

QI HEALS

NEWS FROM THE SIKE HEALTH QI COMMUNITY

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ABOUT THE SIKE TECHNIQUE

The SIKE Technique is a modality to induce physical change by means of stimulation. For example, you can get the stomach to expand or contract by stimulating the sixth thoracic vertebra. The stimulus itself is, of course, qi. If the stimulus is applied properly, a bloated stomach will contract, improving digestion; a tight stomach will expand, improving digestion. The application of the technique is a conscious design, and so the SIKE Technique differs from *kiryu* which is based on the unconscious flow of qi through the body. SIKE is applied according to a plan based on a careful view of the individual and his/her body.

You consciously apply a stimulus to induce the body to move in a certain direction. It is analogous to golf. Depending on the placement of your ball in relation to the hole, you choose a certain wood or iron, you carefully plan a swing designed to send the ball straight, to the left or right, to curve, to have a certain speed, to have a certain trajectory, to have a certain spin, etc. In other words, careful observation of the situation leads you to make a considered judgment. Then you use your concentrated skill to execute that judgment.

Successful SIKE depends on the practitioner's judgment of using a variety of stimulation techniques to restore the patient to health. The overriding consideration must be *how the patient is likely to respond to a single stimulus or a combination of stimuli.*

The essence of Japanese art is the removal of all superfluous and extraneous movement. Whether it be Tea Ceremony, calligraphy, or swordsmanship, the object is to pare the art down to the bone so that

only the essential movement remains, leaving both beauty and efficiency. The same is true of the SIKE Technique. The practitioner should seek an economy of movement. After each treatment, the practitioner should ask him/herself, "What could I have removed from that treatment to have improved its effect?" Each treatment aims for a *gestalt* that creates beauty of motion akin to Noh and Tea Ceremony. It should be an aesthetic pleasure to watch a good practitioner at work. The observer will be left with the same sensation of tranquil beauty as that experienced in the Noh Theatre or tea house.

APPLYING QI

Generosity of Spirit

There is a unity of intention and the effective flow of qi. The most potent qi is that which is generated and guided by a generosity of spirit. Regard for others is central to the efficacy of healing qi. In the words of William Blake, "The most sublime act is to set another before you."

You cannot kill a person with qi. You can wish them dead as you transmit your qi, but qi will not make your wish come true. At worst, you will make the person feel anxious or nauseous. More probably, your qi will not be the least effective simply because it does not blend with the qi of the receiver. Just as it is next to impossible to transmit qi successfully to a mean-spirited person, so it is unthinkable that a mean-spirited person can generate effective healing qi.

On the other hand, wishing someone well as you transmit qi will

work toward making him/her well. To have a loving thought in mind as you give qi enlarges and fortifies your qi.

You may also have a conscious intention of healing a specific ailment or treating a specific wound or blow. Intention is not the be-all-and-end-all of healing qi, but no amount of technical expertise or finesse can make up for a lack of good intention and generosity of spirit.

I never begin to give qi treatment without thinking of a loved person, living or dead, whose approval energizes me. I conjure up his/her face when I do my warm up exercises to access my qi, and imagine us breathing together. I feel a rhythmic union with the person, and dedicate my day's work to that person. I work for that person's approval by helping others on their behalf. Thus, I set out to do a day's work with good intentions and a generosity of spirit.

Applying Qi

The application of qi depends on the size and location of the area to be treated. There are three fundamental ways of giving qi: through the fingers, through the hands, and through the circular area at the base of the forefinger.

Touch the base of your forefinger and you will feel a round, prominent bone. This bone is the center of a small circular area that is highly effective for transmitting qi. In traditional Japanese martial arts,

it is known as “the fourth point,” and, when applied effectively, creates a lot of pain. In traditional Japanese healing arts, it is called “the tranquil point,” and when applied effectively, alleviates pain. I like to refer to this point as the “heart” of the hand for the transmission of healing qi.

Remember: whenever you transmit qi, be sure to begin and end on an exhalation.

When you begin to give qi, the spot that is receiving it will begin to feel warm under your fingers in under a minute. It may even feel as if, rather than you giving it the qi, the spot is taking the qi from you. The sensation is as if your qi is being quickly sucked out of your fingers or hands.

In a minute or two, the sensation of warmth will reach its peak and then plateau out. Once the plateau has been reached, the area will begin to cool down. In another minute it may actually feel cold to the touch. This means that the spot has absorbed all the qi it can, and it is pointless to try and force more qi into it. It would be like adding water to a saturated sponge. Remove your fingers on an exhalation, and wait at least an hour before attempting to give qi to the same spot.

Qi is not magic. The giving and receiving of qi involves physiological processes. Therefore, rather than “go for the home run” and attempt to eliminate pain at a single go, attempt to hit a single or a double,

meaning the alleviation of pain. The qi will continue to work at the cellular level after you have removed your hands, and the pain may later be eliminated.

Remember: healing with qi is like cooking with microwaves---the process continues even after the current is turned off.

CULTIVATING THE IMAGINATION

A central tenet of the SIKE Technique is that it is important to feel that you are helping another cultivate his/her life by touching her heart or mind. Pain and illness are debilitating. They make people feel closed and small. We try to instill a feeling of widening, deepening, and heightening a person's powers of imagination in order to bring them some pleasure while they are passing through an unpleasant situation. The easiest way to do this is to present an optimistic picture of the person's future, i.e. a future without pain and with health and structural integrity. Just to imagine a pain-free life in the not-too-distant future stimulates the person in a healthy and positive direction.

The imagination cannot be discounted as a tool for healing. Where the body is concerned, no amount of will power can raise your pulse rate by so much as a beat, or cause you to shed a single tear. However, use the imagination, and you can bring about changes in the circulation of the blood, bring forth tears, encourage the secretion of gastric juices, and constantly direct the body's workings in various ways.

UNCLE ARNIE (VII)

I was thirty, twenty years having passed since I had been socked on the jaw in lieu of Uncle Arnie. Mort was on his third marriage, and had begun having brotherly thoughts about his twin. Knowing that I was going to the East Coast on business, he asked me to stop by Pittsburgh and look in on Uncle Arnie. I was happy to oblige my father. We had had a falling out a few years before, and it seemed a painless way to effect a reconciliation.

More than that, however, was a curiosity about Uncle Arnie. That intense vision had been to my maturation and understanding what university had been to my education, a springboard. The man in my vision prompted me to speculate that there was more to Uncle Arnie than anyone imagined. Indeed, there could hardly have been less. I was interested to see if my adult eyes could perceive more in my uncle than my childish eyes had. Perhaps the evening at wrestling had been the vision...

For all of my speculation of a deeper side to Uncle Arnie, I assumed that he went nowhere and did nothing. I did not, therefore, inform either him or Silver Birches of my planned visit, intending to turn up unannounced one Saturday afternoon in August to find Uncle Arnie sitting in his room watching television or perusing comic books. I wanted to surprise him.

I dressed well for the occasion, thinking to get from Uncle Arnie the respectful submission I could not get from my colleagues. I wanted Uncle Arnie to know that the passage of twenty years had left me a different, more successful person. I was, and still am in many ways, Mort's son.

The staff at Reception paged Uncle Arnie, but he did not respond. It was decided to send for Arthur Pillars, who might be able to locate my uncle for me. I sat in the waiting room on a long, nondescript green couch which, I noticed, was bolted to the floor. The nicest thing that could be said about the waiting room was that it was adjacent to Reception and clean. As I sat down, a mangled apparition hobbled over and regarded me carefully. He was small and scrawny; his face looked like it had been torn apart and then hurriedly pasted back together. The eyes were puffy and quizzical; it was hard to tell if they reflected the light of intelligence or the light of the ceiling. He held a cane feebly in hard, callused hands that looked bent out of shape through arthritis. He smiled and spoke. His breath smelled rotten.

"You a Balsom, too, eh? I heard you're a Balsom. That's three of us." He pronounced 'th' minus the 'h'.

Assuming the third to be Uncle Arnie, I asked him his name.

"Benny Balsom. Maybe ya hearda me?"

"Frequently," I lied.

"Who's your father?" he demanded weakly.

"Mort Balsom."

His laugh was thin, sharp and dry. "A stuck-up little shit," he pronounced clearly, and fell into a reverie. A moment later, he nodded dreamily, "Yes, he was." His memory validated his judgment.

"He's changed," I sprang to my father's defense.

"So now he's a stuck-up big shit." It was the best joke Benny Balsom had ever made, and he didn't care who knew it. His face creased grotesquely, tears poured from his eyes, and he fell blindly down onto the couch beside me, gasping for air. I patted him lightly on the back to bring some rhythm back into his breathing. He righted himself and held his puny fists in front of his face.

"Wanna mix it up?!" he wheezed.

"Benny! You fightin' with the visitors again?" a stern voice reprimanded.

A tall, lanky man stood before us. He looked like a retired philosophy professor, wearing a shabby suit of erstwhile respectable cut and design, and carrying himself with an air of vacancy that wavered between senility and a preoccupation with the Absolute. He was fair, and looked healthy and well-scrubbed. His hands were well-formed and dirty, as if he had just come from doing difficult mechanical

work. He was perplexed that a youngish man in a three-piece suit had sought him out at his workplace. He had to be Arthur Pillars.

When I rose, introduced myself, and stated the reason for my visit, he shrank from me even as he held out his hand.

"The staff tell me you're my uncle's best friend," I began.

"We better do somethin' about him," he said, indicating Benny, who was ranting at the couch, "You're yella, you're yella, just like all the Balsoms." An attendant was summoned and, though I did not see it, I could have sworn he struck Benny in order to calm him. Whatever he did, it worked, and Benny was led hobbling off, a piece of premature detritus.

"You're my Uncle Arnie's best friend, aren't you?" I began again.

"Arn's out," he said apologetically.

"Do you know when he'll be back? I can wait if it won't be too long."

"Arnie don't tell me nothin'." He was lying, but it didn't matter. I would not see my uncle that day; the reason was unimportant.

I invited Arthur to have coffee with me in the residents' dining room. He sat opposite me at the table, his hands clasped tightly before him, his jaw muscles trying to punch holes in his cheeks. He would talk about himself, but not about my uncle. I had no interest in Arthur, and his verbal meandering past Mr. This's faulty hearing aid and Mrs. That's

glasses that needed fixing bored me. As I did not respond to anything he said, his interest flagged. I put an end to our coffee chat by asking if there was any way I could get into my uncle's room to see how he lived. Arthur brightened at my query. He relaxed and dipped his hand into his coat pocket, retrieving a key to a padlock.

"Youse the first person ever asked about seein' Arnie's room," he said respectfully.

The words were simple, but I failed to grasp the meaning.

"Paul's seen the room, hasn't he?"

"Paul ain't never been there." Arthur left no doubt about the meaning.

"Are you sure?"

"'Course I'm sure. I'm Arnie's best friend, ain't I?" he said, patting his chest. He was annoyed that I doubted his intimacy with my uncle. "It's somethin' for you to go there, I can tell ya. I'm his only visitor. That's 'cause I'm his best friend. Are you sure you want to go? I mean, ya might get dirty goin' there. Your nice suit, I mean."

"Is Uncle Arnie's room dirty?" I remembered his fastidiousness.

"It ain't the room so much as the gettin' there. But I guess the room's kinda dirty, too." Arthur seemed somewhat disappointed in his friend.

We left the building through the back door of the kitchen, and entered a bleak alleyway. It ran like a steep stone gorge between the back of the home and a high wall. The path was narrow, perhaps six feet wide, and uneven. We had to negotiate the obstacle of metal garbage cans right at the outset.

Arthur said, "The snow don't melt here till May. Arnie slips alot, but he don't get hurt. But, man, you should hear him cuss." He chuckled to himself.

Fifty yards along, a heavy metal door was inserted in the Silver Birches building's wall. A porch light, long since expired, decorated the concrete lintel. It took all of Arthur's strength to tug the door open, and all of his ingenuity to locate the light switch. A series of forty-watt light bulbs, strung economically from the ceiling like fairy lights, gave all the illumination of a flashlight in a forest. When turned on, the oily stench and throbbing sound of heavy machinery came on with them. Metal steps worn to a dull sheen led precariously downwards. Arthur began to descend, saying "Watch ya don't get dirty." He squinted into the underground gloom, looking for dust piles to avoid.

Bulky machinery loomed grimly on either side of our passage, rumbling sentinels. Pipes slithered aimlessly over the walls and floor. The ceiling was probably high, but the darkness and rumbling brought one low; we both walked stooped. It was hard to know where to put

your hands, and harder to guess the safest direction on which to fix your eyes. I walked very slowly, and Arthur, for all his experience of the route, walked not much faster. As the sound, stench and darkness intensified, there was a convergence of dozens of pipes into one large conduit. A narrow catwalk had been constructed over the conduit.

Arthur stopped and removed his jacket. "Take yours off, too. It starts gettin' hot from here on."

The rickety catwalk was, fortunately, straight, passing between machinery whose dimensions were unfathomable in the murk; but they must have been considerable, for the heat and the noise they threw off were appalling. I was beginning to doubt Arthur's sanity. I had gone to pay a house call and ended up a questing knight entering the lair of a deranged enchanter who tortured his prey with stinking, clanking machinery.

"Arthur, where are you taking me?" I was embarrassed at my own voice, it trembled so.

He turned from the waist and regarded me darkly. "I'm takin' ya to Arnie's room. What's the matter? Ya changed your mind?"

"No, not at all. Let's go on." I tried to sound bright.

The catwalk was about thirty feet long, and wide enough for an average-size man to walk on. Uncle Arnie --if this was, in fact, his route home, and not Arthur Pillars's practical joke-- would have to

cross edgeways. When we climbed down from the catwalk, we were once more mired in darkness. Arthur switched on another series of lights, and I saw that at this end the basement had become angular, tapering off to a tip. In the triangular recess of the tip was what appeared to be furniture.

"Arnie's place," Arthur shouted, pointing.

I looked at my watch. It had taken us five minutes to get from his 'front door' to his living room. The way back would take at least eight minutes.

Uncle Arnie's room was separated from the rest of the basement by thick wire mesh stretched across a wooden frame. The noise and heat were pervasive even in this remote fastness, but not nearly as bad as on the catwalk. A door like the entrance to a chicken coop was padlocked. Arthur opened it with his key and we entered. The extent of the room could not be judged until one was in it. Arthur switched on a sixty-watt light bulb that dangled from the ceiling on a frayed, brittle cord. Without a shade over it, the bulb threw out a hazy, diffused light that showed everything, but clarified nothing. The room was not very big, certainly not for a man who moved as I remembered Uncle Arnie did.

Uncle Arnie lacked nothing for comfort in that room. There was an old throw rug on the concrete floor, a wooden table, two metal folding

chairs, a cot, a television on a listing stand, its antenna cord snaking into the darkness to wend its devious way to the roof, standing wardrobes and dressers. The room even had its own two hundred-gallon gas boiler, though this was partitioned off by wire mesh. A sink and toilet were off in a dim recess about twenty feet away. Arthur did not offer me the use of them, nor did he even illuminate them for my inspection.

All I could think of was how in the world someone had managed to run an antenna cord all the way from the roof through the dangerous barrier of machinery? Had Arnie done it? Was there a television serviceman somewhere in Pittsburgh who had seen Arnie's room? What was reception like? I stared up at the wire, trying to maintain my wonder at the accomplishment.

Arthur Pillars sat down noisily on one of the metal chairs, and wiped his forehead with a dainty handkerchief.

"Youse Arnie's first visitor from the outside. Too bad he ain't here to greet ya."

"What about the television man? Wasn't he down here once?" I asked stupidly, pointlessly.

"What are ya talkin' about? Oh, that TV. Man, that was some sonuvabitch gettin' down here. Your uncle's a very strong man, though he couldn'ta done it without me."

Arthur's serious, touching response to my question restored me to a semblance of maturity. My heart ached and my stomach turned over.

"Nobody else has ever been here?" I asked through my pain. "Not Paul, not the Director, not the Manager, not anybody? I'm the first?"

"I'm the first!" Arthur thumped his chest. "I'm here lots."

"And he's lived here since he left his parents' house all those years ago?"

"Sure. Where'dya think he lived? In a mansion?"

Arthur crossed his legs expansively. For the first time in his life he knew more answers to important questions than anybody else; he affected a regal dignity in preparation for any more questions I might have for him. I had too many questions. A lifetime would hardly be enough time to ask them all. I paced the length of the room, running my fingers over the wire meshing as if I was destined to be confined there.

"Somebody must have brought him down here. Somebody must have set him up in this. There must be records from his first day on the job showing that Arnold Balsom lives in the boiler room of the home. I can't be the first one down here."

"I'm the first," Arthur scolded me.

"Oh, shut up," I exclaimed, and apologized profusely.

He ignored my insult and my apology. "Ain't the greatest place in the world, is it? Why don'tcha siddown? Ya look sick." Arthur indicated the bed. "G'wan, siddown. Youse makin' me nervous."

I sat on the edge of Uncle Arnie's cot. It was like the rollaway kept under my childhood bed, to be used for brief visitors. I had become accustomed to the noise and vibration of the machinery. Uncle Arnie probably felt strange when he went aboveground and his viscera stopped quivering. Arthur's face looked stern and angular under the naked light, as if it had been slashed out of dough.

"Sometimes it really burns me up," he said.

"What does?"

"Arnie livin' here."

"Why?" My second pointless question. Why not? Were my family brutal? Uncivilized? Unfeeling and uncaring? Why should a one-eyed man who lived like a monstrosity amid mechanical murk have been frightened by another one-eyed man who lived in a cave that was, by comparison, spacious and airy?

Arthur looked angry, then nonplussed. "Are you kiddin'?"

I was not kidding. I was not really there. I was busy, just as Paul and Mort, and even Eddie and Edna were busy. We were getting on with our lives. The whole world was busy, every sentient creature with

the exceptions of Arnold Balsom and Arthur Pillars. They had time to engage in pleasant conversation underground.

"I think Arnie could afford better if he wasn't givin' money to that no-good cousin of his."

I didn't understand. Philanthropy from Uncle Arnie, and for that piece of ersatz humanity I had met in the waiting room?

"He got Benny in here, I dunno how, but I know he slips him money and gets him looked after. I say, Arn, ya gotta take care of yourself first, but he just smiles in his way and says okay, but he don't change nothin'."

The waters of dark incomprehension were rising, and I felt about to be carried off.

"Look at this! Youse his nephew. Don't it burn ya up?"

Twenty minutes before, sitting comfortably with coffee and Arthur Pillars, as an idea it would have burned me up. Experiencing it made me fireproof. It was too gruesome to draw tears.

"Why don'tcha say nothin'?"

"I'm speechless."

"What?" The word was lost on Arthur.

"I don't know what to say."

"Shit."

I felt drained. I stretched out on Uncle Arnie's cot and wondered how high the ceiling was. My thoughts returned to the man who had threaded the antenna cable through the obstacle-laden darkness. In a former life he'd probably designed the pyramids. I couldn't get comfortable on the cot. There was a full-length depression like a trough running through the middle of the mattress. It rested on something hard and uneven underneath, boxes or crates perhaps.

I turned on my side and looked at Arthur. He broke the silence.

"Arnie says Paul'd get mad if he was to leave here. Ya think Paul'd really get mad if Arn was to move outta here? Arn could get hisself a better place. He don't need to be givin' dough to that cousin of his. He could be livin' better than this. Why don't nobody talk to Paul?"

"I'll get Uncle Arnie out of here."

"Shit." Arthur's bitterly resigned voice and look accused me of everything from insensitivity to incompetence. "What are ya gonna do for Arnie?"

I felt groggy. "I've seen enough," I told Arthur, and got slowly to my feet. He turned off the light, locked and double-checked the padlock with a scrupulousness not unworthy of the vault at Fort Knox.

"Up we go," he said gaily.

We exited by the same route. It took nine minutes; the stairs were steeper than I remembered. I imagined Uncle Arnie, his eye dripping

fear, staining his clothes as he groped his awkward way out of the darkness and into the grim light of the back alley.

I telephoned my father from my hotel room. I was not altogether coherent --I talked of ecstatic visions and nightmarish reality-- but in a voice so strident and urgent that Mort promised to come up on the first plane out. I left the hotel briefly to buy an expensive bottle of whiskey, and spent most of the night sipping it from a plastic cup and trying to discern facial patterns in the texture of the room's carpet. When I realized I had before me the face of the man who connected Uncle Arnie's TV to the rooftop antenna, I put the bottle down and went to sleep. It was an insipid penance.

USEFUL HEALTH HINT

Relieving Eye Strain

Fill the sink with water three or four degrees above body temperature. Sit at the sink. Bend your elbow (either will do), and place it in the sink for 3 minutes, preferably with your eyes closed. You will feel refreshed when you remove your elbow.

SIKE HEALTH QI ENERGY WORKSHOP

Saturday, July 24, 2010

Therese & Mallory Fromm will be giving a **beginner/intermediate workshop in the SIKE Technique** at our home on **Saturday, July 24, from 10:00-4:30**. The cost

is **\$125**, and includes: learning to access and transmit your qi, fundamentals of healing and health maintenance, an individual treatment, a great lunch, and conversation with interesting people. Detailed information about the takeaway skills taught at the workshop can be found at www.sikehealth.com. Click on Workshops.

We cannot over-emphasize the benefits of taking a workshop. The knowledge and skills learned at a workshop enable the individual to understand his/her own diagnosis and treatment; how to maintain health and accelerate the healing process at home; how to treat others for aches, pains, and minor ailments. **We plan to emphasize techniques for health maintenance at home, with particular attention to kiryu as a simple, elegant, and effective means of wellness and mental clarity.** And finally, each participant also receives a treatment, which is included in the cost of the workshop.

TF adds: We pride ourselves on offering each individual client the knowledge and means to pursue his/her own healing and health maintenance. If you want to know what is going on in your mind/body and how to direct yourself toward health, then our workshops should not be missed! And perhaps best of all, a facility with qi makes you nice.

For reservations and information, phone 818-992-0713 or email info@sikehealth.com.

