

2022 Session Descriptions

Following are sessions from which you will be able to choose over the course of our January 28-30, 2022 Zoom retreat. Please note that this list may change as we continue to refine the January 2022 program.

As in the past, most sessions will be repeated at a different time/day. Videos will be available for registrants' future use. These will be either live recordings or pre-recorded practice materials.

Bios of our volunteer Team Members/Leaders are available at: <https://livingwiththeprinciples.com/the-lwp-team/>

Registration fees are used for computer support and applications that allow us to continue to offer this Retreat, as well as present Seasonal Qi events. We appreciate your support.

A Tai Chi Response To Trauma

Leader: Mike Poole

Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event. Immediately after the event, shock and denial are typical. Longer term reactions—including unpredictable emotions, exhaustion, headaches, nausea, confusion, sadness, anxiety, dissociation and strained relationships—take a terrible toll on our health and wellbeing.

Currently, we are all going through the global traumatic experience of COVID-19. Many of us are also carrying trauma in our bodies from before COVID.

In this session, we will spend time learning simple techniques to assist us while experiencing a traumatic experience. These are techniques we can also use while having a trauma-informed response to everyday life. We will discuss not only how to incorporate these techniques into our lives, but also how we can assist others when they may be having a trauma-informed moment in their lives....improving the health of our community and adding to the peace of the world, one breath at a time.

Before Heaven / Ching Tai Chi

Leader: Dan Jones

The *I Ching*—along with the philosophy of Taoism, Confucianism, the Tao Te Ching, Tai Chi Chuan Classics and Traditional Chinese medicine—formed the foundation from which Tai Chi Chuan was developed. The *I Ching* is a very important part of Tai Chi Chuan.

In these sessions you will learn movements based on the first 16 characters of the *I Ching*. The movements of this form, based on early Yang style, along with a foundational understanding of the *I Ching* will give you a deeper understanding of Tai Chi Chuan. Each session will concentrate on one or two movements together with a pattern and short discourses on how they relate to the *I Ching*, the Tao Te Ching, and Tai Chi Chuan Classics.

Additionally, you will learn how the Eight Diagram Images (Pa Kua) relate to the Eight postures/Eight Gates of Tai Chi Chuan. A short 13 posture companion form will assist

with understanding and applying the Eight Gates. You will also learn the Eight Yin Yang Hands which are the expression of Tai Chi movement.

Building Resiliency By Becoming the Tree

Leader: Mike Poole

Trees are used to represent life and growth in mythologies, legends and novels. Philosophers regard trees as observers witnessing the evolution of humans and the planet around them. Phytologists marvel at the survivability of trees through extreme weather conditions. Trees are not only resilient, but they are also life giving. Thus, they are representative of life, wisdom, power and prosperity.

During these sessions, we will build resilience by using imagery, guided meditation, and ten (10) standing postures that represent trees in various situations. We will observe how trees find resiliency in different settings, seasons, and circumstances. We will mimic them—using this powerful Qigong practice—to build our own resilience to the adversities we face in life as we become the tree.

Conversations With a Doc *new*

Four different sessions, each of which will a different medical doctor of varying expertise. Each session will have a focus within which questions, fielded from participants, will be answered/discussed.

Doctors include:

Kathy Shirley - <https://www.linkedin.com/in/kathy-shirley-a260a685>

Stephanie Taylor - <https://womanswellspring.com>

Sharyl Truty - <https://balancedphysiciancare.com>

Brenda Zenk - hospice & palliative medicine specialist

Disconnecting Worry Cords

Leader: Debra Schumacher

To be in harmony with the world, nature, and our fellow beings, requires that the mind be integrated with the body, while movements and breath are controlled. Generating internal energy through mindfulness, *song* (loosening), and *jing* (serenity) lets us find balance. An example of this is harmony facilitated by *qi* and acquired through tai chi practice. Such harmony comes when we are able to identify our own *qi* by developing our intuitive-selves and separating our *qi* from others. This heightened and trusted self-awareness lets us obtain more resiliency in our lives.

During these sessions, you will learn techniques to recognize your *qi*; connect to a grounding cord; cleanse and clear the meridians, chakras and auras; and disconnect from other's energetic attachments.

These meditation practices can be done seated or standing. No prior Tai Chi/Qigong experience is necessary.

NOTE: **Auras** are the bio-electric magnetic fields radiating from every human, plant, and animal—both living and non-living. **Meridians** are the pathways in your body through which *qi* flows. **Chakras** are “stations” along the meridian paths and are both transmitters and receivers of *qi*. Blockages in meridians also block chakras.

Exploring the Power Of Presence

Leader: Maureen Miller

Being in the present moment means being aware and mindful of what is happening at this very moment; we are not distracted by dwelling on the past or worried about the future, but centered in the here and now. All of our attention is focused on the present moment. Being present minded is the key to staying healthy and happy. It helps fight anxiety, cuts down on worrying and rumination, keeps us grounded and connected to ourselves and everything around us, and makes us more resilient in times of change.

In this session, we will explore and discuss simple, enjoyable ways to quickly bring yourself to—and stay in—the present moment using your imagination, all your senses, and the power of Nature.

Foundation, Roots, Resilience

Leader: Maureen Miller

We know instinctively that a good foundation is crucial to any building project. It is the basis upon which something stands or is supported. Indeed, we use “foundation” as a metaphor for stability in dozens of different scenarios. For example, we talk about: relationships needing a solid foundation of trust; a basic knowledge in a given subject acting as a foundation for further learning; a cosmetic used as a basis for makeup; a tree’s roots as anchors to the ground.

In our practice of Tai Chi/Qigong, we use the principles as our foundation and roots as the enabler of all movement. This is what makes Tai Chi the best exercise for resiliency, particularly in terms of preventing falls.

In these sessions, we will review the principles while concentrating on rooting the feet as the most important aspect for balance and flexibility—particularly as we age. We will spend time practicing the five basic Tai Chi stances and discuss how they can be effectively used in everyday life.

Introduction to Inner Alchemy

Leader: Betty Scanlon

Inner Alchemy, a term often used synonymously with Qigong, is the Taoist art and science of gathering, storing, and circulating the energies of the human body. This is used for the purpose of improving physical, emotional, and mental health and, ultimately, merging with the Tao (i.e. becoming an immortal).

During these sessions we will move through four levels:

Level 1 - Review how qi is perceived, and explore the classic, “Strengthen the Bone, Empty the Chest, Fill the Abdomen, and Weaken the Mind”. Practice some relaxation exercises to achieve good qi flow in the body.

Level 2 - Explore the classic “Strengthen the Bone, Empty the Chest, Fill the Abdomen, and Weaken the Mind” on a deeper level. Practice opening the four major gateways, the ripple effect, and how to guard against negative energy.

Level 3 - Explore opening the spine, charging the middle and lower dantians, and opening the 5th gate.

Level 4 - Explore generating energy from the ground, developing a deep root, transferring energy to the hands, and practicing with Fa Jing.

Note: While it is beneficial to have participated in previous levels before taking a specific level, it is not required.

Life At the Drift-line

Leader: Deirdre Dwyer

The debris carried by turbulent waters, washed up against a contour or man-made structure, is known as the drift-line. As Life changes course, it may bring a sense of uncertainty, drifting or loss. Using Tai Chi movements and meditation to calm the agitation and confusion, we come to a place of Yin, where we release and find our place in the flow.

You will learn movements and meditations that will act as both an anchor and life-line to hold you steady until you safely reach the shores of stability.

Life In Balance

Leader: Sheri Nicholson

Finding a healthy balance in our lives is not complicated or challenging, not when we can take gentle, kind ways to fill our Mind, Body & Soul. In these sessions, we will discover methods to:

- foster peace within
- grant kind intention to self
- uncover sustainable ways to enjoy each day
- explore the phrase “moderation is key to Qi”

These sessions can be done seated or standing. Everyone can receive the benefits of sharing our passion for “Life in Balance”.

Looking at the Strength of Words

Leader: Meghan Bryant

Nathaniel Hawthorne said, “Words - so innocent and powerless as they are, as standing in a dictionary, how potent for good and evil they become in the hands of one who knows how to combine them.”

In this session, we will explore words to see how and what we say/think may be affecting our resilience. Group discussions will help us be able to increase and or shed words in order to work on reevaluating what we want to express to the world. We will also look at research and others’ exploration for further understanding of how words can affect our Middle Dantien.

Medical Qigong

Leader: Dan

Follow Dan on Friday as he leads us through his signature medical qigong warm-up. These gentle exercises will help to open all our joints, wake up our Qi, and prepare us

for the day ahead. No experience necessary. This session will be repeated on Sunday with Deb as our Leader.

More Medical Qigong *new*

Leaders: Various

Get your Qi flowing and your joints opened as various Team Members lead you through gentle Qigong warm-ups and routines on Saturday and Sunday. We will be running two rooms each day, giving you a choice between:

Saturday - *Shibashi Set 1* or the *Eight Silk Brocades*

Sunday - *Seven Movements Of the Sky Fisherman* or a repeat of Dan's signature set.

Outside the Box Tai Chi *new*

Leader: Maureen Miller

Intellectually we know Tai Chi can be practiced anywhere—both indoors or out. But, as recent events find many of us confined to small spaces in our homes, attempting to practice our forms, take or give online instruction, or get our students to do the same, proves to be a major challenge. While such a challenge may not be conducive to practicing our regular forms the way we normally do them, it does offer an opportunity to think “outside the box” and come up with new methods of practice.

In this session, we will discuss what is small space Tai Chi, why it's an important tool in our hands, and try out the hows, e.g. ways to make our practice and/or teaching most effective in a small space.

Pushing With A Ball

Leader: Mearl Thompson

Tui-shou (push hands) is an intricate component of Tai Chi Chuan. Practicing push hands is an exercise in negotiation. Any relationship involves learning to negotiate with another person to create a positive connection.

In these days of physical distancing, however, we often don't have the luxury of having a partner with whom to practice. This session is designed to help you keep your push hands skills sharp through the use of solo push hands drills using an exercise ball.

Taiji Qigong Shibashi (set 2)

Leader: Deirdre Dwyer

Shibashi was created in 1979 by **Professor Lin Hou Sheng** who today is revered as one of China's Living Treasures. It is a series of 18 flowing, gentle movements that coordinate breathing and focused attention with beautiful imagery.

This second form is a bit more challenging physically than the first set of 18 movements. It will allow you to feel the energy of the earth rise in your body through more intense flexion of the legs and more weight transfer during movements. This Earth energy will be pumped by the legs, directed through your body via the waist and expressed through the arms, circulating it effectively through every meridian.

Note: While it is preferable to know and practice set 1, this is not a requirement for attendance.

Using Animal Frolics To Build Resilience

Leader: Mearl Thompson

The Five Animal Frolics can be regarded as the earliest form of Medical Qigong in Chinese history, dating back to Eastern Han Dynasty (25-220). These Frolics consist of a set of deep stretching and deep breathing movements imitating the actions of animals based on the habits of the tiger, deer, bear, monkey and crane. Each animal movement improves the efficient function of an internal organ, bringing balance to one's own body. Appreciating the intrinsic strength of each animal allows us to develop and bring those characteristics into our relationships with others to promote harmony, strength and growth in our communities.

In these sessions, we will take a detailed look at the movement of one or more of these animals⁶, discuss its relationship to specific internal organs, and explore how to use it to build resilience.

Wall Qigong

Leader: Mearl Thompson

Falling against a wall, or Wall Qigong, is widely practiced in Asia. It is a qigong practice that activates acupuncture points along your spine helping to relieve fatigue, stress, anxiety, and depression, while restoring energy and strengthening the vascular system. It also teaches *song*—relaxing open all joints and learning to let go. Practiced frequently, it is very relaxing.

In this session, you will learn; some history of this practice, which acupuncture points are stimulated, and—most importantly—how to perform Wall Qigong safely and effectively.

Note: You will need an empty space on a solid wall—about 3-4 feet wide. Doors are not acceptable.)