

The background of the cover is a light teal color. It features several pink peonies in various stages of bloom, with green stems and leaves. The flowers are arranged in a circular pattern around the central text. The petals are detailed with fine lines and shading, and the centers show yellow stamens.

YANG SHENG

THE ART OF CHINESE
SELF-HEALING

KATIE BRINDLE

CONTENTS

Title Page
Introduction

PART 1: KEY PRINCIPLES

IDEAS FROM CHINESE MEDICINE

PART 2: YANG SHENG IN PRACTICE

BREATH

DIGESTION

SLEEP

EXERCISE

EMOTIONS

SPIRIT

SKIN

PART 3: SELF-HEALING FOR THE SEASONS

Afterword
Further Reading

Bibliography

Index

Acknowledgements

About the Author

Copyright Page

INTRODUCTION

‘A drop of prevention is better than a bucketload of cure.’ ANCIENT CHINESE PROVERB

----- Yang sheng may be the most important concept in Chinese medicine you’ve never heard of. The direct translation is ‘nourish life’. To explain a bit more fully, yang sheng will help you balance your whole self for a long, wise and happy life.

Sounds like a big promise? You might think it’s even bigger when I tell you that yang sheng is the self-care part of Chinese medicine – a self-healing system – which means you can do all the treatments yourself, most of them completely for free, putting yourself in the driving seat of your health.

BETTER ENERGY, SLEEP & MOOD

It's my dream to help people discover yang sheng techniques. These simple but powerful habit and lifestyle changes have transformed my life. I know the knowledge in this book can do the same for you. Living the yang sheng way will improve the way you feel in so many ways, from your sleep and digestion, to your skin and energy levels. Yang sheng has mood benefits, too: getting into balance will bring you closer to a default state of calm and quiet contentment. And you can get all of these benefits in just a few minutes a day.

This book will explain the principles of yang sheng, which is currently relatively unknown in the West. But, most importantly, it will show you how to fit this system into your life, easily and effortlessly. You can use the book as the beginning of a journey deep into Chinese medicine or you can simply add a few of the suggestions to your daily routine.

Chinese medicine is ancient, yet it's still relevant today. It has helped millions of people and it can help you, too. Life has evolved, but the mechanisms of our body haven't really changed. The actual techniques have stood the test of thousands of years. What I have tried to do is to bring them up to date with a modern format and instructions. I only ask that you keep an open mind and give it a try.

BENEFITS OF DAILY HEALTH MAINTENANCE

Yang sheng has such a different way of thinking about the

body, but this is precisely why it's valuable. Western medicine tends not to focus on disease prevention. We, in turn, take our good health for granted until we're ill; at which point, we treat the symptoms collectively rather than looking for a root cause.

If you fell sick in ancient China, it was regarded as a failure of preventative medicine. The principle of yang sheng – and indeed of Chinese medicine – is that if you eliminate small health niggles as they arise, you'll prevent bigger ones happening. There's an ancient Chinese proverb: 'Waiting to treat illnesses after they manifest is like waiting to dig a well after one is thirsty.'

When you adopt yang sheng as a daily practice, you are being proactive about your health maintenance, using what I consider to be the most powerful and time-tested of techniques. Think of it like this: regular yang sheng will do for your wellbeing what tooth brushing does for your mouth. You wouldn't dream of not brushing your teeth each day – and once you see and feel the benefits of yang sheng, you will want to continue doing it every day, too. It is daily maintenance for your body, mind and spirit.

ARE YOU IN BALANCE?

Chinese medicine has a sophisticated understanding of how the body works physically, emotionally and spiritually, but also energetically, because it says you are all of those things

wrapped up together.

The philosophy is that any disease starts with a disruption of energy flow, which happens before you notice any symptoms. The good news is, you can treat those subtle energetic imbalances before they progress and cause obvious physical symptoms. As strange as this may sound, I have seen in practice that it really works.

A disruption of energy flow can manifest in all kinds of ways before you become ill. For example, are you sleeping well? You may not be a hardcore insomniac, but do you wake up exhausted? You may not be sick, but are you quite well every day? Do you feel strong? Are you calm? Do you bounce out of bed ready for action? Sadly, most of us feel under par at least some of the time. Our modern lifestyle leaves us as out of balance as a single person on a seesaw.

Maybe that's why you've picked up this book – you don't feel quite right but you can't put your finger on a cause. My patients often come to me because of poor sleep, low energy, depression or chronic pain. These are all conditions Western medicine can't resolve easily, but which have left them desperate to find a solution.

I often see patients suffering from low libido, too. Sex is often a casualty of modern living. Think about it like this: you can live without your fertility, so it's usually the first bodily system to get shut down when the body is stressed and needs to conserve resources. Which, given how life-affirming sex can be, is a huge pity.

The more symptoms of ill health you have, the more out of

balance Chinese medicine will assess you to be. You don't have to understand exactly how and where you are out of balance to get yourself back into alignment – another of the joys of Chinese medicine. You just have to learn and understand a few of the *right* things – then do them.

Good health is not something you achieve with an hour a day in the gym (although exercise has its place) or by depriving yourself of your most-loved indulgences. Rather, health is something to nurture with a series of little moments, the yang sheng techniques I'll be showing you, throughout the day.

LESS IS DEFINITELY MORE

I'd say most of my clients are probably doing too much. You know yourself when you're doing too much worrying, too much work, too much socialising. According to Chinese medicine, less can be more. Sometimes, you may be delighted to hear, a nap is better than a workout. You can actually overexercise and have too many rules about what you're eating and which foods you are giving up.

Often, people come into the clinic having changed their diet and started taking supplements, but they still feel exhausted or anxious. As I explain to them, it's because they don't have the full picture of what it takes to nurture their health. Yang sheng is the full picture. Yes, food and digestion are important but so is the right kind of breathing and exercise, self-massage and looking after your emotions and spirit, too. Once you have all these elements in place, you'll be in balance. And then there will be no need to ban the small things that sweeten life – such as the morning coffee you treasure or the glass or two of red after a tough day.

That said, when you try yang sheng, you'll notice life begins to go a little more smoothly. There will be more good days. Even better, you'll want to adopt yang sheng techniques because they are, in themselves, pleasurable. It's time to take steps to look after you.

WHERE YANG SHENG COMES FROM

Most likely what you already know of Chinese medicine is herbs and acupuncture, but there is so, so much more this ancient wisdom can teach us about nurturing the body, mind and spirit to be in harmony with natural rhythms and universal laws.

So why aren't we all using yang sheng already? It comes from classical Chinese medicine, which has a history of over 5,000 years. However, after the People's Republic of China was

Yang Sheng

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Publishing Director: Kate Pollard
Senior Editor: Molly Ahuja
Junior Editor: Eila Purvis
Cover and Internal Design: Nicky Barneby