



October 2007 Health Letter

A Health Declaration of Independence

Ever wonder what it would be like to find something so simple to do every day, that costs nothing, yet with such profound results that your health and vitality would grow steadily with the practice of it? Sound like a fantasy? Actually not. In the words of my friend and teacher, Dr. Roger Jahnke (author of The Healer Within), the most profound medicine known to humanity is manufactured within your body in response to very simple and gentle mind-body practices. Gentle movement, exercise combined with conscious awareness of breathing and a meditative mindfulness can do just that. It really works. Whether the practice is yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong (pronounced Chee-Gung), or similar practices, these ancient health technologies are gathering very modern evidence of effectiveness at building health, and gaining many devoted fans among everyday people in our modern fast-paced world.

How could these really work that well? Feeling skeptical? Good. I myself am an “open-minded skeptic” and I think it’s important to be careful when presented with any suggestion about a health practice with claims that sound too good to be true. The first question you should always ask is “could this be harmful to me?” Even things that are “natural” may be harmful, so when in doubt ask a professional. In the case of gentle movement, breathing, and mindfulness, it takes just a moment to affirm that these pose no danger; we were created to do those things just as trees were created to grow skyward. So then is there any benefit? In the case of Qigong (chee-gung) for example, this practice has a 5000 year history, and has been refined for generations. Millions of Chinese (and now others around the world) would not practice something over centuries that had no benefit. Years and years of careful observation of its effects have confirmed its role as a health enhancer, improving energy levels, calming anxiety, improving focus, physical balance, and imparting a sense of flow and balanced living. Modern research into Qigong (chee-gung) and related practices has suggested that it enhances oxygen delivery to body tissues, balances the autonomic nervous system (think, getting your body out of overdrive), improves lymphatic flow, and enhances the body’s bioelectric field.

And the best part? You can practice this at no cost, at home, every day, and take charge of your health in a new way. This can be a declaration of health independence. You can have a practice which allows you to build health as an asset, without making an appointment and sitting in a waiting room. I encourage you, as autumn moves the year to its close, to begin *this year* a health practice like this.

As a special opportunity with the opening of Aiken-Augusta Holistic Health this month, I am personally offering a community Qigong (chee-gung) practice, with 8 weekly practice sessions of simple exercises you can take home with you. The cost is only \$5 per session, meeting each Saturday for one hour starting November 3. We will meet at the office at 308 West Avenue to practice together. Please e-mail me through the website (contact page) to let me know you plan to attend. I am really looking forward to seeing you there!

One more special offer this month. In honor of this theme of self-applied healing at the opening of the office, I am offering a FREE COPY of Dr. Jahnke's book, The Healer Within, (http://www.feeltheqi.com/healer_within.htm) to the first 20 patients whom I see in the office for an Integrative Medicine consult. Call to make your appointment, and I look forward to seeing you.

For healing,

Robert Pendergrast, MD