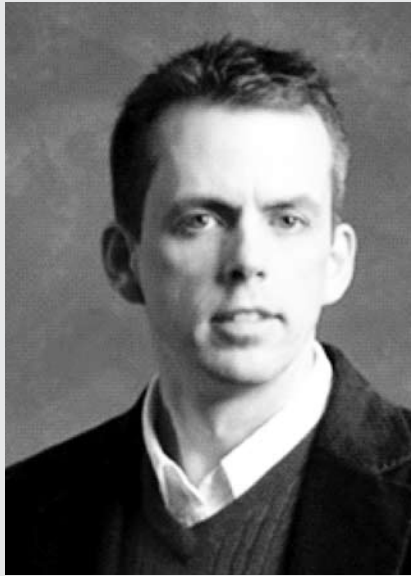


Community Spotlight: Chris Gaunya



by Nancy Cohen

Practiced for thousands of years, acupuncture is a key component of traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). Licensed Acupuncturist Christopher Gaunya describes it as follows: According to physicists, all matter, including the body, is composed of strands of energy. Acupuncture works with this fundamental energy that the Chinese term “Qi.” Oriental Medicine, and acupuncture, in particu-

lar, allows us to correct energetic imbalances that manifest as illness. In essence, the acupuncture is a way of interfacing with the flow of Qi, allowing us to remove blockages of energy and restore the natural movement that maintains health.

Chris approaches health care holistically, considering mind, body, and spirit factors in well-being. Though pain is many clients’ predominant concern, Chris also uses TCM to treat issues such as: asthma; irritable bowel syndrome; migraines; and multiple sclerosis. Additionally, he integrates acupuncture with nutrition and weight loss components of his practice, deeming that a natural fit. “Chinese medicine has always considered nutrition central to good health. Food is essentially Qi. We are born with a certain amount of Qi and we have to take in Qi to live.” Diets containing toxins, fats and sugars can create disease-causing imbalances. Healthier eating improves Qi, and acupuncture becomes more effective. “The level to which we can heal is directly proportional to the quality of our nutrition.”

Chris perceives western and eastern medicines as complementary, rather than adversarial. “TCM is amazing medicine, but if I get hit by a car I want to see a trauma physician, not my acupuncturist. But once the crisis is over, and the long process of healing has begun, I will use TCM to marshal all of my body’s own healing powers to speed my recovery.”

His acupuncture journey started with a rock climbing incident. The initial pain from a fall flared up a year later and got progressively worse. While working as a New York State cartographer, his boss suggested trying acupuncture, which relieved the pain. Having that experience, and inspired by an acupuncture article, he decided to pursue it as a career and hasn’t looked back.

Following that epiphany, Chris earned his Master of Acupuncture degree from Seattle’s Northwest Institute of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine, and national board certification by the National Commission of Colleges of Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine (NCCAOM). He worked in several clinics and became certified in Japanese Meridian Therapy, a system of traditional acupuncture stressing pulse diagnosis, palpation of the abdomen, and typically involving a non-insertion needle technique.

Moving from Seattle due to an illness in his family, Chris opened his Connecticut practice and chose Acuhealth Holistic as “a pithy play on acupuncture and health. Holistic Solutions really came out of what I intended to offer my patients. It kind of flowed all together...” In addition to meeting other practitioners during a stint as advertising salesman for Natural Awakenings, old friends offered a welcome return.

Initial appointments with Chris typically last 90 minutes, with half devoted to health history and diagnosis. “Holistic means that we take into consideration all aspects of a patient’s life: diet; exercise; health history; emotional stress at work and at home, etc. I really strive to connect all the dots to create the best healing option.” Follow-up visits, usually an hour, include treatment comprising 35 to 45 minutes.

Considering becoming an acupuncturist? Chris recommends Ted Kaptchuck’s book, *The Web That Has No Weaver*. He suggests researching schools, speaking with acupuncturists about their educational preferences, and observing them on the job. In Connecticut, Chris explained, only those who are board certified by the NCCAOM and have the designation, Diplomate of Acupuncture, can call themselves an acupuncturist. That person is a Licensed Acupuncturist or L.Ac.

Many people are aware of acupuncture and its healing effects. Others are curious, but feel some trepidation. Chris asserts acupuncture needles are unlike hypodermics, most people don’t feel them, and many clients become so relaxed they fall asleep during the appointment. He suggests “The only thing you have to fear is feeling the way you do now, forever! Try something new, and see your world in a new, pain-free light.”

Acuhealth Holistic LLC is located at 366 South Main Street in Cheshire, CT. For information about appointments, office hours, insurance/payment plans, contact 203.439.7060, or visit www.acuhealer.com. Chris will host Natural Awakenings networking breakfast at Acuhealth on Tuesday, October 13, at 8 a.m. He also conducts talks on health topics and periodically runs “cleansing classes.”

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