

We're going to do something a little different in this article. Instead of answering one of your questions, I'm going to ask you some questions.

When you catch a cold, and you have a fever and body aches and a cough, what do you call those things? They're symptoms. It helps you feel better to treat those symptoms, but it doesn't get rid of the cold, does it? Similarly, if you were to break your arm, you'd have a lot of pain and some dysfunction in the arm. These are symptoms of a broken bone. If you went to a doctor, and he just gave you a painkiller, it might adequately address the pain symptom. But it wouldn't help your arm heal, would it? Depending on how badly the bone is broken, your arm might not ever heal. Or the painkiller might mask the pain so completely that you would injure your arm even more severely than when you went to the doctor in the first place. In addition, you might find that the side effects of the painkillers made you groggy, or constipated; or there might be many other undesirable side effects. As in the example with catching a cold, treating the symptoms of a broken arm would not heal your arm.

What if depression is a symptom of something else, and not a disease in and of itself? Western medicine recognizes that depression sometimes may be caused by a chemical imbalance in the body. Why do we try to mask that by using medicines that frequently leave people feeling like they're in a fog? Why use medicines with all kinds of side effects to treat the *symptom* of depression? Wouldn't it make more sense to treat the *cause* of the depression? I'll give three examples of how Chinese Medicine would treat depression differently.

Case 1: Male, mid-30's, history of frequent colds and skin problems, complains of depression.

Case 2: Female, mid-40's, history of loose stools, anxiety, insomnia, complains of depression.

Case 3: Male, mid-50's, irritable, poor night vision, acid reflux, complains of depression.

All three individuals might be on the same Western anti-depressant. But from the standpoint of Chinese Medicine, they are *radically different* cases. In the first case, the man's symptoms indicate a *Lung deficiency*. In his case we treated lung points and prescribed *Bu Fei Tang* (Tonify the Lungs decoction). In the second case, the woman's symptoms indicated *Spleen Qi* deficiency and *Heart Blood* deficiency. We treated Spleen and Heart points, and gave her *Gui Pi Tang* (Restore the Spleen decoction). In the third case, the gentleman's symptoms indicate *Liver Qi* stagnation. We treated him with Liver points and *Xiao yao wan* (Free and Easy Wanderer Pills). In each case we looked at the symptoms to tell us what was wrong. Each case had one symptom in common – depression. But we didn't treat frequent colds, or loose stools, or poor night vision; we didn't treat the three cases the same way; and we didn't treat depression – we treated the underlying causes of these symptoms. In doing so, the symptoms went away, ***including the depression!*** So the big question for you is, do you want to treat a symptom, or do you really want to get better?

You can contact us at [tom@jadetreewellness.com](mailto:tom@jadetreewellness.com), at 727-344-8690, or at [www.jadetreewellness.com](http://www.jadetreewellness.com). Jade Tree Wellness Center is located at 3039 - 49<sup>th</sup> St. N., in St. Petersburg.