



## We Need Each Other

by Amy Tyksinski

After presenting Justin's form of Turiya meditation in two early morning optional sessions at the recent T'ai Chi Chih Teachers' Conference in Philadelphia, I found myself sobbing in gratitude and appreciation for the support I had received from so many directions. Leading up to the Conference, doubt had its way with me as it frequently does. I observed the human condition express itself through me, familiar, personal and impersonal all at the same time: Who am I to be offering this? I don't know anything! Am I making a mistake? Can I find a way to share which is appropriate for those who show up? Can I have FAITH in the Chi in spite of all these mental machinations? Can I TRUST the 'Yes' that flew out of my mouth faster than I could think when the request to share the Turiya meditation was made in the first place?

I was particularly moved by the care I received from a few specific people. Knowing full well how deeply supportive one trusted and dear friend had been throughout the actual sessions, later in the afternoon I blurted out to her, "I need you!" Like the earlier "Yes," that got me into this pickle in the first place, I did not know I was going to say those words until after it happened.

**"We need each other,"** she responded.

And indeed we do.

More strongly than ever before, it occurred to me just as T'ai Chi Chih teaches us T'ai Chi Chih, ***we, as T'ai Chi Chih Teachers in our individual "personal/impersonal" expressions of this "Chi," are teaching, coaxing and encouraging one another to accord, trust and flow from our T'an T'iens as well.*** We need only to listen and the exact right question from or interaction with another will guide us further into our own learning as the shape, balance, and manifestation of the "Chi" embodies and expresses through us, as us.

I can share a personal story about this circular learning effect. At last year's TCC Teachers' Conference in Colorado, I presented on the element of the wrists in *T'ai Chi Chih*, including in part, as expressed through the movement *Push Pull*. At one of those presentations, another trusted friend shared an observation (I am paraphrasing here): "It feels good to allow the hands to drop into the heart rather than return to the shoulders on the backward weight shift, but I

don't feel the continuity of the movement after the hands drop in. Because of the dropping in, it seems like there is a complete stop before the hands then have to turn up (rising upward from the index fingers, not dropping down and around) and face out prior to the weight shifting forward again. It feels abrupt, like there is no continuity."

This reflection was a great one for me, and I felt I didn't provide insight on it well in that moment. The friend was right in what he was perceiving visually in me and trustworthy in what he was feeling in his body at that moment. For my part, in presenting Push Pull, I know I was nervous and I believe I may have exaggerated the "Releasing-of-the-hands-down-into-the-heart" part of the movement so that it did look abrupt and cut off prior to the hands returning to their starting point. I had just been given a wonderful opportunity to plumb deeper.

So, for this last year I have worked with Push Pull in my own practice. I asked myself, "How is the continuity felt? How is this movement animated, what is that which doesn't interrupt or negate the principle of "Softness and Continuity?"

Day by day, I slowed down Push Pull when I practiced it so I could really feel all the parts of the movement as flowing from inside the chi, rather than from a more mechanical understanding of it imposed externally by the mind or how I thought I understood it. As the T'an T'ien shifted the body forward, I paid particular attention to the slightly downward-pointing curve of the ellipse that the wrists traced, the subtle tug in the wrists as the finger tips pointed upward. ***An exquisite awareness began to infuse each millisecond of Push Pull as a fuller embodiment coaxed the vital energy to circulate more strongly and teach me about itself.***

What was happening, what was felt at the final moment of the return? Ah, the return! The energy of love poured into the front of the heart as the ***hands released*** more and more gently into the chest area, ***seemingly pausing*** in completion once the pinkies were parallel to the ground, ***but not***. Never losing an inner connection, ***the hands began to lift of their own accord***. The energy continued its flow, now delicately embracing and massaging through the back of the heart in accord with the hands opening up and out. ***The "Chi" itself had animated the hands back to the starting point effortlessly and continuously!***

This, so far, has been my personal experience through my inquiry into Push Pull as inspired by a friend's question and of course, we all must have our own. How do *others* feel the continuity in Push Pull? How do others feel the animation and expression of the "chi" through their bodies ***in any given moment*** of any given movement? Through deep inquiry, enjoyment of process and willingness to feel, what a delight to be able to ask with patient reverence, "What might the chi be whispering to me now? And now? And now?"

We don't have to be perfect to share with one another when we are moved to do so by the inexplicable power of the "chi" and our own inner sincerity, even holding in our hearts the gentle encouragement from Justin in the face of our own doubt, "I don't know now, but I will know." As we find ourselves sharing, we can also receive one another's questions and observations and allow the "chi" through this feedback to have its way with us. We can follow

up with one another at any time, sharing further insights and refinements. We can play and delight in this back-and-forth learning together. In this way, T'ai Chi Chih not only teaches us T'ai Chi Chih. We, in turn, teach and learn from one another, too. Both our T'ai Chi Chih practice and our T'ai Chi Chih Teacher Community become ever more dimensional, a felt experience of Connection.

***We need each other.***

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