



TRUE WELLNESS
THE MIND

How To Combine the
Best of Western and Eastern Medicine
for Optimal Health

sleep disorders • anxiety • depression

Catherine Kurosu, MD, LAc
Aihan Kuhn, CMD, OBT

Foreword by Jeanne Heroux, MSN

Combine the best of Western and Eastern medical traditions to treat *sleep disorders, anxiety, and depression.*

"A wide-ranging and enthusiastic wellness approach."

—Kirkus Reviews

"A welcome addition to a science supported integration of Eastern and Western medicine."

—Peter Anthony Gryffin, PhD, author

"Combines the very best of Western and Eastern practices to comprehensively address depression, anxiety and sleep."

—Claudette Ozoa, PhD, clinical psychologist

"Blends the best strategies of Eastern and Western medicine into clear and easy-to-follow steps."

—Valerie Cacho, MD, medical director of sleep medicine

"I will implement these approaches to my daily practice at work and home."

—Jo Ann Liu, DNP, AOCNP, University of Michigan Integrative Oncology Scholars 2018-2019, Duke Cancer Institute

"Intellectually rigorous... yet readily accessible... strategies to promote wellness."

—Nancy Halevi, PsyD, licensed clinical psychologist

True Wellness The Mind is a step-by-step guide to better mental health. The authors recognize that the conventional way of managing sleep disorders, anxiety, and depression may not be sustainable for many who continue to struggle with these problems. In their own practices they have discovered a path to optimal mental health.

"We have seen among our own patients how chronic stress can wear away at their well-being, often first by stealing their sleep, then dampening their mood, and finally disrupting their health."

With this book you will

- Discover the strengths and benefits of both Eastern and Western medicine
- Combine Western and Eastern healing methods for *sleep disorders, anxiety, and depression*
- Use questions, worksheets, checklists, and practical advice to prepare for and begin new, healthy behaviors
- Learn to create a multidisciplinary care team for a strong alliance between your Western health-care providers and Eastern practitioners

True Wellness The Mind encourages individual responsibility and prepares you to take the first step on your healing journey. By combining ancient wisdom, cutting-edge scientific discoveries, and practical advice, this book will lead you through a transformation to true well-being in body, mind, and spirit.

MONICA LAU
PHOTOGRAPHY



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TIM COMBRE



Aihan Kuhn, CMD, OBT, is a physician trained in China (OB/GYN) who now specializes in holistic medicine in the USA. She lives and teaches in Sarasota, Florida.

Look for subsequent books in the True Wellness series focusing on specific ailments and providing actionable tools you can use for integrative health care.

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Praise for *True Wellness the Mind*

“*True Wellness the Mind* is a welcome addition to a science-supported integration of Eastern and Western medicine, presented in a well-documented yet very readable and motivational format. I have seen, experienced, and researched many of the benefits discussed by Drs. Kurosu and Kuhn. In a world becoming ever more stressful, *True Wellness the Mind* includes research that shows that mindful practice can actually change the structure of the brain, enhancing our ability to deal with stress and anxiety, and promote the healing ability of the body. Their work does an excellent job of incorporating Eastern modalities of healing with Western approaches to medicine, forwarding a new era of science-based holistic health. A must-read for anyone feeling frustrated with conventional approaches to health or who would like to explore broader avenues founded on several millennia of practice.”

—Dr. Peter Anthony Gryffin, PhD, MS, author of *Mindful Exercise: Metarobics, Healing, and the Power of Tai Chi*.

“In the spirit of the biopsychosocial model in health psychology, *True Wellness the Mind* does a wonderful job of combining the very best of Western and Eastern practices to comprehensively address the biological, psychological, and social aspects of depression, anxiety, and sleep. The reader is presented with a thoughtful roadmap on how to address these life challenges. By showing the reader how to integrate Western and Eastern interventions, and highlighting the importance of self-healing, Drs. Kurosu and Kuhn provide us with valuable tools on our journey toward the overall goal of wellness.”

—Claudette Ozoa, PhD, clinical psychologist, Honolulu, HI

“Depression, anxiety, and sleep challenges are the major issues that lead people to seek psychotherapy treatment. *True Wellness the Mind* offers readers not just a theoretical understanding of the combined power of Western and Eastern approaches to mental health issues, but also step-by-step instructions and tools to address mental health challenges. With accessible and practical

suggestions, Drs. Kurosu and Kuhn support the reader in establishing small, meaningful behavioral changes, knowing that, ultimately, each of us can be an active participant in our own health.”

—Warren R. Loos, clinical psychologist, PhD, Honolulu, HI

“Following up on their excellent book, *True Wellness*, which focused on ways to integrate Eastern and Western approaches to health care, Catherine Kurosu and Aihan Kuhn have put together a new volume focusing on the mind. *True Wellness the Mind* is, like its predecessor, a clear, balanced consideration of how we can benefit by choosing approaches from what the authors call the ‘continuum of medicine.’

“The book is intended to assist readers in gaining a better understanding of the underlying causes of anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders, all of which can contribute to health issues. The authors hope to inspire readers to modify detrimental behaviors and learn to adopt beneficial practices, with the assistance of health-care providers. And, of course, they are advocating a complementary mix of Western and Eastern approaches.

“Kurosu and Kuhn are clearly proponents of the role that Eastern approaches can play in promoting well-being. What is refreshing, however, is the balance they bring to their discussion. They are not wide-eyed enthusiasts making overly broad promises for the benefits of arcane techniques from the Mystic East. On the contrary, the authors are well grounded in an understanding of and appreciation for the scientific method and Western medical practice. They are quite clear in stressing that they conceive of Eastern medical approaches as tools to be used only as complementary to, and to the extent they are compatible with, Western medical science. In this regard, they are careful to provide research citations that support their discussion—a welcome and rare practice in popular approaches to nontraditional medicine.

“In their exploration of a ‘continuum of medicine,’ the authors stress a need for cross-cultural understanding of medical approaches. They provide a cogent discussion of the history and philosophy of both Western and Eastern traditions. They note the tendency for Western medicine to fragment treatment into discrete areas of focus, contrasting this with more holistic Eastern approaches influenced by, for example, Daoism.

“Kurosu and Kuhn present a solid discussion of Western research that examines the effects of breath control and meditation on wellness and provide a fascinating (and honest) assessment of research completed to date on the efficacy (and mystery) of acupuncture.

“The writers are clearly proponents of the benefits of activities such as qigong and tai chi in health promotion. Their assertions on the benefits of such activities is less well grounded in research studies than other topics, but this is more a reflection on the state of scientific investigation than it is a failure on their part.

“To assist in activities that can help individuals with stress, anxiety, and insomnia, the work includes illustrated instructions on basic qigong exercises, helpful checklists for self-healing practice, self-assessment tools, and dietary guides. The authors have provided simple, clear tools for self-help that nicely supplement the more theoretical portions of the text.

“In short, *True Wellness the Mind* provides a well-thought-out, lucid, and concise resource on ways to integrate Eastern medicine with Western treatments. By providing a balanced presentation of research to date on aspects of Eastern medicine and a judicious emphasis on complementary integration of medical approaches, they have crafted a fine resource for those looking to expand their understanding of Eastern medicine, as well as a solid practical guide for individuals wishing to take the next step and explore the health benefits of this tradition.”

—John Donohue, PhD, author, dan-ranked in Shotokan Karate-do,
Kendo, Shinshin Ryu Iaijutsu

“*True Wellness the Mind* is a timely guide on how to use integrative therapies to treat the modern-day ailments of stress, depression, anxiety, and insomnia. Practitioners, healers, and wellness-seekers can all benefit from the wisdom of this book. Kurosu and Kuhn blend the best strategies of Eastern and Western medicine into clear and easy-to-follow steps that will allow readers to overcome emotional and physical barriers that may be standing in the way of optimal health.”

—Valerie Cacho, MD, medical director of sleep medicine, Hawai‘i Pacific
Health: Straub Hospital, Honolulu, HI

“Catherine Kurosu and Aihan Kuhn’s latest book, *True Wellness the Mind*, effortlessly blends Eastern and Western approaches to emotional wellness. It is intellectually rigorous in its explanations of the mind and how it works and yet readily accessible in its suggestions for daily cognitive and behavioral strategies to promote wellness. The authors draw from both traditions to provide a primer on how to get started on the path to emotional balance.”

—Nancy Halevi, PsyD, licensed clinical psychologist, Kailua, HI

“*True Wellness the Mind: How to Combine the Best of Western and Eastern Medicine for Optimal Health* by Drs. Kurosu and Kuhn is their second book on true wellness. This book focuses on healing anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders using a combination of Western and Eastern medicine. The authors do an excellent job of explaining the history, philosophy, and science of Western and Eastern medicine, as well as presenting the respective healing modalities for anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders. Then, the authors emphasize the benefit of qigong for anxiety, depression, and insomnia, with easy-to-follow, step-by-step practical instructions. At the end, the authors provide the True Wellness Checklist, with simple instructions to help readers get started.

“In *True Wellness the Mind*, Drs. Kurosu and Kuhn use evidence-informed, patient-centered care and therapeutic approaches for these complex health conditions. This book will benefit health-care providers by guiding them to help patients make better treatment choices, and benefit other readers by offering a better understanding of how integrative therapeutic approaches, combining Western and Eastern medicine, help in healing anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders. I will be implementing these approaches in my daily practice at work and home.”

—Jo Ann Liu, DNP, AOCNP, University of Michigan Integrative Oncology
Scholars 2018–2019, Duke Cancer Institute

“The doctors have published a very good body of work on an important yet challenging subject: integrative medical treatment for anxiety, depression, and insomnia. I have been practicing integrative medicine since 1997 and will be recommending *True Wellness the Mind* as necessary reading for patients who are dealing with these issues.”

—Robert J. Schmidt, MD, LAc, Family Medicine BC, Clinical Lipidology, BC

“In this succinct yet thorough book, authors Catherine Kurosu and Aihan Kuhn present the history and philosophies of Eastern and Western medical modalities and provide practical applications for implementation of both in our hectic world today. When suffering from anxiety, depression, or insomnia, the brain’s ability to conceive of solutions is diminished, and *True Wellness the Mind* offers feasible and immediately implementable methods for change. This integrative approach to wellness promotes an important paradigm shift for lasting recovery and healing.”

—Gina Cargile, trauma model therapist, certified hypnotherapist,
Reiki healer at Honolulu Acupuncture and Naturopathic Clinic, HI

CATHERINE KUROSU, MD, LAc
AIHAN KUHN, CMD, OBT

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Optimal Health; Sleep Disorders,
Anxiety, Depression

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NOTE TO READERS

The practices, treatments, and methods described in this book should not be used as an alternative to professional medical diagnosis or treatment. The authors and publisher of this book are NOT RESPONSIBLE in any manner whatsoever for any injury or negative effects that may occur through following the instructions and advice contained herein.

It is recommended that before beginning any treatment or exercise program, you consult your medical professional to determine whether you should undertake this course of practice.

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Foreword

EVERY SO OFTEN, SOMETHING MAGICAL HAPPENS. Think about the joyous ceremonial union of a seemingly unlikely couple. Here we are about to embark upon an extraordinary journey with the marriage of Western and Eastern medicine. Drs. Kurosu and Kuhn have artfully and scientifically blended these two traditions in *True Wellness the Mind*, the second book in their True Wellness series.

I have known Aihan Kuhn as a doctor, instructor, mentor, and, also, a friend for well over a decade. I've taught qigong since 2008, having learned from Dr. Kuhn the practical, mechanical science along with the positive, vital spirit of qigong and tai chi. I speak at her yearly Qigong / Tai Chi Healing Institute's annual conference in Sarasota. Dr. Kuhn trained in both Western medicine and traditional Chinese medicine. Early in her career, she trained in obstetrics and gynecology while in China. She uses various holistic methods such as traditional Chinese medicine, qigong, and tai chi for healing, Daoist healing, mindful eating, dieting, hands-on healing, and therapeutic exercises. Her mind/body medicine has helped many patients with amazing results.

I know Catherine Kurosu as an expert in her field as an OB-GYN and as an acupuncturist. She is an adventuresome spirit who brings a calming presence wherever she goes. Dr. Kurosu is trained as a medical doctor and practiced obstetrics and gynecology for almost twenty years, while also learning the benefits of acupuncture. She is now a diplomate of the American Board of Medical Acupuncture and the National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine. Both doctors have combined the expertise of their original training and broadened their scope of practice to include more holistic, preventative, and curative methodologies.

Recently, I had the profound honor and pleasure of spending four days with Dr. Kurosu, with Dr. Kuhn as our gracious hostess in her serene Sarasota home. We spoke together of the chasm between Eastern and Western approaches and how this gap has gradually been closing. I have found both psychiatry and obstetrics to be more open to alternative modalities than are more conventional medical fields such as, for example, cardiology and pulmonology. However, even these specialties have, over the past ten years, begun to value a more holistic approach to total wellness, as opposed to a single-minded focus on curing disease.

Some doctors recognize that drug treatments are not providing their patients with the long-term benefits they'd hoped to achieve. Patients continue to suffer with symptoms of their disease despite progressively stronger medications. Does medical intervention sometimes thwart the body's self-healing mechanisms, and even promote disease progression? Can nutrition and various natural, holistic therapies enhance the body's own response toward stress and dis-ease? Can a combination of Western and Eastern modalities achieve optimum wellness? If you have read this far, you may be thinking, "yes." And, you are right!

Do you ever wonder, if the natural approach is so effective, why aren't more doctors using it? While progress is being made, such as doctors increasingly recommending omega-3 fish oils or glucosamine sulfate for their patients, for example, the truth is, doctors are uncomfortable with recommending many of the myriad modalities available, primarily because they know only what they have been taught. The typical medical doctor who graduated nine or ten years ago had fewer than twenty hours of nutritional training during their four years of medical school and basically was given no mention, let alone a survey, of therapies such as herbal medicine or acupuncture. Fortunately, more recent graduates have been exposed to these healing modalities through courses in integrative medicine during their training.

I am a nurse practitioner, board certified in both medicine and psychiatry. Over the years, I have observed many disconnects in our allopathic medical and psychiatric fields: patients are looking for a "cure," but frequently can't tell me what medications they are on or

what they take them for; the Western model strives to “fix” the patient by alleviating symptoms, but often ignores the underlying root cause of the disease; when providers *do* discuss the many stressors that contribute to a patient’s illness, the patient may not be willing to make the recommended changes. Often, patients verbalize their preference for taking a pill to counteract the symptoms of stress, rather than reduce the stressor itself. I have found that lifestyle change can be a struggle for some, until it is too late. *True Wellness the Mind* emphasizes taking control of our own medical care, rather than outsourcing it to a medical provider. The authors suggest that we, ourselves, are responsible for our own mental and physical health, and provide easy-to-follow steps to true wellness.

I currently specialize in addiction medicine, but I have worked in hospitals for more than twenty years, including more than ten years in emergency departments. During this time, I have seen many examples of the ways stress manifests. My favorite example of people’s anxiety-ridden response to stress occurred in the emergency room at least twice per month. A horrified patient is brought in by ambulance, believing they are “having a heart attack.” They describe tremendous chest pain, sometimes radiating, shortness of breath, and nausea, all red flags for a potential cardiac emergency. Once all the test results are in, and it has been determined they are not going into cardiac arrest, they look at me with complete, utter perplexity and ask, “What happened?” And, “I still feel awful!”

At this point, I order a calming agent such as lorazepam for them, but long before that arrives, I take one of their hands in mine and say, “Just breathe with me.” They dutifully comply, and together we breathe long, slow, deep, slender breaths. As we breathe together, their breaths become longer, until, after about three minutes, they became relaxed. Often they even refuse the lorazepam! I explain that they had worked themselves into a state of panic, a “fight-or-flight” response over some stressor, or an accumulation of them, and induced the symptoms of a heart attack. At this point, they often feel embarrassed. But, those are such great teaching moments! It is a chance to explain how the anxiety generated in our mind can completely derail our body, and, in turn,

how our brain, with simple slow breathing, can invoke a parasympathetic response, gradually calming us down.

You will find the same types of “teaching moments” right here! Within the covers of this book are discussions of the connection between chronic stress and brain function/malfunction, the importance of sleep and how to optimize it, and a multitude of stress-reduction techniques, including qigong exercises, complete with explanatory illustrations and the wisdom of the Dao. A thorough, easy-to-understand explanation of acupuncture describes how utilizing the piezoelectricity of the entire body leads to a reduction of pain, stress, depression, anxiety, and more.

Drs. Kurosu and Kuhn also discuss behavior modification and lifestyle changes for managing factors that cause stress such as trauma, external and internal pressures, and emotional imbalances—conditions with which we all struggle if we live in modern society. There are a plethora of self-help and holistic therapy books out there, but I can guarantee you that none of them create the same effective fusion of East meets West as does *True Wellness the Mind*. So, read on and struggle no more!

Jeanne Heroux, MSN
Board Certified Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner
Board Certified Adult Medicine Nurse Practitioner
Owner of The Affinity House, A Sober Home for Women

Preface

WE LIVE IN AN EXTRAORDINARY WORLD. The technical advances of the past century are incredible, but they can also be overwhelming. In most parts of the world, life is fast paced, pressured, and nonstop. We are in constant communication with the society around us, including those on the other side of the globe. With cell phones, computers, and internet streaming, we are continually absorbing information regarding current events. These events can be inspiring, entertaining, or disturbing. They are always with us and available for viewing. Gone are the days when radio and television broadcasts stopped at midnight and resumed in the morning. Information overload is available every moment of the day or night.

And it is not just information that is accessible. Supermarkets, pharmacies, and restaurants provide twenty-four-hour service. No longer are emergency workers like police, firefighters, and medical personnel the only people who work nights. Checkout clerks, waitstaff, bus drivers, shelf stockers, and cleaners are among the many workers who are expected to pick up night shifts.

Between endless media interactions, longer working hours that disrupt the usual rhythm of the day, and the ever-present need to work faster and harder, we find our patients are increasingly stressed and sleep deprived. The demands that modern society places on us, and that we place on ourselves, are creating a situation in which we can never fully succeed. We worry that we have left work undone or that we have not attended to our families. We worry about our finances and our communities and the future. Indeed, many people have a lot to worry about—poverty, unemployment, illness, religious persecution, racism, violence, and war.

Such circumstances may naturally lead to emotional distress, but even for those who have a comfortable existence, constant worry can give way to anxiety, depression, and difficulty sleeping. We have seen among our own patients how chronic stress can wear away at their well-being, often by first stealing their sleep, then dampening their mood, and finally disrupting their health. Sometimes a sudden change can have such a negative effect on people's lives that startling, debilitating shifts occur in their emotional and physical health. Other patients seem to have a tendency toward psychological and sleep problems. Such patients may exhibit these features under "normal" conditions, and others may manifest these disorders only when exposed to external stressors.

Why are some people more resilient than others, even among those who have no genetic predisposition to such problems? How do some people keep themselves emotionally healthy even under extreme stress? How can people maintain restorative sleep under these circumstances? Modern researchers are attempting to answer these questions, but so many societal and environmental influences act on an individual that it is difficult to tease apart the answers. The circumstances are as different as each person's underlying constitution.

As physicians, when we encounter patients struggling with anxiety, depression, and sleep problems, we recognize that emotional health, physical health, and sleep are intertwined, each affecting the others. We work with our patients to help them identify adjustments they can make to optimize these three aspects of good health. Improvements in any area will act synergistically on the others and create a positive change.

Our purpose in writing this book is to help the reader understand the intricacies of anxiety, depression, and sleep disorders; modify behaviors that are detrimental; initiate practices that are healing; and seek assistance from a health-care provider to guide the reader's progress. It is our firm belief that readers who are troubled by these conditions should have a thorough evaluation by a Western medical professional. Eastern healing modalities may be used concurrently if

they are compatible with Western care and administered by a qualified practitioner.

Modern science is unraveling the biological processes responsible for brain function. With that knowledge, we are learning how chronic stress not only affects our sleep and mood, but actually alters the structure and function of the brain. The brain can change, for better or worse. It is our hope that readers will use the Eastern and Western treatment approaches in this book to restore normal brain architecture and processing. With persistence, you can achieve emotional well-being and restful sleep.

Catherine Kurosu, MD, LAc

Aihan Kuhn, CMD, OBT

Emotional Health, Sleep, and Disease

FOR MANY CENTURIES, humans have appreciated the connection between our emotional and physical health. Sleep lies at the interface between these realms, influencing and being influenced by our minds and bodies. When we find our mind troubled, our sleep disrupted, and our body out of balance, it is sometimes difficult to determine the initial cause.

This is like the classic question, “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?” When talking to patients about their medical history, a lot of information can be gained by trying to unravel the “chicken or egg” conundrum. When someone is asked, “When was the last time you felt well?” he will almost always know the month and year. The follow-up question, “What happened in your life during the previous few months?” can shed a lot of light on the problem. Some people have experienced an emotional trauma that has not resolved, leading to anxiety, depression, or difficulty sleeping. Subsequently, they develop physical ailments such as headaches, digestive issues, or chronic pain. Other people suffered a physical trauma that disrupted their sleep and led to anxiety and depression. The physical trauma could have been an accident or an illness, a surgery, or a lifelong disability.

Any initiating trauma, whether physical or emotional, can lead to disrupted sleep. This can be caused by the physiological changes brought about by a medical condition or by the worry and stress caused by a change that the initiating trauma has brought about in relationships or

socioeconomic factors. For example, if someone is in a car accident and is injured, she may suffer both physical and emotional trauma. The physical injury may cause pain, disfigurement, or disability, which may result in an inability to work, either inside or outside the home. People injured in this way may be unable to care for their children, parents, or partner. Perhaps now they cannot financially support their family. This can lead to worry, anxiety, and depression. Individuals who are unable to fulfill their usual responsibilities commonly feel ill at ease in their relationships and society at large. These physical and emotional stressors can adversely affect a person's sleep. Not only can pain from a physical injury disrupt the normal sleep cycle, but the emotional strain of altered circumstances can also lead to insomnia. Head injuries, in particular, can disturb a person's normal brain function and sleeping pattern. The physical and emotional trauma caused by traumatic brain injury (TBI) can take years to resolve.

The example of a car accident is a common one, but any serious illness or life change can lead to emotional problems and sleep disorders. Some people are able to bounce back from these situations and get right back on course. Others, because of the severity of their injury or illness, never truly recover and may carry the secondary burden of poor sleep and emotional distress for the rest of their lives. Yet again, some people are genetically predisposed to suffer from emotional or sleep disturbances; such conditions are known to run in families. With increasingly sophisticated tests such as gene sequencing and functional magnetic resonance imaging of the brain (fMRI), and a greater understanding of how brain cells actually work, scientists are able to pinpoint the reason some people are affected with these disorders and others are not. For instance, generalized anxiety disorder carries a moderate genetic risk, with a 30 percent risk of inheritance.¹ A 2018 meta-analysis found

1. Michael G. Gottschalk and Katharina Domscke, "Genetics of Generalized Anxiety Disorder and Related Traits," *Dialogues in Clinical Neuroscience* 19 (2): 159–168.

The Continuum of Medicine

WHEN WE GET SICK, physically or emotionally, often the first questions we ask are how and why did this misfortune befall us? These questions have been asked for millennia. In ancient times, illness was attributed to the supernatural. Afflicted people thought they were being punished by a god, possessed by an evil spirit, or hexed by some malignant force. Various legends and myths were created in all societies in an effort to explain the how and why of disease. “Cures” were generally ritualistic and of a spiritual nature, administered by the “doctor” of the group. These healers went by different names in different cultures—shaman, curandero, kahuna—but they all blended their understanding of culture, community, and physical environment to create rituals and remedies to treat illness within their tribes.

Over time, as nature was better understood, the realization came that diseases were caused by real-world phenomena and not by supernatural forces. With this awareness came a shift in the role of the shaman. The shaman continued to be the spiritual leader of the group, but the physical health of the community was left to others—the herbalists, the bonesetters, and the surgeons who were the doctors of the tribe. Even though the shaman and the doctor now had different responsibilities, there remained a consistent understanding of health and healing. They knew that the health of an individual was more than the correct functioning of the body. True healing involved the patient’s mental and emotional well-being. In many ancient traditions, doctors realized that to view their patient as a complete person, they had to

consider all aspects of that patient's life; medical conditions, relationships within the family and community, and daily habits would all influence the quality and quantity of the patient's life-span. Those daily habits were, and still are, the cornerstone of health maintenance. These physicians encouraged adequate sleep, nutritious food, and exercise. Not only was physical exercise recommended, but mental discipline and quiet concentration of the mind were promoted for complete well-being of the body, mind, and spirit. Through these methods, the physician helped people maintain good health and recover from illness.

The following discussion of the history and philosophy of Western and Eastern medicines will shed some light on how and why doctors in each discipline approach patient care the way they do. We then discuss the science behind the Eastern healing arts and the current trend toward integrating these two medical systems.

The History and Philosophy of Western Medicine

The birthplace of Western medicine was ancient Greece, and its father was a physician named Hippocrates (460–360 BCE). Hippocrates felt that a clear understanding of the patient's way of life and constitution was essential in order to provide appropriate medical care. He particularly emphasized balance in daily living regarding food and exercise. In ancient Greece, the human body was thought to be composed of three material substances: blood, water, and bile. These substances were called "humors." Additionally, the humors were associated with certain qualities (hot, cold, moist, and dry) and elements (earth, air, fire, and water). Perfect health was considered to be the ideal equilibrium of the humors, qualities, and elements within each individual, and disease was the result of imbalance among these components.

Even prior to the birth of Hippocrates, Greek philosophers and physicians were fascinated with the natural world and, like the Chinese, used observations of their environment to explain human growth and development. It was thought that the universe consisted of pairs of

The True Wellness Approach to Anxiety and Depression

AN INCREASING NUMBER OF AMERICANS suffer from anxiety disorders and depression, either separately or in combination. Many other conditions, such as obsessive-compulsive disorder or post-traumatic stress disorder, can encompass some of the symptoms of anxiety and depression, but it is beyond the scope of this book to discuss them all.

It is estimated that more than 18 percent of the population suffers from some form of anxiety disorder,¹ and 10 percent of Americans report varying degrees of depression to their doctors.² The overlap is considerable, as almost half of individuals suffering from depression are diagnosed with a coexisting anxiety disorder.³ Symptoms of generalized anxiety include worry, tension, agitation, sleep disturbances, fatigue, poor concentration, restlessness, and irritability. Those with depression can also suffer from all these symptoms, as well as depressed mood, decreased interest in life, diminished appetite, low self-esteem, and suicidal thoughts.

1. <http://www.adaa.org/about-adaa/press-room/facts-statistics> (accessed April 29, 2014).

2. <http://www.cdc.gov/features/dsdepression/index.html> (accessed April 29, 2014).

3. <http://www.adaa.org/about-adaa/press-room/facts-statistics> (accessed July 20, 2016).

Why some people become depressed or anxious and others do not is poorly understood. When subjected to similar life circumstances, one person may become severely affected, another may experience mild symptoms, and yet another may navigate the situation easily. Every individual has unique genetic and environmental predispositions toward depression or anxiety. With the inevitable stressors and losses we all encounter, some vulnerable individuals will develop alterations in the way their central nervous system functions. This, in turn, will change the body's biochemistry, resulting in symptoms of anxiety or depression.

Historically, the symptoms of both anxiety and depression were thought to be caused by abnormal neurotransmitter levels, so medications were developed to restore brain biochemistry to a more normal profile. For those who suffer from debilitating anxiety or are severely depressed, pharmacologic therapy can be very beneficial and even life-saving; however, drugs may not be as useful for other types of depressive disorders. If you suffer from milder forms of depression, you may receive greater benefit with fewer side effects from other modalities such as exercise, dietary changes, supplements, and mind-body techniques. These modalities can be used in conjunction with psychotherapy and pharmacotherapy, or both, after discussion with your health-care provider. Special attention must be paid to the use of supplements, herbs, or dietary changes if you are already taking any sort of antidepressant. These complementary therapies may affect the absorption, metabolism, or excretion of your current medication, resulting in unwanted side effects or serious complications.

It is worth noting that prescription medications may cause depression. A 2018 study published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* highlights the link between depression and prescription medications. More than 26,000 people were surveyed, with 37 percent found to be using medications with depression as a known potential side effect. The authors found that the greater the number of medications used that listed depression as a possible side effect, the greater the likelihood the person would suffer from depression. Compared with people who used a similar number of medi-

The True Wellness Approach to Sleep Disorders

WHAT CONSTITUTES A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP? Adequate quantity and quality of sleep such that you wake refreshed. Regarding the quantity of sleep, the number of hours you need depends on your age. According to the Centers for Disease Control, the amount of sleep recommended for adults age 18 to 60 is seven hours or more. Contrary to popular belief, older adults actually need about the same, between seven to nine hours per night. Teenagers need eight to ten hours and young children need even more than that!¹ Unfortunately, for adults over the age of 18, at least one-third of us are averaging less than seven hours of sleep in a twenty-four-hour period.²

With respect to the quality of your sleep, this depends on many factors: Whether you have an underlying medical condition such as chronic pain, whether you take medications or supplements that alter your sleep stages and brain waves, whether you are naturally a light or heavy sleeper, whether you are a shift worker, and many more factors that we will discuss in the coming pages.

1. Centers for Disease Control, "How Much Sleep Do I Need?," https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/about_sleep/how_much_sleep.html (accessed March 12, 2019).

2. Centers for Disease Control, "Short Sleep Duration Among US Adults," https://www.cdc.gov/sleep/data_statistics.html (accessed March 12, 2019).

In chapter 1, we discussed sleep in relation to emotional health and disease. We touched on some aspects of what happens in your brain when you sleep, but we have not yet described the full sleep cycle. Thanks to the scientists who have dedicated their lives to this area of study, we are learning more every year about the intricate biochemical and neurological dance that occurs during the different stages of sleep. It is well beyond the scope of this book to delve into the details of sleep physiology, so we will highlight important points to clear up common misconceptions about sleep. For those readers interested in a closer look at this fascinating subject, we recommend *Why We Sleep* by Dr. Matthew Walker.³

We would like to mention three essential pieces of information presented by Dr. Walker that may change the way you approach your sleep habits.

First, while your brain contains a natural timekeeper that keeps track of the twenty-four-hour circadian rhythms that govern your wakefulness, there is another mechanism that determines when you feel sleepy. Dr. Walker calls that mechanism “sleep pressure.” This is how it works: From the time you wake, your brain is producing a chemical called adenosine. As the concentration of adenosine increases, you become increasingly sleepy. Peak concentrations occur between twelve to sixteen hours from the time you wake up. This would be around the time you would normally go to sleep. When you sleep, your adenosine levels drop. But, have you ever stayed up all night to finish a report or a school assignment and noticed that as you keep working into the early morning hours you get a “second wind?” Even though your adenosine levels continue to rise because you have not slept, your circadian rhythm that governs wakefulness is on the upswing. These two systems march along, quite independent from each other. Even though your wakefulness will wax and wane over a twenty-four-hour period, your adenosine levels will increase until you succumb to the pressure to sleep.⁴ While caffeine can

3. Matthew Walker, PhD, *Why We Sleep: Unlocking the Power of Sleep and Dreams* (New York: Scribner, 2017).

4. *Ibid.*, 36.

Qigong for Anxiety, Depression, and Insomnia

THE TERM QIGONG IS COMPOSED OF TWO WORDS. The first, “qi” has been translated as the “life energy” or “vital force” within the body. “Gong” has been translated as “work” or “mastery.” Together, the word qigong can be interpreted as “energy work” or the act of mastering one’s vital force. Qigong is a healing practice that combines breath control with concentration of the mind. There are many forms of qigong, but all fall within two basic types: passive and active. Passive qigong is performed seated or lying down and resembles the stances we associate with meditation; it is also known as internal qigong or *nei gong*. In the active form of qigong, breath control and focused attention are combined with specific movements to create a type of moving meditation. Active qigong, also known as external qigong or *wei gong*, is similar to tai chi and yoga.

The practice of qigong is an ancient one. These exercises have been known by several names over the centuries, including *Dao-Yin*, “leading and guiding the energy.”¹ Earlier, we discussed the silk texts that were discovered in the Mawangdui tombs in 1973, which date back to 168 BCE. A chart was found among these texts that depicts the *Dao-Yin* postures. The *Dao-Yin Tu* (“*Dao-Yin Illustrations*”) consists of four rows

1. Kenneth S. Cohen, *The Way of Qigong: The Art and Science of Chinese Energy Healing* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1997), 13.

of eleven postures, forty-four in all. In these illustrations, the roots of most modern qigong practices can be found; they also include descriptions of the stances, instructions for the movements, and indications for the use of each exercise. Certain Dao-Yin exercises were deemed valuable in treating low back pain and painful knees; others were indicated for gastrointestinal disorders; and still others were designated to treat anxiety. This demonstrates that not only were Dao-Yin exercises prescribed as a medical therapy, but ancient physicians also appreciated the utility of this type of qigong practice in the treatment of emotional disharmony.²

As old as qigong is, its development was likely influenced by the older Indian practice of yoga. The earliest known documentation of yoga was found in the Indus Valley and dates back 5,000 years. Two millennia later, in approximately 1000 BCE, the Upanishads were written. These commentaries emphasize the personal, experiential nature of the journey toward spirituality and elucidate many basic yoga teachings, promoting an understanding of the principles of karma, chakras, meditation, and prana.³ In India, the vital life force is known as prana, and pranayama is the cultivation of the life force through breath control. By breathing with intention, the prana is moved through the nadi (channels). The intersections of important nadi are called chakras. There are many similarities between this system of energy management and that of qigong and Eastern medicine. Qigong requires the same attention and control of the breath and the movement of qi through channels of the body. Interestingly, the locations of many important acupuncture points correspond to the positions of the chakras.

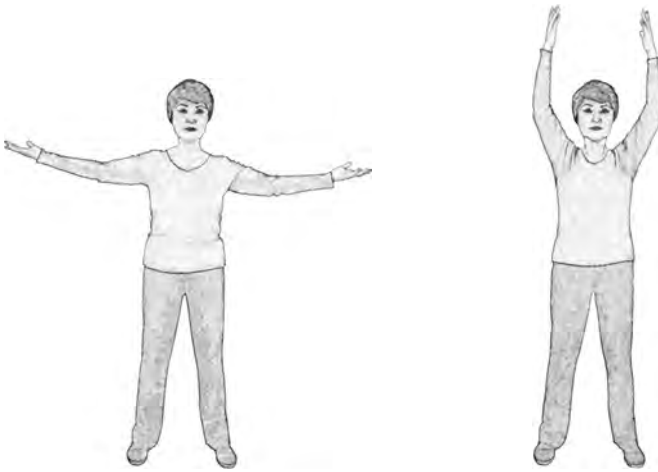
Yoga and tai chi have many benefits, but we feel that qigong is the best practice if you are new to these Eastern healing arts, especially if you have any physical limitations that prevent prolonged standing or

2. Ibid.

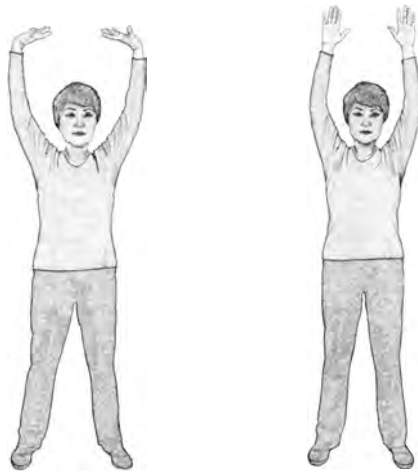
3. Jennie Lee, *True Yoga: Practicing with the Yoga Sutras for Happiness and Spiritual Fulfillment* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn Worldwide, 2016), 7.

6. Bend Forward and Relax

This movement really helps open the bladder channel, which is the longest in the body. The bladder channel contains all the points that strongly influence the internal organs of the body. This channel has a close relationship to the nervous system and the nerves that travel from the spinal cord to the internal organs. The points on the bladder channel that are assigned to each organ correspond to the anatomic location of the nerves that modulate the function of that organ. For example, the point on the bladder channel that influences the function of the heart is located at the level of the spinal column where this nerve travels from the spinal cord toward the heart. By opening the bladder channel, all the organs will benefit.



Begin with your feet shoulder width apart. Inhale as you raise your arms up from the side of the body, palms facing up. Exhale as your palms face each other while you reach above your head.



Inhale as you turn your palms upward and push them up as high as you can.

Exhale as you relax your palms.



Lower your arms in the front of the body with your palms facing forward, then downward. Continue this motion while bending forward until your fingers touch the floor.

You are bending as low as you can while still feeling comfortable. Relax your arms and upper body and breathe deeply and naturally.

Your mind is focused on total relaxation: arms, shoulder, upper body, lower back. Your knees can be either straight or slightly bent, whatever feels comfortable. With each inhalation, you imagine that the energy goes through your lower back, starting from your feet. With each exhalation you move the energy from the lower back through your body to your fingertips and then connect with the earth's energy.

General Principles of Self-Healing

ULTIMATELY, THE SUCCESSFUL TREATMENT OF ANXIETY, depression, and insomnia depends on consistent self-care. Even if you are taking medications for these conditions, you must be attentive to your body, mind, and spirit on a daily basis. Medications must be taken regularly without skipping doses, and doctors' appointments should be kept. Your health-care provider can do a lot for you, from arriving at a correct diagnosis to arranging specialty and support services.

But you can do even more for yourself. We all know that eating nutritious foods, not smoking, exercising regularly, sleeping adequately, and managing stress levels can lead to a healthier life. In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have determined that if people would exercise more, eat better, and not smoke, 40 percent of cancers and 80 percent of adult-onset diabetes and heart disease could be prevented.¹ Sleep deprivation and life stress have each been shown to contribute to the incidence of chronic illness, so sleeping well and managing stress can decrease your risk of such diseases.

Taking care of yourself requires determination. Every day you will be faced with choices about what foods to buy and how to cook them,

1. Kenneth Thorpe and Jonathan Lever, "Prevention: The Answer to Curbing Chronically High Health Care Costs (Guest Opinion)," *Kaiser Health News*, May 24, 2011, <http://www.kaiserhealthnews.org/Columns/2011/May/052411thorpelever.aspx>.

how much to eat, and how to exercise and for how long. You also make choices about whether to go to sleep at a reasonable hour or stay up and surf the internet. You choose whether to manage your stress by using meditative practices or dangerous habits such as smoking or excessive alcohol consumption. Every decision you make matters. Your doctor can give you advice, but ultimately, you must decide for yourself and act on those decisions. No one else can do it for you.

If you have already established these healthy habits, congratulations! You are stacking the odds in your favor. The likelihood that you will develop a lifestyle-related chronic illness is at least half what it would be otherwise. As we have seen, even conditions like anxiety, depression, and insomnia can be improved through lifestyle modification.

If you feel there is room for improvement in the way you eat, exercise, and manage your stress, now is the time to gear up and get going. In our first book, *True Wellness: How to Combine the Best of Western and Eastern Medicine for Optimal Health*, we devoted a whole chapter to the process of change, setting goals, and taking action to achieve those objectives. We have found that one of the most useful tools you can use to establish new habits is a checklist. There is nothing particularly glamorous or high-tech about a checklist, but for many people, it is invaluable. With a checklist, you can see concretely what you have or have not done during the course of your week. If you plan to practice qigong three times a week, you can see as the days pass whether you will meet that goal. If you are honest, you will see the number of times you meditated or went to the gym, how many vegetables you ate, or how much water you drank. Many people, when they start using a checklist, are astonished at their own lapses. We often convince ourselves that we are doing all we can to achieve optimal health, when really we are falling short of the mark. This sort of wishful thinking is common.

The beauty of a checklist is that it gives you a systematic way of changing your behavior and developing consistency. The checklist has become integral in air-traffic safety and in hospital operating rooms. Its use has improved outcomes in these industries where lives hang in the balance. It is not being too melodramatic to say that both the quality

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