

Refresh With Spring: *Exploring the Element of Wood*



By Anne C. Crowley, MAc,
Licensed Acupuncturist

With the bursting of Spring energy in nature, comes the bursting of Spring energy in us. Even before the bulbs pop out, there is this feeling of “on your mark, get set...” The trees are whispering this and our bodies are also feeling this.

So Spring can have a bit of tension associated with it. Buds are popping! Pow! Not a slow motion, but a very sudden motion occurs. Humans are also moving, and moving quickly. While the season brings all of its beauty of green and rebirth, it also can bring this tension and at its peak, anger. Healthy wood energy is assertive and charges through to accomplish its goals. It is much like the blade of grass pushing

against the concrete—push... push against unbeatable odds, and then finally finding a way around the obstacles.

The liver meridian in the wood element is about planning and creating a vision for the future. “Great Esteem” is a point on the liver meridian that is about taking up one’s own space, standing on your own, and pulling back when needed. It’s about taking responsibility for ourselves and doing it with majesty and esteem like a huge tree in the forest.

The gallbladder meridian, the other wood meridian, is about carrying out the plans, making decisions and using determination to follow through and get the job done. Tom Hanks’ character in “Saving Private Ryan” has been said to represent this gallbladder energy. Decision after decision had to be made; there was no choice in the matter. “Foot Above Tears” is a point on the gallbladder meridian that helps clear the mind so that a good decision can be made. It helps people to rise above the complaint, the tears of frustration when obstacles get in the way. It may also help someone who is fighting back tears to express their

anger. Acupuncture points are meant to balance and bring out the energy that needs to come forward.

So, how can we use this to further our health? One way is to understand that what is happening in nature is also happening in us, and the people around us. Below are some hints for living life fully with the Springtime.

- Start a new project.
- Begin an exercise program.
- Eat cleansing foods: lemons, spring onions, greens (leaf lettuce, spinach). Read “Staying Healthy With the Seasons” by Elson Haas.
- Notice frustration—can you navigate around the obstacles?
- Notice your ability to bend and be pliable, as well as to stand tall and firm.
- Start a garden—think about the unique potential of each seed as you plant it.
- Explore your creativity—write a poem or short story, draw a picture, paint and decorate a room.
- Take a Tai Chi, Qi Gong, or Yoga class—keep muscles supple and flexible.
- Make a plan, set goals and time to accomplish them.