

## ***ESTABLISHING A TAI CHI CHIH PRACTICE AT HOME***

### **GETTING STARTED**

#### **I. WHY: Desire and Will**

Knowing the many positive benefits of T'ai Chi Chih practice that have been experienced by others is strong motivation to start and continue your own practice. Believing that you deserve these benefits is also helpful. Persistence is the most important personal quality you can develop and use to support your progress and growth. Persistence in practicing T'ai Chi Chih will enable you to reap the benefits awaiting you!

Think about why you decided to take a class in T'ai Chi Chih. What were the motivating factors that made you decide to enroll? Think about what you want your life to be in five years. Do you need to make some changes so that you will be calmer, healthier, more relaxed and joyful?

Now think about your own sense of independence and ability to choose what is good for you. You have the desire and will power to make positive changes in your life. It is just a matter of intent. **WHAT IS YOUR INTENT?** Now say aloud to yourself what your intent is: "My intent is to .....so that ....." Affirm this intent as often as you need to.

#### **II. WHERE: Clearing a Space**

Chose a space in your home that is comfortable for you, giving you some privacy and space. You already know which room feels good and perhaps has sunlight or a view outside that is nice. You may need to move a table, chest or chair in order to have the space you need.

#### **III. WHERE: Setting up the Space**

Now clear off an area on a chest or table so that you can create some space, an opening. Place a small vase or bowl for a flower on the table, light a candle, or just use an object that is special. Perhaps you want to set up a CD/tape player so you can have some soft music. What else needs moving or rearranging? Now the space is ready.

#### **IV. WHEN: Targeting the Best Practice Time**

Decide what time you will practice. Say it aloud to yourself so that you hear your intent. Keep to the schedule for a week, then evaluate. The best time to practice is before you eat breakfast. Always practice before a meal, not after. If practicing after a meal, wait 2 hours for digestion to be completed.

#### **V. WHAT: Informing the family of your intent to Practice**

Tell your family that you intend to practice TCC every day and ask for their cooperation. You can return phone calls later, etc. One student wore a kimono when she practiced. Her family knew that they should not disturb her or be too loud when she was doing her meditation. You decide what works for you. A **DO NOT DISTURB** sign works if you are practicing at work.

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### VI. HOW:

#### a. Keeping a Journal of Practice

Keeping a journal, even a very informal one, is a good idea. It helps you see the progress you are making. Write the date, time of day, and length of the practice. Note changes, signs of chi and any questions. Are you experiencing stress reduction, weight changes, health benefits, more calmness, balance and coordination, spiritual attunement, joy and serenity?

#### b. Keeping Positive about your Practice and Being Patient

Every person wants to be successful in learning to meditate. But some are not willing to put in the time to practice. Be persistent and positive. Persistence is more important than talent. Keep on practicing, no matter what intervenes. You can do it. Be patient. Be positive. “You cannot appease the hunger by reading the menu.” You have to practice to reap the benefits that await you. If you establish a habit of doing T’ai Chi Chih every day, nothing can keep you from experiencing the great benefits which will manifest as a result of circulating and balancing the Chi. Start each day with this practice of Joy Thru Movement.

#### c. Forgive Yourself when You Forget to Practice and Move On

Don’t get bogged down with bad feelings that you have missed days of practice. Forget the days you missed and move on. Keep track of the days you do practice on a calendar. Accentuate the positive. When you start to practice, remember all the teachers and students that are practicing with you. Imagine a whole room full of friends who are practicing T’ai Chi Chih with you. Connect with their strong commitment to keep practicing this form of moving meditation. It will strengthen you.

#### d. Do TCC Movements Slowly, Moving from Center

Begin your practice in Rest Pose. Let all the tension and worries melt away. Stand quietly until you are ready to move. If you have only a little time, select a few movements to perform, rather than hurry through the whole set.

**Slow down.** It is better to do the movements slowly, rather than hurry to get more done. Focus on the soles of the feet, notice the weight shift from the back of the foot to the front. Stay connected mentally with the soles of the feet. Enjoy the practice, knowing that you are doing something *very significant* to improve your life. Enjoy the benefits that come and deepen your practice so that you will experience the Supreme Ultimate.

*“Practice when you feel like it and practice when you don’t feel like it”.- Justin Stone*