Irritable bladder syndrome - also called interstitial cystitis
- Endometriosis
- Low back pain in all its manifestations.
- Food intolerances, especially to the dampest food on earth, i.e. milk. A typical presentation here is a bloated, damp gut on the inside with a dry, hot rashy skin on the outside, i.e. eczema.
- Somatic Anxiety disorders (all constitutions can suffer anxiety but they suffer it rather differently to one another, the Bear version typically has less awareness of the mental component of their

anxiety but stronger physical manifestation of it in their bodies).

- Anergic depression - different to a melancholic state of affairs, they just have no energy and may be stuck in a loop of procrastination with inertia to do anything about it.

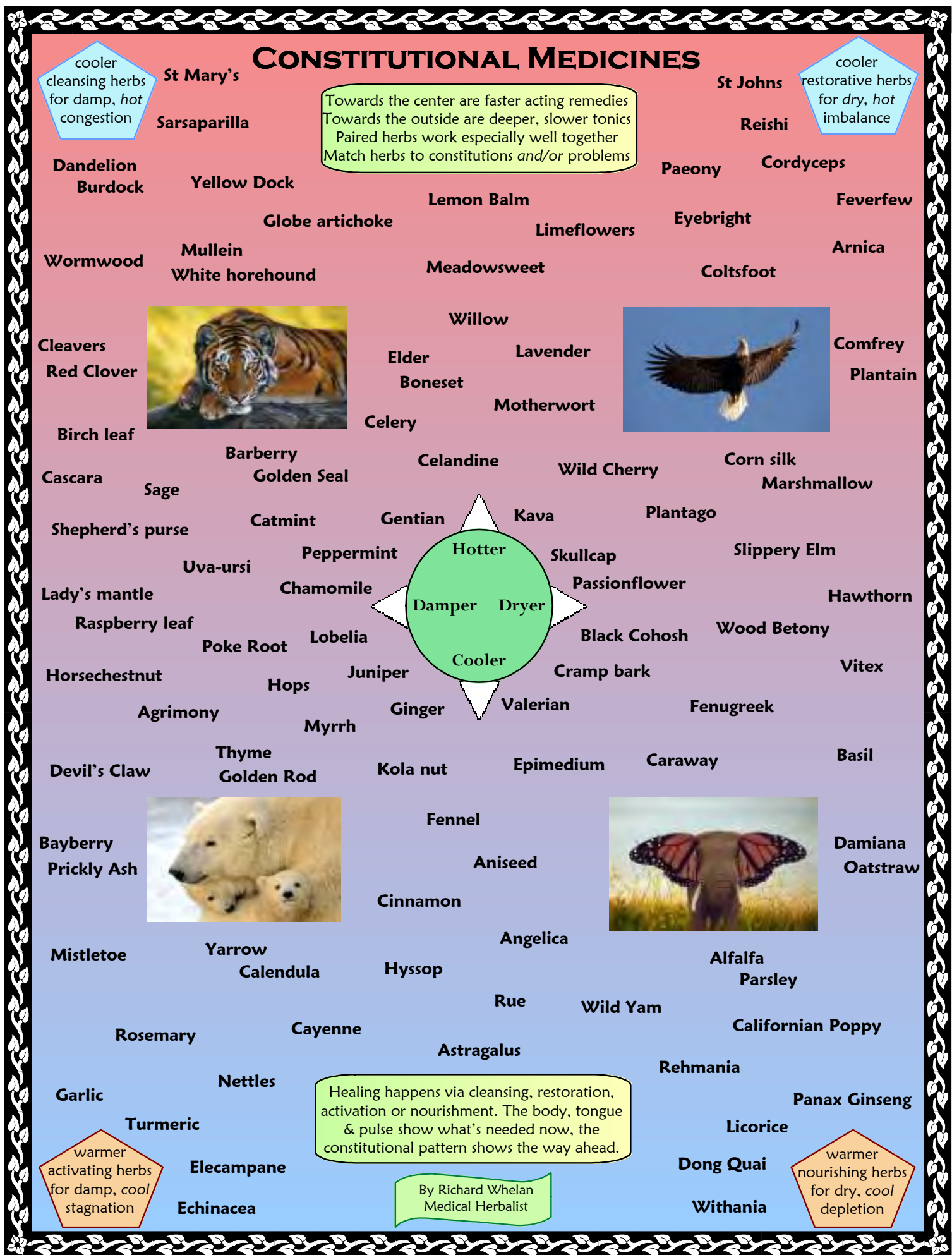
Remember, any person from any constitution has the capacity to suffer from cooler and damper conditions but there can be no doubt that they are found most often in the Bear and again, if this is you or someone you care for, I warmly encourage you to use the following chart to help find at least one or two allies to help. When you use herbs in this way, and you find and start using the remedy that is the right energetic match, something quite wonderful occurs. Bears become unstuck, Tigers start hunting again, Eagles fly and Elephant-Butterflies start finding their way back to the most valuable possession any of us can ever own; our health.

To see some examples of the kinds of herbs that could especially help the Bear, or a person who has gone too far to the cool or the damper sides of the spectrums, see the Constitutional Medicines Chart on the following page.



— WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

Constitutional Chart



Go back to “Tiger conditions” on **page 47**.

Go back to “Eagle Conditions” on **page 56**.

Go back to “Elephant/ Butterfly Conditions” on **page 67**

— WORKING IT OUT MATTERS

Don't rush



I mentioned earlier that I estimate close to a third of the people, who just use the questions and answers to work out what the constitution is, end up choosing the wrong one. Well, then I suppose it could also be said that close to two thirds of people get it right by the same method too. So, it isn't a useless process, but neither is it a very reliable one.

I hope the above writing on the challenges and quirks of working it out has shed some light on the subject for you, even if it has mainly served to make you more aware of how complex it can be! In fact, if the result from reading all the above has been an increased sense of complexity, and therefore uncertainty around it all, then I will have achieved one of my main purposes in this section, because you will really hear me when I say - don't rush!

That is such a key message for anyone who is studying this subject because they want to use it to help others. Don't rush, and don't worry about not having the right answer even remotely quickly. Even

if you come to the end of the first time you meet, and you still aren't sure of the constitution, do not rush to just pick the one you think is most likely right. Just leave it, and there is every chance that it will become clear later, and you will have learned a whole lot more about working it out as a result.

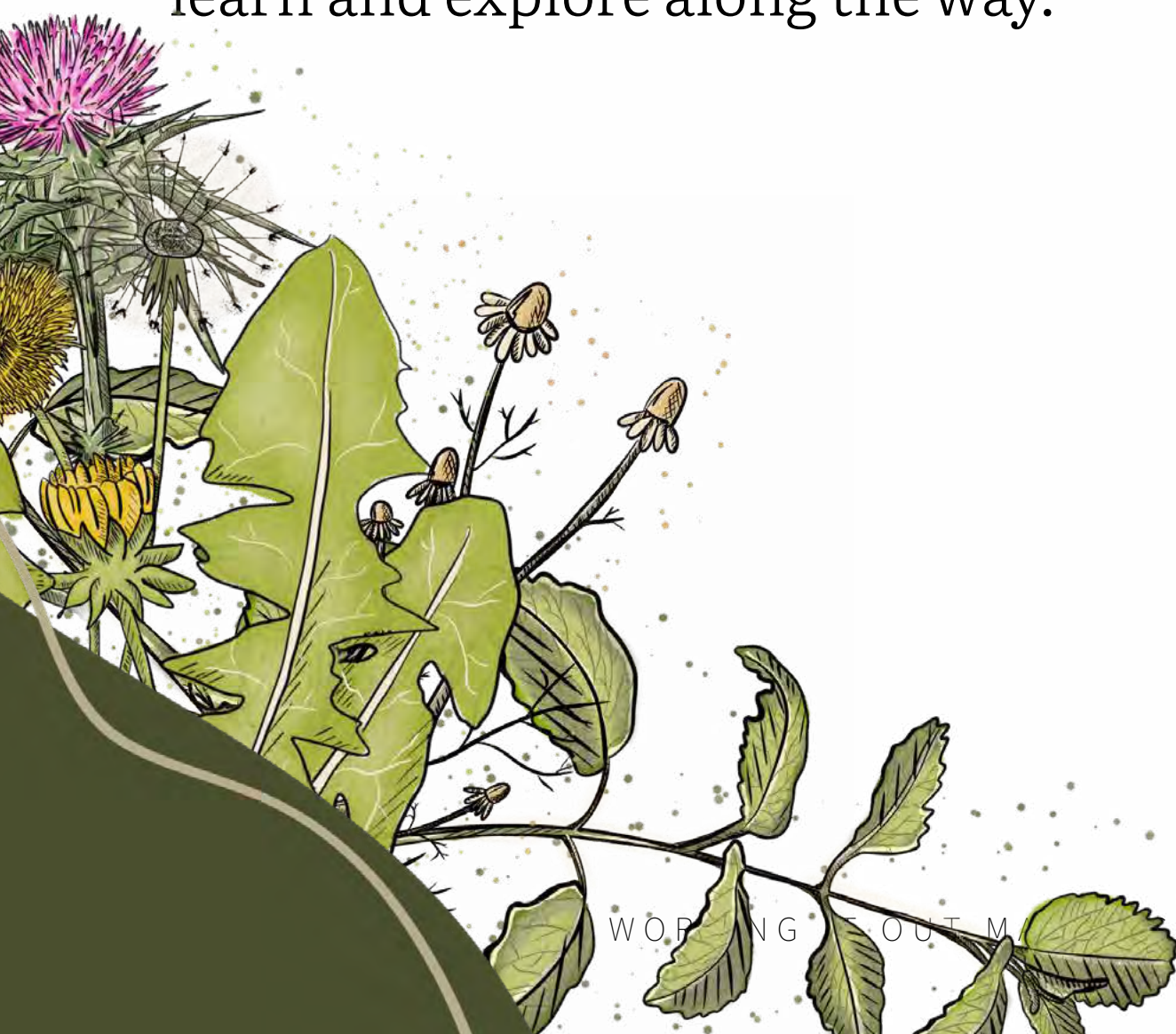
You do not have to guess a person's constitution before they leave because that's not what they came for. Meet them where they are at, and with what they want help for, and believe me, you will have more than enough to talk about. If you are studying with me, or using this material to help your studies in an allied field, then just allow the terrain of the Constitution to remain in the background of your awareness. However, you do not need to talk about which constitution you think they might be. My advice is, until you are sure, to just keep quiet about it.

Not only will holding your tongue spare you any embarrassment and the loss of confidence that comes from getting it wrong, but you will just see so much more that there is to see when you don't rush to be sure. Each constitution has many distinct characteristics, once you start seeing them for yourself, then you will start quickly recognising them the next time they come up and you will readily be able to get it right so much the faster the next time. Don't feel pressured, especially by yourself, to get it right, don't be in any haste at all!

It may happen that you process it subconsciously and so reach that point of certainty after they leave, or maybe it will come to you at the next visit, or even the one after that, why not. Take your time, take as much time as you need. Let the impressions layer up until you reach a point where you realise that the healthy doubts that made you keep looking are no longer there, because now you know, and there is no need for doubt.

And this is a note for the students of our college - SIMH. The same goes for writing up case studies on the student forum. If you aren't sure then just say that. I really mean it when I say that it is very ok to have healthy doubts for as long as they need to be there because, if you don't run from them, then they will teach you faster than just about anything.

In the meantime, as you practice something in order to become good at it, take your time. Enjoy the journey, there are so many interesting things to learn and explore along the way.





CYCLE OF HEALING



— CYCLE OF HEALING

Introduction

CYCLE OF HEALING

Now we come to a subject that is both very interesting and remarkably useful to grasp; the Cycle of Healing. Exactly like Constitutional medicine, which is very simple in its concept but then the more you go into it the more it spirals into ever increasing complexity, so the Cycle of Healing is an extremely simple concept to grasp in its essence, but the more you think about it and see it in action, the more its complexity and depth becomes apparent. .

It is not necessary now but, at some point, you might want to read or reread the chapter specifically on the Cycle of Healing found in the constitutional section of my website. Whilst the core concepts that are briefly reviewed in the beginning part of this chapter reinforce that earlier work, what soon follows is new, written through the lens of the overarching theme of this work ; constitutional complexity.

I've also realised, much after the fact, that whilst I give an origin story to my reformation of the Constitutional model, also described in a page found in the 'further reading' section of the

constitutional section in the website, I never thought to do the same with the Cycle of Healing model. Since that time, a number of people have asked where they can learn more about the Cycle, assuming I have adapted my material from one or more sources... only to be told there really isn't someone or somewhere I can refer them to!

Just to be clear, I don't for a moment think that I am the first person to come up with any truly new ideas about this, or anything else for that matter. I am simply putting a slightly new spin on a very old wheel. These old ways of understanding have been around for thousands of years because they work, and because they continue to appeal to new people in subsequent generations.

The roots of (re)discovering it came from the same impetus that led me to seek out a constitutional model that could fit the eclectic mindset of a western herbalist. I needed a way to see and understand the patient behind their condition, not to get caught up and consumed in treating their pathology, which is what you inevitably end up doing if you don't have a constitutional model to work from.

If you have read my origin story about the constitutions you will know how I worked with the Greek model for long enough to see its value, but also to suffer from its crippling hierachrical and therefore discriminatory bias, and that eventually

I went on a vision quest to get a non-hierarchical and more workable model, with many interesting realisations that then ensued.

Getting a handle on, then practising with, and then eventually writing and teaching about the Cycle of Healing, was a far more glacial, step by step process. It came from the feeling of a pressing need to better understand what it was that was blocking the *vis medicatrix naturae*, the self-healing intelligence from doing what it is clearly able to do, at least some of the time. So why not all the time?

All that is underneath these inquiries has been to find methods that would get better results with the people who came for help. All that matters to me and all that should matter to anyone about any of this is the answer to this question - how well does it actually work in practice?

I can answer that question for myself, because I have seen *much* better results from working with this Constitutional model and the Cycle of Healing etc. It works, it works well, and it works well many times more consistently than when I used to primarily treat the condition, rather than the person with the condition, which is exactly what these systems give you a practical method to do.

No-one can have any doubt that living things have the capacity to self-repair. Every possible scientific and observable evidence shows the daily miracle of that most remarkable fact. So why doesn't it always happen? This is not a matter of one constitution being lucky and another being worse off, clearly any person from any constitution can become sick and not be able to remedy themselves, why not?

As everyone knows in theory, but then quickly doubts in practice when it is happening to them, people can actually get better from most health problems. Rather than write a grim list of exceptions to that statement, let's just acknowledge that most of us lurch through life with at least a few minor issues a year; injuries, infections, unwise or unsafe foods, dark nights of the soul etc. It's entirely normal, and human, to suffer at least a little, more than we would prefer no doubt, but nothing that we see no hope of a cure from because, as we well know, nearly everything eventually passes.

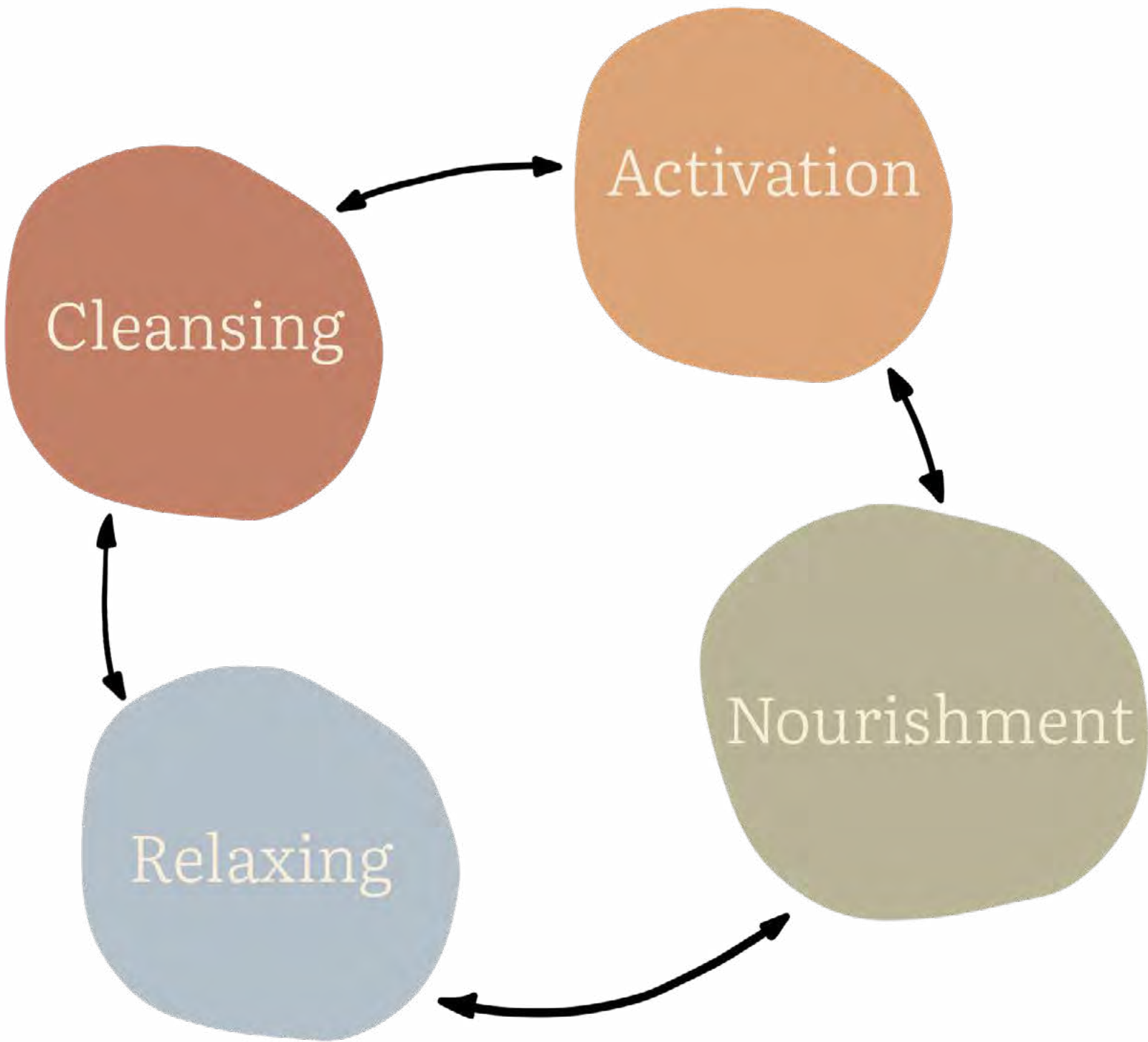
But how does it pass? How can we not, like an armchair whose stuffing is gradually coming out, just continue to break down piece by piece until we really are too sick to get better?

It is all entirely dependent on the ability, shared by all living organisms, to repair themselves. This is such an ordinary thing that it seems like it hardly needs mentioning. But it is, in fact, an utterly magnificent miracle. Non-living things can't do it,

not whatsoever. We do it in our sleep, quite literally.

Except for when we don't. There's the rub, that's the thing to look at, because if we can see and understand the cause of why we aren't getting better, and then somehow treat it, then we have every possible chance to cure it.

CYCLE OF HEALING



So, what are the key obstacles we need to look for? What is it that gets in the way of our Nature, our self-healing intelligence?

The first to mention is a lack of rest. It is frequently true that ‘rest is the best medicine’ and that if a person, or any living thing for that matter, isn’t getting enough of it, or at least enough good quality rest, that they cannot self-repair.

These are in no order of importance, it always depends on the individual case as to which is the most important part to pay attention to, the next is the Cleansing phase of the Cycle of Healing.

Cleansing incorporates a lot of essential processes, on a number of levels. The obvious physical part of it includes having a healthy liver and kidneys, along with an unobstructed bowel and bladder that can easily release the wastes that those liver and kidneys produce. The skin and the lungs likewise have crucially important jobs that include keeping things clean. All kinds of health problems can come from any obstruction of the continual cleansing process from any of these vital organs or systems.

Cleansing can be just as much a core issue when it is mental or emotional ‘wastes’ that are blocking the free flow of the self-healing intelligence. I have met many people who, in the honest self-appraisal of their lives and the roots of their illness, have shared the belief that it is their own ‘holding on’ to emotional hurts and emotional wounds that is the

leading cause of their disease.

The next quadrant is the least obvious of the four but it can be just as important as the others to address when this is where the root of the imbalance lies. I call it 'activation' for a broad enough term to encompass the range of what it signifies. Activation is all the switch-on and get going aspects of life in all its multiple complexities. Hormones, blood, muscles, nerves, brain cells are all made to do things, to be alive, to get activated.

It can be just as damaging to health and healing to remain in an unactivated state as it is to remain in an unrelaxed state. These two are on the same spectrum to each other in a similar way as cooler (more relaxed) is to hotter (more activated). In good health, you need to go between relaxation and activation and not get stuck in one at the expense of the other. Increased activation can be helped by certain herbs, in a therapeutic sense it can also include things like practising health-giving exercises for the mind or the body.

Last in the Cycle, as we have been going around it this time, is nourishment. The vast topic of nourishment, in all of its many ways and forms, is where a lot of my field starts and stops. Naturopathy, and even much of herbalism as it is practised in the West, is focused, sometimes almost exclusively, with what you can put in your mouth in terms of



nutritional supplements to get back to health.

Many, many supplements exist for more or less every ailment known to man. When they contain vitamins, trace elements, minerals etc, you can be sure that the goal is to meet a need in the nourishment side of the Cycle of Healing. Which is sometimes absolutely the key intervention required, and great things will happen when a deficiency is at the root of the blocked self-healing and the lack is finally being met. Sometimes, however, it can be a big misdirection of energy and resources if a deficiency is not the core issue and what really needs attention is in one of the other phases of the Cycle of Healing.

Physical nourishment is essential to the Cycle of Healing working properly and, equally, emotional nourishment can be just as important. People need to feel loved and nurtured, valued and cared for, even if their life circumstances might mean that they sometimes need to lead the way on this themselves and be the first one to give themselves the love, and nurture, and care that they need.

Just as there is a direct spectrum from relaxation to activation, so it is helpful to think of nourishment as being on a spectrum where the opposite pole is that of cleansing. Each side of the spectrum deeply affects the other. For example, it has many times been seen in practice that a person who is having trouble with absorbing the nutrition from their

food can actually best be helped with a course of cleansing herbs first. The spectrum is like a see-saw where, when one side has become stuck in a low state, the best way to release it can be to put some energy, some weight, over at the other end.

I trust all of that seems easy enough to grasp in principle. The complexity, as always, comes in the practice of it and all you have to do to get a sense of that is to take another moment to do a thought experiment! In a moment I will ask you to turn your attention inwards to ask yourself an open question. This time, about where you think you may be most stuck in your own Cycle of Healing.

Perhaps you already know the answer to this without making any such inquiry, but I will still encourage you to do it anyway, as you may get further insights, for example in how a block in one area is causing a flow-on effect to another.

None of us are perfect, you will surely be able to find at least some fault in yourself in all four quadrants of the Cycle of Healing if you were to really look with a critical eye. But the point of this inquiry is not to find fault but rather to simply sense where the block, or the imbalance, is the strongest. This is a highly interesting, and useful, matter to get insight with, and if you can do it with yourself then you can eventually do it with others.

THOUGHT EXPERIMENT



Now, or whenever you are ready, I encourage you to take a few moments with this important inquiry. To focus on your breathing to quieten your mind, then to gently, softly, openly ask yourself this question *‘where am I most blocked or lacking in my own Cycle of Healing? Is it in my rest or activation, or is it in my nourishment or my cleansing?’* Where am I most blocked in my own Cycle of Healing?



Another way to look into this that I sometimes use in practice is to ask a person to give themselves a score out of 10 for their diet, their fitness, and then their sleep and relaxation combined. A couple of 7s or 8s and then a 3 or a 4 usually makes things abundantly clear as to where the main issue lies. Unless it is in the sphere of cleansing, where we need to learn how to recognise signs of congestion in the tongue, skin, eyes or from what others signs or symptoms are telling us in order to get a sense of when cleansing is the core issue.

The simple principle of working with the cycle of healing is that you identify which of the four areas is most in need of support and then you use one or more herbs to help in that area. One or more medicinal herbs are the first step, then the second step is for the person to do some 'work'. To put some achievable energy or action into the area of the Cycle of Healing that needs it the most.

It is very simple to grasp these core themes in principle and they are remarkably powerful if you put them into practice. People start getting better from all kinds of things, even when you aren't directly treating their condition much at all, simply because their body, their self-healing intelligence is no longer being blocked in what it just instinctively knows how to do.

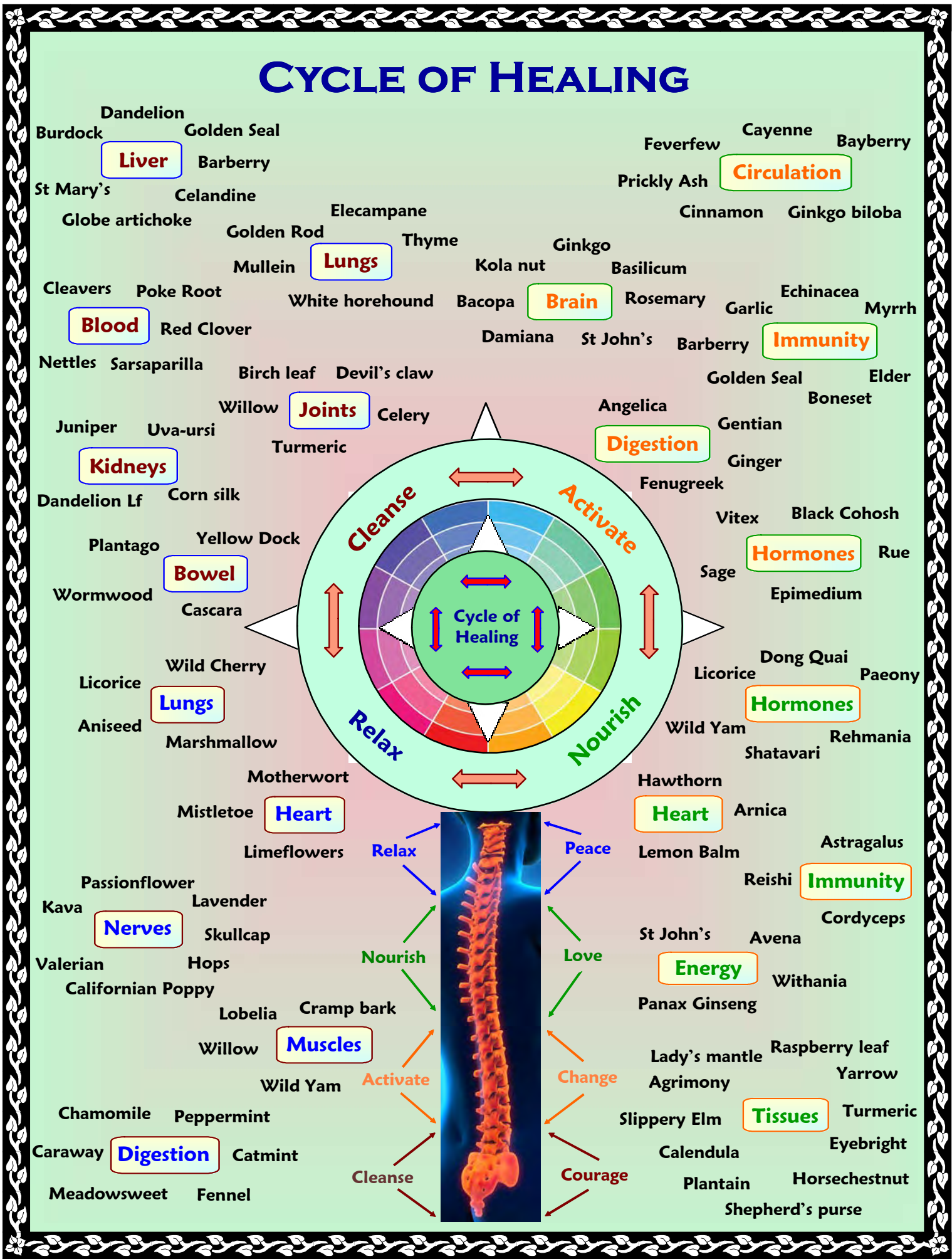
Just below, I will show you the second of the two charts we give to our students to help their learning

journey. This one shows a range of herbs that are grouped in two ways. One by their affinity with different organs or systems within the body, the other by at least part of their action being relaxing, cleansing, activating or nourishing. You are welcome to print this chart out using the link below. It may aid you in making wise choices of herbs to help you, or someone you care for.

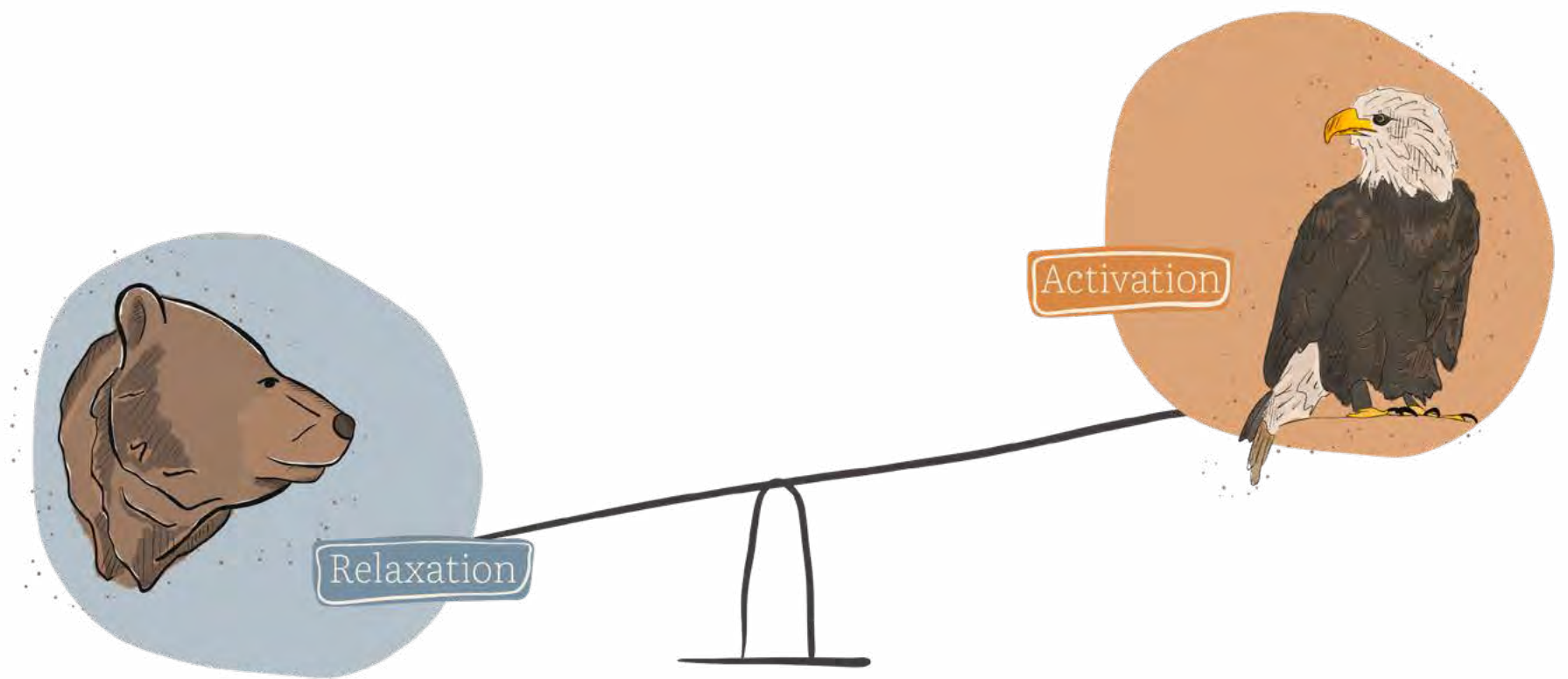
To open the PDF of the Cycle of Healing Chart in a new tab, and so not lose your place in the book, find the button called **Ctrl** on your keyboard, and then hold that **Ctrl** key down whilst at the same time clicking your mouse **here**.

— CYCLE OF HEALING

Cycle of Healing Chart



Go back “Weaving things together the Cycle of Healing with Herbal Medicines” to **page 199**.



— CYCLE OF HEALING

The Two Poles of the Cycle

Some further core principles within the Cycle of Healing is that there is normally a free and frequent movement from one state to another and that the Cycle turns both ways. I mentioned earlier how there are two spectrums within the Cycle of Healing, one of activation to relaxation and the other cleansing to nourishment. In normal life, and in good health, people go between one and the other but they don't typically jump between them but rather go through one of the adjoining stages first.

For example, a person doesn't typically go from being up and about, activated, to just straight away being relaxed. They either go through a process of physical nourishment, which could be eating

or drinking something, or equally it could be a process of emotional nourishment in the form of some entertainment or ‘food’ for their mind. Or they could go the other way around the cycle from activation to relaxation, by doing something of a cleansing nature. This could be some form of physical bodily cleansing, or equally it could be a thinking or talking process that helps them to let go of the stress of the day.

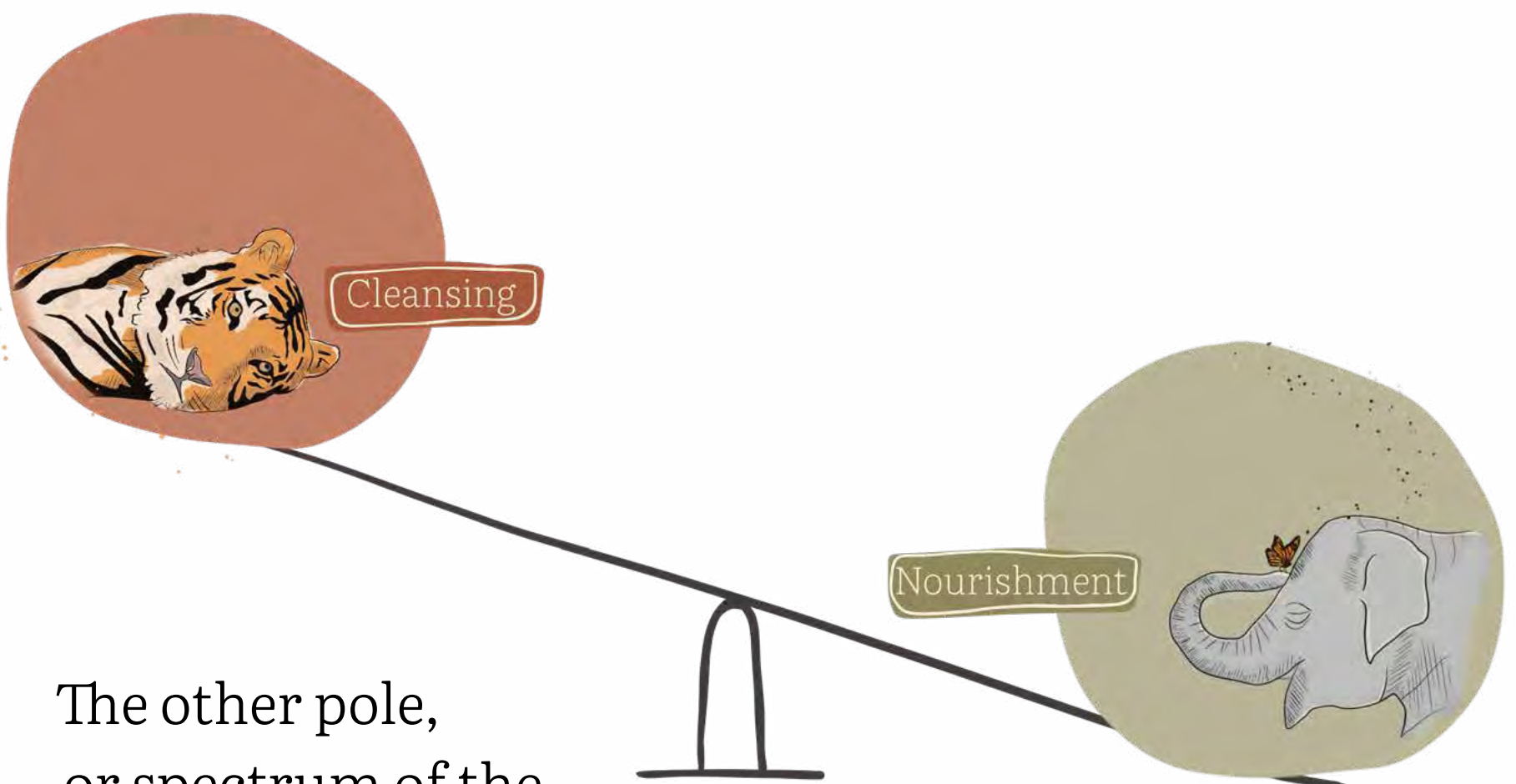
Many people need to go through both nourishing and cleansing to properly get from up-activation to down-relaxation. The Cycle spins both ways, it is very dynamic and it is not bound by time. A person can, if they need to, quickly move through any phase of their Cycle if it is not blocked or impeded in any way.

Now to use the opposite example, we don’t usually go from relaxation straight to activation. The exception to that could be when a sudden and unexpected event triggers a surge of adrenaline with a rush of ‘fight or flight’. Such as being woken from sleep by a loud and scary noise in the house.

Usually, in good health, and outside of emergencies, we move from a relaxed state to an activated one by taking in some nourishment or doing something of a cleansing nature, or some combination of the two. Have a think about your own morning routines, what it takes for you to get ready for work or study, or caring for your family, and you will see

how your own Cycle plays out in this matter. It's interesting to take it further and notice how you compare to others on this too, how people's needs for nourishment and/or cleansing before they can become activated has a lot of variation.






The other pole, or spectrum of the Cycle of Healing is the cleansing to nourishment one, and being able to go from one side to the other is just as dependent on being able to easily move through the adjacent sectors in the Cycle here too.

We must take in nourishment in order to live but you also have to be able to effectively clean your digestive system in order to keep taking in more food without trouble, and many people have problems with this.

Constipation is an obvious expression of the issue for some people but many others, who have regular motions, still have too much poorly absorbed food in their system when they are taking yet more in. They haven't adequately cleansed before taking in more nourishment. The issue here will be broadly one of three things:

1. Cleansing may not have occurred adequately (much of the practice of herbal medicine, in all traditions, focuses on this as a necessary first step in a healing journey)
2. the person has not sufficiently rested to digest their food
3. the person is stuck in a high level of activation, even to the point of being in fight or flight, which makes digestion, i.e. taking in nourishment, diabolically difficult!

Each of these core issues would need a different strategy to 'treat the cause'. This is an example of how the Cycle of Healing can be so effective in practice. It shows you where to direct the attention.



Another common issue, and one that is met many times in practice, is the person who is stuck in the cleansing phase of their Cycle of Healing. They are not lacking cleansing, they are cleansing too much! For any of a number of reasons, the most common being the adoption of a philosophy and way of living that orders the exclusion of a great many substances in the diet,

they are eating an advanced version of what I would call a ‘cleansing diet’, and often taking herbs or supplements that push the process further too.

Cleansing work can be tremendously important when it is needed, but only ever for a limited period of time. If a person stays in an accelerated cleansing state for too long then they will become unwell and undernourished. Undernourishment means that they will get deficiencies in their blood and they will get fatigue. Undernourishment means their body will not be able to heal itself from injury, or infection, or even the normal wear or tear of life.

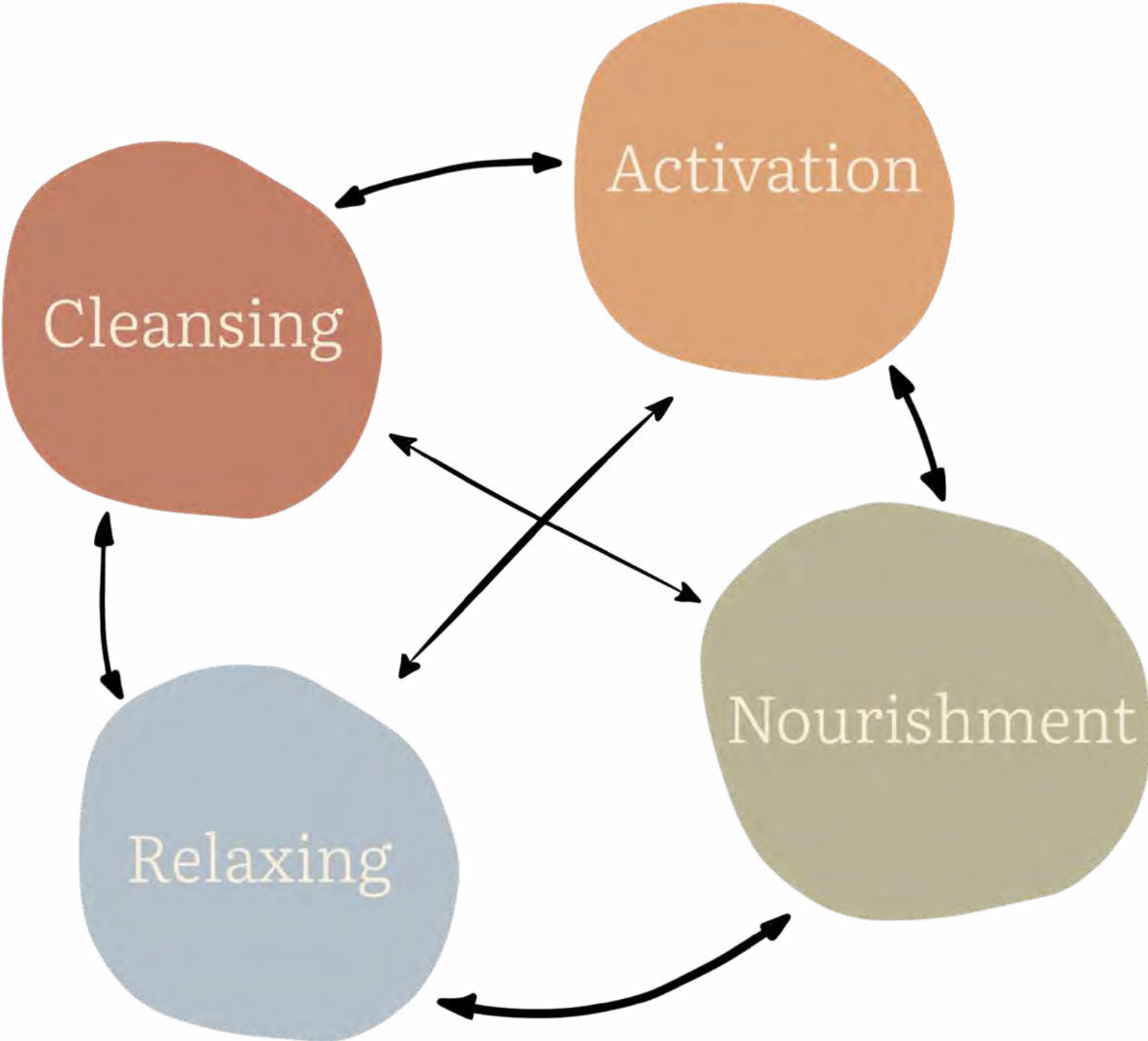
For such a person to get their health back to balance, they need to put much more emphasis on the nourishment phase of their Cycle but they can’t just jump over to the other side of the see-saw spectrum without going through either relaxation or activation or both.

The relaxation could be, for example, a necessary release of some of their anxiety about food. They will need to let go of the fear that less pure foods are actually harmful to them unless they truly do still need to cleanse. Relaxing from a strict diet often has to happen piece by piece, step by step. The person needs time to release the constrictions and prohibitions from their philosophy about food. They need time to feel safe that when they eat a more nutrient dense food that their body will actually

thrive from it. They need to feel good from what they are letting themselves eat again!

Alternatively, such a person may need a process of activation to let go of their restrictions and get back to a more nourishing diet. Activation can include the brain just as much as the body. They could start doing some research that could challenge their adopted belief systems around food with searching for answers to the great question - *What really is a healthy diet?*

As I am sure you know, there are many differing and opposing ideas in our world about what is a healthy diet. But if a person looks far and reads widely, they will see a lot of common ground and a lot of common sense out there too. Especially if their search encompasses those ideas that have stood the test of time and have been consistently adopted by nutritionally aware health practitioners for millennia.



— CYCLE OF HEALING

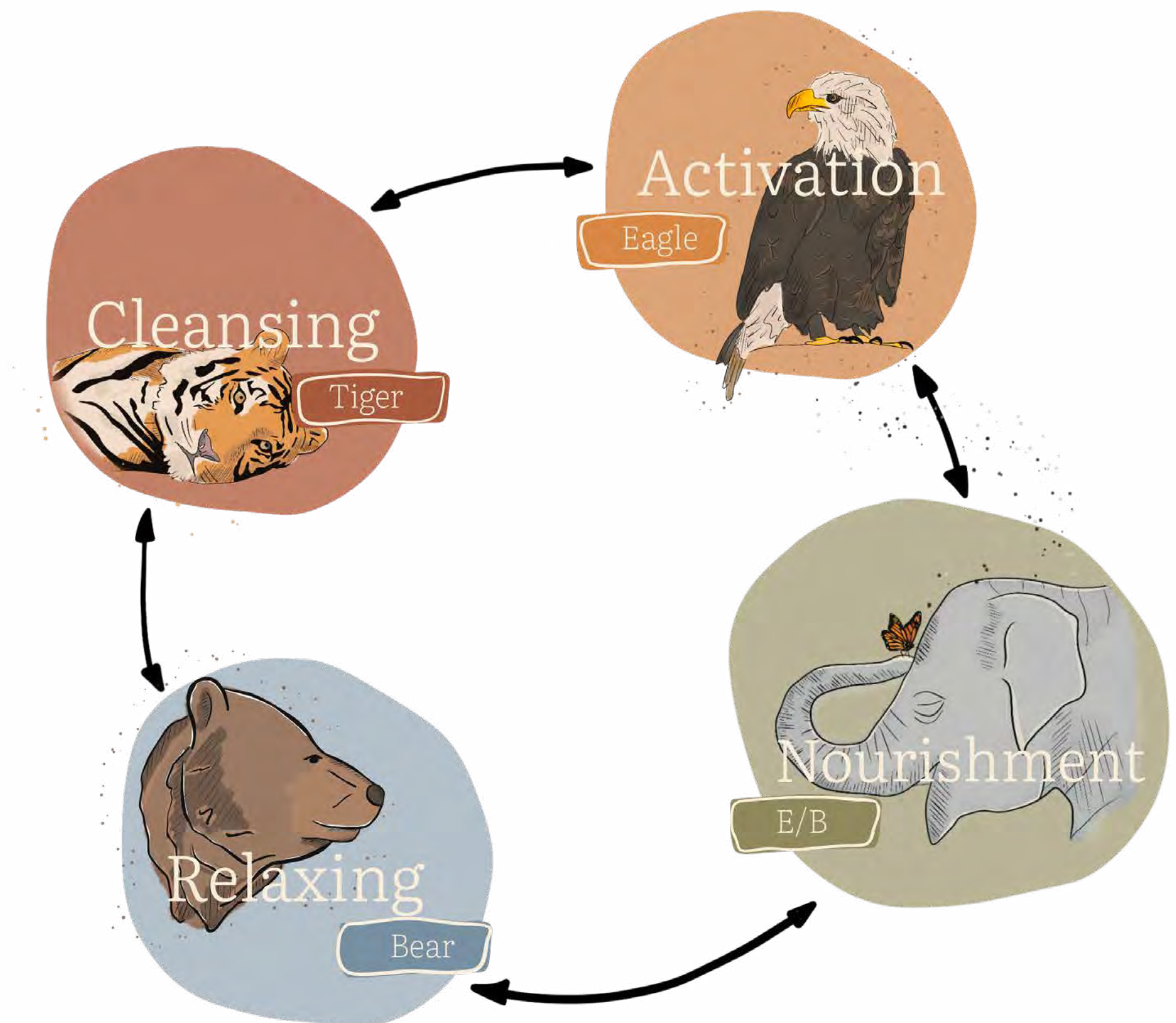
The Constitutions within the Cycle of Healing

Each of the different constitutions reflect different aspects of the Cycle of Healing in ways that are fascinating and highly useful to learn. Patterns within patterns and complexity within simplicity.

Far from limiting the view of people by putting them into a box with their constitution and where they are most blocked in their Healing Cycle, the constitutional model lets you get underneath the surface to understand a person much more deeply. From that understanding comes many good things, including the kind of acceptance that leads to compassion instead of judgement, including some good ideas of what to do to help!

It is especially useful to understand how much the constitutional types tend to get caught in patterns of certain types of blocks within the Cycle of Healing. As the below image shows, there is a first and primary relationship between each of the four

constitutions and each of the four phases of the Cycle of Healing that can be very useful to be aware of. If we are able to work out the Constitution we can know that these phases are likely where some attention will need to go, especially in the beginning stages of a healing journey.





TIGERS

Let's start with Tigers again. I could not even guess how many times I have met with a person, who it eventually became crystal clear that they were a Tiger, and for whom it turned out that they needed a cleansing program, first and foremost, for their health to get better.

The dietary part of this could simply be a cleansing diet, namely high fruits and vegetables, low meat and dairy, no processed foods etc. but equally, because the metabolic syndrome is so common in Tigers, it could be getting the person to fast from sugars and refined carbohydrates and to eat more proteins and fats instead. Both dietary approaches require cleansing herbs to support a safe and positive outcome but, with varying levels of intensity and time required, the results are usually frankly terrific.

There will have been all sorts of different reasons that they have come for some help but, rather than putting the main focus on their condition, we have treated their constitutional tendency to be hotter and damper and so used the cooling and energetically drying action of a cleansing treatment plan to help the body to heal itself.

EAGLES

The quadrant of the Cycle of Healing that the hotter and dryer Eagle most often finds themselves in trouble with, at least at first, is in that of ‘activation’. Activation is very broad, at some levels it could simply be described as everything that is the opposite of rest, sleep and relaxation. For example, the breath in compared to the breath out, or to bring it even further into the microcosm, the variation within a single heartbeat, where one moment the heart muscle is in relaxation; soft, resting, and then in the next moment it must suddenly go into activation; contracting, hard, pushing out blood, before it swings back to relaxation again, and then back to activation, and so on for the entirety of our lives.



1. Problems in the ‘activation’ phase can commonly involve issues such as the army of the immune system being overactive, so perhaps less infections than average but there being a major issue with allergies or an auto-immune condition.

2. As just mentioned, the most tireless and hard-working muscle in the body, the heart, gets overactive. There is plenty of push to do a lot of work for a long time but then eventually such problems as angina, arrhythmia or high blood pressure can start to occur. I have met many Eagles who have a great health history in terms of having had very little go wrong in the past, but whose hearts are clearly wearing out faster than the rest of them.

3. The mind or nervous system becomes overactive, which can lead to all kinds of issues; from insomnia to irritability, from neuralgia (nerve-pain) to neurasthenia (nerve exhaustion).

Other constitutions can certainly get an overactive immune or nervous system too, but it is especially common in Eagles, at least when they lived long enough. When you can identify that it is an Eagle constitution who is stuck in over-activation, then rather than getting too caught up in treating things like heart arrhythmias, auto-immune conditions, drug-resistant insomnia etc, you don’t have to roll the dice on a



combination of herbs or supplements being the miracle cure for something that drugs haven't been able to help. Rather than treat the condition, you treat the person with the condition.

This might typically involve working with nourishing and relaxing 'nervines' (these are herbs that work on the nervous system) and at the same time putting some kind of an agreed upon program into place that involves the patient in their cure, that helps address the cause of the excess hours of flight or fight, or the deficient hours of rest and relaxation.

ELEPHANT/BUTTERFLIES

The quadrant of the Cycle of Healing that the cooler and dryer Elephant-Butterfly (EB) most often has to do their first work in is that of 'nourishment'. The person I described earlier, who is too much in the cleansing phase with a too restricted diet and so is now suffering from increasing deficiencies is most commonly an EB.



Problems associated with a lack of nutrition are manifold throughout our communities. The body requires a constellation of essential amino acids, fats, sugars, vitamins, minerals and trace elements in order to heal itself from injury, wear

and tear. Lacking even one of them has numerous down-stream effects. The person who is by nature cooler and dryer is more prone to deficiency than any other constitution and, paradoxically, they are at the same time most inclined to go on diets that restrict their nutrients, because they believe they need to cleanse. In fact many go further and want to either fast or at least restrict many types of foods. From ancient times, the one constitution that was forbidden to fast was the cooler and dryer one and yet they are, without doubt, the ones who most want to do it.

Conditions that can especially arise from not getting the nourishment a person needs, and that EBs are especially prone to include: infertility, osteoporosis, underactive thyroid, arthritis, slow-healing injuries, fatigue, chronic fatigue, low blood pressure, chronic headache, hair-loss, prolapses, constipation, indigestion, chemical and environmental sensitivity and more.

It is a hell of a list, but where a lack of nourishment is one of the root causes, then all these problems can be helped, and sometimes greatly helped, by the simplest of steps; namely eating animal proteins and other high density sources of nutrition to fill the gaps. In other words, meeting the vital need for nourishment so that the self-healing intelligence can go to work with the tools it needs to repair the



wounded body!

When making such a radical change as, for example, to reintroduce animal fats and proteins to a person who has avoided them, often for many years, it can greatly help to take some drops of a bitter such as Gentian a few minutes before food to warm up the digestion and get the juices flowing so that they can digest and assimilate the richer foods without stress to the weakened or over-sensitive gut.

Gentian is superb for this, and there is a detailed write up on my site with practical instructions on how to best use it. Herbs are the people's medicine and people should know how to use them!

There are other, potentially equally valuable, nourishing, warming or moistening tonics that can greatly assist the EB or other person who has gone too far to the cool and dry, which in this context means they have gone into depletion and need support in the nourishment phase of their Cycle of Healing.

B E A R S



Bears, in the cooler, damper corner of the constitutional spectrums, most often have to do their core work, or at least their initial work, in the rest and relaxation quadrant of the Healing Cycle. The classic presentation of the Bear who is blocked in this phase is that they may be sleeping well, or at least getting plenty of rest, and their mental health seems quite robust, or at least they aren't really complaining about it, but their body has a full-on, chronic health condition that, quite clearly and beyond any reasonable doubt, has stress at the root of it.

A careful history may be needed to bring out the truth about this. Because if a person didn't previously have an issue, and then one day they did, what happened, what changed? In the case of many Bears, the change was having to take on a lot more responsibilities, and therefore a lot more worries. This in turn meant they had to start spending far more time in the 'activation' phase of their Cycle and much less in the relaxation phase.

Once the Bear stops being able to go into hibernation, which I also call going into their 'cave', therefore once they spend too long in the 'forest', working, worrying, being 'on', there can be a heavy price to pay in the form of a physical condition that

is primarily being driven by stress.

Many Bears, rather dangerously, even stop enjoying being in their cave. It becomes a place to avoid because, at least when they are busy, they don't have to notice how much worse they are feeling on the inside. Even less time in the cave means their stress-related condition gets more and more stuck. Remember, the condition is usually very physical. A much disturbed bowel function, a rampaging eczema, a chronic low back issue, a bladder, prostate or gynaecological problem. The frequent pattern in the Bear is that their condition goes inwards and/or downwards, and their history shows that stress makes it worse, or even seems to have been the primary cause when it first started.

The next point I want to make here has many exceptions and this will not be the case for most Bears, who if anything are more honestly self-aware than average, but there will be real-life examples of this that will surely come to the person who wants to work with others. It is that you will meet the Bear who, after taking a careful history, seems to have a stress-caused or stress-related health condition but who has nothing to say about their mental and emotional health and is not forthcoming about there being a connection there that they are aware of.

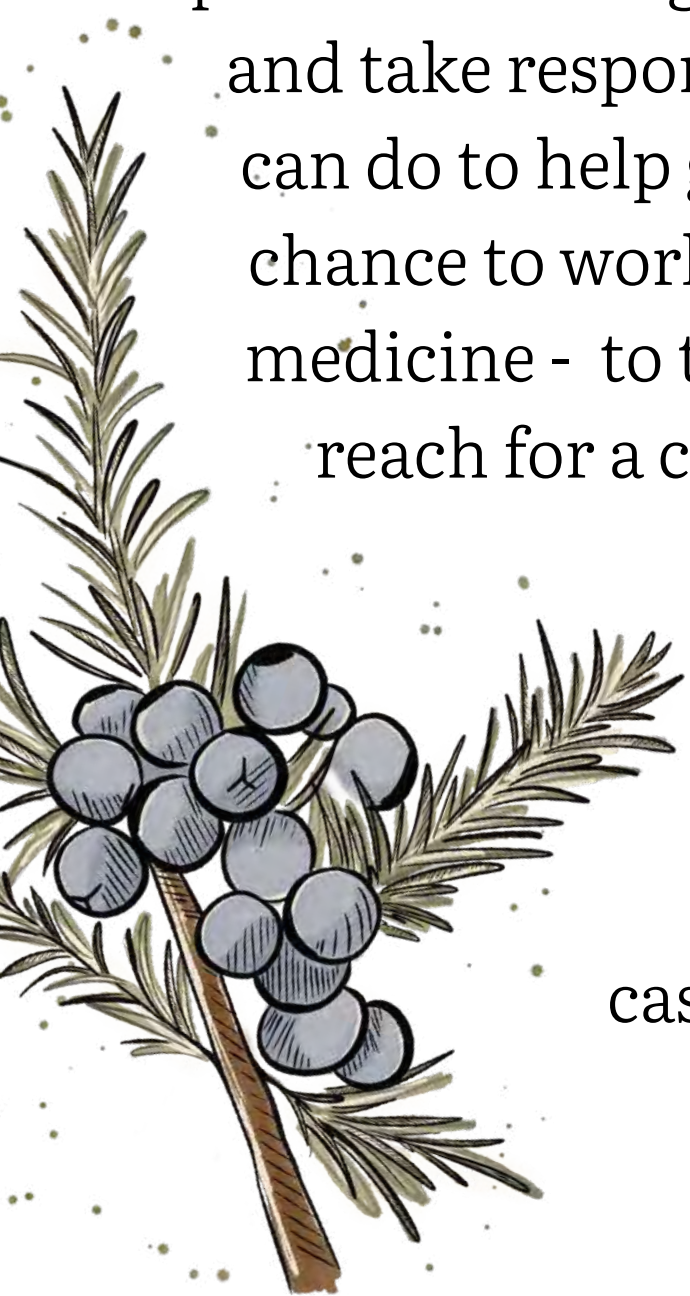
You will certainly meet this person in practice sometimes, and because they are a Bear, and may

therefore even appear to be rather more calm and relaxed than the average person, the last thing you might therefore continue to suspect is that they are having a big problem in the relaxation phase of their Cycle of Healing.

Beware being fooled by such a person. You may know that deep down they are a Bear but they have temporarily transformed themselves into a Duck! Gliding calmly, serenely over the river, as if they did not have a care in the world whilst all the time, out of sight, under the surface, relentlessly paddling, striving and straining and in reality not even close to being relaxed. If such a person is not ready to acknowledge the true state of their affairs, especially to themselves, there may be little you can do to genuinely help them.

Many times in my lectures and discussions with students I say 'denial is the enemy', because if a person is willing to face the truth of their situation and take responsibility for their part in what they can do to help get better, then you have every chance to work with the crucial second law of medicine - to treat the cause, '*tolle causam*', and so reach for a cure but, if they are not ready to face the truth, if they would rather be in denial, then we can often be quite powerless to help.

Hopefully that will not be the case. When people have suffered

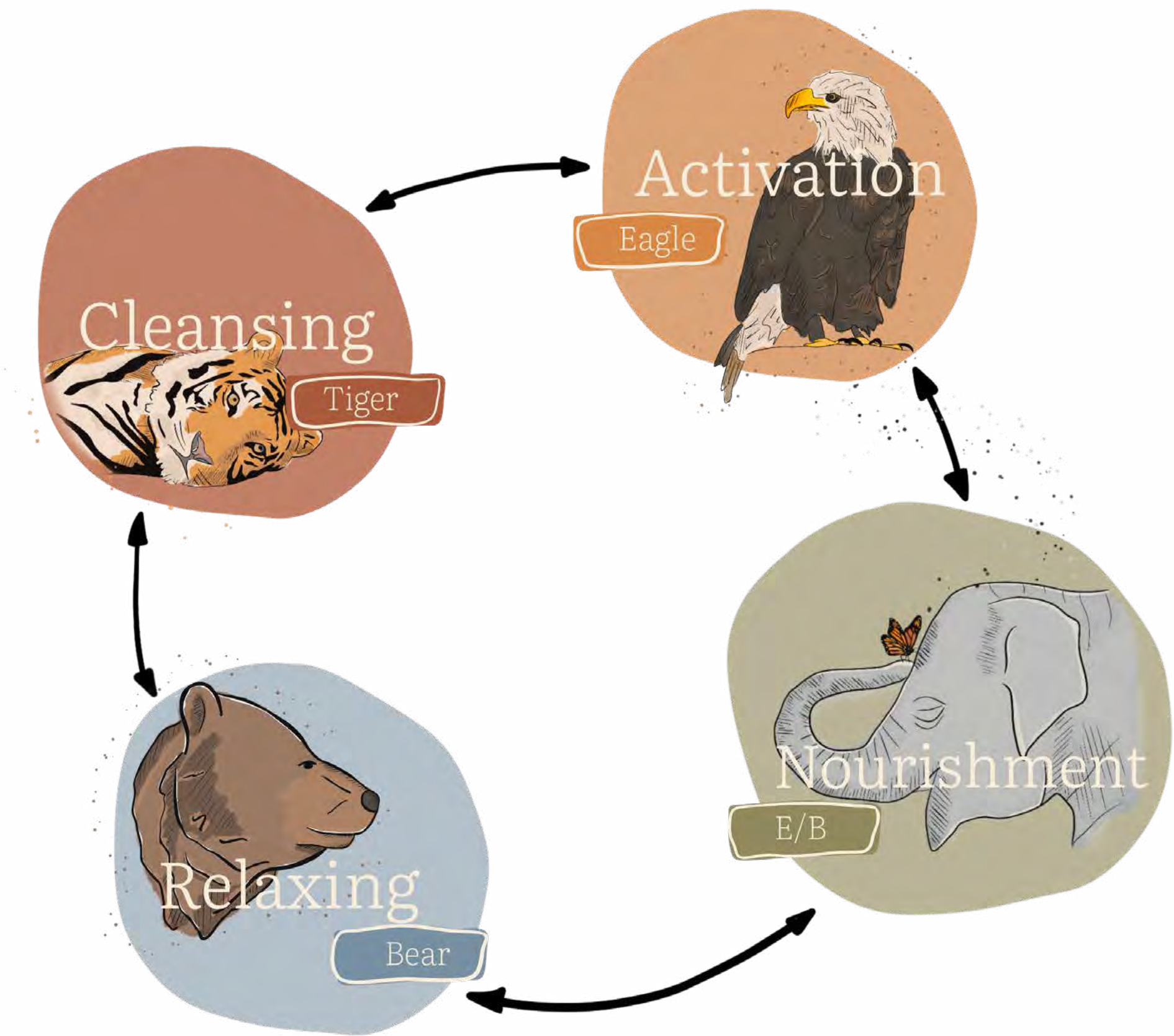


enough and suffered for long enough they are ready to face anything and do whatever it takes to get better. And if it is excess stress that really is the primary driver to a health issue, and the person, from whatever constitution they are, can acknowledge that, then there is every chance to go on a highly successful healing journey. There are relaxing and strengthening ‘nervine’ herbs that can be tremendously beneficial, plus there are simple but effective treatment strategies that empower the patient and involve them in their cure. More on that later.

I will also just mention here that if a Bear is not sleeping well then there really will be hell to pay. They are the least likely of all the constitutions to have sleeping problems and are nearly always intuitively aware of the importance of plenty of rest and comfort in their lives and don’t need to be told about it. However, if the innate intensity of the Bear combines with some life-crisis and they are not able to get their usually good rest and ample sleep, then their physical and mental health can unravel faster and further than anyone.

Especially watch out for the young adult Bear who has become deeply imbalanced by a lack of sleep and becoming too activated, getting too ‘up’, who then gets diagnosed with a mood disorder. Bipolar and mixed-mood disorders are more commonly diagnosed in Bears than the other constitutions by far. Rather than a life-time of powerful mind-

altering chemicals as the only solution, see what happens when their sleep rhythms and activation rhythms are restored. The crisis can pass in a matter of days, the mood can stabilise and the craziness can pass away like a lightning storm receding into the distance.



— CYCLE OF HEALING

Across the poles in the Cycle

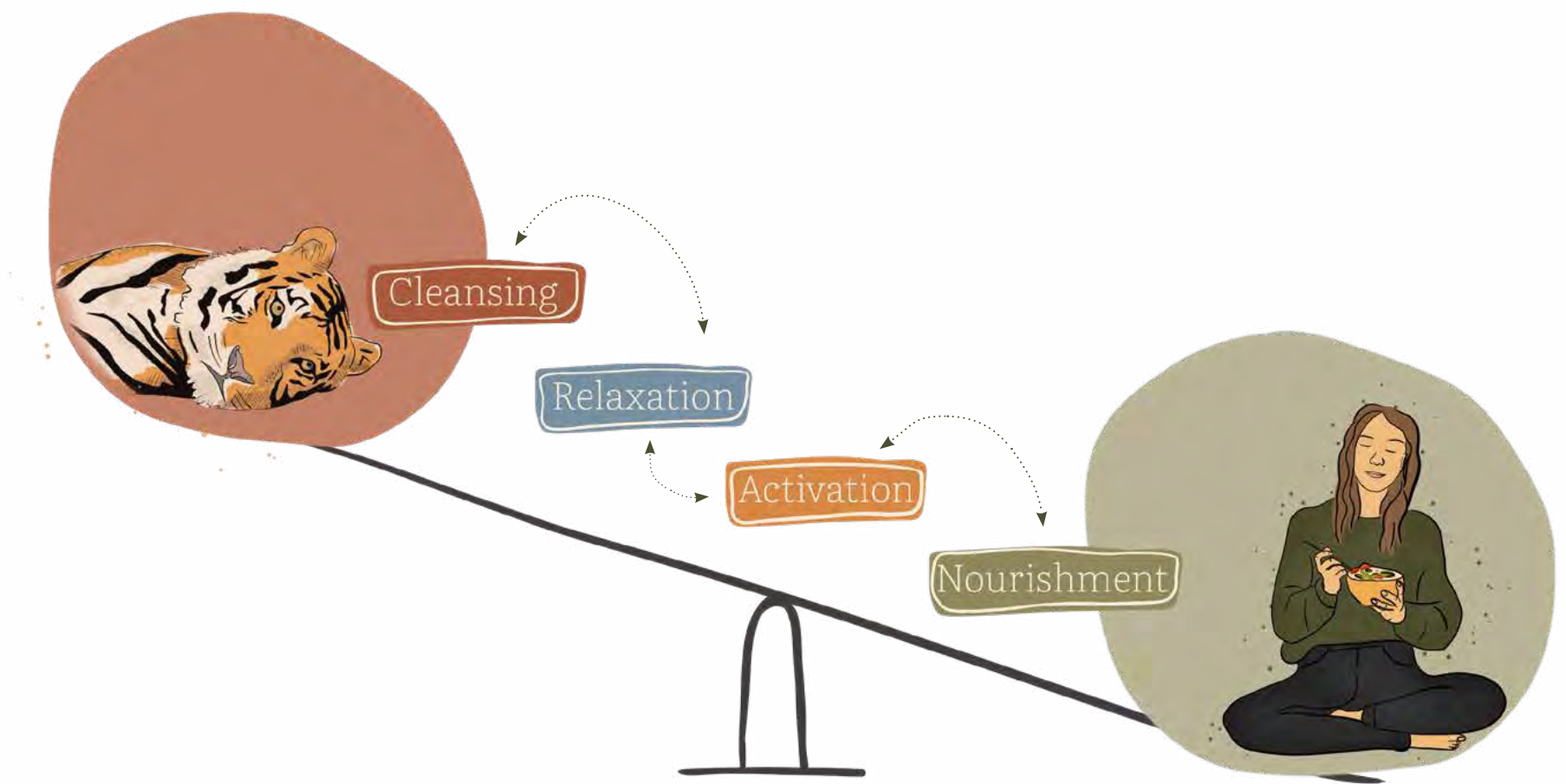
I will now introduce to you a further observation on this fascinating subject, which is how remarkably often it is that, what eventually turns out to be that the biggest challenge in the Cycle of Healing, will be found on the opposite side to the ‘home-base’ of where that constitution sits.

That, as I have been discussing, the initial challenge, the first step, in the healing journey is to remedy some core need or imbalance in their corner, their ‘home territory’ so to speak, but that the longer, deeper process of a truly transformative and healing change very often requires them to go all the way to the opposite side of their Cycle of Healing ‘pole’.

Understanding this in some practical depth will require us to go once more around the constitutional cycle and to give some examples as we go. Plus it will, by necessity, add another layer of complexity to the constitutional picture, but I think you will find it a highly interesting theory to put to the test in your own life, and in your observations of those who are close to you, and then perhaps even

into practice if it is your heartfelt desire to put all of this to real use in the world one day.





TIGERS

Again starting with the Tiger, hotter and damper. I've said above how very often it is a cleansing program that is the basic training, 'the boot camp' of the work that needs to be done with the Tiger patient when you first meet them. In many cases that is really all you need to do. Their symptoms, such as they were, resolve themselves, they feel great, they *'feel the best they have in years'*, and it is just not necessary to push them any further, unless this is clearly what they want or need.

You have to meet the patient where they are, and you have to meet them where they are each time they come. If they got what they came for and they are happy to stop there, then my advice to any future practitioners who are reading this is to keep the appointment short and sweet. Invite them to feel free to come back if they ever feel the need and then wish them well on their way!

By the way, on this note, an important comment

to those who will one day be hoping to build their practices as medical herbalists. You should know that every person who you might get business advice from; whatever their persuasion, will give you the exact opposite advice to what I have said above about letting them go and wishing them well on their way. They will say, ‘find a reason to get them to come back, create a wellness plan, get them enrolled in something, anything!’

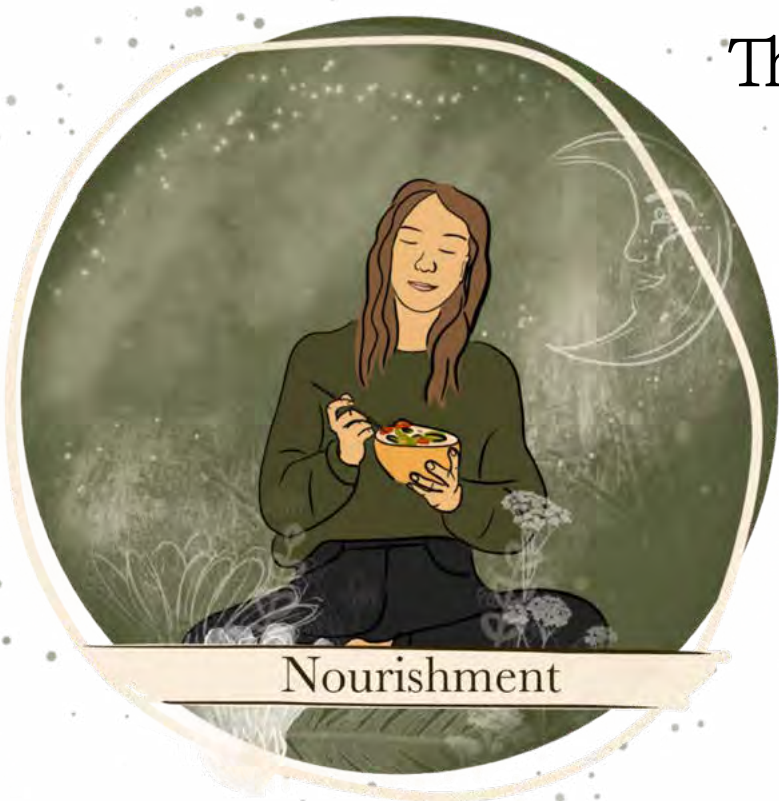
Such advisers will mean well but they will be doing you a disservice. People see through all that. However, if they know that you are not trying to get anything out of them, that you genuinely just want to help them when needed and are most happy if they don’t need your help, then you will have earned their trust.

Then you yourself will be trusting Nature, and I can assure you that Nature will reward you manyfold. Including in ways none of us can really understand or explain, but also in part because the spirit of integrity in which you have treated such people, means that they will always become your best supporters and sources of referral.

Back to the subject at hand, I will have badly misrepresented the great Tiger constitution if I have conveyed an image of them to only ever be like Tigger from Winnie the Pooh, bouncing in with endless optimism, needing the simplest ‘oil change’ to fix them up, and then out they bounce again.

Actually, in the spirit of complete honesty, I do rather like that image and do find some of my Tiger patients to be just that light, and easy, but there are many, many exceptions, especially when the great leveller, age, comes into the picture.

We are also now starting to veer closer into the great heart of many matters, i.e. the emotional and spiritual health of the person, and I want to give this important subject its proper due later, but suffice to say here, whilst we are still mostly focusing on the physical realm, that even just with the Cycle of Healing at a blood, bones and guts level, many Tigers have a lasting journey whereby their biggest health challenge for their health, their hormones, their weight and their vitality, is actually over in the opposite corner, the nourishment quadrant, i.e in what to eat and how to eat.



The whole complex and essential subject of nourishment and nutrition, that which is over at the opposite end of the spectrum from cleansing, is where the ageing, or health-conscious, or afflicted with some chronic ailment, Tiger, frequently has their hardest, and trickiest work to do.

Several key themes seem to recur that are worth highlighting here. One has already been mentioned

above, which is that there can be no doubt that the constitution who is the most prone of any to get the metabolic syndrome is the Tiger. In other words, they can do poorly on a high-carbohydrate diet and do much better on a hunter-gatherer, Paleo-type diet.

Or, taking a big step further, I am a long-term advocate for the very low carbohydrate ketogenic diet and frequently prescribe it when there are significant cardio-vascular issues happening, or diabetes is looming close, or there is a lot of weight to lose, or even sometimes when there is a life threatening cancer in the picture (because starving *some* types of cancer from getting any sugar to keep growing on has literally saved lives).

Tigers are less inclined to food allergy but rather more disposed to food intolerance, which in some cases can affect them quite badly, especially in their gut health or as a driver of inflammation in their body. Food intolerance is a thorny subject that is full of myths and misinformation so if this is something you need to know more about then read my article on it in the Conditions section of my website under allergies and intolerances.

I have not kept statistics on this, I can only give an impression rather than a percentage, but with multiple hundreds of cases where we have done some science-based blood testing and/or worked through the hard yards of the exclusion and

challenge process (i.e. stop the food for long enough to see what difference it makes and then eat it again to see if it makes things much worse) I can say that it seems Tigers are more inclined to react to either dairy or eggs than anything else. Only a few seem to have problems with gluten, so my comment above about not doing well with lots of grains is more to do with getting a fatigue and inflammation-creating insulin spike, rather than an allergic or intolerant reaction to things like bread and grain. However, there is something about the highly damp nature of both eggs and dairy that seems to drive some Tigers out of balance into intolerance. Not so often both at the same time though, thankfully, more often either eggs or dairy.

EBs do this the most, by far, but then in second place is the Tiger who embraces vegetarianism all the way up to veganism. They may have a very good reason for this, such as concern for the environment and the climate, or because they see the great moral responsibility of taking another animal's life to feed their own. Or they may have changed their diet for a more dubious reason, such as believing it is better for humans to ignore over a million years of evolutionary biology and eat a plant-based diet because it is supposed to be better for you.

Whatever the reason, here's the thing, because especially if the Tiger needed to go through a cleansing process, which so many do, at least for a while, then the lack of animal proteins and fats in

the diet practically guarantees that their body will go much more into the cleansing phase of their Cycle of Healing.

That's often great, for a while.

The Tiger that needed a cleanse feels better, and symptoms such as bad skin, poor digestion, low energy or mood etc, marvellously clear up and, of course, they rightly credit the diet as being the reason



they feel better, but then wrongly assume that what was making them sick were those animal proteins and fats they they have now given up. The animal proteins and fats weren't making them sick, but removing them from their diet for a while allowed their body to better do the cleansing that it needed.

Such a diet takes 6 months to do what would take one or two months with herbs on board as well, but putting that aside, the problem comes later, when what could have been perfectly healthy to do for a few months or even half a year becomes an ingrained philosophy and a long-term lifestyle.

Depending on their genetic endowment, depending on their age, depending on how well their nutritional stores were filled up before they began, it might take months or years before it happens

but, without fail, in every case so far ever seen, from all constitutions, the person who removes all animal proteins and fats from their diet, ends up in depletion and deficiency.

The scientific evidence is clear and compelling for our best diet to be the omnivore-based one that we have evolved with. Farming methods and environmental concerns are real, we need to continue to have tough conversations about that and surely we need a grass-roots revolution to create the change that is needed in how we take care of our world while we have our time to live in it.

I feel that the hardest issue here is the ethical one and, as a person who once felt so strongly about the moral repugnancy of taking a life to feed your own that I was once a vegan myself, I really can understand the philosophical objection that people have to eating animal proteins and fats.

In my clinic, when meeting with a long-term vegan who is showing all the signs of depletion and deficiency in the nourishment phase of their Cycle, I sometimes tell the story of my own daughter, Danielle, now a good medical herbalist herself after doing more than 7 years of training (longer than some, faster than others) who, when she was just 1 year old, was not wanting to wean on to any foods and, unlike her twin brother who was walking at 9

months and galloping around the house at a year old, she was hardly able to stand up by herself.

Danielle was a happy baby but she liked to be carried around and she certainly didn't want anything but the milk of her mother. It probably sounds not so bad the way I am writing it here but the truth is that it worried me up to the point of a crisis one unforgettable day, when I felt her little wrists and ankles and how they were about as firm as soft cheese. The militant vegan that I was, the practitioner who took any opportunity he got to convert his patients to vegetarianism, suddenly and without any possibility of refuting it, instinctively knew that my little girl needed meat to survive and thrive.

Seized and pulled in two directions by the conviction of what I knew had to happen and all the deep resistance I felt against it, the only way I could bring myself to take such a previously unthinkable step was to make the following deal - if I could personally take an animal's life, and then take every step that would follow from that, then I would do it.

So, the next day I purchased an air-rifle with a scope and me, the city boy, who had never shot anything in his life, who had been, long ago, more drawn into the healing arts and the desire to relieve suffering by my feelings about animals than my feelings about humans, tramped up into the hills nearby to

Christchurch, saw a perfect little bunny rabbit up on a rise above me, raised my rifle and shot it dead, through the head.

I walked up to it, beheld what I had done and what could not be put on anyone else because, without me, this rabbit would still be 100%, gloriously alive, and I fell to my knees and wept like I have never wept before or since. And then had a state of Grace come upon me, also like I have never quite felt, although there have been some few other such similar moments that I treasure above all others too.



And I knew that there was no sin in what I had done, that everything eats everything, and that it truly was, truly ok. So I cleanly skinned my first animal, with no hesitation or revulsion, as if my hands were guided by my ancestors, came home in peace, cooked the flesh of the rabbit in peace, and then quietly wept some more tears of joy as I saw my dear daughter fall upon the food and devour it ravenously.



It would have been a grave mistake on my part, in this presentation on constitutional complexity within the Cycle of Healing, to be giving the idea that the only two sides of the spectrum that a Tiger need worry about are in the Cleansing or Nourishing phases.

Relaxation and Activation can be, and frequently are, of profound significance too, and I will make a few comments about them both in relation to Tigers in a moment, but before I do, I want to emphasise that the key theme, the pattern, that I would love you to consider here, and then test out, starting with yourself and then some others who you are

close to, is this fascinating idea; that your constitutional ‘home corner’ in the Cycle of Healing is the place that you most often have to give your initial attention to, but it is the ‘farthest corner’ that is the one that will need your longest attention over time, and could also well be the area that gives you the most trouble, or at least the most challenge!



Back to activation vs relaxation for the Tiger. Asking my heart, or my subconscious, call it what you will, for what feels like the most honest answer to the question ‘what percentage of my Tiger patients have sleeping problems?’, the best estimate I get is around 1 in 6 or 1 in 7, which

is obviously still a lot. Furthermore, a fair percentage of that 1 in 6 or 7 won’t respond to any kind of sleep aid in natural medicine and barely respond to potent pharmaceutical sleeping pills either. I have come to see the reasonably common sleep issue in the Tiger as one of ‘unreleased steam’. Their nature to be both hotter and damper means they get a kind of energetic steam which, if channelled wisely, gives them the ‘get up and go’ to achieve all kinds of things but, if they are not working towards goals that they believe in, e.g. if they are not engaged in some kind of meaningful work or study or raising a family or working on a project etc. then they can toss and turn all night with hell to pay for the consequences.

In terms of the Cycle of Healing, this is an imbalance that exists on both the relaxation and activation spectrum. They need to have ‘activated’ enough to use their energetic steam or else it just sits inside them, like a pot of water at the boiling point, and instead of cooling off to let go and go to sleep, the restlessness created by that unreleased ‘steam’ causes havoc to their sleep.

As mentioned, I have not found there to typically be any combination of complex or simple remedies to help this but that doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t give the support of relaxing nervines in the evening and tonic nervines in the morning, only that a broader strategy is going to be needed to make any deep or lasting changes. Sometimes pushing themselves to exhaustion with exercise can work, and I see that many Tigers in this situation have figured this one out for themselves. Honestly though, it may mean the hard question needs to be asked ‘*what are you doing with your life?*’, and of course not everyone is ready to hear that question, let alone try to answer it.

A second pattern in the Tiger to look out for on the activation quadrant is what happens when they become sedentary. Imagine an actual Tiger that was literally caged to get a sense of what that can



feel like with a person of this constitution.

Most often, the loss of activity and the increasingly sedentary life is a direct result of getting overweight, which in turn is itself a by-product of having the genes for the metabolic syndrome and then eating the usual modern diet, which is incredibly high in refined carbohydrates. The person with galloping metabolic syndrome is basically pre-diabetic, they get tired and overweight, their mood and motivation plummets, they find exercising just too hard, both physically and morally, and not everyone has superhuman willpower to push through such obstacles.

What works is to start in the cleansing corner, with either intermittent fasting, which many Tigers find quite easy to do, or a very low carbohydrate diet. When the weight is dropping off and the energy is coming up, exercise becomes a far more achievable and sustainable proposition.

It is not only from becoming sedentary that a Tiger can have trouble in their activation quadrant. It can also happen by simply being too busy to exercise. Their ‘energetic steam’ can be expressed in pursuing a career that occupies every waking moment and there just isn’t any time to go to a gym.

Sometimes, I share with patients who say they are too busy to exercise, what I do myself, which is a burst of high-intensity calisthenic type exercises just using my body as the weight (push-ups, squats,

lunges etc.) that takes less than 15 minutes a day. Anyone can make time for that.

Personally, I love to have a long walk both before and after the high-intensity burst, because I want to think, or sometimes talk on the phone, or listen to music. I love to stretch my legs by the river but I know I am getting most of the physical benefits of the exercise from just that short burst of high-intensity work in the middle.

While I am talking about myself, in case you have already wondered or at some point would wonder. No, I won't tell you what my constitution is anywhere in these pages or elsewhere on my website. I don't want it to matter to you because the truth, and I really do believe this, is that no constitution is better or worse than another. They are each just profoundly different from one another!

Before we move on to the Eagle, in keeping with the main thesis of this section, that it is across the pole of the Cycle of Healing where each constitution has their deepest or most lasting challenges, I want to say one more thing about the great challenge of finding the right Nourishment.

This is clearly a recurring theme for the Tiger, but 'knowing what to eat' can be one of the greatest health challenges for anyone, from any constitution, especially if they have done a lot of work with therapeutic diets in the past.



There can be enormous benefits from going on therapeutic diets. Anyone who works with them for any length of time will witness people going through extraordinary healing journeys. They will see people who have had conditions that seemed hopeless, who were hardly able to be helped with the strongest pharmaceutical drugs, achieve remarkable recoveries primarily from changing their diets. It is a joy to see this in practice. It makes you realise, over and over again, how much power there is in nutrition to both harm and heal. It is an undeniable fact that a great many people literally poison themselves on a daily basis with what they eat. When they remove that poison, their self-healing intelligence can cure them of their disease. Sometimes, marvellously, miraculously, it really is that simple.

But there is a cost. If you have been sick, in pain, in suffering, and you remove a group of foods from your diet and get better, then there is every likelihood that you will form a strong belief that those foods are now forbidden and must be avoided from this time on for the remainder of your life. That could well be a very good belief to now have, at least sometimes, with at least some foods but, once the healing has happened, it also may be completely unnecessary to still fear all the foods that were once

needing to be removed.

I have mentioned this already in relation to cleansing diets, but the same issue can apply with food intolerances - where a person could now be able to entirely benefit from at least some foods that they have previously been badly intolerant to. Likewise, the same issue can apply to Tigers, or others, with the metabolic syndrome, where they could now be able to beneficially eat a moderate amount of carbohydrates because they are now well enough to easily convert the sugars into energy.

The problem is, if you have had a positive experience by removing foods then there is a very good chance that you will be left with a fear that you will get sick if you eat those foods again. Perhaps that is a healthy problem, perhaps there should remain a healthy fear. There certainly are many people that especially should never eat certain foods that they are allergic, or very strongly intolerant too. But there are actually also many times that there is no more reason to be afraid. The body, the gut, the immune system are no longer in crisis. They can handle a small amount of previously difficult foods with absolutely no problem, and in fact potentially much benefit if those foods are healthy and nutritious.

But you might never know such a thing because, the power of belief being what it is, you might as well be permanently forbidden



from a food you have become afraid of. The worry about eating them will be enough to make you sick, even if your body wouldn't mind them at all. At least your body wouldn't mind if it could eat those forbidden foods without your consciousness somehow knowing about it!

There are four parts to the Diploma program of the Southern Institute of Medical Herbalism. The first, with conditions and herbs that relate to children's health, pregnancy and childbirth, has the student going on a strict hypoallergenic diet where they avoid dairy and gluten for several weeks and then record their experiences as they both strictly avoid those food groups and then bring them back in. The second stage, with conditions and herbs that relate to adolescence and young adult health, has the student follow a cleansing diet where they again record their experiences. The third stage, about women's and men's health, has them do a strict ketogenic diet, again journaling their experiences. Then we come to the fourth and final stage, about conditions and herbs that help with ageing, but also with the last of the therapeutic diets, which is in many ways the hardest of the diets to do, and the one that I have been leading up to talk about here.

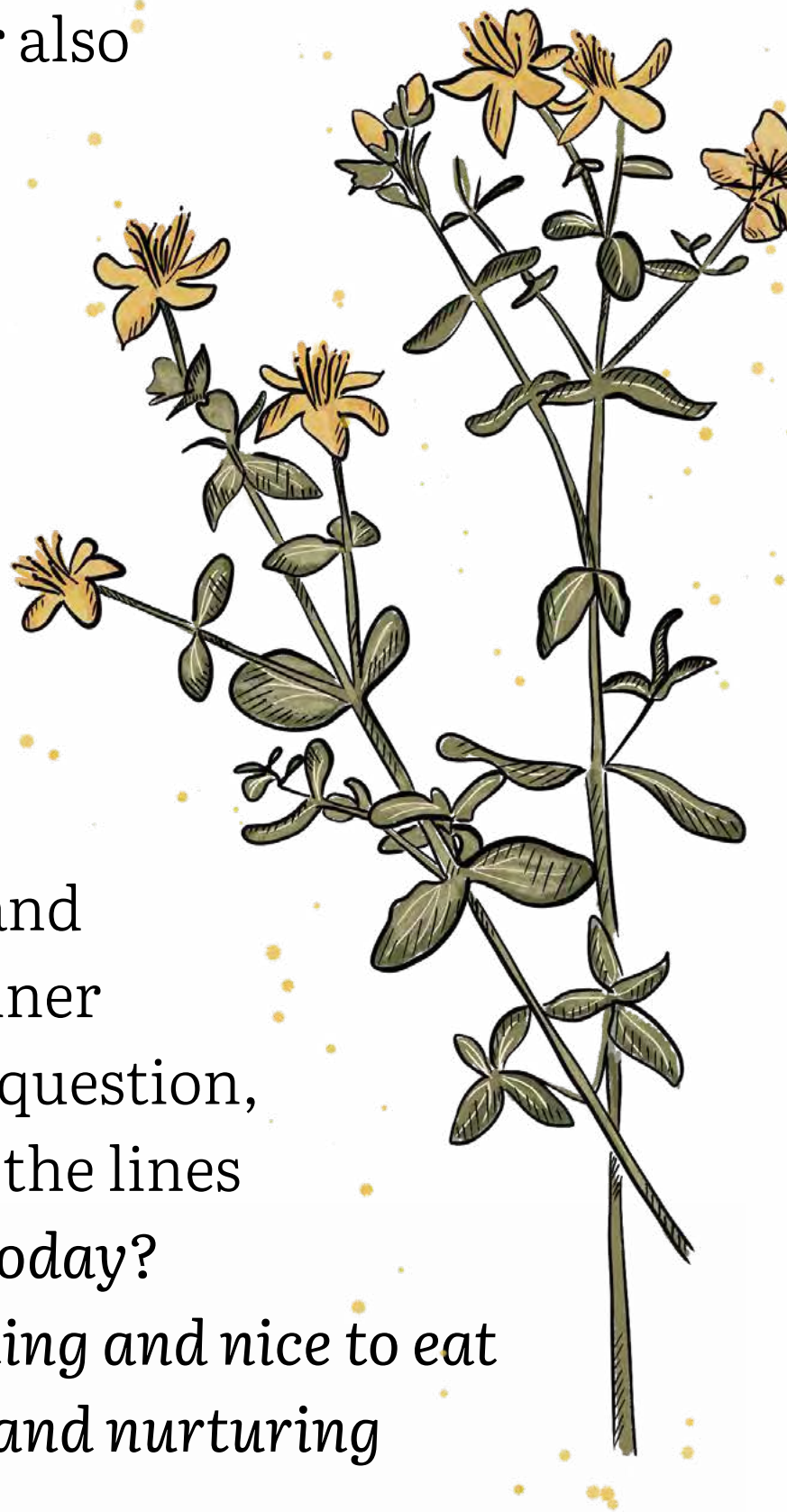


CONSCIOUS EATING

It is called conscious eating, or also intuitive eating.

I have a more detailed write up on my website under both conscious and intuitive eating in the conditions section, but the principle of it is very easy to summarise. You take a few deep breaths, you bring attention to your heart and your belly, and you ask your inner intelligence a searching, open question, for example, something along the lines of ‘*what would you like to eat today? what would I find most nourishing and nice to eat today? how can I give you love and nurturing today?*’ Questions like that.

You can find more information about this [here](#).



I have quite a few more interesting thoughts that I want to share with you in the remainder of this section called ‘across the poles’ in the Cycle of Healing, and there aren’t any more internal inquiries until we get to the next big chapter on the Maps of the Body. I’m just saying that in case you wanted to learn the above process by trying it now. It really is as simple as just breathing and asking the question. Then you wait for the reply from your heart and gut, and don’t pay too much attention to any instant gratification backchat from your mind!

It is so simple in principle that it can be explained in a few sentences. But especially for someone who has done exclusion diets in the past, ‘conscious eating’ is one the hardest of all the therapeutic diets to do.

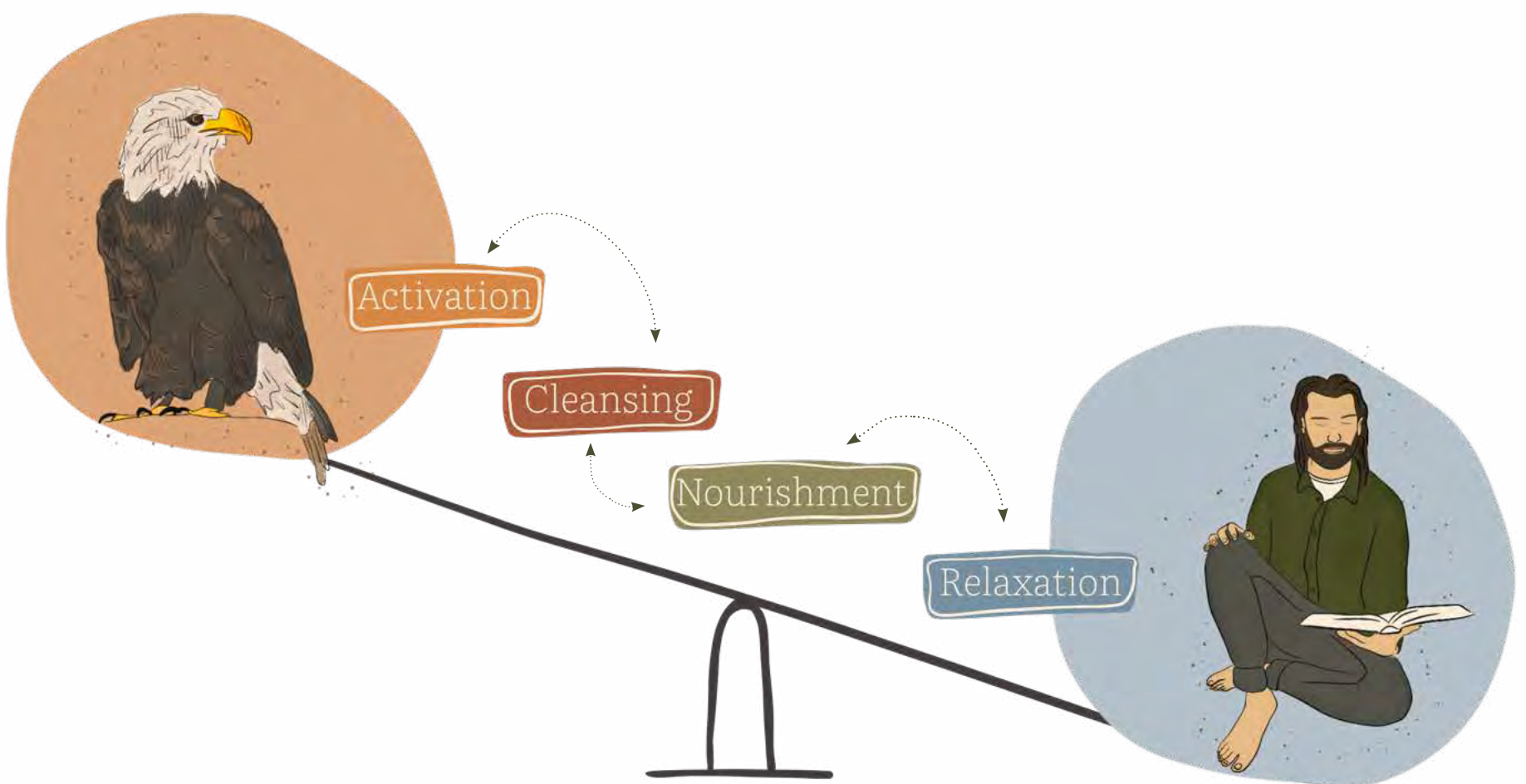
It is hard because of how much our fear and beliefs can get in the way of our listening to our intuition. The more exclusion diets a person has done in the past, and so the more they may have developed worries about their food, the harder it can be to relax and listen to their heart and gut as to what their body really wants to eat.

That is why we leave it till the end of the course. The Diploma student needs to know, through their own experience, the cost that doing exclusion diets will incur for their patients. There is every chance that their own journey will make them fear and respect the power of food to both heal and harm them too. They will need to navigate through their doubts and

worries to learn how to listen to their gut, and trust that their body knows very well what it needs to eat and what it needs to avoid. Even more, those needs change with the season, with the phase of the moon, with the different stages of life that we go through.

For the Tiger especially, this may be one of their hardest and most perennial health challenges. When they are ready, perhaps after they have worked out their true intolerances, if they have them, after they have done some cleansing, when they needed it, and once they have assessed how much carbohydrate they can eat without getting bloated, or overweight, or sluggish, then with all those worries now alive and well, they need to ask the question - what do i really want to eat? and then, like a big cat in the jungle, surrounded by food, and life, to smell out the food that they want to hunt today. To find it, catch it and eat it, and then to live without fearing their food. To live long, to live well!





EAGLES

Let's move to Eagles, hotter and dryer. Remember that their first quadrant in the Cycle of Healing is activation and that in practice, if there is a health problem that needs to be addressed, then there is a good chance it will be related to 'over-activation', which could be expressed in something like excess nervous tension, or some kind of an immune storm (i.e. allergy or auto-immunity), or some kind a functional heart issue such as arrhythmia.

The pole where the initial problem lies is in activation but, at least in the case of the Eagle, it is nearly always in over-activation rather than underactivity and again, this is the key point, that after whatever you may need to do to help ease back the over-activation and so ease back the initial symptoms of their condition, the place you are likely to need to direct the longer therapeutic attention, when this is needed and wanted, will be all the way over at the opposite side of this pole, into

relaxation.

And this is inherently a tricky proposition for the Eagle! They are people who like to fly a lot more than they like to land. If you are not rather careful in what you give them and in how you frame the treatment, they can get very nonplussed that what you are doing is not making them feel better, it is just making them feel more tired, because of course ‘feeling more tired’ is highly likely to be how it can feel to start relaxing when you have been running on your nerves for a while!

In exactly the same way that some people have to go through a kind of ‘healing crisis’ when they have a cleansing treatment, some people have to go through an energy crisis when they start repaying sleep debt and stress debt. When you are ‘up’ but it is an edgy up, an adrenaline and cortisol fueled up, then you can get an awful lot done but eventually, inevitably, there is a price to pay, namely coming down.

Many people will resist this tooth and nail and, it must be said, the worst offender is the Eagle. Activation, being up and keeping going is their natural domain. They can literally relate to phrases like ‘*you can sleep when you are dead*’ or, at least when they are younger, ‘*live hard and die young!*’

I cannot tell you how many times I have met with such a person when, after listening to their story and listening to their body, I have felt an awful

sense of foreboding. I just know that some terrible crisis is going to bring them crashing down to earth if they don't listen to what their body is trying to tell them. It is not easy to communicate such feelings. Sometimes I just take the plunge and speak from the heart.

I do want to share a strategy that, at least at the time of writing, has been the most successful I've found thus far, and it is to take the first step of using a combination of muscle relaxant herbs.



It is important to recognise, especially for an Eagle, although of course any person from any constitution can become too tense and stray too far from their relaxation quadrant, that rather than think that there is going to be any kind of switch that you can throw to immediately correct the imbalance, that you have to rather methodically work on it for a while!

The three best muscle relaxants I know to help do this are Cramp bark (easy to understand how it got its name), Wild Yam (which used to be called colic root and rheumatism root, so you can understand its reputation for relieving physical pain and spasm) and then the strongest of the three, Lobelia, a Native American herb with remarkable powers to release physical tension in the body and one that needs to

be especially used with great care and respect.

These three herbs are nearly always combined with some Ginger root to help the Lobelia be more easily assimilated, and then at least one of these three herbs; Licorice root, sweetened Elderberry or sweetened (with glycerine) Peppermint leaf, any of which will greatly help the palatability of this formula which usually must be taken many times and so needs to be as non-disagreeable as possible.

The muscle relaxant herbs have characteristic effects on people, they lower the blood pressure, they slow the heart rate, they deepen the breathing and of course they relax the muscles. I always advise people to sit down for at least 10 minutes after they take such a formula. The main thing I exhort them to do is to *‘not get in its way’* but rather encourage them to allow the benefit of the herbs to come in to them to help them to relax, I explain that, if they so choose, they could resist the action of the herbs through the power of their mind but why would they want to do that? I say *‘better to let them in rather than fight them off!’*

Dosage is such a vital part of the art of herbal medicine to get right and using this kind of formula is a perfect example of that. Take too much and the patient will feel decidedly physically altered, and not necessarily in a good way because, even though they are not in the least mind-altering, the consequence of

releasing a significant amount of tension from the body can still have a profound effect on the state of mind. People who are used to being in a lot of tension are often not used to the feeling of being relaxed at any point during the day other than the briefest of moments before sleep. It can throw them much more than you could realise unless you had felt it or seen it for yourself. Then, of course, taking too little is going to be of small benefit. Too small a dose and you won't have the above issue with the Eagle, or another wound-up, 'wired and tired' person struggling against the potent action of the relaxing remedy, but it just won't do much good either.

Depending on their age, their condition and the person's prior experience with herbal medicines, I will either just give my best estimate of what I hope will be the optimal dose or I will do what I prefer to do if I think they are ready for it, which is to give them a range of doses to work with so that they can do some experiments themselves to find what is too little, what is too much, and what is just right.

There can be a lot of variability in that number and then a further complication is what could be the optimal frequency to take the muscle relaxant herbs. For a person who was used to using herbs and so who could be better supported by being given a more free, self-directed approach, I tell them what the maximum safe daily dose is and then encourage them to use the mixture as freely and frequently as

needed within that margin. As an example, for the below formula, I would put that as high as 30mls in divided doses during a day, which would be much more than what the majority of people would need to get a sure effect.

I love to give such self-directed treatment strategies. I want to be a good middle-man for Nature and then teach and empower people to understand these great allies as friends that they can have for life, whenever they need, as much as they need. However, for most patients it would just create more stress to give them such ranges of dose and frequency and so I simply ask them to take a specific dose of their formula, usually just twice a day, and I put much more emphasis on what will happen after and how they need to allow a good 10 minutes or more to relax once they take this special medicine.

I usually advise that it is ok to take a third dose if they are having a particularly bad patch with their symptoms and also that it is ok to not take the first dose in the morning if they are in a rush or hurry to get into their day, but in that case to then take the first dose after work or later in the afternoon and then the second dose sometime in the evening.

We usually give the patient their first dose in the waiting room before they leave and have them sit for a while so they can first experience the action of the herbs in a safe space. This works perfectly to make a good start in getting used to how the

medicine makes them feel so they can feel well supported from the beginning of their relationship with these powerful herbs.



For the student or practitioner of herbal medicine who would appreciate some practical details on this, here is a typical formula and dose

Cramp bark	160mls
Wild Yam	160mls
Lobelia	40-80mls*
Ginger	40-80mls**
Licorice, Elderberry or Peppermint***	80mls

Depending on the variables, it should make somewhere around 500mls, give or take. A typical dose of this could be around 6mls, twice a day, with a third dose when needed. Which at twice a day would take close to 2 months to get through, which is exactly the kind of time frame you could need to really make a difference in loosening the knot and releasing tensions that have built up over many years.

*towards the lower levels if I think they will be more sensitive to the Lobelia, you really need to personally get to know this herb by taking it yourself and so learning the respect it deserves before ever prescribing it to someone else, it is an incredibly powerful remedy that will alter your body.

** you have to know your Ginger too, and by that I mean how strong the extract you are using is, too much will make the mixture too spicy, too little and the Lobelia could make them feel a bit nauseous. If they get some nausea anyway, which can especially

happen if there is a lot of tension knotted up in the gut, then we recommend they make some Ginger tea and sip it while they are getting used to the formula. It usually improves or passes after a few doses as they get better at releasing the long-held tension in their upper digestive system.

*** for the love of mercy, put something like this into the mixture and don't be too sparing of it. I often just ask my patient which flavour they think they would prefer and choose that way. We extract our Elderberry and Peppermint over a few weeks in 40% ethanol and then add about 20% glycerine in at the end, it makes them taste terrific and it makes the medicine enormously easier to take.



In line with the challenging but important subject of helping the overactivated person to relax, which is something that especially affects the Eagle, but really this approach can apply to any constitutional type, I want to now talk about the 'paradoxical action of Valerian'. You may well have heard of Valerian root, one of the most famous of the herbal relaxants and an effective aid to sleep or anxiety for a great many people for many millennia.

Reasonably well described in the herbal literature is the subject of Valerian's ability to produce, in some people, a paradoxical effect whereby the

person becomes highly stimulated by it. Instead of helping them into a deep and relaxing sleep, they lie awake full of nervous energy, cursing whoever recommended it, or whatever impulse they got, or advertising they saw, that made them buy a bottle off the internet or at their local pharmacy. It is estimated that about 1 in 10 people get this paradoxical reaction, it is completely opposite to what is expected from Valerian and the usual advice is just to process your 'buyer's remorse' and avoid it in the future.

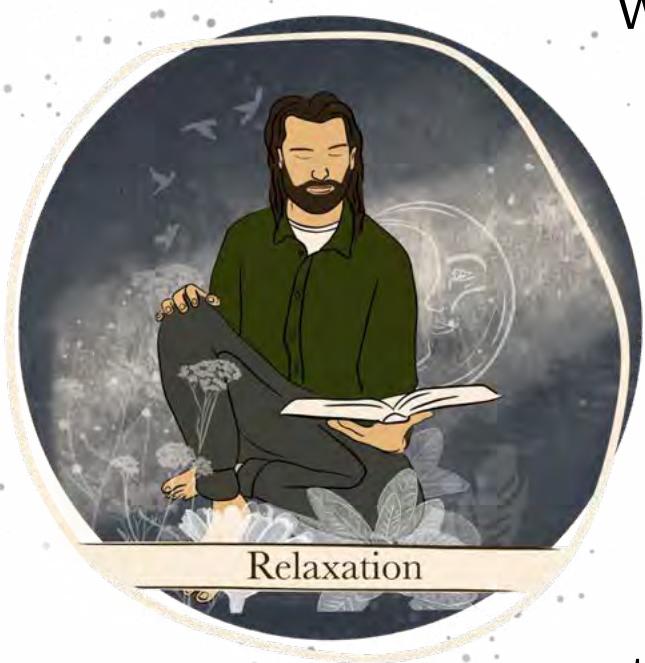
Ok, so I went along with this for some time without really questioning it and really it just made me rather wary and unsure about using Valerian. It is not a good feeling when you get a phone call or an email from someone you have given a medicine to help their sleep or stress and they tell you that they got a panic attack half an hour after using it or they were up all night with a racing heart! I adapted to using some other great sleep aids instead, herbs like Hops, Kava and Passionflower, which are all seriously great but, if we will be really honest about this, nothing quite compares to Valerian. For some people, it can be a game changer, bringing them down (usually!) with its weird, pungent root energy in a way like no other.

Anyway, when I started getting into constitutional medicine, and so started paying a great deal more attention to the type of person I was working with instead of just what condition they came for, I

started noticing a lot of patterns about a lot of things, including that my hotter and dryer patients had much more sleeping problems than average and that a surprisingly high number of them would tell me, before I had even thought about what herbs I might want to try for them, that they couldn't take Valerian because they had already had that paradoxical reaction sometime in the past. Again, I can only give a gut-felt estimate in lieu of having a database, but my best estimate is that close to 80% of the people who get a paradoxical reaction to Valerian are from the Eagle constitution.

One more ingredient in this soup before I give my take on it is that I have now reasonably often observed the same paradoxical reaction with other herbs, especially a formula such as that shown

above, and again mostly with Eagles or with other constitutions that have gone too far into the hotter and dryer 'activation' phase of their Cycle. This is definitely not just a Valerian thing and this is definitely something that happens far more to Eagles than others, why?



Imagine a metal spring or a big thick rubber band that has been twisted over and over until it has coiled up tight. Nervous tension feels like that; like a knotted, twisted, coiled-up spring inside. So, what can happen when you release some tension off that

coiled up spring of nervous energy is that it can suddenly release a lot of pent up energy.

Eagles, and others who get too hot and dry, can build up a lot of nervous energy, and when you start to release that nervous tension they can get a great release of energy. Instead of the remedy bringing them down to earth, it makes them fly even higher, at least for a while. It isn't welcome, it's not timely, but it's not a 'bad' reaction, it's not an adverse reaction, it is just a strong reaction.

I love Valerian and have entirely lost my fear of it. We use buckets of it in our clinic and also have two encapsulated products of its concentrated root extract, one combined with Hops flowers and the other with Kava root.

These days, and for many years now, we give clear instructions to our patients who experience these kinds of reactions to not fear their medicine and to not stop taking it, but rather, assuming we have been using it at night time, we shift the entire dose regimen into the early part of the day and we probably reduce the dosage at the same time, all the way down to just one capsule or 1 ml of a mixture if needed. Plus we give them coaching to help them understand what is going on and some advice on how to get used to the 'action' of the relaxing herbs.

Initially, what usually happens is that they get a nice release of energy at a time when they can use it but then, often fairly rapidly, they start feeling

the opposite effect. In other words, the paradoxical action stops happening after a reasonably short time and they start feeling the normal effect, the Valerian or other strongly relaxing herbs start to work in the way you expect them to.

That is typically when we might meet our next challenge, because obviously they are sensitive to the action of these medicines and these are herbs that clearly have strong effects on them but now, instead of acting like a stimulant, they start feeling like what they actually are, which are a relaxant, or even you could say they are a sedative, and they may not like the feeling of being brought down. Obviously, we then change the dose back to having it at night, but they still have to come to terms with a substance bringing them back to earth. On one level they know that this is exactly what they need, but on another level a big part of them can actually want to resist it!

The paradoxical stimulant action occurs just sometimes, the strong relaxant, or even sedative action occurs a lot and, because we use a lot of Valerian and other powerful nervine relaxants like those shown above, we have now many times received feedback from patients who are initially struggling with the potent effects of these kinds of herbs.

You must understand that, for many people who are in chronic stress, the reason that they don't relax

is that they don't feel that they can. They don't feel that it is safe to relax. They believe, consciously or subconsciously, that there are too many troubles for them to be able to safely put down their guard. This is the nature of being both wired and tired. You are so tired, so exhausted, maybe even so sick, but you are so wired up at the same time and it instinctively feels like if you release some tension off the wires then you will completely fall apart!

It is not easy for such a person to start relaxing but herbs can be very powerful at making them relax. The herbs can take them somewhere that they would never go just by themselves at this point in time. Some people can feel quite apprehensive about being taken somewhere like that. They can resist the action of the herbs because they just don't feel ready to relax. They consciously or subconsciously feel that something bad might happen to them if they let go of their vigilance and their tension. They are afraid to let go.

This is also the reason that, even if a person in stress knows very well how to relax and what are the things that they could do that would relax them, they almost never do those things. They put them off until that day comes that their stress is resolved,

But of course that day never comes. What usually finally triggers them to do something about it is that they just get too sick or unhappy to carry on as they are. Which is when they might go to a Doctor,

presumably to be prescribed antidepressants in order to feel less of everything. Or sleeping pills to render them unconscious and even more unable to process their stress through the dreams that come with natural sleep. Or perhaps they hear about and come to someone like me to see if the old ways still have some use in the modern world.

Learning how to help a person who is stuck in activation and doesn't know how to get back to relaxation is one of the most important skills that any herbalist working in these times must learn and practice.



People are sleeping nearly one and a half hours less, on average, than they did a century ago. Stress related illnesses are running amok throughout our communities. As a connected and interdependent species, our collective consciousness is in deep and chronic stress. We lurch from one crisis to the next and have forgotten what it is to live in peace and harmony with Nature.

Truly, rest is the best medicine (alongside laughter, the other gold medal winner in that competition) and we have some phenomenal allies to help people get the rest they need for their self-healing intelligence to heal what is wrong. Herbs can help a

person to relax better and sleep better, to ‘*knit up the ravelled sleeve of care*’ (Shakespeare)

Further to the medicine is the ‘work’, namely what the patient needs to do as well as taking nervine herbs. This needn’t be too complicated to figure out. Often, the best question you can ask an Eagle, or anyone who is stuck in the arid desert of being too awake, too alert, too switched on, is ‘*what do you know and trust most relaxes you?*’

I talk about this with my students at some length in my lectures. I say, don’t plan to teach someone who is in stress how to relax. They are not good at taking in new information or learning new skills when they are not sleeping, or in anxiety, or suffering some kind of nerve pain. Just ask them ‘*what do they already know and trust that will certainly relax them, so long as they actually do it?*’

People always have an answer to that question, eventually. They may have to think about it for a while because, if they are in stress, then it is also almost a guarantee that they have not been doing the things that relax them, and they have probably even temporarily forgotten what they were. As mentioned earlier but cannot be overstated, stressed people don’t relax.

Your job, if you will be a good guide and support for them, either as their friend or their practitioner, is to remind them of the things that you know and trust can relax them and then hold them to account

that they are doing them again! To ask them if they will promise to do that thing or those things that they trust will relax them, and then check up on them to see if they are following through.

If not, and if you care for them, then challenge them again. Many people need to hear something more than once before they are ready to act on it. If they are not doing it then keep both challenging and supporting them to make a start. If they are doing it then you can be sure it will be helping and can just encourage them further, say *‘keep going!’*

Again, it would be a mistake to give the impression that the only issues Eagles ever have to deal with are on the activation to relaxation spectrum, even if that is where their challenges come up the most.

Eagles do, of course, also sometimes have issues with their nourishment and cleansing. If we will again put dietary matters on this spectrum then I say that I have seen more of an inclination to allergy than intolerance in the Eagle constitution and that some level of Gluten allergy in particular should be suspected, especially when something like an auto-immune condition is in the picture.

Some Eagles also get intolerant to nuts, dairy, eggs, and nightshade family foods but only in what seems like a rather small percentage. However, again some level of Gluten intolerance (as distinct from allergy) is also quite a lot more common in the Eagle. That said, no-one should start blaming gluten for

any and every problem if there aren't some strong physical signs and symptoms such as bloating and GI upset to make you suspect that something is causing an inflammatory reaction in the digestive tract.

The biggest reason I would either recommend a blood test or try an elimination diet is if an auto-immune condition had come into the picture. Even though, most probably, with an Eagle or anyone else who gets an auto-immune condition, we will likely come to see that it was being stuck in over-activation that was the underlying root of the issue. Especially if, when asked what they think led up to their getting the auto-immune condition, the person says that it was a period of far too much stress and tension brought on by x, y or z, and that they themselves already know this is what caused them to get sick in the first place.

I don't know why most health practitioners don't ask their patients to share their ideas or theories about why they got sick. It seems like such an obvious thing to do. They live in their body 24 hours a day every day of their lives. They are the experts on themselves. We just meet them for a tiny portion of their life and are assumed to have some special power to know the answers to the big why questions. Surely we should at least ask them what they think about it.

Back to the potential value of making dietary

exclusions in an auto-immune condition. No one should think that they must limit their approach to only treating stress if there are other issues going on that need attention too. Anything that adds heat and tension to the immune system, such as an infection, or certainly also an allergy or intolerance, can most definitely also feed the fire of auto-immunity. The more you can remove sources of chronic infection, e.g. in the mouth, the sinuses, or the gut, and the more you can reduce food allergy or intolerance, the better chance you have for the storm in the immune system to blow over and for the body to self-correct and heal itself.



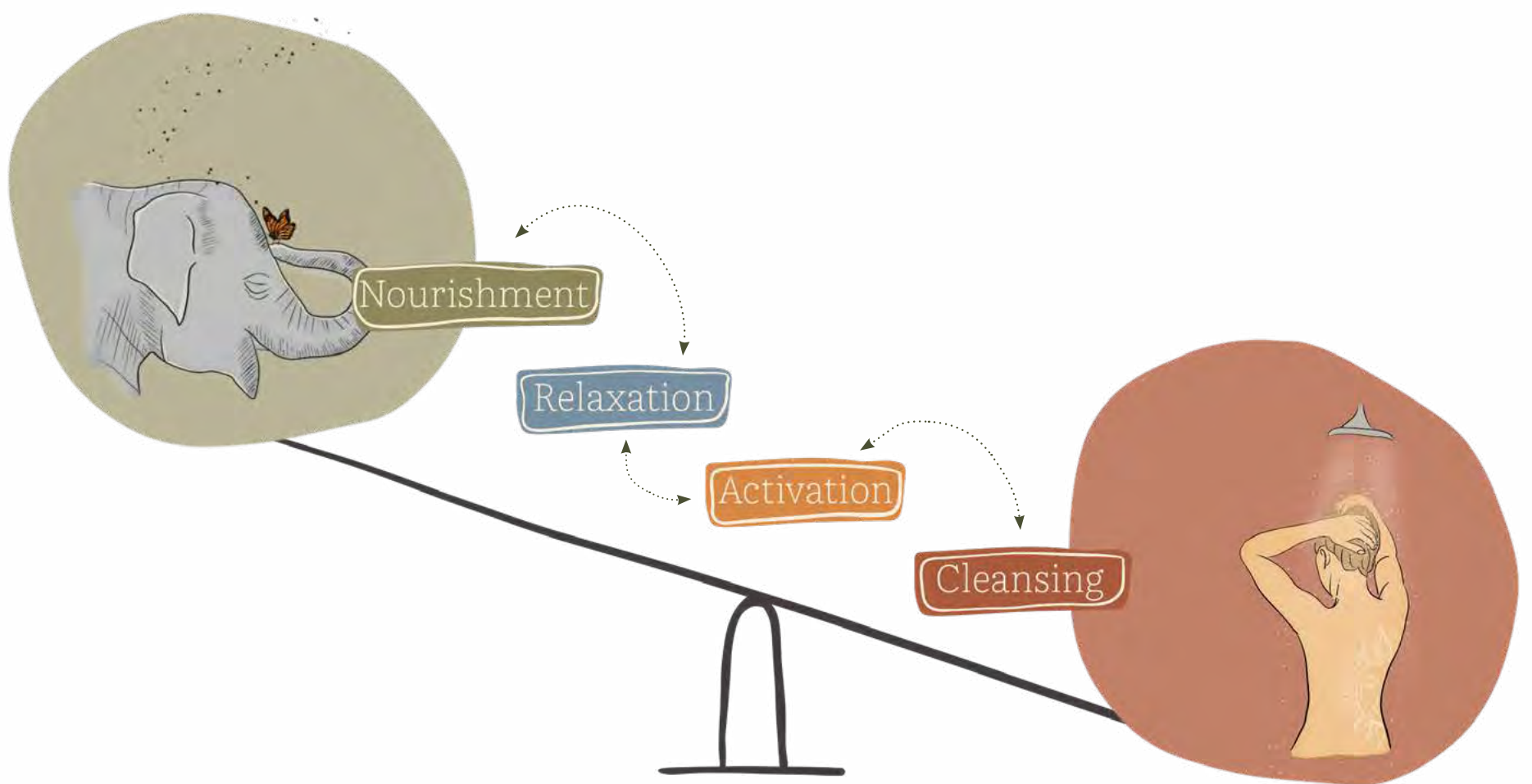
Another Eagle phenomenon, not so common, but seen enough to be a pattern and a good one to warn others about, is a rapid and even rather sudden onset of both type 1 and type 2 diabetes. Hotter and damper Tigers are the most prone to the metabolic syndrome (which can grow into adult-onset diabetes if left unchecked), and they in turn are followed in second place by the cooler and damper Bear, so it is only a third place for how often they get the metabolic syndrome that you find the Eagle but, noticeably, they can get it both especially badly and especially quickly and they can end up with a full-blown insulin dependent diabetic state a great deal faster than their damper cousins across the spectrum.

The sooner you can detect the early stages of diabetes, or diagnose the metabolic syndrome if that is what is in play, the better chance you have to prevent an enormous amount of hideous and completely unnecessary suffering; heart disease, blindness, loss of limb, or even loss of life at an early age. The metabolic syndrome, and even type 2 diabetes if it is caught and treated early enough, is an entirely curable disease of modern civilisation, so long as the patient is prepared to really change the way they eat which, if they get the right attitude to it and put the work in to find the right kind of recipes, will have them eating like a King or a Queen for the rest of their lives.

I also have to mention two other remarkable herbs that can especially benefit Eagles. They also sit on the nourishing side of the spectrum and can be profoundly important to the ageing Eagle who is losing strength in their heart, their nerves, or their immune systems. They are Hawthorn (berry and/or leaf) and Reishi mushroom. I use a great deal of these two herbs, combined in a capsule, for my Eagle patients whose hearts are wearing out before they are, or who are getting signs of wear and tear in their immune systems or symptoms of exhaustion in their nervous systems. We usually use them at a robust but reliable dose of 4 capsules, once a day, and they are usually recommended to be used for a long time.

Of course, any patient who needs that kind of nourishing medicine can benefit from them, but if you look at the constitutional medicines chart shown earlier, you will see how Reishi is put at the far top right-hand corner as a remedy that can especially help an Eagle, or a person from a different constitution who has gone too far to the hot and dry, i.e. too far into the activation phase of their Cycle. Reishi can be remarkably cooling, nourishing and balancing, and it can certainly be worth exploring and experimenting with for the person who knows that their core imbalances involve excess heat or dryness.





ELEPHANT-BUTTERFLIES

Now we come back around to the cooler and dryer territory of the Elephant-Butterfly (EB) - which is tricky territory because this is also the area where conditions can become terribly long-standing, but somehow also remain endurable. By not boiling over into hot, damp, crisis-level inflammation, the cooler, dryer problem and the cooler, dryer constitution can go on together for a long time.

The home-territory of the EB is that of nourishment, and there is a fascinating, and rather wonderful emotional corollary to this that I am looking forwards to discussing soon but, for now keeping more in the physical frame, this means we frequently have health issues that relate to a lack of nourishment, in other words you can see that the primary need to improve health is to remedy depletion by attending to deficiency.

It sounds simple in theory, and surely it sometimes can be, but there is something that can be seen to complicate matters in a great many cases, I touched on this earlier but this is a tricky subject and it will benefit from some further examination to really get a handle on it, especially if you who are reading this may eventually need to put it into practice! We are back to the polar nature of the constitutional spectrums and how they interplay with the Cycle of Healing.

The health and wellbeing of the Elephant Butterfly may be caught by the need for the kind of nourishment that can remedy their depletion, but their attention and their energy is pulled over to the other side of the spectrum and, even more than their need for nourishment, they can mainly perceive their biggest and most important challenge as being a need to cleanse! I am sure you can see the quandary. The person who needs to eat more meat, more protein, more dairy, more fats, more grains, more carbohydrates, gravitates towards a diet that goes in the exact opposite direction!

It is time for me to confess that, in practice, I struggled with this conundrum for too many years. Instead of listening to them, of ‘meeting them where they were at’, I badgered my poor EB patients to give up their puritan ways to get the nourishment I could see they sorely needed. Perhaps I had a modicum of success with it sometimes, but never enough to warrant it as being a reliable approach,

let alone one to recommend to others! Fortunately, In my own typically glacial-paced learning process I have found a far better way.

It is to recognise and acknowledge when the EB feels a need for cleansing and to entirely support them in that process with the remarkably potent allies we have from Nature that are tremendously good at pushing the cleansing phase of the Cycle of Healing into prominence.



These are my personal favourites and the ones I teach about the most as the great cleansing allies: Dandelion root, Juniper Berry, Barberry, Celandine, Yellow Dock, Burdock, Cleavers, Red Clover, St Mary's thistle and Globe artichoke leaf. We go through literal buckets of capsules and various liquid combinations that include one or more of those 10 herbs for both our Tiger and EB patients (and certainly for our Bears and Eagles as well, albeit less often)

The Tiger frequently needs cleansing as their lever to unlock the Cycle of Healing and, often, there's the job done, just like that. The EB frequently needs cleansing to likewise move their stuck Cycle of Healing because only then can they start to really get the nourishment they need.

Sometimes, reasonably often, you can work in the two areas simultaneously, in tandem. You can give the EB herbs for cleansing and successfully encourage them to eat a more nourishing diet at the same time. I also love to use some of the great nourishing tonic herbs for EBs, and in fact for anyone from any constitution who has become too cool and dry, in other words too depleted. We have some truly extraordinary allies in this area. Tonics such as Withania, Ginseng, Licorice, Rehmania, Dong Quai, Oatstraw, Damiana and Ginger.

Sometimes, however, it is clear that there won't be room to add good things or really get the benefit of good things until you have clearly and palpably got rid of enough bad things. Not only do you need to start with a course of cleansing herbs but you may even need to look for what else could be sacrificed from the diet, perhaps by a process of an elimination diet, or some blood testing to find some suspects. Or a low-sugar diet such as Keto. Though I cannot bring myself to recommend fasting or even intermittent fasting to even the most ardently 'set upon cleansing' EB.

I imagine the astute reader, and certainly the correctly identified EB, will already be wondering why. Why does the constitution that typically has the cleanest diet and the purist life-style of all four feel so much need for



cleansing? It is a good question, and one that I have pondered over a lot. I have had some part-way theories about it, about how the whitest sheet shows the most dirt, about how the more you strive for purity the more sensitive you become. I think there may be some truth in those theories sometimes but I honestly think the main part of it is within the paradoxical nature of the Elephant-Butterfly. That there is a part of this constitutional nature that wants to feel as light and free as a butterfly and another part that accumulates every memory, every experience, with the capacity of an Elephant. There becomes a lot to let go and, if you don't know how to do it emotionally, you try to find a way to do it physically.



Being careful not to overdo the dose, because they can be very sensitive to cleansing medicines, some herbs to put energy into the cleansing phase often works better than anything to get a healing process started for the EB.

Something that makes them feel better, something that gives them a legitimate sense of hope that help may be out there, that there could be a way out of their chronic condition. Who could have guessed, that the thing they said they felt they needed could actually be the thing that worked. As always, all that matters in any of this are the results.

Is it safe and does it work? For the EB who shows signs or feels that they need some cleansing the answer is yes, it is safe and it does work.

Of course, I am speaking in generalisations to make some points, not all EBs are like this, not all need this kind of approach, but it is a distinct pattern that is good to know, good to recognise. The results of meeting the patient where they are at and working alongside them are exponentially better than trying to push or pull them from some place that is several steps removed.

In this matter, and for many others examples with all of the constitutional types, I love the simple schematic of what it means to both support and challenge someone.

The person who neither challenges or supports you is simply a stranger

The person who only supports you and doesn't challenge you is an enabler

The person who only challenges you and doesn't support you is an asshole

The person who both supports and challenges you is a friend, or a good therapist as the case may be.

The challenge aspect of much of our work as herbalists is in the diet or exercise areas. If those are the areas where the cause of the problems are coming then that is where the most important work is going to happen. Challenging people on their diet or exercise requires tact and tenacity but it can be

done with a lot of support and people are generally open to it and very ready to make some positive changes.

However, a lot of our work as herbalists also has to involve challenging people in the great arena of their emotional health, especially if this is where the primary cause of their health issues is coming from.

All constitutions can suffer tremendously from stress-related health problems and, if you will truly help them, then along with using whatever you can find to be the best methods to support them, you also must be prepared to challenge them if you will legitimately expect there to be any lasting change in their condition. If a person is suffering from a health condition that is being caused or much worsened by stress, and you or they have hope for a chance for a cure for what is wrong, then you must hold the courage to find a way to work in the emotional sphere, as challenging as that can sometimes be.

Back to EBs, who are especially prone to accumulating excess stress, often over a remarkably long time. The Elephant side of their nature can just accumulate, year after year, the hurts, the disappointments, the feelings of being taken for granted, or taken advantage of...

I am going to work back around to Cleansing, the EBs biggest challenge and probably most important

quadrant at the opposite side of their home base in the Cycle of Healing. But to get there in a way that really meets the need, beyond the physical level alone, we will probably have to do some meaningful work on the relaxation to activation spectrum of the Cycle.



The work, in practice, that I often use for EBs is twofold, one for activation and one for relaxation. The activation side of it is to do GENTLE, sustained exercise. I write that word gentle in capital letters in their email summary too. In fact, when we are talking about it, I often ask them to visualise the word 'gentle' in glowing neon letters in their mind (then I ask them to tell me what colour they are seeing, just so I know they are really doing it). I know how much I have to emphasise this because, if they go out hard on their exercise, if they don't do it gently, then there is every likelihood that they will just tie the knot tighter and make their stress-related condition worse.

The 'sustained' part in the 'gentle and sustained exercise' is just as important too, even if it doesn't need to be so emphasised to be remembered. Usually 40 minutes is about the minimum amount of time for this to really work and usually the kinds of things that the EB naturally wants to do when they get a sense of what this is all about are rather

naturally ‘gentle’ e.g. walking, swimming, cycling, or classes of something like yoga, tai-chi, qi gong or pilates. It’s exercise, it’s activating, but it doesn’t so much wind you up as help you to move through this part of the Cycle in a way that then lets you to relax and so get out of the stuck ‘fight or flight’ phase of activation where you don’t get to relaxation and so can’t heal from the stress.

Moving through the relaxation phase of the Cycle of Healing for the EB can actually be extremely difficult. I am always happy and willing to use herbs to help here, often just relaxing nervines given in the evening, but further to the first step of letting Nature help, the ‘work’ that I most trust to use to really get the EB into the relaxation phase is to encourage them to do some kind of ‘hands-on relaxation’

There is no ‘right’ way to do this so we always start with a conversation about what they, hopefully, already know and trust works for them in this area. For example, I could start with an open question such as *‘is there something you do now or you used to do where your hands are occupied and that, when you are doing it, you tend to get moments of feelings of peace and tranquillity?’*

Obviously, that is a big question and not everyone has a quick answer to it. If I can see they are looking perplexed, to keep the question open I might repeat it in a slightly different way to give

them some more time to process it, for example, ‘is there any kind of hobby or pastime that you used to do that would have your hands busy doing something but your mind would be free to wander and that it used to often make you feel good when you were doing it?’



A lot of EBs, and by that I mean maybe as many as four out of five, will come up with something if you give them a chance to think about it. It might have been in the distant past but, when they remember it, you can see the light in their eyes and the smile on their face as they recall how it used to make them feel to do that ‘hands-on’, relaxing activity.

It’s always best to ask an open question when you can, because you get better and more honest answers, and because the person then owns their answer, it belongs to them, they haven’t been given it with hints or suggestions as happens in a leading question, however well-meaning it may have been.

Nevertheless, if nothing is forthcoming on the ‘*what do you like to do with your hands to relax?*’ question then I will lead with some examples such as ‘*did you ever do any craft-work in the past, or did you like to work with colours or paints or photographs, or do any kind of writing or journaling, or play any kind of*

musical instrument?’

Hopefully, we get an answer one way or another and, if we do and if it certainly used to help them to unwind and put the world to rights and feel good, then we have an excellent chance of getting well into the relaxation phase of the Cycle of Healing by simply going back and doing what used to work.

Remember, people who are in stress do not think to do the things that relax them and so can need a lot of encouragement to even make a start. Also, equally importantly, remember that when they are in a state of excess stress it is always better to go back to something that they know and trust helps them to relax rather than trying to learn something new.

Nearly all EBs have had an experience of doing some kind of activity that gave them a sense of peace. It is a deep part of the innate nature of the EB that they love to create and, especially when they were young and had an abundance of free time, the great majority of EBs found great peace and pleasure in such pastimes as you can usually have at hand.

In that rare situation where there really is nothing that can come to mind, even from the childhood history, and I suppose with the advent of phones taking over young people’s lives so much that this will be increasingly common, then we have to start from scratch.

Starting a new ‘hands-on relaxation’ activity from previously doing nothing would be a tall order for any of the other constitutions. But because the EB will quickly find that they are in a kind of ‘meditation in motion’ when they start doing it, the immediate rewards will keep the effort of learning something new feel entirely worthwhile. It just makes them feel good, they relax, they let go and so we achieve our ultimate goal, which is to release the burden that is holding them back in the Cleansing quadrant of their cycle of healing.

The gentle and sustained exercise that takes the person through the activation phase, along with the hands-on activity that takes them through the relaxation phase, achieves the great challenge of the kind of Cleansing that is beyond the ability of pure diets or herbs to reach.

When I meet the older EB who has come in for some minor issue but beyond that I can visibly see and palpably feel how they are abundantly healthy, I no longer need to ask them if they engage in regular gentle and sustained physical exercise or whether they have some kind of hands-on relaxation, some art or craft or music or writing etc. in their lives.

Every single elder EB that I have ever met, who is basically in good health, has worked these things out for themselves. This is not one of those grey-area things, there is a night and day difference between those who do and those who don’t. This is also how I

know the above strategies work for EBs. Far beyond my own practice alone, I have come to certainty in this matter by meeting those EBs who have grown old but remained in good health and spirits and I have sought to to learn why, and how. What is it that has kept them light? What has enabled them to not only become the heavier and heavier Elephant, weighed down by every hurt and harm, but has allowed them to remain in their Butterfly nature? The answer is always the same. They are active in a way that is gentle and sustainable and they all have some kind of hands-on relaxing activity that they do plenty of, every day or near enough to it.



ART THERAPY

Art therapy can be an extremely powerful and effective tool when working with the great challenge of emotional healing. I want to share the simple method of it in this section because it is clearly a method that can work especially well for the person from the EB constitution, but this process has been successfully used many times with people from the other constitutions too. Anyone can do it and, if they need the unique medicine that it can provide, anyone can get great benefit from it.



When using art therapy as a therapeutic tool, unlike the ‘work’ of hands-on relaxation as described just above, there is no expectation to do it at least a few days a week. Nor are there any guidelines about what kind of paper or pencils or pens or colours etc. to use. Nor are there even any kind of instructions on where to start and what to draw or write!

Art therapy has just one rule. If it feels appropriate, I ask the patient to guess what that rule is and give them three guesses, if they want them. Most people want to play when I put it like that and are at least willing to have a go. They usually come up with good guesses, but I have almost never had someone guess the right answer.

The one rule is ‘no judgement’ and I tell them that it is a 100% guarantee that they will break this rule and that they will break it repeatedly! I often use the crude but memorable analogy of getting them to imagine walking into their own bedroom at night, flicking on the light-switch, and finding a dirty thief with his hands in their underwear drawer, literally caught with his hands in their most private possessions. It is a little bit shocking, and that is the point, because that can now be one useful image of the ‘inner Judge’ that they can easily remember. The Judge being someone who will be perfectly happy to sneak into your most personal spaces to rob you of your peace and well-being.

We all have such an internal character, watching us, casting judgement, there’s probably no getting away from it altogether, unless you are some kind of psychopath, but when it comes to your efforts to be creative, the internal Judge can be incredibly damaging and destructive, to the point that it can completely destroy your ability to keep going, at least if you have not already had long practice in nurturing the creative flame through all kinds of storms!

I say when, not if, but when the Judge is critically watching what you are writing or drawing in your art therapy session, and casting judgement on it, then all you have to do is catch them, nothing more, nothing less. The act of catching the Judge is the same as catching the thief in your bedroom,

they cannot deny that they are not meant to be there, that you have made a rule and that they are breaking it. The catching is enough to stop them continuing to take away your power to keep going, to create, to express yourself.

Sometimes I flip the page over on the clipboard I am using to write their notes on and me, who could not draw a well made picture to save his life, demonstrates what I am asking them to do. Perhaps, in the course of our conversation a certain subject, or person, has come up where there is clearly a heavy load of unresolved hurt or stress associated with that subject or that person. In which case I might draw a symbol for their name or the topic itself (or just write the actual name, there are no rules in art therapy that you have to draw images, words can be perfectly useful too), and then I will draw some abstract shapes or lines around it to start to convey something of the nature of the feelings that could be associated to it.

Look, dear reader, if you have never done such a thing and could only imagine how ridiculous you might feel if you had to do it, no-one would blame you if you are feeling a little cringey right now. Art therapy, really? I understand that. I am a man of my times and see that such things are far beyond what our culture deems useful, or cool or respectable. That is what I am often up against in practice as well.

All I can say is, don't knock it until you've tried it, or

at least not until you have tried it with a person who has been holding on to some hurts about someone or something literally for years or even decades. The process of just getting things out, on to a page, can be extraordinarily liberating.

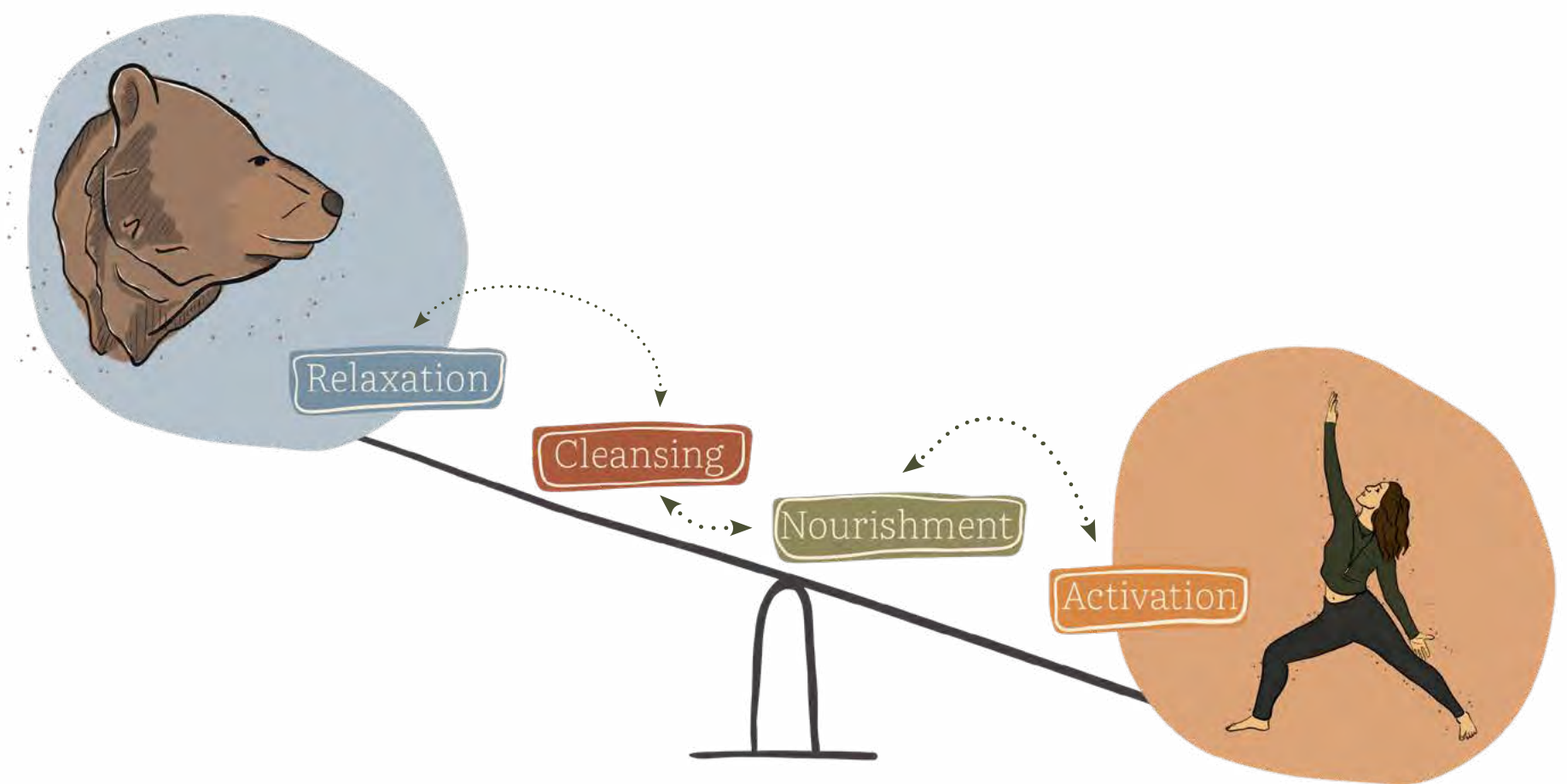
Again, all that matters is if it works. It clearly does work when it is the kind of medicine that is needed and, I say again, art therapy can be a most potent tool for anyone from any constitution.

That said, it can also obviously be especially helpful for the EB and they are surely the ones who get given it as a treatment the most! The reason it can be a necessary therapeutic intervention, and the reason it works, is that the EB can have such a lot to let go. We are once more back to the cleansing part of their Cycle of Healing. It really is the one that gives them the greatest challenge for the longest time.

Again, the main reason they feel such a need for cleansing is almost certainly not going to be from physical toxicity, however much they can find that hard to believe, because it feels so real! The need for cleansing is coming from the emotional burdens they have accumulated by virtue of being alive, and having the memory of an Elephant. There is no denying it is there, once you know what it looks like and feels like, you will see it in a lot of EBs. But there is also a Butterfly there too, wanting freedom, craving beauty, and love. That's there too, don't forget to look for that part too. Your main work may

well be in finding the way to help set it free!

I don't need to ask the EB patient who is coming back for their follow up if they have been doing the 'work', whether the relaxation part of it in an old way of theirs that they have gone back to or, in some cases, the art-therapy that we have done for a little while with a more specific goal in mind. You can see it in their face and you can hear it in their voice. Time peels back, people literally look 10 years younger, even more. There will always be a serious, responsible Elephantine person in there, but the Butterfly nature starts to come out and you can see how it allows them to be so light, so joyful, so beautiful, so long as it is set free.



BEARS

Now, poor Bear, last on the list again. I wonder, dear reader, if you yourself could be tired from studying and whether you need a break? This material is not difficult like a science textbook with a lot of facts or numbers to retain, but it has its own kind of intensity. Surely, for example, there are too many pieces of information about the Constitutions and the Cycle of Healing, to absorb and hold on to from the first time they are met. This is not like a novel, that best of Bear medicines for the unquiet mind, where the plot and the characters carry you along. The subject of the constitution is like a tangled web that spirals into more and more complexity the deeper you go into it.

Seriously though, take a rest if you need one. You know that this book, like my website, is my labour of love. It won't be going anywhere, it will always be free. I will come back and edit it if I have some new insights but that will only be to add something.

What is here now will still be here. Enjoy the journey.

Right now, you are engaged in a process of learning about what surely most of us must find the best subject in the world to study, namely ourselves; our wonderful, interesting, faulty, maddening, world-consuming and rapacious human race. Take your time!

Relaxation and rest is the home-territory of the Bear. How nice that sounds, until you meet the Bear who has become stuck in his or her cave and can't get out. Who, for any combination of circumstances, or ill-health, no longer ventures into the 'forest' of the world, and so festers, like some swamp dwelling Gollum-type creature, in a dank bedroom, growing paler and less communicative by the day.

I'm only partly joking about that. I've seen such Bears, and you will too if you work with people. Being stuck in any part of the Cycle of Healing is really bad for you. Too much rest and relaxation is just as bad as too much activation, cleansing, or nourishment, and Bears, better than anyone, can get stuck in their corner of rest, stuck in inertia, and stuck indefinitely if they cannot find the way back over to activation.

We'll come back to that. In most cases, at least at first, our primary attention in a therapeutic sense is helping the Bear get back to their home corner.

To get more rest, to get more relaxed. Perhaps this can be supported with some nervine relaxants, perhaps with some time out from an overactive mind with a good novel, or some other engaging and entertaining redirection of their attention away from what has kept them overlong in the ‘forest’ of activation.

Imagine there is a ‘cave’ for the Bear, and that this is where they go to rest, to ‘hibernate’, to withdraw from the ‘forest’ of the world, so that they can relax. The cave could be their body, or their bedroom, or even their car. The cave includes their inner world and, in good health, it is a warm, dry place, with a good metaphorical fire, a good book, or other absorbing entertainment, even some good company so long as that company doesn’t always require entertainment, not need them to keep being ‘on’ or ‘up’.



If a Bear knows their way to the cave, and is spending enough time in it, then there probably won't be any major health issues driving anything along towards a health crisis. Their Cycle of Healing will be well enough supported in their key home-base to prevent anything really bad from developing. However, not being in a crisis does not equate to being in good health, they

may still be a long way from anything approaching happiness, fulfilment or contentment. The polar opposite to relaxation is activation and this is, quite clearly, the area of the Cycle of Healing that the Bear has the most lasting trouble with, both from going overboard on it or not getting nearly enough of it!

Going overboard is familiar territory from the common issues that befall Eagles, and if you meet a Bear with an immune condition or some kind of disease in their nervous system then you should rightfully suspect that they have been overactivated and under-rested. I call this getting stuck in the forest. Even without a disease to march a diagnosis forwards, the symptoms of being stuck in the forest, i.e. over-activated, can be just most troublesome. Things like excess anxiety, nervous bladder, chronic infections or irritable bowel syndrome (IBS)

Incidentally, IBS, is what I call irritable Bear syndrome because they are the only constitution that ever truly gets it. Other constitutions get issues such as food intolerances or gut infections (dysbiosis) that cause IBS-type symptoms but, once you resolve the wrong diet or the dysbiosis it all clears away. Not so for the Bear. The IBS of the Bear almost always starts in the late teens or the early 20s, when adulthood and stress come properly into the picture. So far, without exception, from many hundreds of cases, every true IBS has always been in a Bear constitution.

The remedy for over-activation is, of course, relaxation. Remember, unlike their polar opposite cousins the Eagle, that Bears are naturally good at laying down their tools and giving up the good fight for a while. Relaxation, and the healing that comes with rest, will come easily to them if they go along with their own nature to rest and sleep more when they need to. Herbs may help, a good book is certain to help, if you can only get the Bear to read!

This is where I want to talk about the ‘prescription of the book’. It isn’t always the easiest medicine to get an overactive Bear to take but, if they do it, it always works.

What happens with a *good* book is that the Bear mind gets engaged and entertained and, without trying, without getting in their own way, they find themselves happily in their ‘cave’, unwinding tension, getting relaxed, getting better.

Please note the emphasis on ‘good’ with books. I talk about the ‘barometer of the heart’ with my patients, although I am realising, as I get older, that more and more people have no idea what a barometer is so I am eventually going to need to find a new analogy. It’s simple enough to get the point across though,



which is that when you think about reading your book, maybe later today, maybe when you have your lunch, or when you get a break, or before you go to bed, or even when you are lying in bed, whenever you think about reading your book your heart lifts. You have met at least one or more of the characters and you can relate to them. You like the setting of the book, you have a feel for the plot and you are interested in what happens next.

That is a good book, one that makes your heart happy when you think about returning to it, one that even makes you feel sad when you finally finish it, and so to wish to find another story from that magic-working storyteller, who wove a web around you and entranced you so, for a while.

A bad book is the one that makes you feel ‘meh’ when you think about reading it again. There is no rising of the barometer, no lifting of the heart. I tell my patients, in as convincing a manner as I can, knowing full well how this could make or break their treatment *‘if you get that sinking feeling then you are only allowed to pick that book up one more time, and that is only to flick to the end to see what happens, and even then only if you really need to!’*

Honestly, a good story teller is truly a good medicine woman or man, their stories literally help people to heal by taking them out of themselves, by helping them to let go of their worries and their over-thinking, by helping them to return to rest

and relaxation and so to get one of the best medicines of all.

By the way, I am strictly talking about novels, about fiction, about ‘made-up’ things. This last point has been seen to quite literally offend some people. They can hardly imagine a greater waste of time than to be reading a made-up story. It’s sad, they have utterly forgotten something that every child instinctively knows. Stories help you to make sense of the world, stories help you to learn all kinds of things, stories help you to get good sleep!

I don’t know where I read this, in a novel I suppose, but I often quote it when I can feel that doubt permeating the air and I can see my patient grappling with how they are going to justify reading novels to their workaholic partners, let alone to themselves. I quote *‘if you want to know what’s going on in the world, read the news, if you want to understand the world, read novels’*.

I should remind you here that none of these ideas or practices are limited to the constitution that they are linked to in

these pages. I could advise any person from any constitution to take up reading if I can see that they are of unquiet mind. Anyone can benefit from a good book. They are a true medicine for the mind.

If a person has never developed the habit of reading, or they have struggled with the concentration it requires and don't have confidence in themselves as a reader, or they have too little spare time to sit and read but could certainly listen to something as they went about the more mundane parts of their day, then they may do better by using audiobooks instead. I am certain that audiobooks can work just as well as paper or e-books and, for different reasons, they clearly suit some people much better.

Sadly, TV, Movies, Video clips, or Gaming does not work in the same way. I wish they did, they are all so popular now that we would have a much healthier society if they could be even close to the kind of medicine for the mind that a book can be.

The difference is in the passivity of the screen vs. the engagement of the story. When you read, or listen to a book, your imagination, your thoughts and your mind are being invited into a world that is not of your making. You go on a journey that at least partly belongs to you, the characters and setting and story take a shape that is at least partly of your making.

Film can be a fantastic way to see all kinds of things that you might never see by yourself, but the

journey is taken for you, you are only a receiver, not a fellow traveller. I say this as a huge movie fan, one who goes to the last remaining DVD store in Christchurch on a weekly basis to find great movies to watch with my family. Certainly, film, tv, games etc. are great to relax and tune out with, they can be tremendously entertaining and I think they can be of great value on all kinds of levels. However, they cannot compare with the ‘medicine’ of a good book.

Whatever kind of written or spoken story, woven by a storyteller that has been able to grab hold of a person and keep them in their spell for a while, has the power to truly take a person out of themselves.

Screen technologies, i.e. moving pictures combined with sound, can arrest the mind from being able to think its usual thoughts, but it only works as long as you keep watching them. By contrast, the setting, plot and characters of a good novel, by engaging the reader in a living relationship that they must participate in for it to work, gives a lasting release from the burden of self-centred consciousness.

The person thinks different thoughts, not about themselves, they no longer have to remain the main character and centre of every scene. They can relax.

I could very well understand the person who, reading through the above, would obviously take in that I highly rate the value of a good book, especially



for a Bear, but unless they were already an avid reader and had actually experienced the magic for themselves, multiple times, they could still have missed my main point! That this is a true medicine for the mind.

I have strong feelings on the subject that follows but, before I go on, I want to be crystal clear that I am not talking about the sacred bond of working with a genuine therapist who knows how to listen, knows when to reflect, and knows when to make a supportive challenge to help facilitate some necessary ‘work’. There are, thankfully, many such good people in the world and may they all have long lives to keep going with their important and necessary work for as long as they are well and able to do it!

So these are my thoughts about the self-improvement industry. Self understanding is not the same as self-improvement. I don’t know how far your awareness goes of just how many false, or let’s say ineffective ‘medicines for the mind’ there are for sale in this world. The self-help, self-improvement industry is as voracious a self-promoter of its wares to people with unquiet minds as the diet industry is to people with body image issues. There are countless books and courses already out there, and more every year, showing you in ‘this many easy steps’ how to improve yourself, how to fix yourself, how to change yourself. I have met far too many people who have gone into all this kind of thing

not to see how it just doesn't work. In fact it makes things worse because it always, eventually, just makes people 'tighten the knot' on themselves.

Not just Bears, but Bears especially, are naturally introspective and naturally intense. If they start analysing themselves (or start being analysed by a therapist who doesn't have a very great care to not do harm) they become self-aware in a way that just ends up bringing their inner Judge into greater power and prominence. The more they see their weaknesses, and the more they see the faults in the patterns of their nurture all the way back to early childhood, the worse it gets. The more they try to then correct the past by putting in whatever treatment that has been offered as the cure, the more they get invested in it being the 'right treatment', even as they are only getting more knotted up with unhealthy introspection. What the treatment usually comprises is some kind of compensating positivity, some kind of self-hypnotic charm. Something that has been sold to them as a cure for their broken, flawed humanity.

Every version has its own bells and whistles. Some are more harmful than others. You have to especially watch out for the ones that have a beginner level that seems simple, and inexpensive enough, and then the more you go into it, the harder and more expensive it all gets. Those systems always have a compelling hierarchy of progression towards 'mastery' built into them and, however

well hidden it may be, there is always the corruption of greed somewhere at the heart of the matter.

Anyone who is willing to exploit the weaknesses of others to profit from them is working for a very different set of rules and reasons to the person who wants to serve Nature and genuinely help people to find their own way.

In any case, aside from the real ugliness behind the beautiful facade of the self-help industry, none of it works. It seems to help for a while, when the hopes are high and the belief is real, but then the awesome and awful reality of the truth of what we are and who we are eventually comes back into focus. It always does. Only now they have the added burden of an increased self-awareness of just how messed up they are.

Unless you yourself have ever been caught up in something like this then you may not be able to fully understand just how deep the illusion can run. I say illusion because the constant theme, throughout all the various methods for sale, is the promise of salvation. The promise of peace, health and wealth if we only keep advancing far enough up the ladder of the system on sale. In reality, the ladder reaches nowhere but a cloud of confusion and denial. Denial of our nature, denial of the truth of our flawed humanity, denial of the actual reality of this, what is, here and now. These false paths are actually very dangerous to people. It takes



them away from actually understanding themselves as they truly are and makes them endlessly and fruitlessly keep trying to become something they are not.

Self understanding is not the same as self improvement. It's entirely normal to be messed up. Every person is born whole and then gets broken into a million pieces by a million different experiences and influences. We cannot fix that any more than we can fix ourselves. It is the intelligent life force inside us that can heal both our minds and our bodies and the best thing we can do to help it is to just get out of its way!

Many, many times in practice, meeting with a Bear or some other wonderfully conscious and aware human being who has gone deep into the rabbit holes of self-help and self-improvement, we come to the point of the prescription, of the work, and as gently but strongly as I can, I tell them that for the time we will work together they need to take a total break from reading self-help books or the like, most of it now of course on the internet. Then that is usually about when I give my spiel on reading novels instead, and listening to the barometer of their heart to be sure that they are reading the 'right' book. The one that makes them look forward to reading it some more, the one that feels like a reward.

As I keep saying, all that matters about any of this

is what works. Stopping unhealthy introspection and going on a mental holiday certainly does work. In fact even from the very beginning you can often see the relief in the moment of realisation that they can finally take a break, that they must take a break, from worrying away at themselves and that they are about to go on a real internal holiday with something that most Bears used to do and used to love to do; to get lost in a good book!

Recommending novels is not a frivolous medicine, it is a true medicine because it lets the person let go, to loosen the knot, to stop getting in the way of their own healing. Every culture in every part of the world throughout history has known that we must tell our children stories for them to make sense of the world and to be able to release the burden of their own consciousness and self-awareness, but so many adults forget this. To whoever you are, if you want to help others, I say remind people of the power of stories and help them to use this medicine, it works!

Perhaps not at the beginning of the healing journey, perhaps a little ways further in once some better, healthier, happier ‘cave-time’ has been established, but Bears have the same fascinating conundrum as the other constitutions in this matter. That the quadrant of the Cycle of Healing that is furthest from their home territory is the area that they need to work on the most to find their way. In the case of the Bear that area is Activation.

Before I go on, just to be clear, I wouldn’t be the one to be pushing a Bear forwards into what follows. If they asked, then that’s another matter, but as was mentioned much earlier, if a person gets what they came for and is happy enough with where they are at then I have zero compulsion to poke or prod them further with the kinds of questions I am about to start talking about.

So, let’s say you are a Bear and you are working on you. Or you are really close to a Bear and you can see that they are not necessarily stressed and sick but they are not happy and healthy either. Perhaps you have grasped the insights that the Cycle of healing and the Constitutional



model are offering and so you are questioning if they, or you, are actually stuck because of a lack of activation. How might you go about seeing if your hunch is correct?

I think that the following question, or one like it, would tell you what you needed to know. I will phrase it as if you were asking someone else but again, if you are wondering about yourself then I warmly invite you to see it as an inquiry and so, when ready, to take a few breaths and give it your full attention.

‘Are you as physically fit as you need to be and are you as mentally stimulated as you need to be?’

A critical thinker could answer those questions with another question

‘as you need to be for what?’

Physically fit enough to climb Mt Everest? Mentally stimulated enough to do what exactly? Those questions in answer to the question would be fair.

Actually, it is not healthy for us to compare our level of physical or mental fitness to others. There will always be people who are more or less active than us in every sphere of life. Forget about how it compares to others or even how it measures up to whatever the standards of physical and mental fitness were



set as the model when you were growing up.

The Bear, or any person who has become too stuck in the relaxation phase of their life and is not activated enough for good health, only needs to honestly answer the question for themselves. If they want the question and are ready for it.

So what does 'good health' mean in part of the above statement - 'activated enough for good health'.

Obviously, we all need good health, but it is impossible to define health by what it is, it has to be defined by what it isn't. I think we come to much the same problem when we try to define love, and end up better saying what it is by seeing what it is not.

If you are not in good health then you will know about it one way or another. And if the lack of good health comes from a lack of physical or mental activity, then it really isn't hard for a person to see the truth of that either. What gets in the way is nearly always simply denial. We don't want to face the truth about ourselves. There are a million faces to denial, one of the more common ones in this instance is the lie that if we start exercising our bodies and our minds that there will never be an end to it and that we will become our own slave driver, never satisfied, always wanting more. Of course, it doesn't have to be like that, but those are the kinds of thoughts, conscious or hidden, that people who are stuck in inertia use to stay stuck.

To take it a step even further. In this arena, if you really wanted to peel away all the pretence and face the truth of things, then there is another question that can really pierce to the heart of the matter.

‘Are you bored?’

Children know exactly what boredom is. They recognise the feeling so quickly because their usual joy, curiosity, and sense of fun is suddenly not there anymore, and it feels terrible! Many adults are bored but they don’t realise it because they are too busy to acknowledge how they are feeling. If the adult has forgotten how to recognise how boredom feels, another way to ask the same question in a different way could be *‘do you feel stuck, flat, uninspired, or are you looking forwards to things, are you still learning, and do you have joy in your life?’*

I’m sorry, I need to say it again. Whilst I am perfectly happy to use all the powers of persuasion I possess to convince someone to get lost in a good book, I am not in the habit of torturing people with questions such as the above under any circumstances other than that they clearly want to be provoked in such a way and have therefore asked for it! That said, I will also say that for that not so rare Bear, one who is intent on an inner journey of discovery and development, they may not be such bad questions to ask.

I tell my students that if you want to be a good herbalist then you have to

a. know the herbs, know them enough to be a good matchmaker for the people who need them

b. be able to be a dietician, or a nutritionist if you prefer that title, when needed

c. be able to be an effective exercise coach, again when needed

d. be able and ready to be a counsellor, again when needed.

This area of helping a Bear, or anyone else that has got stuck in a cool, damp place and is too relaxed, too unmotivated, too unmoving or unstimulated, requires a little of column c and a little of column d.

Some kind of exercise program may be essential and, if there aren't any good habits already in place in this area I recommend for the Bear constitution to get it over with as quickly and effectively as possible, which can be best achieved by doing high intensity training of some sort. Ideally you would play a sport or do something that was fun, and engaging, and not boring, but that is often much easier said than done.

Then the emotional part, the part where counselling may need to come in, is to recognise that a person who is bored, flat, unmotivated, uninterested in the world, may need help above and beyond what you can achieve with a good diet, herbal medicines and an exercise routine.

There are a great many people in our world who have not found their passion or their way in life because they had a fairly rotten upbringing, or education, or both. You can't help that, or change any of it, but you can help a person start to identify what gives them joy and sparks their interest just by taking an interest in them, and asking the right questions.

Putting it in the frame of the 'therapeutic relationship' as a practitioner who is willing to work holistically, and to be open to having the difficult conversations about life purpose and life path, you are much less trying to find the right answers for people as to find the right questions.

Then, if a person is ready and willing to try something out, to take a step in a certain direction, all you have to do is turn up and be present for when they meet you again to let you know how they have got on.

Guiding another human being on their healing journey is not about tying a rope to them and then trying to pull them up a mountain. It is meeting them where they are at, which is mostly a matter

of just actually listening to them, and then perhaps helping them see something that is obstructing their way a little more clearly, and then supporting them take those steps that are on their path, to overcome their obstacles, to find their own way.

In all honesty, it's wonderful work and, so long as they are not in denial about what's happening and what it is in their power to do about it, it's light work too.



— CYCLE OF HEALING

Weaving things together

WEAVING TOGETHER THE CYCLE OF HEALING WITH HERBAL MEDICINES

I will conclude this section by again showing you below the second chart that I have found highly useful in my own work and as a study guide for students. You will see how each part of the Cycle of Healing has medicinal herbs that fan out from its quadrant, which are then further grouped into the organ or system that they especially influence. You will also see on the bottom of this chart an image of a spine with corresponding links to the Cycle of Healing. This gives a visual introduction to some most interesting areas that I will explore in more depth in the next sections.

When the self-healing intelligence that lives within us, and all living beings, is unable to



correct what is wrong then there will always be at least one area within the Cycle of Healing that is most blocked and needing the most help. There are various things that we can do in our lives or diets to help release those blocks, some of them have been discussed already, but if we consider healing to be a journey then the very first step ought to be to get some support from Nature in one or more of the medicinal herbs that have aided us from the very beginnings of our existence.

If you know where you, or a person you are caring for, is most blocked in their Cycle of Healing then there is every chance that one of the corresponding herbs that relate to that area, as shown in the chart below, will be able to act as a catalyst, an ‘agent for change’ to start a process of healing that could be extremely difficult to achieve if you or they were only working on diet or some other aspect of the way of living.

Herbs can be remarkably powerful. When the right herb is used for the right person, it may not be necessary to use many remedies, even just one or two can be all that are needed, but within a short time of starting to use them there will be a clear and palpable shift in the stuck condition. This is the power of Constitutional Medicine in a nutshell. By not being caught in trying to remedy symptoms but rather by looking at the person behind the condition, understanding their Constitutional nature and recognising where they are blocked

in the Cycle of Healing, you can select the herb or herbs that will help them to heal themselves. You can also skip back now to see the Cycle of Healing Chart by clicking on **page 93**. Note the link at the bottom of page 93 which will bring you back here to ‘Weaving things together the Cycle of Healing with Herbal Medicines’ on page 199.

Again, if you are interested in learning and practising with these old friends then I suggest you study the Cycle of Healing Chart to start making links between different herbs and how they can especially help in the Cycle of Healing. You are welcome to print a PDF of the Cycle of Healing Chart by clicking [here](#).

As with the Constitutional Medicine chart shown earlier, the Cycle of Healing chart shows a flexible and effective way to learn how to be a good matchmaker, a midwife, or a middle-man, for these extraordinary allies from Nature itself.





MAPS OF THE BODY

— MAPS OF THE BODY

Introduction

The wisdom of the flesh, of the body, is the intelligence of Nature. That intelligence is as old as the beginning of time. You cannot see it, you can't even really name it. Invisible, unknowable, yet real and entirely practical. It permeates all things, and all living beings especially, from their beginning till their end.

Each one of us is like a tiny drop from a vast ocean. Each of us is unique, but part of something much greater at the same time. We have a shared purpose, even if we cannot comprehend it because it is simply too vast, and we are simply too tiny. But we are not without freedom in our tiny part of the whole. We have a path to find our way, to meet our needs and to reach for what we are all seeking, individually and collectively - peace, love, happiness. If life is a journey towards those great goals, then our body is the map of the inner terrain of that journey. A map that shows us where we've been and where we are, it even shows us where to go, if we can learn how to listen to its wisdom.

Many people, especially older ones, or those who have gone through a lot of trouble and strife, talk about ‘*learning to listen to their heart*’, or sometimes they talk about ‘*learning to listen to their gut*’, they mean the same thing, that there is an internal knowing, a wisdom that seems to come from beneath our heads and within our bodies.

The practice of learning the map of the body with relation to the Cycle of Healing could be thought of as a form of training in how to get better at such intuitive listening. Instead of dealing with a breakdown or waiting for a crisis to learn to trust our instincts, how much better would it be if we could learn how to tune in without pain and suffering being the primary impetus, but rather curiosity and a desire to better ‘*nosce te ipsum*’ to know thyself.

Given who I imagine I am speaking to; the student of holistic medicine or someone on an important healing journey, I think you will find the following discussion extremely interesting. There is quite a lot of experiential learning in this section and it is my heartfelt hope that you will want to play along and try each of the inquiries as they come along. The main goal is to teach you how the Maps of the Body can show us where we ourselves, or someone we care for, is stuck in their Cycle of Healing.

Every cell contains our essence. Every part of us, no matter how small, is seen by our innate intelligence as utterly essential to its overall driving purpose; which is to live, to make more life, and to live long,

When there is any kind of a problem, the symptoms of disease are what is happening as a consequence of our body trying to heal itself. Pain, inflammation, loss of freedom or function, or any of a thousand expressions of illness are already a kind of map, showing where there has been an injury or imbalance, showing where the life force is working to heal the body or remove the sources of harm.

Acute illness, and how it presents on the map of the body, is often reasonably simple to interpret, because there is a clear before and after. Where, before this point in time, the illness did not exist and then, after, from what can usually be identified as an event; for example an injury or an infection, there is now a problem.

Holistic medicine is sometimes perfectly adequate to support a person through acute illness but sometimes emergency medicine is needed here instead. Conventional medicine's greatest strength lies in treating acute illness where the symptoms are overwhelming and the condition is beyond what a person could heal from by themselves with adequate rest, nutrition, cleansing etc.

Chronic illness, however, can be much harder to understand and treat. Without wishing to denigrate

the mainstream medicine of my culture, because I have the greatest respect for its practitioners whose heartfelt desire is to help people and relieve suffering, I must say that conventional medicine frequently serves people with chronic illness very poorly. The causes of their unresolving illness are not sought for or addressed. They are given powerful drugs to mask the symptoms of their illnesses as if there were no tomorrow, but many such drugs accumulate significant toxicity and side effects and their risk vs their benefit gets worse and worse over time. Sadly, the approach of conventional medicine to many chronic health conditions does not promote a healing journey, in fact it can even prevent one.

To understand chronic illness, and to understand how to treat the causes of it, we need to be able to have ways to see the map of the body more deeply than just where there are symptoms of pain, or inflammation, or dysfunction.

If you have gathered into yourself the core principles as presented thus far. If you instinctively grasp the extraordinary truth that the life force within all living things has the capacity to heal from almost anything, then you will understand that we really need to be able to see where it is that a person is most blocked in their essential Cycle of Healing.

If we can see that, then we will have an opportunity to do something to remove, or at least lessen, those

blocks. We can help to remove the obstacles to the innate, self-healing intelligence so that it can do the ordinary miracle of its work unimpeded.

For this quest there are two highly useful maps that exist in and on the body of all human beings, they are in the belly, and in the spine.

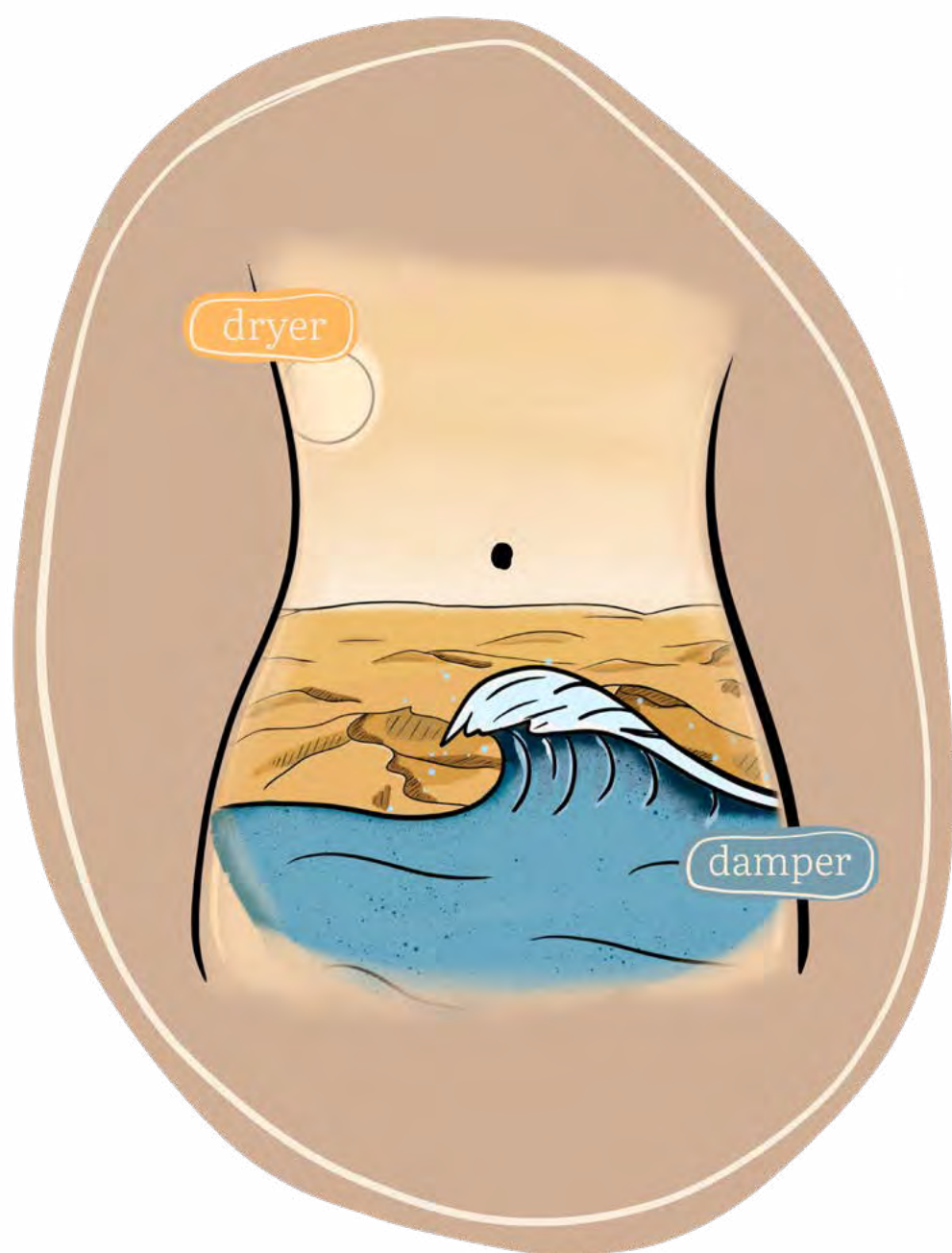


— MAPS OF THE BODY

Maps of the Belly

I am shortly going to ask you to begin your own inquiry into these matters, so that you can understand them in a way that will let you use them for yourself, or others if you so choose.

We're going to start with an interesting and unusual proposition to experiment with. That within our belly, in terms of the constitutional spectrum, there is a relative dampness below and dryness above.



How might a person feel such a thing? In a few moments, after a little further introduction, I am going to ask you to shut your eyes, so that your inner experience can more easily come to the fore, and so that you can go into the murky depths of your subconscious, which exists in your belly as much as it physically ‘exists’ anywhere at all, and then to feel for yourself what there is to feel.

What you will feel will be subtle, unless you have pain or some kind of palpable imbalance in your gut. If that is the case then that pain or discomfort will, of course, dominate your awareness when you bring your attention into your belly and, if that is what is happening for you right now, then don’t stop or turn away. You will still get a lot of practical and personal benefit from learning the following material and you should certainly go ahead with the following inquiries regardless, but just be aware that you may need longer to process the various feelings and distractions before you can get the sense of what we are trying to explore through these experiments.

Gut troubles notwithstanding, if there is nothing hurting right now then of course that’s great, but it means that what you will be able to feel is very likely going to be subtle. Subtle is good for what we are about to delve into. Subtle means there are no big obstacles or blocks. Subtle means you can explore your inner map nice and gently.

Before we start to try to access this experience through an internal inquiry, I need to firstly acknowledge what can be a really common block to this process, which is an uncomfortable self-consciousness that many of us have about the size or shape of our bellies.

If this is true for you then there is a good chance that this is what you will first notice when you bring your attention into your belly. If you do hit this stumbling block then please be assured of two things.

The first is that you will have to believe me that I know how you feel! I am not a fat man but I am not a skinny one either and I have always been self-conscious about my belly in that way and I know that this is extremely common for other people as well. The second is that there is absolutely no reason for this to stop you from doing it anyway because, once the resistance of the self-judgement releases its stranglehold, which it honestly will if you just hang in there and keep focusing within your belly, breathing in and out, and feeling what you feel, you will be able to do this experiment perfectly well.

By the way, on this tender subject, this is as good a place as any to mention that the biggest reason diets fail is not because they don't work, they all work if you do them, but because people don't deal with the emotional and psychological reasons that they are overweight and so they just can't work for

long. This exercise, this process of learning how your inner being lives and moves in your belly can be a tremendously helpful step towards the understanding and acceptance that is absolutely vital to live a long and healthy life, at a healthy weight, with a good amount of fat on your belly, not too skinny, not too big...



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT



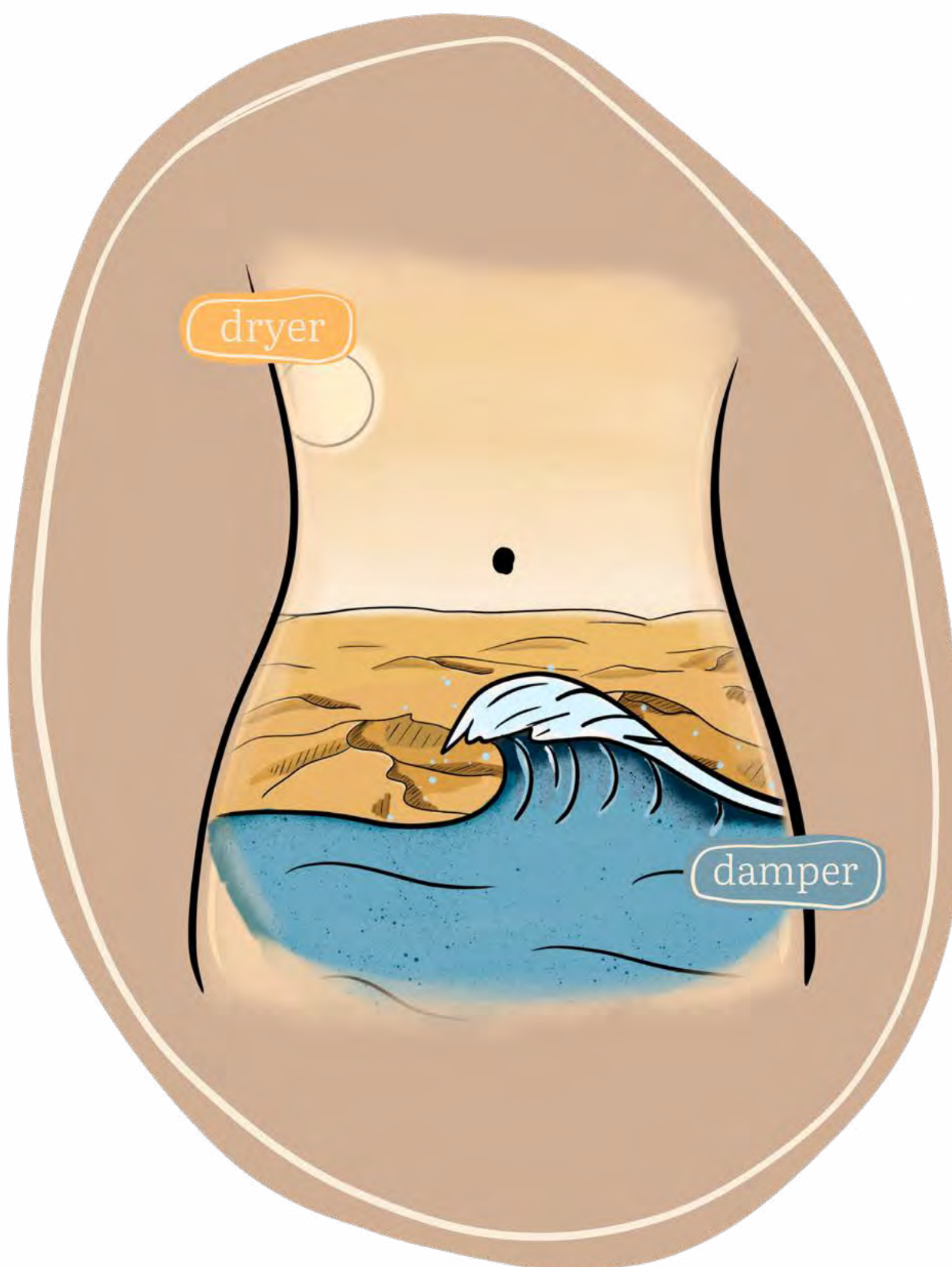
Ok, so back to the inquiry, which is actually in two parts, but the first is just to get a sense of the ‘damper below, dryer above’ spectrum in the belly. In just a moment I will ask you to start by doing the easiest, and always the best, of the methods of ‘going within’ which is to simply follow the movement of your own breath.

You will be able to feel how your belly is gently rising and falling with your breath, and you will especially be able to feel the movement of the great breathing muscle called the diaphragm, which is attached to your sternum and your spine and is located just under and at the bottom of your ribs. When you breathe, your diaphragm opens up and draws air into your lungs, which then greatly expand.

You are literally drawing air into the top of your belly when you do this. I suggest you start by noticing this air, which is relatively dryer, and how it feels in your belly and then allow your attention to go lower, into the area below your naval, in the bottom parts of your belly, where I think you will be able to feel how the energy, the sense of things, is

much more dense, more heavy and more damp.

Remember, the feeling of the difference between the damper below and the dryer above will only be subtle, and it will probably take a few breaths and going backwards and forwards a few times to really get any sense of it at all. But if you can get some experience of this nonetheless then the first inquiry will have been successful and we will be ready to move on to the second part. Please take a moment and give the first inquiry a go now.



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT



The second thought experiment in this area, which I will ask you to attempt in a few moments, is also to feel something intuitively, subtly and experientially within your own belly. Which is that, as you turn your attention within, that *most of the time* you are slightly hotter to the right and slightly cooler to the left.

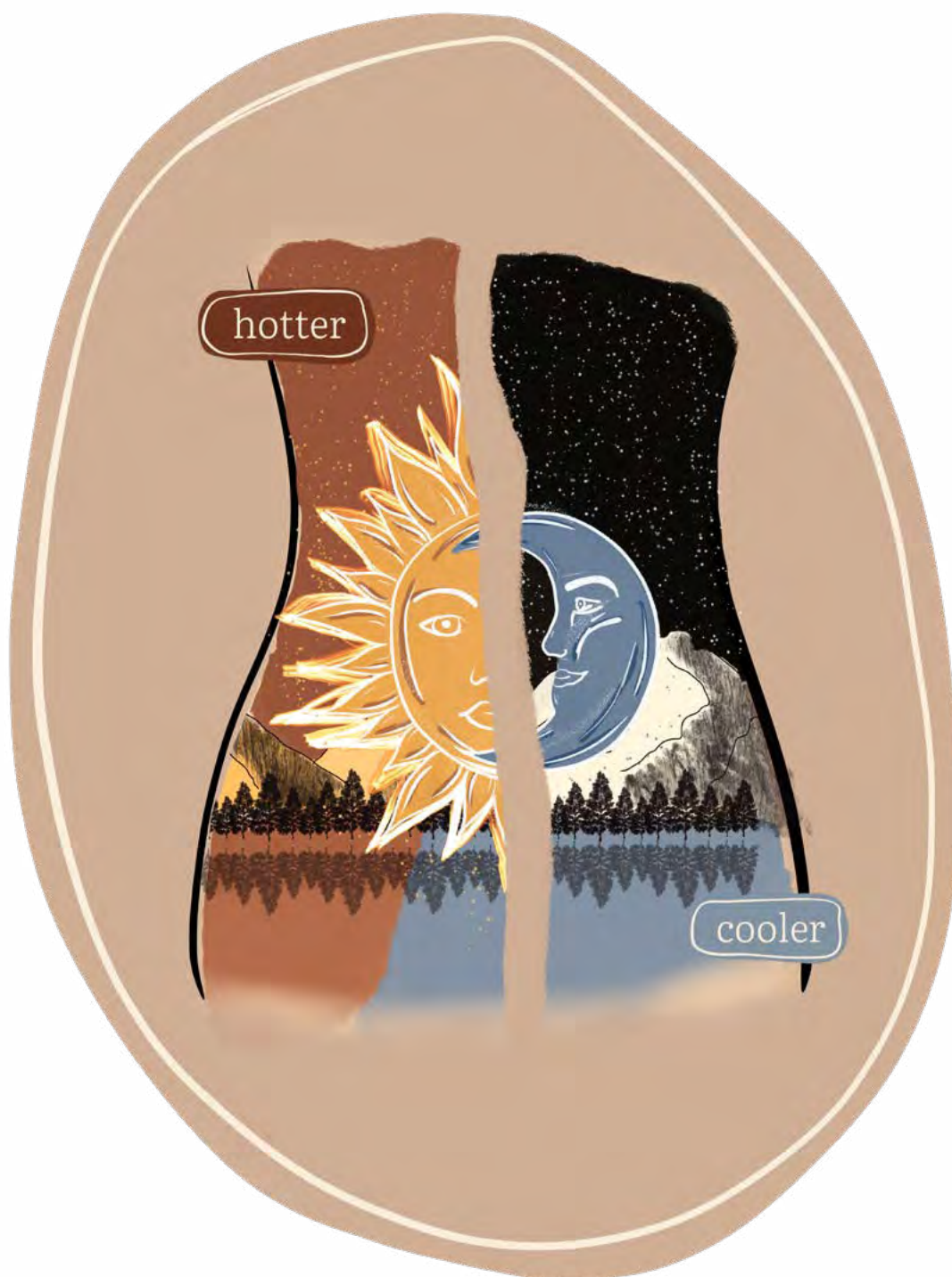
This is not something that you will need to imagine, by the way. You literally are hotter on one side and cooler on the other. Your liver, on the right, is literally the hottest organ in the body. The stomach, on the left, is much cooler when it is at rest.

However, I say ‘most of the time’ because the only time this inquiry would not work would be to do it soon after you had eaten or drunk something rather hot, which can temporarily raise the left side to be hotter than the right.

Normally, the right side of your belly is hotter than the left side, not just between the liver and the stomach either, but it will be enough to give those organs as starting points for now. The hotter to cooler spectrum contains many further interesting

elements and there is a great deal more that can be explored in how we all have a cooler feminine Yin side, which in the map of the front of the body is on the left side of us, and a hotter, masculine Yang side, which in the map of the front of the body is on the right side of our belly.

It doesn't matter whether you are left or right handed, by the way, unless you are the 1 in a million people whose organs are swapped so their liver and their hearts, their descending colon, their appendix, are all on the opposite side to normal.



This second inquiry may be slightly easier than the first, because we are all of us more used to feeling the differences between hotter and cooler than we are between dryer and damper but again, if it takes some time to sense it then don't be too quick to give up. Your brain has probably never been asked to sense such a difference within your belly before. It does not have the neural pathways to make sense of what it is being asked to feel and it may need a little time, a few breaths, to process and understand what is going on!

Again, using the breath, take your awareness in and move as slowly or as quickly as you like from one side of your belly to the other, trying to feel the differences in physical temperature but also perhaps starting to try to feel some of the other differences in the Yin to Yang spectrum that we all contain within ourselves. As soon as you are ready, give it a go and remember, the difference will be subtle and that subtle is good here!

Ok, dear reader! Perhaps this is working for you, you can feel it, you get it, and you are ready to move on to what's next. I have done this experiment with enough people in a real-life setting to know that it can be that easy for many people. But for others, into which

camp I place myself, such things are not that easy, especially on the first try.

Why is it so much harder for some people, including me, to ‘get’ experiential learning? I am going to digress for a moment to really talk about this, because a lot of the key learning that follows will really depend on personal experience to make sense, and if we just forge ahead regardless I could lose the person who, like me, can struggle with this kind of felt, experiential learning, at least at first.

We emphasise experiential learning from the beginning of our SIMH certificate course. The certificate sets the foundation of our further training into the Diploma program and everyone has to do it, regardless of how much previous study they have done in this field or related ones. At the beginning of the Certificate program, we send a ‘student pack’ out by courier to all our New Zealand students, and by overseas post to our international students, which contains 20 herbs, 15 in dried form, 5 in tincture form.

From the very first lesson on the very first herb the student is encouraged to take that herb themselves, thoughtfully, consciously, and experientially. Then they record their experiences with a set of questions that invite them to consider what actions they feel and what responses they get from a number of different angles. Nearly all of our students love this approach at first sight, and they write wonderfully

about their experiences and on how their relationship with the herb evolves and deepens as they get to feel its unique character for themselves.

However, every now and then, someone comes along who says *‘I can’t feel much of anything apart from its taste and I really have no idea what I am supposed to be feeling, is there something wrong with me? Help!’*

This is a student that I can instantly personally relate to, because I am exactly the same, or at least I was. In my early years of training where I did all sorts of workshops and courses after my basic boot camp in herbalism, I would constantly hear people sharing all kinds of marvellous experiences about all kinds of things and me, who let’s just say does not have a very active imagination, would just quietly sit there and think *‘wow, I must be only getting about a tenth of what I am supposed to be feeling here’*.

It took a long time, in fact a very long time, for me to trust what subtle means, to learn to listen to my body with a quiet mind. Certain people, including me, have heads that get in the way when we project our expectation of what we think we are supposed to feel. We stop ourselves from actually feeling anything because we don’t want to trick ourselves into imagining something. If we think we could be making it up then we know that we will never really

be able to trust it. It's a self-perpetuating loop of head-centred intuition blocking, and you cannot just think your way out of it, sigh.

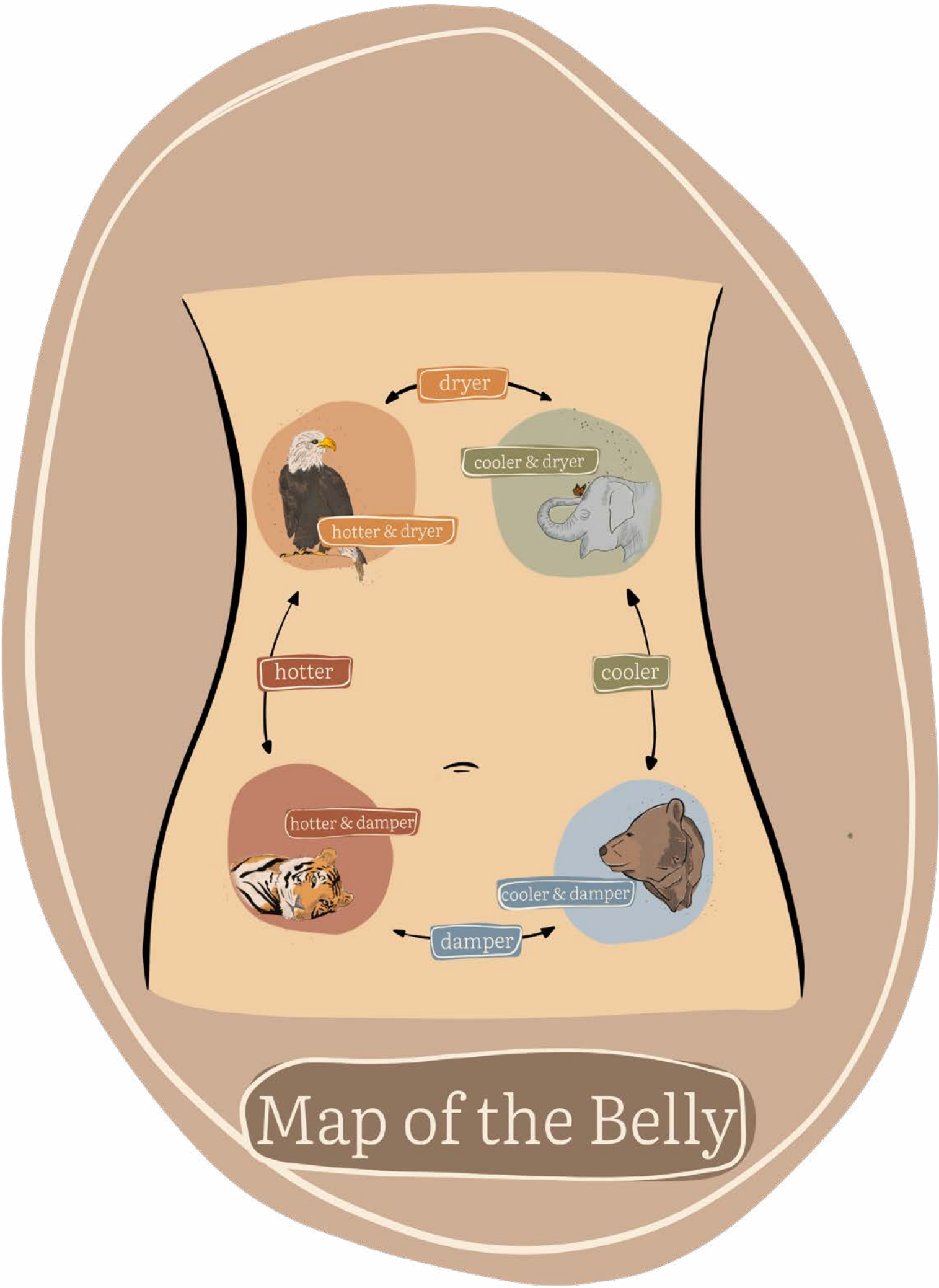
Now, of course I am acutely aware that I am right now suggesting you feel something that somehow reflects a sense of greater dampness below and dryness above, greater heat to the right and coolness to the left. I see the potential problem of me projecting an expectation onto you of what you are supposed to feel and I acknowledge that, for at least some of you, this really will be a problem. If that is you who I am speaking to right now, if you are somewhat like me in this matter, then let me talk to you as if you were right here with me in the room.

Do not give this up just yet. This kind of experiential learning is actually the kind of thing that you need to be doing. For your own sake, you must learn how to get out of your head and to start learning how to listen to your body and to trust the feelings that it uses to communicate with you. You need to do this more than anyone! Don't give up, keep trying, it will get easier with practice, like everything. Once you start to recognise the feelings that are actually there, however subtle they may seem at first, and that you aren't making them appear by imagining them, that they really are there, the trust will come.

If you didn't succeed at all with the above inquiries then I suggest you pause your reading because we really have to learn this Map through experience for it to work. But don't give up. Now, or some other time, when you feel ready to try again, just focus on your breathing and bring your attention to your belly with these rather interesting inquiries: where am I cooler or hotter? Where am I dryer or damper? I am sure that, once you feel something that you know is not your imagining it, however subtle it may be at first, however slight, you will be taking a great step in a journey of trusting the real, and there will be no stopping you.

Whether you got there fast or slow, if you have understood, and been able to feel, however subtly, those two tidal forces through your belly, the dampness draining down and the air rising up, the masculine, heating yang moving more on the right and the feminine, cooling yin moving more on the left, you now already have the essence of the Map of the Belly.

The detail that is about to follow will then quickly make sense. You will be able to remember it and, with practice if you choose to go further, you will be able to quickly feel the constitutional energies, and their corresponding quadrants from the Cycle of Healing in yourself or even in others if you are willing to get up that close to them. I am going to talk more about those quadrants next.



— MAPS OF THE BODY

The lower right Quadrant

HOTTER AND DAMPER - CLEANSING

In a short while I am going to ask you to take a big step forward in this learning journey by doing another internal inquiry to connect to the area that is hottest and dampest in your belly; the lower right quadrant.

The key anatomical event here is that this is where the small intestine ends and the large bowel begins. and it is, by nature, a damp, hot and swampy place indeed. Sometimes too much so, many inflammatory problems in the body have their roots in this quadrant. It is where dysbiosis (an altered microbiome) especially starts and sits. It is where foods that have not been well processed and digested must sit before they can be passed into the main channel of elimination through the junction of the ileo-caecal valve. It is where the appendix



can moan and grumble for many years, even eventually become swollen and inflamed to the point of bursting.

This is the area in the Map of the Belly that relates to Cleansing in the Cycle of Healing. Whether you will be able to feel it for yourself by doing the inquiry that we will get to shortly, or whether you will learn how to feel it in a person that you are caring for by palpating their belly, there will be consistent and characteristic signs of trouble in this quadrant that will show themselves when there is a block to Cleansing that needs attention for the self-healing intelligence to operate without obstruction.

As I was studying natural medicine in Australia in the 1980s I also learned and practised Shiatsu, a form of hands-on treatment with roots in Japan that uses a combination of pressure points, stretches and soft-tissue massage over a layer of clothing. The area of the belly is called the Hara in Japan and it is just as normal for Japanese people to go for a Hara treatment as it is in our culture for people to go for a back massage. In my early years of practice (when I still had time!) I did a lot of Hara treatments for people and found them universally beneficial and extremely well-received, once the person got over the momentary initial weirdness of having their belly worked on!

Alas, I no longer have time in my clinic to do this kind of work but I always appreciated its value and have greatly enjoyed teaching the rudiments of it to the students of our institute who are able to come to one of the 4-day immersive workshops that we run once or twice a year.



I teach a very simple massage technique (over a layer of clothing) that loosens up and releases the surface tension in the belly and then I get them to practise finding areas that feel tight, or just somehow ‘off’ and then practise applying a gentle pressure, using one or more fingers, i.e. making it more ‘rounded’ or more ‘pointy’ according to the person, and the area, and going in with the pressure as the patient breathes out, then releasing off the pressure when the patient breathes in. If that sounded complicated it really isn’t. It is very easy to learn how to do it, and it can be profoundly healing to have it done.

Anyone who starts to use this method in practice eventually becomes attuned to how a belly feels when it is in good health and how markedly different the various ‘blocks’ and problems feel by comparison.

Coming back to the subject at hand, for you the reader who are about to tune into this area, or for the student or practitioner that wants to test this material out on others, you will find that when Cleansing is a primary block in the Cycle of Healing, that you will consistently feel signs and symptoms in the lower right quadrant. It will be noticeably hotter and damper than usual. It will also be more tender, more swollen and more blocked feeling than usual. When you first tune into it in yourself, or feel for it in others, those signs and symptoms may seem very subtle. That's normal and ok, you are learning how to read the Map and trust the Map.

However, after some time and practice, the blocks in the belly become much more palpable to the person who keeps going back for more hands-on experience with the people they meet in their work. For an example of something similar, but a thousand times harder, imagine a person who had lost their sight and who was now learning how to read Braille. At first it would seem that their fingers could hardly 'see' anything, they would feel like a child first learning how to speak; clumsy, inarticulate. Eventually they could read with their fingers as fast as a seeing person could read with their eyes. Some end up being able to read even faster. It was only a matter of practice.

Even when there isn't a block in the Cycle of Healing in this area, or any great need for cleansing, there is always a lot going on in this quadrant of the belly.

We are in the territory of both heat and dampness, as well as the territory of a very powerful emotion that we will be talking about later on.

I have emphasised about it being normal and ok for things to be subtle, but there is equally a possibility in this area, and other crucial parts of the Maps of the Body, that you will feel rather strong sensations when you tune into certain areas. Don't be alarmed if this happens. There is zero chance that you will do yourself harm with this kind of awareness. Whatever you feel was already there, just hidden. It is certainly very healthy, and it can sometimes be rather enlightening, to start to get in touch with this important part of your inner Map.

If you do feel something rather strong, or palpable, you will likely be tempted to try to physically feel for it with your hand because what you can feel seems so real! That's ok but don't expect much when you examine yourself, it will be different to what you were sensing without physical touch. One of the quirky things about this kind of work is that you may become rather adept at feeling the flow of the Cycle or the blocks in the Cycle by using your hands on the belly or the spine of another, but you can't much do it with your hands on yourself, and can only really feel that flow or those blocks by casting your awareness inwards.

The spirit of this next inquiry is twofold. Again, as always, you start by quieting your mind with its

doubts, expectations and projections by simply focusing on your breathing. Then you bring your awareness into the lower and right hand side of your belly with the first intention to feel how it is, subtly or strongly, hotter and damper here and then the second intention is to simply listen and feel.

Let your body talk to you. Tune into it. What you feel or sense could be super subtle, surprisingly strong or anywhere in-between those ends of the experiential spectrum. Whatever you experience, don't worry about analysing it, that can come later, if at all. Just breathe, be and feel. You are learning the Map of your Belly and this is a very important place to start, take your time!



— MAPS OF THE BODY

The upper right Quadrant

HOTTER AND DRYER - ACTIVATING

The next area to discuss, and then explore experientially, is the upper right quadrant. This is the hotter, dryer area of the belly that relates to Activation.

I say dryer, because that is how it should feel in good health, but if the cleansing zone did indeed feel boggy, blocked, too hot and too damp, then there is every likelihood that the upper right quadrant will feel similar, if not worse. Especially because that damp heat can so readily rise into the liver, which is the key organ that concerns us in this area.

The liver is the hottest organ in the body, most people obviously associate it with cleansing, and they're not wrong, but it has a far more elaborate role as the body's 'production factory' and, in good health, it gets so hot



because it is running a kind of transformative ‘fire’ where it takes the raw ingredients; sugars, fats, vitamins, minerals, amino acids from proteins etc. and converts them into all kinds of substances that are essential to our health.

The factory has production lines that go the other way too, constantly breaking things down to their component parts so they can be reused again. The liver is the ultimate recycler, its super-intelligent cells, the hepatocytes, work in perfect harmony with the body, knowing exactly what to keep and reconstruct into something useful again. The liver’s hepatocytes filter our entire blood stream in less than 5 minutes. They know what is safe and good to keep and they know exactly what is harmful and without benefit. That which is bad for us is taken out of circulation and sent into the bile, where it is stored in the gall-bladder and then eventually excreted by the bowel.

This is the energy of ‘activation. In good health it is both hot and dry, in bad health the liver gets congested, i.e. damp, or it loses its metabolic energy and cools down.

Under the hands of an experienced person, which simply means someone who has practised feeling enough bellies to know what is normal, this upper right quadrant should feel warm, dry and full of energy and life. In poor health it feels notably boggy and congested. It feels firmer and less pliable than

it should be. In such cases, it may be that cleansing is the first and most important step, to release the stuck dampness from the liver, but further down the track there may need to be other steps that get the fire of Activation burning bright again, perhaps in the diet, perhaps in the life-path.

Most people never so much as think about how their liver is doing and how it feels unless it, or its storage unit for the bile it produces, the gall-bladder, is in pain. The hottest, hardest working, most essential factory of our body usually doesn't get so much as a thought. That's actually ok, for most people there is already enough to worry about without going looking for more trouble.

However, without doubt, the health of the liver is crucial to the wellbeing of the whole body and a great proportion of any herbalist's work, wherever they are in the world, is in using herbs and diets to help heal the liver so that it in turn can restore health and balance to the body. Any herbalist, in training or in practice, really should have hands that eventually come to know very well how a liver in good health feels, compared to one that is struggling and needs treatment.

I believe that such learning must start with ourselves before it can be truly applied to others. But as mentioned, you won't be able to feel yourself with your hands in the same way that you could another. We need to use our internal awareness to

tune into this vitally important part of our bodies. There will always be a lot going on here, albeit usually under the surface, out of sight and out of mind.

There is another very powerful, often very difficult emotional energy that makes it home in this upper right area of the belly. I will talk more about that later but for now that emotion, plus the energy of Activation, plus the constant processing of the world means that, whether we know it or not and whether we feel it or not, there will always be a lot going on here.

I think that there is a very good chance that if you approach an experiential inquiry into what you can feel in this quadrant with a curious and open mind that you will start to sense some of its remarkable life-force, it's potent 'fire', but please remember that subtle is more than ok too. Subtle is a great and perfect place to make a start, to get acquainted. To make a friendly inspection of your inner furnace.

Whenever you are ready, please make this second, more focused inquiry, by taking some conscious breaths, then bringing your attention to the upper right quadrant of your belly where you are seeking to sense what should feel like greater dryness compared to the damp below, but may also feel damp if there is some congestion going on. Your inquiry may also be able to notice how this area is at least somewhat palpably hotter and may also have

a lot of other kinds of dynamic energy going on, swirling around under the surface.

Do your best to see if you can tune into the hotter and dryer energy of the upper right quadrant but, however much you can or whatever you actually feel, then just make some space for a few breaths to just feel whatever there is to feel.



DISHWASHER VS. CAULDRON

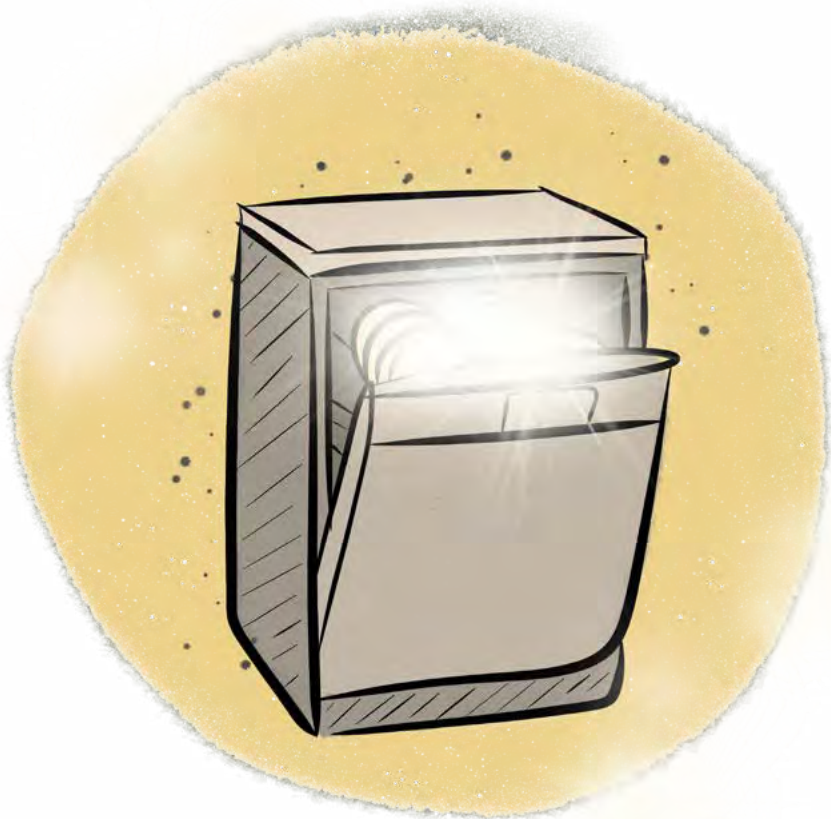
Before we continue over to the cooler side of the belly, a comment from me on the Maps of the Body and this ‘going within’ process to feel things for yourself and so own them for yourself. I am

very aware that I am showing
and describing the

areas that relate to
the Constitutional
energies and the
Cycle of Healing on
these Maps as if all
is orderly and in its
proper place. In reality,
it is much less like a

dishwasher with upper and
lower racks where everything

is where it is supposed to be and much more
of a churning cauldron of constant change and
complexity!



When you go further with these inquiries, both with the Map of the Belly and the Map of the Spine that follows, there is every chance that you will get all kinds of signals and feelings that flow and turn, move and change within. The life force is extremely dynamic. Things are constantly in a state of flux.

When you practice tuning in to your spirit, your life-force, you will feel how its epicentre is never fixed in one place for long, It travels as fast as thought, now it is ephemeral, seeming without any

substance, now it is as physical and palpable as flesh itself.

The Maps are guides to better get to know at an experiential level the tendencies of our life-force to flow between hotter and cooler, dryer and damper, to move between activation and relaxation, nourishment and cleansing, but the journey never ceases, not until death itself. Life is both movement and a journey at the same time. In the great goal to *nosce te ipsum*, ‘know thyself’, it’s good to have a Map!



— MAPS OF THE BODY

The upper left Quadrant

COOLER AND DRYER - NOURISHING

The next area to better understand and explore is the upper left quadrant of the belly. This is cooler and dryer territory and it is where the great stage of Nourishment has its centre in the Cycle of Healing.


This upper-left part of our belly is where the primary receptacle of our nourishment sits, our stomach. ‘Cool and dry’ are not concepts that we naturally associate with the stomach because usually, when a famine is not prevailing, or we are fasting on purpose, the times we are mainly aware of our stomachs are when they are full, warm and moist.

So the first point to understand here is that it is only when it is rather empty that the state of the stomach is cooler and dryer. This is its natural resting place and



the state that it must return to in order to be in good health.

Many digestive difficulties arise when the stomach does not properly empty and return to its cooler and dryer resting state. For example, heartburn, indigestion and reflux are extremely common issues in our society and they all have a shared root - namely food sitting too long in the stomach, fermenting, getting too hot and damp, then spilling over and causing mayhem above or below or both.



The gut is the core terrain of the herbalist, many of our herbs work first and foremostly through the gut and much of our key therapeutic work is with diets to help remove harmful foods so the gut can heal or to promote good nutrition so that vitality can be restored. For some herbalists, learning how to use their hands to not just examine but also treat the gut can give a great further benefit. In fact it can be a powerful ‘medicine’ like no other.

I mention this in this section about the stomach because, if the reader is a student who may plan to do some belly work in their practice then I encourage you to ask your patient to not eat for a good couple of hours before they come to see you, so that the stomach can empty out and return to its

resting state.

Just to be clear, a good herbalist does not have to do any kind of hands-on work to be successful in their practice, nor do they need to do blood tests for that matter, or be up on the latest scientific jargon on herbs or health. Those things, and many others, can certainly be useful, but they are none of them essential.

Our profession is old, really old. We can do without a lot of things and still be good herbalists. All that really matters is to know how to follow the three laws of healing; to do no harm, to treat the cause, to work with the healing intelligence of Nature.

That said, as you are probably already gathering, I encourage my students to get their hands on their patient's bellies if they can. Both to get good at assessing what is happening in the gut by feeling it with their hands and also, potentially, sometimes, for the right person, to be able to do some treatment.

The student may just need to find their way to get past the usual obstacles that come up when a person starts imagining how they could do such a thing. I will say some more about that shortly in a section called 'hands on notes'.

You will feel an entirely different 'terrain' around the upper left quadrant according to how recently a person has eaten. A warmer and more 'moist', i.e. a more fluid feeling under your fingers, when

they have eaten recently is perfectly normal and to be expected. However, if they have not eaten for a couple of hours or more, and you still feel that kind of dampness or fullness, then there is every likelihood that the nourishment phase of their Cycle is stuck, and they will probably have symptoms to support it e.g. signs of poor nutrition in their skin, hair or nails, even if they are eating well. If they have not eaten lately and the stomach is palpably warmer than other areas in their belly then there could well be some gastritis, some inflammation, in the stomach as well.

There are many kinds of issues in the Nourishment phase of the Cycle of Healing, plus another very important spectrum of our emotional health, talked about later, which can be felt as imbalances or ‘blocks’ in this area of the belly. What should feel light and airy can feel heavy and congested. What should be easy to examine can feel resistant and guarded, as if it were protecting itself from further harm.

It takes plenty of practice to be able to feel these things, mainly because you need a good sense of what is baseline normal in order to know when something is out of balance.

In good health, when the stomach is empty and resting, the tissues can be easily moved and felt, there is no resistance, the upper left quadrant will feel cool and airy, with plenty of space.

In a moment, I will ask you to cast your attention into this part of your belly where I think you will likely feel something quite different from the previous inquiries over on the other side, the right side, of the belly. Of course, it may only be subtle, but I would encourage you to be open to the possibility that it could also be very noticeable.

We are moving from the hotter, more Yang, side on the right, over to the cooler, more Yin, side on the left. There is a good chance that you will be able to tune into a shift in the way the energy of the life force moves from one side to the other. You may notice, in the cooler left-side, that there is less rapid movement, more holding in place. The flow of the life force in the belly, the ‘engine-room’ of the body, runs faster and more to the surface on the right, whereas it runs slower and deeper on the left.

Again, don’t worry if you can’t feel any of that the first time, or if what you feel is only very subtle when you first tune into your belly in the upper left quadrant. Take your time in this area, and likewise in the bottom left quadrant that follows next and last. These cooler quadrants of the Cycle of Healing, on the left side of the Map of the Belly, run deep and have a lot to show us if we are willing to stay with the inquiry, and not rush a response, but rather just let it come in its own way, in its own time.

Remember that you are making a two-fold inquiry. One part, assuming you have not too recently filled

your stomach with something warm or moist, is to see if you can sense the nature of what it feels like to be both slightly cooler and slightly dryer in this area, both at the same time.

Then the second part of the inquiry is just very open. You are tuning into your belly and your body. You are willing to feel whatever is there, under the surface of your skin, in this great place of Nourishment. Your body only has one way to communicate with you, through the language of feelings. Now, or whenever you are ready, take some deep breaths and listen to it.



— MAPS OF THE BODY

The lower left Quadrant

COOLER AND DAMPER - RELAXING

This last area for our inquiry and discussion into the Map of the Belly may be the least glamorous but it can be as essential to the health of the body as water is to the health of the land. This is the cooler and damper, lower left quadrant of the belly. This is the area of the Cycle of Healing that relates to Relaxation and it is also the area where the main wastes of our body accumulate before we finally cleanse them from our body.

The student or practitioner who finds the courage or the curiosity to take this further and actually starts feeling their way around more than a few people's bellies will, I predict, find a consistent theme in that this quadrant is also where, for most people, the most trouble is found.



The most trouble means the most congestion, the most blocks and the most, what in Shiatsu are called ‘ashi’ points, meaning the areas of most tenderness. You could look at this from one level and just say that it is because many people have trouble with their bowels, because this lower left quadrant is the area where the descending colon finishes the journey of wastes through the body. That is true, no doubt, but you will also find trouble in this area in a great many people who are not aware of any bowel problems whatsoever but what they do have in their whole body, and what can be most blocking their self-healing Cycle, is excess tension.

The lower left quadrant should be, in good health, like an underground pool. If you tune into this part of the body when it is in good health you can sense how it is quiet, a little cool, and how there is a sense of a kind of ‘pliable dampness’ that is quite relaxed to the touch. However, you may have to examine a few bellies before you get to one that feels this way as a great many people have tissues that are tender in this area, that feel hotter rather than cooler, stiff instead of pliable, tense instead of relaxed.

It is not only excess tension from the whole organism that will reflect in the lower left quadrant, unresolved issues in the other three parts of the Cycle of Healing can end up here too! Problems with cleansing, activation and nourishment all can and will affect the bowel. That ‘underground pool’ receives all the waste, all the unfinished

business, in fact it can and does absorb a great deal, but everything has its limits and it can eventually lose its cool, its quietness, and it can become hot, disturbed, and tense.

If some of this is true for you, and there may be some tension, some unfinished business in this area, then have no fear that you might awaken some sleeping monster by giving it your attention. You will make no issue worse by becoming aware of it. It might temporarily seem worse but that is only because now you are seeing it. That attention is necessary, it will bring the chance for healing, not more chance of disease.

If you feel some tension, or even some subtle soreness, when you bring your focus into the lower left side of your belly then I encourage you to go into it further. To keep breathing, to let it show you how to let it go. This last inquiry is actually the one I would encourage you to take the longest time over, if you need it. Most people have a lot to let go in this area and, when they do, they can get a wonderful restoration of their peace and equilibrium.

Now, or as soon as you feel ready for it, take some deep breaths and bring your attention to the lower left side of your belly. You are seeking to sense the terrain of the cooler and damper elements within your body and you are giving space to feel whatever else there is to feel. Trusting that your body knows how to release its tensions as well as its wastes and all you have to do is nothing, just not get in its way.



— MAPS OF THE BODY

Working with the Belly

HANDS-ON NOTES

I've made a few comments in the above section, directed towards students, encouraging them to be open to using their hands to examine, or even treat their patients. The following are some further notes to support that recommendation.

If you are in practice, or are in training to go into practice, then as part of your process of understanding and assessment, I warmly encourage you to try to find a way to incorporate taking at least a couple of minutes to feel the belly of at least some of the people you work with.

I only say *some* people because one immediate obstacle is that you may just not want to get that up-close and personal with everyone you meet. Nor, you might sometimes feel, could they in any way want you to examine them in such an intimate way either. I teach this method as I have practised it, over a layer of clothing, so being



naked over the belly will not be the issue that it otherwise could be. Nevertheless, it is still a highly vulnerable place to be touched and examined, and plenty of tact and sensitivity is required.

Whether it's you or them that has some resistance to it. Let's be clear about something from the outset of talking more about this, which is that it is always going to be ok to not do it. It is always going to be a choice.

That said, keep an open mind to trying, because if you can get through the main hurdles, namely unfamiliarity and uncertainty, and can make a start with this then, oh my goodness, what a treasure trove of incredibly useful information you will be getting immediate access to!

Just as, with practice, you can learn to read the map of your own belly and so much better understand your own Cycle of Healing, so you can learn how to trust your hands to help you read the map of another person's belly too. Anyone who is working in health care, or who wants to do such work, might appreciate how big a deal such a map-reading ability could be.

That can certainly be enough, just to examine, not to treat. It is highly beneficial to get good at examining the belly with a view to both better feel what is going on in terms of digestive health as well as to possibly also get a sense of what the Map of their Belly could be showing us. Those tactile impressions

and that information can do a lot to guide good treatment choices and, for many years now, that is as far as I take it in my own work.

However, if you are working with people, and you have already come as far as examining their belly, you also have a choice to take it a step further and do some treatment. It could be, for some people, something rather magical, rather extraordinary, to set an intention to help that person to release their blocks and aid their healing by doing some treatment over their belly with your hands.

I do not personally think that a great deal of technical training in this area is a good idea. No doubt others, especially those who have done advanced courses in hands-on therapies, would disagree with me about that. But we are not trying to take the place of a massage therapist, or any other type of dedicated physical therapist in the kind of work I am encouraging a herbalist in training to think about picking up here.

Of course, it is always better to learn these things in person, but the essence of the technique, as I teach it in our workshops, is so simple that it can be written down in a few paragraphs. Then, exactly like everything else about Constitutional medicine, what is simple in theory branches into enormous complexity in practice, and it is in that practice where you learn what



matters, and what works.

Firstly, before I describe the treatment technique, even if you are only planning to just examine someone's belly, then your first job is just to get them as comfortable as possible whilst lying on their back. For most people that means making sure their head is supported under a pillow or cushion whilst also putting some kind of a bolster, or rolled up towel, under their knees.

Then, your second job is to empty your mind as much as you can and start practising feeling around the belly with your hands to get as much information as you possibly can through the great and powerful sense of touch that you were already born with, and certainly don't need extra training to use.

The first few times you do this, you will presumably need to revise where is what in both the anatomy of the belly as well as the Constitutional Map of the Belly because it won't be ingrained enough to be automatic. Just see those as training rounds and don't worry too much if you only got subconscious impressions.

However, once you are through the hardest phase of this, which of course is always in the beginning, you can much better empty your mind and just feel what your hands can tell you. Then, once you have some clear signals you can switch your mind back on in order to reverse engineer your impressions

with all kinds of useful information having now literally come from your fingertips. You can make connections to their constitution, their symptoms and their Cycle of Healing.

Now, for that brave person who wants to try to treat. What do you do and how do you start?

You start in the exact same way as you would for the above steps. Get them comfortable and have a feel around in a spirit of inquiry. Empty your mind of what you are supposed to be able to tell and don't worry about what is where and where is what. Just tune into your fingertips and the palm of your hands and try to feel as much as you can by having a feel.

You are going towards something in a true spirit of inquiry. *What is going on here and what can I feel?* I think you will be surprised at how natural and easy this becomes when you aren't trying to follow a rule book to do it 'right'. We all have a great deal of intuition ready to use as soon as we give it a chance to exist but you won't be able to tune into that intuition if you are in a state of stress about whether you are doing it right or not! We don't examine our students in this process so the only person who would be imposing that stress is the person doing the examination themselves. It's not necessary to worry about getting this side of things right, just drop that and hold on to the intention of the inquiry instead - *'What is going on here and what can I feel?'*

After having a feel around, the next step to begin a therapeutic process is to simply get your breathing in sync with the patient, or whatever you want to call them, because if you are practising this with your partner or a friend then you can hardly call them your patient.

Breathing out as they breathe out and breathing in as they breathe in is also much easier than you might think. To quickly and easily do this, keep both hands or at least one hand just resting lightly on their abdomen, in the centre and above where you think their belly button is likely to be. Their belly will rise and fall, at least a little bit, as they breathe in and out so, even if you can't hear them or see them breathing, you will still be able to match your breath to theirs through what you can feel under your one or two hands.



You have already started a therapeutic process by this point. Laying your hands on someone's belly and breathing with them is already a powerful healing method in many cultures. For the person who is open to Energy or Spiritual healing, whatever you want to call it, this may even be as far as you want to take it and all you want to do, and

that would be totally fine.

My only advice to you in that case would be to talk to the recipient about what you are doing. Don't leave it to their imagination. Tell them what your intention is before you do it, tell them what it is that you are hoping will happen. Invite them to ask questions so you can easily see if they want you to talk more about it. By talking to them, and also asking their permission to do such work, you are helping them to allow you to help them.

Talking about what you are doing is especially important for men. If you are doing any kind of treatment to them with your hands, be sure to talk to them and tell them what you are doing or what you are about to do. No doubt this will be just as important for many women too. Talking will put many people's minds at rest so they can trust you and therefore let go of their guard so you can help them release some blocks. It may be very good to eventually do such work in silence but only when that quietness has become very comfortable for both sides and you cannot know that they are ready for that level of intensity unless they are somehow communicating it to you.

Many people can benefit from a person connecting to them in such a way. I think that even many more will benefit even further if you take some further steps and do some actual treatment over the belly as well. This is very simple and easy to learn.

These are the steps:

Again, be sure to get in sync with the breathing before you start but you may only need to do that ‘getting in sync’ process for one or two breaths before you could go to the next stage. You will drop the thread of matching your breathing to theirs as soon as you go on to the next step but that doesn’t matter and you pick it up again at the final stage.

The first stage, as we have discussed earlier, is the examination phase. You have had a feel around, you have taken in some impressions of the terrain of the gut and the Map of the Belly.

The second stage is what we have just been talking about. It is getting in sync with their breathing while you have one or two hands on their upper belly, this stage can be just for a breath or two or, but it could be for much longer if it felt like the right kind of ‘treatment’ to be doing.

The third stage, if you go that far, is to do some very simple clockwise massage (starting in the bottom right quadrant) that goes around like a wide horseshoe up and over and finishing in the bottom left quadrant. So you start in their bottom right hand side of their belly, close to where their hip bone is, then you move up their right hand side to just under their ribs, then you go over the top part of their belly,

still under the ribs, and then come down their left hand side to finish in the bottom left quadrant.

The massage technique is not important. You can do back and forth, or circular, or a wave-like heel of the palm rocking up to the fingers type motion, or something else, or any combination of the above. Don't get caught up in what is the right technique. You will have to try a few methods out before you start finding hand-holds and techniques that suit you and feel good to use. The main thing is not to make a 'pointy pressure' at this stage, that comes next!

Firstly, we need to loosen up the tissues. I call this 'tilling the soil before planting the seeds'. You are turning over the earth of the belly. Rocking it and kneading it with lots of your palm and your fingers being in contact with the belly at the same time. In many ways, the more of your hand you have in contact at one time the better. The lack of a pointed pressure means they can relax with the movement but you also have to be careful not to move too quickly. Slow, spread out and as firm or as gentle as they need.

How can you tell how firm or gentle to go? It mostly just takes practice. At first you won't have a clue. You will probably be too gentle but that won't hurt anyone. You practise tuning in to the person, listening to their breathing, feeling for when they tense up in any way. If you go too strong and hurt

someone a little bit then they will surely let you know one way or another. You might want to start by keeping some peripheral vision on their face, because they will probably wince if you go too hard.

This stage sounds like there is a lot you have to be careful not to do, but it is much easier than you could ever realise without actually doing it a few times. It probably only needs about a minute or so to do. A minute is longer than it sounds when you are doing this kind of work. I wouldn't worry about timing it and neither would I worry about how many times you should go around the horseshoe. Once, twice, five times? The main thing is just to feel that you have loosened things up enough to get to the next stage, which is where the main action happens.

It is in this next and final stage where you can do some very powerful medicine if you set your mind to it. The previous stages were mostly to prepare for this. This is when it is now essential that you get back in sync with their breathing.

So, again, simply lay one or two hands on their upper belly and breathe with them until you're fully in sync. Now you are going to use pressure points to help them to release the blocks in their belly and so also help to release blocks to their Cycle of Healing. There is every chance that you have already felt where at least one or two of those blocks are when you went through the examination phase. You

may also have felt them further when you did the massage preparation.

There will almost always be work to do in the lower left quadrant, but I guarantee, in any but the young and truly trouble-free child, that it will not be the only place that you find sore, tender, imbalanced troubles and blocks.

Now bring your hand, or hands, to any area that you felt a block and, staying entirely in tune with their breathing as you do this, press in as they breathe out, and release the pressure as they breathe in. It is usual to need to do this at least 3 times in each area, but sometimes, perhaps often, your instinct may tell you to stay longer. You can feel that they are still letting go and that they need more time, let them have it!

Eventually, you learn by instinct to know how many fingers to use, or whether to use more of the whole hand. The key point to remember is that you breathe with them so you get the exact right timing. When they are breathing in you release almost all the pressure, but when they breathe out, you press into the troubled area as firmly as you need for there to be a release.

For some people that level will be much more or less than others but it gets enormously easier to feel the exact right amount of pressure to use as you practise tuning in to the person, which breathing in sync with them goes a long way to help, and start

trusting what your hands are showing you. Your hands, your heart, your instincts will not just show you where the blocks and tensions are, but also just what it takes to help them to let go and how it feels when they do.

I loved doing this work very much, perhaps I will have time to do it again when I have trained enough herbalists in my own city to not have to be so busy myself. In the meanwhile, for those patients who especially need this treatment, I refer them to my daughter Danielle, who through practice and intention, has magic hands for this kind of work and many people would now attest to how as little as one or two or treatments with her have been of extraordinary benefit to their own healing journey.

Hara work, belly work, is usually gentle work. Meditative, spiritual, highly connected and intensely energy-focused. It is not hard on the practitioner so long as the patient is ready for it and receptive to it.

Of course, it is not for everyone, I would never think to do this kind of work with a person who wasn't ready for it or with someone that I didn't want to get so close to but, when the time is right and the person is ready, it can be a true medicine, as true as any, and I warmly encourage the reader who is going deeply into these matters to consider going a lot further with it themselves.

— MAPS OF THE BODY

Constitutional Connections

The following notes are for the person who may or may not want to do any kind of hands-on treatment but would certainly like to know more about using the Map of the Belly to do a hands-on examination over the belly when they meet with a person.



I may not personally have had time to do Hara (belly) treatments but I've certainly kept examining a great many Maps of the Belly nonetheless! It has been fascinating to see how the Constitutional and Cycle of Healing patterns reflect in this Map, it is how I have learned most of what I have to share here.

The lower right hand side of the belly is where Cleansing is focused in the Cycle of Healing, and it is also the hotter and damper territory of the Tiger. The person from the Tiger constitution is likely to

have plenty going on in this, their home-quadrant at the bottom right. Their natural disposition to being hotter and damper means that this area can become an especially steamy jungle with various manifestations in digestion or metabolism that can follow. As mentioned, if that excess heat and dampness reach a certain point of intensity then they rise up and spill over into the upper-right liver quadrant, which should by rights be airy and dry but can easily become congested and damp, particularly in the Tiger. If you can feel this with your hands, and/or there are signs and symptoms in the health picture that confirm it, then Cleansing herbs and some kind of a cleansing diet will be highly appropriate and probably extremely effective at helping whatever else is going wrong. .

That's the first-aid, the typical primary steps, and also as mentioned, often all that needs to be done. But do you remember the interesting 'across the poles' phenomenon in the section of the Cycle of Healing? The first area that the Tiger might need to deal with may relate to cleansing, but many have a much deeper challenge and a longer journey to find harmony with their nourishment. The quadrant that relates to Nourishment in the Map of the Belly is in the upper left area, and it is diagonally across the pole from the Cleansing side of the spectrum in the lower right.

Many Tigers have issues here, ones that cannot be simply resolved by a cleansing diet and some liver

herbs alone. Again, I encourage the practitioner or student who is drawn to go deeper into these old ways to practise feeling what their hands can tell them by carefully examining the belly of their patients.

You don't have to come up with a name for what you feel and nor would I suggest you need to talk about it too much either. . You are just feeling in the way of a listener. You are wanting to take in what is going on so you can better understand where the person is blocked in their own self-healing process.

Those subtle impressions, that sense of things, may well lead you to intuitively think of one or more herbal remedies that might help. I couldn't tell you the number of times that a herb just came to me when i was examining a belly or feeling a pulse. I feel that the body, as the part of Nature that it is, knows what it wants and needs and is seeking to communicate that to us in any way it can find.

Whilst you are still learning about herbs and are developing your sense of trust in them as well as your intuition about them, If you have one or more herbs that come to mind then, with the method called 'pulse-testing' you could test that herb or those herbs by talking with, and listening to, the intelligence of the body. The how-to of that is described [here](#).



The upper right hand side of the belly is also on the hotter side but it is naturally dryer rather than damper and this is Eagle territory. It is also the home of Activation in the Cycle of Healing and many important processes of change and transformation in the body. I will talk about this more in the section on Emotional Healing in relation to the Constitutions but this is the area where our energetic ‘fire’ is most concentrated in the body. At least that’s where that fire should be concentrated.

Many people get a lot of heat here but instead of it moving freely and charging the body with vitality, it becomes like a damp smouldering fire that releases a lot of smoke but not much energy. Liver congestion is an enormous problem in our world. Not only because of diet, drugs and pollution either. A lot of emotional issues end up clogging up the system in this area and any herbalist in training or practice will do well to build their practice with palpating around the upper right quadrant to feel when the liver needs some love.

Even though this upper right quadrant is the home of the Eagle, it is Tigers who have much more trouble with getting damp congestion in it and so

needing actual liver cleansing herbs. The much more common issue that you will feel when this area is out of balance for the Eagle is that it just stops feeling so warm! It gets cooler than it ought to be and it is exactly when it does this that you may be almost certain that the Eagle is now moving into fatigue or exhaustion from being aloft and activated for too long.

I know I keep saying this but you just need to know and accept that it is going to take plenty of practice to be able to feel when this area is cooler than it should be. Because how could you know unless you had felt a lot of normal ones beforehand? The immediate problem with a lot of what you can tell from hands-on examination is that most people have plenty of imbalances in their Map of the Belly. Therefore where is the healthy baseline to compare against? I'm afraid that the main answer to that is that it really is just a matter of practice.

In the meanwhile, an Eagle who is losing their metabolic fire will probably have some physical symptoms that they will have told you about so you may already have some expectation going in that will guide you further to check and double check. Aside from whatever a medium level normal might feel like, you should know that this upper right should be the hottest part of the belly in any person. So if it feels cooler than other areas in their own belly then you may be able to get your feedback that way. Yes, you can feel relative coolness or heat from

the abdomen through a layer of clothing. It just takes, you guessed it, practice.

Also in practice, if you are examining an Eagle, then you may very well find plenty of blocks and imbalances in the area across the pole from their home territory, namely the lower left, cooler and damper quadrant, This is a frequently troubled area in the Eagle constitution. Whether they have bowel problems or not, if you can feel that this area is tender, swollen, stagnant or sore, then you will be getting every clue you need.

I have to say, how much benefit some hands on relaxing breathing and pressure point therapy could give here is hard to overestimate. People can be incredibly good at tying their knots tighter but they really struggle to let go of their patterns of tension by themselves. In any case, with whatever else might help, focusing on whatever methods and herbs might help a person to let go and land could do a great deal to help them start healing from whatever condition brought them to see you.

If you are learning herbal medicine, as you take impressions from what they tell you, plus you have taken impressions from the look of their tongue and the feel of their pulse, plus now the many impressions you will receive from what an examination of their belly can tell, you may very well start getting some good hunches about their Constitutional and Cycle of Healing needs and so

may be getting some instincts about what herbs might particularly suit them.

Especially whilst learning and gaining confidence with herbs, it would only be a matter of a few moments to then test those hunches out with some double-blinded pulse testing. Double blind pulse testing is where you select a small handful of herbs in tincture form, I would suggest no more than six, which have already been placed in little sample bottles with droppers that you could have in a drawer or somewhere out of the way most of the time. You select from your hunches and then shuffle the bottles with their labels facing away from both you and the patient so you really don't know, and of course they don't know which one is which. Then one by one, without knowing which one you are testing, you give a drop or two to the mouth with one hand whilst feeling the pulse before, during and after with the other hand to feel how it reacts. We do a lot of practice in this method in the immersive workshops and it is brilliant to see how quickly people can get fluent and confident with this method, and how remarkably accurate and consistent it is for the wisdom of the body to know which remedy it most needs and which it actually really doesn't want. Doing it double-blind really brings the magic of it out into the open, it's somewhat stunning.

We are over to the left side, the cooler side of the belly now, and our immediate hurdle to overcome in doing a belly examination is that, whilst your hotties will, by and large, be quite easy to examine and ready to be examined, many people from the cooler constitutions are going to be trickier propositions.



The cooler, more inward nature of both the EB and the Bear means that they have a lot going on under the surface and, however conscious of it they may be, the area of their belly is where a lot of their difficult feelings are being held. Feelings that are quite possibly rather private and largely hidden from the world.

What I am about to say may be a little jarring to hear, at least until you've had time to process it or see it in action. It is to not ask but tell. If you start by asking, '*would it be ok if I got you up on the table so I could examine your belly?*' You are giving them a choice and therefore a sense that this is something that they might want to say no to.

Of course, without doubt, people should have the choice as to whether someone can touch them or not. In the normal world of human interaction that choice is sacrosanct and you would never dream

of telling someone instead of asking them if you could touch them. However, the space that you create to meet a person with the intention to help them is a sacred space. You will be working to a law that begins with *primum non nocere*, to firstly do no harm. If you were a student of our institute who was training to become a herbalist then at some point you would swear a sacred oath in front of your peers that, amongst other promises, includes that you will hold everything you hear or learn about someone in the course of your work in the utmost confidence. When you are working in that space, with those intentions, there is no benefit in giving a person room for worry and doubt by asking them if you can examine them. It is much easier on them to simply and respectfully say something like ‘*come on over to the table and lie down so I can examine you*’ and then take things from there, making them as comfortable as you can before you begin. Forgive me if, even with the explanation about the why, it still feels jarring to see it written out like that, but once you have done this in practice you will see why I say it. They will not feel any lack of respect from you when you guide their steps in this way, it will help them to trust you and that will be very important when you are going to examine them in such a personal and sensitive part of their body.

EBs will typically have a lot going on in their belly, especially in their home territory in the top left quadrant, the region of Nourishment and across the pole in their lower right quadrant, the region of

Cleansing. I don't want to say too much about what to expect, because it is better to go into this with an open mind, and very little by way of expectation, but rather just to say to take your time. Be especially conscious that there may be some 'guarding' that you will need to get through to really feel what is going on. The way to get past that guarding, which you can feel as a layer of surface tension that makes it really hard to feel what is going on underneath, is to a) not rush and b) tune your breathing into theirs so you are breathing in when they breathe in and out when they breathe out.

I have worked with a lot of EBs in my career. Sometimes it happens quickly and sometimes it takes all the way till near the end of the appointment, but I have found that there is a point where you quite visibly see that they have decided to trust you. Their whole face opens up with it. It is really quite a remarkable thing to see, very like watching a butterfly open its wings, and that now you are seeing them as they really are for the first time. I think that is also true in general life that it is very common that it is only the closest people to the EB who see what they are really like. The world just sees the formidable Elephant, only those who are very close may get to see the very beautiful, and sensitive, Butterfly.

If you are working with an EB and you don't feel that you have seen beyond the chrysalis, if you don't get those lovely intuitions for which herbs to

try or what path of healing to support. If you have done your best but feel that things have not really connected and so you feel unsure if you can help, then please remember what I am telling you right now. That you are not alone and that I had exactly those feelings many times with many EBs. I would always check myself first to see if I could have done something differently. So I begin by being open to hearing if my conscience needs to prick me about something I need to practise better. However, if all that was all clear, then I could see that it was simply that they hadn't decided to trust me yet.

It's very few and far between that it happens now, because nearly everyone that comes to see me has been recommended by someone they already trust, but it certainly used to happen. All I would say is to do your best, keep it simple and invite them to come back if they choose. All relationships are built on trust, including the therapeutic relationship. If it takes them more than one visit to choose to trust you then that's totally fine. You will know it, and see it, when it happens.

I already mentioned how IBS, irritable bowel syndrome, could be called irritable Bear syndrome. Its classic form, starting in late teens or early 20s, only really ever happens to Bears.



Not as much as EBs, but some Bears are also prone to guarding, so you might need to take your time with the belly examination. You may need to tune into their breathing and help them to relax a little before you will really be able to feel what is going on in their gut, but there surely will be a lot going on.

Bears are the constitution that puts their feelings into their gut more than any other. You will feel all kinds of energy in the belly of a Bear. Energy means emotions, feelings, the substance of the spirit in the flesh.

It isn't helpful, or accurate, to judge it as being good or bad. Yes it can cause all kinds of strife when it gets stuck, but we are not trying to get rid of that energy, of those feelings, we are just trying to help them to flow more easily, for the Cycle to turn freely, and not get stuck.

I am sure there must be trouble-free Bears out there with perfectly healthy and stress-free guts

but I obviously don't meet them in practice. I have always found that there is a lot going on, especially in the home territory of the Bear in the lower left quadrant, the area of Relaxation in theory, but stress in practice.

Ashi points (tender spots), and swollen, hot or sore areas, or even just subtle sensations under your hands will tell you, in no uncertain terms if you are willing to listen, that these are troubled waters.

Then the further great challenge for the Bear, over in the upper right quadrant, the area of Activation, is where you should especially allow your hands to linger in this Constitution. To see what you can feel and pick up, perhaps to open your intuition to what herbs could help them in different ways. Including to possibly make better friends with, and channel, the inner fire that is the perennial challenge of the Bear to come to terms with.

I wrote earlier that, from my own training and practice, and then in the method I teach in workshops for both the examination and treatment of the belly, that we leave a layer of clothing over the skin. I also mentioned that I refer my patients who are ready for, and especially need, this kind of treatment to my daughter, herself now a medical herbalist. Just to add here that she has evolved some wonderful treatments using herbal compresses and creams that allow her to bring herbal medicines directly onto the skin of the belly

in a way that is obviously deeply healing for people.

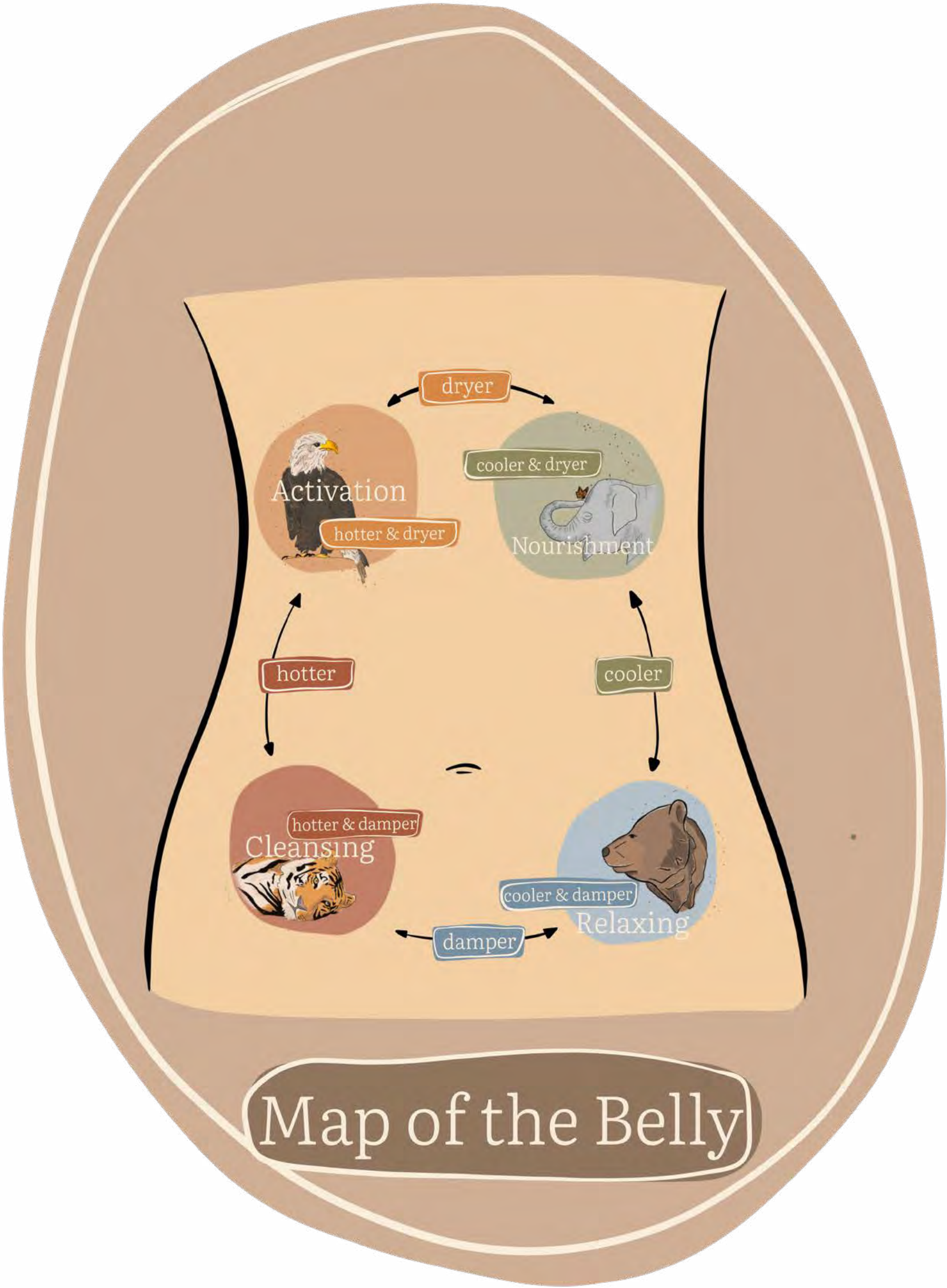
I am sure I have sent more Bear constitutions than any other to her, because by and large they get the toughest challenges in their belly health. Danielle does the massage preparation and the pressure point releases as I talked about earlier, and then she adds another layer with giving compresses or creams etc. and then even one more layer for most people where she covers them up and talks with them while they relax, using guided imagery or meditation techniques to help them to connect to their stuff in a way that brings understanding, insights, acceptance and healing.

She gets phenomenal results with it all.

Again, I highly recommend any herbalist in training to consider getting into such work. It can be an extraordinarily powerful form of medicine to help people. And, I have to say, Danielle clearly gets a lot of joy from doing this work. She is extremely green-thumbed and I think the hara work lifts her spirits in a similar way to how working in her garden makes her feel. She is a gardener of the human belly.



MAP OF THE BELLY



— MAPS OF THE BODY

The Map of the Spine



This is the second of the two maps that I wish to present to you, for your interest, for your experimentation, possibly for another method to better understand and help others.

The Map of the Spine is the same in principle to the Map of the Belly, with each area of the spine having its own section that connects to, and influences, the one next to it but, unlike the belly where there is an obvious circling cycle around the abdomen, to grasp the way the Map of the Spine works with a necessary accuracy from the beginning I will ask you to contemplate an ancient archetype, that of the serpent eating its own tail!

It is a provocative image but there is a great truth embedded in it, one that at least some of our ancestors were well aware of, as this image occurs through a number of different cultures and old mythologies.

The archetypal image of the snake eating its own tail not only shows the cycle of life and death, creation and destruction on a cosmic scale, it also shows something that is within everyone one of us, something that has an abundant, powerful energy inside it that moves both up and down, in a cyclical manner, through the very core of our central nervous system. It is the thick, vital, snake-like cable of our spinal column, that which innervates our entire body, and that which is housed and protected within the strong and movable bones of our spine.

The self-healing intelligence, the life force, the energy within the Cycle of Healing and within the body moves both up and down the spine and it can also leap a kind of synaptic cleft to go from either side between the very base of the spine and the very top of the spine; the serpent eating its tail.

Surely, you have not stumbled on to my work as your first exposure to ideas about health and healing. You have already seen some of the depth and complexity of the multitude of ideas out in the world on the subject of human health, close to us as it is. So many words, so much theory, I think we must keep an open mind but we must also wish to find the truth and to recognise the simple fact that to find the truth you have to be prepared to search for it. In this matter I say what many others say too, that the search must start within.

So, in a few moments, I will exhort you to experiment, to take this beyond a theory and into the most important practice of testing it out to see if it is true for you. It is only from there that anything of lasting value can come.



— MAPS OF THE BODY

Sacrum & Coccyx

CLEANSING - HOT & DAMP

In the most interesting challenge of learning the map of the body in how it reflects in the spine, I suggest starting at the base, the very base, which is where our Sacrum resides and then, even further, at the very last segment, the part of the spine known as the Coccyx, aka the ‘tail-bone’.



These lowest sections of the spine are the deep, dark jungle of Tiger territory, it is where the energy of the spine is at its most hot and damp, it is where the energy of Cleansing is centred in the Cycle of Healing, and it is where a most important emotional ‘dark-friend’ has its home in the basement of the body.

I will come to talk more about that soon, but if you

will learn this and use the knowledge for good, then in just a moment I will ask you to close your eyes and, even if it just for a few breaths, allow your attention to go down, all the way down to what is, in Eastern terms, called your ‘base chakra’.

In fact, our creative energy, our sexual energy and in many ways therefore our spiritual energy starts here. All those energies, those ‘forces’ are all deeply aligned and are just different aspects of the same primordial, hot and damp soup that is centred in the base of the spine. A great many problems come into our lives when we fight against this part of ourselves and, for many people who are caught up in their thinking conscious minds as the constant centre of their awareness and identity, nothing could be further away from who they might perceive themselves to be than the raw, deep, primal energy that centres in the base of the spine.

It may be that this is an area that you have only been aware of when it has been associated with discomfort, because low back pain is an extremely common phenomenon, especially as people age. If that is the case for you then you may feel some resistance to bringing your attention to your low back, but the inquiry you are about to make cannot do harm. If you have any challenging feelings come up then they will be there for good reason, just keep breathing and focusing your attention and they will not harm you but rather will almost certainly soon shift or dissolve.



Once you allow your attention to come deep into the lowest parts of your back, without critical thought, you can feel what our ancient ancestors knew and passed on to subsequent generations. That the base of the spine is a true source of energy. It is warm, damp, and very much alive. It is good to allow yourself to sometimes centre here, to understand that this too, is you. To own it and accept it.

Now, or as soon as you are ready, close your eyes, focus on your breathing and bring your awareness all the way down to the base of your spine for at least just a few breaths. Allow yourself to feel the heat and dampness, or ‘density’ that exists there. Allow yourself to feel whatever it has to show you. It is you.

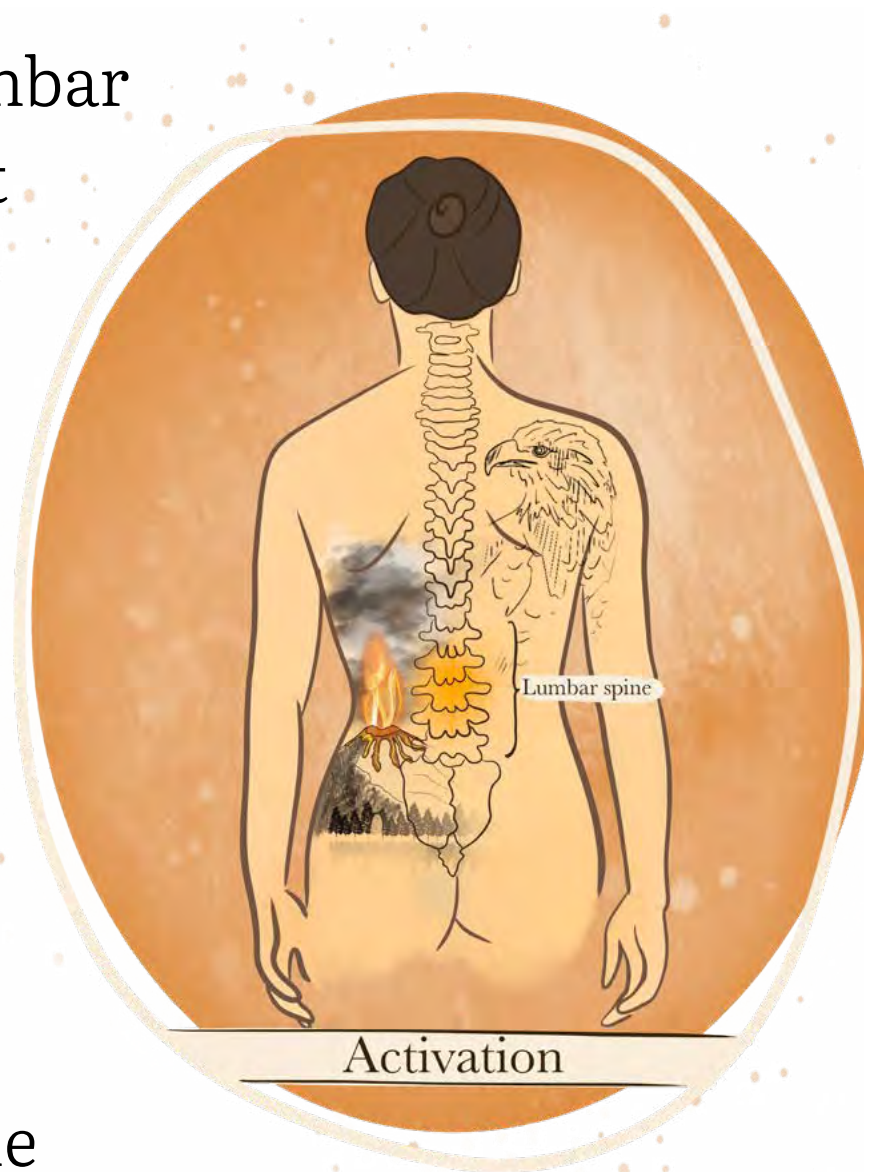


— MAPS OF THE BODY

Lumbar Spine

ACTIVATING - HOT & DRY

The next area up is the lumbar spine. This is the area that supports and enables a great deal of the fire of transformation of the belly. This is the area that corresponds to Activation. It relates to the liver area at the top right quadrant in the Map of the Belly. The energy of the lumbar spine is powerful, potent. The strongest and thickest bones of the spine are here. This is the part that supports the upper body, this is the area that is like a root of a tree.



This is also Eagle territory, hotter and dryer, and in good health it supports power, freedom, independence, If the colour that associates to the base of the spine is red, then the colours that associate to the lumbar level are orange and yellow. The energy and colours of the sun and the energy and colours of sunrise and sunset.

Life is movement and the energy of ‘activation’ concentrates that movement in the lumbar spine just as it concentrates it in the liver. Hotter and dryer energy is like that of fire, it changes things, it moves them from one state to another. The heat creates the outward, upward, expansive energy, the dryness, like air and wind, gives it movement, freedom.



The energy centre in the lumbar spine needs to run hot and dry, like a fire, to be unobstructed. In good health it is a source of great power for change and ‘activation’. However, in poor health, problems here can bring a person to a halt just about faster than anything. Imbalances can happen along the constitutional spectrums in characteristic ways. The area can become overheated, in other words inflamed. Or it can become over-dry and depleted, so the disks become too thin and lose their elasticity. Or it can become too cool or damp or both, where the kidneys and other organs that receive their nervous energy from the lumbar spine become congested and the fire of digestion and metabolism becomes quenched.

We are about to do a thought experiment to try to better feel the elements and the energy of this key area but I realise that most people are not used to bringing their awareness into this part of their

bodies in this way and, either they may have some trouble there now that has been lurking under their conscious awareness or, if their connection with this part of their spine in the past has only been when there has been pain or stiffness, then there may be a discomfoting echo of that previous experience at the start of the experiment.

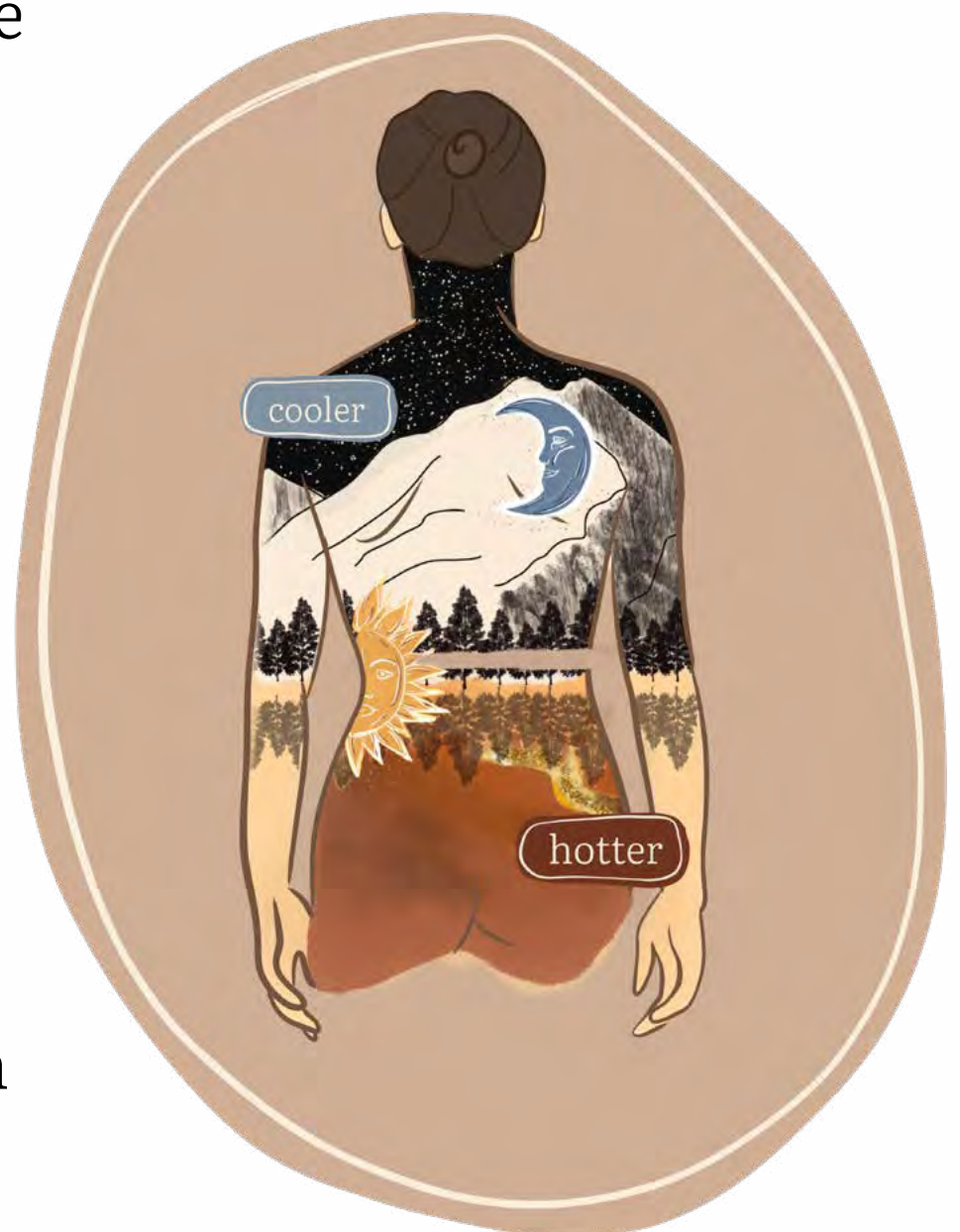
If that happens to you, then all you have to do is to just keep breathing and keep going. You can entirely trust that any increased awareness of past or present troubles in this area will only ultimately be healing, not at all harmful. If there is work to do here, to strengthen, to cleanse, to reduce inflammation or to increase heat and activity, then you will need to know about that and your body will be wanting to show you as clearly as it can what it needs.

In a few moments, I will ask you to allow your attention to explore the feeling of this part of your spine. This is the place that your upper body rests on, beneath your naval, under your belt. With a quiet mind and not rushing to make it happen, I think you may be able to feel how there is a constantly moving and flowing energy in this area. The moving fire element of it could be described as being like a great flow of lava from a volcano through a narrow canal where molten rock flows fast and deep, but can also move both ways, up and down. The energy in this area is free-flowing, turbulent and dynamic.

Now, or whenever you are ready, close your eyes, focus on your breathing and bring your awareness all the way to underneath your belly, but above your hips. Try to stay here for at least a few breaths to feel the natural heat and then even see if you can feel the sense of space that opens up around this area that represents its inherent nature to be more dry. Ideally, your inquiry will give you a sense of the energy of Activation, of heat and dryness. However subtly the sense of that may come, have a look, and then give a few moments more to connect with this vital part of your body and allow yourself to feel whatever it has to show you. Because it is you.

HOTTER BELOW - COOLER ABOVE

The first two areas we have been exploring have both been hot. Hot and damp in the basement of the sacrum and coccyx, hot and dry in the ground floor of the lumbar spine. In the Map of the Belly, the Constitutional energies are damper below and dryer above. In the Map of the Spine, the Constitutional energies are



hotter below and cooler above.

Before going into the remaining two cooler territories of the spine, I want to teach you some key concepts about the Map of the Spine on an experiential level.

It would be great if you could do this with a willing participant so, if by chance you have someone like that nearby you then now would be a good time to tell them to get ready to lie on their front in a couple of minutes so that you can do some experiments on them!

If there is no-one suitable for the job right now then the next best thing will be to use your imagination and if that is what you will be doing then get ready to do a thought experiment where you are both lying face down on a bed, or massage table, or comfortably on the floor and, at the same time, someone else (you can imagine it is you again if that makes it simplest) will be putting both of ‘their’ hands on your back to be able to do the experiment.


So, whether it is with someone else or, right now, feeling it for yourself, the ‘trick’ is to be aware of the ‘two hills’ at the same time and then to become aware of the ‘two valleys’ at the same time.

The ‘two hills’ are the rising curves of your spine at the sacrum, the lowest part, and the thoracic spine, the mid-back. The ‘two valleys’ are the inward curves of your spine at the lumbar spine and then at

your neck, the cervical spine.

Remember the poles that I talked about a lot earlier on and how significant they are when you are working with constitutional medicine. The poles are activation to relaxation and cleansing to nourishment. Energetically they are hot and dry (activation) to cool and damp (relaxation) and hot and damp (cleansing) to cool and dry (nourishment). Many, many people who have a core issue in their self-healing cycle on one of those poles will eventually need work on the other. They intimately affect each other, relate to each other and potentially block each other.

When you have your attention on, or your hand on, the lowest part of the spine, the 'hill' of the sacrum, and you then hold a dual attention, or your second hand, on the mid-part of the back, the long 'hill' of the thoracic spine, you are feeling or holding the pole of cleansing to nourishment; hot and damp equals the cleansing quadrant at the base hill around the sacrum, cool and dry equals the nourishment quadrant at the higher hill around the mid and upper back.



When you have your attention, or your hand, on the 'valley' of the lumbar spine, and at the same time you have your attention, or your hand, on the longer valley of the cervical spine of the neck, you are feeling or holding the pole of activation to relaxation; hot and

dry equals activation at the base valley where the lumbar spine is, cool and damp equals relaxation at the higher valley where the cervical spine of the neck is.

Many very interesting experiences and realisations can come from becoming aware of these maps, both for yourself through internal reflection, and certainly by tuning in and being open to what the map of another's body can tell you.

As mentioned earlier, not all herbalists will want to do hands-on work with people and they certainly should not believe that they need to in order to become or be good herbalists. But there are many advantages to learning how to read the map of the body through feeling the belly and/or the back with your hands.

Remember, you don't have to 'treat' the person, of course it might be nice if you did, and certainly there are some marvellous herbal creams, compresses, poultices etc, that you can place over the belly or over the spine, and there are truly some very powerful hands-on methods that you can use to help release tensions and troubles that are easy to learn, simple to practice, and profoundly effective. It is however, entirely ok to just have a feel, not to try to do anything more than to try to get a better sense, a more intuitive sense, of what is going on than you can by only talking, asking questions, and listening.

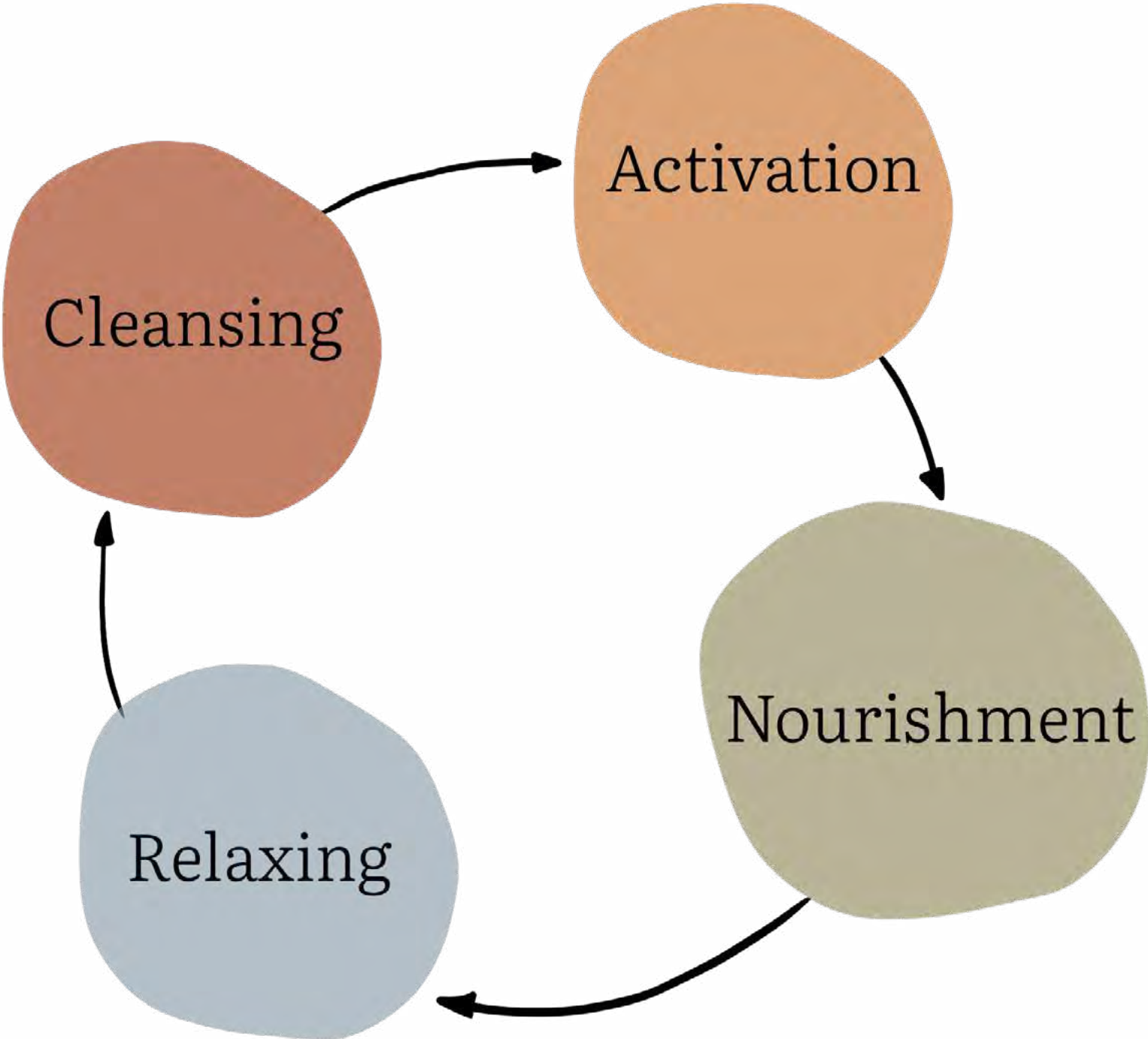
One of the best things about having any sort of massage table in your consulting room, which is presumably and hopefully just in a room in your house so you can get going with all of this without any stress or fuss, is that once you have committed these few very simple principles of which part of the body relates to what from memory, which really does not need to take very long or be very hard, then you can put your hands on the belly or the back and allow your mind to somewhat empty out, so that your heart, and your hands, and your own inner intelligence, can really listen.

That emptying out the mind so that the heart can open idea is, by the way, very much the essence of my teaching on the arts of reading the Map of the Tongue and the Pulse, a highly related subject to the material being presented here and also something I have a detailed chapter about on my site.

The key point I make there and repeat here is that the essence of the great art of reading such maps is to empty your mind and open your heart. These are spiritual matters, sorry if that is a loaded word for you, but how else can I put it? The self-healing intelligence of all living things is as much a soul as it is anything else, a spirit, a soul, a life-force, a mystery. Trying to understand it, let alone work with it, only through the intellect and reductionist thinking is simply doomed to fail. Whereas emptying your mind and opening your heart has every potential to get you where you need to go.

Perhaps it takes a leap of faith, which is an even more loaded word, to trust that you could feel another person's body and sense things through your hands that aren't physical but are real nonetheless. Ok, so some trust or even faith is required, and so what is there to lose by trying to take a leap of it? Or even what is there to lose in trying many times, because there is no question about one thing, which is that all of this gets enormously easier with practice.

I do think it is tremendously helpful to have some core principles to get started though, e.g. what does it mean to be hotter or cooler, and dryer or damper? What does it mean to be blocked in a Cycle of Healing between nourishment, cleansing, activation or relaxation. But then from those core principles, the goal is not to be stuck in an analytical thinking, judgemental zone of trying to get the right answer but rather being relaxed with complexity, and therefore accepting uncertainty, and so allowing the body, which could certainly be your own body, or the body of the person you are seeking to care for, to talk to you, which it loves to do, through a variety of methods and 'maps'.

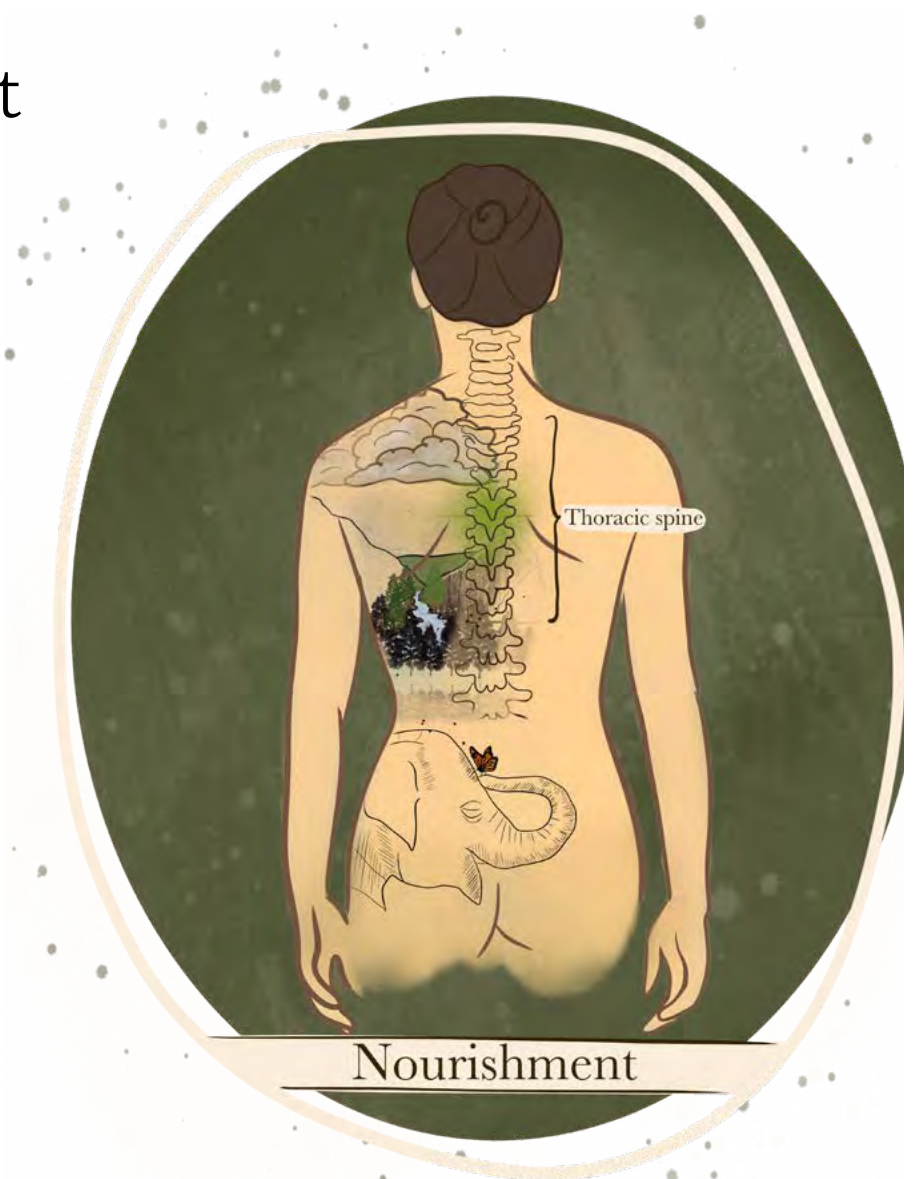


— MAPS OF THE BODY

Thoracic Spine

NOURISHMENT - COOL & DRY

Let's come back to the next section of the spine, the longest by far, which is fitting given how very long a journey it truly can be to find and achieve nourishment. The cooler and dryer energy of the cycle of healing is centred in this long hill of the thoracic spine and there are many areas here that can suffer drought, or even starvation.



Complications in this area cause great strain and trouble to those most essential organs of our survival, the heart and lungs. The colour that relates to this area is green, the many shades of green; green for life, for sustenance, for nourishment.

Later in this work I am going to teach you a very simple but beautiful technique to learn how to literally listen to your heart. This whole area of the

spine, and what it represents, has an incredibly diverse range of ways to both connect and heal with its branching, reaching energy.

For now, so long as you are willing, I will ask you to just make a simple, two-part inquiry. The first is to just entirely tune into the movement and feel of your breath. To notice how this mid-back part of your body is intimately connected to the movement of your breath and how your whole body literally rises and falls, expands and contracts, with every breath. When you have tuned into your breath, bring in the second part of the inquiry, which is to simply make a deeper connection in an internal and experiential way between the two ‘hills’ as described earlier.

Allow yourself to feel the hill at the very base of your spine moving with the undulating breath that comes from around and within the upper hill. This ‘connecting the hills’ practice is also a way to feel beyond the conceptual level just how much the hotter and damper elements within us are so completely reliant on the cool and dryer elements within. Consciously and experientially feeling how they connect is rather empowering and I think you may rather enjoy this experiment if you give a little time to it. Try it now, or as soon as you are ready.



— MAPS OF THE BODY

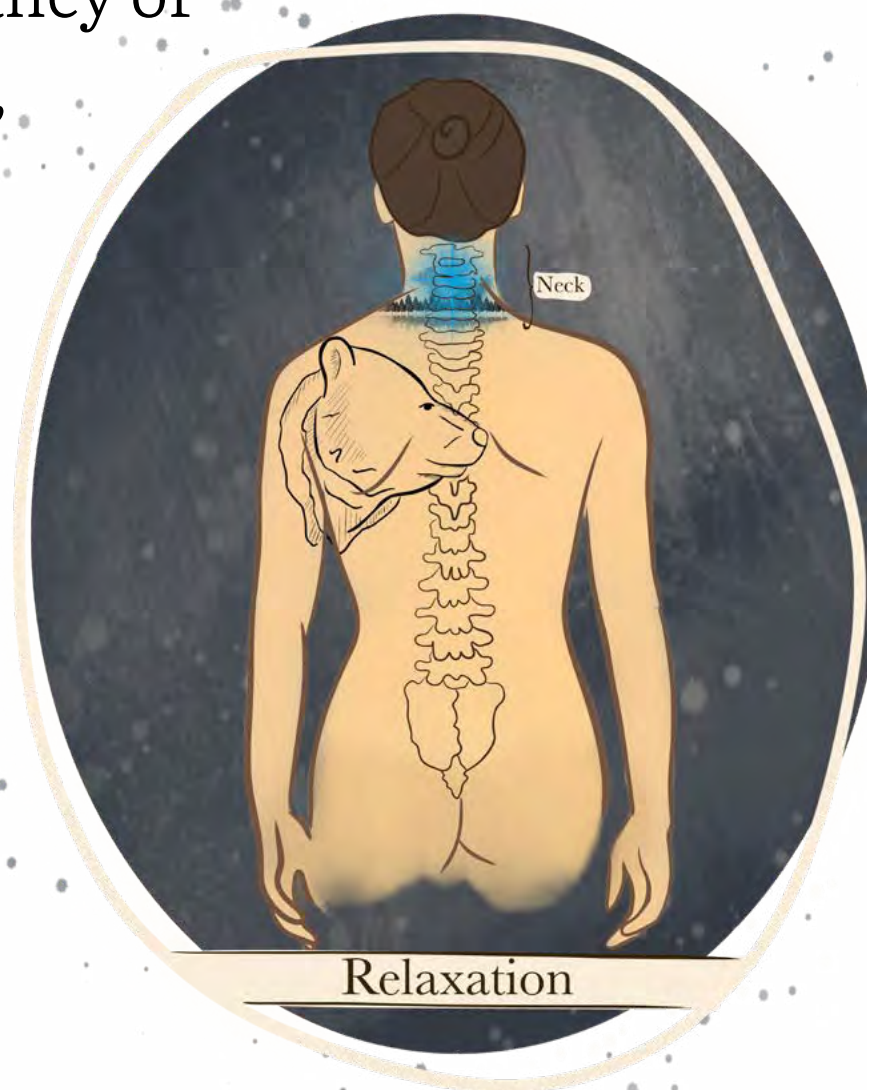
Cervical Spine

RELAXATION - COOL & DAMP

Lastly we have the upper valley of the spine, the top, the neck, the cooler and damper territory that, you may remember, like the head of a snake eating its own tail, forms an energetic cycle that connects directly into the base of the spine.

The reason I wanted to introduce you to this idea at the beginning of this section is that many problems that float to the surface and manifest up in the neck have their origins in the lowest part of the spine.

Equally, many issues that relate to the ‘base chakra; that manifest in all kinds of ways in our health and wellbeing, come from some kind of energetic break that comes from the neck, where the cycle of healing is blocked in its cooler, damper, and very essential phase of rest and relaxation.

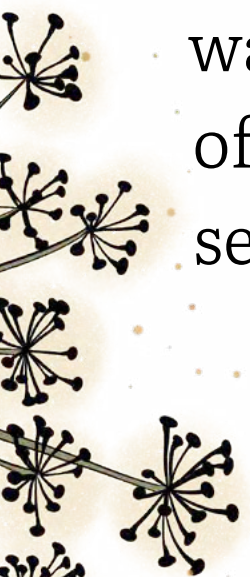


All of us, surely all of us who have ever lived, know what it is to feel a heavy head. The experience of fatigue seems to be built into every living thing that has ever existed. Whether it be the long sleep of winter for a tree, or the diurnal rhythms of the creatures that live by day or by night, everything that lives must get tired and therefore everything that lives must rest.

A great many people have trouble in their necks. As people get older, more have at least some problems in their necks than those who don't. Even if it is just some stiffness, some loss of mobility. The neck takes the brunt of much of the unresolved tensions in other parts of the spine and it also carries at least some of the tension of the whole system when the Cycle of Healing is blocked in any area.

Energetically, the neck relates to the cooler and damper relaxation phase of the Cycle and, just as the lower left side of the belly likewise carries much of the debris of the unfinished business of the gut, so the neck carries the burden of the unfinished business of the spine.

In a moment, I will suggest you do the last meditation, thought-experiment and inquiry into your own 'terrain of the head of the snake'. I am phrasing it like that deliberately, to convey the warning that 'here lies dragons!' Some awareness of pain or stiffness may already be present in your sense of your own neck but, if not, there is every



likelihood that focusing your attention here will bring things to the fore that are not comfortable to feel. The neck is also the bridge between the mind and the body. Many tensions that come from our thinking; our critical, judgemental, brooding minds, come into our necks and stay there. Creating rigidity in an area that must be so flexible. Creating a sense of disconnection between the never satisfied mind's version of how we 'should' be vs. the reality of who and how we are.

My suggestion with this thought experiment is to very much come to it with the exact same approach that you use when you lay your head down on your pillow at night to go to sleep. You are ready to make the ultimate surrender when you do that on a nightly basis, to give up your very consciousness itself.

It is another everyday miracle that we are able to do such a thing. When you consider that the strongest and most dangerous drugs on earth are the ones that put people to sleep it is quite remarkable that we are able to do this ourselves, with our own purely natural biochemical and energetic shifts.

When you bring your awareness to your neck, don't try to do anything, don't try to force anything, anything you try to do will only make whatever is blocked there become worse. Practise a truly passive awareness, a 'choiceless awareness', and just let whatever you feel there be what it is and move as

it will, because things never stay in one place in the neck for long. The energy moves, undulates, travels fast, goes into thought, and then back into feeling again, as fast as lightning.

If you pay attention, you will be able to feel how there is a cycle, a loop between the very top of your spine and the very base of your spine, it spins both ways and can leap the gap much faster than you can follow it with your awareness. Again, all that is required is to take a few conscious breaths and to set the intention to feel the living, moving energy within your neck, and then to allow it to take you wherever it wants to go. You are simply the observer in this experiment, feeling, watching and not trying to do anything. Have a go as soon as you are ready.



— MAPS OF THE BODY

Connecting the Maps of the Spine & the Belly

It is terribly interesting, in an awful way, because we are talking about the manifestations of suffering, but it really is a marvel how so many health issues express their nature through the Maps of the Body, and how useful this can be to see the causes of things.

This next section is rather short. Its intention is to simply make some conscious connections between the two Maps of the Belly and the Spine. To take a few breaths in each area to help lock them in so they are well learnt and so could be of practical use. This time, just for once, let's Spin the Cycle the other way by starting where we have just finished.



COOL & DAMP - CERVICAL SPINE & LOWER-LEFT QUADRANT

You who are reading this are already an expert in how it feels to be tired. Whatever your age or stage of health, you intimately understand what tiredness is and how it feels. The next time you feel very tired, which must surely be at least once a day when you are about to go to sleep, notice how the feeling of it spreads from your head to your neck and from your neck to your head and how, if you fight it, even a little, how much tension starts to accumulate right there, in your neck, and then upwards into your head.

Whether you feel like doing it now, or would prefer to wait until the next time you feel very tired, I encourage you to tune into your very real and physical presence of tiredness in your being in a way that helps you to feel how much the energy of it is centred in both your neck and your lower left quadrant of your belly.

You may not have issues with this yourself, but you should know that the person who is most blocked in



their relaxation phase will often have a stiff or sore neck, along with a palpable tension or trouble in the lower left quadrant of their belly. These two areas are by far the furthest apart physically of the two maps, and yet they encompass so much between them.

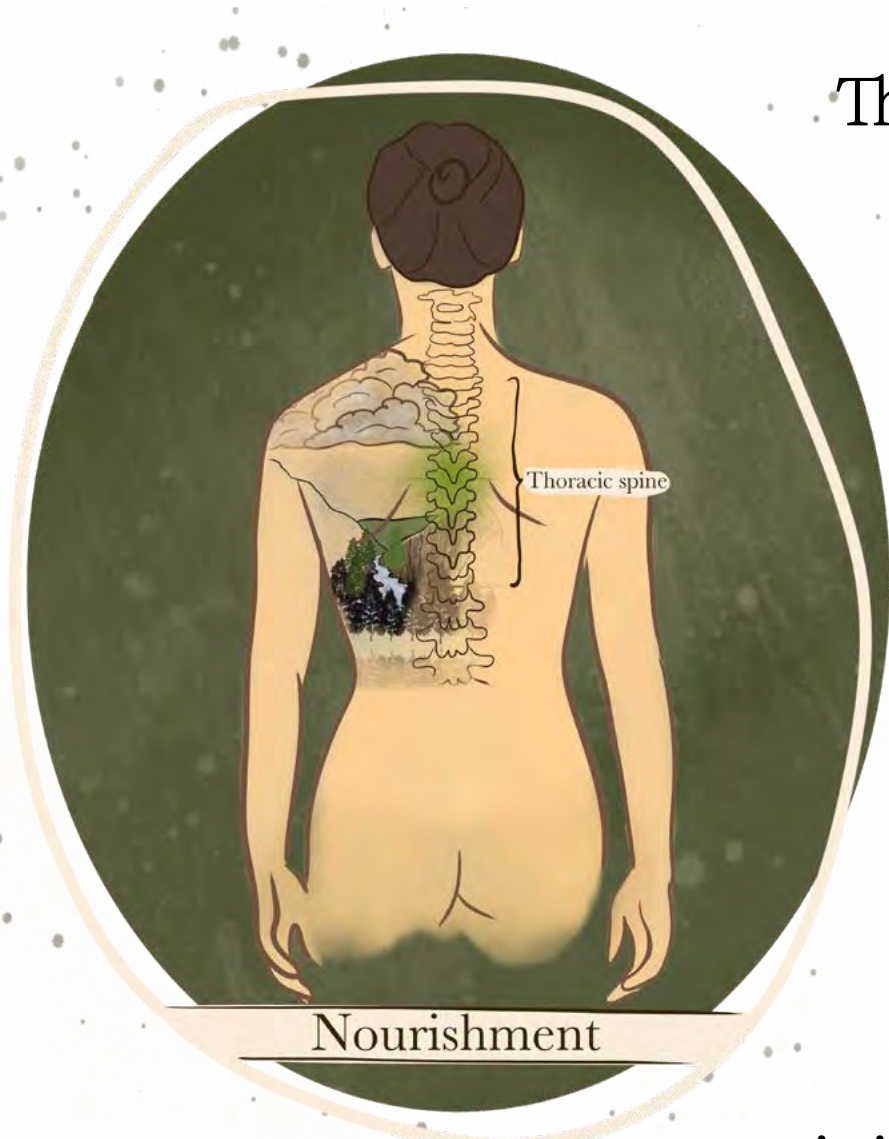
The more a person resists their tiredness, the more tension will build up, both in the neck and the lower left quadrant of the belly. However, if they stop resisting the tiredness and let it take them to where they need to go, which could be to get more sleep or just to relax, then there is a palpable letting go in these areas.

Now, or when it suits, take a few breaths and send your awareness within, to deepen your understanding of the Maps of your Body, by connecting these two areas. As far apart as they may be in your body, they resonate with each other like two strings on a violin. See if you can feel, both the

tension and the letting go, in one area and the other at the same time. They can both show you a great deal about how to relax.



COOL & DRY - THORACIC SPINE & UPPER-LEFT QUADRANT



The cooler and drier areas in the maps, the mid-back thoracic spine and the upper-left quadrant of the stomach area are obviously much closer to each other anatomically. Our heart, our lungs, our stomach, and the long centre of our spine are all joined together here. So much

of our vitality, our balance and our life-force is held in this deep, spacious and cool terrain.

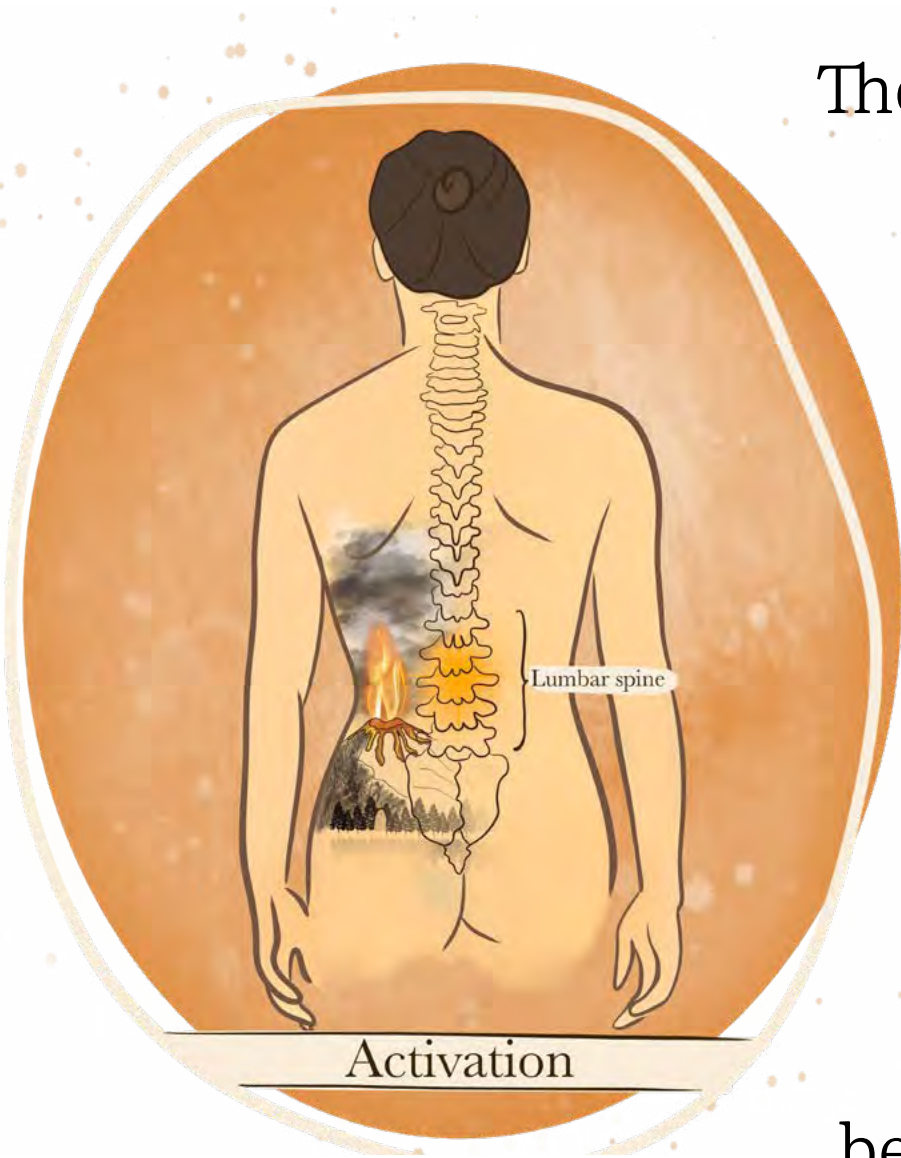
To help learn the Maps and better know yourself, I encourage you, in just a moment, to take a few conscious breaths to feel some of the living connections that exist in this extraordinary space within you. You will want to bring your attention to your heart, your stomach and the long hill of your thoracic spine with its 12 ribs that form a cage of protection that reaches all the way around from your back to your sternum at the front.

Your breath will take you there without any effort of will. Feel these open spaces as you breathe, the

movement of the wind in your chest as your breathing provides you with air, the most essential of all our sources of nourishment. At the same time, see if you can feel how the stomach, the naturally cool, often dry and empty, receptacle of nutrition in the form of food and drink sits here, loyal, like a beloved dog, a faithful companion, just needing to be fed to give you back all the love, and life, in the world in return.



HOT & DRY - LUMBAR SPINE & UPPER-RIGHT QUADRANT



The hotter and drier areas in the maps; the lumbar spine and the upper right quadrant where the liver lives, are again not quite so close in physical proximity, but it is good to imagine them both as areas that contain a kind of fiery strength.

Then to feel the connection between them within your own body, and how deeply ‘vital’, warming and essential, the activating fire that runs between them truly is.

Our society can be incredibly condemnatory of many of the natural expressions of this fire, unless it is in film or tv, or a sports arena, and then we can’t get enough of it. It is no small thing for any person, male or female, to come to acceptance and understanding with their energetic fire and to learn how to channel it. Such a person has a fire in their belly and a thick root in their spine that they can grow a great tree from.

In just a moment, or whenever it suits, take a few conscious breaths with your eyes closed to better

focus within and feel for yourself how the energy of the lumbar spine and the energy of the upper right quadrant of your belly are connected. How they have a sense of potency, like a great weapon that we should fear to use but not be afraid to hold. How there is a strength within us, that is very concentrated in these areas, that we have probably not really come to fully understand yet.

Even if it feels fractured, or blocked, or no longer what it once was, honestly, all it will take is a few conscious breaths, a moment's awareness, to experience, and therefore really know, that all that latent power, that fire, is all still there.

If you are still alive and breathing then you still have it, at any age. The life force doesn't hold on to the past like our minds do. While we still live, all of us have that fire in our belly and that root in our spine. It may be very important to get in touch with it.



HOT & DAMP - SACRUM - COCCYX & LOWER-RIGHT QUADRANT

The hotter and damper areas in the maps, the sacrum/coccyx and the lower right quadrant are again closely related anatomically. So you see how the two ‘hills’ of the spine have the areas of the belly that closely relate to them physically underneath them, whereas the two ‘valleys’ have more of an energetic connection, as if rivers ran between them. Underground streams that run hot from the base, the tail of the spine, and cool from the top, the head of the spine but that are also energetically linked to each through the connections that dampness makes possible.



This lowest part of the spine and this beginning point of the cycle within the belly are very swampy, mysterious, primal. It is the warm and damp jungle where many highly essential things happen in our health that allow us to renew, to try again, to heal, and to let go. Cleansing is a much greater subject and concept than what we flush away, it is the essential destruction that accompanies creation.

You cannot have life without death, and vice versa.

Honestly, at least half the battle with any of this is just to get out of denial and start to become aware of what's actually happening inside! Awareness is not easy, it's clearly not for everyone, but I don't see any other way to get to the truth than to tune into what is, and what's real.

These base areas contain a wonderful energy to tune into, to process what is there and to let go of all the prohibitions, myths and lies that surround the profoundly misunderstood subjects of sex and spiruality, of what it is that we really want, what are our true drivers, and what is stopping us.



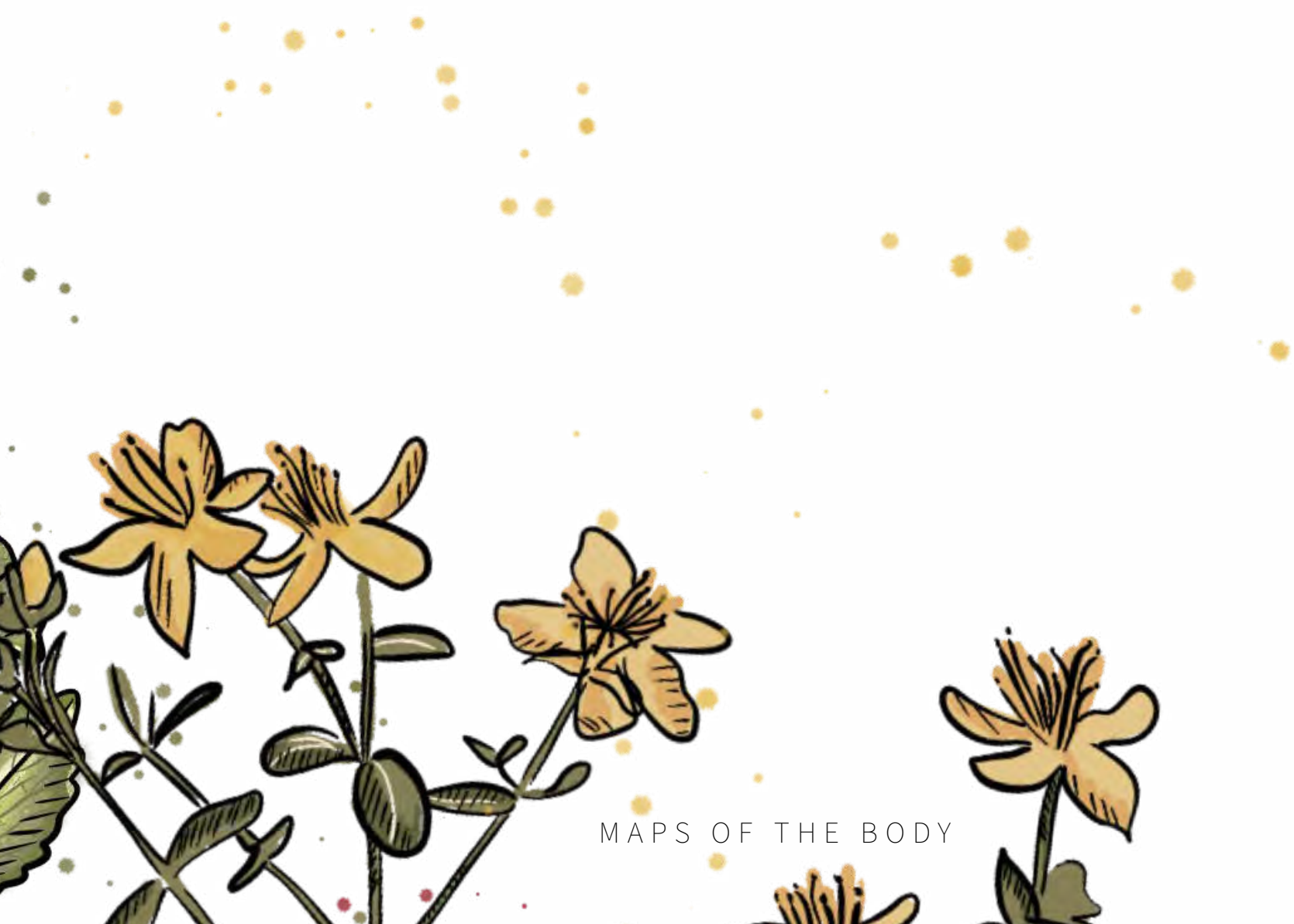
Now, or when it suits, take some conscious breaths and allow your attention to come all the way down into the primal soup of the hot and damp! The base of the spine and the base of the belly, with a slight

turn to the right that signals its coiled-up-spring-like nature, its readiness to spiral up and out at a moment's notice.

Of course, it may be entirely subtle and so rather anticlimactic after such a build-up, but I think that anyone who brings their awareness into their base,

at least eventually, will get some potent energetic awareness.

If you are alive, then it's all in there, heat and damp are not passive energies, they move! The main thing is not to force the awareness, you don't 'do' anything when you practise this kind of going within. You are the passive observer, your job is to hold space and actually not do anything, except breathe and watch, breathe and listen, breathe and feel. Does it sound easy? It is both the easiest and hardest thing in the world to do. So have a go!

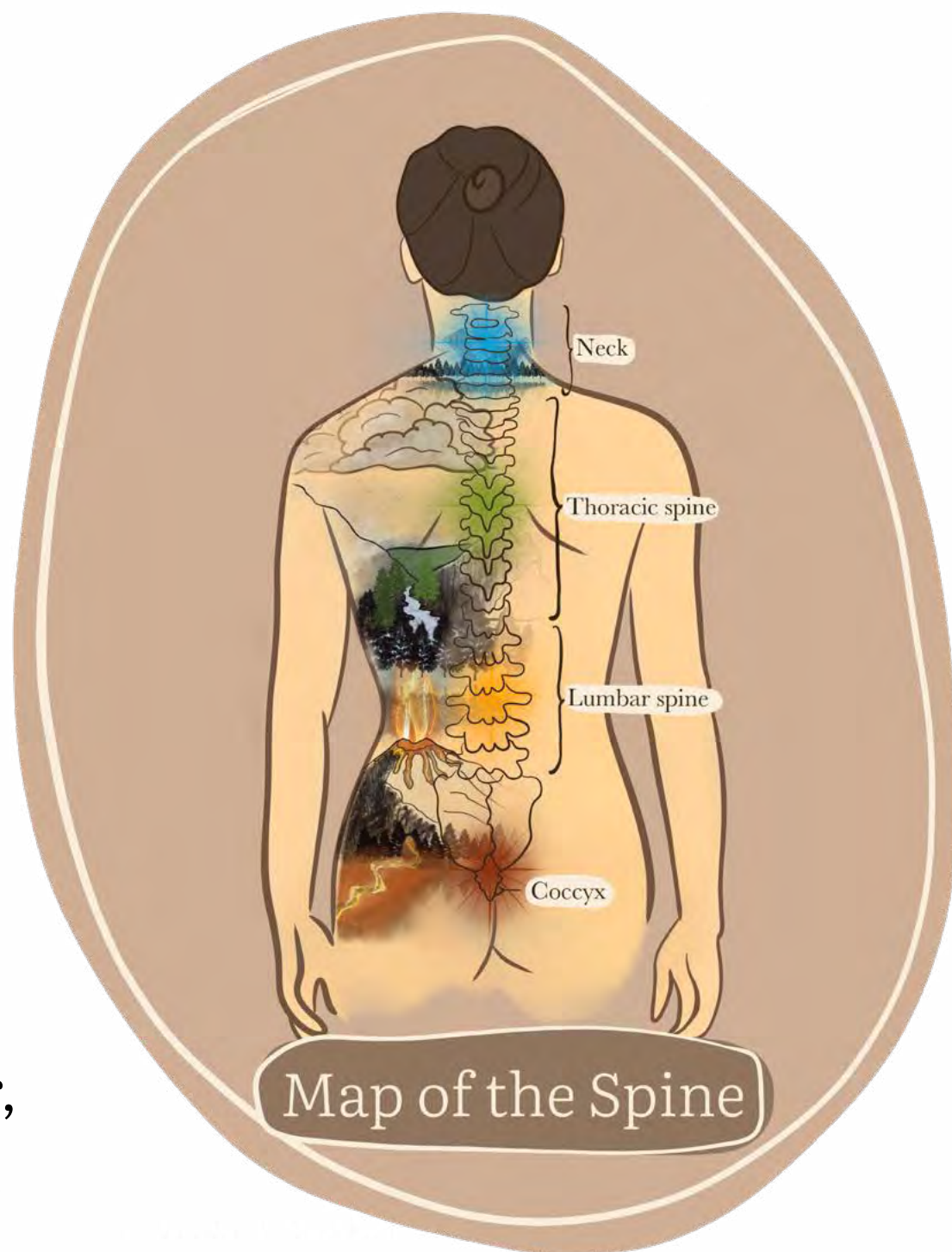


— MAPS OF THE BODY

Working with the Maps

It has often been said about our species that, minus much in the way of tooth, claw or hide, our super-power that has allowed us to succeed so much is our extraordinary potential for adaptability. However, in health and in life, it seems that what most stops people from healing, or moving forwards, is losing that adaptability and getting stuck. When we get stuck we lose our ability to adapt to the change that is always happening, everywhere in the Universe, and in us too, so long as our Cycle of Healing is turning as it must.

When you bring a meditative awareness to your inner maps and feelings, whilst there will likely be areas that draw you back to themselves again and



again, there will also very likely be a sense of an ever moving point of the internal compass. How once you bring your attention to where it needs to go there is a shift, a change, and the focal point moves elsewhere, as if drawn there by itself.

Our life-force does not want to be stuck. It wants to flow, unimpeded, like a river of energy that moves through us and around us. The core intention in this work has been to help the student or the person who is ready to learn, to better understand that energy, and how and where it becomes blocked.

I hope that you have been doing the experiments as we have been going along because the vital question, the most important question, the ‘*is this true?*’ question, is one that must first be asked of yourself, through your own experiments and your own experience. Only then you can further the evidence for the truth of it by trying it out on others as well.

Most of what you have been reading here about Constitutional medicine, the Cycle of Healing and now the Maps of the Body is not written down in some other book by some other authority. What you have been studying has simply slowly evolved out of the head and the heart of a Herbalist plying his trade for over 30 years on an island deep in the South Pacific. I do not say that to elevate myself in your esteem. I say it because I want you to take none of this on faith. Whatever you think about me is unimportant. What is vitally important is that you

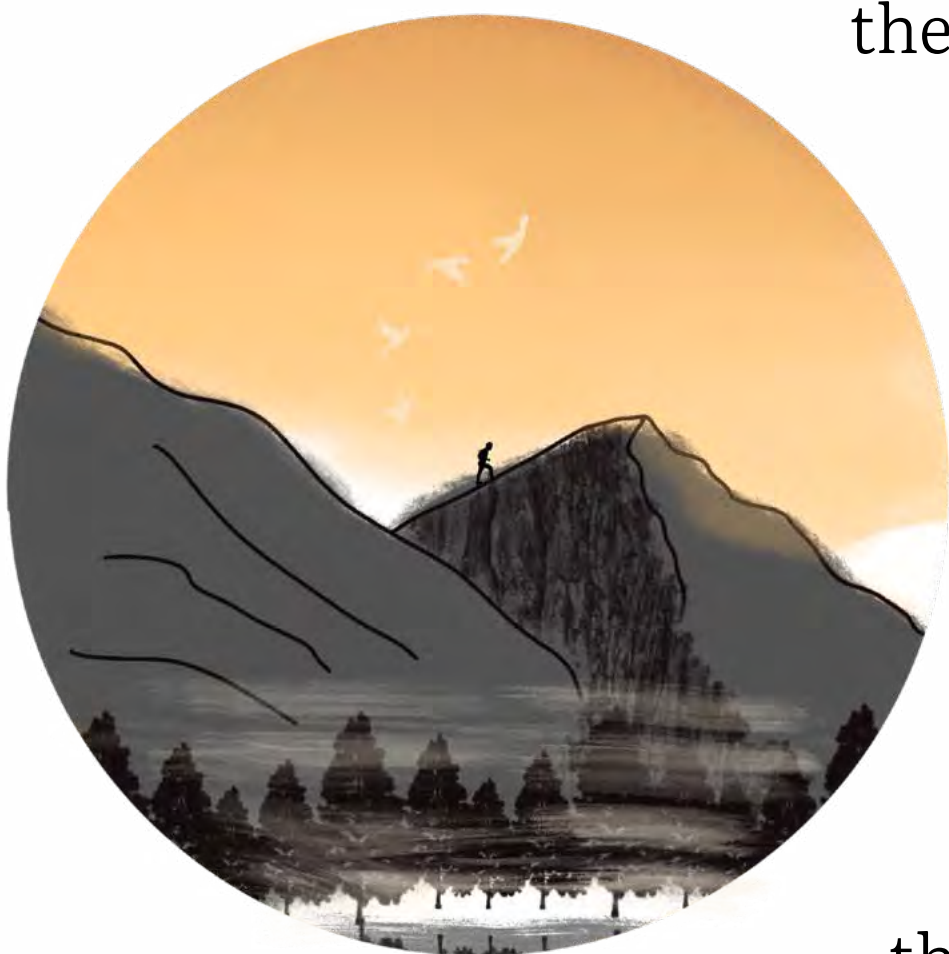
absolutely must test it, all of it, to see if it is true for you, first and foremost.

In doing such tests, I believe something wonderful will happen, which is that these Maps etc. will certainly stand the test, but that you will then add your own realisations, and layers of depth to it all.

By doing your own experimenting, your own experiencing, you will own it for yourself. In your own unique way, you will therefore grow it.

Further to that, there is a kind of rule about these things. It is that if you can use it for yourself, then you can use it for others too. That's just how it works.


The journey of understanding must start with you first, before you can possibly help another person. How can you teach someone something you do not understand? How can you give them what you don't have?



I do not wish anyone to suffer, but I will say that if the traveller on the learning journey has his or her own problems that are driving them to find a way to be well, then there can be no doubt that their inquiry will be forced to be completely truthful by what is at stake.

If they get better, if their life-force lifts, if they are at least somewhat relieved from suffering without suppressing their symptoms, then they can know for sure that what they have been doing has genuine merit.

But, if it doesn't help, if it doesn't help clearly and consistently, then they are paddling up the wrong stream, climbing the wrong mountain, heading in the wrong direction. That has been my only measure of anything, in all these years of working with the sick, does it actually work? Does it actually help?



Many times in my work I have met practitioners of holistic medicine who are going through some kind of health crisis.

Their condition has taken them past the point of what they know how to deal with and they are suffering badly enough for the helper to reach out for help.

I have found, with only a few exceptions, that practitioners from any field of health are, by far, the worst patients. No-one else even comes close to how bad they can be, I'm not joking about this! It's been so bad that, in the past, I've had dark thoughts

about refusing to treat them, but obviously I couldn't do that.

I am always super respectful to them and their work. I know there are many ways to help and to serve and that some people will do much better with their approaches than they would with mine and vice versa. They aren't terrible patients because I've offended them or disrespected their calling or in fact treated them differently from anyone else I see. They are terrible patients because they have been the ones who do the helping and giving the advice for too long and they really struggle to let go of that mindset to just be the patient instead of the therapist. They struggle to be the person who can be wise enough and humble enough to be guided and supported by another for a little while.

These days, I sometimes bring the issue into the open to try to get some sort of promise that they will do their utmost to put aside that egoic mind, i.e. that part of them that is supposed to already have the answers and not need to be the one who asks for help.

If we can make it past that primary hurdle, and they can embark on the healing journey and then, as we would naturally hope, they start to make some genuine progress and it appears that the worst is over, I might say something to them to the effect that their illness has allowed them to complete an 'advanced diploma' in their work of being a good

healthcare provider.

Such an idea would be cruel to suggest to a person who is not yet looking behind them at their illness as it was clearly passing but honestly, it so often is like that and I don't know if I have ever met a genuine healer who didn't eventually need to complete at least one such 'advanced diploma'.

These are the kinds of lessons that teach you what is real, what actually works. They are what it can take to do away with the immature notion that there is a pill for every ill, that people can be fixed without doing anything to treat the causes of their conditions. They can show, beyond any possible doubt, how a person needs to go on a healing journey to get well from a chronic health problem.

Coming back to this subject, the Maps of the Belly and the Spine and what they can teach us, I think that if a person is able to go within and feel the constantly shifting and sometimes challenging feelings that exist within their own belly and spine, and make the deep connections with their own Cycle of Healing, plus the deep emotional feelings that are going to be talked about in some depth shortly, then those are their real 'qualifications' to do this kind of work with others.

It all must start with '*knowing thyself*' first. If you have learned the Maps of your own Body, then you have every ability to use your hands to feel the belly or back of another person and be able to get a sense

of what is going on in their Maps too, at least to the point of understanding better where there may be blocks in the Cycle of Healing. Possibly even to the point of doing some hands-on healing if that is something you are strongly drawn to do.



— MAPS OF THE BODY

Working with the Spine

HANDS-ON NOTES

Exactly as earlier when I spoke about working with someone you are caring for on their belly. Likewise, no one should ever feel obliged to put their hands on another person's back to treat them unless both they, the practitioner, and of course the recipient themselves, want it to happen and are ready for it to happen.



A person is always going into a vulnerable place when they allow themselves to be touched by another human being while they are lying down. The back is not nearly as intimate an area to be touched as the belly but it is still every bit as full of feelings, even if they have more of a bony and muscular shell around them!

So, if you think you might want to get hands-on, perhaps because you who are reading this are

training to become a holistic practitioner, or you already are one but wish to grow your work into something that encompasses more range, more options, then I warmly encourage you to do two things.

The first is to keep practising with yourself, as we have been doing through this material. Get to know your own Constitutional nature, get to know your own Cycle of Healing and get to know your own Maps. Those will be your chief qualifications but you cannot learn them in a classroom or from a book, including from this book. You must learn them by experience because that is how you own the knowledge for yourself. Once you own it then you can give it to others.

The second is to be open to starting another kind of practice with one or more people who are happy for you to experiment with them, both for your and their benefit!

The practice is very simple. Unless they are your partner or someone who is completely comfortable with you, a layer of clothing is preferred so there are no issues around disrobing to get past. Then the first step is to get them in the most comfortable place possible where they can lie on their front for a short while.

This could be a couch or even a bed if you are doing it with someone in your inner circle. But it would also work perfectly well to use a blanket or a rug on

the floor if you and they are ok getting down there. When I used to do Shiatsu I had a rolled up futon that I would spread out on the floor when we needed to use it and that I would roll back up when finished. I encourage our SIMH students to get a massage table, as it will be very helpful when they want to do a physical examination, for example over the belly, and will be an asset to them regardless of whether or not they choose to incorporate some form of hands-on treatment in their work at some stage.

When your person is lying down on their front your next step is to carefully watch and/or listen to their breathing so that you can synchronise your breathing to theirs. Breathing out when they breathe out, breathing in when they breathe in. I suggest resting your hands on their back to most easily get in tune with their breath and to synchronise your breath to theirs. Some people are such light and shallow breathers, or sometimes even just such slow breathers, that if you don't have your hands on their back to feel the movement of their breath then you won't be able to catch it by seeing or hearing it either.

Don't worry if you lose the thread of their breath and repeatedly get out of sync. It takes practice to get good at this but it makes a world of difference to what you can feel and sense from them when you get in harmony with their breath so it is worth the effort!

Then it is up to you whether you want to start with your hands on the hills or the valleys.

Two hands, two hills. Or two hands, two valleys. Place both your hands on the person's back, palms down, either on both of their 'hills' (sacrum and thoracic) or both of their 'valleys' (lumbar and cervical) and then just breathe in and out with them and feel what there is to feel.

You have now already begun both a treatment and an examination, as this technique brings both together in tandem. I suggest that, whatever your hands may tell you in terms of the examination side of things is best to be absorbed without comment or conclusion. Just let your mind empty and your heart open and there will likely be impressions, or feelings if you like, that you will absorb, but just let them come and don't feel any need or haste to chase them into form, you won't forget what they were if you need to remember. You can get a lot of good intuitions about what herbs to give people, or other vitally important decisions to get right, when you tune into a person in such a way; belly or back or both.

The treatment part comes about rather spontaneously. Perhaps it comes from your intention to simply feel these living epicentres of another human being's constitutional energies. Then the life-force that is within that person feels what you are doing and why you are doing it and so

starts to respond to it. There is a lot of what could perhaps best just be called mystery in that healing intelligent force. The more you get to know it the more you realise how much it can't be 'known'.

You don't actually have to do anything further. You can simply feel and breathe in sync for as many breaths as feels somehow right and then move your hands on to the next place.

Or, if you feel so inclined, you can give a rather perfect treatment by simply starting to rock back and forth with one or both of your hands.

There is no 'right way' to do this. One hand can anchor while the other one rocks. Or you can rock both together going the same way, or rock one hand forwards while you pull the other one backwards to make a kind of twisting and untwisting motion in the snake of the spine. It actually rather is like charming a snake to do work like this. You will likely feel how much people want to let go and how much easier you are making it for them to let go.

Of the many, many hundreds of patients I have met who have tried different kinds of physical therapies from the different kinds of people who offer this work in my city, I see that the ones the majority talk about with the most fondness, and acknowledgement of its benefit to them, are those treatments that they experienced as the most gentle. I think that this is because, rather than having something done to them, a more gentle treatment

has helped them go into a space where they can let go of their blocks themselves. They will usually attribute the success of the treatment to a virtue of the therapist. Actually the reason they are getting a deeper benefit, and that it is lasting longer, is because they are the ones who are letting go of their blocks themselves. The benefit of the treatment belongs to them.

Of course, you can apply all kinds of types of pressure and movement if you are so drawn, and there are many courses that you could take that would give you a range of techniques to use, if that is what you want to do. There is no right way, but there are many ways. Including that you don't have to do anything, not to rock, not to move at all.

It can be entirely appropriate to just breathe with them and to hold still, or to just move your hands a little, by instinct, and then, like a silent witness, just watch and feel what comes out of the person you are holding, which is what you might feel flowing into your hands, or equally what might come out of you, flowing through your hands, and into their body.

Then, when you are ready, you move your hands from where you were to the two hills, or to the two valleys, depending on where you came from. By the way, a hand on the neck is not the one that wants to rock back and forth too much, just a little would be ok, but it could also just gently squeeze and release, if that is what it is in your instinct to do.



When you start such a treatment/examination, it could be expected that you will be in doubt. Healthy doubt, no doubt, because if you were asked to give a detailed description of what you were feeling or what you thought any of it meant you might not know how to even begin to talk about it. No-one is going to put you to such a test, unless you invite them to and I don't know why you would want to do that. People will like you holding their spine at the hills and valleys. It feels nice and comforting, it feels deeply supportive. You probably need to have it done to you to be 100% sure of the truth of that, but it is true nonetheless.

Have you heard of Reiki? Or energy healing? Or chakra balancing, aura-balancing, spiritual healing, laying on of hands, light-work? Or any of the names that people give this kind of work?

Whatever we call it, the intention and what actually happens is much the same. There is an understanding, or at least an awareness, of the *vis medicatrix naturae*, the healing force of Nature. The practitioner wants to connect to it, encourage it and feel it flow or move more easily in the person they are seeking to help. Every society and every tradition throughout human history has had people who do such work, under one name or another. People use it, and like it, and seek it out because it works, not for any other reason. It just works, that's all.

I see that many people who are drawn into becoming herbalists have a latent gift for this kind of work. And I want to encourage them to bring it out but I know it just has to happen in its own way, in its own time. That said, many of the suggestions above and in this section on the Maps have had such people in mind. The biggest hurdle will always be in just making a start, to overcome the potential awkwardness in taking the meeting from the place where you are just listening and talking, to another level where you are placing your hands on that same person's belly, or their back.



I think 'scripts' are helpful for such awkwardnesses. We use them all the time to get through the difficulties of meeting new people. We are actors on the stage of our lives with lines that we have practised enough to more easily say things about what we do, what we like, who we are. The same can apply to starting out with working with people as a new practitioner, or a student.

You can make the invitation in all kinds of ways
*'Come up on the table for a few moments so I can
examine your belly (or your back)'*

That 'exam' might be enough and you can stop there.

In having a feel there is every chance that you will get some very helpful feedback from what your hands can feel and from what you have learned by studying the Maps of the Body. Without you needing to consciously analyse it, the feedback that your hands are picking up will send its insight into your subconscious, so that when it comes time to think about what herbs, or what ‘work’ to suggest, you will be coming a lot more from the intelligence of your own gut and heart, and not just your head.

But you might want to go past the examination phase too. So imagine what you could say, what kind of script you could use, if you had a feeling to hold space, to keep your hands on the valleys or the hills, or on the part of the belly where you could feel a block that seemed to be calling out to you to help it to release.

I brought up a tender subject in the section on the belly where I said to tell, rather than ask to start the examination without unnecessary tension. Here, if you feel drawn to do some treatment, and it is not what is expected, it is best to ask. The initial hurdle of getting to the hands-on point has already been navigated so now it really is very easy to ask if it is ok to take a further step in this setting. And there is a zero percent chance that you will get a refusal, quite the opposite, they want you to help!

‘I feel a block (or problem, or trouble, or any word you prefer) here, would you mind if I did some gentle

treatment over this area while you just help me by focusing on your breathing?’

There are a hundred other ways to ask the question but I am sure the answer will always be the same. People want you to help them when they are unwell. They will say yes.



— MAPS OF THE BODY

Condition vs Constitution-based Medicine

A person who treats conditions, in other words an allopathic practitioner, must be very well versed in the health sciences to do what they do. They are treating a problem with the view to how to best make it go away and the more they can work from an ‘evidence base’ the better. The ‘evidence base’ comes from studies that take groups of people with x, y, or z condition and treat them with x, y or z substance or therapy and then find one or another way to measure the results against a placebo as the comparison.

Personally, I tried working from such a foundation for some years, supported by our natural health industry, which has companies that take research and extrapolate it out into products that they then promote as new and better than what we had before.

It might work better in other fields, but in terms



of natural substances and therapies, I found the whole approach rather weak in practice. It was also rather cumbersome in terms of just how many supplements and interventions you seemed to need to use. Plus it was rather non-adaptive in the sense of - if this is the best evidence-based treatment for x or y condition and it doesn't actually do anything, then now what?.

My practice and my ability to support my family and keep going has always entirely depended on getting good results. Christchurch is a very conservative city and conventional medicine is almost entirely state funded by our taxes in New Zealand so if you don't get good results with people you've got no chance.

I did not set out to learn Constitutional medicine because I am an academic person who likes research and reading lots of textbooks. I like listening to music, watching movies and reading good novels in my spare time, thanks very much. It was purely and simply the lack of good enough results using condition-based medicine that took me up all sorts of garden paths before I eventually dove down into finding the roots of my craft that led me here. All I wanted was to get more consistent, and more dependable outcomes. To be able to answer the question - what actually works?

You do not need to be very well versed in the health sciences to be a good herbalist. The health sciences

can help in all kinds of useful ways but they have not been necessary to be a good herbalist for many millennia and are still not necessary now. You aren't treating conditions to work with Constitution-based medicine, you are treating the person who has the condition and there really is a world of difference between those two approaches.

When the condition is overwhelming, or when the condition is not getting better despite your best efforts to help the person to heal themselves, then you encourage the patient to get support from conventional medicine. You don't keep treating a person who is getting worse and you certainly don't think that the natural medicines we have available to us have everything that can help a person who is overwhelmed by a crisis that is beyond their ability to self-heal. In the most extreme states of pain or the fear that comes with suffering that is beyond a person's ability to manage, the best medicine may still come from a herb, but not one whose safe and effective use is under our guardianship any longer, i.e. extracts from the Opium poppy.

I mentioned my daughter Danielle earlier, and how she has become a medical herbalist after many years of work and study. Danielle's twin brother is called Benedict and, at the time of writing, he is conducting a very successful business as a chiropractor in Germany where he went to live several years ago, learning the language and developing his craft into a level that is now quite

truly masterful. I say that having watched his work.

Ben spent 5 years at the Auckland College of Chiropractic learning the rudiments of his trade with an enormous component of health sciences emphasised throughout the course. As they should be. You are more than charming the snake of the spine with the kind of work he does, you are grasping it by the segments and wrestling it back into some kind of order from the chaos into which it has strayed!

This is a true 'therapy' in every sense of the word. The patient is having something done to them that they could not do themselves. The practitioner must take great care not to do harm because they are doing something very powerful. It is similar to using potent drugs, or certain dangerous herbs. You are going beyond the level of only supporting the self-healing intelligence, you are creating an intervention and must know the risks as well as the benefits of what you are doing extremely well in order to not break the first rule to do no harm.

If you ever get the opportunity. Ask someone who has done a massage course, or trained as a physiotherapist, osteopath, chiropractor, bowen therapist, shiatsu therapist etc. and has been out in the world doing their thing for at least a few years the following question.

‘How much of what you do in your day to day work is what you learned in your training and how much is it the things that you have evolved yourself or picked up along the way since then?’

I think you find that nearly all of them will say something rather similar. That initially they did as they were told and practised as they were taught but then they started to find their own way, changing and adapting what they initially learned and adding many strings to their bows as they went along.

The person who wants to help others is like the person who needs to go on a healing journey. They just have to start with the right first steps and then the next steps, the ones that will carry them on in the right direction, tend to follow. If you who are reading this can imagine working as a herbalist who is willing to put their hands on people to examine them, and possibly to treat them too, then I think it may be better not to know too much. You will not be wrestling with the snake. You will not be doing anything that could do harm if you were not careful. It could even be said that the more knowledge you bring into your mind from the endless world of the sciences the harder it could become for you to empty your mind and open your heart. I think that these Maps could be enough to guide you, and then, as to what this or that might mean and what more you could think about doing about it. For example,

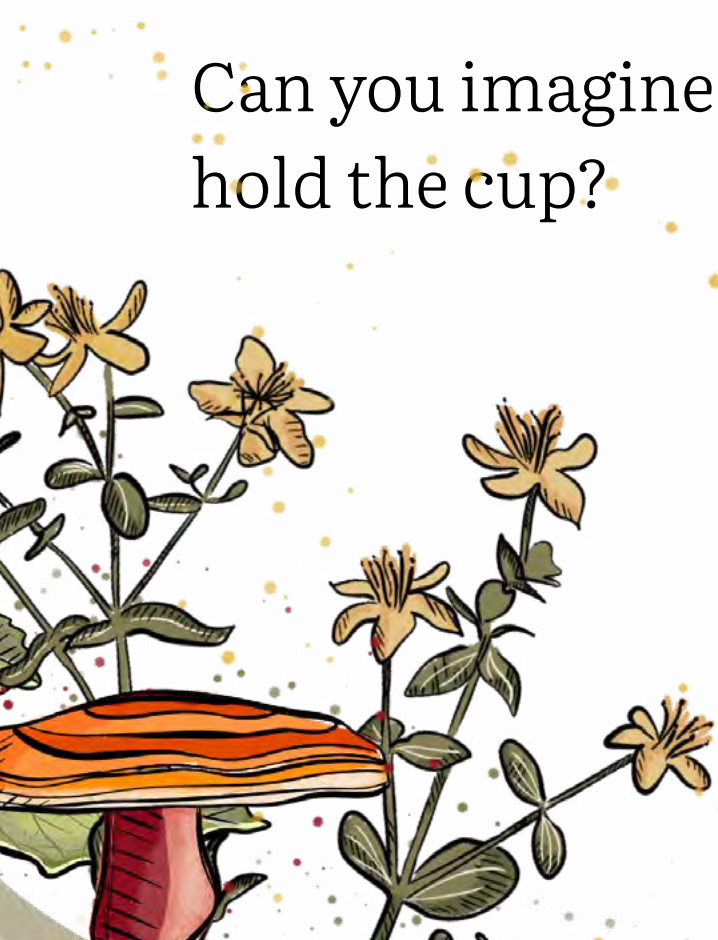
with herbs or therapeutic diets, or some other strings that you have gathered on your bow.

Without needing to know a hundred techniques and a thousand facts about the anatomy of the body that lies before you, if the time is right and the person is right for it too, then you have every chance to witness something extraordinary unfold with the most simple of treatments.

Breathing with another person while you touch them, mindful of their energy, their life force. Maybe doing some rocking, maybe not. More importantly, having the intention to understand and to help them understand and release their blocks to healing.

Connecting with that evergreen, everpresent, healing intelligence that is both in yourself and them at the same time. That, in many ways, is the same Ocean of life, even if it has divided into your own separate drops, for now. So many people need this kind of work, even for a moment, a few minutes, it can be like receiving water when you are practically dying of thirst.

Can you imagine giving yourself the opportunity to hold the cup?





EMOTIONAL HEALING

— E M O T I O N A L H E A L I N G

Emotional Healing within the Constitutional Archetypes

Now we come to a subject that is very near and dear to me, emotional healing within the constitutional archetypes.

What I have to share here is new but, more so than the other topics discussed previously, I have already written reasonably extensively on this subject on my website and invite the interested reader to also delve into that work at some point too. It is easy to find in the constitution page under the heading ‘emotional healing’ in the further reading section, but it is not necessary to have read that material first in order to keep going here. You can find the Article [here](#).

The key theme explored in that earlier work is that all people, from all constitutions, as part of the human journey, must grapple with four intensely difficult emotions; namely fear, anger, loneliness and fatigue, to use just some of their names, and that through a process of maturity, experience and understanding, we can eventually learn to accept the presence of these difficult feelings as if they were a kind of ‘dark friend’ in our life. Fear can become courage, anger can become transformation,



loneliness can become love, and fatigue can become peace. It is again a rather simple concept in theory but one with profound and, seemingly endless, depth in practice.

Many people, throughout history, and especially via expressions of art that come through in poetry, stories, music and pictures have said the same thing in different ways. The concept of suffering having meaning, of it being something that we can grow from, is a universal theme that recurs in all cultures. Not only because it gives comfort, but because sometimes it *can* actually be true!

I only say ‘can’ because suffering can also be completely and hideously useless. It can just be pain, without any chance of respite, which really is insufferable. If pain and suffering are useless and intolerable then they simply must be stopped, by any means, as quickly and effectively as possible.

Fortunately, the much greater majority of the time, pain and suffering are not intolerable, and have a reason that they exist that can be worked on, with every hope of a cure. Nonetheless, for us to not sink into despair, or simply seek a way to dull that pain, whatever the cost, we have to be able to find the meaning in it.

If we can see a meaning that we can understand and a cause that we can treat then we can do something. We can go on a healing journey. We can find a way to help release the block to our self-healing

intelligence in order to become well, and free from suffering.

At least until the next time, because the gruesome truth doesn't quite get laid out in the fairy-tale side of the stories that we tell our children with their 'happy ever afters' at the end. These stories are terribly important for our children, because they help them to understand, from an early age, that they too will have to take a hero-journey to find courage, love and peace. But of course we don't want to make it seem too hard for them to even try, by telling them that even when they conquer one fear that there will be another around the next corner. Or that love is not an end-point, it is an ongoing journey, or that peace comes and goes, and that everything always changes.

There is no 'happy ever after' because it doesn't stop. By virtue of being human we get to suffer, and a very large part of human pain and suffering is experienced in the emotions. Anyone who wishes to work with people in a holistic way, who wants to help them at a deep level, a real level, must come to terms with this and must resist the impulse to throw emotional healing into the 'too-hard basket!'

I have met and known many practitioners in the natural health field who are decidedly uncomfortable in being called on to work in the sphere of emotional health. They would far prefer to work with things that can be measured and

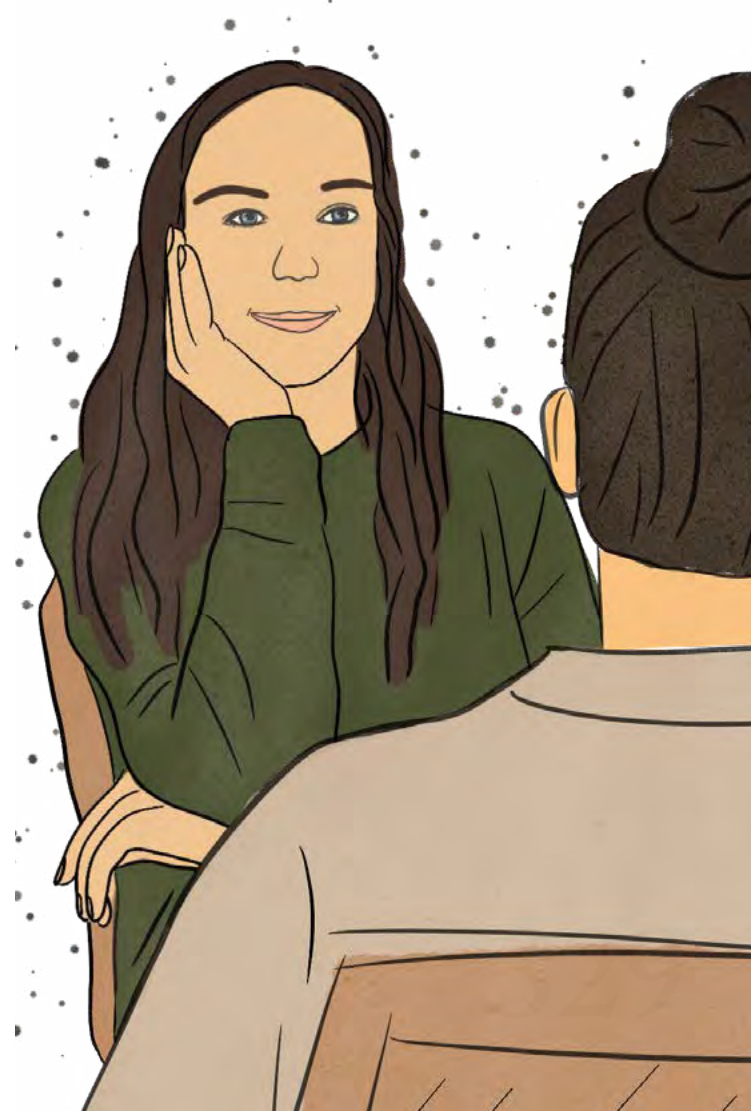
quantified. To treat people and their problems as a kind of chemical soup, where the right combination of supplements and a change of diet might cure all ills.

It must be recognised that their training was woefully inadequate for emotional healing. The typical approach from their equally untrained tutors saying don't delve into anything beyond the physical and to immediately refer the patient to a counsellor if they insist on needing to talk about their feelings.

It is a terrible disservice to a holistic practitioner who is in training to make them believe they would be out of their scope of practice when their patients are reaching out for emotional healing and support. In fact, I think it is frankly cruel to be taught to say to such a person who is trusting their hard feelings to you that *'I can't help you and you need to go somewhere else'*.

Anyone can help another person in such ways. You don't need professional training for it, you just need to know how to hold space for a person, to listen to them, to understand and accept their feelings and so help them to acknowledge them as well.

It should be that, with the



maturity that comes from life experience as much as anything else, you can also sometimes give some solid advice on how to take steps to stop future harm or release past burdens, but you won't get anywhere near any such work if you can't make the room for the conversation to happen in the first place.

It makes me feel very sad to know that there are so many well-qualified naturopaths and herbalists in our world who have not been trained in, and have not yet found the courage, to work in the vitally important sphere of emotional healing. The patient who is willing to trust you with their inner world is the one who decides what they will tell you when they ask for your help. It is not our place to put any constraints or boundaries on their process. We are there to meet them where they are at, not to judge them and not to send them away to someone else when they want to talk to us.

In the real world, people don't separate their aches and pains, their symptoms and suffering, from their feelings. In fact, the most common answer to when you ask a person an open question such as '*do you have any theories about why you have condition x, y or z*', is that they will quite sincerely say '*stress*', and they can often pin-point the sequence of events that took them over their limit that, in turn, led up to the first symptoms of when they first became unwell.


Improved nutrition and paying attention to such fundamental supports to self-healing as cleansing, activation and rest can go a long way to help but will only ever be a partway support if there is not a more direct way to help the person who is still struggling mightily with deepheld anxiety, or unresolved resentments, or the vulnerability of isolation, or unrelenting tiredness, which are another set of terms for those four universal challenges mentioned above; fear, anger, loneliness, fatigue...

For balance, and for truth, I have also met and known many people in the holistic world of medicine who swing far too much to the other side of this spectrum and become ‘spiritualists’ to the point of almost downright disdain for the relative ‘materialism’ of things such as diets and physical remedies.

Honestly, I don’t know which is worse, to meet the patient who clearly has physical obstructions to their healing, ones that need physical solutions, and to just lead them into the subtle work because you believe that this is the answer to everything. Or to meet the patient who clearly has emotional obstructions to their healing, problems that need emotional solutions, and to not be ready to even talk about it but only able or willing to give them physical remedies for their treatment.

Neither is worse than the other, they are both awful, because they both miss the crucial second law of

medicine, which is to treat the cause. Holistic medicine, in principle if not in practice, is not meant to pick a side between the spirit and the flesh, between the physical and the emotional. It is all part of one continuum where each part affects the other, where you cannot say that one is more important than the other. To be a holistic practitioner you must be ready to work on both sides, frequently at the same time!



Ok, so those were my introductory thoughts to this chapter. Now comes the first and most important point I want to make in this section. That everything we have been talking about in terms of the Constitutions, the Cycle of Healing and the Maps of the Body have as much of an emotional, subtle side as they do a physical one.

I have primarily been talking with you about the physical ramifications of these concepts but you will now see that there is an equally important emotional side that is not separate to the physical, but rather is simply another layer of existence and experience to it.

What follows will feel at times like some revision of what we have already been discussing, which I trust you will agree is inherently a good thing

(repetition being the absolute key to lasting learning of anything worth remembering) but there will now be a more emotional, or if you like, spiritual theme, that streams through these same subjects that you were introduced to earlier.

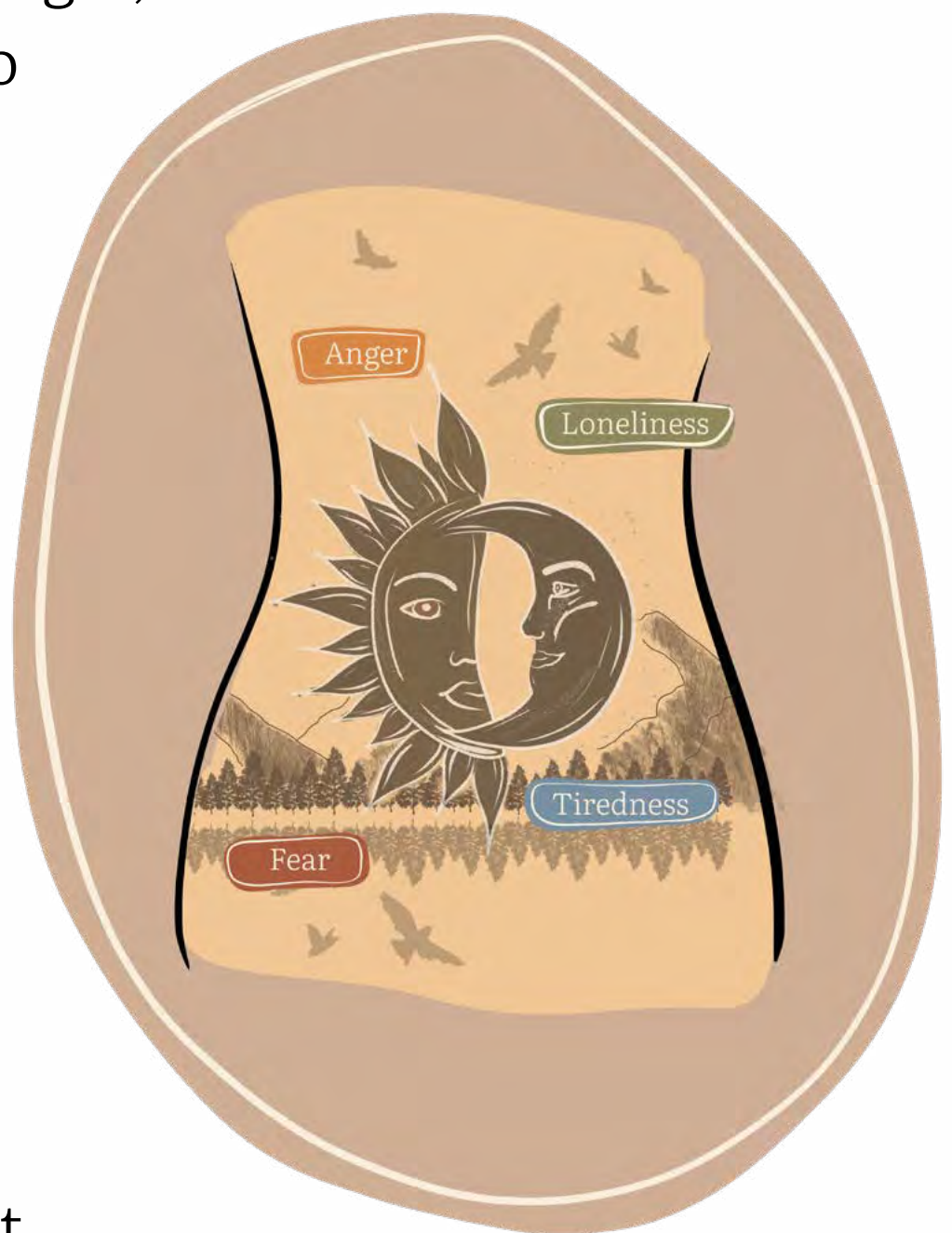


— E M O T I O N A L H E A L I N G

The Dark Friends within the Map of the Body

I want to now make some links between the Maps of the Body and what I call the Dark Friends. To understand what is going on in this next section it will be of the utmost importance to grasp just how very real and physical, our emotions actually are.

We use words like fear, anger, sadness or exhaustion to describe things that we feel in our bodies, and just as much, we use words like love, peace, courage and hope to describe things that we also actually feel, in our bodies. We know that these feelings are real because we experience them much more deeply than only at



the conceptual, verbal, conscious level. None of the really important emotions that we experience, good or bad, happen in our heads, they are all felt in the body and only then are they interpreted and understood in the brain.

The reason this is so important is that, in seeking to both understand and help ourselves, or others, with the sometimes terrible challenge that being human brings, with all the dark friends that can come to trouble us, if we try to somehow work our way out of the conundrum by thinking ourselves out of it we only and inevitably just make things worse!

I know that is an awfully bold, or at least cynical statement, but I am afraid I have just met too many people, many hundreds of people, who have tried to work their way out of emotional problems with their heads and I see that it simply doesn't work!

You can't fix your feelings by denying their existence or changing your thinking, as much as we really truly wish we could. In fact, you can't fix feelings full stop. They are there to be felt and they need to be felt for as long as needed and for as strong as they need to be felt.

This next point is such a simple truth in its concept, but it seems to be remarkably difficult for a huge percentage of people to accept, and that is that there are *always* good, or at least let's say there are *always* valid, reasons for people to feel what they feel. If you think about it, at least for yourself, you will see that

this is always true, and yet we spend an enormous amount of energy condemning ourselves, and each other, for feeling things that we perceive as undesirable, and more to the point unwarranted.

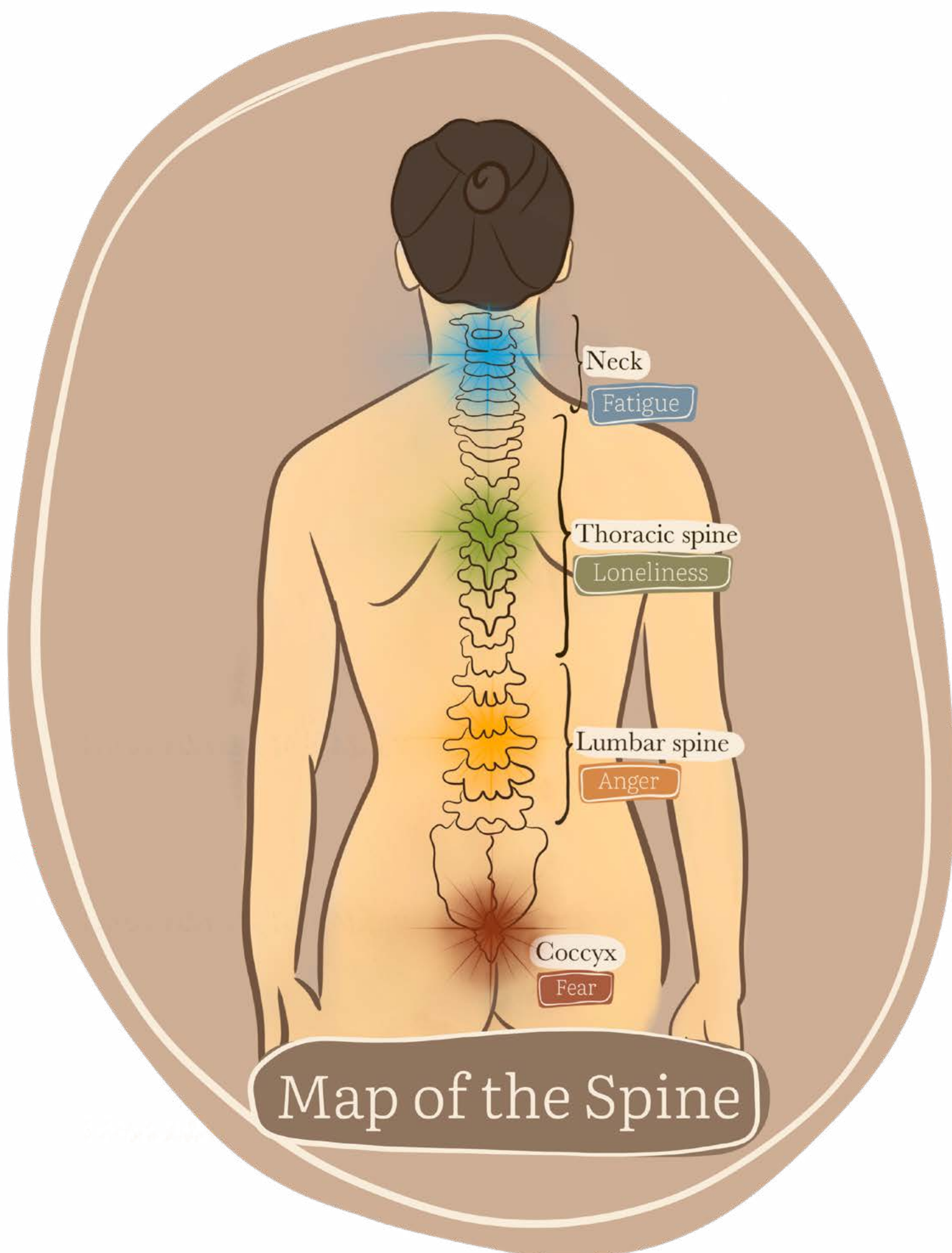
That ‘unwarranted’ is really the crux of the problem and it is the primary obstacle with emotional healing. It is that there is a denial that there is an entirely adequate reason for whatever is the cause for the hard feelings to be present, here and now, in the subconscious ‘room’ of the body.

With the briefest of examinations, with just a little thought, anyone can grasp the truth of people having what, at least for them, is always a good enough reason to feel exactly as they do. The trouble lies in what do you then do about that? Because no-one wants to feel afraid, or angry, or lonely, or fatigued for one second more than they have to. We all want to get rid of our bad feelings but then, because we often really don’t know how to get rid of them, we do a lot of things that bring enormous amounts of harm to ourselves and others in the process.

I want to put it to you that there are ancient, well-described and highly tested-by-time methods that many people, throughout all of our shared history, have found



to genuinely help us with our most difficult feelings. That we do not need to reinvent the wheel on this. There are many guides that have left many clear signposts and maps to ‘what works’ and they all say much the same thing.



- practice acceptance, practice understanding
- stop running, stop fighting
- go within, '*nosce te ipsum*' - know thyself.



To stop fighting or running from your own dark friends, your hard feelings, you must learn how to make space for them to actually exist in your body without overwhelming you into panic, despair or complete and utter chaos. This is a step by step journey that must be taken one step at a time. The best place I know to begin is right here and now, in your body as you are reading this, or I should say in just a few moments, as I want to try to explain the process at least a little bit first!

So, shortly, I will ask you to take a moment to simply cast your awareness inside your body, where, I am sure you will find, as if it is waiting for you to notice it all this time, there will be a point or a centre of ‘feeling’ that is slightly or clearly stronger than any other right at the time that you cast your awareness within. We touched on this exact same process right at the very beginning of this work, but now we will go into it a little more deeply.

There is no special trick or training required for what you are about to try to do, you will simply be allowing your awareness to be drawn to wherever in your body you have any kind of sensation more strongly than another. When you do this, don’t be surprised if ‘it’, the point of maximum sensation, moves to a new location as soon as you become aware of where it was a moment ago.

If, or more likely, when that happens, just follow it to wherever it takes you and again simply allow it

to be, to exist, whereupon ‘it’ will likely move again. When I say ‘it’ of course I mean ‘you’ but it is that part of you that *feels*, as distinct from the part of you that is your conscious, thinking awareness.

Honestly, all of this is only conceivable up to a fairly narrow level by trying to make sense of it with your rational mind. You will shortly actually need to stop reading for a moment to do this as even the process of reading, as does talking, as does thinking, places the ‘you’ firmly in your head, which is a fine place to be at least some of the time, but not much help to you if you have to get some training for dealing with difficult emotions, which all happen somewhat further south! Before you do it I want to warn you to expect one of three likely outcomes.

The first is what will almost certainly happen if you have some pain or acute illness in your body at this time in your life. Your inner ‘intelligence’ your nature, is deeply and keenly aware of where and what that problem is, even though your body doesn’t have a name for it, or any kind of story around it, because all of that just comes from the mind, but rather your ‘flesh’ i.e. your subconscious, i.e. your body, does not need a mental description to know what it feels. If you have some pain or trouble in your body right now, then it is highly likely that the point of maximum awareness will eventually move to exactly the centre of where that problem is already being worked on by your own *vis medicatrix naturae*, your self-healing intelligence.

The second possible outcome is what will probably happen if you don't have current pain or an acute illness but that you do have any kind of chronic problem that is affecting your health and vitality in an adverse way. Your body, subconscious, innate intelligence etc. is just as keenly aware of what is obstructing its flow of health and energy as if there were an acute problem, but here the centre or primary point of awareness is likely to move around, especially over the maps of the body of the spine and belly, where there are a great many 'forces' at work, trying to find the way to restore health and, in the process, meeting the obstacles that are preventing that healing from happening.



If you go into this in some depth, or come back to it more than once or twice, you will probably find that the point of awareness moves in a pattern, from one place to another, and that there are clear sensations that come through from the different areas. When you tune your inner ear and start listening more closely, the increase in feelings that will come to you can be rather compelling to say the least. This is your body, your own intelligence, aware of itself and talking to you, the sentient being within, through the only language that it has, which is that of feelings. When you do this, especially if you go more deeply than a fleeting glance, It may be rather confronting to suddenly increase your awareness of just how much is going on at a deeper level, hence my describing this is a warning, but I can say with complete certainty that no harm will come to a person who seeks the truth about themselves in such a way, rather that it will only support, and sometimes even free up, your self-healing intelligence.

The third is the one that I hope will be the case for you, whoever you are. Which is that there isn't any significant acute or chronic illness, and there certainly isn't any pain, and that when you cast your gaze, your awareness within, you come to some places of simple physical awareness, such as where your leg is resting against a chair, or the feeling of whatever is under your hand. This would be a perfect place to start; easy, non-confronting, but it is almost a certainty that your awareness will only

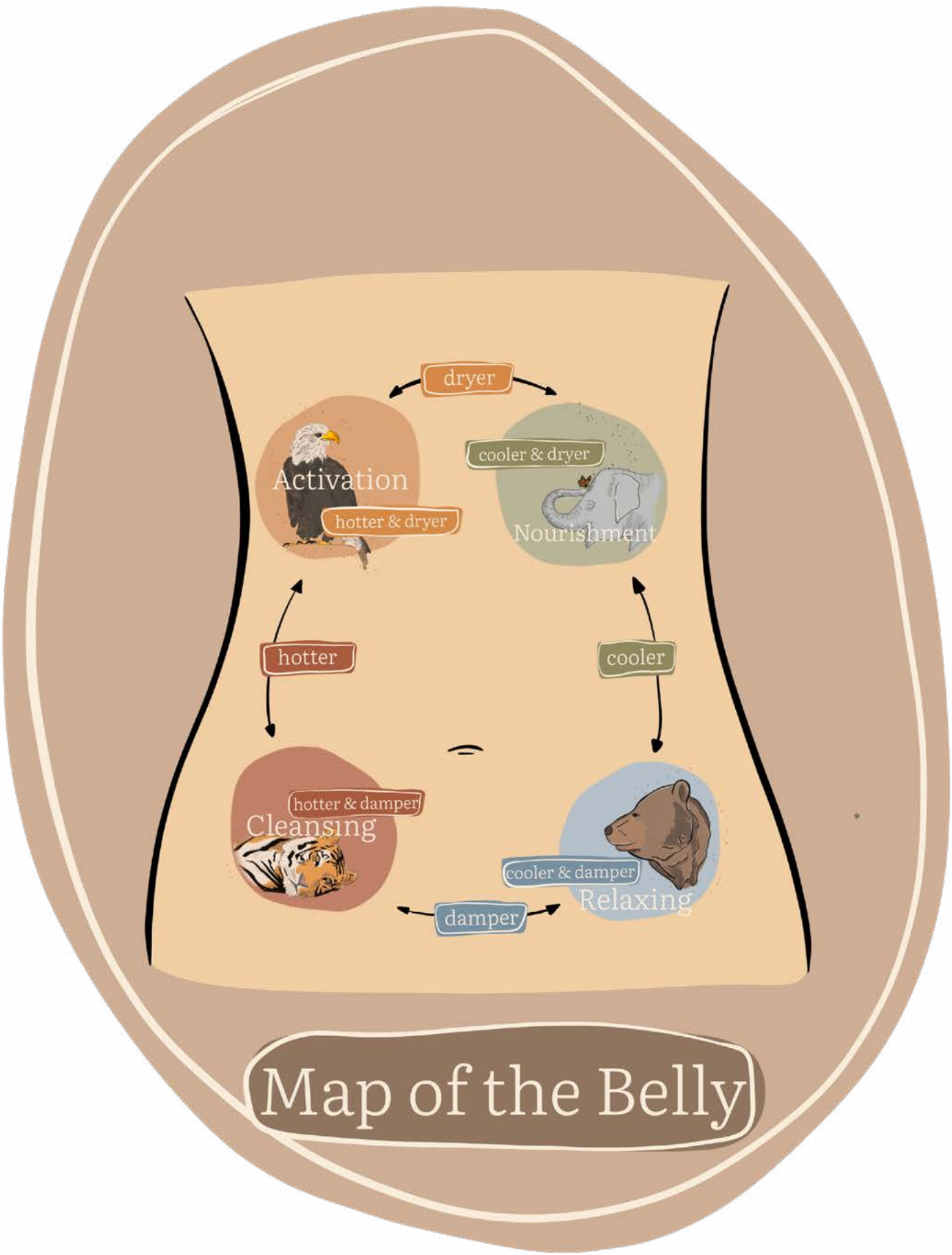
be caught by such sensations for a fleeting moment and then it will move somewhere else, often very quickly indeed.

If this happens to you, then follow it, as if you were playing a game of chasing, because it will probably lead you here and there, back and forth and then, I will predict, if you stay with this inquiry for more than just a few seconds, and I really do mean it could be that little amount of time because this shifting point of awareness can leap and change remarkably quickly, you will come to somewhere on the map of your belly or your spine that will feel notably stronger and more intense than what you have been feeling up till then, because this would then be your body talking to you, showing you in the only way it knows how without having to express symptoms of actual physical illness, where you are at and where your attention needs to go.

By learning the Maps of your Body, It could be showing you that your attention needs to go into nourishment or cleansing, or into relaxation or activation. It could, equally, or more so, or less so, be showing you that your attention needs to go to one or more of the four core emotional ‘dark friends’. Each of which intimately connects to and relates to each of the four core quadrants of the Cycle of Healing.

I suggest you try this open exercise more than once or twice. Each time will be different, and yet there

will be a sense of being on the same Map, going into the same terrain. It will all, unmistakably, be you. Either now, or whenever you are ready, close your eyes, take a few breaths, and allow your attention to be drawn within, this time to absolutely anywhere, freely and wherever, it wishes to go.



— E M O T I O N A L H E A L I N G

Connecting the Dots

I hope you have had at least one go at the above ‘thought experiment’ and that it interested or even intrigued you enough to try again soon, whereupon I think you will find that that each and every experience is slightly or strongly different to the ones before it and that you truly can never set foot in the same river twice!

My reason for again wanting you to get some experiential understanding of these matters is that I am keenly aware of how simple in theory the concepts are that I am presenting here but how vastly complex and intricate they become as soon as they are brought into practice.

Therein lies the challenge, which is that if you can’t quickly make sense of them in a useful and personal way, that they will just drift into the vast swamp of previously learned theory from all sorts of sources, and I will have missed the target and I guess you will have missed the chance to learn something that can be actually rather extraordinarily helpful to know!

With that in mind, let’s now connect the dots between the physical and the emotional, and every now and again to pause, to take a few breaths, to go within to see if you can feel how this resonates for

you personally because, when you do that, then you can use it and develop it as you like, because you will have experienced and therefore owned it for yourself.



— E M O T I O N A L H E A L I N G

Cleansing & Fear

Starting in our usual position of the hotter and damper sides of the spectrum, here we have cleansing, here we have the very base of the spine and the very beginning of the bowel in the bottom right quadrant of the belly, and here we have the great dark friend of fear.



Before I go on, I want to use the word fear, because it is the most direct one I know, but it is a loaded word and I need to say something about that which I hope will give it the room it needs to be heard.

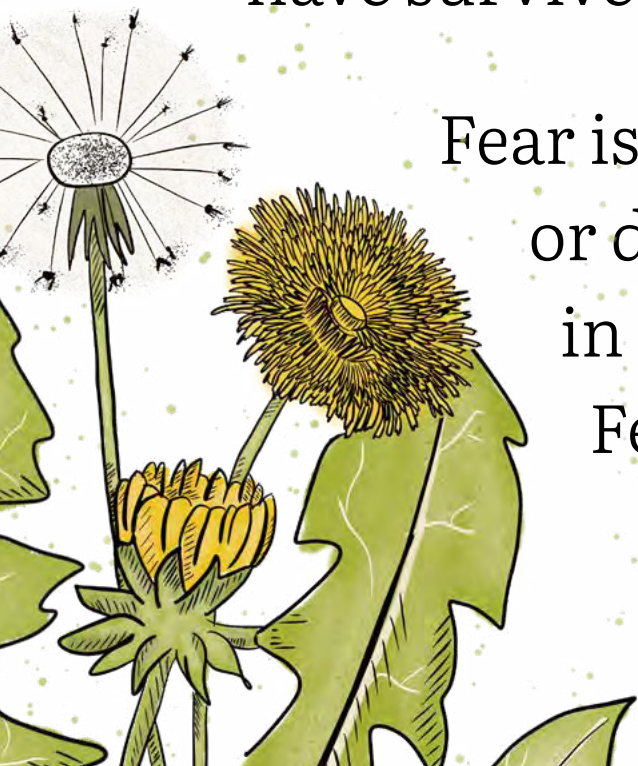
Most people in the modern world, who are rarely facing an imminent threat to their survival, experience fear in a far more low grade but also much more constant level. They are also highly unlikely to call it fear, as this is a word that usually triggers a disproportional or unhelpful response from the person they are communicating it to. For example, the listener starts urging them to go somewhere or to someone who deals with

emergencies, or tries to talk them out of how they are feeling by saying something like ‘don’t be afraid of x, y or z’.

Most people are, however, much more able to express the more socially acceptable words of having anxieties, worries or doubts etc. It is obviously very good that people can express their anxieties if they can get the support of someone who knows how to hear and understand them. However, aside from that kind of listener being hard to find, simply talking about, analysing, dissecting, and discussing solutions for the expression of fear in the mental sphere rarely does anything about the existence of it and so, as soon as you resolve one anxiety or worry, another one springs into its place. A deeper kind of work will be needed for the person who is seeking to master at least some of their fear, and so find at least some of their courage.

Fear is in all living things. Anyone who thinks they don’t have any fear is either in denial or they are living a really comfortable life and haven’t had to face any major challenges lately. Every organism, including plants, including insects, including all the animals, including us, must feel fear or it will not have survived to evolve.

Fear is the awareness of any kind of threat or danger or harm, either happening in the present or coming in the future. Fear can be called worry, or doubt,



or uncertainty, or anxiety, or nerves, or any of a hundred words that dress it down or dress it up but it is all the same energy underneath, and it is almost universally despised.

Our primal fear, the energy that sits inside us and is always there, always waiting to flood our entire being and consciousness with its presence, has its home in the very base of our spine and in the bottom right quadrant of our belly. It is a hot and damp energy. It can move as fast as electricity into any part of our body, rushing to our chest, our heads, our hands, making us instantly ready to run or to fight.

All cultures have a phrase that describes how ‘*fear makes the blood run cold*’, and so fear is often perceived as a cold energy but nothing could be further from the truth. Fear is hot, super hot, but as its presence sweeps through our mind and body a great deal of heat can be almost instantly released, leaving a deep chill in its wake.

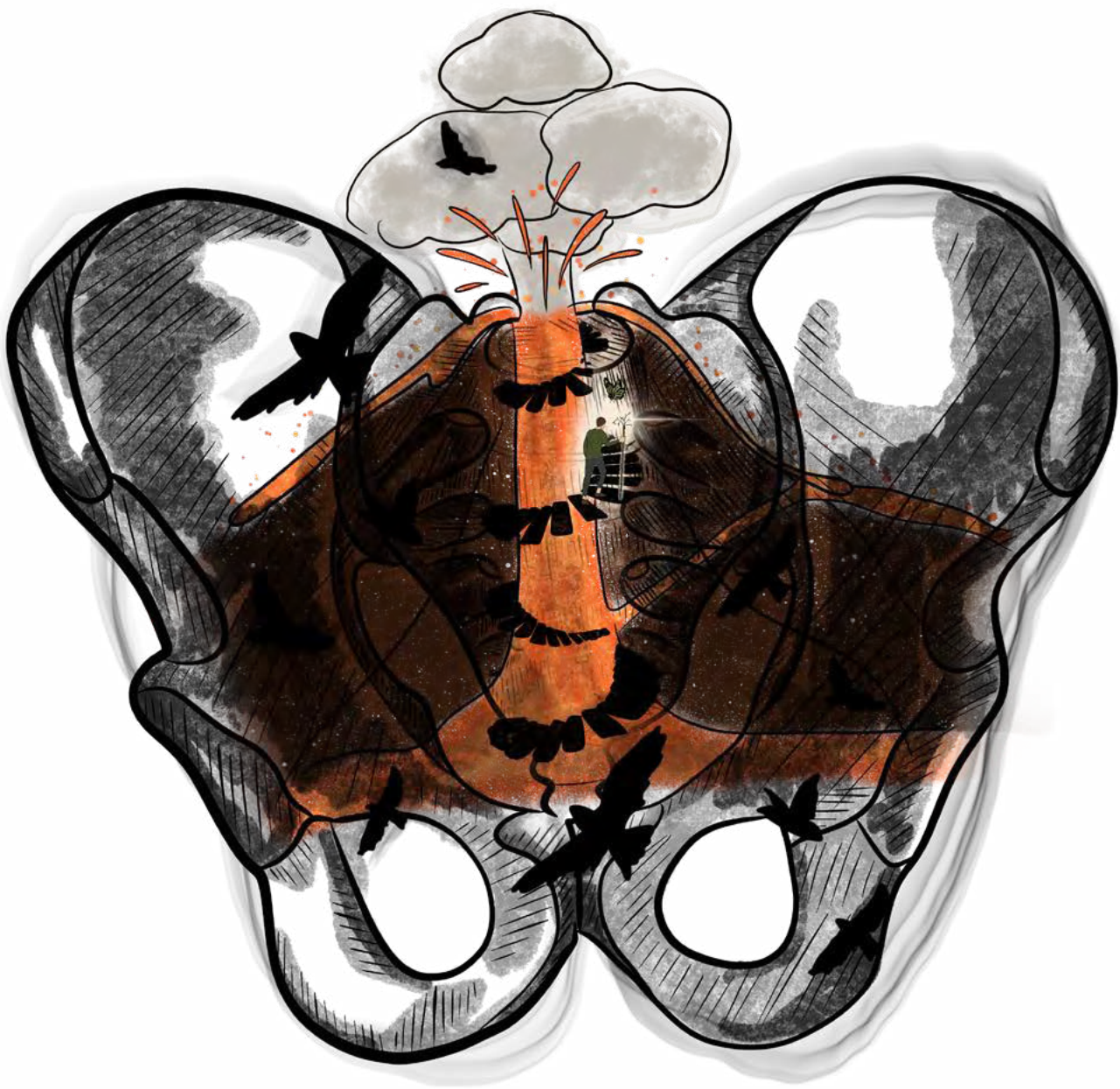
Tapping into some earlier analogies of the edges of the hotter and damper spectrums being like that of Lava, or a Steamy Jungle, or a Primordial Soup, then it can be sensed at an emotional level that the energy of fear is like a shape-changer. Moving, seething, living, permeating, inherently dangerous but also absolutely full of life and vitality. We only despise it, and try to constantly get rid of it because we fear it. We fear it because we don’t understand

it. We can't accept it because we don't understand it. But without this core energy there is no life-force, no drive, no passion, no purpose. It contains the creative, life-affirming and life-saving energy of life itself.

This energy exists inside us, always, but often it is deep under the surface and we only become aware of it when we become excited about something, or fearful of something, both feelings being two sides of the same coin with a remarkably similar physical experience to both.

My suggestion is, let's not wait for it to intensely bubble up out of its damp basement to get to know it further, that way is much too hard. Actually I think it is frankly impossible to make friends with this energy if we only perceive it when it is already out and rampaging around, dominating our entire experience.

Much better to go to its home and to be on its own territory, to get to know it little by little, to get comfortable with it, to learn its nature and learn how to be with it without fear. For, as it has been said, the only thing to fear, is fear itself. Making friends with fear is one of the most powerful things a human being can do in their lives, because it gives them courage, and with courage we may achieve almost anything.



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT



So, in the spirit of making this learning useful, practical, real, I will ask you, once again, in just a moment, to take a few breaths to bring your attention within your body, but this time with using the Maps as we have been exploring them to go directly to these hotter, damper parts of your body, at the very lowest parts of your spine and the low and right hand side of your belly. I ask you to bring your attention here with the intention to simply be aware of the energy that resides here and to begin the process of developing a different kind of relationship to it, one that revolves around understanding and acceptance, rather than misunderstanding and rejection.






Being aware of one's breath is the universally recognised way to help bring the attention inwards. I do not recommend any special techniques for this (unless you are experiencing acute anxiety in which case I have some further comments just below that are written for you)

The acute need to resolve a panic attack aside, simply breathing deeply is enough for most people to focus within and then all you do is simply go between the two maps and see what there is to see and feel what there is to feel.

Please don't worry if there are no revelations, no lightning bolts. In fact I wish you a safe, pleasant and rather uneventful journey into your personal primordial swamp. Just to bring your attention there and become used to recognising this part of yourself, and how you feel here, is more than enough to begin.



So, just in case you, dear reader, suffer from anxiety in its more emergent and acute form, I have a few extra comments here. In talking about 'fear', we must recognise the utmost importance of understanding and treating the condition of anxiety as a profoundly physical one. It may be that this cannot be truly understood by someone who has not experienced a lasting state of anxiety in their own lives, but it is never a purely

psychological disorder to be treated with purely psychological methods.

Fear and anxiety are real. They exist in the body and, as anyone who has suffered from them will immediately tell you, they bring an extraordinarily uncomfortable set of symptoms. A 'sense of impending doom' is one particularly descriptive way to summarise just how truly awful severe anxiety can feel. Phrases such as 'palpitations in the chest' or 'knots in the gut' don't sound quite so bad, unless you are feeling them yourself at which point you are under no illusions as to just how profoundly unpleasant they can feel. Most people who suffer from enough anxiety for long enough start to get intrusive thoughts about how they just cannot bear the prospect of continuing to feel this way and start thinking about how they could put a terrible end to it all. You know how bad a feeling is when the person would rather die than to keep feeling that way.



I want to make this point as emphatically as I can because, having worked with many, many hundreds of people who have suffered from strong to severe

anxiety, I know what works and what doesn't help.

Anxiety is a condition where physical medicine is needed and I, for one, would never judge anyone who needed to use pharmaceutical medicines to get through the personal hell of their anxiety but I also must say that herbal medicines are, quite frankly, superb for helping people who are caught in chronic states of fear and anxiety.

Literally just a few drops of the extracts of medicines such as Lobelia, Cramp bark, Wild Yam and Skullcap, combined with a simple breathing technique to arrest hyperventilation, can always quickly alleviate the worst of anxiety symptoms. Even the first dose starts to give some relief and, because these are herbs that can be used very freely and frequently for a while, you can nearly always quickly get through the worst of the storm in even the toughest cases. It is a big deal for a person with bad anxiety to be able to trust that there is something from Nature's medicine chest that can reliably help them.

Herbs are the people's medicine, they cannot be patented. Anyone, anywhere in the world should be able to get the formula described in my article on anxiety, or one very like it that could be just as effective. Fear and anxiety are truly mind-body conditions. If they are bad, then firstly give the body, the flesh, a substance to help, so that there is some relief, some improvement, and only then

consider what can be done to help the mind, the spirit. There are practical details on the herbs and the breathing technique etc. just mentioned written up [here](#).



— E M O T I O N A L H E A L I N G

Activation & Anger

Just as the hotter, damper energy of fear relates strongly to cleansing, and to get a literal sense of that, just think how much, in its acute stage, strong fear causes people to sweat, or to need to release anything they are holding in their bladder or bowels. So, in a similar but also very different way, the hotter and dryer energy of anger relates strongly to activation, to the fire of change and transformation.



Again, anger is a very loaded word, but in this case I won't keep using it by itself as it is actually not the most direct representation of the dark side of this equally great dark friend. I vastly prefer the word 'fire' to talk about this energy, because fire is what it is in how it feels, and moves, and acts.

When we are not just having to deal with the nuts and bolts, with the diet, the sleep, the body in its endless ability to manifest symptoms of illness in some way, in that more rare appointment when I am talking about emotional healing with

the patient who is ready for a chat like that, and needs it, and when the specific subject of the day is a particular type of an emotional state that is wreaking a particularly nasty amount of havoc on the health of their mind and body, I introduce the idea of using the word ‘fire’ to better describe what we actually need to talk about. At that point I often use my hand to demonstrate the process of counting off all five fingers, one by one, to better show and tell exactly what is meant by this word ‘fire’

My thumb comes out first, for *Anger*, the ugly word, the one that most people have a lot of trouble owning but is exactly what they are actually feeling about x, y or z.

Then the index finger is for ‘*Frustration*’, which is good at pointing at the issue, even if when we use it to literally point at something we have three more of our own fingers pointing back at us. But frustration is a very good word to use to talk about our fiery feelings. Just as it is much easier to own the feelings of worry or anxiety instead of calling it fear, so it can be easier to talk about frustration instead of anger, however much they may be two sides of the same coin.

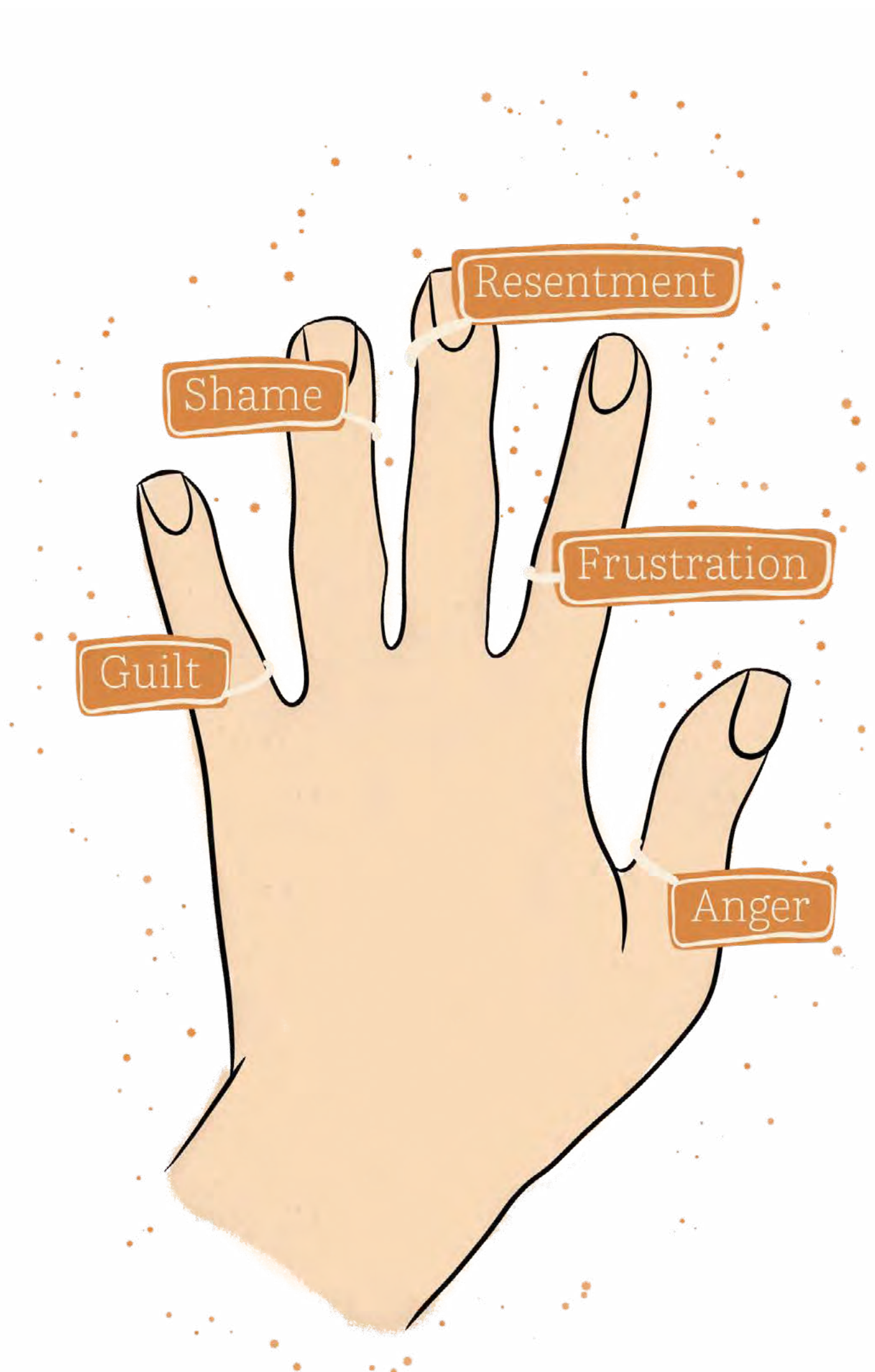
Then the middle finger, the one that gets right up everyone’s nose. Now we get right into the really dark territory of where our anger and frustrations can end up taking us, assuming they are not being easily resolved, assuming they are sticking and

festering. The word here is ‘Resentment’. Believe me, most people do not want to own-up that they are holding onto resentments. They know how bad it is to be resentful, so they hide it, especially from themselves. Which just means that the ‘fire’ of resentment can go deep into their body and does what it does when it festers inside, none of which is remotely good for you. Resentment is what happens when you can’t let go of those fiery feelings that are being projected outwards to something that has happened, from one or another person in your life, or from some other source of pain and hurt in the world. Resentment can come from just about anything or anyone that has hurt you in any way. It can brew, and fester, and take on a life of its own. It can grow into hate.

The fourth finger finally gets us to the point of this exercise, and is the reason I present the concept of the ‘fire’ in this way, as a handful of an idea. No-one ever expects the word for the fourth finger.

Everyone gets the connection between the first two fingers, anger and frustration pinch each other together and are almost the same thing. Everyone understands that resentment is really bad for you and that it suits the middle finger. But what happens when the anger, frustration and resentment is not against someone or something outside of you but is actually turned against yourself. What happens when the fire is turned inwards? When you are the one that you are angry

with? The fourth finger, the ring finger, gets us to one of the two words we use for that awfully hot, uncomfortable feeling when the fire is turned inwards, and it is *Shame*.



The second word for the inner-directed fire, and the last descriptive word for the handful of fire belongs to the pinky, the little finger, the one with the hook in it, and it is **Guilt**. Shame and Guilt are close to each other but also very different in some key ways. They are both as hot as hell though, at least on the inside. As weird and counterintuitive as this might sound as a suggestion, I recommend you to tune into them in your own ‘body-mind’ to feel their differences some time. I think you would have to be actually feeling one of them for this to work, so maybe not right now, but at least when you next have to deal with either or both you might like to try that dark experiment of feeling the way your inner fires live and move.

It may not seem like it, from the outside looking in, but such an inquiry is entirely healthy. In allowing yourself to feel what you have to feel, and allowing yourself to fully feel just how damn hot and truly uncomfortable all the different types of fire are, you are opening up a process of understanding and acceptance that can have profound consequences.

Anyway, if and when you do this experiment for yourself, I suspect you will notice a number of key differences between how shame and guilt actually feel. It is the same with the difference between anger and resentment, the way the heat is different, the way these different kinds of ‘fire’ make your body feel and your brain think.

Shame is so intense, focused, it is like putting some tender part of yourself on to a burning hot ember and then feeling, once again, the eternal shame of something you have absolutely zero chance of being able to go back and change.

Guilt is hot too, they are all super hot feelings, but it is a slippery heat. It aggravates and prickles, it runs over and around the skin, it is a slippery snake of a feeling that twists and turns and never stops still for you to know what to do with it. A lot of people go a little crazy with their guilt.

A lot of people are also in complete denial that they are suffering from it too. Guilt is an incredibly loaded word. In the great trial of life, in front of the judge of our own minds and the jury of every one else's, we all want to plead 'not guilty!' We are all doing the best we can at any given moment, but we keep making mistakes regardless. How can we be guilty of our faults and imperfections if we were honestly doing the best we could at the time? Perhaps a better word for this slippery, crooked, hooked little-pinky could be regret. Shame, guilt, regret, condemnation, recrimination, whatever the word we use to describe the inner-fire is not so important. What matters is that it is real, it exists, and it has the power to do great harm if we do not understand it, and work with it. We deny our fire to our great peril, we acknowledge it and seek to work with it to our great benefit.

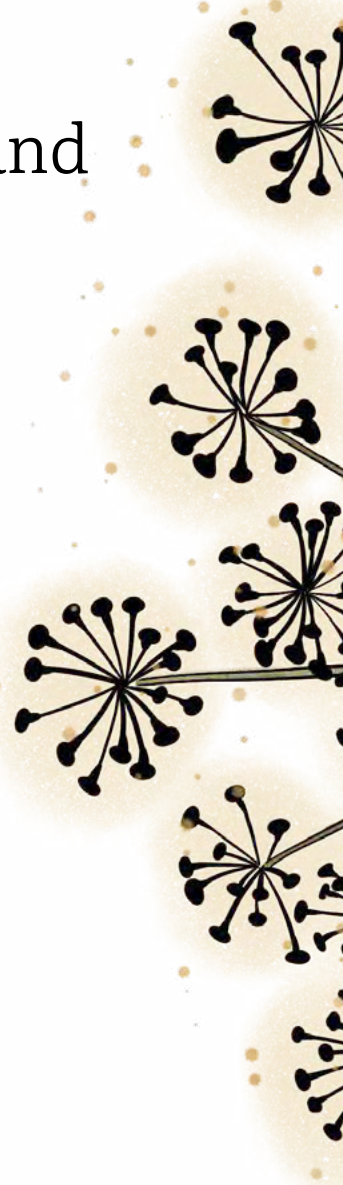
However, you cannot simply go within and then just hold on to the raw fire in any of its emergent, flaring forms. You cannot expect to make friends with it, just like that, not when it is actually burning you. Such a thing would be as impossible as literally holding fire against your bare skin. Unnatural and utterly undesirable.

The ‘fire-work’ which is what I call that remarkable challenge of learning how to accept and understand your inner fire, must be very gradual, very step by step. Just learning how to be with it without trying to get rid of it is the first step. Which just means sitting as close as we can to it without actually getting burnt!

Gradually, step by step, the goal is to eventually make friends with the fire. Not to try to get rid of it, not to put it out. Yes, there will always be a danger in the fire, to you and to the people around you, but it needn’t be a destructive fire. In fact it can be an extraordinary friend. One that gives an energy like no other. A primal, essential, life-giving energy that gives rise to transformation, evolution, change.

In the Map of the Body, the fire energy is centred in the areas that relate most to the parts of us that are hotter and dryer, namely the upper right quadrant of our belly and the lumbar ‘valley’ in the low part of our backs, below our ribs.

Anyone, from any constitution who needs to do firework, has the potential to hugely help



themselves make some actual progress in this most difficult challenge by practising going into these parts of their body and getting comfortable and familiar with the subtle feelings and the low-level fire energy that exist in them, to at least some extent, all the time.

Are you ready to start doing any of that now? Many people, without even realising they are doing it, have an instinctive resistance to taking their awareness into these parts of their bodies. Without consciously knowing why, they are afraid of their own fire and how it can damage themselves and others.

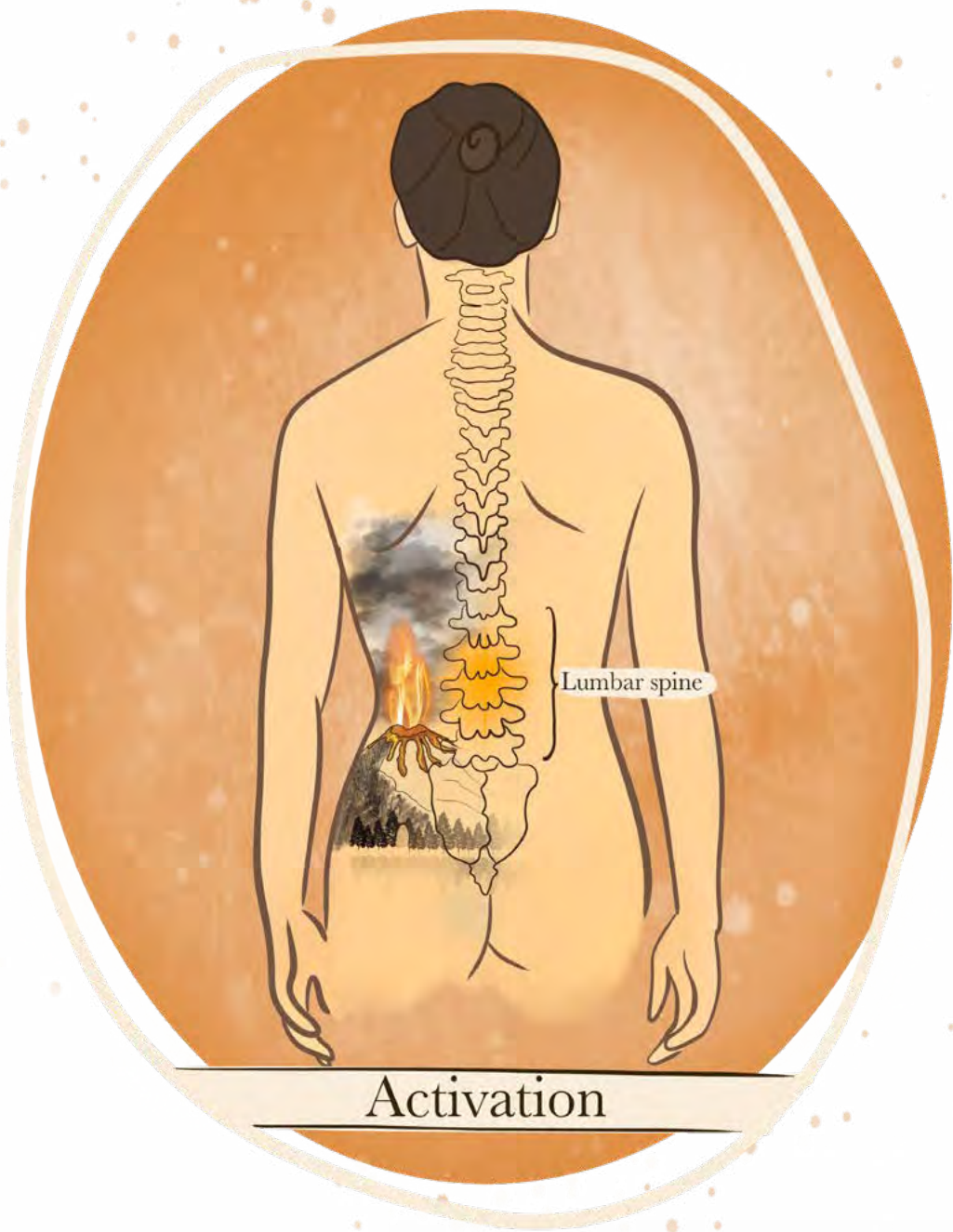
From our earliest cognitive experiences, we are taught to feel shame when we act out, speak out, shout out. We are taught to internalise our fire so that it doesn't hurt others. A great many people, a huge number of people, are doing untold damage to themselves, right now, and at every moment of every day of every year that passes, with the hurt that comes from turning that fire on themselves.



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

1

You could, if you wish, in just a moment, go into the Map of your Belly and your Spine and breathe into that fire. If that is what you would like to do, then now would be as good a time as any to start! And if you are drawn to making a start right now then I want to encourage you to begin with setting an intention. For example, something along the lines of ‘*I want to be ok with my inner fire, I want to learn to accept it, to work with it, and eventually make friends with it*’.



Making such an intention can be extremely powerful. No-one realises how powerful it is until they look back at the journey they have been on and realise ‘*wow, I said I wanted to do that, and I actually did it!*’

Perhaps what I have already been suggesting, and will go on to suggest further, will sound too simple, too easy. Surely we have to make a Herculean effort to control our fire, to stop our anger from hurting others, or ourselves. This is a great lie that is taught from the age of the toddler and beyond. That the fire is a terribly harmful energy, that we cannot control it. That we must teach our children to be ashamed of it by making them feel shame when they express it. That we must above all hide it from everyone except our very closest people. That as much as we can, we must even deny that it even exists.

In fact, that hot and dry and fiery energy is utterly essential to our life and our vitality. In just the same way that our hot, damp energy can show us how to be brave, our internal fire can help us transform that which needs to change.

We will do this same process a second time at the end of this section but if you are ready and willing to make a start now, then close your eyes and take a few breaths with the intention to get in touch with your inner fire. To accept its presence, to welcome it, to make friends with it.



You may see, permeating this work, influences that I have received, in some instances from the great old philosophies from the Eastern world, that reflect in what extraordinary power I see that there can be in practising acceptance and awareness.

But I am also a Westerner, someone who also accepts the need for struggle. Who doesn't just accept whatever fate the place and circumstances of my birth have set up for me, who passionately believes in a true and lasting revolution in our society that achieves freedom for all people. Without the transformative power of a fire in our bellies, there will never be any meaningful change in our personal or collective lives.

This *fire* is not the enemy, it is a deeply misunderstood, extremely powerful, friend. An incredibly dark friend, no doubt, surely the hardest of all the dark friends to make peace with, to be with, but hard is not the same as impossible. It is just like any thousand mile journey that starts with the first step. It begins with an intention, born of understanding, and then step by step, using the Map of the Body, practising endless forgiveness as you repeatedly get it wrong, which is absolutely inevitable, as you inch forwards to reclaim your power, and *'become the change that you want to see in the world'*.



We have been talking about the ‘hot’ dark friends, aka fear and anger, amongst other names. No-one should have any illusions about how impossibly hard it is to be with such feelings when they are in their zenith, when they have come out of their home bases in the low parts of our spine, in the right side of our belly, and are coursing through our blood, our nerves, our entire felt experience.

The cool dark friends are a different matter, we will come to them soon, but please let me be completely clear on this point first, that it would not be any easier to hold molten lava in your hands or have a literal fire against your skin to simply be with, and accept, these hot emotional energies when they are in their ascendancy, pouring through us, flaming over us, consuming our consciousness with their compelling intensity.

Even the worst of all sensations that we can experience, namely pain, which itself can come in 10 thousand different forms and which itself can dominate our awareness over anything, even the worst kind of pain can be met and managed if we can find a way to maintain our courage in the face of it. But if we cannot see any end to it, if we cannot have hope that we can be free of it, or at least be successfully relieved of it enough to remain of good heart in the face of it, then our fear of more pain, or future pain can utterly overwhelm our ability to keep our courage.

This is how people become suicidal, they are in pain and they become consumed by a fear that they will always be in pain. How can such a feeling be called a friend? Surely when it has taken such a hold of a person's being it is the greatest enemy of life and hope that we can have?

It does seem that way sometimes. You have to be very careful with what you say and how far you go with these ideas when you meet a person who is suffering from pain and the fear that comes with pain. Firstly find a way to give them some relief or help them to find the person who can give them some relief, at least enough so that they can take a breath that has some hope in it, and only then maybe consider the wisdom of helping them to find the way to face their fears and to even begin to find a way to make peace with them. Again I say that all that matters, about any of this, is if it actually works. It does, but you have to have journeyed into your own dark lands yourself before you can be of any good in trying to guide someone else into theirs.

The hot dry fire can be just as overwhelming. Think of rage and what people have done in its grip. Who can control such a fire? Any person who has an honest look at the 'fire' will come to the same conclusion, namely that you are damned if you express it and you are damned if you don't.

You can suppress your anger, not speak your mind, hold your tongue, be the ‘better person’, and then live with the fact that nothing will change and you are left with a seething toxic resentment that fills your liver with stagnant bile and poisons your spirit and flesh with destructive energy.

Or you can speak out, raise your voice, trumpet your truth and deal with the high probability that, however righteous it might feel at the time, that you will soon be left with the shame and/or guilt that comes in its aftermath. It is extremely hard to challenge the person you are upset with and have them go away thanking you at the end. People don’t like being blasted with a flame-thrower. They like you when you are agreeable and supportive, not when you ‘lose your cool’ and start shouting at them, or in fact expressing your anger with them in any way, shape or form.

So what is the answer to that? I honestly see this as one of the biggest, if not the biggest problem our entire civilization is facing. Our earth is overheating in exactly the same way that we, as an increasingly connected race, are building up our individual and collective internal fires. More intolerance, more inequality, more hurt, more anger. There is a sense that we, here on our Earth, where we are all breathing the same air, drinking the water, all on the same surface of the same spinning globe, are gradually bringing our pot to the boil. We either change or we perish. It is tempting to say that the

anger itself is the problem but it really isn't, it is the symptom, in fact the anger needs to be there for the change to happen.

I often get angry. I get fired-up. I freely confess this to my patients when we are working together on this extremely tricky matter. They don't believe me at first, they don't want to believe me, but this subject is far too important, and difficult, to not be completely truthful about who we are, when we are approaching trying to work with the fire that is at its heart. I tell them that I have a fire in my belly about all kinds of things, and that it can burst out of me at a moment's notice. I am not a violent man, not whatsoever, no-one around me ever fears for their safety, but I can get terribly angry sometimes. Most often it is with the people I most love, because of course they have the power to hurt me far more than people I don't care about, so then afterwards I am an ashamed man, and a guilty man, as I process the aftermath of breathing fire from my mouth. I have no claim to any transcendence of any of this, but I am working on it nonetheless and, here and now writing about it, I can honestly say two things.

The first is that, despite having plenty of anger and frustration, shame and guilt, I do not harbour resentment. And the only reason I can honestly say that is because of just how much I know it ends up hurting me if I do! I have tried the many and varied ways to suppress and stop myself from expressing my fire when it rushes from my belly to my lips and,

whilst there can be a weird kind of gloating sense of superiority over the person you are in conflict that comes from it that feels good just at the time, and for a little while afterwards, I have consistently found that not getting fired up and letting it out but instead suppressing my fire within inexorably leads to the most god-awful feeling of resentment.

Sooner or later, if I have not expressed my anger, let out my fire, I start nursing my hurts and building a feeling that I know only too well. It is a brooding, simmering, hurtful and hateful energy, it is resentment. The great crazy genius, the father of psychiatry, Sigmund Freud, said that depression was anger turned inwards. He's right about that. Resentment just ends up hurting you, first and foremost. Your spirits drop, you lose your spark, you fall into the abyss.

I have tried all the methods I could to 'hold my fire' when I actually needed to speak, and I have seen the same result every single time, however much I have tried to convince myself I am being the better person and that I am doing the right thing. This has been true for me and it is true for everyone I have so far had the good fortune to get to know well enough to find out such things are true for them too.

I know that a great many people would vehemently disagree with me about this; their creed, their religion, their upbringing or their conditioning tells them that on no account can they raise their voice

and lose their cool and that anyone who does so is contemptible, to be scorned, typically to be given the ‘silent treatment’ until they learn to behave better.


I’ve seen a lot of that kind of repression and silent treatment thing in my 30 plus years of working closely with people. Again, all that matters is if it works, or even if it ever works in this case. So, does repressing your fire and not speaking out when you are hurt and angry work? No, It does not, it just leads to toxic, seething resentment, usually combined with a total and complete denial that they might be making things a hundred times worse by stewing on them instead of getting them out in the open. And if the other party is the one who is getting vocal and expressing their anger then it is entirely they who are at fault.

So, the suppressed rage, with the resentment that inevitably follows, combines to prevent the change that needs to happen to start healing the hurt. Then the bad fire, the destructive fire, the one that needed to come out but has instead been turned within starts to build, and build. It grows, and grows until there is one and only one inevitable consequence; hate. I don’t think I need to spell out what hate leads to.

My second claim, as a self-confessed angry man, to have any kind of right to be talking about any of this, is that I really do practice



the methods I am encouraging you to try out for yourself. In learning the Map of my own body, allowing the feelings and emotions that are inside me to exist without judgement or condemnation, even going so far as to sometimes feeling love and acceptance for them, I feel that I have come a long way already on my path. I express my anger as quickly and clearly as I can and I am very quick, quicker and quicker, to let it go, to not sulk, to not hold resentment in my heart, to come back to peace, and love. Wanting to support the other person to find their way back to peace and love with me too. To be willing to see my faults in what has happened, to be ready to acknowledge them and say sorry, which means to recognise when I did something wrong and can do my best not to do it again, and so can ask for forgiveness. So, does expressing anger, giving a challenge, and then quickly letting it go and seeking the way back to peace and support work? Hell yes it does!



I was deeply involved in Eastern spirituality in my youth. For four years, as a very young man, I became a kind of monotheistic Hindu priest, practising strict celibacy, living in a community of brothers and sisters, meditating for hours every day. I arrived in the mountains of Rajasthan in India a month after my 18th birthday

and lived with the Yogis, occasionally experiencing a kind of otherworldly bliss that is impossible to describe but that frequently bubbled through me with irrepressible laughter.

Of course, we were all just trying to escape ourselves into higher and higher states of exaltedness. You can probably do the same thing with certain chemicals, though they might have a different kind of cost! Perhaps some people attempt to ascend such heights in different ways with great fame or wealth. Whatever the path, I see it all now as an illusory seeking for what isn't. A denial of what is. Eventually you have to come back to who you are, to what is, and it is whether you can face the truth of that or not is the question.

Anyway, whilst not attempting to transcend reality for many a long year now, I am deeply grateful for the experiences and at least have travelled those paths of meditation etc. to know what they are, and what they are not.

I know this is provocative of me, and here is a good example of my fiery nature, that in subsequent years, when I came off the mountain and into the marketplace, literally and figuratively, and have met the person who follows one of a hundred such spiritual-type practices, someone who seems self-satisfied, who is no longer seeking the truth because they have found it in this or that Guru, this or that practice of meditation or mindfulness, I have asked

them ‘if you are happy but your brother is unhappy, are you happy?’

I suppose anyone could, at least in theory, find peace on a cool Mountain top while the world was burning underneath them. Peace, but not love. If you know, you really know, in your heart, in your soul, that we are all one family, that we are all part of the same human being, then you begin to love your brother as yourself, and so how could you be happy if your brother is unhappy?

I am obviously encouraging you to go within, to learn the Map of your Body, to learn and release the impediments to your self-healing, to learn and make friends with your base elements, your humanity, but please, do not stop there. As much as you can help yourself, help others. Do not live to only serve yourself. ‘Self-satisfied people do no good’ (Lao Tzu).



If you have any kind of fire in your belly about anything then listen to it! It is showing you, like a light, that which is in your life that needs to change and, once you start, you will see that the change that you have made shows you the change that is needed next! I will always deeply love the Eastern promise of peace and love through self-realisation, but it is

not enough and it will never be enough. We need our incredibly challenging hot dark friends in the picture as well, because of what they bring to the party once we stop fighting them and start making friends with them.

Fear brings courage, fire brings change, and we actually do need change, anyone who denies this has simply built themselves a high enough wall that they are living behind. Getting safe and removing yourself from challenging people may well give you a quiet life but, so what? You will live and then you will be gone, for eternity.

What strands will connect to your thread in the great tapestry from your weaving your way into the lives of others, including those who will go on when you are gone? Whose lives have you touched, who in turn will touch others lives? Which young people, who themselves will have children, who themselves will have children, all of whom, every one, so long as they live, will keep weaving the great tapestry of humanity for as long as we can survive ourselves. Survive the burning fires of our hurts and inequalities, survive the mad fears born of our mortal minds. Peace and love yes, please yes, but let us have change, and the courage for it too.



So, if it is impossible to be with the hot dark friends of fear and fire when they are in their racing, raging, spreading states, or at least it is as improbable to be able to be with them in an open friendly way as it would be to hold lava in your hands or have fire on your skin, then what are you supposed to do with them, aside from deal with their aftermath?

This is the premise, the idea that can only be tested by putting it into practice and seeing what happens. That if you learn the Map of your Body and how to be with what is there right now, all the time, usually quietly, under the surface, but still there and able to be felt, and related to, and understood and so accepted, that many interesting and unexpected things will develop. Good things, transformative things.

So, what do you actually do? You just simply allow your awareness to go within and, like a traveller who is exploring the terrain of their inner world, you start to feel what there is to feel and go where you are able to go. The Maps of the Body can help you to gently explore the inner terrain of your deepest and sometimes darkest feelings. I cannot tell you how much better this is to do when things are quiet, not in crisis, not overwhelming. In fact, surely it is the only way we can even begin to make friends with such difficult presences as fear and fire!

Ok, it's really only useful to talk about all of this up to a certain point before the words start actually

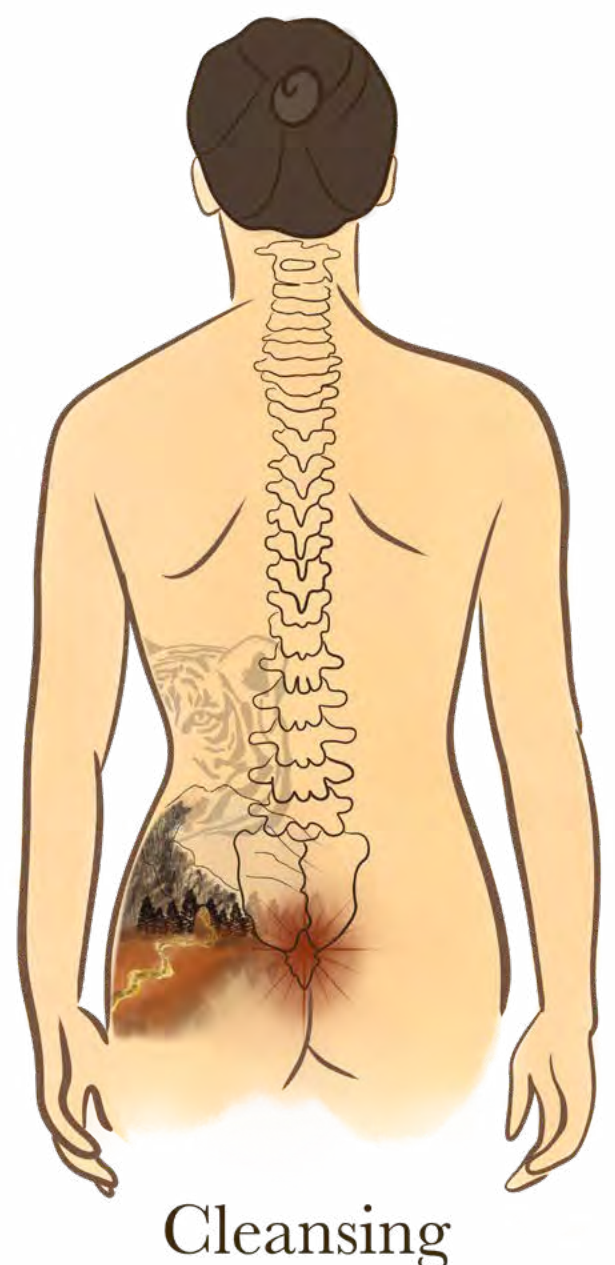
getting in the way. In just a moment, (after a few more words!) I want to suggest another internal experiment to put this into a more experiential form of learning. In fact it is a dual-experiment. One part to the dark friend of fear, the other to the dark friend of anger. The hot dark friends together, what a party, what fun!



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

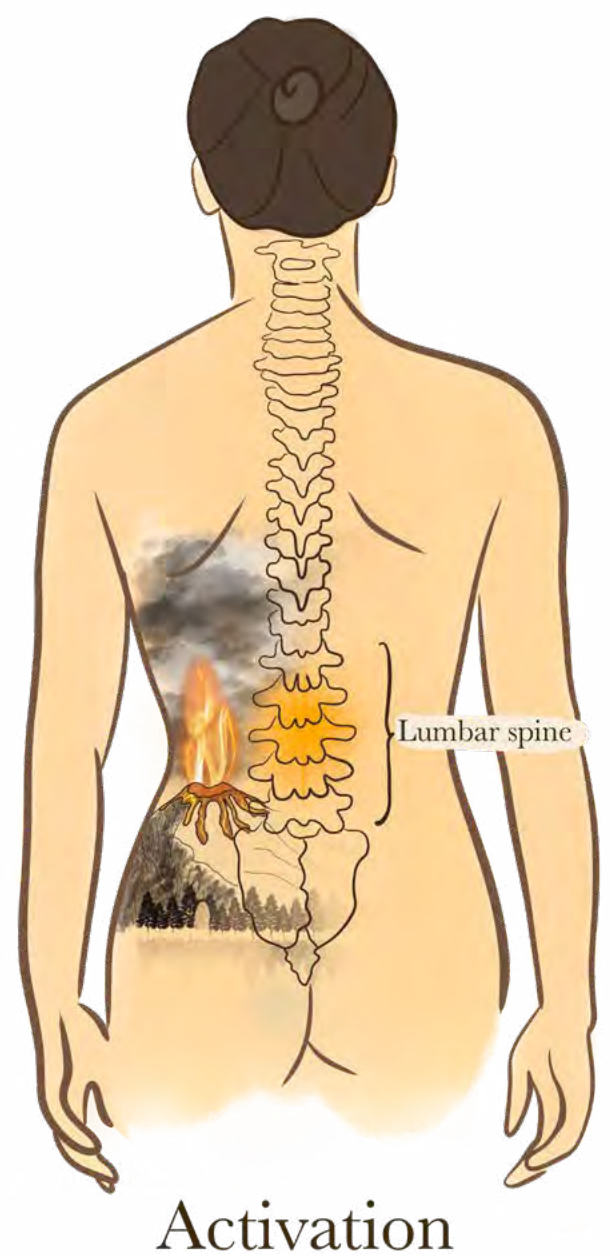


So, one part of the thought experiment is to connect with the presence of the hotter, damper energy within your body at the base of your spine and, at the same time, in the lower right side of your belly. You (hopefully) did this exact same inquiry when you were exploring the home territory of the Cleansing energy in the Cycle of Healing in your body. Remember that these areas are very close to each other physically but that there is usually a lot of moving energy down here too.





The second part of this experiment is to feel the connection between your lumbar spine, a little higher than the very base of your spine and then the upper right hand side of your belly, under your ribs. Remember we did this with exploring the Activation energy within the Cycle of Healing. These two areas aren't so close to each other physically but they are deeply connected energetically.



The purpose of this experiment is especially to feel the heat of our inner being, how it feels and moves within, and how it relates to both the elements in the Cycle of Healing and some of our key feelings at the same time.

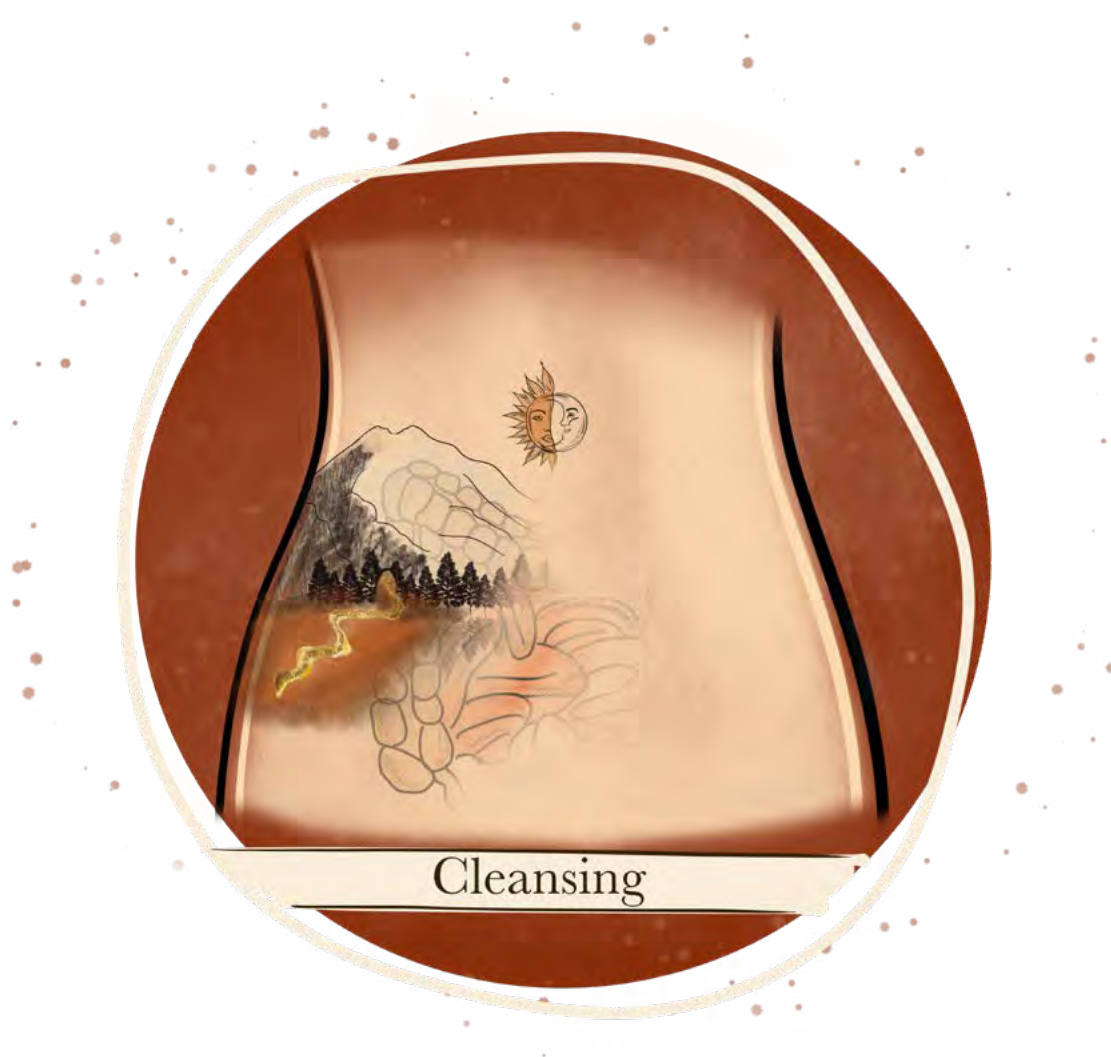


However subtle the experience of the ‘heat’ or the feelings might seem, remember subtle is good because it is gentle and easy to get comfortable with. All we are hoping to do here is to make a very simple connection between the healthy, natural, very real, very alive ‘heat’ within our body and the feelings that connect with that heat. It is a very similar inquiry to what you have done before. The layer we are adding is simply one of awareness that there is an emotional connection here that is just as important as the physical ones that we have previously explored.

I suggest taking it one at a time, but to go back and forth a few times. When you bring your awareness within you can experience here is where the energy of heat and damp, and Cleansing, and also the great dark friend of Fear live, down in the base and the bottom right. Take a few moments, a few breaths to explore and just feel what there is to feel, however

slight, however subtle. Then move to the next area with your inner eye. Here is where the energy of a drier kind of heat, and Activation, and also the great dark friend of our inner fire makes it primary home.

The intention is simply to become aware of both areas, without judgement, without rejection. Allowing whatever you feel here to be whatever it is. Growing your awareness, understanding, and acceptance. I invite you to take some deep breaths now, to close your eyes, and to go within, to the low parts of your spine, and the right side of your belly and just listen, and feel and watch what's there. That's all there is to do. If some further steps are needed now, then your body and the intelligence it contains can show you the way from there.



— E M O T I O N A L H E A L I N G

Nourishment & Loneliness

However much we are aware of them, our permanent-resident dark and hot friends do exist, and they are not easy tenants to have living in the home of our bodies. The dark but cool friends may be just as hard to live with but they are probably much easier to explore, and possibly easier to come to terms with, if we will but try.



Because now, at last, we rise above the waist band to ascend the mountain of the mid-back and we move across from the hotter, yang, swampy or fiery infernos of the right side of the belly to the cooler, yin, open savannas and underground pools of the left side of the belly.

The dark friends in this territory are equally formidable but they do not rush and rampage around the body like the hot elements sometimes do, rather they lie more still, and concentrated, and they are therefore considerably easier to both feel

and focus on. And what extraordinary gifts they bring to the seeker for the truth of what lies beneath them, the joy of love, the treasure of peace.

Earlier, writing about facing fear to find courage, channelling anger to make change, I am fully, 100% aware of how hard any of that is for people, including myself. It's not that we don't like talking about the things that worry and frustrate us, we talk about those things a lot. In fact, if you take all of that out of a conversation there often isn't much left to talk about!

The 'hot' dark friends produce a lot of steam and smoke and talking is good, it helps to release enough of them that they don't do some serious damage by being held within. But actually going into the feelings with the intention to accept them and stop trying to get rid of them is an entirely different proposition. We might not mind advising someone else to face their fears or sit with their furies but when it comes to feeling them ourselves it can be *'quick, show me the exit!'*

If you have made a beginning with this, by going into your own map and starting to feel what there is within then, however humble, however tentative those first steps have been, I applaud you wholeheartedly. You have begun a sacred journey to know yourself as you are, which means you have become a seeker for the truth.

What follows is a continuation of the inquiry and, in many ways, it is simpler, because we are looking to find our way to the emotions and feelings that come with the cooler side of the spectrum and those feelings that are cool are far less eruptive, and less shape-changing but I do not say that they are less uncomfortable.

Before we go on, I want to remind you of something that is so essential to all of this that, to lose sight of it will be to utterly lose the thread and the point of this entire process. It is simply to remind you of something that you and everyone else already knows instinctively, namely that there is an intelligent, self-healing and utterly alive force that lives inside you, just as it does in all other living beings.

Call that force whatever you will, but this is all that we are working with, to better understand how it exists and moves and heals and acts inside us. To get in touch with it, to make friends with it you could say. The whole purpose of the ‘map-learning’ process is to better understand it when it will show itself in the reality of the living experience.

I am asking you, as you hear me out on these old ideas rebaked fresh, to learn them experientially and not just theoretically. Therefore, as you have seen from time to time I have been asking you to cast your awareness within, to see what you can see and feel what you can feel.

This is a kind of study, a learning process. In real life, when you are troubled by illness or by bad feelings, that is when any of this must be put to the test to see if it actually works and it actually helps. You may very well have compelling feelings, or we could call them symptoms, that will demand a great deal of attention if you can give it.

Much of what I am saying here can be simplified down to this; our feelings, our symptoms, are there for good reasons, we need to not just seek an escape from those experiences but rather give our attention to them in a way that brings understanding, along with whatever shifts or changes might need to then follow.

In small ways or large, that bodily intelligence within will eventually make its existence known to us. Including something that is inevitable, if we live long enough, which is that there will be storms. How much better it is to know the terrain of your inner world enough to be able to manage a time of crisis in good faith, without having to run to someone or something to rescue us from ourselves, though there can be a time and place for that too...



LOOK AT THESE WORDS WITH ME FOR A MOMENT

- Loneliness
- Loss
- Sadness
- Grief
- Emptiness



Counting those five terrible words off on five fingers to show a patient some of the different faces of this dark friend would feel cruel, I've never done it. Plus it would be pointless, which is another word that could be added to the list, as could the awfully loaded word 'depression'.

Anyway, it's a terrible list, isn't it. Of course, they are just words, symbols, they are not the feelings that they represent and won't mean anything unless you take a moment to look at any one of them, just one, and allow the tiniest chink in your internal armour to open up to make it personal. If you were to do that, then I could say again, it's truly a terrible list, isn't it, and you would emphatically agree.

So what was this about these cooler dark friends being somehow simpler to get around or get to? They are simpler, to get to, to understand, but they are not easier to feel, they are just very different to the hot feelings. They are cool, they can stick around, sometimes for what feels like an eternity. They are not so quick to go places. A lot of people make their home with them, even to 'live lives of *quiet despair*'.

I do have to pick one, just as I did with 'fear' and kind of did with 'anger' though obviously I prefer 'fire'. The one I pick from this bunch is 'loneliness', not because it best reflects the others, I pick it because of the terrible truth that comes with this great dark friend, which is that we truly are alone,

in so many ways, and there is nothing more revealing of that truth than that every tiny speck of sadness that we feel utterly and completely belongs to us. No-one can feel what we feel and nothing is more isolating, more separating than this feeling, in all its many colours and tones.

How can such a feeling be called a friend? Because of the most extraordinary gift that this dark but true friend can bring, that of love. No-one can know what love is without knowing its opposite. The baby cries with its soul-wrenching misery because its stomach is cold and dry and empty and its heart is full of the most aching, painful separation from its source of love, warmth, comfort and food. The new lover goes into a kind of madness between the ecstatic high of feeling truly accepted, deeply wanted, and the devastating low that follows the separation of a quarrel when *'it hurts so much I feel like I could literally die!'*



We don't have to be a baby, or a new mother, or a new lover, to know what love is, or to know what we are missing by its loss. But if we would grow our love, open up to it, be in love with what we have, who we are and what there is, then we are probably going to need to make better friends with its dark side, because you don't

get one without the other.

How many times in your life have you heard people talk about ‘*listening to their heart?*’ Nearly everyone says it about the things that matter to them the most.

In the spirit of the intention of this work, and to help understand the dark friend of loneliness, to get in touch with the nourishing energy that flows through the upper left quadrant of the belly and the mid-back of the spine, to explore the world of the cool and dry, I am shortly going to ask you to take this advice completely literally, and actually practice listening to your heart in a real, entirely palpable way.

Before I introduce you to this most simple, most wonderful practice, I must kind of warn you that, going within with the kind of intention that we have here, to literally listen to your heart, is an extremely powerful form of meditation and it can have rather profound consequences. Once you start doing this you will not be able to go back to where you were before, it is, quite simply, transformative. If you don't feel ready for anything that sounds that loaded then skip ahead, come back to it when you are. Like many of the ideas presented here, it is exceptionally simple in theory, but it is when you bring it into actual practice that everything starts to a) make sense and b) become useful - i.e. things actually happen.

Also to make a note that, whilst you direct your attention inwards in these ways, that there is every possibility that there will be some very important and rather unfinished business that will soon come to your attention in the Map of your Body. If so, please listen to it, pause the heart-listening (or other inquiry) until later and just come back to it once you have given your attention to the feelings that need to dominate your awareness for as long as it takes for them to be heard, and processed.

Listening to your heart, literally, is deceptively simple. You do it with your breath and you do it by focusing on the gentle, smooth, in-and-out of your breath, with the 'wave' that ripples through that breath every time your heart beats.

Imagine a body of water that alternates from being completely still one moment and then having a ripple run it over the next moment. In this analogy, the breath is like a body of water that has waves that ripple over it, and those ripples are coming from the beat of the heart. You can feel them, and kind of 'hear' them.

I won't talk about it too much more, because the best way, the only way, to get this is to just do it but, in case you find it challenging and might fall prey to thinking you aren't ready for it, or are lacking something essential that means you can't do it, I want to reassure you that I have done this exercise hundreds of times, with certain patients and

students, in person and that everyone truly can do this. It just takes a little practice to get it and then, once you've got it, like everything, it gets easier and easier to do.

Another quick comment is that you are not 'listening' with your ears, you won't literally hear your heart unless you use a stethoscope or get up very close to someone else's heart with your ear to their chest, but 'listening' conveys the idea of a passive process where you aren't straining to get to something, but rather it is just coming to you. Please do not worry if your previous experiences of 'hearing' your heartbeat have only been when you were in acute anxiety or doing some highly strenuous activity, or even when your heart felt bad, out of rhythm, or even hurting for one reason or another. This process is done by following the breath, which itself is very calming, so you won't hear your heart in stress or feel it in discomfort. It is, in fact, a deeply comforting, relaxing, meditative experience that can be, as mentioned, rather transformative once you become accustomed to it.

Why can it be transformative? For this reason - the mind and body are all part of one continuum, they are not in the least bit separated as we are inclined to think of them or describe them to be. If you bring your mind to the awareness of your heart, on any kind of regular basis, then you will become a much more heart-centred person. No-one who becomes more heart-centred can remain the same. They will

increasingly realise that their minds are not their true centre. They will increasingly see that the never-ending desires and judgements of their minds are a see-saw of unhappiness where peace and contentment are never found, only promised. They will start listening to their heart, and their gut, and so they will get more and more in touch with their life-force, their spirit, their real self. Becoming heart-centred will make them people who know what is true, what matters, and what endures.



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

Shortly, I will ask you to take a few moments to shut your eyes, focus all your attention on the rise and fall of your breath and then catch the wave and the ripples that come through it from your heart. It may take a few breaths to really get the hang of this and you may certainly find that you repeatedly lose the thread of the ripples for a few moments before you can catch them again, especially at the top and the bottom of the breath.



The first step is to catch the beat, the ripples.

2

The next step is to follow the source of the ripple into its centre where you will literally be able to feel your own heart beating. That's it, that is really all there is to it. When you get there, take as long as you like to stay in the awareness of your beating heart, one breath, or 10, or 100, your extraordinary centre will not stop, not for a very long time, and nor will it stop you from taking your attention elsewhere, which of course it will soon go, however close a listener you are.

Close your eyes and start breathing with the intention to learn how to literally listen to your heart now

As all the poets, writers, musicians, lovers, mothers, babies and everyone else who ever lived and ever will live knows, the heart is the centre of our actual, felt, love. I don't think we do have a centre for our 'soul', but if we did have a centre for our it, for the life energy that heals us when we are sick, then it would surely be in our heart too.

I want to say something more about those hard, sad, lonely words that I listed earlier. Anyone who has felt real grief, true loss, will know that it can sit like a stone in the base of the belly. I hope you do not have such a stone in you right now, but if you have had it then you will know exactly what I mean.

I see that the emptiness of loss, loneliness and grief etc starts in the heart and the stomach but that it builds and accumulates into a heavy, stuck presence that holds itself in the bottom of the belly, ever so slightly to the left, where the cool waters lay.



It will hugely help to learn how to be with that energy in a way that gives it room to process and be released and I want to talk more about that when we come to the last of the four great dark friends in just a moment.

For now, I just want to say that, if you are personally struggling with loneliness, loss, sadness etc. to not be afraid to start to listen to your heart and to tune into the life force of your belly and its hunger to live and be nourished!

How do you heal a broken heart, how do you heal grief? We all know that people can heal from such wounds but that not everyone does, why? I think that it must be, and always will be, a process. It is never an event. It is a step by step journey. Surely, the best way to help that journey is to take one step at a time, listening to the heart, acknowledging the emptiness of loneliness, allowing life, and love, to come back in, because that is exactly what it wants to do.



— E M O T I O N A L H E A L I N G

Relaxation & Fatigue

Finally, we come to the last of the four quadrants; rest and relaxation in the Cycle of Healing and, of the great dark friends; fatigue.



I almost convinced myself to start with this one. Tiredness and fatigue, and the aching need for rest, is so universal, so palpable, that anyone who needed to understand my core thesis here could immediately feel for themselves, at a personal level, the essential truth that when you fight against your feelings, you only make them worse.

But, when you accept the feeling, in this case fatigue, and welcome it as the remarkable friend that it is, sent by the life-loving, self-healing intelligence as it is, that there is an immediate, consistent, reliable, blissful release. In this case a release of tension, followed immediately by that most extraordinary gift that this particular dark friend brings; which is peace.

All these cycles, physical, emotional, energetic, spin both ways. It might have been somehow easier, at least for some people, in this area and in others, to start at the cooler, damper, relaxation end of the spectrum and move counterclockwise around the belly and the Cycle to the cooler and dryer nourishment, then the hotter and dryer activation, then to finish with the hotter and damper cleansing.

Nevertheless, here we are at last and I want to share something personal about why this one of the four is so especially poignant for me. If you have read this work from the beginning, you will remember the story I shared about how I came to take an animal's life to feed my daughter, and the life-changing experience that followed from that.

There have been a few other such moments in my life. Another was what led me to start SIMH, another was once upon a time when I was walking in the Port Hills, that my home city of Christchurch is nestled against, and the following poem came to me, seemingly ready-made.

Tiredness is my friend
he shows me the way
when I would have just kept going,
otherwise

Tiredness is my friend
he teaches me how to heal
when I would have done myself harm,
eventually

Tiredness is my friend, my dark friend
and when I just stop fighting him
he gives me the sweetness of peace,
surrender



Much further understanding followed from this, as you have been reading, but that first insight, the one that showed the way to the others, often feels like the place we need to start.

Tiredness is, by far, the number one reason people seek medical help. Pain is in second place. Tiredness is the universal symptom of virtually every chronic illness. Tiredness is the way our mind and body expresses that our self-healing life force is low and that we need to rest in order for something to heal, or just because we have become worn out from the day and we need to rest in order to renew for another day, another spin of the Earth around its axis!

Oh, but how much people fight against their tiredness! When we have a baby or a small child in our care, we look for and even celebrate the signs of their becoming tired because we know that it is so essential for them to rest and that, so long as they do, they will be happy and healthy, and we too will get the rest we desperately need, because surely there is no harder (or more important) job in this world than caring for little children.

We love that our children get tired and get to bed, but when we become adults we forget to take care of ourselves in the same way. Have you who are reading this had the experience of looking after a child who fought against their tiredness because they just didn't want to stop?

We all know what happens when they do that. We say ‘*it will end in tears*’, because we know that there is only one inevitable outcome if the child in our care keeps fighting their need for sleep. So, how strange it is that it is so commonplace for us adults that, using the stimulants of screens, substances, or stress, we fight against our fatigue and keep ourselves up and going, day after day, night after night. How can our health not break down? We don’t even have the resilience that children do!

By the time I meet the person who is most blocked in the relaxation phase of their Cycle of Healing, it is extremely common that they have honestly forgotten how to relax and what it is that they used to do to relax. They are so used to pushing through their fatigue that it has become normalised to feel both ‘tired and wired’.

Tiredness becomes the enemy, the hurdle that they must overcome on a daily basis to fulfil their responsibilities. They overcome it with stress, screens and stimulants, and the longer they do it and the older they get, the more you can see the encroaching disease that is the inevitable consequence of not getting enough rest and relaxation. .

When a person uses their will-power to overcome their innate tiredness, they put their mind into a state of dominance over their body. A person can quite literally choose their ‘mind over matter’ and,

because this is against the natural order of things and it denies the body's need for rest and relaxation, over time this actually leads to a disturbed state of mental health as well.

Poor decision making and strained relationships are common signs but another really important symptom of the disturbed mental state is the belief that the sufferer is powerless to do anything about it. People will say with complete conviction '*I can't relax!*'

It is really a great lie, but it is one that becomes very compelling to many people who have been fighting fatigue and have been too long without good rest.

To the person who believes that they can't relax, who has truly forgotten how to relax, who perhaps feels that they must use substances to even get to sleep, one of the first things I often do is to remind them of the fact that, even before they were born, they were masters of relaxation!

We say '*sleeping like a baby*' not because we've been up all night with a colicky or teething infant but because, when they are in good health, they are so utterly without any tension. You can pick up their arm or leg and drop it to see how relaxed and floppy they are. You can make any amount of noise and see that it doesn't disturb them in the least. You can look closely at them, and listen to their breathing, and feel the utter joy and bliss of peace that resides within them. They came in with being masters of

relaxation, we all did, we just forgot how to do it.

In just a few moments I will ask you to take a pause to shut your eyes and go within for a most important inquiry. Before we try this, I want to guarantee you that, right now in this instant, there is already at least some of the presence of the dark friend of tiredness that we are talking about here within you.

Exactly like the other dark friends, it doesn't have to be ascendant in your consciousness or making itself felt in any signs or symptoms of your body for it to be there. You will definitely find it if you open up to it but there is no reason to come to this with any fear or trepidation, you must understand that this presence is not the enemy and, even if you have been fighting it for a long time, it is not waiting to pounce on you to get its revenge. It will not harm you, far from it. In fact, it is truly the intelligence of your own Nature, your body, that knows how to show you what you may have forgotten, which is how to let go and to find inner peace.

You know how gravity works right? How anything that has a strong physical mass attracts other things to it, so we have our Sun that holds the planets, and the Earth that holds us to it too.

So, the energy of this dark friend within the body can feel, when you open up to it, like a black hole that sucks everything into itself, all the light, all the energy, everything. No wonder people fight against

it when they want to keep going, they instinctively know that if they give into it it will suck them into the ultimate loss of control; unconsciousness itself!

It is very ok if you fall asleep a thousand times as you practise making friends with your tiredness, that will simply mean you need to catch up your sleep, not that you are doing it wrong! But every time you practise going into it and accepting it instead of fighting it, there will be a shift, perhaps small at first but it will get increasingly obvious to you, and I predict to others around you as well, that you are gradually finding your peace and getting well.



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

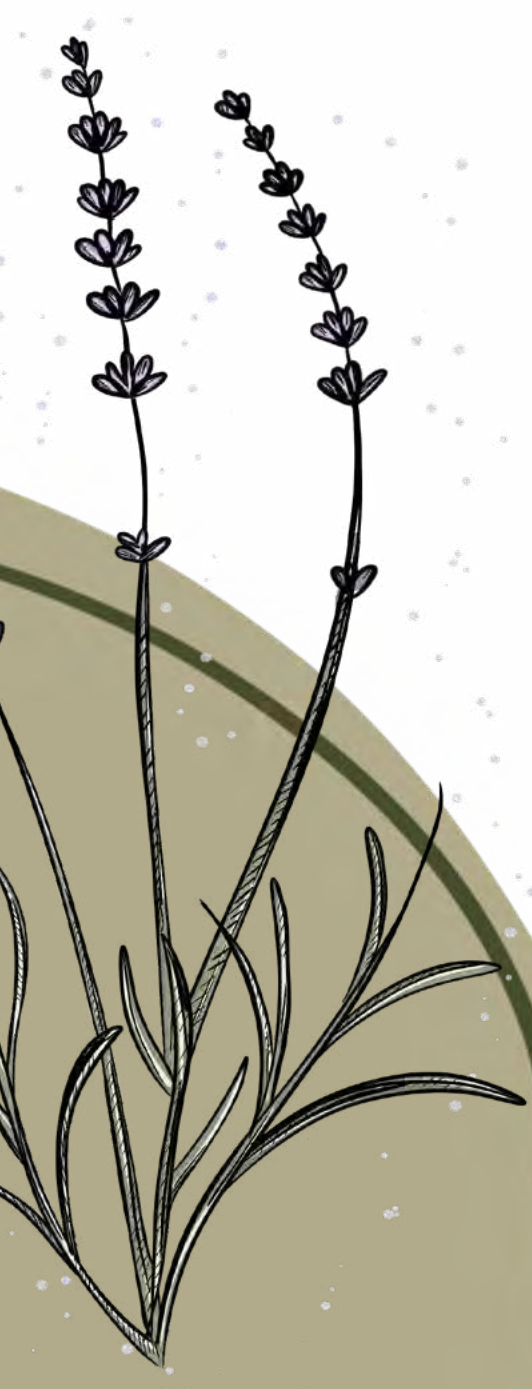
A good way to do this practice is just to let the feeling of tiredness pull you into itself like a centre of gravity. However, there is every chance that this centre will shift as you do this, so you have to set the intention to have a nimble mind and to follow it wherever it takes you.

It is quite likely that you will find that the centre of fatigue begins in your mind, in your head, but then it quickly moves into your neck once you acknowledge its presence and choose not to fight it or to react against its right to exist. Then it will likely move here or there. The dark friend of tiredness can inhabit every single cell and organ of our bodies but it does especially make its home in the upper part of our spine, where there is the bridge between the mind and the body, and the lower left quadrant of our belly, where there is another kind of bridge between everything we take into our bodies and what we release out into the world once we have processed it.





I warmly encourage you now, or as soon as you are ready, to take some slow breaths, bring your awareness within, to wherever it takes you, and set the intention and the inquiry to make friends with your fatigue and to allow it to show you the way to peace.



In my day to day practice, most of what I have been talking about above does not enter the conversation. It's not that I don't think many of my patients would actually be highly interested to learn about things like the Cycle of healing and the Map of the Body and I certainly think many would be keenly interested to learn and even practice some of the things we have been talking about in this section about the Dark Friends and Emotional Healing.

It doesn't come up because we have other things that are more important to talk about at the time, namely what they have come for! Perhaps I could go into this material with at least some people if they could come back another time when the crisis has passed or they had got what they came for, but I am booked up for weeks and months ahead and we have a waiting list that sometimes gets very long. We do work hard to get the ones that need to be seen much sooner looked after, and I think we mostly succeed at that, but I am still acutely aware that I need to meet people where they are at and do my best to help them with what they came for and then not invite them back unless they really need to come back!

I pretty much always tell them which constitution they are but then it is often just a note to invite them to learn more about it by sending a link to the introduction on the site. Then it is up to them how far they go with it.

We now have a wonderful number of students who have completed their Certificate with SIMH and who are now in the Diploma program, meaning they have a passion and a calling to become a herbalist and they are dedicating themselves to learning both the knowledge and the practical, clinical skills to become good herbalists ('good' in this context can simply be defined as being able to be both safe and effective).

All these students are warmly encouraged to start practising as 'apprentice herbalists' or 'student practitioners', presumably from their homes, as soon as they possibly can. All the theory in the world is useless if it doesn't work in practice and it is really only when they start getting real, tangible results with their own people by using these old, safe and effective ways that everything truly comes together and they start to build trust and confidence in what they are doing.

I also strongly encourage them to start very simply, for example with just a couple of herbs and/or a tea, and to just give one or at most two simple recommendations in the diet or lifestyle, something that is entirely achievable and doable, and then to have a follow up appointment nice and soon, for example in just one or two weeks, certainly less than a month, so that they can get feedback and adjust or augment their treatment program accordingly.

People go on a ‘healing journey’ when you use these methods and it is most excellent if you can get alongside them to support and guide them on their way. Further to that, as well as the great benefit to the patient from as many closely spaced follow-up visits as needed, the practitioner learns an enormous amount about what the herbs can actually do and how people respond to the herbs as well as how they respond to their advice and guidance. Surely everyone, from any path or profession, learns most of what it is really important to know on the job itself; herbalism is no different. For many years, this is how I worked, and this is how I learned most of what I have here to share.

In more recent years, I find that I only need to see many people just once. They get clear and written instructions to call for a second appointment if they aren’t, for example, at least 70% better within, for example, 2 or 3 months in which case, instead of carrying on with their treatment, we would want to get them in again right away to reassess things or to try a plan B.

In the cases and conditions where it seems likely that they will do well, we don’t schedule a follow up visit because we’re confident that the treatment and the work* they’ve been given will succeed in helping them to get better and so get what they came for. They are then in charge of their treatment, which means that they can choose to stop any medicines

as soon as they are ready to. This is surely the best and most honest way to find out if you still need something. Stop and see if you palpably miss it after a while. If you miss it, then you still need it, if you don't miss it then you've used it for long enough.

*the work is typically things like a change of diet, for example for cleansing, or removing allergens, or doing conscious eating or intermittent fasting, or it could be a commitment to doing things that they trust relax them, or it could be a commitment to take on some kind of exercise, i.e. some 'activation' for their mind or body, or it could simply be a commitment to stopping doing something that we have both identified as a key cause of their condition.

It would be a big problem for us if this approach didn't work because where would we fit in all those additional visits from patients that weren't doing well and needed more follow ups? Even as it is, with most people only needing to be seen just once or twice, the diary is still full to bursting.

It's funny, funny-peculiar, because for the many years that I was developing my practice there was almost nothing I wanted more than to be this busy and to have a really full diary. I had a young family to support, I worried about money, I worried about my reputation and whether I was doing a good enough job. I worried a lot and I know I said this once already but I want to tell you again that

growing a successful herbal medicine business in a place like Christchurch, in a country like New Zealand, where conventional medicine is paid for by the State via our taxes, I had good reason to worry. If I didn't get good results, and I mean really good results, there was zero chance I could sustain my practice and I knew it.

So much of this work, on constitutions, on the Cycle of Healing, came as a consequence of worrying about getting good enough results. How powerful that dark friend of fear can be, to generate so much energy and creativity. It has not been an easy friend to live with but it has been a life-changing one.

Some of my learning has come from reading, some from thinking, but the great majority of it has come from my patients themselves. They are the ones who have taught me the answer to the question - '*what works?*' They are who made me need to look much deeper than treating the condition into how to better understand, and treat, the person behind the condition. For many years, I was able to spend a lot more time with those patients, to try things out with them and then meet them again to find out exactly what happened. That was my practice and that was how I searched for the truth of what is just wishful thinking, weak, and what is real, powerful, and truthful.

Whilst I am still always learning, and especially still learning from my patients every day, I don't feel like

I need to test out my system any more. I know it is solid, it has deep roots and fresh leaves on its many branches. It works but, paradoxically, I don't really have much time to talk about it with people in the one to one consultation space any more. That's the 'funny peculiar' part, which is that now I don't need to be running the experiments and getting people to keep coming back any more, I am too busy to sit and chat about these wonderfully interesting matters, most of which I learned from them!

I mentioned at the very beginning that I imagined myself talking to two kinds of people here, one is the student who wants to become a herbalist, the other is that patient who has their own deep healing journey to go on, who wants to know because they need to know. It is for both types of people that I have kept asking you to take things within, to own them, so that you can use them.

Who knows, if I have been successful with this endeavour, even in part, then it may have achieved more than I could have ever done in person, with all the constraints of time that we all must live within.

I don't want you to feel sorry for me, by the way, I am not a time-poor man, or I wouldn't have had the time to write this! But there is only so much energy to work with patients in the intensity of the one to one consultation and I do limit my hours within the four days I work in the clinic each week.



I also should mention here that I am conducting another quite long-term experiment, which is in the process of training up some good herbalists, including in the area that I live, I wonder if I will be able to spread my load and have more time available in clinic, or will the demand for good holistic practitioners just grow in our community and we will all end up as busy as we can handle? I am guessing the answer will be in the latter camp but we will see, it takes a long time to learn to become a herbalist, so this one will be an ongoing experiment for a while yet methinks.

However, even with all the time in the world, even with an unlimited amount of one to one appointments available, the truth is that you cannot take a single step for another person on their healing, or their learning journey. Their journey belongs to them, at best you can be a good guide and support to them on their way.

In terms of the spiritual matters, the emotional challenges along the way, it is not how much you can teach or support a person that limits the speed and depth of their journey but rather the simple truth that, when a person turns their attention inwards with the intention to see and start to better get to know their great dark friends; their fatigue, their loneliness, or their fire, that there will be one constant obstacle, practically each and every time, certainly at multiple points along the way, and it is fear.

That is why we had to start with it, and why we have to end this section with it too. The Cycle of the body turns around, the top of the neck circles around to the base of the tail, the cool, damp left side of the belly in the base of the gut takes a turn over to the hot damp right side as fast as a blink, as fast as electricity.

Anyone who sets out on a journey to find the truth about their own nature, to become self-realised if you like, must accept that they will have to face their fears first, second and third along the way. It is the primal and surely the hardest of all the dark friends to face. This is why it had to be first.

The biggest obstacle to any of this, perhaps the only real obstacle to any of this, is that when you initially give your attention to anything, it grows. Or at least it appears to grow, to get bigger. In exploring the terrain of your inner self, the great hurdle to overcome is that when you initially open up to feeling whatever there is to feel, you will seem to make it stronger, at least at first.

If you stop fighting fatigue and just allow yourself to feel tired, it is a guarantee that you will feel more tired. Everyone knows that. The same applies to all the dark friends, if you stop staving off loneliness with one or another business or distraction then the grief or the sadness will come up, if it's there. People know this. Certainly this applies for getting closer to any kind of internal fire - it will always feel hotter

at first, of course it will, you are going closer to it.

And that, right there, is exactly where the fear comes in. By giving it our awareness, we feel whatever we are feeling more acutely, more strongly, more clearly and, if we are not very wise, and careful, our minds will rush to a fear-based thought, along the lines of this *‘if I don’t stop this, if I keep allowing myself to feel this way, then I will always feel this way!’*

That thought, however it might be internally phrased or felt, is so compelling, so believable, that the person in its grip does not even stop for a moment to question whether it might actually be true. We are sure, we are certain, that if we let ourselves truly feel as angry as we actually are, or as sad as we can be, or as utterly defeated by fatigue as we have become, that we will never feel good, ever again.

This is all there is to it. People just want to feel good. They don’t want to feel pain and they certainly don’t want to feel sad, angry, fearful or tired! No-one should be under any illusions that a person will explore this kind of territory unless they have to. Not unless they have an utterly compelling passion to understand themselves and others, presumably because they want to make some kind of a change or a difference in their world, or because they are suffering something that it is not fixing itself, or able to be



fixed by the usual remedies that people take to stop feeling hurt, sad, angry, fearful, tired etc.

I know that this is a dark path that I am laying out for the intrepid journeyman or journeywoman. Dark friends for a dark path. You must have an excellent reason to set out on such a journey and you certainly must be entirely ready and expectant that you will be visited by fear on the first step, and the second, and the third. If you are ready for that then I think you could be ready for anything.



TWO YUKTIS

Here are two ‘yuktis’ (an old Sanskrit word meaning device or method) to help. I suggest you study them carefully because, if you travel on this dark and largely untrod path, you will need them both.



The first Yukti, the first method, is to be ok with your increased awareness making things seem more uncomfortable, at least at first. You can handle the increased intensity of experience because you can trust that there will always be a shift, a change, a release, each and every time you step down this dark path with one or more of the dark friends.

If I am wrong about this and that, after an initial increase in awareness, one that may bring some increased discomfort, there is no release, no shift, no relief, then you should take this entire thesis and put it where the sun doesn't shine, metaphorically of course.

I am not promising, or suggesting, that some long held physical or emotional pain will somehow magically disappear when you give your attention to it. If there is a deep knot, an old knot, a many-layered and many-times tied up knot, then it will not just dissolve for finally giving it some of the attention it sorely needs. The knot can loosen though, and in so doing likely show a deeper layer to itself too. Which of course can again make the knot *seem* worse than it was before. It isn't worse but such is the attraction of the path of denial that our minds are ever-ready to convince our spirit to run and hide from that increased sensation, with the quickly rising flush of fear that can accompany it if we do not hold on to the light of our courage.

Facing that fear and staying with the inner feelings has to 'work' each and every time, without any exceptions, ever. It must always be true that it will only seem to feel worse at first, that whatever increase in discomfort or increase in intensity that happens when you start to bring your awareness to wherever in the Map that it needs to go is *only temporary*. That sooner or later, preferably sooner but always, without fail, eventually, there will be a shift, a release, a relief. This must be found to be true or all we will be doing is breaking the first rule of medicine, namely to 'do no harm'.

Put this to the test. Put it to many tests.

2

The second yukti, the second method, is to just ‘follow the leader’. Gradually, increasingly, as fast as you are able, realise that you, the thinking mind, are not in charge of this process but rather that there really is a self-healing, intelligent force inside you that exists as a palpable awareness inside your body, feeling your feelings and taking you exactly to where you need to go. Let it lead, follow it.

This last point is super tricky to grasp with the conscious mind. I have read a lot of spiritual poems, mystic literature, meditation and mindfulness books and they all know full well too that they cannot convey in words what it actually means to let go of the conscious mind and to let your spirit lead the way.

I know I won’t be able to explain it any better but at least I know we are all trying to say the same thing. There is a treasure in the many words out there that you grow to recognise as the truth. It is like a vein of

gold that runs through the rocks. ‘You can’t stand on your own shoulders’, is one of the many ways I have heard it put. ‘You can’t see your own eye’, you cannot separate yourself from your own mind, even though it is not the true essence of your inner being...

Another way I have heard it put that I particularly like is this ‘you cannot go to it, because it *must* come to you’. In this context ‘it’ is that intelligent energy of the life force that, within the universe, is like an ocean, and within us, is like a drop. Our conscious mind cannot go to the ocean, but our drop most certainly can be back within it, in fact it already is, there is just a layer of skin and bone and consciousness between us. When we release our resistance, the ocean reconnects to us.

To get out of the way, to get back in touch with that undeniable force, that inner spirit, it seems that the ‘trick’, the method, the technique, if there ever could be such a thing, is to allow the physical, emotional feelings that are playing around and through your physical body to take the lead and to just follow them where they go, with as little resistance as you possibly can.

That kind of practice takes a leap of faith every time you do it. That the inner intelligence knows what it is doing, that you don’t have to control it, or change it, and you certainly don’t have to judge it. You just trust it and then it takes you where you need to go, to feel what you need to feel, to heal and grow how

you need to heal and grow.

It will help to know something of that 'Map' when this is happening. Actually, I honestly think it could help a great deal. Not to get too caught up in analysing every feeling as belonging to this or that quadrant or this or that dark friend, but mainly just to help your fear that this feeling must be a bad thing if it is uncomfortable, something that you need to run away from, or fix.

Understanding that it is the self-healing intelligence showing you where it needs to focus its energy, showing you where it is blocked, showing you where it needs more of your life force to go, can bring you into harmony with your own Nature.

There is a potential for a very great internal change to happen with this process, and it can heal.



One of the best ways I have ever heard it described is in this poem from Lao Tzu as translated by Ursula K Le Guin.

Le Guin, Ursula K. "Lao Tzu, Tao Te Ching." 1997. Selected Poem, Techniques, p. 13.

Techniques

Can you keep your soul in its body,
hold fast to the one,
and so learn to be whole?
Can you centre your energy,
be soft, tender,
and so learn to be a baby?

Can you keep the deep water still and clear,
so it reflects without blurring?
Can you love people and run things,
and do so by not doing?

...



The ‘learning to be whole’ is really the core theme that runs through pretty much all of mankind’s organised systems of spirituality. In a thousand different manners of expression, the same idea is presented over and over again. One after another teacher says that you must let go of the ‘Self’ to feel and embrace the Divine. However, the vast majority of people interpret this as you must ‘transcend the self’, you must overcome your base natures, you must discipline and order your mind with one of another thousand ‘practices’ so that you can attain a kind of Divinity.

Honestly, all of that is just a great ladder into the clouds of utter and complete fog. There is no transcendent self, no enlightenment state that one can attain, through any amount of effort. This great illusion has sustained religion for millennia, and still does, but it comes around in a different form in our age, in the quest for fame. A thirsting, unquenchable desire to be loved by millions of strangers is no different from a desire to be exalted, enlightened, transcended. That might seem like a peculiar idea to you, if you have not suffered from such desires, but others have.

Returning to my theme, that the ‘trick’ of this travelling within is allowing your body-intelligence to show the way, I must reinforce that you, the thinking mind, will most certainly put up a lot of stiff resistance to it. Both because you are becoming ‘soft and tender’ and dissolving the defences of the

formed personality, and also because it is scary to feel things strongly within.

We don't want to feel anything bad, understandably, and so when uncomfortable feelings come they can very quickly, almost immediately, trigger our fears. If you can see it happen then you can let it go without it having to control you.

That is more or less the essence of one of the greatest of the contemplative traditions; Buddhism. Just to let thoughts arise and depart without giving them any great importance, to let them cross your mind like clouds in the sky.

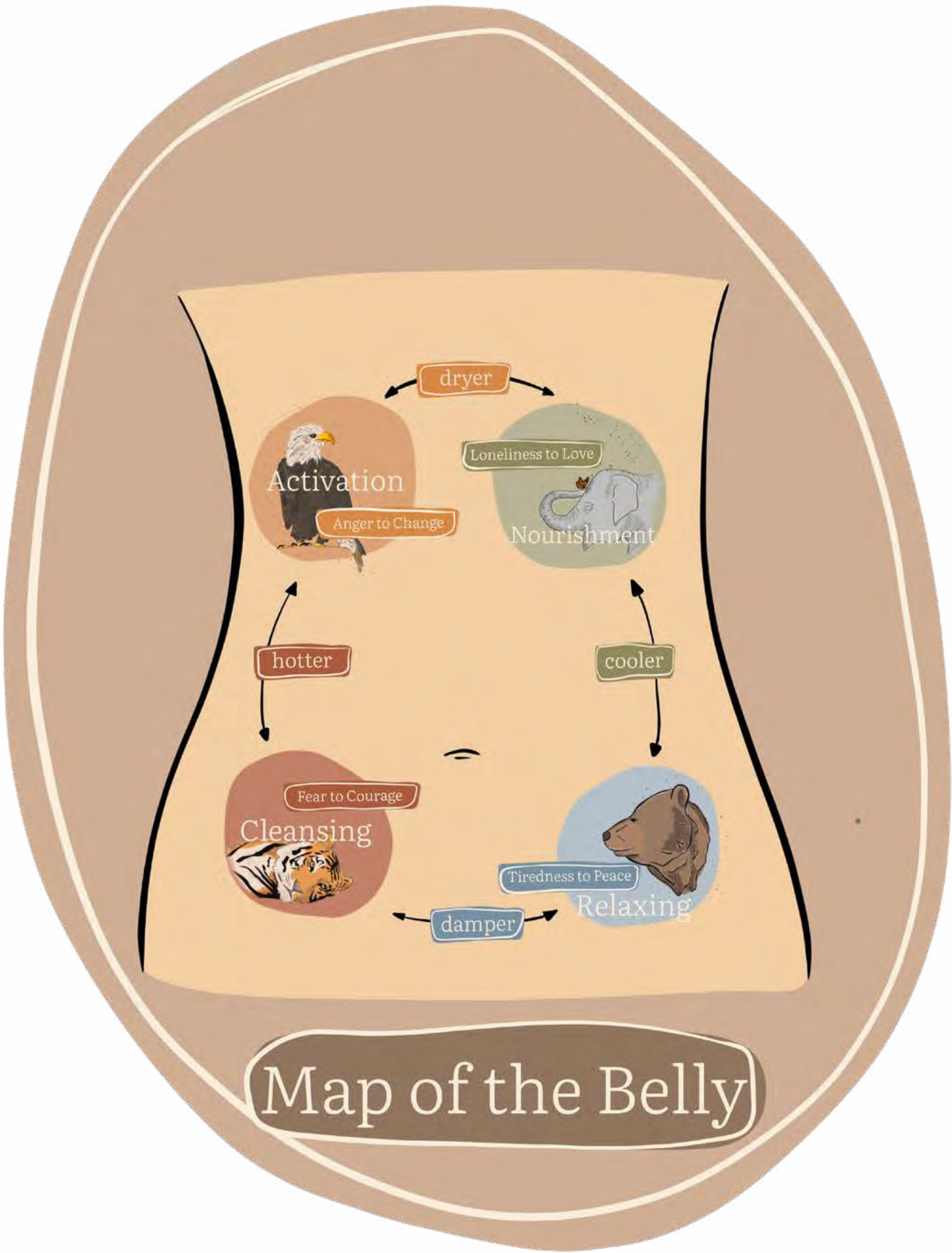
It works because it allows you to easily return back to the here and now of '*being with what is*', which is another phrase that perfectly encapsulates everything that I am hoping to communicate with these many more words than that perfect encapsulation, that nutshell, to just '*be with what is*'

Do you remember the few words I wrote about oneness vs duality way back near the beginning of this work? Learning to be whole is going back to the source of things, to Oneness. As you follow the leader through the Map of your Body, as you feel your fears and other difficult feelings rise and then just as easily fall away, as you centre your energy and become soft, and tender, I think you will feel a sense of that Oneness. Then the Ocean comes to you, you are a part of something so vast, so eternal, that all fear of death, or loneliness, or fire, or fatigue,

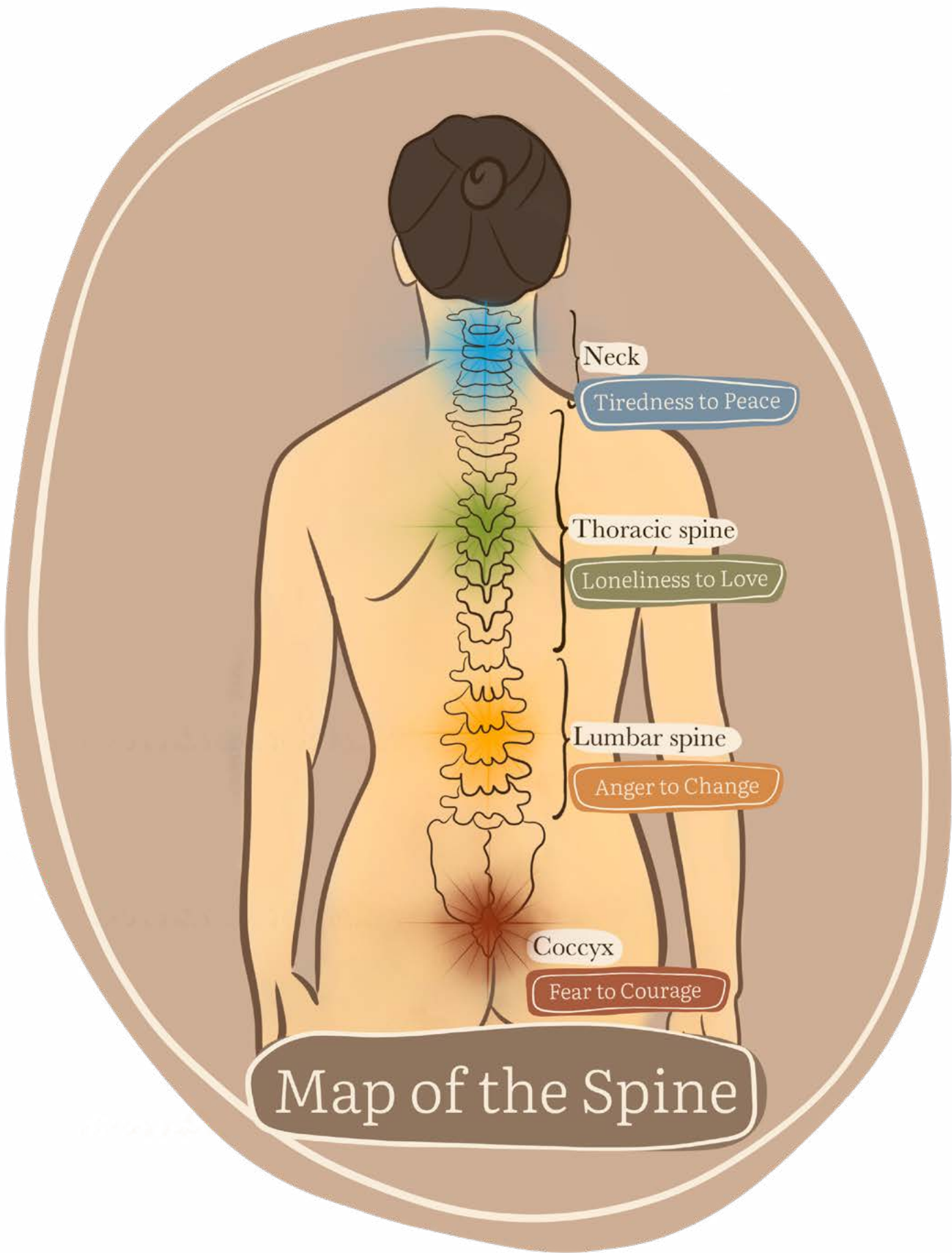
dissolves away entirely. There is only peace, and love, that remains.



MAP OF THE BELLY



MAP OF THE SPINE



— E M O T I O N A L H E A L I N G

Weaving things together

T H E C O N S T I T U T I O N S , C Y C L E S A N D
M A P S W I T H T H E D A R K F R I E N D S . . .

In this last main section, I want to weave together the strands of what we've been going through as well as add one further, most interesting observation. So at the beginning of each constitution there will be a short note to repeat and reinforce the key ideas as they have been presented already.

But before I go on, I wonder how you would answer this question. As you have been reading this work and delving into it, to whatever level has been of your choosing, have you felt any resistance to being typecast as one or another constitution, with all that apparently goes along with that?

If so, then I think it is very natural to feel that way and, especially if it was a strong



resistance, potentially enough to derail you from experimenting and learning further, then I will just ask you to do one thing before pushing back against your own hesitation.

None of us want to feel boxed in, if we have gone through any kind of a 'coming of age' as teenagers or young adults then we have done some unboxing of our own. It is one thing to feel some healthy doubt about whether you can be sure that you are inherently cooler or hotter, dryer or damper, it is another thing entirely if you don't want to pick a side because you would like to be both! The truth is that we all have a vast range of every element inside us, we can all of us run hotter or cooler at one time or another, and likewise run dryer or damper at one time or another... but that we do also have one side of each spectrum that is our base-line, is also true.

If you feel resistant to being pegged down yourself then please, don't fight with it and certainly don't feel like you have to pick a side before you are absolutely 100% sure, however long that takes. Rather, my suggestion is that you take a break from trying to work yourself out and instead keep looking at people around you with the interest to work out their constitution.

If you do this, when you do this, you will start seeing many aspects of them that were not so clear to you previously. You will get insights into their Nature that will help you to both understand them and

accept them. This is a great gift to be able to give to another human being. To understand and to accept is surely to love.

Far from causing you to box people in and narrow them down, by seeing their nature and, essentially, by seeing the issues that they are typically struggling with as part of how that nature needs to work itself out, you will see much more of them, they will open up for you (and very likely they will open up to you if you allow them, as people are very good at sensing when someone is judging them and equally good at sensing when someone is accepting them)

There is no constitution that it is better to be than another. That was the great and fatal flaw of the Greeks, and those who followed them in the way they evolved their constitutional model. They can hardly be blamed for it as their entire society was completely stratified from top to bottom, but it gave them a tremendous number of blind spots to what are the virtues and the challenges of being cooler, or hotter, or dryer, or damper. Please do not repeat their mistake.

Even if you are personally being tortured by someone close to you who you have been able to positively identify as one constitution or another. It might be tempting to then look for the same faults in the next person and then again the next person who occupies the same constitution, and

you might well see them too, but every person from every constitution is capable of every positive human quality as much as they are capable of every negative human quality. Seeing the nature of the beast behind the behaviour helps a great deal to understand, and accept, and even forgive.

Let's go around the Constitutions, and the Cycle, and the Map and the Dark Friends, just one last time.



The Tiger

WEAVING THINGS TOGETHER

- Hotter and damper
- The spectrum for the Cycle of Healing is that of Cleansing
- The quadrant for the Maps of the Body are at the base of the belly veering to the right hand side and the lower hill of the sacrum and the coccyx in the spine
- The first Dark Friend is Fear (anxiety, worry, doubt etc).
- The gift it can bring is Courage



You may recall this, but it was a while back since I wrote about this next part, so please don't feel bad if you don't immediately remember it. The only way any of these things really stick is if you use them in practice, either on yourself or for someone in your care. I talked about how the 'home-base' of the Tiger in the Cycle of Healing is in the field of Cleansing and how their health conditions frequently reflect that core need. I also shared the observation that, whilst anyone from the Tiger constitution can be challenged by any kind of problem in the Cycle, that the area that seems to most often trip them up and be the hardest to get right over the longer term is at the opposite end of their spectrum, at the 'Nourishing' corner, in the cooler, dryer 'Elephant-Butterfly territory'.

So here is a most interesting phenomenon that has been closely observed in many, many people to see that it rings true consistently, which is that

in exactly the same way as with the elements in the Cycle of Healing, Tigers are most likely to have their primary and initial issues with the dark friend that is in their home corner, which in this case is Fear, but then they all end up having their most lasting and difficult



struggles with the dark friend that is the furthest from them, which in this case is Loneliness.

What I was saying just a moment ago about how the constitutional framework does the opposite of closing people down into an expected stereotype is especially and cogently true in this area. When you get under the surface and learn something about their story, you see that every Tiger has had some primary reason to face their fears in their own unique way. Fear is the Tiger's home territory, it is the Dark Friend that they need to face and somehow find their way to be with, to get through, and then to carry on regardless for them to claim their Tiger power and to start to do and be what they are here in the world to do and be.

But then if you go even deeper still, and start to understand what are their biggest challenges you start to see the same pattern, played out differently in every case, of course, but a distinct pattern nonetheless, namely that every Tiger has their own particular struggle with loneliness in their own unique way. No two are alike in the story of the how and the why and the what of it, but the pattern is remarkably consistent and crystal clear to see once you start recognising it.

It seems that the archetypal Tiger journey is to make the most initial progress with their fears, and therefore get some currency of courage to move forwards. Then, only when they have made *enough*

progress with that dark friend that is closest to their corner can they approach the summit of their own personal Everest to find their way to what is at the opposite end of their natural spectrum; i.e. grief, sadness, loss, loneliness, call it what you will, or whatever word best reflects the cooler, dryer, terrain that is the farthest from the hot and damp Tiger territory.

To put this in one kind of nutshell, it seems that the journey of the Tiger is one that has the consistent theme of somehow involving the great search for love. Furthermore, it seems that what they most need to get that most precious treasure of love in their lives is courage.

I think of this as the ‘hero-journey’ of the Tiger. I know that might read as a bit cheesy, but when you get up close to people and get to see what is really going on in their lives, you start to see that there really is a kind of call to heroism in people’s individual journeys. They have to face a lot of challenges that require them to be remarkably brave and resilient. From the outside they may look very ordinary, no-one is going to make a movie about them, but on the inside, where it matters, they are being or becoming the hero in their own life-story and, like any great hero, whilst they are clearly flawed and susceptible to failure, they still strive to achieve the best outcomes they can for others as well as themselves.

This characteristic dark-friend hero-journey for the Tiger is a big idea and, if it will have any merit, then it needs to be thought about, and tested too. In a moment, I am going to ask you to do a quite different kind of thought experiment to what we have done previously. Instead of trying to tune in to your feelings or your *vis medicatrix naturae*, I am going to ask you to open up your memory to delve into your past to find the answer to an important question.

Before I go on, for this next inquiry, it does not matter in the least if you are not a Tiger, or if you are unsure about what constitution you are. Everyone has all the elements within themselves; hotter and cooler, dryer and damper. Every human being who has ever lived and ever will live eventually needs to deal with fear, loneliness, fire and fatigue.

My working hypothesis, now tested and proven many hundreds of times over, is that the hotter and damper Tiger constitution especially needs to deal with fear first, but will ultimately most struggle with loneliness even more, but that it is especially coming to terms with their fears and so finding their courage which can help them more than anything else with this.

Loneliness, sadness, grief and loss show the way to love, because only love can heal loneliness, sadness, grief and loss. But the way that is being shown is one that requires courage to go on it. Courage to

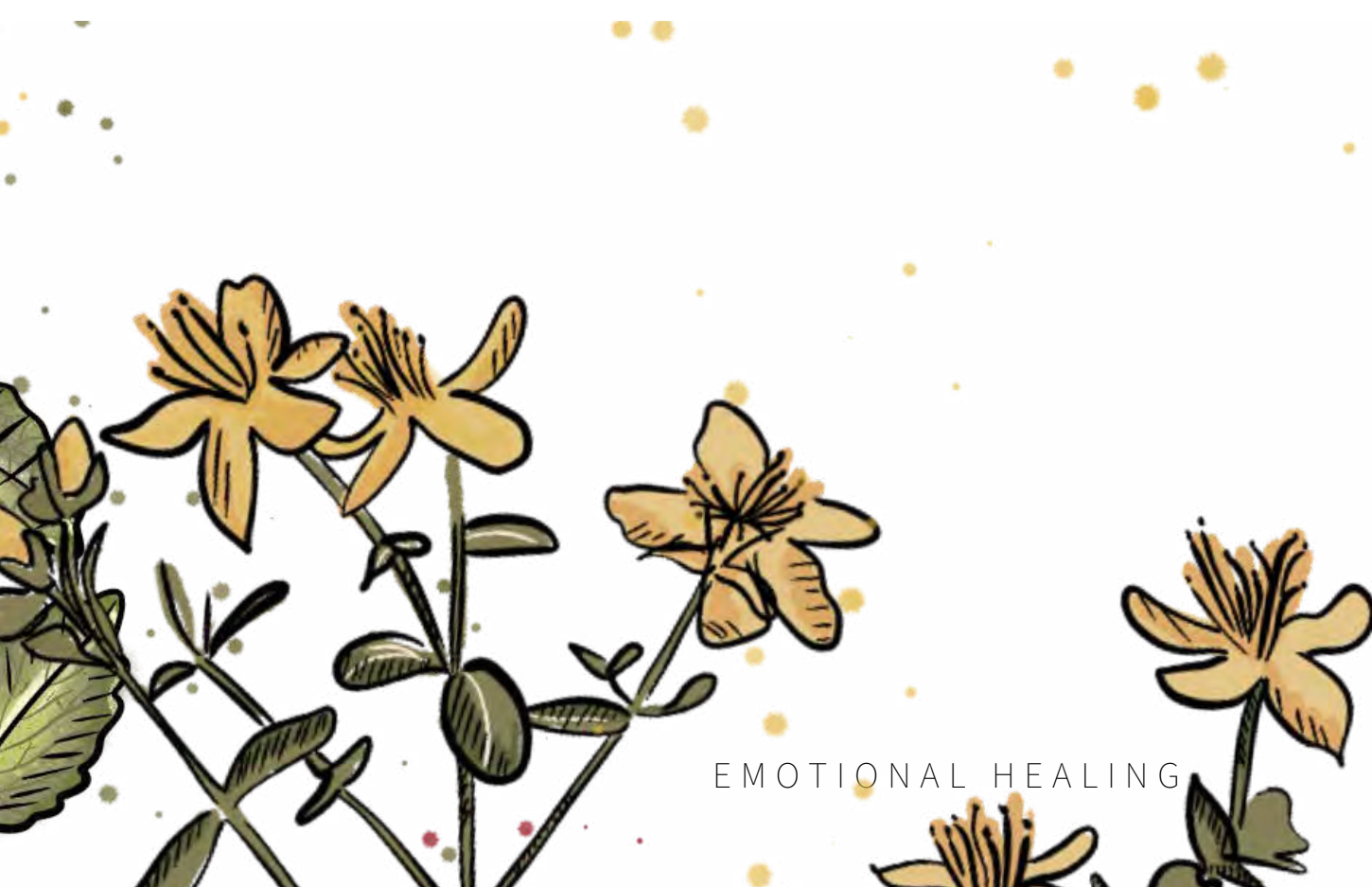
make oneself vulnerable, courage to take risks, courage to not be alone.

Whilst this might be the hardest path of all for the Tiger, it is surely true for all people from all constitutions that we must all eventually undertake a hero journey in the search for love. The further hypothesis here is that it is especially through facing our fears that we can move forwards with the greatest of goals, to find love. It sounds like a good hypothesis, don't you agree? Let's try to find a way here to at least begin to test it out.

What I am encouraging you to try by way of this next test is very different to what we've done previously. This is a lot more involved than simply taking some breaths and casting your awareness, like a fisherman casting his net, to see what you might catch. This really is a 'thought experiment'. It requires you to go into your mind, into your past with the first question and into your future with the second. The life-force, the intelligent energy of nature has no such past or future awareness, it is simply always here, and now. This experiment is purely of the mind and, consequently, you need to pick the right timing to do it, it may take much longer to do, and it may take you up all kinds of garden paths before you get a clear sense of an answer to the inquiry!



If now isn't exactly the right timing to try this experiment then please just take a note of the questions and allow them to sit like seeds in the fertile soil of your imagination, ready to sprout when you are ready.



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT



What is a time that you remember needing to have great courage to do something? What happened, how did you do it and how did it make you feel?



What is something that you need to do in your life now that will actually need a lot of courage to do? (the second part of that question could be the how part - i.e. how do you imagine you could do it!)



The past is what happened, it cannot be changed, but there is a great deal of truth in it if we are prepared to look at it without filters. Everyone has had to be very brave in at least one memorable time in their lives. If they can go back to remembering that time, and also bring back the feelings that came along with that important challenge in their lives, I think they will find that there will be a consistent theme in how something really important happened. How it changed things. They might not say that it led them to love exactly, but that it at least greatly influenced the feeling of being connected, and not alone, in the world.

To take this a big step further and to put it in a therapeutic context, if you know that a person who is suffering from grief, or loss, or loneliness, can remember how they once faced their fears and found their courage over something important, and then if they can bring that same courage to bear on something that they are frightened about doing, but need to do, I think you will see what I have seen, which is that a minor miracle can take place at the point that the person who has been lost in loss, finds their courage again. What happens is that there is a shift, a letting



go, a renewal of hope, a gain where there was loss.

People want to believe that time heals all wounds. It is a nice idea, a wishful thought, but they are wrong, and I suppose it's because they just haven't had a wound they couldn't get better from, or maybe they have not got close to one or more people who are still hurting many, many years after they have had an internal or external loss they couldn't recover from.

Wounds may heal in time but it is not time that heals the wounds. The healing force of Nature is what heals wounds, when it can, and as quickly as it can, but when the wound is not healing, and in this case we could be talking about long-standing physical or emotional wounds, then it is the energy of nourishment, and love, that is most required.

Somehow, in some remarkably consistent way, it seems that the gateway, or I could say the lever, to get that nourishment, or love, because they are two sides of the same coin, can best come from the opposite side of the spectrum in both the Cycle of Healing and the line up of the great Dark Friends. So, an act of cleansing can be what finally leads to a return to nourishment and an act of courage can be what breaks the spell of loneliness, and opens the way to love.

Courage leads to love. Such a big idea, a beautiful idea. I hope you will explore it for yourself. Perhaps,


some time in the future, for yourself, for someone you care for, you will witness the hopelessness that comes with a lasting sadness and will think to test this idea out in the raw, in the real. I have done, and it has held true, but surely you would have to experience the idea working in action for yourself to trust its value.

If you will allow it, I want to sow one more seed in your mind for this interesting, and somewhat counter-intuitive terrain. This is a dark seed, a way to test the connections across the poles by the presence of the dark friends in the Map of the Belly.

If you wish, next time you have some anxiety-producing trouble in your life, feel for yourself how much it brews and bubbles over into the stomach. The bottom right quadrant is where the fear keeps it home, deep in the dank basement of the belly and the spine, and you will have to continue to gently explore that for yourself to feel the truth of that. But once it comes out, like a tropical storm of damp heat that rushes and runs around us, you can also feel for yourself how much its epicentre, its strongest point, comes to the normally cool and dry terrain of the upper left.

The stomach clenches with fear. The fear pushes and pulls upon the stomach, twisting it, hurting it. It is not a pleasant feeling, and I do not wish you to have to feel it to sprout this seed of an idea to put the connection to the test. But I suppose it is inevitable

that something will always eventually come along to make us nervous and afraid and when it does.... well it's up to you if you choose to remember what you read here today...

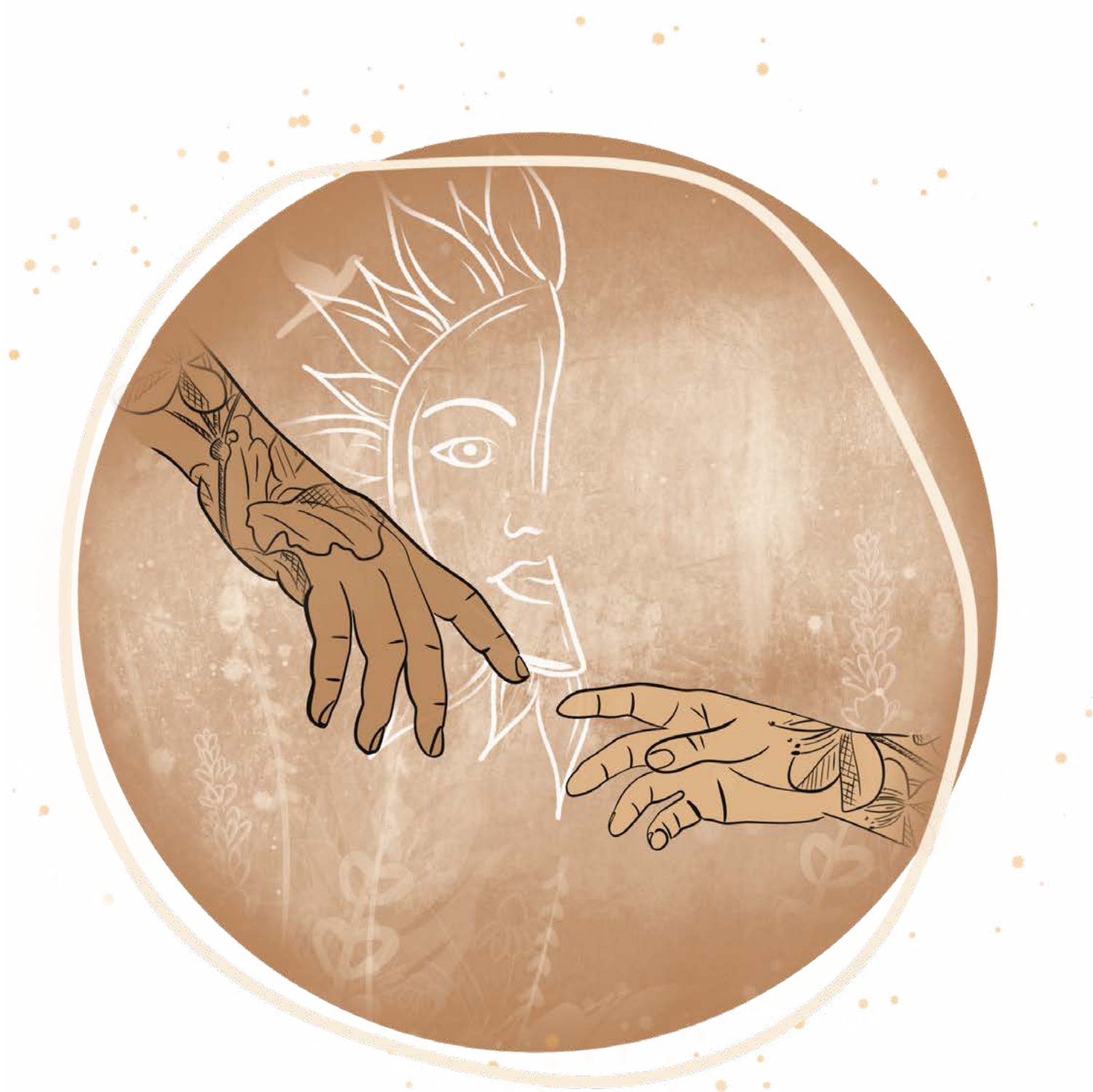


Whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever constitution you are, surely you do not feel that there is already enough love in your life or enough love in the world you see around you. At least not enough love to not want more and believe there could be more. Who could possibly feel there is enough love in the world when there is so much hurt and hate on every side?

I will answer my own question, young lovers of course, or young mothers. There are some utterly magical times in some people's lives when all they see and feel is love. But let us not kid ourselves that those times do not also always pass, sadly.

Our human world desperately needs love. The Earth and all the other species it has grown will do fine without us, but we humans will perish without love because the lack of it is the root of all the evil we see around us. When there is not enough love then there will be hate. Hatred in such forms as the intolerance and inequality that can be seen on every side. That hate will destroy us if we are not extremely careful in how we choose our coming steps.

When the timing is right, I hope you will think about this big and beautiful idea in your own time, in your own way. To consider how our dark friend of fear may show us how to find courage and how our courage may help us to find love. How our courage may even be the currency, the energy, that could bring us to love above all other ways.



The Eagle

WEAVING THINGS TOGETHER

- Hotter and dryer
- The spectrum for the Cycle of Healing is that of Activation
- The quadrants of the Maps of the Body are at the upper, right hand side of the belly and the lower valley of the lumbar spine
- The Dark Friend is Fire (anger, frustration, resentment, shame, guilt).
- The gift it can bring is Change



Before we go on, just to reiterate that Tigers, and other constitutions, can and do struggle with problems along the activation to relaxation axis in the Cycle of Healing and absolutely they can struggle with the Dark Friends along the Fire to Fatigue axis as well. We are going to focus on those polarities now with reflections on the Eagle nature but remember that all constitutions have to work with these elements to at least some degree and that, whichever one you think you are, or even if you are unsure, that the following will always apply at some level, however greater or lesser that may be according to your stripes!

I mentioned much earlier, in the perennial challenge of accurately identifying the constitution, how much there is a kind of ineffable but distinct ‘creature of the air’ element to the Eagle that you start to pick up on more and more easily with practice. I honestly think that a lot of this is due to the great majority of them making better friends with their ‘fire’ than most other kinds of people. They are good at talking, good at speaking their truth, good at not bottling things up inside.

Well, let’s say they are *usually* good at these things, because of course there are many ways that a repressive home or school conditioning, or repressive relationships at home or work,



can shame and control a person, including an Eagle. This is true for anyone, from any constitution, but it is especially true for Eagles, that if they are forced to internalise their fire, to stuff it inside and not speak their minds and express their feelings, there will eventually be hell to pay. Meaning their health will suffer, and probably suffer badly.

If you get to know them and they open up to you about their past, you will often hear an important story from the life of an Eagle about the time that they broke out of some kind of repressive relationship and how their ‘fire’ their anger, that was finally channelled outwards instead of within, was what broke them free from the cage they felt they had been living in.

Freedom is as essential to the Eagle constitution as the air is to a bird to fly. Eagles are the most likely of all the constitutions to make friends with their inner ‘fire’ in a way that lets them be free. This is most often their first and foremost challenge in the hero-journey of their lives. In finding their way they must first find their freedom but if they don’t become friends with that fire energy then they remain trapped in the past, and nothing changes.

However, often much to the eventual disadvantage of their health, both mental and physical, fatigue is the Dark Friend that the Eagle struggles with the most.

The biggest problem with fatigue is exactly the same as the other Dark Friends. We just don't want to accept it. We especially don't want to accept it when we use one of its other, more emotionally loaded, words to describe what we are actually talking about here. Because the existence of fatigue, the experience of fatigue, carries the energy of defeat, of surrender, of giving up, of letting go.

Whatever we call that energy, most Eagles honestly and truly hate it. Sometimes, you can see the disdain on their face when they talk about resting. *'You can sleep when you're dead'* could be a good epitaph to put on an Eagle's tombstone. Fatigue, and the scent of defeat that comes with it, is their nemesis, their archenemy, and of course it is the one that they have the greatest need to make friends with.

I am using the example of the Eagle to again demonstrate this most interesting thesis that the difficult emotional state that we most need to make friends with can best be approached by gaining currency with the one in its opposite corner. So, in this case, it is actually the energy of Fire, of Change, that can best bring us closer, and even eventually into friendship with Fatigue.

Don't you think that is an interesting idea? Rather different to the usual advice to learn to meditate, destress, slow down, relax. I am suggesting that at least one way for the Eagle to land, or in fact for

anyone who is fighting against their fatigue to make peace, is to actually channel their inner fire in a way that brings them to peace, at least eventually.

I want to now go on and talk to you with a sense that you could be anyone, from any constitution, because there can be no doubt in anyone's mind that we all want and need peace.

The more you live, the more suffering you experience yourself and the more suffering you see, the more you understand how much we want and need peace. I know it doesn't seem that way, when you look at the world, but all those people who are trying to hurt each other are just already hurting on the inside themselves. In fact they are burning with their hurt. They desperately want peace but have no idea how to achieve it and even come to believe that it will come to them when they have hurt others enough. It would be sad if it was not so insane.

People, truly and deeply, need and want peace. And love for that matter, and just as it may be seen that a person can need to face their fears in order to get courage in order to find love, so it can be seen that we need to learn how to channel our inner fire in a way that we can make the changes that we need to find peace.

The journey of the Eagle is the one most likely to highlight this part, but it can be just as true for



anyone, from any constitution. I am about to invite you to look at the second of the ‘thinking’ thought experiments in this section and again, I am aware that this asks for a very different kind of headspace than the simple breathing and awareness exercises we’ve done previously.

Do have a look at the questions below but I encourage you to take time to think about them when it is the right time. One thought will lead to another once you go down this particular rabbit hole. You are needing to go into some deep and possibly rather intense memories to see if the unusual idea being presented here is actually true for you personally.



THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

So, whenever you might be ready to contemplate these questions, here they are



What is a time in your life that you remember getting fired up about something that you needed to change, not so much about changing someone else or something else around you, but in your own personal inner life? What happened, how did you do it and, most importantly, how did it end up making you feel, once you went through it all?

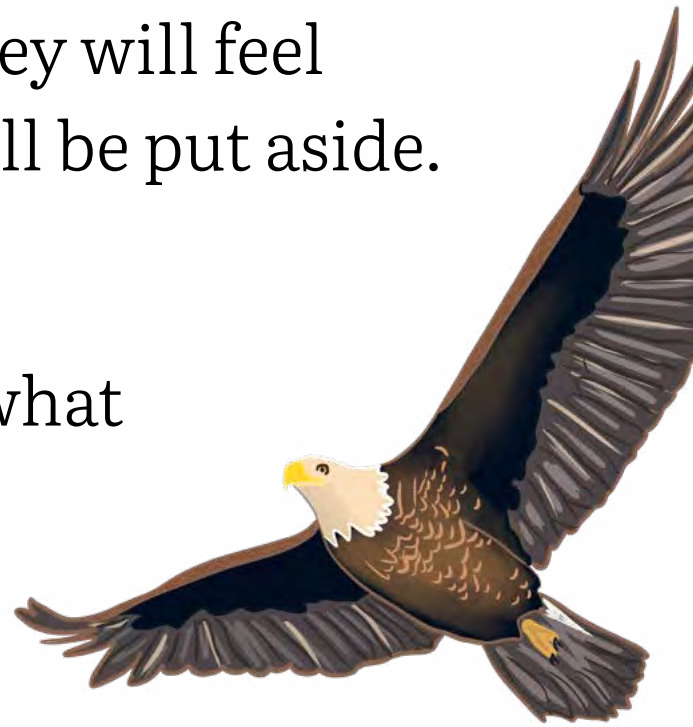


What is the number one thing that is happening in your life right now that makes you feel that inner ‘fire’ (anger, frustration, resentment, shame, guilt) and what could you actually do about changing that in a way that was not dependent on anyone else doing anything, but was only reliant on you?



Some people, some of the time, will find those good questions to be asked, and will be happy and interested to engage with them, at least eventually! However, I think many more people than that will find them to be anything but good questions; especially the second one. I think they will feel uncomfortable, confronting, and will be put aside. Put in the ‘too hard basket’.

It’s not that we mind talking about what upsets us, quite the contrary. People are very ready to talk about their frustrations with the world and with other people.



Much conversation between friends and colleagues is a healthy process of letting off such steam. However, it can be completely different when the spotlight is turned inwards, towards what belongs to us, what we own, what we can do something about. Our inner fires can hurt us, even when they are just in our memories, and most of us prefer to keep them hidden.

There is such a tremendous amount of misunderstanding in our world around our inner emotional fire. It is as necessary to the health of our life as the Sun’s fire is to the very existence of life and light on our planet, and yet we either hide it or hurt with it, either way we hate it.

Learning how to make friends with that fire is no small endeavour, in fact it is a true hero journey to

even try. But what a treasure it can bring! Firstly for change, then for peace! Peace, along with love, are the two greatest treasures that any person can attain. But there is a kind of Love that cannot be found without courage and, strangely enough, there is a kind of Peace that cannot be found without change.

It is hard to trust such a force, especially when we all have so much conditioning to be ashamed of it. I hope you will try the above thought experiment because if you can find the real evidence in your own life of a time that you used that inner fire to make a necessary change, and can then see the living proof in yourself that you found a peace from that change that wasn't there before, then you have every reason to think that the same thing could happen by bringing the light of your inner fire to bear on something else that needs it too!

Going up a mountain to become a monk to meditate all day is not the answer to the search for peace. Nor is getting enough money to put up a big enough wall around a big enough house. Those are just escapes and anyway, if you don't have peace within you won't find it someplace else because, after all, wherever you go, there you are.

The peace of rest, surrender etc. comes when we stop fighting our tiredness but the peace of happiness, of joy, of life, comes when we become the change that we want to see in the world.

This is really a big subject; big, mysterious, and hard to fathom. Well it is for me at least. Could it really be true that we need to make friends with our inner fire in order to get the Peace we so deeply, and profoundly need? And if it is true for the individual could it also be true for our species, our society?

I have come to believe that it is true. That we cannot find peace without going through a journey that must at least sometimes be lit by fire. That there is a light that comes when we stop running from what it is that makes us hurt and angry. When we turn to face that light, to go closer to it, and then to hold the fire that brought the light into being, we get the power of transformation come into our life. We can make the changes that the light from that fire was showing us were needed. Our inner fire lights the way and then gives us the energy to travel on that way.



I see that we need to make changes within ourselves to find true Peace. Not just the passing peace that comes from accepting our fatigue and so going to rest or to sleep, but the lasting Peace that comes when the war is over. When the internal conflict of who I actually am and who I think I ought to be is resolved. When I have changed what it is that was causing me to be sick, however that might have manifested itself. When I have understood and accepted what I am left with, who I am.

Could it not be true that if enough of us were to do such a thing for ourselves that we could but not begin to increasingly and collectively step towards the greatest of goals, Peace on Earth? My old, ridiculously utopian dream is asking me to reveal itself here, and now, on this page.

I imagine all the people who have come of age in the world all listening to each other at the same time and, for the first time, no-one needs to speak, because all are truly ok to listen, and actually want to listen. Such an event could never happen without there having firstly been an extraordinary amount of necessary change in our world. Everyone would have to have had their basic needs met. No-one could still be suffering from an unmet need. Our society would have to finally have utterly rooted out corruption. No-one could be suffering from an unresolved injustice at the hands of another. No-one would be in unbearable pain. There are effective treatments for pain, no-one would be without the

ability to manage their suffering in a way that allowed them to continue to be of good heart. No one would need to be lonely. Anyone could be alone whenever they needed to, or wanted to, but they would not need to feel lonely. There would be so much love, playfulness, and creativity in the world, and because it would be easy to find your tribe, your people, no-one would need to be lonely if they did not want to be alone. No-one would need to cry out without being heard. If they needed to talk, if they needed help, then they would have been heard, and helped, long before the meeting of the world. No one, at the time of the meeting, would need to ask for anything, not a basic need, not justice, not love, not solace. We would all finally be ready to listen to each other without needing to be heard ourselves. So, with a technology that is easy to imagine as we already have it now, we would make a time when we all of us, every single human being of age on the Planet Earth could listen to each other at the same time. The time would come, we would be listening, we would be breathing together, we would be waiting together. Any single person could talk if they chose, and the whole world would hear them. But no-one would need to talk, they were actually ok to just listen. They would just want to hear each other and to know, to really know, that they were there. That we are here. That we are together. That we are One.

I imagine something happening, but I don't know how to describe it. I imagine a shift in consciousness

that every individual would feel in their own way, but that would also belong to us all. I imagine it being the beginning of World Peace. And I know I will never hear it, nor will my children, or their children, and I suppose I could go on writing ‘or their children’ until my own hourglass had run out and still not come to the time of it. But I still imagine it, and believe it, that it could happen.

Don’t get me wrong. I know that we will still be the same fundamental human beings that we are now in 10 thousand years or, if we can survive that long, a million years from now. I am under no illusion that people will not always be what people are. That we will still fall in love and then hurt the ones we love the most. That we will fight like hell for dominance with our siblings first of all, then our peers when we are young in any of the endless ways that we find to compete with each other, then on to our colleagues and fellow citizens in a world that surely must encompass a meritocracy for our human nature to strive against our limits and each other to make sense. And people will still get angry, and sad, and afraid, and fatigued, in every shape and form that those dark feelings have always happened and always will. We cannot change our basic nature, but we can change the things that are harming us both individually and collectively, and so heal ourselves both individually and collectively.

We don’t need greed and corruption. We don’t need injustice and inequality. I accept that we probably

always will need at least some pain and suffering to learn and grow, but there is a vast amount of unnecessary pain and suffering that we receive and inflict on each other that we simply don't need, that serves no higher purpose, that is just useless, and cruel. Peace on Earth is not an end to pain and suffering, or competition, or heartache and loss, or any part of what it is to be human. But it is an end to war, and hunger, and injustice, and unnecessary loneliness and unnecessary pain.

Oh well, it is one of my happiest, and most precious thoughts, and there is no harm to share it, and back to the now, to the individual journey, because surely there is nothing else that we can ever really do but take that journey for ourselves, and then perhaps help others on their way.

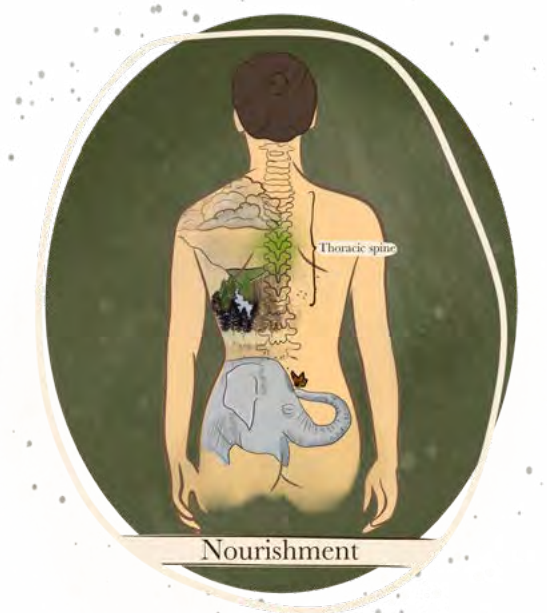
In any case, surely even a step towards Peace on Earth could only ever happen if enough of us were to find our way individually to heal, to become whole, which is not without suffering, but is equally not needing to add to the wounds of the world any more either. But just to think that we could heal ourselves, that it could be possible, is a glorious enough thing to imagine, and that if we can go through our own internal change, our own hero-journey, then it may be true that a greater change could happen, but none of it happens without fire.



The Elephant-Butterfly

WEAVING THINGS TOGETHER

- Cooler and dryer
- The spectrum for the Cycle of Healing is that of Nourishment
- The quadrants of the Maps of the Body are at the upper, left-hand side of the belly and the upper hill of the mid-back; the thoracic spine
- The Dark Friend is Loneliness (grief, sadness, loss etc.)
- The gift it can bring is Love



So now we are on the opposite pole to the Tiger and you will see some interesting crossovers in the following discussion to what was talked about earlier but I will initially talk about the EB in relation to the Dark Friends to illustrate a few key points.

One of the more quirky aspects within the already unlikely marriage of the Elephant with the Butterfly is how often they feel terribly alone because it is uncanny, seriously uncanny, how many have such a close-knit tribe around them, and yet still manage to feel so lonely.

EBs are nearly always deeply connected to the people they love, they care about them and they care for them as tirelessly as the Elephant keeping its herd together as it crosses the endless Savannah plains. The mother or father EB sacrifices his or her life for their children. The full-time working EB sacrifices their life for their career and the people they support with it. The married EB endlessly

suffers the faults and foibles of their partner, year after year, without it ever seriously occurring to them that they could

leave. It is very alien to the nature of the EB to think about giving up on someone they love.



It is unlikely that an EB will need to learn what it means to embrace their inner sense of loneliness. They have already spent enough time with it to know what it means to understand and accept what it is. Even if they are not actually alone in any usual sense of the word.

In fact, somehow the lonely and alone feelings don't seem to bother them nearly as much as other people. That might sound like a somewhat callous thing to say, surely grief is not to be taken lightly by anyone. It isn't, but the EB, almost always, does make friends with it a great deal earlier than anyone else. It is their home territory, they learn how to handle it the earliest and the best, and it never seems to break them like it can others.

What torments them the most is anxiety. No question, no exceptions thus far, not one. So far, every EB I have ever met, and got to know well enough to find about this kind of thing, struggles more with anxiety than any other of the dark friends. I'm not saying they necessarily have more anxiety than other people, but I am definitely saying that they struggle with it more when it comes.

Every person from every constitution must experience at least some fear, at least sometimes. Many people from every constitution will have periods in their lives when they have to find their way through a storm of it. But EBs struggle with it the most. Often to the loss of their peace. Often to

the loss of their courage to follow their hopes and dreams, such as to explore their creativity, to make new friends, to find love. Anxiety can cause a person to shrink their life down to what feels safe, to avoid any risks. It is no small thing to face fear, and the more you are afraid of it the more courage it takes to face it. Facing fear is the stuff of a hero's journey in every sense of the word.

I have zero illusions about how hard it is for anyone, from any constitution, to face their fears. Yet is it not impossible and, in fact, there are methods that actually work and have been seen to consistently enough and successfully enough to want to share them.

FACING FEARS

Stage 1

Acute, high-grade - the person is clearly suffering from symptoms of anxiety in any of its many forms.

Treat it as a physical condition. Use a breathing technique that immediately corrects the hyperventilation syndrome that always accompanies acute anxiety and use potent and fast-acting relaxing herbal medicines to grow a sense of trust in something from Nature that can help. Then when ready, start exercising and/or practice 'worry-time' to get on top of the physical manifestations of the stress and reprogram the body and mind. All the practical details on the how-to of this are found in my article on anxiety [here](#).

Stage 2

Chronic, low-grade - the person has a level of anxiety that is quite normal in terms of others in our society but, at least privately, is enough to interfere with their peace and happiness to be acknowledged as a problem.

Treat it as an unremovable presence that has a palpable base in your physical body but one that will become much easier, a thousand times easier, to live with



if you make friends with it. Suggestions to help that process evolve include having a regular practice of being with it in a way that lets it both express and release. Many of the ‘workshop’ experiential-type exercises throughout this book have been with that kind of goal in mind.

Stage 3

Existential - Purposeful

After using any part of stage 1 if or when it was needed, and then at least doing enough of stage 2 to make friends, stop fighting and get closer to the raw energy of what we are talking about. The final stage is to use the power of love to transform fear into courage. Then the existence of that fear is understood to have had a much greater purpose than only keeping us safe from harm. That it was our hot damp light, just as our fire is our hot dry light, showing us the way to what we most want, and need.

Now I want to talk about love, therefore I am going to need to say as little as possible, because the words for love are definitely not what love is. In fact, I am going to ask you to do the work here so that it's your feeling, that which entirely belongs to you, that is the definition and the understanding of what love is.

In a moment, for the very last time in this book, I am going to ask you to do one last inquiry, one final experiment. Don't worry if you haven't done the other two thoughtful ones mentioned earlier. This one doesn't need to wait until you are ready. You don't have to dig into your past or have a look into your future to do this one, it will be easy.

The last section in this chapter, on Bears, doesn't have any thought experiments. Mostly it is to describe two techniques that can help a person who is struggling with their fiery dark friend. Which might especially be a Bear, but could certainly be anyone. Then the very last chapter 'treating the condition' is a separate essay, it is not a summary or a tying things together of what went before.

So, you are nearly at the end! And the intention behind this last inquiry is simply for you to know, and feel for yourself, how love really can help us to face fear and find courage. That's it. Once you have that connection, my work is done here. You can use it and run with it if you wish or it will be as a seed that was planted that will one day sprout.

THOUGHT EXPERIMENT

This is the first part of the question



Who or what do you love most in the world? How do they make you feel?

Maybe you know the answer too well to need to think about it, but I still encourage you to take a few moments to shut your eyes, listen to your breath, and really let the feeling of love show itself within your body. Your heart, your gut, your mind, your being. Subtle or strong, only you know the reality of it. It doesn't have to be a person, it just needs to be who or what you love most in the world.

Once you have tuned in to your love, you know it, you own it and so can speak for your love, then you can easily answer the second part of the question.





What would you do for your love? To protect it, to save it, to help it?

Imagine if someone was going to hurt or destroy who or what you loved. It is highly unlikely that you would be apathetic about that. You would find the strength to do something, possibly even something highly difficult, because your love would give you courage.

Here is my advice. Whether you are an EB or any constitution. Get on top of your anxiety if it is really bad. I've never met someone who couldn't do that with the right support from nature and some simple methods to get their breathing regulated out of fight or flight. Get in touch with your hot and damp fear energy when it is down in the basement, quiet enough to not be so scary as to get up close and personal to it. So you stop fearing fear. You even start making friends with it! Then don't stop there. Focus on what you love and ask yourself the next question. Not one from me. The one that you need to ask yourself to take the next steps in the hero-journey of your own life. Use your love to find your courage to do the thing or be the person you can be, and you want to be.

The Bear

WEAVING THINGS TOGETHER

- Cooler and damper
- The spectrum for the Cycle of Healing is that of Relaxation
- The quadrants of the Maps of the Body are at the lower, left-hand side of the belly and the upper valley of the neck; the cervical spine.
- The Dark Friend is Tiredness (defeat, surrender, fatigue etc.)
- The gift it can bring is Peace



Every constitution, when you start to identify more people in it, starts to fill up with all kinds of interesting quirks and idiosyncrasies. The more people you know in any one of the constitutional archetypes, the more shared qualities and patterns you see.

More than a few times, I have had to pull myself back from writing more in the home pages on the constitutions about those qualities and patterns. As mentioned near the beginning of this work, I feel like I want to talk about a hundred more qualities in each constitution but I always end up stopping myself from doing so, mostly I think because the more you say the more you can exclude the person who is not an exact fit. Better to give some sweeping generalisations to show that there are some distinct tendencies but then allow as much room as possible for the uniqueness of the individual to come through the underlying terrain.

This is so very true for Bears. They are all completely and utterly different from one another, and at the same time each and every one has such a profoundly palpable Bearishness that, once you start seeing it, you can hardly miss it. But it's certainly hard to describe; something of an intensity in the gaze, a coolness in the aura, a solidity to the presence, a softness that sits there, even in the battered ones, somewhere under the surface; tender, thoughtful, aware.



Bears already know that they think a lot, but they feel a lot too, more than they typically even let on to themselves. That thinking, and feeling, Bear intensity leads to them becoming all sorts of interesting kinds of people as they grow up, with all kinds of curly challenges, mostly created by themselves, knowingly or unwittingly, as the chief architects and authors of their own lives.

Physically, the thinking tension goes into the neck and the feeling tension goes into the bowel. Emotionally, the dark friend they must contend with first and foremost is the mysterious ‘odd one out’ of the four. The emotion that is not an emotion, but is every bit as compelling a feeling as anything that any living creature must experience, namely fatigue, defeat, surrender.

Is it the darkest of the dark friends? Maybe so, it is certainly the one that eventually takes the shape of the ultimate letting go, to the ‘long sleep’. However, in life, before the very end, it brings such an extraordinary, incomparable gift, the small sleep, the little letting go, the presence that follows when we stop fighting the tiredness, the rest, the relaxation, the peace.

Most Bears get good at the business of relaxing, they know how to create comfort in the ‘cave’ of their living rooms, bedrooms etc. and they often even master the art of the 40 winks, the nap, the snooze, the little lie down, at least sooner than most people,

some of whom can associate the need to do such a thing with a complete loss of their adult dignity!

The greatest obstacle in the emotional-spiritual sphere for the Bear is clearly tied up with how they connect to and make some kind of peace with their inner 'fire'. For many Bears this plays out in actual fiery feelings; anger, frustration, resentment, guilt, shame, and how they deal with them, but even more so than any of these on a typical day to day basis is the really common issue of simply getting stuck and not being able to change.

If we broaden our understanding of the 'fire in the belly' to include the energy that we need for transformation, or change, then on both a physical and emotional level, the biggest problem for a great many Bears is that they somehow back themselves into a corner and just don't seem to be able to get out of it.

There may be some fiery frustrations as a consequence, but not always.

The cardinal and consistent symptom to look out for to show that the Bear has become stuck is that of boredom. Boredom to the Bear is poison, it is their arch-enemy, it is the sign they are stuck.



Before the age of screens, a lot of children used to get bored. Do you remember getting bored? Most adult people will only really remember calling what they felt as boredom when they used to have a lot of time to experience it and no obvious escapes. I.e. when they were children.

People who have become very busy in their lives often don't realise that they are bored because they don't have enough time to really stop and think about how they are feeling. At least until they or someone close to them asks the question, and then it can become painfully obvious in a microsecond.

If you can ask yourself, or the Bear you are close enough to be this real with, the straight and open question '*are you bored*' and if the honest answer that you or they give is '*yes*', then you can know for sure that this will be one of the greatest issues they need to face in their life and health or there will eventually be hell to pay.

Boredom to the Bear is what fear is to the EB, or fatigue is to the Eagle, or loneliness is to the Tiger. Boredom means the fire is not moving, it is stuck, it may be smouldering away at some level, making them grumpy or irritable with themselves or others, but it may also not be enough to actually change anything. Their innate tendency to be both cool and damp has smothered the inner fire and, without it, they cannot find the energy or even the clear direction to make the changes that they badly need.

Paradoxically enough, stoking up the fire and getting angry with yourself for being stuck doesn't much seem to help the Bear either! It can work perfectly for the Eagle, who can channel that fire into an action that releases their obstacles but for Bears, turning up the heat on their inner flame-thrower might temporarily seem to help, but ultimately it just makes them stucker, only now with increased pain and discomfort.

Rather extraordinarily, as with the other constitutions, the same principle seems to apply. Namely that it is by using their super-power, the gift, from their home territory that they can cross the great divide into friendship, rather than enmity, from the element that is furthest from their innate nature.

In this case, for the Bear, it means they have to find their way to make friends with their fire by coming to peace with it. By accepting that they have a smouldering flame inside, and that they can't get rid of it, but by accepting their fire there is a release. Then the cause of the fire in the first place, i.e. the change that is needed, actually starts to take place.

I need to now broaden this out one more time because, whilst this core theme plays out in the Bear constitution the most, it certainly can affect all people from all constitutions.

We are still talking about the great hero journey to find peace here. However, unlike the path we

looked at under the Eagle archetype, the one that finds and acts on the change that is necessary to release the fire so that peace can come in its place, this first method about to be discussed is the polar opposite. Here we are not trying to change anything externally or internally, we are coming to peace with the inner fire by accepting it, by making room for it, by even encouraging it to grow!

What follows is a different kind of proof than the previous thought experiments that we were using to start to put all this to the test. Anyone can try either of these methods anytime but if you, who may be from any constitution, or who may still be unsure, have any sense of a smouldering fire, or a sense of being bored or stuck in your life, then it is recommended to practice them multiple times before making a conclusion about whether they truly work or not.

These are both rather life-changing practices, but they will need multiple repetitions, multiple trying outs, before you will be able to trust their certain benefit, as well as feel that they have become natural and easy for you to do, especially if you have a good amount of Bearishness in you!



HOLDING FIRE

The first practice is what we could call ‘holding fire’

Firstly, before I very simply describe it, this method is primarily aimed at those times that we have an uncomfortable fire simmering away but it is simply not possible, or simply would not be appropriate, to say anything about it or do anything about it. When we are stuck with feelings of frustration, or shame, or guilt, or anger, but it would not help, or it is not possible to speak out.

I have to make this very clear in advocating for a method called ‘holding fire’ because I am acutely aware of the great danger and terrible risk of building resentments if you do not speak out when you feel hurt by someone or something, then and there, in the moment, or at least as soon as possible thereafter.

I talked about this earlier, wrote how Freud said ‘depression is anger turned inwards’, shared my own story of how miserable I consistently made myself when I bottled things up to try to be the ‘better person’ by not expressing my frustrations.

If it is possible to speak, to release the fire, then you must be the judge, each and every time, of whether it is wise to speak in anger then and there, when the fire is surging up your chest and into your mouth or to choose such a moment to practice this method.

Do not buy into the various self-help or religious movements and philosophies that advocate for an utterly passive approach to avoid all possible conflict at all possible costs. It is all a neat way to control people, keep them in their place, and repress the fire of change, and it can cause the worst toxicity and disempowerment imaginable.

But, it is no more true that you should never speak in anger than that you should always speak in anger. There are definitely going to be times when the wise path is to release the fire and there will be times when the wise path is to hold the fire. If you must release the fire then I encourage you to get it out as quickly as possible and then, just as quickly, if you possibly can, show the person involved that you mean them no harm, and that you are ready and willing to rebuild peace and goodwill, right now.

However, If you need to hold the fire then it will be very helpful to have a practice that, like anything, will get easier the more you practice it. The method is as simple in theory as it is difficult in practice. In fact, you have already heard of this method multiple times in your life in phrases such as ‘count to 10, take a deep breath, walk away etc’. The difference in what I am suggesting is that you don’t only just stop yourself from exploding but that you embrace the surge of fire that will inevitably build up even further inside when you don’t speak or act from it.

Again, be very careful in using this method in relationships where you actually need to fight, and by fight I mean talking it out with whatever language at whatever volume you need, rather than to give your partner the silent treatment. You must know that there is nothing more harmful, or toxic, in any relationship than the passive-aggressive punishment of the silent treatment. This is when you are very angry with someone but instead of saying anything you hold on to the anger in order to punish them. This is what resentment looks like, it is very dangerous, it can destroy love, it will destroy peace and it can and will seriously hurt people. I really hope I have made that point enough now.

What I am advocating for holding the fire in an entirely different way to how you would hold a weapon. I am saying to embrace it as you would a lover. Not with scorn, or shame, or hatred, but as something that is there for a very good reason and something that you know you need in your life to achieve anything remotely worthwhile, or good.

This will confront a great deal of conditioning in your life that says that this 'fire' is something you must be ashamed of and must get rid of. Learning how to 'hold



fire' is a gradual process. It is not suppressing fire, it is holding it. It is not trying to get rid of it, it is learning how to accept it and make space for it to stay as a welcome guest, one that actually warms and lights your home, and does not need to harm you, or need to be feared.

That is why I say you will have to do this exercise many many times to understand it and to feel how it can change your life. If this is something that especially appeals to you then I would also recommend, at some point, to either go back to or at least remember the key points in the sections on the Maps of the Body where I talk about tuning into and feeling the parts of your body where this dark friend lives; around the liver and the lumbar spine.

This exercise, or meditation if you like, is a hundred times easier to do when you are not caught in the flare of anger when it is roaring out in its hot, fresh, volcanic burst but rather when you can take some quiet time to go within, to travel on your inner Map, and to make your relationship with this great friend little by little, piece by piece.

The inner fire is not your enemy, in fact it is such a great friend that it can actually help you find the way to peace, which is the greatest treasure any person can have on this earth, along with love.



STUCK-FIRE (PROCRASTINATION) CURE

As mentioned, Bears are especially prone to getting ‘stuck-fire’ but it is a condition that affects a great many people from every constitution. The cardinal sign and symptom of ‘stuck-fire’ is probably best described as boredom but, because most adults aren’t able to recognise what a child would instantly know and rebel against with a heartfelt complaint ‘*I’m bored!*’, it may be better to listen for the way a typical adult will describe their condition, typically along the lines of feeling that they are not getting anywhere in life, that their efforts are futile, that they feel frustrated or resentful, or that they just feel stuck.

If you look under the surface of these feelings you will see that the ‘activation’ phase of the Cycle of Healing is not moving, that there are not the healthy signs of growth and change that we would look for in any child, plant or animal that was in our care to show that they were moving forwards in a good way.

If you go even further you will usually find that people are well aware of their state but feel powerless to do anything about it because they are suffering from the disease of procrastination. I call it a disease because it causes disease. The fire of activation, of change, is stuck, and it is a kind of



sickness in the mind of the person who is suffering from the condition that is stopping it from getting better.

Before I talk about this simple but extremely effective ‘cure for procrastination’, I want to apologise to the industrious Bear who is quite rightly insulted by my including it here, glaringly obviously, in a Bear section. Because it is certainly true that a great many Bears do not suffer from this life-sapping issue. However, it is also true that many do, and more so than other constitutions, so here it is.

It’s back to that fire again, the hardest element for the Bear to connect to and make friends with. And it is certainly back to that perennial issue that plagues and cripples many a good Bear, that of becoming stuck and not being able to get unstuck despite any amount of willpower, good intentions, or even frank rage against themselves and their stuck state.

That said, this is a tool that has been seen to work in every person that has used it so, whoever you are, and from whatever constitution you are, if you suffer from procrastination then you are suffering from a disease that will be badly limiting your life and robbing you of your peace and happiness and, if you do the following, you will cure it. The method is as follows

You are going about your day, wherever you are, whatever you are doing, and you get a thought

about something you need to do, and a part of you no doubt wants to do, however much that part may seem to be in the minority much of the time.

You catch the thought, as quickly as you can, before you have time to answer it with a negative, or an excuse, or an escalating sense of frustration combined with apathy and self-hatred, and you ask yourself, as quickly as you can, a question along the following lines...

‘Is there something, anything, no matter how small, that I can do towards that job, or goal, or project, or person, whatever it is, at this moment, right now?’



If the answer is no, because you are going to sleep, or you are driving, or you are away from your computer, or because you are actually working on something else, or for any other good reason that makes it just the wrong timing to be doing anything towards the thing you thought about, then you get a pass. Move on, don't torture yourself with thinking about how you must do this but how you haven't been doing it for so long now, all the usual negative self-talk that comes with the disease.

None of that kind of thinking ever helps. It just makes it worse and disempowers you further. Once you start using this technique, you must trust yourself that you will definitely think about this undone matter another time when you could do something towards it. Those things that we need to do that remain undone come back to our attention repeatedly but, if you can't actually do anything, anything at all, right now, then just drop it.

However, if there is something that you can do, however small, however insignificant, then simply start doing it. Don't stop and think about it, don't allow the stuck energy of procrastination to build up again, just seize the moment to make the smallest of steps and actually take an action, however small, however briefly. And don't forget the one rule!

The one rule is that you give yourself complete freedom to stop just as quickly as you started. To

give a classic example, I will use housework. You have an untidy bedroom or kitchen and know that you need to do something about it. So, you think about the undone work and quickly ask yourself the question, ‘could I start to do something, anything, no matter how small, on it right now?’

If the answer is yes, you are there, you could do something, then you don’t think about it any further but you simply make a start. If all you do is put a book on a shelf, or a cup in a cupboard, then you are off the hook. You can stop right there if you want to.

If, or when you do this, don’t cheat. Don’t try to trick yourself with willpower to force your way into doing more than you are ready for. Just stop as soon as you like. This is really important. You will get plenty of opportunities to practise this, but you need to make a deal and then stick to it for your subconscious mind to believe you when you give it the promise of getting out of ‘activation’ and going back to ‘relaxation’ as soon as you want. Just so long as you have taken at least that one first step. Which was some kind of action, no matter how small or insignificant it might seem in comparison to how much unfinished work there still is to do.

The point is that you acted on the thought, you turned the cycle of activation. You are creating powerful new neuronal pathways in your brain with this method. Pathways to reclaiming your power.

There are some similar versions of this out there that have conditions such as ‘the five minute, or the ten minute rule’ where you do as much as you can within a certain time frame before you let yourself off the hook. This will help some people with the disease of procrastination but I personally think it is a mistake to put any time limit on it, mainly because any amount of time could feel too long and become the reason not to do it!

If you fight with yourself you will lose. There is a part of the person who suffers from this condition that wants to stay in the relaxation phase and not come out of it. Yes, it is particularly common in Bears but anyone from any constitution can get like this. It is probably to do with an especially deeply felt need for peace that they get stuck in not wanting to move out of the relaxation phase, but then they actually lose their peace because of what happens with how stuck fire causes harm when it isn’t channelled wisely.

Whatever the cause, the cure is to move into action, to release the stuck energy, to do something, however short, however meaningless it might seem when there are a mountain of dishes or undone chores or unread books, because the simple process of connecting the thought to the action will break the spell of inertia and begin to cure the disease.

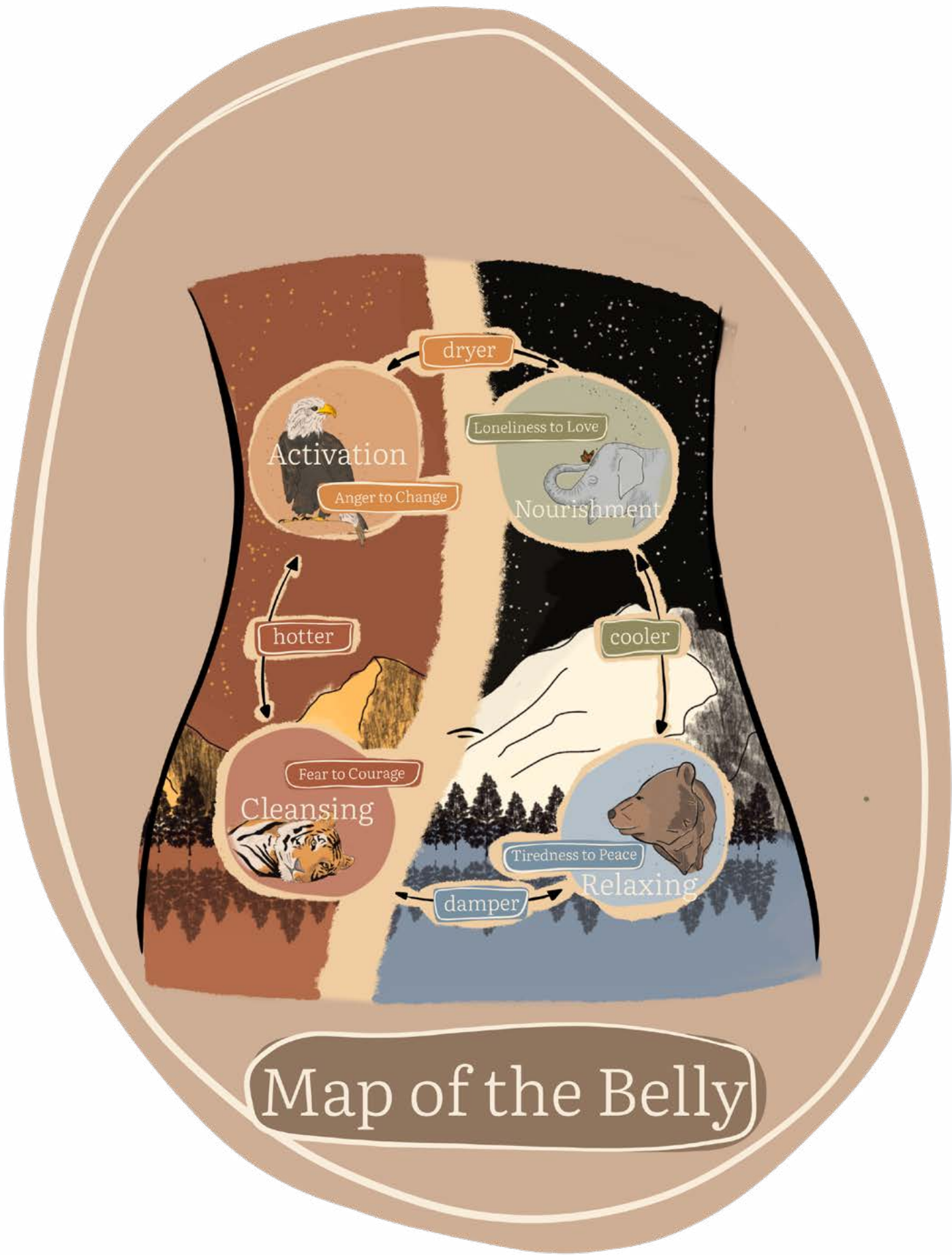
Eventually, of course, it becomes natural and even easy to move into activation and to stay there for

longer and longer periods. Eventually, the promise of returning to peace, i.e. relaxation, that you make to yourself at the beginning of the ‘treatment for stuck-fire’ becomes something that you learn to trust. You believe yourself when you say that you will reward yourself with the things that bring you the most peace, whatever they may be, and so you will happily spend a lot of time channelling the fire of activation and getting all kinds of things done. The Cycle turns, the poles of activation and relaxation spread out further and you can go from one to the other more fully. So you go both higher and further when you go into activation and deeper and more fully when you go into relaxation.

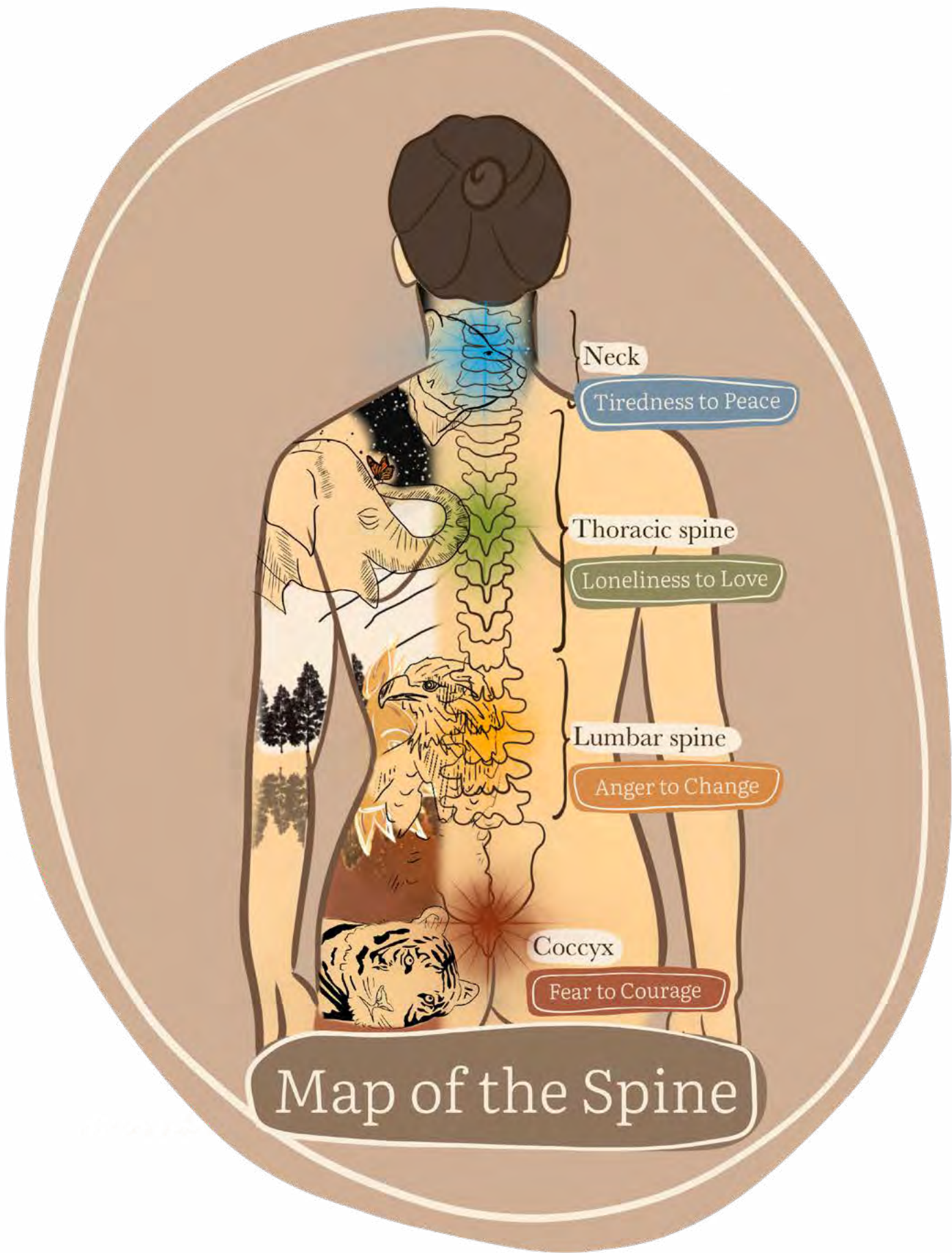
Stuck-fire, procrastination, is an entirely curable disease. This method has been tried and tested with many people and what I can report is that every single one of them who did it got the cure. Without doubt, the hardest step is the first one. Once you begin, because it always works, it gets easier.



MAP OF THE BELLY



MAP OF THE SPINE





TREATING CONDITIONS



— T R E A T I N G C O N D I T I O N S

Helping People

Now, finally, we come to the reason any of us started thinking about any of this in the first place; the ‘condition’. The condition is the problem and, if there were no problems, then there would be no story, nothing to do, certainly no need for a ‘hero-journey’.

The condition is the answer to the question ‘*what’s wrong?*’ It is much of the reason we need to ask questions in the first place, and to then search for their answers.

In health settings, the consultation starts with asking about the condition. You don’t begin by asking questions to find out what constitution they are. You ask ‘*How can I help?*’ ‘*What brings you to see me today?*’ ‘*What is troubling you the most right now?*’ They may or may not have a name for it, a diagnosis that gives a label to one of the thousands of diseases that plague us, but they certainly have feelings that are troubling them, and those feelings, those symptoms, are what you are asking about to start to get a sense of their condition.

When I run our four-day immersive workshops with the students of my college, I get them to do a lot of

exercises in pairs that help them to get practice with recognising Constitutional and Cycle of Healing signs, learning how to read the Map of the Body, practising the art of listening to the pulse and seeing the tongue, thinking about and acknowledging the presence of the Dark Friends in the health picture etc. Then at some point, possibly not until the 3rd day, we have some discussion and I introduce some exercises to practise for the consultation interview where you would always naturally start by asking about, and talking about the condition, which is the reason they have come to see you.

Even though this is always the first matter that comes up in real life, in the workshops, I deliberately leave the focus on the condition until we have spent plenty of time in the Constitutional terrain. The reason for doing it like that is the same reason I have left this section till last in this work too.

If you don't have the awareness, and the practice, of seeing the Constitution and at least some of the elements that are associated with the Nature of the patient, then you will inevitably become lost in the condition. Conditions, at the very least, are disturbing, they can also be frankly overwhelming. The symptom or the list of symptoms, the pain, the stress and discomfort of the condition, as communicated by the patient, can be so compelling that all you want to do is to help them find the quickest way to make it all go away. To stop the

pain, stop the symptoms, stop the stress, stop the profound disturbance of it all.

Treating the condition is where conventional medicine basically begins and ends. It has also come to completely dominate the great majority of how natural medicine is now practised in the modern world outside of systems such as TCM and Ayurveda. There are now vast numbers of both pharmaceutical and natural products for every symptom and ailment known to man. There is nothing whatsoever in the training of the great majority of Western herbalists or naturopaths about Constitutions, or Cycles of Healing, or Dark Friends, or anything of a similar nature. The simple philosophy is to get rid of the symptoms as quickly and effectively as possible so you can get on with your life with as little disturbance as possible.

This is called the ‘allopathic approach’. It has come to dominate most of the modern natural health industry and it is certainly how conventional medicine has always worked. And the allopathic approach; to treat the condition and resolve the symptoms, is frequently the exact best and right thing to do! I will come to why I say that shortly when I talk about alleviating useless suffering.

Firstly, I want to bring us back to something at the very roots of the old laws of medicine. After striving to ‘*do no harm*’, our next great guide is to do our best to ‘*treat the cause*’. If you can understand your

own nature, then you can understand the nature of others and, if you ever want to help those people in a lasting manner, i.e. not just fixing something for them but really helping them to help themselves, then from that understanding of their nature you will have every chance of seeing the causes of why they are suffering. If you remove the cause then you remove the effects. We all know this, if you can treat the cause of a problem then you can cure it.

This last point is a deep one to grasp. Especially for the person whose work it is to serve and support those who are in trouble in their health or in their lives. If you are any kind of practitioner, and there are many ways to be such a person, and if you meet the person whom you seek to serve without the ability to see and understand their nature, their constitution, then you will inevitably end up missing much of what you need to know, and see.

What I am saying is that if you have not practised the ability to see and apprehend their constitutional background and therefore can only hear, see or feel what is wrong right now, then you will inevitably be caught in treating the condition, not the person.

I am not saying that allopathic (symptom focused) conventional medicine is not without great value, it clearly is, nor am I suggesting that all the many forms of therapy that work with whatever condition the patient presents with using more natural methods are not without great value, of course not.

What I want to convey next is a tricky matter, a touchy subject, a minefield of a topic that it is hard to thread your way through without setting off all kinds of unfair explosions. Especially, and let me be extremely clear on this point, it is an idea that would usually be frankly cruel to present to a person who was anywhere near the beginning of a crisis in their life or health.

So, this is a subject that must be thought about, and talked about, with great sensitivity and tenderness, and it is that sickness can be sacred. What I am saying is that it can be necessary. That it can be the only way that many people will ever go through a healing journey that they desperately need to go through.

Why do people need to go through such journeys? Often it is because they need to make some lasting and necessary change in their lives and there is no way they will ever make such a change unless they absolutely have to.

If we, who wish to help others, who wish to at least somewhat reduce the pain and suffering in our world, if we truly seek to make a difference then we must understand that treating a condition without really understanding why it is happening can stop the healing journey rather than guide or support it.

Our work, if we will guide people using an understanding of Nature, is often not to stop the

problem in its tracks, as some of the most powerful chemicals on the planet, natural or man-made, have the power to do, but rather find the way to support that extraordinary, self-healing intelligence that is embodied in all living beings.

For this kind of work, if you do not have a constitutional framework front and centre in your awareness. If you cannot see the innate nature of your patient and what it is that it is struggling to achieve in its own unique and vitally necessary journey through the shadow lands of sickness, then you run every risk of being that well-meaning and all-too common meddler in the troubles of your fellow man. The therapist who, in the very act of providing some comfort and support, ends up delaying the necessary crisis of healing interminably!

Do you see how tricky a subject this is? A part of us must recoil at the very idea that a benevolent doctor, or other kind of health-provider, could make things worse by trying to help. And yet many people who will read these words will be able to recall for themselves how exactly that has occurred in their own lives.

I will try to make my key point here once again as clearly as I can. When you work with a person who presents with any kind of health condition, mental, physical, emotional, anything, and you do not have a constitutional model to work with, one that will

allow you to begin to understand their nature, the complex being that exists behind and before the condition, then you will inevitably be caught up in the story of how to treat the condition, how to fix what is wrong, or at least to reduce its impact.

Whilst that might sound like a good thing, to fix what's wrong I mean, and whilst it certainly can be a good thing when the trouble is well beyond the healing intelligence of nature to resolve, the truth is that the great majority of chronic health problems are not at the crisis level that requires interventions that take away a person's autonomy and ability to care for themselves. Those people, who are the great majority of people on earth who are past the generous flush of their youth, suffer rather quietly, rather sustainably. They are not so sick as to truly need those drugs that can make virtually any symptom go away, including consciousness itself, but they are surely not well either, and nor will they ever be if they do not undertake a healing journey.

I will also say this, that however far anyone can go with this with others is entirely limited, or enabled, by how far they can go with it themselves. If you can grasp the extraordinary power and depth of the influence of your own constitution then, probably little by little, piece by piece, you will come to the same inevitable conclusion that all who have walked this path before you come to. Which is that we cannot change our innate nature, and that we must learn to understand it in order to accept it. If

we don't accept it then we can have no peace, and we will not choose our steps wisely. We will be in conflict, with others as well no doubt, but worst of all with ourselves. You cannot fight Nature and win, never. And you are Nature.

Of course, every philosopher, poet or writer who argued for the mighty force of Nature has heard the counter-argument that our 'Nurture' our upbringing, our culture, our environment is at least as powerful, perhaps even more influential. The '*which is stronger, Nature or Nurture?*' debate is a great one, unlimited points can be scored by either side and no-one can ever declare themselves the final victor. But to only see the subject as a debate is to miss the point. Seeing the influence of both is wise, comparing which is the greater is essentially meaningless. What matters is what we can actually do about any of it.

For our past Nurture, nothing, but for how we care for ourselves in the present, who we allow to influence us, where and how we live, we do have a lot of choice and we must choose our steps carefully.

But as for our Nature, our constitution, it is what it is, we are what we are. Many people want to rail against the implacable fact of our Nature, our genes, our race, our constitution. I say rail away, fight like hell, do whatever you need to do in order to find that which we all need, eventually, which is the peace of acceptance. You can certainly change how you

live, how you look and act and think and speak, but make peace with who you are, and the long life we are most of us given will not be nearly such a trouble and a strife.

All suffering is hideous, and sometimes unbearably so. It is entirely natural, understandable and human to want to relieve suffering (especially our own!) as quickly and effectively as possible. The concept of suffering being somehow integral to a necessary growth, a 'sacred sickness' will stand up to scrutiny some times with some people, perhaps more often than nearly anyone realises, but there are most certainly many times with many people where there is nothing necessary or sacred about any of it whatsoever. It's just cruel, utterly unhelpful, detestable, useless.

At such times, whatever relief may be had, by whatever means, must be found, and used. If the relief will come in the form of a substance, and if it can be natural or at least without toxic side effects then all the better but absolutely include the strongest of pharmaceutical interventions, which of course always have toxicity, in the statement that useless and unnecessary suffering should be relieved by whatever means, as quickly and effectively as possible.

So then the question comes - how and who can determine what suffering is ultimately necessary and what is cruel and pointless? I think the only

person who can answer that is the sufferer. If they can see no point, no reason, no justice in what is happening then they certainly should seek relief by whatever means. However, if they can ask themselves some hard questions and be willing to answer them truthfully then a different path might unfold. *‘Have I been the architect of my own fortune? Has my biography, and the choices I have made along the way of my life, led me to the trouble I am now in? Are there ways in which I know I do harm to myself, and yet I still do them?’*

People who get life-threatening cancer ask themselves questions like that without being prompted. Sometimes, sadly often for this practitioner, who has already seen more than enough cancer, it is clear that they do not have any answers that show them the error of their ways. They have tried to live well, not had any truly injurious habits (no-one should aspire to a perfect diet, if there even was such a thing), nor done any great harm to another that gives them remorse.

Faced with their own mortality, many people are inclined to be brutally honest with themselves, the truth comes out and, in many cases, the truth is that cancer is just a truly evil thing, a by-product of our imperfection. We create nearly half a cupful of new cells every day and 0.00001% of them are mutated, in any animal or human, and sometimes that tiny number survive the surveillance of the immune system and are able to grow. Cancer is

able to inflict the worst fate on people who have truly done nothing to deserve it. The same can be said for a great many other ‘conditions’. No-one who reads this work of mine should be in any doubt about what I am saying here, and I will say it again now. There are many times that suffering is cruel, pointless and utterly unjust. If that is you, or one of your loved ones, seek what solace you can find, get what relief you can, with whatever means available, and try to find some peace, and for the love of mercy take as much extract from the Opium poppy in whatever form it can be legally given to you so that you can eventually die with dignity rather than fear and pain.

The other, much less ‘serious illness and unbearable pain’ side of the spectrum of when I am saying it can be entirely appropriate to turn to the allopathic approach is what happens at the outset of any of the 10 thousand health problems that can beset us on our journey through life. A sore toe, a headache, an upset gut, a skin breakout, an injury, an infection, any of the myriad, almost unlimited ways in which we can be disturbed can, and at least some of them will, eventually come along to anyone who lives on this earth for long enough. And deal with every single one of them we must.

When some new trouble comes along, so long as it passes a certain threshold (higher or lower depending on the person afflicted) it tends to rather instantly and insistently dominate the

consciousness of the self. You'll know what I am saying is true if you give any present or past trouble a moment's reflection.

Sure enough and soon enough you, like me, like all of us, will have something come to disturb the peaceful rhythms of your day and, if you care to remember the point being made here then you can say by crikey he was right! Because of course you will want to get rid of it as soon as possible, by whatever means you can think of at the time.

We are programmed, deep in our cellular biology, to avoid pain and seek pleasure (which includes such mundane joys as food and shelter). If something hurts, or makes you unhappy, you want it to stop. Remedies for such sudden troubles as we encounter on our ways are great and good, and may they be abundantly available to you when you need them!

But what about when the remedies don't work, what then? And what about when the drugs stop working or can't be taken any more, what then? This work has been for the student who wants to learn how to help others and for the person with the chronic condition who can no longer turn to remedies alone for the answers but must instead go on a healing journey, a hero journey.

Before I conclude this work and wish you well on your journey, I want to say one more thing, and of course it is something that brings us back to that mysterious

power, that self-healing intelligence; the vis medicatrix naturae. Whether we receive treatments or use remedies, whether we change our diets or do meditations or practice acceptance or in fact whether we do or don't do anything, it is that remarkable life-force that is already within us that is going to make us well, if it can.

Having suffered, and suffered enough I think, I am 100% with the Buddhists with their beautiful prayer '*let all beings be free from suffering and from the causes of suffering*'. But of course I know that will never happen. Suffering is as built into the great game of life as much as birth and death itself. As cruel as it seems to deem it sometimes necessary, it does seem somehow woven into the fabric of every life that lives.

Still, certainly, let us remedy suffering when we can. The 'living book' of my website, like any 'herbal', is full of remedies. Herbs and different methods to give yourself, your children, your loved ones, in order to help ease some trouble, some new and acute condition that we wish to leave us or them as speedily as it arrived. Let all beings be free from suffering and the causes of suffering, yes!

Again, even at the very end of this work, I feel myself stepping foot back on to the mine-field, because again, who can say when the suffering should be eliminated at any cost and who can say when it is necessary to stop seeking an end to it and to instead

turn to embrace a very different path. One that searches for the truth of the cause of the condition, one that seeks to find the reasons that the self-healing life-force is not able to perform its everyday miracle?

I must conclude that I do not have the answer to that most important question for anyone else other than myself. If I suffer, can I bear it, or does it overcome my ability to be of good heart? Does my fear overwhelm me without the possibility of my finding my courage again, or can I see what I need to see, learn what I need to learn, change what I need to change?

I think that we all must learn to be the Captain of our own Ship and to take responsibility for the only thing we ever truly own in this life, that which we came into the world naked with, and will leave the same way.

That we ought not, unless we are truly overwhelmed, to give away our power to someone else, however well qualified, well-meaning, or ready to take that responsibility they may seem, but rather to learn the Map of our own bodies, to learn how to listen to them, to understand the crucial Cycling Elements that heal us and how they may be blocked or challenged, to learn how to make friends with the dark emotions that come to us all for good reasons; to help us to grow, to give meaning to the suffering, so that we can really live, and love, and find peace.

So, to you who have had the interest and the readiness to have so deeply delved into this work that you now come to its end, it is my heartfelt hope that you have gained some experiences and understandings that now entirely belong to you. Use them, adapt them and grow them as you wish. I put no copyright on anything that I share on my site or in my work.

Herbs are the people's medicine, they belong to us all and no-one can claim ownership over them. It is the same with these ideas, however much of what is in these pages may be a new version of an old story, none of it belongs to me, I just whistled with the wind that blew through me, for a while.

I hope that what you have learned here will support you on your own sacred journey towards peace, happiness and health.

May you have a long, happy and healthy life, and may you help others on their way too!

With love

Richard



