



## EXPERT INTERVIEW

# Sean Lee Gardner

## Chinese Medicine



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**Sean:** My name is Sean Lee Gardner. I have studied medical Qigong for the past five years. My focus is on this because it is one of the four main branches of Chinese medicine. The other three are acupuncture, herbal therapy and tui na or massage. I found Qigong was probably the basis for all these other arts emerging. I thought it's absolutely fascinating as to its implications for an individual being able to take control of their health.

I studied this with several Qigong masters, and one in particular, Dr. Jerry Alan Johnson, for about three years solid. We did the equivalent of a doctoral program as they had in China, within the course of about three years. We studied all manner of methodologies of Qigong healing, both in treating other people and self-treatment.

What I found was this is by far the most comprehensive and profound method of taking care of oneself that you can possibly imagine.

In addition, I have done much self-study in both Western and Eastern herbal styles, primarily Chinese herbalism, in addition to Ayurvedic herbalism, Western herbalism and European as well as New World or North American herbalism. I've been a massage therapist for almost 12 years. I'm not an acupuncturist but, I see acupuncture almost two to three times a week.

I've had plenty of experience in this. I feel you should get regular treatment from everyone who's in the discipline and

should seek professional advice from them. They will give you long-term strategic advice you can integrate on a daily basis.

But, when it comes to herbs and Qigong, again, it's one of those things that once you learn the basics, you'll be able to integrate very quickly the most important principles and affect your life in a very dramatic way.

That is what I hope to deliver today.

**Larry:** How do you view the problem?

**Sean:** So, the question is how do I view sleep-related problems? The answer is there are so many sleep-related problems and each kind has its own specific approach to understand it.

Generally speaking, when it comes down to a physical explanation, it tends to be a hormonal issue. The insufficiency of neurotransmitters within the brain, insufficiency of testosterone within the body, and not enough sunlight hitting the body, these are all really good simple explanations for what's happening on a physical level.

On an energetic level, that's something entirely different. I still have seen people who work out daily, seem to get enough sunlight and seem to have a calm overall existence in life. Yet they still tend to have insomnia problems. Sleep apnea tends to manifest itself in people who are essentially suffering adrenal insufficiency. This also can have some powerful effects in people who have insomnia.

So, through my own studies and experience, I'll go from that instead of just conjecturing about what I read. My own experience has been more of insomnia from community college, when I was staying up really late at night cramming for tests. I was that type of guy where if I had something to do the

next day, I would finish the 30-page or 40-page paper six hours before I had to go to class, down a bunch of coffee and then head off to class. I would present the paper and generally passed with a pretty good grade.

But, this led into a pattern of staring at an artificial spire, if you will, a computer screen, a light that is not supposed to be stimulating our optical nerve at that time of night.

This is becoming more and more of a problem within our society. People are becoming more addicted to television and having some kind of stimulation coming into the eye in the form of light. Moving images are taking the place of what would have been dreams, what would have been rapid eye movements helping us to process the day's input and helping us to store it properly and sort and collate it, if you will, into short- and long-term memory.

As a side note, it is interesting when we start realizing we stopped dreaming nearly as much with the advent of so much stimulation late at night from all these moving images on televisions and computer screens.

When we have this constant stimulation of light through a computer screen, not allowing us to go into the deep, dark cavernous place in our mind, for the Yin state of our daily life and body, we don't really get the full restful experience of shutting the brain down, so to speak. Obviously, it doesn't fully shut down, but it allows us to access other areas so we don't hyper-stimulate other areas.

This is, generally speaking, how the ancient Chinese saw the place of sleep within the daily cycle. If it's not being done at appropriate times, when the body wants to go into a Yin state, you're not going to get the full rejuvenating powers.

As a rule of thumb, Chinese medicine encourages getting to sleep before 11 p.m., actually being in bed before 11 p.m., so you can be asleep and have the organs nourished, if you will.

We'll go into that in a little bit here. We'll start looking at the strategies and the underlying theory about why you're actually sleeping and why at a certain time.

When it comes down to it sleep-related problems first are being caused by an improper amount of sleep. Second, the time in which you are sleeping and third, how deeply you are getting into sleep. So, are you actually achieving REM sleep? R-E-M, not the band but Rapid Eye Movement, is the state we're really trying to achieve through some of these techniques. That is to say, an extremely deep and profound place where your body actually starts secreting different hormones and chemicals that rejuvenate throughout all the tissues.

Why is proper sleep important? Well, first and foremost, when you don't sleep properly, when you don't sleep enough, we all know you just feel like you're dragging your butt through the day. You're not actually fully engaged, fully awake, fully alive.

So, it's very interesting that when you are not fully asleep, you don't feel fully awake when you should be awake. I heard this from a great movie I would recommend to everyone out there listening to this. It's called, "Waking Life." It's a very wonderful film, watched it a couple of times. You'll get what I'm saying, but there is a piece in there where one of the characters says, "It just seems as if everybody is dream-walking through their waking state or wake-walking through their dream state."

I felt this was interesting that we walk around like a zombie, right? That is you are dragging your body through this existence when you don't get enough sleep. It's a very appropriate name

for these days when there's so many people hyper-stimulating their minds with coffee, with energy drinks and those sorts of things. Yet they are not actually fully engaged with their bodies, their minds and their spirits.

These three things are going to be the fundamental basis by which we have this conversation around the Eastern energetic approach to sleep. So, energizing your body is the first place we want to talk about regarding why sleep is so important.

When we don't have hormonal rejuvenation happening on a daily and nightly basis, first and foremost, we don't sleep at night and then, during the day, we don't get exposure to the sun. When you don't have these two contrasting experiences, you're going to be thrown out of balance.

You can get away for a while, as you probably have already experienced, by drinking coffee or by drinking Yerba Mate. This is one of the things that has become very popular, especially in natural health circles and that's not to say either of these drinks are bad. We're not going to categorize them into good and bad categories.

I still enjoy Yerba Mate every once in a while as well. But, it's a matter of understanding whether you are using it as a crutch.

So, if you're using it as a crutch to push through daily habituation, that's not going to be so helpful in the long run as a strategy for getting long-term nourishing sleep.

Your mental state, do you ever feel as if you're cloudy? As if you can't focus or recall on short-term or long-term memory? Can you actually bring cohesive thoughts together?

Well, one of the ways people do that is through having proper sleep cycles so their brain chemistry is balanced and allows

proper actions to be stored. When we don't have that, of course, we feel as though we're zoned out or tuned out of reality or think it's slightly fuzzy.

I noticed this for a while when I had long-term insomnia. It was after about three years of staying up every single night to almost three in the morning, which is a very interesting time. We'll get to it shortly, there was something drastically missing from my everyday life.

That glow, that kind of luminesce, the thing that makes your life sparkle and pop kind of drains out after a while when you don't have proper sleep and you're not being exposed to proper amounts of sun. So, when these two pieces are not in place, you just feel as if you're losing the magic that we already naturally have. This is probably one of the most important pieces as to why proper sleep is so important.

Then on a spiritual level, there are now many, many studies showing the link between improper sleep cycles, improper amounts of sleep, improper types of sleep and depression. This is probably one of the most important topics for me. I have seen many of my friends start to take anti-anxiety medications as well as anti-depressants when they feel sad.

In my humble opinion, this is largely due to improper sleep. This notion that somehow you are sad all the time, you can't seem to pull yourself out of this slump. It's not just improper brain chemistry as the reductionist scientists would have you believe.

It has to start somewhere. It's not just a genetic trait. You're actually affecting your epigenetics by your daily habits and actions. Bruce Lipton has started talking more about this recently with his book, *The Biology of Belief*. I highly recommend it. Behavioral epigenetics is an emerging field. They are starting

to look at the behavior that an individual has and that they do on a daily basis and the way it affects their genetic output, the control mechanisms of their genetics.

So, I find this very interesting that we actually can change and shape the physicality through the way we are asking and thinking about our lives on a daily basis.

When you start losing proper sleep cycles, you're actually going to be physically changing your body, causing depression in the long term, causing this overall sadness. If that is not the most important thing about sleep, immediately applicable to our society as it stands right now, I don't know what is.

People's depression and sleep issues seem to go together. When people ask me for this type of generalized health advice, more than any other category, that is what is coming to mind.

Then that leads us into the consequences of poor sleep. The first consequence is depression. Second is, you start lacking things such as proper hormonal balance. So, free floating testosterone in the body starts to drastically go down when you don't have proper sleep. Then the counter position of proper sleep, in my opinion is sunlight, getting plenty of sunlight all over the body – on the face, on your arms, on the neck, on the back, on the genitalia which is one of the probably the least studied areas of sunlight exposure.

While I'm still waiting for more confirmation from the scientific arena on this, I'm going to throw my hat in the ring and say, "When we have nude sunbathing on a semi-regular basis, we're going to start seeing studies come out confirming this is going to be one of the most easily accessible natural testosterone boosting activities we know of."

Forget about the history of injections of this or that. You just need to go get naked and get out in the sun for a while. If you can't do that fully, at least walk around with as little clothing as you legally can in your locale and get sun on your face.

Sun is not the enemy and I mean this without sunscreen. This is probably one of the most diabolical issues facing people, understanding this connection between skin cancer and sun exposure, right? I'm not going to get in to that too much right now. I'm sure there are plenty of other things on [bewellbuzz.com](http://bewellbuzz.com) about the dangers of sunscreen, especially when it contains zinc and titanium dioxide. I will leave that to you. It's there to go and check out at [bewellbuzz.com](http://bewellbuzz.com).

Suffice it to say it is really important to get sun on all parts of your body. Then you're producing the right kind of hormones during daytime so you're getting the right kind of energetic interactions during the daytime.

When the sun is up, the Chinese simply see that as the Yang part of the day. By Yang, I mean the bright part, the masculine part. We're not talking strictly male or female. It's more of just an archetypal representation system they had. It is the active part of the day and this, of course, makes sense because that's typically when we are out and active and moving around.

So, the Yin part of the day is night. This is the part where we want to go into our cave, go into an area where we are being nourished and internally set, if you will. We'll get into the interaction between a Qi and blood a bit later on. Those are the Yang and the Yin aspects of the body.

This will start feeding into your understanding of how these two components that are absolutely critical to life will affect and/or are affected by your daily sleep cycles.

**Larry:** What symptoms should one look for?

**Sean:** The next question is what symptoms should an individual look for? I will go from my own perspective on this one. Maybe you could relate a little bit. I will show you the types of symptoms I was experiencing because these are extremely typical, as I found out later.

Irritability, that's the number one thing when you are lacking sleep. We tend to get a little snappy. We tend to get a little bit short with other people. We tend to feel as if there is maybe a little bit too much stress around us on a daily basis and that every single little thing tends to piss us off. That is the first sign you're probably not getting enough or the proper kind of sleep.

Others are just a general lethargy or lack of energy. When you are not properly being nourished by sleep, you're going to feel as if you're dragging around, as when we spoke about this before. You are not going to feel as if you're filled with life and energy.

Other more severe symptoms can include itchy, red, and dry eyes. This is what would be called a lack of Yin fluids. When you're not nourishing the Yin at night, or the dark internal aspects of the body, you're not going to be producing the right kind of fluids. So tears and moisture, including for the eyes, is one of the first things to go. We'll talk in a little bit about why that is as it relates to the body's organ systems. The eyes relate to the blood and the liver and the gall bladder. We'll talk about this form of energetics in a little bit.

The other symptoms to be aware of can start looking like emaciation. This is for long-term insomnia. Sleep apnea is a little bit different. This is way more prevalent, or rather not prevalent, but you notice it more when people just seemingly fall asleep

when it's inappropriate. For example, when they are driving or when they're in movie theaters or even on the phone.

I've had that happen a couple of times to clients, where they are literally falling asleep in the middle of a social situation. This is, in a way, a cry from the body to get more and deeper sleep. It's also a cry for greater activity during the day. You should balance all that sleep you're getting because, sometimes, it ends up being very excessive, ten to fourteen hours.

Now, that's not to say the body doesn't need that, because when you're catching up on sleep, you're going to be sleeping a lot more and a lot deeper. As one health guru I looked into a couple of years ago said, which I didn't really pay attention to at first, "How do you know when you've had enough sleep?"

We tend to think, "Oh, I've overslept," when we wake up in the morning, right? Is that a symptom, oversleeping?

Well, that's kind of a standard we place upon ourselves that is a little bit arbitrary compared to what our bodies' needs are. And, in comparing it, maybe not totally equally, the question of how do you know when you've had enough sleep to, well, how do you know when you're done going to urinate?

Well, when you don't have any left, when you are done, when it's all out. In the same way, this is kind of how the body works. You are done sleeping when you are no longer sleepy and tired. You wake up naturally on your own.

This can take a couple of weeks to correct and become fully topped up, if you will, on your sleep quota. So, in a way, when you start looking at the symptoms and the overall sleepiness you're experiencing, be patient, be kind, be gentle with

yourself. Realize this issue did not come about overnight and do not expect you'll be able to correct it overnight.

There is no one pill or powder or tincture or drug or any one thing that is going to be the magic bullet. It is going to be a combination of things. There are helpful herbs and supplements. These sorts of things can be added into your regimen but, it's overall going to be a change of lifestyle and habits.

Through that, in examining and identifying these symptoms, it's going to be really important to see when those symptoms arise for you at what point in the day. Then you can be aware that it is connected to something you're doing throughout the day.

So, that is drinking stimulants and then, having a crash six to eight hours later. That is part of the symptom and it's also part of the co-dependent pattern that has emerged out of the avoidance of creating better sleep habits and cycles.

I won't go much into the Chinese medicine jargon regarding what types of symptoms you're looking for. Generally speaking, you may hear your licensed acupuncturist talk about blood deficiency. They're not talking strictly about the physical blood of the body. They are talking about the greater concept of blood. When you're looking at it in textbooks, they will differentiate physical blood, as *Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary* talks about it, with a little "b" when you're talking about blood.

Chinese medicine's definition of blood is with a big "B," or an uppercase B, and includes more of an energetic perspective regarding how the blood is forming in the body. The definition also includes how blood is being acted upon by the Qi in the body as well, which is Qi being the life force energy. That may

not even really be accepted as being existent within Western medicine standards.

This is a concept they consider to be vitalist, a theory that is not well accepted within that establishment. But once we start looking toward naturopathy, Chinese medicine and Ayurveda, which is the traditional Indian medicine, we start seeing these other ideas of life force energy. Within Naturopathy, within Qi, within Chinese medicine, within prana, within Ayurveda, all of these are essentially the same aspects. They may just describe them slightly differently, but this is the energy that motivates and animates the body's tissues. It is what is generating the Shen, or the spirit of the body, as well. We will get into that again a little bit later.

Blood (with a capital "B") is going to be one of the most, the most important, aspects of what we're going to focus on here. We are going to look at herbal strategies for how to nourish the blood, calm the spirit, and sedate the mind and body to prepare for sleep, and how to turn functions into more of a nourishing experience at night.

To recap, the symptoms of not getting enough sleep include irritability, not feeling energetic and feeling lethargic. Overall, you can have things such as itchy eyes, weakness of the limbs, we won't talk about that too much, and overall emaciation of the body. You can start losing your appetite after a while or not get enough food in the body simply because you're not producing enough the right kinds of hormones necessary to stimulate hunger.

So, that will be a really good start to understanding where you are in identifying your own symptoms. There are plenty others, but those tend to compound with longer term sleep issues.

**Larry:** What aggravates the problem?

**Sean:** The primary sources of aggravation within the Western world, in my opinion, are coming from the consumption of caffeine and stimulants. So, coffee, excessive amount of black tea, energy drinks, basically, anything that has been spiked or contains a large amount of caffeine.

I am not speaking to demonize or to make any one food or substance the enemy here. However, the average American seems to drink between two and four cups of coffee a day. That number probably rises pretty drastically as you go towards Northern latitudes within the United States, where we don't have quite as much sunlight throughout the day.

Take a look, for instance, at the coffee boom that came out of Seattle. We get sometimes, I think it's around 200 inches of rain here, which means, of course, it's very cloudy. I find it very coincidental, if you will, that coffee such as Starbucks came out of this culture that needed the internal stimulation of warm them against the elements. This is a very interesting consideration when you are trying to adapt properly to your environment around you.

The aggravation of the problem can be seen in a couple of different ways. One is exogenous, or things that are external to your body, coming in and stimulating you. So, the first thing, of course, is stimulants such as caffeine.

The next thing would be light. If you're consuming light at an inappropriate time of the day, meaning staring at the television at two o'clock in the morning when all of the rest of the world where you're in is darkened, that is going to be aggravating the problem. It's going to be stimulating nerve and brain centers that are not normally stimulated at that time of night.

You need to shut down. You need to have darkness to produce the hormone-like melatonin that is going to be floating normally throughout the body, calming things down, acting as an antioxidant on the tissues, and generally loosening and rejuvenating the body.

In a lot of life extension and longevity expert circles, it's largely agreed melatonin is one of the most powerful anti-aging hormones available naturally to the body. Now, we can also get supplement forms. We'll talk a little bit more about melatonin as we get to that supplement section.

But, when you don't have enough of this, don't have enough melatonin, that's going to aggravate the problem. In my opinion, I think when a person does not have an appropriate amount of herbs in their diet, when they don't have the proper diet, that will aggravate the problem. That's the number one thing.

If you don't have enough protein, if you don't have enough free amino acids, branched-chain amino acids, you're not going to have the building blocks you're going to need for producing the hormones to calm down the body, calm down the mind, and help rejuvenate the brain at the appropriate time.

So, you'll see the foods I'll recommend later on are generally going to be high-protein ones for helping correct a lot of these issues, helping to get appropriate daily sleep cycles.

Other things may aggravate the problem, including stress, driving on a daily basis and commuting to work. If you don't have a way to discharge that stress, it is going to build up in the body, the tissues and the muscles especially. If you don't have a way to fully release all that tension that's built up during the

day, you're not going to really experience an overall relaxation response in the evening.

The number one thing to reduce stress is working out in some capacity, whether it's lifting weights, doing yoga, or other exercise. Qigong meditations also are a really important way to counteract that form of aggravation.

There's a bunch of other ways you're going to experience stress but, overall that eustress, as opposed to distress, is a common concept that most people never heard before.

What is eustress? That is the antithesis of distress, which is negative stress upon the body when you get so distressed about say, bills or your kids going ballistic in the house and breaking things, or relationship issues or being stuck on the 405 in L.A. These are all distressful situations.

Eustressful situations are those where you are actually being challenged and your mind is being challenged in a way where you are enjoying the stressful activity, such as going to the gym, right?

Even if you don't know it, on a regular basis you are forcing yourself into an eustressful situation that is causing a positive adaptive response. That in my mind is part of the definition of eustress. It's causing a positive adaptive response, as opposed to a negative adaptive response, where you are constantly starting to breakdown and going to a catabolic mode within the tissues.

Eustress will cause an anabolic, or building mode, within the tissues. Again, this is where we are working out in some capacity, such as doing exercise, Qigong meditations, lifting

weights, yoga, stretching, running, anything outdoors, swimming, these sorts of activities.

This is the antithesis of aggravation. This is what is actually going to cause the body to adapt upward in a way that allows you to have a better response to your everyday stressful activities.

**Larry:** How would you treat the problem?

**Sean:** Now that we know how the problem is aggravated to a large degree, how would we take care of it? What is the amelioration? What is the balm to the itch? Well, it depends on the source of the issue but, I'll give you a bunch of different tools here to play around with because I'm a big fan of self-experimentation, within reason, within an educated domain.

The treatment for the problem, of course, I'm not a medical doctor. I can't give you the advice to treat anything. Here's how I treated myself.

First and foremost is getting enough sunlight. That is probably the number one way people will continually tell you to treat insomnia or any kind of sleep issues, getting enough sunlight. And, why is that?

Well, from the Chinese medicine perspective, if you're nourishing Yang during the daytime, it's going to be vastly easier to allow the Yin to settle at night. What do we mean by that?

When you have the Yang expressing itself throughout the entire day, the active side, the masculine side, the awake side, you're going to have a much easier time letting the Yin settle.

That means the blood is the Yin aspect of the fluids of the body, whereas the Qi is the Yang aspect. The Qi leaves the blood,

and the blood is the mother of the Qi. This is kind of a metaphor for the way the Chinese saw the blood acting within the body.

Now, if you understand the very basis of the interaction of Qi blood and the way that it affects your sleep cycle, when you go to sleep at night, the Chinese believe the blood goes into the liver. And what it means in a strictly physical sense is the blood is going to be filtered out and replenished by the liver.

In the doctoral level of detoxification, there is a time frame by which this actually is happening. This is starting to happen at 11 o'clock at night and goes to about 3 o'clock in the morning. There's the two-hour segment and then, of course, the four-hour segment. But, between eleven and three in the morning are the most critical hours by which you're going to get rejuvenating sleep. This is when the blood goes into the liver, becomes processed, and it settles. If the blood is not doing that, you're going to start having sleep issues and sleep disturbances.

One of the main problems with insomniacs is they are not able to feel as if they are asleep or that they are tired by 11 o'clock. They only do that by running their minds, running their brains, telling them it is 1, 2, 3 o'clock in the morning sometimes.

So, this first strategy is to set up a schedule by which you shut off electronics. I realized my problem was being aggravated by my room having a television, a VCR (that's kind of showing how old I am), a game console, my computer, and a couple of power strips. I was becoming so sensitive, I realized, to all of these little aspects that I had to shut off everything. I couldn't have any light in the room, any of the lights or those in the electronics. Those all needed to be shut off.

I've been seeing people recently and when I go into their rooms, they will have Internet routers and wireless routers. Some of the worst things you possibly can have in your room are electronics, televisions, DVD players, VCRs, any kind of electronics that will need to be shut off so you are not experiencing any light coming out of them.

The body wants to go into a dark, deep place where there's no stimulation from light. That's the first step right there. Remove any light-emitting sources from your room. This will stop the mind and the body from engaging with those. And they'll stop having the spirit or the Shen activated.

This is one of the things that shows an interaction between the Chinese medicine's definition of the blood and the spirit or the Shen. When you don't allow the blood to rest, then the Shen constantly is being activated. It's depleting the resources below it that rely upon it.

So, many of your listeners probably have heard of this candle idea, the explanation of Jing, Qi, and Shen: Jing is the essence or the formative constructive elements within the body. Qi is the energetic component that emerges out of the Jin. So, when you have enough hormonal essence, if you will, you will start to have an abundance of energy.

When you have abundance of energy, then you're going to start generating Shen, or the light coming off the candles of the wax, of the candle of the Jin. The flame itself is the Qi. The light that the flame sheds is the Shen, which is the spirit.

So, this three-layered concept of your body, mind, flash energy, and spirit, is what we're looking at. When your physicality of your blood is not resting and rejuvenating, you're not going to have proper amounts of energy to produce the Shen needed

to have an overall happy and vibrant lifestyle. You're not going to feel as if there is that quintessential magic to reality.

Well, how does this come about? Fundamentally, the mechanism is letting the blood go back into the liver between the hours of eleven and three in the morning. So set up, as we have said before, a schedule to go to sleep between 10 and 10:30 p.m. so you can actually be fully asleep by 11 p.m., the optimum time.

Now, it's actually almost impossible for me to do that on a daily basis because so much of my "job function" requires me to be up late. Sometimes I'm talking to people in other countries. I still have to adjust this on an everyday basis, getting everything done for work before 8 o'clock.

On the weekend is where most people start to slip up. They start to go partying or they stay up late watching movies. Or, they generally are having some kind of late night activity that they then need to consume alcohol to sedate their mind, or to smoke pot, or to rely upon Ambien or some other form of drug to get them to sleep.

Of course, this is not a healthy cycle to get yourself into because it's not a long-term fix. It's just a short term issue that you're trying to treat with a short-term application of some kind of herb or drug or some sort of sedative or depressant.

So, the treatment has to come from long-term lifestyle adjustment. I'm talking about changing your schedule. I know that doesn't sound sexy. I know that doesn't really sound like, "Oh, that's going to be the piece that really does it for me." But, that will be the piece around which everything else you're going to apply to change your daily existence and your sleep cycle is going to be predicated upon. So, having that

schedule, setting it up, making sure you are actually getting into bed before 10 o'clock or so, so you can be fully deep in sleep mode before 11 o'clock or so, that's when we want to be in sleep mode.

As an individual protocol, I constantly am trying to tweak and add and subtract new things to ensure I'm getting the proper amount of sleep and the right kind of sleep. Again, we're trying to focus on rapid eye movement sleep when the body is going in and allowing for the secretion of certain kinds of hormones and chemicals.

Specifically, we're looking for DMT. I won't get into that too much but that is a very important part of rejuvenating the body, rejuvenating the mind, having profound dream state when you actually can be inspired on a daily basis and maybe even start getting into a lucid dreaming state.

The ancient Chinese saw the ability to have a lucid dream as a very, very healthy form of sleep. This is one of those forms where the body is fully being rested and the mind and spirit are able to transform themselves into a healthy expression of dream state.

I'll touch upon that just a little bit later. But I'll just put that out there, that having the proper amount of physical sleep will translate into an overall spiritual purpose in life. It will translate into your being able to look deeply and interpersonally at your dream state and how it is translating messages from your daily life into that lucid dream state.

So individual protocol, let's get back to that. The individual protocol I'm following is working out probably between noon and 3 p.m. Is that possible for you, right after work, if you have a regular nine to five job? Doing an hour and a half of yoga or

doing an hour of Qigong, standing meditation, having something to center and focus the mind. If you're a morning person, having that morning period where you're exercising the body, getting a little bit of sweat going on, getting a little bit of muscle action going on, loosening up the tendons and ligaments. Then the liver, to which the tendons and ligaments are energetically connected in the Chinese system, is being activated and opened up and dilated so you can actually have proper flow of Qi through the meridians.

This proper flow on a daily basis is really, really important. This is one of the reasons why people who practice Tai Chi and Qigong, through many different studies in China as well as domestically, have shown there is a life extending quality to this. It circulates the Qi in the body. It moves the Qi, it generates Qi, and it eventually starts causing proper rhythms within the body.

On that note, circadian rhythm, understanding we have a natural rhythmic response in the body to light and dark cycles, to the magnetic fluctuations happening with the sun and moon. These are not mystical ideas. They are well studied within Western medicine and science. Understanding that, on a more fundamental basis, is just when you're up, making sure, again, and it's going to sound like I'm a broken record here but, getting enough sunlight during the day will be the counterpoint to getting enough sleep at night when the moon is up.

One of the more obscure methodologies I've employed myself is both sun gazing and moon gazing. There are plenty of resources on this. I'm not going to make any kind of extraordinary claims about it, but I have noticed small amounts of sun gazing and moon gazing at night, adjusting the eyes to natural sources of light, getting them away from artificial

sources of light, is one of the most effective ways of helping regulate the body's circadian rhythms.

Energetically speaking, your eyes are kind of absorbing the Yang energy of the sun by looking at a sunset, for instance. They're absorbing the Yin energy from the moon. There's health to balance, the mental state, the energy and the psychology of the states of the body. So, I would recommend looking into that. There's a couple of great websites out there. I think it's [sungazing.org](http://sungazing.org) or something. Just look at the general strategy they use. I think you might have a little something on [bewellbuzz.com](http://bewellbuzz.com) regarding sun gazing. But I can't remember when I actually saw it. So, maybe you can just look that up.

Herbs are another part of the individual protocol I've used. There're a couple of herbs I'll be recommending here shortly. But having proper herbal recommendations from a licensed acupuncturist is a really important piece. There're also a couple of single Western herbs you can take and a couple more exotic ones you may or may not have heard of that I will touch on. Having a proper herbal protocol integrated into your everyday life is absolutely necessary. This is one of the aspects that has been completely overlooked in modern society.

We think of taking it as a supplement. Herbs are not supplements in any more of a capacity than using basil or oregano or tarragon or black pepper in your food. It's just we've gotten away from using herbal medicine on a daily basis. We tend to only rely upon food. We make this delineation between herbal medicine and supplements and food.

At some point, the line blurs and we're no longer able to differentiate between what is medicine and what is food. For example, Goji berries are one of the most powerful and often

used herbal medicines in Chinese medicine. Yet, they're delicious little raisin-like pieces of fruit that are essentially food. So, in this way, I'm going to recommend you start looking at your herbal medicine as food and vice versa, looking at your food as herbal medicine.

So on an individual basis, both men and women probably are going to need a little something different. But, I'm going to focus more on the commonalities of the protocol that you want on a daily basis. So first, with the treatment of food and herbs on a daily basis, you want to look at, "Am I eating a regular meal three to five times a day? What am I exactly eating?"

Too many sugars will hyper-stimulate the body, of course. "Am I eating things that are vital? Am I eating enough fat, long burning fuel?" Or, "Am I eating too many carbs that are going to be like a flash in the pan in terms of the glycolysis cycle or the burning of carbs within the body?"

We want to go into more of a ketogenic or burning of the ketone, which are a product of fat metabolism and higher protein diet metabolism within the body. We want to go toward more of that because it causes the proper hormonal cascade within the body that causes, again, that anabolic cycle.

So I start off my day with a relatively high protein smoothie. I tend to put one or two, or even sometimes three, raw eggs from pastured hens into a smoothie. And that goes along with, say maybe, some raw milk or raw Brazil Nut milk or raw Almond milk or something like that. Then I add a bunch of other types of "sugar food-like substances." I like mesquite pod meal and cacao powder which, of course, I know it sounds hypocritical, but it is a stimulant.

First thing in the morning, make sure you're doing that. If you're going to take any stimulants, it should be in the morning so you're not stimulating yourself throughout the day. But, if you're trying to heal a long-standing insomnia condition or sleep issue, I would recommend no stimulants.

At first, when you start doing this and you start eating the heavier kinds of food, foods that are deeper and more nourishing for the body, you're eventually going to see, "Wow, I feel really tired when I do all this."

And it's not because, usually, the food is creating the tiredness. It's that you're stopping the stimulation you've had from way too much sugar, too many soda drinks and too much fruit juice and those sorts of things. And, you say maybe, "Well, fruit juice is healthy for me."

Yes. It's not that bad but, you just want to get away from too many quick burning carbs and get back to more slow burning types of food.

When you get off of that, typically, what I find is people's adrenals just finally breathe a huge sigh of relief and you want to go to sleep. This is a natural response. So in the beginning, feel free to take naps when you are doing this. It's okay. It's not an unnatural thing. It will help you actually regulate your sleep cycles a little bit more effectively.

As far as the integration of herbs and food and sleep cycles, the number one thing to keep in mind is regulation, having this be a regular piece on a daily basis. Then you're not integrating too much and you're able to consistently apply it every single day.

So, I obviously make a huge number of recommendations within this interview. But I recommend you start integrating only one or two of them at a time on a daily basis. See if you can do that for a week. See if you can sleep just an extra hour or get to bed just an extra hour earlier for a week at a time. Then, once you can do that consistently, start bringing in, say, a dietary component, or start integrating an herbal formula, or trying out new herbs, or adding a little bit something extra to your diet.

Again, it will sound as though I'm a broken record but, consistency is going to be key in regulating your body's energy so you can achieve excellent sleep.

The protocol for men or women, in my mind, is not that different. It's not something people should really make a big fuss about. It's the 20 percent that is not going to make the most drastic difference.

I like focusing on the big chunk that is going to make most of the difference. So, I should say it like this, "Eighty percent of your results are going to come from the 20 percent that you focus on right now, it's that whole 80-20 principle. Whether you're a man or a woman is going to fall into the other 80 percent of what you do that can have a long tail." That eventually will come into play. But we want to focus on the most important things right now, which are not gender-specific-- proper sunlight, proper herbs, proper dietary recommendations, and then getting sleep at appropriate times.

**Larry:** What dietary recommendations would you make?

**Sean:** As far as specific dietary recommendations, I would say having a generally protein- and fat-fueled diet is going to be far more effective for most people overall than one burning lots of carbs, lots of grains, lots of fruits, lots of sugars.

Some people, of course, will not agree with this. There are tons of different styles of dietary therapy but, looking traditionally at what has been prescribed over thousands of years in the ancient Chinese medical text and the ancient Ayurvedic medical text, generally speaking, they recommend a higher fat, higher protein type of diet for overall sleep issues.

I also make a couple of very specific herb recommendations instead of using your morning cup of coffee. The first is just green tea, which is really simple. There's a little caffeine in green tea, but it's a good segue to getting your body a little bit more used to less caffeine and having more nutritive capacity in what you are drinking.

So green tea has one amino acid called L-theanine. L-theanine is very nice for the brain as it calms things down and it's very relaxing. So if you drink green tea, you're going to notice a bit more of a slightly relaxing state as well as how it makes you slightly more alert.

This is exemplified in the story of a man named Damo. Damo also was known as Bodhidharma. He was one of the originators of Buddhism in China. When he came over here and he saw the monks. I believe he was coming over and proselytizing Buddhism. He saw these meditators sitting there for eight to ten hours a day. Their bodies were wasting away and they were not actually having very much success in achieving enlightenment.

He went away to ponder this issue. He found he had to go into a cave, sit facing the wall, and he did so for nine years. At one point during the meditation, the legend says he became tired while sitting there and fell asleep.

He became so angered with himself that he took a knife and cut off his eyelids. Then he threw them out the cave entrance. Where his eyelids fell, the first tea plant emerged.

This is an allegorical tale, of course. This is not a literal tale. It's a way of describing the effects of the tea plant and what it actually does. It does two things. It calms down the mind. So, it causes you to focus. At the same time, it creates a little bit of alert wakefulness. That is, of course, due to a little bit of caffeine.

The interaction between the two main chemicals within the tea leaf creates this placid, calm, and yet focused state of mind. This is one reason why tea is held in such high regard, and for so long, within both Chinese and Japanese cultures, as well as any Asiatic culture that encountered it through the spice trade.

So the first recommendation is if you're drinking lots of coffee, start substituting it with green tea. It will reduce the amount of caffeine and the amount of stimulation. It will start slowly substituting some of those energies with more relaxed, focused energy. It is better than just giving up coffee entirely and "white knuckling it" throughout the day.

The second recommendation is if you're completely adrenal-exhausted, you're going to start looking at herbs that are more replenishing, that are going to be more Jin and Qi replenishing.

The first one I really love is Astragalus, also called Huang Qi or Yellow Qi, as it is literally translated. Astragalus is one of the most potent herbs for getting a really strong movement and generation of Qi within the body. It will start to take the place of the full stimulation that occurs when you drink coffee.

You'll notice it will be very nourishing. There's a couple of ways you can take it. One of my recent favorites is when you have a bowl of oatmeal in the morning, throw in three to six little pieces of Astragalus. They usually come in these really thin, tongue depressor -looking slices of the root. Use three or six of those. If they're really big, maybe put two to three of them, along with a small handful of Goji berries, in your oatmeal. As it cooks, the Astragalus and the Goji berries will slowly cook into the oatmeal.

Goji berries also are a very wonderful Qi product. Those two together are going to give you a really strong boost in your Qi. Alternatively, if you wanted to put those into a tea or a water decoction, that would also be a really useful way of taking them as well if you're still into the mode needing to drink something first thing in the morning.

However, I do find oatmeal to be a very effective way of delivering a lot of slow-burning, long-burning carbs, as well as good medicine, into the body. I'm a big fan of medicinalizing these foods in any way you possibly can.

Now, if you're having some kind of issue with gluten, you also can choose amaranth or millet first thing in the morning. Amaranth also is a really good, nourishing, non-glutinous grain or seed you can use. And it's also slightly sweet.

When we look at this interaction between the flavors you're craving and what's on your palate and in your food, and the way in which it affects the body's organs, we see that in Chinese medicine, between the spleen (which is on the left side directly opposite the liver) and the liver (which is on your right side just below the rib), the spleen organizes the Qi of the body.

The spleen is what's considered the digestive organ energetically even though the liver, gall bladder, and stomach, are the ones that physically hold your food. The energies of the way you digest come primarily from the spleen. And so, nourishing the spleen also has a lot to do with your overall energy level. You'll notice a lot of the Qi tonics also are nourishing the spleen. Astragalus is nourishing to the spleen. Goji berries also are very nourishing to the spleen. Many other herbs that go into this category also are spleen tonics or things that reinforce and fortify the spleen.

One of the other aspects of these herbs is they all have the tendency to be yellow. That is very interesting because the color of the spleen, energetically speaking, is yellow. So, you're going to start getting things that are, like turmeric. It's a wonderful digestive. It does directly affect the spleen. And it does affect the Qi, positively. Turmeric in your everyday diet is another one I'll be recommending as being something you should get more of.

So, what's the easiest way to do that? Eating more curry. I love curry. I can't imagine too many people not liking curry or just making kitchari. This is another really wonderful recipe, excellent for slow-burning carbs or slow-burning protein. The combination of mung bean and rice plus some grass adds some good stuff on top of there. That will give you long-term burning fuel in addition to medicinalizing the kitchari with a pretty good amount of turmeric and/or curry in addition to other spices.

These methodologies of integrating more medicinal herbs that are also culinary herbs are going to be really important. Then, starting to treat the medicinal herb as culinary herb will get you into more of a flow of creating medicine out of your food.

So, what about other foods? Pumpkin seeds are really wonderful ones because they contain tryptophan. Tryptophan is a great amino acid that has a relatively sedating effect on the brain. Tryptophan is within the same group as some other tryptamines.

I'll leave that up to you to Google. It's a very fascinating subject. DMT, as I mentioned earlier, is one of those groups of chemicals that is also tryptamine. They have various and very complex effects within the brain chemistry and upon sleep cycles, as well as being a product of proper sleep cycles.

But, suffice it to say a good quantity of tryptophan-based foods or, rather tryptophan-containing foods, before you're going to sleep will help you maintain a deeper state of sleep. A small amount of pumpkin seed would be a very good way of reinforcing an extra amount of that amino acid into the body so you can get into deeper state of sleep.

One of my favorite foods that is not exactly widely available, but get some if it is, is the durian fruit. This is one of the most exotic, strangely delicious foods you'll probably ever have. It's also one of the most highly tryptophan-rich foods I know of.

You'll notice that once you gorge yourself on the fruit and you have, say, enough of the inside pods, you'll start to get slightly sedated and sleepy. It's a very interesting food to maybe have for a little bit for dinner, maybe not dinner but dessert. It will cause you to become a little more sedated because it's very high in fat. It's also got some great oils in it that are very nourishing to the skin and brain. But, it also has a vast amount of tryptophan.

So, this is going to be a really powerful way of modulating your diet so you're getting enough protein. Generally speaking,

higher protein foods are going to have enough tryptophan. I mentioned earlier high-protein foods have extremely high amounts of tryptophan in general. Then, you have all the organ meats. If you're eating animal products, these are also really important.

Finally, within just the strictly food range of things, I am a big, big fan of grass-fed, raw, organic milk. And, for whatever you think about it, just try it. Even if you're allergic, a lot of people have found success with specifically grass-fed, raw, organic milk. There is something magical to having it not crushed or homogenized or cooked, pasteurized, to a point where the proteins and fat can become deranged and cause allergic reactions. When it is in its still pristine state, there is a little bit of a magic to the way the milk interacts and reacts within the body.

So again, I'll leave you to do your own research on that. But that is one of my favorite foods to have, four to six ounces before I go to sleep, to kind of maintain a really sound solid sleep pattern.

So, there are two formulas you definitely want to look into on your own to see if they fit you. But they're two of the most commonly used formulas for sleep issues. When it comes to Chinese formulas and prescriptions, of course, I'm not making a prescription for any of you out there. You need to do your own research. But given that these are for some of the most common symptoms, I will throw them out there. Then you will be awareness of the formulas used for probably some of the most severe cases of insomnia.

The first formula is called Tian Wan Bu Xin Wan. First word is T-I-A-N. Second word is W-A-N. Third word is B-U. Fourth word is X-I-N. Fifth word is W-A-N. Tian Wan Bu Xin Wan.

This is a very common formula for dealing with insomnia that is caused by nervous issues, anxiety-based nervous issues. Within the Chinese medicine idealism, you have this idea that the spirit is not routing with the blood. This is eventually coming back to an issue of the heart.

If the emotions are perturbed and there's anxiety around the emotion, there are palpitations within the heart, this is one of the quintessential formulas. It usually is used to calm down the anxiety, relax the spirit back into the body, calm down the heart and chill you out. Then you actually can sleep appropriately. It calms down a racing mind.

This is one of the most important formulas I got to experience. It was absolutely profound. There have been very few other single herb formulations or supplements that have done something so profound to the very specific way I was experiencing insomnia. This is why these formulas need to be given to you by a licensed acupuncturist or other medical professionals, so that they know exactly what's going on with you.

Make them look at your pulse, your tongue, the coating on your tongue, your eyes because these all are subjective diagnostics. These medical professionals are highly trained and you're going to need very specific recommendations. Maybe they don't even need to adjust the formula, add a little bit more of this herbal, add a new herb, or take away this herb, to fit your specific constitutional type and how your presentation is coming about.

Again, this is one of those things where you can do your own research, as you're probably already doing. You're looking into this interview and taking it to a health professional so you are

educated on your own and have a composite idea of maybe what's going on inside. On that same note, insomnia sometimes also is rooted, this type of insomnia, in emotional disturbance.

This is one thing I am really strongly convinced is within the locus of control of most people, the modulation and control and changing of one's own emotion through your thoughts, words, deeds, actions and these sorts of things.

Your thoughts produce the motivation for the actions. The actions eventually start creating the emotions you feel around what you've done. If this is the case, and we accept it as being true, then you can, in theory, be in control of your emotions by starting with what you're thinking.

The thinking mind is engaged for most of the day. But, if you're consistently over burdening and over taxing your mind by thinking too hard, it's going to take a toll on the emotions because they never get to actually rest. This is what I mean by turning off the mind, turning off the thinking portion so the actions and the emotions can rest. Then they can have some process time at night during their sleeping cycle.

Tying all that back in with what I have said in the past hour, make sure you have this resting period, where the energy of thought is just calmed down. It's probably going to be one of the most important aspects that this specific formula addresses. It calms down the thinking process, allows for the emotions to be processed through the heart. This may not come as a surprise to most of the listeners out there.

So, when we have this sort of processing of the emotions through the heart, we get, obviously, the heart gets taxed when there are too many emotions. This is one of those visual understandings that we have without needing a theory of it but

it's not well-acknowledged within the Western mindset. So it bears repeating that this is something very important to pay attention to and that it is well-acknowledged within the classical Chinese texts on the emotions and how they affect the organs.

So, when we look at the way the emotions affect the organs and the body's energy and, therefore, the sleep cycles, we're going to calm it down at night. That's what's the short explanation of the long explanation actually is.

That formula is very good for calming down anxiety and eventually allowing your body to process emotions, chill out, and go to sleep in a much shorter time.

The second formula I want to talk about is called Zao Ren An Shen Pian. This is a very interesting formula. It is based upon an herb which is very commonly used in calming down spirit and creating a slightly sedative-like experience within the body and mind. That is this spiny date seed also called suan zao ren, or sour date seed. Suan zao ren is a very, very powerful medicinal. It is probably one of the greatest Shen restoratives, it's spirit restorative in that it allows for the mind and the body to reconnect and speak with each other.

This whole formula is very complex in the way it is elegantly put together, but it is for essentially nourishing the kidneys and the blood. It is for bringing, you know, basically whipping away some of the heat, as they call it, that tends to reside within the body.

So through that, it nourishes the blood, calms the mind, and creates an overall sensation of relaxation and tranquility. It's very rooting. The first time I took this, I had taken the upper end

of a large dose. I almost immediately fell asleep after the herbs started to digest.

It was some of the most restful and peaceful sleep I had had in a long time. I noticed the only other time I had this was with one of the herbs in this formula I had taken individually. That is he shou wu (or woo), also called polygonum multiflora. He shou woo is prepared in a black bean sauce. It is cooked so it turns this black color. It's a very powerful herb that affects the kidneys and the liver directly and it's very, very nourishing.

I started to take very strong decoctions of this herb. I realized that because it's so nourishing, my body just wanted to shut down, go to sleep and start to rejuvenate on that really deep, cellular level.

He shou woo is one of most powerful substances within the plant realm of herbalism for restoring and replenishing Jing within the body. As a side note, the Chinese call pretty much anything a herb, even if it is of animal or mineral origin. Things such as deer antler, they still call that an herb, even though it is a bone from the deer or elf elephant.

Again, when I say herbs, I am referring to all things, animal, mineral, and vegetable within this context. This is one of the most powerful Jing restorative herbs within the plant kingdom of herbalism. I highly recommend all of you listeners go out and take a look at it. Only a few other herbs are in that same category with the same kind of power this herb has.

I believe one of the reasons they put it into this formula is because it is so nourishing to the kidney system. As previously mentioned, one of the aspects of insomnia is, or rather I should say an effect of long-term insomnia, is adrenal depletion. This formula is going to be very good for that, for starting the path

of calming down the adrenals so they can replenish themselves.

Further down the line here, we look at what I experienced, which was long-term insomnia. I'll give you a little bonus formula here for what it is I had experienced. I started getting night sweats and very dry mouth in addition to the insomnia. This is what they would consider the Yin being completely depleted so the fluids are not being generated properly in the body. You are getting night sweats. So there is insufficiency and inability to hold down the Yin fluids within the body. They leak out and you become too hot.

So with this you have a couple of things going on for all these symptoms. You have night sweats, insomnia, irritability, and lower back pain, which also is a very interesting. There's a few other symptomatic things going on there, but essentially, the number one formula for it is called Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan.

This is probably one of the most amazing formulas for nourishing the adrenals, calming down the line, reinvigorating the whole system. It's very eloquently put together. It is a shu di huang rehmannia, prepared rehmannia formula.

So, it's very, very nourishing to the blood and to the body, especially to the kidneys and adrenals. This is for all you people who have had long standing issues with night sweats, insomnia and adrenal issues. This will be one of those formulas you'll want to integrate sooner rather than later, typically. Again, as for all these formulas, you should speak with an to see if these formulas are appropriate for you or if you need something different.

For instance, if your symptoms are not inherently profound, they may recommend another formula called Liu Wei Di Huang

Wan. It is essentially this formula, Zhi Bai Di Huang Wan, but a little bit more toned down. But again, I am not going to get into that other formula.

Just ask your acupuncturist or other health care professional for their recommendations on this certain formula. As far as specific individual herbs, now that we have those three formulas down, specific individual herbs and/or other supplements can be effectively used.

I am not going to give you a huge list. I think that, in short, there should only be a few things you can integrate. As far as individual herbs, say Western herb, Skullcap, or one of the number of herbs used as a night cap, drink a couple of cups before you go to sleep. Skullcap is going to be one of the most amazing things for calming down the mind.

Reishi mushroom is really wonderful for sedation and regeneration of all three of the treasures. It's one of the most well-known medicinal herbs and is used pretty ubiquitously in Chinese medicine for general longevity as well as overall health. But, very specifically, it's also very useful for obtaining appropriate sleep cycles. So, take a small amount of either Reishi mushroom extract (about a quarter of a teaspoon that looks like a loose powder or maybe two to four capsules that is an extract) before bed. You also could drink about ten to fifteen grams of sliced up Reishi mushroom boiled in water for 20 to 30 minutes. That will be a really good way of creating a more sedated, relaxed experience.

If it has the opposite effect on you, if it energizes you, that herb may not be for you. If that is the case, an energizing effect, because Reishi does affect Jing, Qi and Shen, we hope it will affect mainly the Shen and will calm you down.

But, in some cases, such as my friend Truth Calkins, he noted that he reacted differently and he feels extremely energized with Reishi. So, it's not for him at night.

In those cases, I would start looking at supplements with the number one being melatonin. I have experimented all over the board with melatonin. In terms of dosing, I have gone up really high and I have gone really low. I am now staying more on the low side. I don't go above three milligrams of melatonin about 30 - 45 minutes before I go to sleep.

I don't need it any more now, but I have experimented with doses as high as 20 - 40 milligrams. I do not recommend that. It is way too much. I wanted to try a dose that high to see what the effects were, how quickly they acted upon me. That is one that comes with a very strong disclaimer. We should not be operating any kind of machinery or doing anything where our attention or responsibility is necessary because you are, at least for myself, not able to maintain those. It is so quick, so drastic, that such a high level of melatonin quickly put me under.

What you want is not a drug-like effect. You want to slowly and gradually boost your body's natural ability to regulate that hormone within it. It is my understanding that low-dose melatonin, even at as low a dose as a half of a milligram may be sufficient to induce the proper circadian rhythms. That helps stimulate your body into producing its own melatonin.

It shouldn't be something you become reliant upon. It is my experience that melatonin may be habit-forming over the long term, at least psychologically. I don't believe it is physiologically, but psychologically I have seen people become slightly dependent upon melatonin supplements.



That is, one day they are no longer are integrating proper diet and exercise. They only have the idea in their mind that it's just a pill I need to rely upon and this is the thing that does it. No, that's not the correct approach. It's not the right way to think about this.

We need to integrate all of this and realize that if we take low-dose melatonin for a little while, say a couple of months, to help regulate our sleep cycles, it can be very helpful.

I believe tryptophan supplements are legal again. For a while, you could not find tryptophan supplements because of some industry debacle coming out of, I think it was like Japan or something, were not good. They were not up to the standards. So they were pulled off the shelves.

Now I believe we can get tryptophan in supplement form. Tryptophan may be a better fit for most of your listeners out there when it comes to just a simple amino acid being added to the diet. Five hundred to 1000 mg of tryptophan maybe what helps get you a little bit more situated and ready for bed.

I noticed for myself it was very helpful. Again, I usually only take that for short bursts to help regulate my sleep, if, for example, I have been flying back and forth from the East Coast to the West Coast.

That will help regulate the sleep cycles in addition to getting, of course, a few more hours of sleep. So, between those couple of herbs, you will get a lot more bang for your buck.

Now for the last one I would like talk about, or rather the last two. Kava kava is a Fijian herb that is really nice. It comes from the whole South Pacific area. It can be used in place of

alcohol if you find you need to have too many drinks to go to bed at night.

A nice bowl of well-soaked kava kava can help create a little bit of sedative feeling within the body. It should not be relied upon long term, but it is something that can be substituted that is also in the same category as valerian.

Valerian long has been used in both Ayurvedic and Chinese medicine for its sedative quality. It's a very, very powerful tasting herb, though. So, I tend to take it in a tinctured form. If I am taking it in a decoction such as a water decoction, it is not the most pleasant tasting herb. So, I don't tend to do it like that. I tend to take it in an alcoholic tincture.

If we are looking at valerian root, it's in the same category as kava kava. We don't want to take this for extremely long periods of time. In my opinion, it can become psychologically habit forming as the person gets reliant upon the herb's sedative effects.

But, in the short term, these herbs can be used for great and profound effect to quickly help regulate the way our nervous systems are reacting to the stress around us. They can help the circadian rhythms and stress flash sleep we're experiencing.

With those couple of recommendations, do your research, do your homework and be truthfully experimental on your own mind and body. Always use the principle of the minimum effective dose, go with the low dose first.

Do not try doing large doses at first. I made that mistake many times when first starting out. Now I am a strong advocate of minimum effective dosing, which is taking just enough to get the right amount of effect for your body.

That means ratcheting up small doses over time to achieve that effective dose. So, use small amounts and go up from there. Make sure your body can tolerate it.

And, yes, one last bonus herb. For long-term adrenal kidney nourishment, Jing nourishing, and Chi nourishing, cordyceps mushroom and its extract probably is my number one herb. I'm really hot on it right now and have been for some time. I just hadn't really been able to find good sources of it.

This is probably my top herb for long-term maintenance of the body's endocrine function or hormonal function. It's also how we actually can achieve a longer, better state of sleep. This is, again, one of those things not directly affecting proper sleep cycles but nourishing the body. It does so in a way that helps support the proper energetic flow and development of Jing, Qi, and Shen within the body so you maintain proper sleep patterns and cycles.

It's one of the longer term strategic herbs I'd like to use on a relatively daily basis that nourishes. It's one of the primary longevity herbs we can see start actually regenerating nephrons within the kidneys and regenerating the cells themselves. On a cellular level it is going in and regenerating DNA, potentially regenerating and reducing damage to chromosomes, and stimulating stem cell growth within bone marrow, these sorts of things.

This is a long term Jing creation. This is going to be fundamentally what your whole sleep cycle and proper adaptation of sleep is going to be all about from a Chinese perspective. It is that you're going to want to replenish, restore and, hopefully, create more Jing within the body, more hormonal abundance, more hormonal balance.



When you have that, you're going to have copious, abundant amounts of energy. And this is one of those things that is really, truly the precious and most treasured part of your health and your life. And this is what I really hope for you on a daily basis, that you have this abundance of energy you can spend with your family and your kids. I hope you can use that energy to change and do good things for the rest of humanity.

This is what this is really all about it. It's about going from the individual focus of taking care of yourself, then using that to spread the message to other people. It's about telling them they can empower their lives and get out of those little ruts of insomnia where they can't get to sleep at night. It's about getting past the little health challenge that eventually are exacerbated into larger health challenges.

"You can heal your life" as I believe Louise Hay would have put it. You can change these things in the long-term by strategically placing effective small changes into your daily habits and patterns. It's just changing habits.

If you are drinking coffee in the morning, start drinking other medicinal teas in the morning, such as a medicinal herbal decoction. Switch things out. Start changing your diet toward a more organic or wild, whole food based approach. It doesn't matter what you are eating, if you are an omnivore, an herbivore, or anything in between. Start getting more whole, wild food into your diet. That will be the big change where you get started getting get more vibrance in your life, more Qi into your body so you can become more of an actualized individual.

You achieve that state in the hierarchy of needs, where you can become an actualized being, self-actualized, as Maslow called it. When you start getting to that point then, you become more empowered to look at the longer terms of your life. You realize they're entirely possible but, you have to have the most fundamental basis down. That is correct food, correct sleep, correct sex life, correct thinking and meditative capacity. This is really what it all comes down to.

I think having profoundly good sleep on a daily basis is going to go a really long way toward having a profoundly good life. That is what I will hope for you on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis, that you set these goals.

So, that's pretty much rounding out what I am hoping to deliver to you. I hope you find it to be incredibly helpful or insight and that this starts some more positive changes in your life and within your family's life. Then you can affect people more powerfully and, on the whole, just make positive change for the rest of humanity.

**Larry:** What life style recommendations would you make?

**Sean:** When it comes to energetic practices, yoga and Qigong are my favorites. So, as an individual protocol, I integrate those on a daily basis. In the morning, if I can integrate it, I like to do a little bit of meditation. I don't do it every single morning. I typically do it when I am just all by myself, completely alone and I have plenty of time to be in a quiescent state.

Meditation first thing in the morning, with long deep breathing, is really simple, it's just in and out breaths. So, here is the simplest way to go about it.

When you wake up first thing in the morning, find a pillow, or something comfortable to sit on cross-legged. Relax into the sitting position and close your eyes.

Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. If you can breathe in through your nose and out through nose, do that as well. Do this for ten minutes or less, even five minutes is okay. Start doing this on a consistent basis. You will notice very quickly how it attunes your system and your body to adjust the way you approach the rest of your day.

It will center and focus your mind so you're not in immediate need of stimulation into your morning. Once you start having this fundamental peace integrated into your day, when you wake up on a daily basis, you will notice you have less and less of a need for artificial stimulation or over stimulation through caffeine consumption and that sort of thing.

You'll have a rooted, centered, balanced approach that feels like you're being filled with energy on a daily basis, just by meditative practice. Additionally, if you feel as though you can do a bit more, the number one thing I recommend if people are into yoga is the sun salutation pose. You can go on YouTube.com and type in "sun salutation." You will find all kinds of demonstrations of this really basic, fundamental exercise. It's the best way of opening up the different chakra centers of the body, or the "dan tien" as we call them in Qigong. We have three dan tien and seven chakras. Look those up. Those are fun little systems to look at and understand how they interact with one another.

So basically, you are trying to open up and energize those energetic centers of the body. You are trying to flex the body's muscles and tissues so you open up the meridians that pass

longitudinally through the body, up and down that is. This allows a proper and consistent action of Qi and blood flowing through those vessels and meridians.

So, that's another piece. We already went over proper and consistent consumption of light, consistent consumption of food, consistent consumption of sleep. So we are looking at how you are bringing all these things into the body.

Now, exercise. It is going to be good if you are not really into dealing with Qigong or yoga or meditation or if you don't even have a regular, consistent protocol of working out, first thing in the morning or later on in the day. I do find some people still have issues with sleep when they don't have some kind of a more classical meditative workout routine.

This is why I tend to be a "fundamentalist" when it comes to the application of exercise in your daily life. This is why I go towards yoga, and Qigong, and tai chi, and martial arts, those sorts of things.

They have a deeper, more integrated perspective than just straight "pumping iron." They integrate more of the mind and body kind of peace into one's daily life. So, when it comes to that, the exercise is really important for how you are actually guiding Qi through the body. And what do I mean by that?

When you are doing Qigong exercises or yoga asanas or postures, the integration is you are looking at the internal environment. You are looking at how you actually are visualizing and guiding the Qi or prana through your body. Many times, when you're going through a class or a session, a competent instructor will have you doing a proper graph work and visualizations internally. That will allow a proper guiding of the Qi or prana through the body.

If you're not experiencing this in your current yoga class, or your current Qigong class, I would advise you to start looking for a different teacher. He or she should be one who has this capacity and knowledge of how the breath work integrates with the way the Qi moves through the body.

It's not to say the other teachers are incompetent or they don't know what they are talking about, but this is not a commonly taught concept within the more contemporary varieties of yoga. That is, basically, yoga styles named after an individual. I am not going to name any specific variety, but you go out there and just look at the different ones.

Ashthanga, on the other hand, is a great start. Look at Ashthanga yoga, Kriya yoga and Laya yoga. These are great ways to start looking at more classical styles of yoga that have been developed over thousands of years. They have very specific breath work practices that you can use to help regulate the flow of Qi and prana.

Likewise, Qigong has a couple of very specific steps of Qigong exercises. Let's focus on two. One is called the Dao Yin. This is probably one of the most esoteric forms of Qigong that has become very popular, very well-known. It's known as the five Yin organ exercise, where it nourishes the heart, liver, kidney, lungs and spleen, the five main Yin organs. Through that it helps nourish your overall life Qi, Jing, and Shen, all of the different treasures.

You will notice it is done very slowly. It has intentionally developed breath practices. YouTube.com has a couple of videos you can check out for the five Yin organs or the five Dao Yin exercises.

The second one I would recommend is called the eight pieces of brocade, as in brocade silk or brocade cloth. It also is called the Ba Duan Jin, or the eight pieces of brocade. This is an eight segmented practice that was used for a very long time, and still is, first thing in the morning. It is for waking up the energetic body and nourishing the kidney, waking up the heart and mind and bringing energies to very specific areas of the body.

I recommend the eight pieces of brocade Qigong exercise step, usually first thing in the morning. You'll feel very, very energized. You won't even need coffee or any kind of stimulant when you do this first thing in the morning.

If you do it correctly, your body will feel alive and buzzing as if there is a huge amount of Qi moving through it. And this is what we want. This is what we want to do, charge up the battery via this mechanism of moving Qi, cultivating it and storing it in appropriate places in the body.

Through the Dao Yin, I would recommend doing that really anytime you feel the need to calm down throughout the day. So, if you have a lunch break or a 15-minute break, you can do three or six or nine revolutions of each of the exercises. You can complete them in five to ten minutes. It's a really quick exercise set. They're also very easy to understand when you see them.

So, those two exercises are the most impactful ones I have been able to integrate on an individual basis. And then, do a daily yoga practice. Start with one and, eventually, integrate both.

So, here's a quick recap. We are looking at dietary changes, herbal changes, getting to sleep at an earlier time, and eating more consistently with the dietary changes. We're also looking at the energetic practices of breathing, meditation, and the

yoga and Qigong-based exercises you want to integrate to calm down the nervous system and the mind, and reintegrate blood back into the liver at night. Then the liver becomes nourished and you cleanse and detox and relax the spirit back into the body.