

# BREAKING THE GRIP OF FEAR HOW THE ANCIENT ART OF CULTIVATES COURAGE Qigong

Fear is a mysterious force, often cleverly disguised as anxiety, distress, anger, impatience, etc. It can be tricky to get to the bottom of it as it's so slippery and manipulative and yet for many of us, it literally holds dominion over our lives.

Think about it; are you working in the career that you love? Are your relationships fulfilling? Does your life reflect your dreams and desires? Are you able to rise above your challenges or do you feel eternally tethered to something prohibitive within you?

I know what it's like to feel like you'll never escape the torment of this demon. Until I began Qigong, I had been to several therapists, both physical and mental, with minimal relief and assured relapses.

Western medicine currently generally prescribes:

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy which helps one to identify the challenge and reframe 'irrational' thought patterns that trigger fear.
- Exposure Therapy gradually exposes one to the source of their fear, attempting to desensitise the physiological response over time.
- Pharmaceutical Drug Therapy includes Selective Serotonin Re uptake Inhibitors
- Benzodiazepines - rapid acting sedatives
- Beta-Blockers - block adrenaline

These methods treat the very real, visceral responses to fear yet often have debilitating side effects without getting to the root of the matter.

According to Chinese Medicine, emotions dwell within certain areas of our body. Anger's home is the liver. Worry belongs to the spleen. Mania abides within a heart whose spirit is disturbed. Grief and sorrow belong to the lungs while fear has its residence within the kidneys.



The kidneys are akin to the batteries of the body. They govern longevity and vitality, the bones and bone marrow, the ears, the hair on one's head as well as the two lower orifices.

They are also believed to be the home of our essence or 'jing,' the primordial substance or original source from which one is made. Jing is the originator and root of our existence.

When we live lives or have had experiences that compromise the heart of who we are by nature, this drains our life force. We literally lose a little bit of ourselves each time we are fearful or acquiesce to what we know is not optimal. The more depleted we are, the more vulnerable we become to external forces.

Vitality and vigor lead to courage, offering us the capacity to command our energy into focused and directed vision.

Qigong's combination of movement, breathing and intention helps to:

- calm and regulate the nervous system - the inner visionary directing our experiences
- lower cortisol and adrenalin
- boost immune function
- release physical tension
- connect and ground one to the present moment
- release fear from the body
- re-energise the mind, body and spirit, infusing one with vitality

As a practice, Qigong's ability to restore the nervous system and nurture the health of the entire body renders it an excellent means of support.

The ultimate bonus is that there are no negative side effects, just profound benefits that must be experienced to be truly appreciated.