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Sandy's Message

Finding the Essence of a Movement

When presented with two seemingly opposing thoughts or comments on a movement, it can be disconcerting. How do we decide which one is the correct one. Fortunately there are many tools which may help us discover the answer.

I try to read everything Justin has written about a movement. I review his DVD's and listen to his words and watch him do the movement. Sometimes the camera angle does not give a definitive answer or can be misleading. Sometimes the way he moves looks slightly different in each DVD. Justin did not go into great detail about the movements, and sometimes there were seemingly contradictions. For example with Wrist Circles Taffy in one place he writes "do three circles" and in another "two and a half circles".

I will practice the movement in question, the two or three different ways that have been suggested, and try to feel which more closely follows the principles outlined by Justin in the Photo Text. I consider which way the movement flows with the greatest of ease, softness, and continuity, while following the parameters of the movement that Justin has outlined in his teachings. I look at all the pieces and try to distill the essence of the movement, not get bogged down in the minutia.

The essence is the heart or key points that makes that particular movement distinctive. Besides the foundation of all the movements – that we shift weight correctly and move with softness – I would say the key points for Bass Drum, for example, are the hands are 9-12" apart, palms remain facing each other throughout, as a circle is made using a lot of wrist movement.

Sometimes we cling to a comment or we have a fixed mental image of a movement. A student described to me in great detail her Bass Drum – it had her high school name across it with the school colors and several decorative aspects. Every time she did the movement she would envision her hands tracing the edge of that particular drum. Her movement had become fossilized into a ridged image. There was no feeling, exploring, allowing, letting go.

To get across an idea at the beginning of learning a movement, using images can be beneficial. But at some point the learning must move on to "feeling the shape" and allowing the essence of a movement to happen rather than moving in lock-step to an exact mental concept.

Sometimes we get stuck on one comment or one idea of how a movement is performed and close our minds to other possibilities. Our movements flow, but only within our ridged mental concepts, not freely with feeling and expansiveness – an inner expansiveness not physically bigger. It may not be a matter of changing how we do a movement but more how we perceive and feel when doing the movement.

“The real voyage of discovery consists of not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes.” ~ Marcel Proust

~Sandy McAlister in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Community Updates

Teachers and Students: Please help shape the future of our T'ai Chi Chih Community by taking the following survey:

To take the survey now, [Click Here](#)

Plans for next year's Teachers Conference are still in the works. As soon as we know the date and place an email will be sent to everyone who receives this newsletter.

Justin's Insights

Change

The truth is, people don't want to give up their habitual way-of-thinking and responses, even when they know it makes them unhappy. For this reason reformers and missionaries are wasting their time. Though to give people means for evolving, such as T'ai Chi Chih and Meditation, when they ask for it, is certainly not a waste. Nothing helps individuals evolve more than these two activities, and as they evolve, their thinking and habit patterns will change.

~Justin Stone

December 1991 Vital Force Journal

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The Vital Force Archives: [click here](#)

Chi Reflections

Stop talking, stop thinking, and there is nothing you will not understand.

Return to the Root and you will find the Meaning:

Pursue the Light, and you will lose its source...

There is no need to seek Truth: only stop having views.

~Seng-ts'an

Perfection

Perfection is attained not when there is nothing left to add, but when there is nothing left to take away. ~Carsten Astheimer

Events lead by the T'ai Chi Chih Guide and Teacher Trainers

Nov. 16-21 Albuquerque TEACHER ACCREDITATION with Daniel

Contact Co-Hosts: Mary White mwhite327@comcast.net and Joyce Veerkamp kujo1955@gmail.com

2016

Feb. 24-28 Colorado INTENSIVE with Sandy

Contact: Marie Dotts mcdotts@hotmail.com

March 10-13 Santa Barbara Teacher's Retreat with Sandy

Contact: Pam Towne pamtowne@gmail.com

March 15-18 Santa Barbara Teacher and Student Retreat with Sandy

Contact: Pam Towne pamtowne@gmail.com

Apr. 10-13 Aston, PA Teacher Symposium with Sandy

Contact: April Leffler lirpaleff@rcn.com

May 4-7 Prescott, AZ TCC Retreat with Pam

Contact: Pam Towne pamtowne@gmail.com

May 29-June 4 Aston, PA TEACHER ACCREDITATION with Pam

Contact: TBA

June 19-25 Colorado TEACHER ACCREDITATION Daniel

Contact: Marie Dotts mcdotts@hotmail.com

Oct 9-13 Aston, PA INTENSIVE with Daniel

Contact: TBA

Oct. 16-19 Aston, PA Prajna Retreat with Sandy

Contact: April Leffler lirpaleff@rcn.com

Oct. 21-24 Near Orlando, FL TCC Silent Retreat with Pam

Contact: Anita Vestal vestala7@gmail.com or Susan Quinn rsusanquinn@gmail.com

More T'ai Chi Chih Events

Click [here](#) for additional events including those lead by dedicated Teachers, as well as the [Guide and Teacher Trainers](#)

Attending T'ai Chi Chih events is an excellent way for you to receive helpful feedback, improve your practice, and to be with other T'ai Chi Chih practitioners.

Links to Resources & Materials

T'ai Chi Chih Photo Textbook Phone Apps

For both iPhone & Android phones can be downloaded and purchased online for only \$9.95.

Get the Android application: [click here](#)

Get the Apple app: [click here](#)

Justin Stone's: DVDs/Videos, Books, CDs/Audios - [click here](#)

Sandy McAlister's Seated T'ai Chi Chih DVD - [click here](#)

Pam Towne's Serenity in the Midst of Activity DVD: [click here](#)

Skype Lessons with Pam: [click here](#)

Web Resources:

Official website: [click here](#)

Facebook: [click here](#)

Pinterest Justin's Quotes: [click here](#)

Pinterest: [click here](#)

Instagram: [click here](#)

Twitter: [click here](#)

Flickr: [click here](#)

Youtube: [click here](#)

T'ai Chi Chih Community: [click here](#)

T'ai Chi Chih International Foundation:

A 501(c)3 nonprofit agency which:

Sponsors our annual Teachers Conference:

Sponsors our annual teachers Conferences;
Provides scholarship funds for Teacher Accreditation and Continuing Education;
Tax deductible donations can be made out to and send to: T'ai Chi Chih
International Foundation, PO Box 517, Midland Park, NJ, 07432

T'ai Chi Chih Association: [click here](#)

Produces a monthly publication - T'ai Chi Chih News. Sells books from Justin Stone's Recommended Reading List.

The Vital Force newsletter: [click here](#)

The Vital Force Archives: [click here](#)

T'ai Chi Chih Guides' free monthly newsletter -- Sign-Up link: [click here](#)

T'ai Chi Chih Guides' Archived newsletters:[click here](#)

Mission Statement

The International T'ai Chi Chih Community of students and accredited teachers is dedicated to the personal practice of T'ai Chi Chih and to sharing with the world this form of moving meditation and its benefits affecting body, mind, and spirit.



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