

# The Vital Force

JOURNAL OF THE T'AI CHI CHIH® COMMUNITY

Volume 37 No. 1

for teachers & students

February 2020

## Justin Stone: In His Words

### The first thing I want you to do when you get this book

[*Heightened Awareness*, available in print and as an e-book from justinstonetcc.com] is to *watch your posture* and frequently determine *your state of mind*.

This doesn't mean to correct your posture. Just be aware of it. Every so often try to determine your current state of mind. This is not easy as it continually changes while you're awake—and judging by dreams, probably while you're asleep. Nevertheless, try to recognize the present state. Perhaps a noisy plane flies overhead while you are talking on the phone—mind with annoyance. You may be looking forward to a meeting with a friend—anticipation. Sometimes we wake up feeling sluggish—dull mind.

After a few days of watching your posture and your state of mind, you may make an unexpected discovery—that your posture is influenced by your state of mind and your state of mind has a great deal to do with your posture...

When T'ai Chi Chih students or teachers come to me, I notice their wrists and their waists to determine how much inner tension they are carrying around... When the wrists are loose and flexible, so is the person. If the waist turns easily, tension is at a minimum...

Note these things about yourself. Do your wrists circle freely; are they loose or even limp? Or are they tight and unwieldy? The purpose is not to correct the faults (though knowledge of them often does just that) but to heighten awareness. From time to time, notice if these tensions are present in your body, then look at your state of mind...



*Above: Justin giving a meditation retreat in November 1994, with Guy Kent.*

State of mind becomes habitual. A feeling of gloom may become pervading and one will gradually assume a morose attitude. This certainly does not attract others. The vibration is definitely affected (in what some refer to as the aura), and a new acquaintance may feel bad vibes upon meeting another person...

One who notices his interior landscape as well as the attitudes of others is rare. This is different from being introspective, where we probe our thoughts and emotions, possibly with the aim of finding out why we are not liked or why we are not successful, whatever that word may mean. The aim is to become aware, not to stick pins in ourselves.

... It is said that, "the Way is easy to follow. Just avoid picking and choosing." In other words, there is choiceless awareness. Very few can do this. It's so easy to find faults with others and even with ourselves.

Having checked our posture and our state of mind, having observed our wrists and waists, as well as those of others, I would

like the reader to do one small exercise recommended by my friend, Zen writer Paul Reps.

Spread your feet apart, as you stand well balanced. Then lean slightly to the right so most of the weight is on the right foot—then gradually shift the weight to the left foot. As the weight passes from the right foot to the left, try to be aware of the exact second the weight shifts. At that short mini-second, become aware...

... In this book we refer to the constant changes (not so much in mood) that take place in our minds. Annoyance at the noise an overhead plane makes while we are using the telephone is not a lasting condition but a brief passing phase. It is these brief passing phases that we want to note. We are not looking for morbid conditions or chronic feelings; rather, we want to be aware of the lights and shadows as they flit by all day long.

It is too much to expect anyone but a monk to be constantly aware of these changes, but we can, at isolated times, take a quick look. We might do the same with our posture, whether sitting or standing. And remember, it is not necessary to write down these changes or make a progressive record of them. We are not trying to improve and note our day-by-day improvement. Far from it. Rather, we simply want to be aware of the state of mind and the posture for the moment. It is the awareness, not the state of mind or posture, which is important to this practice.

Excerpt from  
**Heightened Awareness**,  
available in print and in an e-book from  
justinstonetcc.com.

**2020 Teacher Conference: It's A No Go**

Conferences are a time-consuming act of love and service. While a majority of teachers in attendance at the amazing 2019 Minnesota conference voted to affirm having an annual conference, there was apparently not enough time or interest for another community to volunteer to host the 2020 event. As someone who feels energy building for an explosion of interest in T'ai Chi Chih, I hope this is not a slippery slope to every-other-year conferences or regional conferences which would supplant a national one.

Sandy has issued a challenge (pg. 6) to use the energy that would have otherwise gone into a conference to grow local events. As the person who posts new retreats, workshops and intensives on taichichih.org/events, I can attest to an increase of activity in local communities.

Nancy Werner-Azarski (pg. 8) has declared May 2020 to be a month of giving to T'ai Chi Chih. Linda Jones (pg. 15) has an undoubtedly controversial way to reconfigure a Foundation Board to grow TCC. And Mary Wichmann ponders (pg. 19) what she would have missed if "she'da" not asked.

**6 For 20: My Pledge To Grow TCC**

I've set a personal challenge in 2020 to influence the growth of TCC in six ways:

- Launch teacher pages on taichichih.org/teacher/firstname\_lastname. (See pg. 23 for details.)
- Offer special introductory pricing for *Vital Force* subscribers—to new students and those who let their subscriptions lapse more than one year ago. Teachers: please email me for a special code to share with students.
- Try to launch a platform for teachers interested in offering web-based classes to remote students who would otherwise not have access to teachers.
- Try to get streaming Justin's videos for students (and teachers) to learn from and move with him.
- Advertise TCC (in general) and teacher classes (specifically) on Facebook with the excess funds (if there are any) garnered from the new teacher pages.
- Revitalize twitter.com/taichichih to introduce TCC to other moving meditation practitioners and journalists.

~~ With gratitude. Kim Grant,  
Albuquerque, NM

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*The Vital Force*

~ Web Site Updates ~

The on-line database (for www.taichichih.org) will soon be updated in relative real time as active teachers will take responsibility and control over their own contact information.

~ Submission Deadlines ~

January 1 for the February issue  
 April 1 for the May issue  
 July 1 for the August issue  
 October 1 for the November issue

~ Submission Guidelines ~

Please send articles as Word documents, electronically, to kim@kimgrant.com. A 1/4 page in this newsletter runs about 200 words; a 1/2 page is 400 words. We are always in need of photos and artwork. Please send high resolution jpgs, which the Editor will crop and edit. If you have 10-12 pieces of related artwork – calligraphy, drawings, photographs, or something that will reproduce well in B/W – please submit them for consideration in an entire issue. The Vital Force reserves the right to edit submission for length and clarity.

**What Does The Vital Force Do?**

- Produces a quarterly journal by and for its members
- Creates and maintains taichichih.org for everyone
- Innovates with ways to connect teachers and students
- Extends its reach through a blog and e-newsletter
- Outreach for teachers and students about TCC through social media
- Provide free subscriptions when we have resources.

~ Giving ~

Please consider a tax-deductible contribution to support The Vital Force's essential and vast outreach. Membership fees cover the journal; our other activities continue through the discretion and generous support of our giving base. They allow us to effectively reach hundreds of thousands of practitioners around the globe. Thanks to our supporters who:

- Bequeath assets to The Vital Force in their estate planning
- Gift stocks to maximize their tax-efficient, year-end contributions
- Contribute monthly (aka our "sustaining members") via taichichih.org/donate
- Give through their employer's matching programs, thereby doubling their contributions
- Donate by credit card via taichichih.org/donate
- Donate by check to: The Vital Force, PO Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199

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# When The Teacher Is Ready, The Student Will Appear

By Jeneth Rundle, Portland, Oregon

**Most of us have come across the saying,** “When the student is ready the teacher will appear.” How delightful that this saying can be turned on its head.

When I moved from California to Oregon in June 2019, I decided to take a full year break from teaching. I needed time to refresh and rededicate to my practice. In September I attended Carmen Brocklehurst’s annual T’ai Chi Chih Retreat in Albuquerque. It had been three years since my last attendance. Upon returning home, the student appeared, suddenly and unexpectedly.

At my condo, I had chatted several times in the elevator with another resident en route to our respective 16th and 17th floor condos. One day an invitation appeared to join her, her husband and another couple for dinner. Over berry cobbler for dessert, I discovered she was a T’ai Chi Ch’uan practitioner who teaches a shortened version to seniors around town. Although her practice differs from mine, we share many sensibilities and enjoy each other’s company.

The other couple in attendance that night invited my husband and me over for a subsequent dinner. We found them to be intelligent, thoughtful, sensitive people and felt a friendly rapport immediately. She asked if I would teach her TCC privately. I inquired if she had asked our mutual friend to teach her T’ai Chi. She had, but our friend was only willing to teach her in public classes and she felt unable to do that. Once I became aware of her medical history and various physical challenges, I agreed that public classes might not be the optimal place for her to learn. So I said yes. I was not entirely happy about it, as I didn’t want to teach until the summer. But I felt I had “no choice.” I noticed with interest that I experienced “no choice.”

My new student was recovering from recent surgery, chemotherapy and radiation—and dealing with the after-effects of cancer treatment, e.g. fuzzy thinking, trouble sleeping, exhaustion. She suffers from balance problems due to a painful chronic foot condition for which she was prescribed special sturdy shoes. She has limitations in the movement of one of her shoulders which had been broken. Her right and left sides are not in sync and her coordination is off due to a stroke several years ago. The area of her *tan tien* is affected by recent surgery and a previous gastric bypass. She is heavier than she would like to be and can walk only short distances comfortably. Her husband was in rehab recovering from a difficult surgery, and upon his imminent return home, she would be taking over much of his care. They were also in the midst of selling their home in another state. Whew!

We began with a mostly seated practice, as she could stand for about seven minutes at a stretch. For the first couple of lessons Cosmic Con-

sciousness Pose required her back to be against the wall for safety and balance. During lesson three she surprised me by suddenly standing in the middle of the room grinning from ear to ear. “I’ve been practicing,” she said with a twinkle in her eye. During class four she was standing for the entire hour and no longer needed a chair, table or wall to check her balance. Light at the Top of Head/Light at the Temple was initially done with her hands at throat level. By lesson six they traveled up to her forehead as her shoulder began accommodating a broader range of motion. She now performs her practice in soft, flexible slippers. Her brain/body connection has been gradually improving and now during lesson ten she has graduated from Pulling Taffy to learning Pulling Taffy Variation 1 The Anchor and Passing Clouds. “I’ve been practicing!”

During lesson three I taught her the short version of the *Nei Kung* to help with her insomnia. It has helped quite a bit. At all times of the day and night she enjoys focusing on “from below the navel to the soles of the feet,” which surprised me a little because of the surgical trauma and discomfort she experiences in that region of her body. **But I think she feels the affection of the practice and the healing forces at work.** Her fingers tingle, and she sees an array of *chakra* colors in Pulling in the Energy. She loves to practice. She wrote her first pyramid poem last week, much to her (and my) delight:

I  
I Love  
I love me  
I love today  
I love you  
Love you  
Love

What a student she is! From the very first class she could feel the *Chi*. Her face lit up with a radiant smile, her eyes sparkled. “I love this and I love you!” she told me. She practices a little every day. She tells everyone she knows about it: her husband, children, friends, manicurist, aesthetician, housekeeper.... She has visions of summer coming and being ready to do the practice in public—in the park, along the river, everywhere. She sees the two of us, and then our friend who practices T’ai Chi Ch’uan learning this form and joining us to make it three, and then she sees five people, seven, ten, fifteen. **You should see her face when she speaks of this.** Joy surfaces and sends its ripples and waves on the wings of the *Chi* out into the world. The power of the *Chi* possesses her—and it embraces me as well.

**My student arrived and I did too.** Every time her husband sees me he thanks me for sharing the practice with her. He sees so many happy changes in her, and she says the same. It has been good for me not to hide the light and really good to be in service to the *Chi*. It’s synchronicity at its best.

Is it true that “when the teacher is ready the student will appear?” Maybe. But it might be more precise to say that in relationship to the *Chi*, **we are all students of the *Chi*, that it is our teacher.** When we step back from being in charge, when we acquiesce—when it works through us, for us, for all and everything—when *teh* (sincerity) emanates from our being—all is well, all is open, all is perfect. **It breathes me. It teaches me.**



*Above: Cristina Fridenstine speaks about her digital free hand drawings (also seen on pages 6 and 15): "It is literally what I visualize when I practice. I imagine stirring waves of energy with my wrists and hands. Energy is tangible in the form of warmth and weight."*

## Awareness Every Moment

By Carmen L. Brocklehurst,  
Albuquerque, New Mexico

**As I did my Seijaku practice** (i.e., three each of T'ai Chi Chih, Seijaku and Fast Track) and came to Around the Platter, I noticed on the third TCC Around the Platter that I had cut my arm movement short. Then I got a visual of what I had done and an awareness of what I would have missed if I had continued to do this part wrong, and it was not a joyous picture. Where I should have made a gentle, loving curve would have been empty. Instead of moving on to Seijaku Around the Platter, I did TCC Around the Platter again, this time making sure to fully round the curve. I could feel the difference. There was a completeness within me; it carried strength and caring, inclusivity and connectedness. Amazing that all of this comes from completing the curve in Around the Platter. Perhaps that is why Justin often asked, "Can you feel what just happened?"

Often in our daily lives we leave things out that are important: a kind word or action, a missed opportunity to help a situation that needed our attention, an awareness. Sometimes we continue being unaware that we set something in motion that may not be to our best benefit. Later, finding ourselves in a different state of consciousness than we wanted, we wonder why. Sometimes we may think that it wasn't a big deal or didn't affect that many people. But it is a big deal and even if it only matters for me, it matters. What we think and do in our lives, in our TCC practice, matters. We matter, and awareness matters.

How fortunate we are to have a practice that invites us to be aware. A friend commented, "Do I have to be aware all the time?" Awareness is important. Great sages said that we come to be aware even when we are asleep. A teacher shared that she had been working on being aware: "I am finally able to let go. I don't know why I couldn't before." The joy in "Joy Thru Movement" is that grace fills us during each practice; we become aware of the softness and let go. We choose to love and share the Chi.

Joy  
Shining  
It's Brilliant  
Light On All Now  
Connecting  
Op'ning  
ONE  
~~ MR

## Appreciation From A New Student

By Cristina R. Fridenstine,  
Las Cruces, New Mexico

**In September 2018, I joined a beginner Tai Chi Chih class** offered at Senior Amigos in Las Cruces, New Mexico. For months I'd been feeling a vague discontentment despite my happy marriage, a comfortable life and good health. I grew up in Hong Kong seeing people young and old in serene contemplation while executing graceful T'ai Chi movements. It was a common sight along the harbor and in parks.

When I saw the words "T'ai Chi Chih" in the class listings, it drew me with **the promise of grace, stillness and contemplation** that I'd witnessed in Hong Kong. I wasn't disappointed. The more I practiced, the better and more self-assured I felt. Mindfulness has brought me a heightened appreciation of my surroundings, people encountered and experiences previously taken for granted.

I learned as much as possible from my teacher Rose Diosdado, and from Carmen Brocklehurst and Justin Stone (through videos). Attending a retreat in Albuquerque to mark my first anniversary as a practitioner cemented my commitment, which continues to grow. My perspective has also improved with **a stronger sense of how everything in our universe ties together**. In addition to the benefits the practice brings, each movement brings joy and peace. My goal is to become certified to teach so that I may introduce TCC to as many people as a possible, but primarily to young people.

## So You'd Like To Become An Instructor?

By Cathe Powers, Ventura, California

### There's a crack in the door...

"I am an accredited T'ai Chi Chih instructor." This is how we were asked to introduce ourselves during the presentation phase of the TCC Teacher Accreditation Course. I let this sink into my being. It sounded foreign to my ears, yet I had planted and nurtured the seed to this moment. I found myself reflecting back over the last two-plus years.

TCC found me a short time after a separation from my marriage and home. While my world felt upside down, **my spirit/soul/being was finding its place**. While doing TCC, I was aware of the *Chi* and felt lovingly grounded and energized. TCC and I were "going steady" and the *Chi* was working tiny miracles in me each day.

My personality type is constantly looking towards the future, the shiny new penny, the next right thing. There are so many opportunities set before us at the buffet of life.

When I spoke to my teacher, Lisa, about wanting to become an instructor, she encouraged me but she did not inform me of the gravity and responsibilities of that decision. I continued attending classes faithfully and also took the Seijaku (advanced TCC) class Lisa offered. I felt I was experiencing Seijaku as I practiced in my mind throughout my day, and I practiced my Seijaku and TCC movements at home each night. Slowly, over time, I became aware of the expectations surrounding instructor certification.

I attended an intensive in Santa Barbara (which was indeed intense), where I found my second signature teacher, Dixie, who blessedly helped steady me as I crept onward.

The months leading up to accreditation became a blur of activity: weekly practice and meet-ups with Dixie (two hours to the north), developing my own personal practice, studying and reading Justin Stone's books and articles, all while working full time as a cosmetologist. Lisa was off to India for two months and entrusted me to lead three of her weekly classes, after giving me the opportunity to co-lead them with her the month before her departure. The highlight of that experience was how much joy I felt standing before the students.

November soon arrived and I felt like a mess, wondering if I had made the right decision. But I did not give in to thoughts of postponing the final requirements. Then, on one "dark night of the soul," I received confirmation from an Instagram influencer no less, assuring me that this mad mix of emotions was very common right before a big opportunity.

I breathed my way forward and crossed that finish line. **The Chi and I are now united, the bond of trust forged**. Doors are opening. There is light and life and growth after all the upheaval. "Clear eyes, full heart, can't lose."



# Deeds Of Kindness

By Sandy McAlister, Hayward, California

**The last T'ai Chi Chih class of the year** at Rossmoor, a retirement community of 10,000+, has an end-of-year celebration. We combine the beginning class and continuing class and enjoy a large group practice. We then gather to share food and chat. Also, at this time, donations are gathered from anyone who would like to contribute to the Rossmoor Fund, a non-profit foundation that provides assistance to residents in need. It's gratifying to show support from our TCC Club to those in need, to concretely manifest the spirit of our TCC community/class.



**Doing TCC affects practitioners in ways far beyond the physical.** It opens hearts, it draws us outside of ourselves, it softens our attitudes and judgements, it builds confidence enabling us to reach out to others, it helps us feel a deeper connection to the physical world and those around us.

All those who practice TCC are a part of the TCC community, whether teacher or student. It is a community that is spread across the US, Canada and other countries around the world.

Because we are strictly a volunteer community, our contributions of time and energy support and connect each other through websites, newsletters, Facebook pages, workshops, retreats, conferences and making available teaching materials.

But what about the greater community we each live in, the community we are all a part of—humanity. If TCC truly does move us toward a greater appreciation and awareness of our world how do we reflect that? Rather than saying TCC is good for you, how do we live that? How can our smaller TCC community support the larger community we are all part of? Do we have a responsibility to do so?

Without a teacher conference this year it seems a golden opportunity to

put that energy (whether attending or facilitating) into supporting our local communities. It can be a simple one-time event, not necessarily a long-time commitment. It would serve as a great advertisement for TCC, especially if everyone wore a TCC t-shirt.

Here are a few ideas:

- Many cities have tree planting or activities on Arbor Day or Earth Day.
- Clean up a local beach, lakefront, section of river.
- Ask a local senior center if there is a job that needs doing such as reorganizing or tidying up their lending library.
- Volunteer to entertain one afternoon at a skilled nursing facility.
- Help out at a food bank.

Justin felt the practice of TCC developed or opened up our creative abilities—be creative. People do TCC because it works, because they receive some benefit from the practice. Receiving leads to giving.

**This year the TCC Foundation is giving three grants of \$200 each to TCC teachers.** Its purpose is to increase awareness of TCC through demonstration, information and/or experience. The grant cannot be used to produce materials that monetarily benefit the recipient. The grant should not solely benefit the teacher, such as increasing their classes. The grant application form is found on [TCCcommunity.net](http://TCCcommunity.net) under resources.

Past grant projects are varied. Teacher Sr. Christa Thompson used a grant to produce a DVD showing TCC being taught to children, grades one through six, with interviews of the children, their teachers and the principle. A copy was shared with TCC teachers who attended the 2018 conference. It will be a great visual aid for TCC teachers starting TCC classes in schools. Another grant helped purchase a banner and informational handouts for a health fair.

I encourage teachers to think globally and act locally. Let your experience, desire, creativity, love, joy and passion express itself, whether through a grant project or helping out with a community need. Give your students an opportunity to participate.

May we create new opportunities this year that allow us to share and give. In doing so what we receive in return is precious. Let the spirit of the practice of TCC manifest concretely through deeds of kindness.

## Pyramid Poems

How does Rocking Motion change the way you feel about life?

flow  
timeless  
effortless  
let go grounded  
life reflects  
inside  
joy  
~~ M.R.

how  
do I  
say what is  
true when all I  
feel is the  
depth of  
shhhh  
~~ AMY TYKSINSKI

strong  
feeling  
of what is  
inside showing  
how to flow  
being  
one  
~~ CAROLINE GUILLOTT

open  
sharing  
connected  
experience  
walking hand  
and hand  
home  
~~ J K VEERKAMP

slow  
let go  
relaxing  
even more so  
feeling the  
life force  
flow  
~~ ANONYMOUS

## Grateful For Deepening TCC Practice

By Daniel Pienciak, Howell, New Jersey

**The New Year can be a time for gratitude** and opportunity. When teaching Anchor Taffy, I often recall my accreditation trainer having a disappointed look on his face while doing that movement in one of our practices during that life-changing week.

When I asked him about it later, he mentioned being overcome with the awareness of sloppiness for no reason during that repetition, that it was a lost opportunity. I remember thinking, “Isn’t that being hard on yourself” (and taking the fun out of the practice)?

But in hindsight, I know what he meant. **Every moment of our practice is an opportunity for profoundness and exquisite elegance**—the inner experience of how it feels, not just how it looks.

We are taught that “Awareness is the Root of T’ai Chi Chih.” It behooves us to develop and nurture deep awareness in *every moment* of our moving and stillness. This is something that takes time and persistence to consciously develop (until it becomes “the effort of no effort”).

A few years ago, I was given the helpful advice to do lots of Rocking Motion at the beginning of the practice. Some who had practiced regularly with Justin specifically told me to do thirty-six.

I started spending a lot more time with Rocking Motion (doing more than my usual nine or 18) in my private practices and in my classes.

One day I became acutely aware in a new way, feeling grounded through the middle of each weight shift in a way that felt like a profound difference. It was almost as if my body weight would change—becoming heavier (with feet flat) and then lighter (with heels up or toes up), or of making an imprint on the earth, which would then disappear leaving no trace.

I stayed with that idea and feeling, which began to pervade all weight shifts in all movements. TCC changed, and my awareness increased exponentially, with no more needless distractions over sloppiness.

So, the start of a new year reminds me of the opportunity in the start of my practice, and I am grateful.

## Advancing In TCC

By Pam Towne, Oceanside, California

**Is one of your intentions for the New Year** to deepen your T’ai Chi Chih practice? Consider advancing to Seijaku, known as the advanced form of TCC. Don’t let that name deter you, thinking that you aren’t “advanced” enough in your practice. Actually, it may be the perfect next step.

Fortunately, you don’t have to do TCC perfectly to learn and practice Seijaku. It is best, though, to have practiced TCC for at least a year and be experiencing the flow of Chi. But don’t wait until you’ve perfected the “Taffies.”

One of the great benefits of the Seijaku practice is that it improves our TCC. It deepens our experience of softness and our ability to flow from the center and focus in the soles of the feet. After two years of TCC practice, I thought I knew what softness was. Then I learned Seijaku and discovered that **there was much more softness to be experienced.**

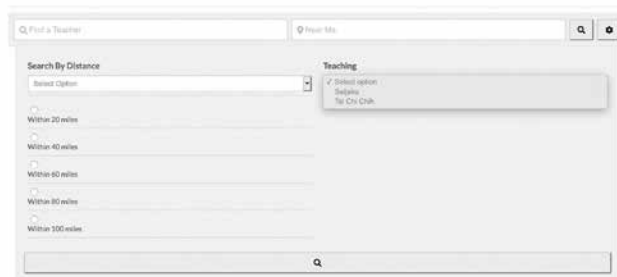
Seijaku practice has other interesting benefits, such as making it easier to adapt to change and to the increasing pace of daily life. It helps develop the ability to let go rather than holding on to that which no longer serves us. It cultivates the ability to be in the present moment rather than worrying about the future or regretting the past.

We know that the benefits of practicing TCC come from circulating and balancing the *Chi*. Seijaku greatly increases the flow of *Chi*, so it naturally accelerates the resulting health, serenity, creativity and longevity benefits of our practice. Try it and see for yourself.

Justin first taught Seijaku in 1986 to a group of TCC teachers. He told us that it was for our own evolution and to share with our best students. **Justin also said that the most important event in his life was discovering Seijaku.** That’s a powerful statement about the Seijaku practice.

You can learn Seijaku from Justin’s DVD (available on justin-stonetcc.com), and it is very helpful to study with an accredited Seijaku teacher so you can ask questions and receive feedback. You can find one on taichichih.org. [Editor’s note: See the photo on this page.]

If you have received benefit from TCC, I invite you to partake of another gift from Justin. Advance to Seijaku; take your next step in deepening your practice.



\*\*\*For more accurate results, add city and state in the search field.\*\*\*Click the GEAR icon to refine your search.

# No Teacher Conference 2020

By Nancy Werner-Azarski, Minneapolis, Minnesota

**So ... teachers are not having a T'ai Chi Chih conference this year.** As you think about how you interact in your local and national TCC community, **how does this make you feel?** What is going through your minds? Here is my thinking journey: What?! The Minnesota community just did all this work to host the 2019 conference and no one stepped up for 2020?! What?! Are we becoming like the larger culture and want to remain in our areas, our comfort zone, not doing the work, not valuing gathering together? Why do we not value the annual conference? What?

This makes me sad, my thoughts and no conference. I have more questions and no answers. But I guess we need to work on our local outreach. Wait. I need to turn this into a positive because I am tired of negatives.

So ... I did my TCC practice, sat down, settled in and asked myself, "What are your biggest concerns?" Turns out they are the continuation of TCC and opportunities we miss by not having a conference (think veteran's outreach). How could this be turned into a positive for those concerns?

My first idea was to attend an event elsewhere but, for my concerns it didn't really fit. My next idea was that since this is going to be a year where we do not pay to attend a conference (flights, conference fees, donations), how about donating that amount to the Foundation or the Albuquerque TCC Center or *The Vital Force*? Can't do the full amount? How about \$500? No? How about \$100? Give as much as you can to all three entities. We could send Sandy, Pam and Daniel all over to spread TCC, or we could support *The Vital Force* (and the new teacher pages on taichichih.org), or we could help the Albuquerque Center reach out to more folks. Or we could sit in our comfort zone and wring our hands and let this opportunity pass by.

I am done wringing my hands, I am done waiting for Oprah to notice TCC. I am so sad for our culture, it needs TCC. If we do not value TCC, who will? **So, I declare May 2020 a month of giving to T'ai Chi Chih.** Ta-Da! (I picked May because it is a time of new growth here in Minnesota, it gives you time to save some money and it gets money to the three entities early in the year.) Send donations to the Foundation, the Center and *The Vital Force*. Send them in now. We do not want to miss any opportunities; we want to keep T'ai Chi Chih going. Will you join me?



# Minnesota TCC Teachers: November 2019 Meeting

By Nancy Werner-Azarski, Minneapolis, Minnesota

**We had a joy-filled meeting** in early November to celebrate and recognize Justin Stone; to celebrate the 2019 T'ai Chi Chih conference and those who worked on it; and to thank our local leadership. Nineteen teachers attended. We started with a great practice, a reading from *Spiritual Odyssey* and then moved onto food and a meeting. We were happy to gather as we felt the conference had gone well, our local leadership team had helped us be more inclusive and we were eager for our next year's plans.

We discussed the issue of no conference for 2020. **Mostly we talked about how well our local leadership fulfilled our hopes for spreading TCC.** After a couple years of losing some very strong teachers, we celebrated a year or two of growth on many levels. We watched a video presentation by Mary Strom which recalled some of the conference highlights. We thanked Mary Weddle and Susan Sobelson for their three years of leadership. Their focus on students helped us grow. We discussed possible next year's plans and how they might be implemented, and we discussed updates to our local TCC website. We happily welcomed a Wisconsin influence with Lorel and Jim Maple present and thanked them for taking care of conference registrations. We also welcomed Denise Clemen and Pete Gregory into the circle as they had moved here recently from California.

We have local and national challenges to face, but from our point of view **2020 has the potential for great rewards and great joy.** Minnesota teachers wish great growth for all TCC teachers and students in 2020.

I end with a pyramid poem. Remember that we are happy and have gotten record snow falls this last fall.

snow  
snow globe  
t'ai chi chih  
we are moving  
with nature  
grateful  
stones



# Wherever You Go, There You Are

By Denise Emanuel Clemen, Minneapolis, Minnesota

**I like to go places.** Weekends away. Long vacations. Working trips where I might go to an artists' residency and write, semi-secluded for a month. I pack lightly. All the usual stuff—including a thin, foldable yoga mat. Some years back I always stuffed one of those stretchy resistance bands into my bag and either a Jazzercise DVD or a yoga DVD. While the yoga mat sometimes got unfolded, the exercise bands and the Jazzercise DVD never once made it out of my bag. **T'ai Chi Chih, I've found, is far more portable than any of the above, and it requires neither packing nor unpacking.**

let  
go let  
go let go  
let go let go  
let go let  
go let  
go  
~ JENETH

TCC requires only the willingness to practice. It can be done outside or inside, with shoes or without, in hot weather or cold weather, on land or at sea—and even inside your head, belted into an airplane seat. In recent years I've practiced TCC on the rim of the Grand Canyon, and below sea level on the salt flats at Badwater Basin in Death Valley National Park. I've practiced in writer's studios overlooking the Gihon River in Vermont, a meadow in rural Virginia, and a snowy hillside in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. I've practiced in my brother's double-wide at a mobile home park in Maryland with two curious cats looking on, and in a fancy Las Vegas hotel room. All I had to do was get on my feet and remember what Justin said, **"The best times to practice TCC are when you feel like it and when you don't."**

**It takes recurring effort to establish a habit,** and it took time for me to establish my daily TCC practice. I want to say that my personal practice has been a daily devotion for years, but that's only half true. Sometimes the devotion only happens in my mind, and in reality I'm lying in bed with pneumonia, or broken ribs, or I'm too busy packing and unpacking a billion boxes for my move from California to Minnesota. **But once we've made the effort to trench the groove of a daily practice, we will come back to it.** The *Chi*, it seems to me, quite literally calls to us, and it knows where we are.

A decade ago when I took my daughter to college I marveled at how lightly her generation traveled. No cumbersome stereo and milk crates of vinyl albums. No boxy portable TV. She had an iPod, a phone and a laptop. Nowadays we can get by with just a smart phone if need be. And when I go places, now that I have TCC, I can get by without the exercise equipment and videos. TCC is the invisible smart phone of practices.

Funny thing about the yoga mat though. Over the past several months, I've developed a daily home yoga practice—which I credit to the energy and discipline of practicing TCC. So I'll still need to pack that folding yoga mat.

TAI CHI CHIH!



SAVE THE DATE: T'AI CHI CHIH CENTER  
ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

OPEN HOUSE, SATURDAY MAY 16, 12 TO 5 PM

**Schedule of Events:**

- 20-minute classes & demos every hour including seated T'ai Chi Chih.
- Learn how to decrease stress, boost immunity, find balance & serenity.
- Accredited Teachers will demonstrate basic, easy-to-learn movements.
- Handouts provided showing researched-based studies on TCC's effectiveness.
- Sign ups and schedules for introductory classes with teachers near you.
- Community group practice at 4:45 PM. We look forward to sharing the chi!

T'ai Chi Chih Association, 3107 Eubank NE, Suite 19, Albuquerque, NM 87111  
T'ai Chi Chih, Joy Thru Movement! Visit: [www.taichichih.org](http://www.taichichih.org)

## Pyramid Poems From The Silence

mind  
contains  
connection  
communicate  
silently  
without  
words  
~ Anon

be  
quiet  
listen to  
stillness inside  
moving me  
towards  
peace  
~ MW

time  
to let  
go of the  
past and to know  
that joyful  
is the  
now  
~ DW

still  
silent  
joyfully  
alive aware  
allowing  
quiet  
peace  
~ MR

feel  
silence  
knowing truth  
go within and  
stay grounded  
connect  
love  
~ Judy

we  
are in  
sweet silence  
energy is everywhere  
comforting  
smiling  
home  
~ J.N.

# Meditate Mindfully For Improved Health & Well-being

By Jerry Jonnson, Herefordshire, UK

*Editor's Note: Jerry uses the following in presentations; all but the last paragraph is applicable to everyone practicing T'ai Chi Chih.*

**If you're still wondering** whether meditation will improve your health then perhaps you've been off the grid for at least the last decade. There's much hard science pointing to meditation (especially mindfulness meditation) as key to reducing stresses (the kind that mimic or even cause diseases) that there's simply no way to ignore the evidence any longer.

Scientists are beginning to tout another mindfulness side effect, which many folks haven't caught onto yet: regular practice enables the practitioner to train their well-being. For more information check out Dr. Richard Davidson and one of his neurological studies on the nature of well-being.

The headlines of his groundbreaking life's work? It turns out there are only **four contributing factors to an overall sense of well-being:**

1. A sense of resilience
2. A positive outlook
3. The ability to pay attention
4. And an attitude of generosity

Practicing mindfulness enables the practitioner to increase all four of these constituents of well-being. It also enables the practitioner to train their well-being. What this boils down to is that practicing mindfulness enables you to learn to be well.

Although these theories may seem unbelievably simple, they're right on the mark. For many years Dr. Davidson (a neuroscientist and professor of psychology and psychiatry at the University of Wisconsin-Madison), along with a team of colleagues, has been studying exactly how people gain and maintain optimum health via mindfulness by tracking their brain activities with MRIs and other tests of cognitive function. Google "neuroplasticity" and prepare to be amazed.

**There's only one trick to this learning-to-be-incredibly-healthy-and-happy business: practice.** The million-dollar question then is, "Exactly what specifically are you practicing?"

The truth is that most people practice feeling stressed out, anxious, sad or mad most of the time. Those factors show up in our lives as sleeping poorly, multitasking 24/7 or just eating, drinking, and exercising (or not) in ways that won't make anyone feel well, physically or mentally.

Do you fall into any of those categories? And if so, wouldn't you love

to learn how to feel resilient, positive, focused, generous and well all the time? But have no clue how to begin? (Truth be told, when most people sit down to meditate with the intent to quiet a monkey mind, they've suddenly given that little guy permission to run amok, amok, amok.)

I can practically hear you thinking, "Aren't there any easier options?"

**Why yes, there is an easier option: An evidence-based, moving mindfulness practice known as T'ai Chi Chih.** And the fact that it is a moving mindfulness is just one distinction that sets TCC apart from other mindfulness practices. (It's also one of the reasons why most people experience it as fun.) TCC is user-friendly because it has no age, physical fitness or coordination requirements. With just a few modifications all 19 movements and one pose can also be done seated. And in case you're wondering, the answer is, "Yes, it can be done in wheelchairs. Folks who are partially paralyzed also find benefits from these movements." There are no limits to who can learn and practice TCC.

Still have questions? Visit [taichichih.org](http://taichichih.org) to read of the well-documented health benefits from practicing TCC or visit [justinstone.com](http://justinstone.com) to watch some short demonstrations of the actual movements and it will all become clear.

**Teachers, feel free use the above for as you see fit and then tailor the paragraph below to your personal situation:**

Now that I've hopefully piqued your interest in TCC, here's an amazing opportunity for you to try it in a completely unique setting: early Thursday morning classes in the stunning Main House Gardens of the Mt Cuba Center (one of the prettiest spots in Delaware!) These outdoor T'ai Chi Chih classes will undoubtedly be even more powerful than usual because spending time outdoors has also been proven to positively impact your health. Now that you know the value (and ease) of adding T'ai Chi Chih to your health routine, click here for class details and here to register today.



## *Where in the World*

*Bill Moore, Pulling Taffy, Mount Washington, New Hampshire.*

# Drowning In The Countdown

By Rev. Richard Davis, Tulsa, Oklahoma

**When my daughter was young** she would use the English language creatively, as children do. We would gently correct her usage along the way to build a strong foundation in verbal communication. But there was one word she said that we let go because it was so cute. She would say “cumpf-ter-full” rather than “comfortable.” All was well until she entered school and came home one day extremely upset, telling us that other students and her teacher laughed at her when she told them that her chair was *cumpfterfull*. “How could you let me go on saying that,” she cried at us. “You knew it was wrong!” Telling her that it was because we thought it was so cute didn’t ease her hurt. We had let her down. Today she is a Linguist and Speech Pathologist in the Portland, Oregon area, and one aspect of her vocation is to help people speak correctly.

In Tai Chi Chih, whether students or teachers, there is a continual learning as we re-examine, gently correct and adjust in order to diminish inappropriate movements and forestall potential bad habits. If we are not attentive and ever-evaluative, bad habits can settle in deep and linger long. These have the potential to sour our practice by nibbling away at our meditative attentiveness to our moving, to our groundedness and to the vital force in movement within.

One such nibbling habit can be found in an emphasis on counting repetitions. It can become easy to hold the notion that the movement meditation is achieved through the correct number of repetitions in the prescribed practice. This need for students to count down through the movements has the potential to commandeer and trap one’s awareness in the head. While it seems to be an awareness of the body in motion, it is a flimsy kind of attentiveness to the *Chronos* (the quantitative-ness of a movement) rather than the *Kairos* (the quality and vital nature of a movement.)

The needed essential awareness is of the body in movement *moving and grounding* rather than to the number of movements. It isn’t harmful if we do one repetition less or two repetitions more. How often has a teacher when losing count said, “Let this be number eight.” It is easy to lose count of the repetitions when our awareness is drawn to the soles of our feet, the soles of our soul, and to the soft and steady leading from our *tan t’ien*. The value in TCC is not in the “how many,” but rather in how we achieve the movements we do. When we let go of the driving need to count “...1, 2, 3” ... and grant ourselves permission to give into the flow, perhaps allowing another to count for us, it is easier to engage in the joy of movement.



**Try Rocking Motion or Passing Clouds with letting go of the count.** Allow yourself or invite your students to settle into the gentle, continual flow until the body signals enough—not from exhaustion, but rather from an inner awareness of it being okay to move on.

Our ultimate awareness of the essential power in movement is key to our practice and meditation. A bad habit or two is not the end of the world, but we don’t do ourselves or our students any favors when we let poor habits settle in and linger deep and unchallenged. A little re-teaching along the way in our gatherings, such as occasionally reading about a movement aloud, or re-watching Justin’s practice videos on the Internet or attending an Intensive course can go a long way in helping keep to the practice and enjoy the benefits of TCC’s moving meditation.

Where in the World  
Julie Fornaci, Pulling Taffy,  
Iceland

*Where in the World*  
Julie Fornaci, Pulling Taffy,  
Iceland

## The Labyrinth, A “Twistery” – Getting There, A Mystery

By Nancy Johnson, Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida

Which way did she say to go?  
This way, that way, right way, wrong way.  
No way for me, “I’m lost.”

Too many paths and curves and trees. It all looks the same to me.  
Then a helper does appear – and then two more with big dogs in the rear.

“That way,” they said. Past the alligator pine.  
These three are now best friends of mine.  
A circle in the stickery brush. I take my time – no need to rush.

I walk in very mindful steps. Some curves go right and some go left.  
Painted rocks glowing bright. Twist and turn, shadows and light.  
In the center I come to rest. Prayers go north and south and east and west.  
Time to spiral out and back. I finish up the labyrinth track.

But now which way, this way, that way? What did my three helpers say?  
Other seekers come my way. They’re lost like me. We bow and pray?

We help each other find the path.  
And when we get home we’ll “share the air” and have a laugh.

The labyrinth – a “twistery” –  
Getting there – a mystery ... solved.

## Chinese Taoists

There is a profound difference between the life-negating pessimism of traditional Indian Buddhism and the life-prolonging, immortality-seeking attitude of Chinese Taoists.

**The Indian Buddhist sees the world as a place of complete impermanence, a forest ablaze with suffering.** The only answer is to escape from the forest. This must be done by renouncing individualized existence for the Bliss of *nirvana*. “Getting off the wheel of life and death” is the goal of all traditional Indian religious philosophy. This complete idealism of the Buddha’s was concurred with by the sages Vashishtha and Ramana Maharshi. They used different language from the Compassionate One and from all *advaitic* (non-dual) thought in India, where the aim has always been to find release, or salvation, through merging with that which is greater than ourselves. “Individualized life is the sin,” points out Ramana Maharshi, “and, as such, can only lead to untold suffering.” This is compatible with the Buddha’s idea of *anatman*, meaning no entity, no soul, no individual life.

**Taoism—and Taoist-influenced Zen—feels that we find *nirvana* right in the midst of tears and woe,** and that *samsara* (this world of suffering) is, itself, *nirvana* when seen properly. The Taoist so enjoys his life that he has always felt one should try for immortality-in-the-body, the much-misunderstood Taoist alchemy. Longevity, pointing to a love of life (“clinging to life” from the Indian Buddhist point of view), has always been the ideal of the Chinese, who enjoy food, sex, and communal existence—in contrast to solitude-seeking Indian holy men, gurus, and disciples.

**How can we reconcile these two opposing views of the same existence?** I once knew two women who looked a great deal alike and were often mistaken for one another. Despite the fact that one was fashionable and the other dowdy, there was no doubt of a startling resemblance.

When twelve people view the same accident at an intersection, each will give a different account in court of what has happened, despite the fact that they are all speaking of the same accident.

There is only one mountain, but to the surveyor, it appears in different sections.

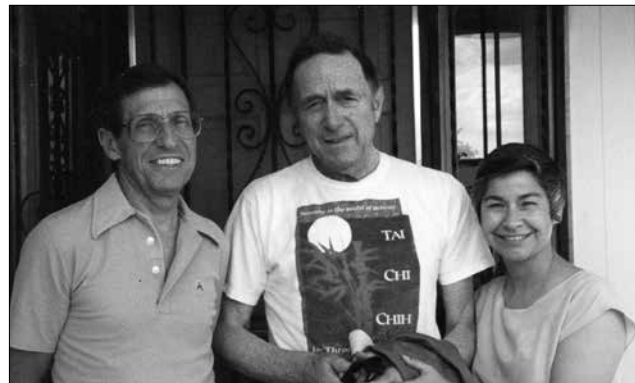
So, too, the one existence appears in innumerable ways to us, depending on where each of us stands. The world truly is a subjective experience, not an object to be perceived the same by all.

Similarly, each of the religious view-

points is right from its particular point of reference. Perhaps the Buddha was speaking of Ultimates, while others were seeking to find workable formulas, including ones that would send us to heaven rather than its opposite.

“existence appears in innumerable ways to us, depending on where each of us stands

Still, **it is difficult for a sincere seeker to reconcile the opposing viewpoints.** From the Indian sage’s corner, the world is not Real—as there is nothing lasting, nothing that is not changing every second. Nothing has its own continuing identity; it is in a constant state of becoming. **So the *Upanishads* speak of *moksha* (release) from the incessant rounds of suffering in meaningless life after life.** The Buddha points the way to the cessation of suffering by urging us to merge



“ nothing has its own  
continuing identity;  
it is in a constant state  
of becoming

into the undifferentiated whole. The simpler Indian doctrines speak of devotion to a God and the repetition of his name, which will lead to a heaven or the Brahma world.

These are in sharp contrast to the **Chinese and Japanese outlook, which feels that this life is decidedly worthwhile and prolongation of it is desirable.** In such worldly clinging (as opposed to other-world thinking), there is little thought of a next life on earth. Traditionally, the death of a Japanese entitles him or her to become a *kami* (a minor god or spirit), after which he will stay close to his clan in a disembodied condition, helping to prevent disasters to his people. This is part of the Japanese ancestor worship, and it often carries over into Japanese Buddhism and other foreign beliefs.

**Who are we to believe?** It is understandable how the hot, parched sub-continent of India, with its continual starvation, would lead to pessimistic views. China, too, has always had great poverty and starvation, and yet the Chinese character molded in a colder climate has always stood for great vitality and a love of life. The whole world enjoys Chinese food. The great sage, Confucius, was a practical man who gave instruction on how to live in human society. He did not speak of future lives.

Now would be the time for the writer to step forward and offer a **workable philosophy welding together the different points of**

**view.** Such is not possible. To enjoy sunsets and other beauties of Nature is not hard, yet the yogi and the Buddha's original followers say we must ignore the sensory, which represents only ignorance. Just because it is pleasing to the taste and the eyes does not make it good or useful. The Upanishads warn us that man mistakes the pleasing for the good (meaning good in a constructive, not a moral, sense). Seeking enjoyment, will we find only suffering?

Probably, for the little-evolved average person, a middle way is best. "Each according to his need" might be my answer, and by need we don't mean desire. Our needs are few; our uncontrolled desires endless. If there is a need for Ultimate answers, one must follow a way leading to Ultimates, such as the Buddha's Way. This entails endless sacrifice, the fasting implied in Zhuang Zhou's Fasting Mind. We must drop the non-constructive, no matter how inviting it is, to reach *kensho* (complete Enlightenment in Japanese).

On the other hand, if we are not introspective and not aware that there might be Ultimate answers, how can we go down a road that requires some degree of asceticism? The mind untrained in concentration cannot be expected to stick, single-mindedly, to a formula of life that denies us so much of what we usually want. Family, career, and all pursuit of such worldly activities can only block the way to Ultimate answers. **And yet, we can't all be monks or recluses, either in or out of the world.**

**To live each day with some contemplation, and to try to feel gratitude for the really countless blessings we take for granted,** will lead us to treat others as we wish to be treated. Simple though these two activities may sound, their effects are profound. Will the average person offer thanks when the housekeeper is late or the stock market

is down? Will he take time from a busy schedule to go within and explore the giant world of inner space? Not very many will do those two things. And yet, each of us perceives his own self-caused suffering. Why is one unwilling to give up his crutches and the very habits responsible for this suffering? We cling to what hurts us most. And all clinging, of whatever nature, ultimately leads to unhappiness. "Hang loose" is preferable to "Hang in there, baby," we must conclude.

"When the wind subsides,  
the surface of the water  
is smooth and serene."

Justin Stone  
Meditation for Healing  
[www.justinstoneetcc.com](http://www.justinstoneetcc.com)



From Justin Stone's *Climb The Joyous Mountain* and available on [www.justinstoneetcc.com](http://www.justinstoneetcc.com)

# Tea Time With Amy T

By Rebecca Paulson (with Holly Trenary hosting), Loveland, Colorado

**T'ai Chi Chih teacher Amy Tyksinski** recently launched her website as well as a YouTube channel, where she shares videos and other rich content to help viewers learn the T'ai Chi Chih movements and to develop their personal practice. Amy T (as we fondly refer to her) inspired the Northern Colorado TCC community to meet together to view and discuss the videos.

"Tea Time with Amy T" held its inaugural gathering on October 12, 2019. We brought our favorite teas to share and our favorite teacups to fill, and we settled in for quality time with Amy. I arrived wondering if we would first sit quietly through a full video or break in with questions and observations along the way. That question was answered almost immediately. Our hostess kept her finger on the pause and replay buttons since we broke in often.

We listened, watched, considered, then got up and tried out new insights. We agreed there is no right or wrong in how the movements are presented by experienced teachers, but there are perhaps different ways to express instruction. Hearing new phrases or seeing new demonstrations sometimes led us to make changes, and sometimes it led us to keep what we were already doing.

## Pyramid Poems

How does Rocking Motion change the way you feel about life?

I  
let go  
a new me  
reveals itself  
peace fullness  
blossom  
love  
~ ADRIENNE WELCH

fear  
sadness  
confusion  
discovery  
acceptance  
healing  
joy  
~ VERONICA FLEMING

love  
softness  
full of the  
goodness of life  
genuine  
grounding  
joy  
~ J.N.

joy  
rises  
slowly first  
building power  
warming me  
then you  
us  
~ KRISTIN CLARK TAYLOR

be  
open  
to the *Chi*  
let it flow through  
me until  
I am  
healed  
~ BENJ BRISJAR

come  
to share  
the gift of  
the loving *Chi*  
we have to  
share with  
all  
~ CINDY DUNN

voice  
full of  
joyful song  
open to life  
feeling love  
grateful  
source  
~ ROBERT

now  
I look  
for my life's  
simple truths and  
all my past  
turns to  
smiles  
~ MICHAEL DUNN

**Each of us had arrived as practitioners and as teachers.** As practitioners we asked ourselves if we could feel the *Chi* more by making certain adjustments. As teachers, we asked, "Would I say it like that with my own students?" Everyone had a satisfying afternoon. There was no doubt: we are growing as a community and each is deepening their own practice.

I look forward to the next "Tea Time with Amy T." Consider scheduling your own Tea Time, whether on your own or with others, and take advantage of the opportunity that Amy Tyksinski offers.



## Full Of Thanks

By Sheryl Adair, Atlanta, Georgia

**It is early Sunday morning** and my freshly brewed coffee and I are comfortably seated in my low-to-the-ground rocker. It belonged to the only grandfather I knew; he died 60 years ago. History. I feel the energy of my T'ai Chi Chih studio. The presence of all who practice here, wrapping me in *Chi*. I am reading the latest issue of *The Vital Force*, so carefully and lovingly prepared by Kim Grant. Year after year. I am content. Full to the last drop with gratitude and appreciation of those who open their hearts and put "fingers to the keyboard" to share their insights, experiences and love of TCC. I learn. Thank you.

# A Personal Opinion

By Linda Jones, Bennettsville, South Carolina

**When I was asked** by Antonia a few years ago to incorporate the Foundation and acquire its nonprofit status, I was not yet a teacher and was still learning much about the community. Pam and I were tasked with jointly preparing the bylaws—me from a business background and she from a T'ai Chi Chih background. Originally it was envisioned that the Board would consist of the Guide, the teacher trainers, an attorney, an accountant and if not an insurance agent, someone well-versed in the area. This never came about and after Antonia's resignation, the Board consisted of the three teacher trainers, one of which was our new Guide. The original purpose of the Foundation was to administer the annual conference and provide a vehicle for tax deductible contributions for scholarships. I feel strongly that it is time to expand the scope of the Foundation and the membership of its Board.

I have heard stories about Justin not wanting TCC to be an organization so this will probably be controversial and perhaps not well received by all. But I feel a responsibility to express my opinion. Never having met Justin, I have tried to understand what he meant by not being an organization.

It is a matter of semantics, in my opinion. "Organization" means different things to different people. At its base, an organization is a group of people brought together for a similar purpose. If you simply look at that, Justin violated his own "rule" of not wanting TCC to be organized. I believe we can become more organized without violating the spirit of Justin's wishes, especially since we already were an organization during his lifetime.

My own interpretation is that Justin meant "not organized" like an organization such as Taijifit. I believe he did not want it to be a highly profitable "franchise" with power and profits concentrated in one person or a small group. Justin was not totally against organization. He had the foresight to protect T'ai Chi Chih with a trademark, to incorporate the New Mexico T'ai Chi Chih Association, *The Vital Force, Inc.*, and Good Karma Publishing. He realized the need for that.

**I believe Justin would have loved for TCC to become a worldwide practice—but without** a highly paid CEO and Board. Justin originated an incredible gift for humanity, but he was human and not infallible. For TCC to spread worldwide as he would have liked, we need more organization than we currently have—not to the extent that we become a big business, but to the extent that we have a diversified Board that can guide us into the future, eliminate duplicate efforts, recognize regional differences, be completely transparent and fully come into the future.

In my opinion, the Board should include, in addition to members with business backgrounds, at least one member from each geographic area with a large number of teachers. We should be joining other larger groups (without losing our individuality) such as The International Medical Tai Chi QiGong Association whose conference Janet Ousatty, Stephen Thompson and Parker Reynolds attended last year. The Board should be subsidizing training and accreditations in foreign countries when funds are available. It should be encouraging talented, experienced and younger teachers to become teacher trainers. We should have had a Board to fully vet the proposal that TCC teachers participate in the federal program to provide T'ai Chi classes for veterans before it was presented at our last teacher conference. Or to have done so after the presentation to avoid contract controversies, duplicative efforts by teachers and to perhaps assist with the difficulties teachers have had with the registration process.

With no conference this year, it would be an excellent time to share ideas as to how we can go forward to attract younger practitioners, to reach out to more diverse groups and to expand internationally—all in keeping with the spirit of Justin's wishes. Let's not get hung up on the word "organization."

This is not meant as a criticism of our current Board. They have served us well. I simply envision a greater opportunity to promote TCC internationally, to utilize the talents of many other community members and to have more representation from the entire community. One of our goals should be to make TCC become a household name. This cannot be accomplished by only three individuals who are also responsible for maintaining the integrity of the practice and administering the accreditation process.



## T'ai Chi Chih

By Jean Olszak

T'ai Chi Chih,  
What's in it for me?

The movements are slow,  
My blood pressure reads low.

My balance is now good,  
I can dance like I should.

My joints don't now creak,  
My future's no longer bleak.

My brain isn't foggy,  
I never feel groggy.

My body and mind are relaxed,  
I no longer feel taxed.

My mood is so fine,  
My outlook divine.

So, I think I will stay,  
Because Tai Chi Chih is the Way.

# Teaching T'ai Chi To Veterans Improves My TCC Teaching

By Jessica Lewis, Claymont, Delaware

**One night last August**, I “hung out” virtually for about 90 minutes with David-Dorian Ross (“DDR”), several T'ai Chi Chih instructors and all the Taijifit instructors who are also participating in the new *Free T'ai Chi for Veterans* program. We discussed a billion roadblocks large and small that all of us had been encountering. At first I felt disheartened that things weren't going exactly as anyone (including DDR) had initially hoped. (In fact, if you spend any time on the Taijifit Instructor's Share Facebook page—TaijiFit's version of our TCC Teacher's Circle—you'll quickly see that most of DDR's own TaijiFit instructors are just as confused as many of us are.) A few minutes into the meeting, however, I noticed the situation was bonding us in ways I never expected.

Toward the end of the meeting DDR gave a brief lesson on how best to teach Veterans based on a governing principle of his style of T'ai Chi called *Fang Song* (pronounced *fung soong*). DDR explained that both words essentially mean relax, but he also reminded us that Chinese characters are often illustrations as well. The word *Song* looks like a Master pulling the pin from his topknot in order to let down his hair. Being a big-haired girl myself (who also wears it pulled up most of the time), I got a perfect sense of Fang Song (and thought “isn't this a way of describing some of our own movement principles?”).

That night DDR also suggested I connect with Marcus Carbo to learn more about Veteran's Administration politics and the vibe of my local Wilmington VAMC. (Marcus was a Taijifit instructor and Army Vet, and before this new federal program was launched he'd been volunteering to teach T'ai Chi inside the Philly VA Medical Center. DDR had recently hired him as Taijifit's official liaison to the VA.) I followed up and—just like April, Sandy, Pam, Dan, and all my wonderful TCC mentors—Marcus has been a constant support, never failing to notice whenever I'm attempting to *push*

*the river* (a habit energy that almost always shows up whenever I'm faced with a challenging project).

What are my takeaways from working with the *Tai Chi for Veterans* program?

- **Somewhere I became judgmental about TCC versus other T'ai Chi practices** (completely unintentionally, of course). Perhaps in my efforts to explain the distinctions between TCC and other practices I also unconsciously began thinking of TCC as good and other practices as bad? During the last few months, however, I've noticed an entirely different possibility: *perhaps all the T'ai Chi practices are more like one language with hundreds of dialects.*



- **I'm excited and surprised at how meeting and working with so many Vets is informing the way I teach TCC.** In order to not trigger the students in my first class, for instance, I followed DDR's advice to use few-if-any words while moving as much as possible. And I was delighted to notice everyone flowing just as smoothly and easily as any other group of TCC newbies. (On the second class I checked in with how the returning students felt after their first experience then asked if they'd enjoy a bit more information.)

- The students were interested in learning more, so on **week two I taught the same way I teach any other TCC class.** Although this program is only a few months old, perhaps the borders between various T'ai Chi teaching styles are already beginning to blur?

To quote Judy Chancey, this program seems more like the embodiment of a long slow weight shift than anything else. Shouldn't we, of all people, be able to patiently embrace the beautiful unfolding of what could potentially evolve into an entirely new approach to public health?

The Taijifit onboarding process is still a beast, but if you haven't already signed up I encourage you to at least think about it. Pam, Sandy and Dan have all told me on numerous occasions how Justin dreamed that something would eventually launch TCC into the spotlight. IMHO this new program might be the vehicle.

## “No Teaching” To Vets

By Linda Jones,  
Bennettsville, South Carolina

**For the purposes of** David-Dorian Ross's *Tai Chi for Vets* program, let's look at the rule and exceptions about teaching. We may verbally instruct students about anything that promotes safety and well-being. We may give limited verbal clues while moving. We are encouraged to include humor in our instruction. Instead of demonstrating movements in detail as in a “traditional” class, we should rely on multiple repetitions and perhaps exaggerate with funny gestures or limited language. We should not make individual corrections. We should not expect or encourage participants to memorize the movements or strive for any level of mastery. With DDR's definition and demonstration, I am convinced I can be an innovative and effective teacher to this group of underserved and most deserving population.



## Practicing At A Veterans Nursing Home

By Eliza Fulton, Glenwood Springs, Colorado

**Twice a month I go** to a Veterans Nursing Home to practice T'ai Chi Chih. The staff calls it "Move Free" so it doesn't have an Asian connotation which might be troublesome for some veterans active in various wars. There are 65 (mostly male) residents in this nursing home and over half are past 90 years old. I work mostly with the "runners," the Alzheimer's patients who live together in a secured area.

Sometimes when I arrive, many are asleep in their recliners or watching TV. We gather everyone together in a circle of chairs. I take time to walk around, look each in the eye, smile, tell them how happy I am to see them and say their names before we start to practice. They seem to appreciate the individual attention.

We do everything seated; some are in wheelchairs and some follow along pretty well some weeks and not so well other weeks. It doesn't matter—it's great that they are there watching, learning, trying and engaging. It is always exciting when someone just watching tries to make the movements. I always get staff feedback about how wonderful it is for them to try to focus and follow along.

When I ask if anyone feels tingling in their fingers, several respond enthusiastically that they do. One participant told me that "it feels like someone else is rowing the boat." What a great understanding. One morning we were practicing Push Pull and I suggested they let go of what they don't need and gather all the love they can and put it in their hearts. On this particular morning one of the more vocal participants shouts out, "Yes, let go of the bullsh\*t and pull in the happiness." I couldn't have said it better myself.

We use empty paper towel rolls (wrapped in duct tape to make them more durable) for Bass Drum, as they seem to love having something to touch and work with. We also use small soft nerf footballs (from the Dollar Store) to practice wrist circles and Carry the Ball to the Side. I also use them to hold in one hand and make big figure eights across the body to loosen the shoulders in order to prepare for the movements.

Mostly my goal is for them to have fun and move together. I was approached originally by the Activity Director to provide these classes twice a month, and I am paid to facilitate them. She had been introduced to the idea of TCC for the nursing home residents after reading a report by local college students on the benefits of Qigong practices for the elderly. We have been offering this for more than a year, and the Activity Director recently asked me to demonstrate and talk to all the Regional Veterans Nursing Homes in Colorado because she feels it has been so successful. If you feel called to work with veterans in nursing homes, I encourage you to reach out. I'm sure Justin would approve.



## While You're Waiting for TC4VETS

By Judy Chancey, Canton, Georgia

**Patience with T'ai Chi Chih's** long, slow weight shifts is a constant friend and ally in the TC4VETS process certification to teach. As we wait, there are valuable actions to take.

**Establish connections and confidence in yourself as an instructor.** Contact the VA Volunteer Services to offer a weekly

pro bono class to introduce yourself and TCC to their trusted network of medical professionals who can help provide referral numbers for veteran participants. TIP: Ask to be located in your preferred VA Hospital/Clinic at your preferred time. Anticipate one month for volunteer processing; two months of weekly VA classes prior to your Go Live date; and at least two months before classes evolve from functional to operational.

**Establish classes at other locations after TC4VETS is operational.** Create offsite classes that don't compete with VA system classes. VFW locations are not VA facilities. TIP: Classes held at VA Hospitals/ Clinics are not eligible for Optum payments. VA class funding comes from another source, not the Community Care Network through which we are participating.

**Research, contact and meet with the Commander(s) of your local VFW post(s)** to discuss and plan for TC4VETS. Few VA and VFW officials are aware of this program. TIP: Request a copy of Marcus Julian Carbo's wonderful guidelines for approaching veterans' communities.

**Locate and collaborate with a veteran T'ai Chi/Qigong buddy in your region.** Someone connected in the VA system can help guide you through VA processes. They don't need to be a TCC instructor. TIP: Join TaijiFit Instructors Share Network on Facebook and the TCC Teacher Circle Facebook group.

**Attend as many live TaijiFit sessions as possible.** Use your first and last name on screen to get continuing education credits. Credits are for in-person attendance only. TIP: 12 credits are required annually, based on the signature date.

**Consider and practice ways to lead each TCC movement without instructions, eliminating words such as left and right.** TIP: For PTSD safety concerns, no corrections are allowed in TC4VETS classes. DDR recommends cues such as "this way" and "that way." DDR also emphasizes leading in a style that's applicable whether seated or standing. BEST TIP: If you participate in this program, invite cheerful patience to accompany your every step.

# TCC Accreditation

## Santa Barbara, CA, November 2019

By Marie Dotts, Loveland, Colorado

**“The Jewel of T'ai Chi Chih is in its Teachers.”** This quotation from Justin Stone hangs on a banner at every teacher conference as a reminder that teachers are the treasured vessel that carry the loving and healing practice of TCC to the world. One of the greatest gifts at this accreditation was to see teacher candidates grow into the jewels that they are.

Our habit energies can keep small and locked in the emotions of doubt, fear and unworthiness. The world does not need small now. It needs each of us to step up and let our light out. Accreditation week pushes candidates to face outlived habit energies. This was made possible because of the loving and supportive field created by the teacher trainer, auditing teachers and the candidates themselves. Still it was not easy. It takes great courage for candidates to face their feelings and move through them. This is the work of the *Chi* in their TCC practice. Newly accredited teachers left with greater confidence in themselves and with the realization that they truly have something very valuable to share. On the last day as we waited for Pam Towne to come into the room, we spontaneously burst into song with the lyrics, “Good morning to you. Good morning to you. We’re all in our places with bright shiny faces. And this is the way we start our new day.” The light is out and shining bright.

### Comments from newly Accredited Teachers include:

As I reflect back, I am bombarded by many memories, the roller-coaster ride of emotions and challenges. We laughed, cried, shared, supported. We were quiet, loud, alone, together. As we visited, ate and practiced together, bonds formed that will last and grow.

I came away with a new commitment to sharing TCC and with the desire to be less critical of myself. I will continue to be open to change as I grow and mature in my practice, trying to let go of old habits. I came away with a deeper understanding of the *Chi* and the holistic nature of TCC as a body-mind-spirit connection.

I especially enjoyed the candidate presentations, seeing different sides to my new friends. I appreciated feedback from auditors and experienced teachers about how to improve my movements, especially in our

small group breakouts. I basked in the beauty of Santa Barbara and quietude of the Mount Calvary Monastery.

I AM OPENING

I AM OPENING

I am opening to new adventures

I am opening to let the *Chi* guide me

I am opening to the joy of teaching

I am opening to the excitement of learning

I am opening my practice to awareness

I am opening my hips to fluidity

I am opening to my *tan t'ien* to lead me

I am opening to nature’s glory

I am opening to synchronicity

I am opening my heart in gratitude

I AM OPENING

I AM OPENING

~ GAIL NIETO

I felt a joyous camaraderie at accreditation. In the beginning I was nervous and a little insecure, but the kindness and mutual support among participants encouraged me to become more confident and to trust the *Chi*. With encouragement from Pam, Marie and the auditors, the accreditation experience was transformative, like taking a giant step into my new teaching role. As I teach others, TCC will teach me. ~ PAT BRIE



Front (L to R): JJ Johnson, Gail Nieto, Linda Jaffe, Marija Hillis. Middle (L to R): Cathe Powers, Lanni Lantery, Gloria Thrall, Ellen Paquin, Pat Brie. Back (L to R): Pam Towne, Sue Johnson, Melody Nielsen, Phuoc Germaine, Terry Johnson, Shirley Cross, Marie Dotts.

I always thought that TCC was “just” a great complementary practice for Vedanta and other spiritual disciplines. But now I realize it’s a complete practice in and of itself, which can, if practiced with faithful regularity, lead to a direct unshakeable knowledge of the Supreme Ultimate ... one’s real being, the true self of all.

~ LINDA JAFFE

There have been some wonderful breakthroughs in my practice related to the movements this week, but one has been most profound. I’m learning to breathe out fear and breathe in the power of self-love. It’s not scary to lead if you have something powerful, joyous and loving to pass to others. ~ SHIRLEY CROSS

It’s normal to have a mad mix of emotions leading up to and moving through accreditation. Be where you are! I rode the storm of passion versus nerves by checking inward. How does it feel to be here? How does it feel to let that go? Let

the passion for TCC move you beyond fears, to make the impact you were born to make. As you journey through life, choose your destination well but do not hurry there. You will arrive soon enough.

~ CATHE POWERS

I remembered reading that accreditation week could very well be transformational. While I hoped it would be, I told myself not to get my

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hopes up too much. It might just be “a bridge too far.” But it wasn’t. There was a profound shift in my practice and mind set. I’ve always viewed learning to be akin to building a structure. Start with a solid foundation before moving on. I believe I’m almost ready for the second floor.

Next, while there is no doubt that I benefited from presentations that preceded mine, I benefited even more from the ones afterwards because I took notes about different ideas and approaches to incorporate into my next presentation to make it more effective.

And finally, my phenomenal teacher Marie, ever passionately and patiently leading me.... I’ve had so much to learn and unlearn these past two years, and I’ve received so much. Marie always had incredibly useful props, and I am now the proud owner of many: yardstick, string, small football, scarf and my very own *tan t’ien* expander and contractor (available at toy stores and on Amazon). And while I will continue to receive, I am also ready to give. I have something very valuable to give. I’m ready to take my Marie Bag of Props on the road. Thank you to Marie and all my teachers. ~ GLORIA THRALL

The purpose of accreditation week was to obtain our TCC teaching certificate. But there was a more hidden reason. To Wake Up, Sleepy Head! Between playing with Push Pull, Around the Platter and some other movement variations Stephen Thompson showed us, we joyfully unwound out of our respective boxes. While playing with the infamous Anchor Taffy weight shifts one morning in my room, I said hello to my *tan t’ien*, and it answered back. That was an interesting! I received a glimmer about why Anchor Taffy will become one of my top three favorites and also discovered why Justin Stone wrote, “as if moving in slow motion in a dream.” ~ JJ JOHNSON

Although the earth didn’t move (I felt my first earthquake at the July Intensive), I was moved by people sharing their TCC journeys. They have all touched my life. I know we’ll all meet again and it will be as if we never parted.

do  
or not  
do. there is  
no try for those  
who would teach  
T’ai Chi  
Chih  
~ TERRY JOHNSON

**Where in the World**  
Eliza Fulton,  
Push Pull, Pololu  
Valley Lookout, Big  
Island, Hawaii.



# If I'da

By Mary Wichmann, Rochert, Minnesota

**My husband Mark immediately opens** his *Motor Trend*, *Golf Digest* or *Toy Farmer* magazines when they arrive—often while he’s walking back from the mailbox down our rural road in Minnesota’s lake country or in the Arizona desert. But I don’t.

I pile up my *Cooks Illustrated*, *Cuisine at Home*, *The Vital Force* and *T'ai Chi Chih News* waiting to savor them when I can carve special time to read, digest and enjoy them.

This morning as Mark took his iPad and coffee to a chair inside, I’ve taken my tea and *T'ai Chi Chih News* outside to enjoy the light on the mesa. The front page has a reprint of Justin’s 2007 article, “**If I'da**”, which reads: “**it seems that music was my first love...**” I remember Justin’s music, his beautiful playing. It was interesting to learn some details of his earlier life from this piece. I’m grateful that although he retained his love of music, he chose TCC and writing books. Thank you for reprinting it.

My experience with Justin began in 2002. Although Justin was offering meditation workshops in Albuquerque, they were always full. At a Minnesota Teacher Retreat in St. Paul I asked, “**How do you learn to meditate with Justin if you can’t get into his workshops?**”

The response: “Ask him.” So, I did; I wrote to Justin. And Justin responded, “The tone of your letter says to me that you are sincere in wanting to learn how to meditate. Accordingly, I suggest that you come to Albuquerque for a few days, including Thursday, Saturday and Sunday when our meditation group meets.”

As I type this remembrance, I’m thinking how different my life might have been, but mostly how much I would have missed, “If I'da” not asked.



# TCC Intensive

## Albuquerque, NM, November 2019

It has been almost three weeks since I returned home, and I still feel a calm and peace that I did not feel before the intensive. I may be finally “getting” the “Taffies” and Working the Pulley. I was surprised and happy to see so many teachers attending the intensive to continue to improve their practice. My desire is to be a TCC instructor and I thought there was no way I could be ready to attend an accreditation. Knowing that teachers are still learning and perfecting their TCC practice was encouraging. Maybe I don’t have to be perfect to be ready.

~ SHERYL BERTELSON

As I write this, I am still integrating the power of the TCC Circle practice we did on the last day. Not knowing what to expect of an intensive, I was happy to find acceptance and support in my TCC ability. I am inspired to continue to practice and to receive the benefits of body, mind, spirit integration in my life. Taking it to the teaching level remains uncovered. I would like to thank Amy, Sandy, Kim and all involved for their hospitality in making the intensive a memorable experience in unfolding my spiritual life. ~ JANET GREENLEE

The main thing I took away from what I received from Sandy McAlister and Amy Tyksinski on the last day: Sandy said I needed to be more “substantial” on Daughter on the Mountaintop. I had heard this word over and over before, but it did not resonate with me until Amy stood with me and showed me what Sandy meant. I realize now that I need to be more substantial on all of my movements. It was an eye-opener. When sharing this with a practitioner from Georgia, she commented that perhaps I had spent my whole life having to be small to feel safe. This is true. T'ai Chi Chih is giving me the opportunity to play bigger. What a gift. I am practicing this mindfully now. Being aware of this will help with my weight shift, especially front to back.

~ DEBBIE REED

New eyes, new words, new relationships with breath and the soles of my feet, plus new friends with expansive perspectives. A tweak here and one there, all contributing to new liveliness and enriched experiences in my TCC practice. Puffy hands, sinking deeper into the feet, heightened awareness of foot alignment... Oh the differences these greatly appreciated adjustments made. Exploring

TCC at an intensive with Amy and Sandy was the perfect opportunity to bring my Empty Vessel receptivity to learning, and to be refilled as though discovering our magnificent TCC practice for the very first time. My gratitude to both teachers and especially to Justin is immeasurable. Thank you to all who have nurtured TCC in me.

~ JUDY CHANCEY

The intensive provided a valuable opportunity to identify some bad habits which had crept into my form. My hip turn was not symmetric in Carry the Ball (thanks Amy Tyksinski for pointing that out). In the forward-and-backward movements, I was shifting my weight in a weird way as I stepped out with my right foot (thanks Sandy McAlister). It was a much-appreciated form tune-up. The highlight was the dinner hosted by the TCC Association, where we celebrated Justin’s birthday with shared stories, photos and videos from his time in Albuquerque. Kudos to Sandy, Amy and the entire TCC Association.

~ JIM EAGLE

~ ~ ~

Sandy always brings helpful suggestions and ideas to TCC movement and practice. I appreciate her ability to breakdown movements to notice the subtle connections. From an intensive many years ago, I learned to observe tension in my ankle and how to allow the foot to rise more naturally as the weight shifts backwards. I learned about the role of the upper arms, forearms and finally the wrists in Bass Drum. This year I enjoyed an ever-so-slight connection between the *tan t'ien* and the knees in starting a movement, when the weight shift begins. There were also some not-so-easy pointers on knee positions related to Carry the Ball and a change in Variation One of Pulling Taffy to somewhat arrest my continual *yin* hand movement beyond the forward knee.

The message is no surprise here. After many years of practice, there is still so much to learn and enjoy. The biggest benefit I received was the discussion with fellow students, hearing the enthusiasm and wonder of newer students and relating to the experiences of teachers. The hidden benefit is what each participant brings and shares. My big takeaway was Jim Eagle’s simple observation that the heel/ankle position during Cosmic Consciousness Pose provides the circularity/continuity/grounding connection like the other movements. For this realization my practice is profoundly more grounded.

~ GUY KENT



Standing (L to R): Teacher Trainer Sandy McAlister, Marc Kwasman, Mary Deaguerro, Cindy Nelson, Di Ristenpart, Kathy Grassel, Sheryl Bertelson, Cathy Rose, Douglas Garrison, James Eagle, Doug Spence. Seated (L to R): Helen Leal, Janet Greenlee, Sondra Lawson, Connie Lapp, Amy Tyksinski, Debbie Reed, Molly Grady, Judy Chancey. Not pictured: Guy Kent, Ann Rutherford, Ali Valderrama.

# TCC Intensive

## Aston, PA, October 2019

By April Leffler, Prospect Park, Pennsylvania

There is a metaphorical connection between my T'ai Chi Chih practice and how I live my everyday life. In both I make things harder than they need to be, complicating things with too much effort. Practicing TCC reminds me to calmly bring my focus into the moment. I used to be frantically busy, planning the next day, month, year. TCC has given me the gift of focus and appreciation for the very moment I am breathing in. However, getting to this peaceful place requires surrender, letting go of control. Practicing TCC helps my ego get out of the way and make room for love to flourish and *Chi* to flow.

~~ SHARON ROYERS

The days were filled with an energy I didn't know existed. I discovered a deeper connection to the *Chi* force through daily practice and the attendees who shared life experiences. I learned to pull in the energy from the stars and make it mine. Practice, practice, practice. ~ SHARON HAYDEN

I am still basking in the afterglow of hosting this Intensive facilitated by Pam. Folks traveled from Newfoundland and nine U.S. states to experience and deepen their T'ai Chi Chih practice. Here are their words. October in Pennsylvania is the perfect time and location for an Intensive. As the season changes and leaves turn, my mind and body begin to change with the continual practice of TCC. My *yinning* and *yanging* are getting smoother, my hands more graceful and my movements more fluid. ~ MEI-LING GRANT

There are people like me who practice T'ai Chi Chih without evidence that *Chi* is flowing. But we practice in faith just like those who practice a religious faith without evidence that God exists or listens. Not everyone is outwardly enthusiastic or has a miracle story to share but we practice believing that TCC is having some positive effect on us or with the hope that at some point there may be some evidence. If not, I will still continue to practice. ~ ANON

I learned when to pick up and not pick up the feet; the position of the hands at chest level; how to adjust my stance; and how to adjust the hand movements in the "Daughters." That said, I did not achieve my goal of sensing *Chi* flow. I realize that is my problem to solve and not the course's, but I was hoping... I also realize that my communication problem with my *tan t'ien* is mine to solve. ~ BILL WHEELER

Practicing T'ai Chi Chih is part of my physical, mental, emotional and spiritual healing. I felt nurtured by TCC through the hearts of a kind

and caring community. Understanding the Supreme Ultimate will be a winding, never-ending journey, beginning with a commitment to daily practice and refining and feeling my way there.

~~ VIVIAN CHAPPELLIER

Pam has an expert eye in noticing corrections needed to improve a practice, and she did it in a non-judgmental manner. I also appreciated the other teachers assisting me to deepen my *yin* and *yang* movements.

~~ MARYROSE SMITH

Everything you need to know about life is learned in kindergarten and through T'ai Chi Chih. I arrived wanting to refine my movements and departed with much more: I'm learning to refine my movements in daily life too. Be aware of what is around and inside you, move softly, don't get stuck in your head, leave your ego at the door, go in different directions like *yinning* and *yanging* but always come back to your center. Don't complicate things. Be grateful for gifts given. Let the *Chi* nourish your life; find a way to share your light and energy. There are no perfect movements in life but moving keeps opportunities open and possibilities endless. When you find your inner *Chi* you are experiencing the inner connectedness of others. I am beginning to understand what it feels like to live with *Chi*. ~ BUNNY MAYBERRY

I came to work on my relationship with T'ai Chi Chih. I need to practice, practice, practice until old habits fall away and new habits sink in. I am also re-envisioning my connection to TCC connects me to others. I am being transformed from within into a new version—and an older and wider version—of myself. Walking on the grounds here, alone but not lonely, provided a place for solace and growth. We are all different here and all somehow alike. ~ JEANNIE SPERRY

While I attend three group practices a week, there is something elevating and deepening about spending so much time with like-minded souls at an intensive. I also came for and received refinements to the movements. There is always a new

nugget, a gem, to be found. I am also grateful to have been taught by such a wise, observant, gentle being as Pam. ~ MARIANNE KELLY

I was accredited in June 2019 but am not yet teaching, so I came to see students and prospective teachers from a different perspective. I was in their shoes a year ago. Attending has made me more comfortable with aspects of teaching. I am able to see things that students do that need refining, and I've learned some new ways to offer refinements without singling out students. Reviewing and refining my own form was an added benefit. ~ DEB WEIN

This event has enabled me to deepen my T'ai Chi Chih experience in relation to continuity, smoothness and inner peace. The awareness of how to integrate these ideas has grown exponentially as a result of breaking down the movements and rebuilding them.

~~ CANDY MORACZEWSKI

T'ai Chi Chih spoke to me from the first moment I experienced it. I felt driven to embrace all TCC has to offer. I was nervous to attend because I thought I wouldn't be prepared for the but I was excited to grow and learn more. I am now filled with joy, feeling blessed to have discovered more of the spiritual aspects of TCC. I feel the *Chi*

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flowing more than ever. My fears were released, as each attendee was wonderful and inviting in their own way, and the instruction was gentle and direct. I am grateful for the new path and journey.

~~ KARIN HAMPTON

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Let it go,  
Move with the flow  
Get out of your head  
And into your feet.  
*Chi* flows like the river,  
So move soft and slow.  
Come with an open soul  
And empty mind  
For T'ai Chi Chih  
Will complete your goal.

~~ RYAN HOLLEY

How do I love *Chi*  
Let me count the ways,  
Unity of mind, body, soul  
Surrounded by love.  
This intense Intensive  
*Yin*ing and *yang*ing  
The balance supreme  
So grounded yet  
Free flowing in circularity.  
No need for safety net here;  
T'ai Chi Chih embraces me.

~~ CAROLYN POGWIST

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These last few days have been a homecoming partly because of a deep connection to my Tri-state T'ai Chi Chih sisters and brothers who I used to see more often before moving to Florida. But the other homecoming is to my true self. Another layer peeled away and I am moving a little closer to "my face before I was born."



Front (L to R): Maryrose Smith, Sharon Royers, Candy Moraczewski, Jeannie Sperry, Marianne Kelly. Middle (L to R): Ryan Holley, Ann Pia, Pam, April Leffler, Mary Griffin, Carolyn Pogwist. Back (L to R): Bunny Mayberry, Sharon Hayden, Bill Wheeler, Mary Ann Johnson, Mei-Ling Grant, Karin Hammond, Deb Wein, Paul Joseph, Vivian Chappelier, Sheila Leonard.

As we pulled in energy from the most distant star I am now aware that each of us originated as stardust, that we are truly the universe conscious of herself. As such, we embrace a huge responsibility. When I met Justin in mid-1990s, I shared that I decided to pursue TCC accreditation because of one sentence in the teacher manual: "If enough people do TCC we will have peace and love in the world."

These past few days I heard Justin calling to me: I know you are grateful for TCC and that you see it as a way of life but how can you deepen and enhance that awareness in your life? As I made my bed, I put out a request to the universe that the next person to use this room may receive as much as I did.

~~ MARY ANN JOHNSON

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I came to support a student on her accreditation journey and to support other students, April and Pam. It proved to be as much gift for me as for them. I kept taking off my glasses and putting on new lenses, inviting others to do the same. It became about letting the *Chi* lead, being open to the surprises and shifts that come with a beginner's mind.

I deepened and refined my own practice and was nourished by our TCC community. It is a gift I will continue to unwrap, a moving experience of TCC's cumulative and collective energy, not bound by time and space, like a huge energy bank to which we all have continuous access. It has been about discovery and re-discovery, and re-dedication to my daily practice for life.

We live in an ocean of energy; we are that ocean of energy. That became more real, embodied and palpable, as we rediscovered the depths of TCC, re-kindled an ancient love (that fruit energy, as Justin calls it), going deeper into our practice and ourselves.

~~ SHEILA LEONARD

## Pyramid Poems From The Silence

in  
silence  
I am still  
quiet searching  
deep within  
coming  
peace

~~ PAULINE QUIMSON-MILLER

so  
quiet  
speaking voice  
stillness abounds  
inner truth  
does come  
forth

~~ JK VEERKAMP

my  
mouth closed  
quiet eyes  
heart filled with peace  
turned inward  
smile now  
joy

~~ KRISTIN CLARK TAYLOR

no  
one spoke  
struggled can't  
communicate  
I could not  
say a  
word

~~ JEANNETTE STOTTS

when  
I am  
most silent  
I hear my world  
most clearly  
I hear  
God

~~ BENJ BRISJAR

love  
new friends  
precious and  
in our silence  
together  
we are  
one

~~ PAULA H.

## Who, What, Where, When & Why

### TEACHERS:

• We are almost ready to offer you the option of a personal teacher listing (dedicated teacher page). Watch for an email soon from me and for forthcoming details on the Teacher Circle page on Facebook.



• What you can do now to help us start the process: Search for your name in the left side of the FIND A TEACHER box on taichichih.org. Start typing your name and let the field autofill to make sure the site

uses the same spelling as you are currently using. If you do not find yourself, drop me an email. If you find information that needs to be changed, please be patient as we move to a self-serve model of keeping your information up-to-date.

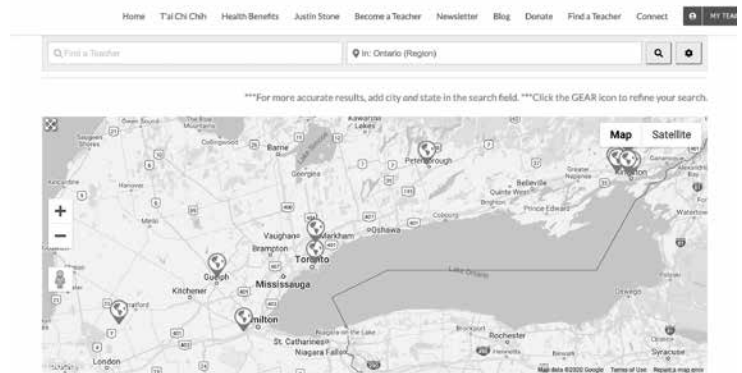
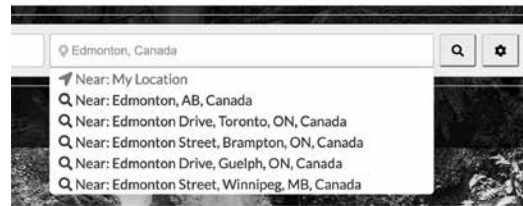
Once we are up and running, you'll be able to:

- Share class times, prices, locations and towns.
- Tell students a little bit about yourself as it relates to TCC. What brought you to TCC, what have you experienced through TCC.
- Share photos or videos of yourself doing TCC.
- Share your TCC-related website.
- Share social links to your regional Facebook page and other TCC-related social media.
- Promote yourself with your own URL: [taichichih.org/teacher/yourfirst\\_name\\_yourlastname](http://taichichih.org/teacher/yourfirst_name_yourlastname).
- Claim your “verified listing badge” which indicates to students that you are an accredited teacher.

• Select teaching specialties so that a.) other teachers may easily network with you, e.g. how do you teach children?; b.) an Arthritis Foundation representative may get in touch with you if that's your specialty, for instance; students may contact you if you do remote teaching, for example.

### STUDENTS:

- It'll be easier than ever to find teachers within a certain distance of where you live or work.
- You'll be able to search for your town or a nearby bigger city on the right side of the FIND A TEACHER box on taichichih.org. Start typing and let the system autofill to choose from various best options.
- Click the cog wheel to increase the radius for search results, i.e. find teachers within 20 or 100 miles from you.
- Find a teacher who teaches Seijaku or specializes in seated TCC, for instance.
- More easily decide between teachers if there are a number offering classes in your area.



Below left: On October 25-27, 2019 participants gathered in Fremont, California for “Feeling the Chi: Immersion into Presence,” a TCC Retreat led by TCC teacher Amy Tyksinski. Standing (L to R): Harry Louie, Regina Otero-Sabogal, Carol Teltschick, Richard Karasik, Teacher Trainer Pam Towne, Nina Gibson, S. Rebecca Shinas, Ray Dirr, Barbara Buckley, Russell Stith. Kneeling (L to R): Judy Hubbell, Amy Tyksinski, Darlene Karasik. Not pictured: Catherine Direen, Kim Grant, Lisa Gregerson, S. Carolina Lumactod, Teacher Trainer Sandy McAlister.



Right: Pennsylvania and Delaware teachers and students gather for a TCC flash mob at the Springfield Mall near Philadelphia before Christmas.



## Contacts

**Originator:** Justin Stone

**Guide & Teacher Trainer:**  
Sandy McAlister  
24835 Second St, Hayward, CA 94541  
510-582-2238 / mcalister19@comcast.net

**Teacher Trainer:**  
Pam Towne  
234 Hoover St, Oceanside, CA 92054  
442-222-8332 / pamtowne@gmail.com

**Teacher Trainer:**  
Daniel Pienciak  
PO Box 231, Bradley Beach, NJ 07720  
732-988-5573 / wakeupdaniel@aol.com

**The Vital Force:**  
P.O. Box 92674, Albuquerque, NM 87199  
kim@kimgrant.com / 617-901-9628

**Justin Stone Materials**  
www.JustinStoneTCC.com  
kim@justinstonetcc.com

**T'ai Chi Chih Foundation:**  
P.O. Box 11  
Norwood, PA 19074

**Web Site Changes:**  
kim.grant@taichichih.org



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youtube.com/tccabq

## Community Calendar

For the most up-to-date info and event PDFs, see [www.taichichih.org/events](http://www.taichichih.org/events)

### DATE / WHAT & WHERE / CONTACT

**Mar 19-22** | TCC Teacher Retreat w/ Sandy | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 760-421-7589  
**Mar 20-22** | TCC Retreat w/ Dan | Bradley Beach, NJ | Daniel Pienciak | 732-988-5573  
**Mar 24-27** | TCC Retreat w/ Sandy | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 760-421-7589  
**May 7-10** | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Prescott, AZ | Linda Worlton | 602-617-0983  
**May 29-Jun 4** | TCC Teacher Accreditation w/ Dan | Aston, PA | April Leffler | 610-809-7523  
**Jul 1-5** | TCC Intensive w/ Sandy | Santa Barbara, CA | Marie Dotts | 970-412-9955  
**Aug 3-6** | Seijaku | Meditation Retreat w/ Dan | Aston, PA | Daniel Pienciak | 732-988-5573  
**Sep 22-25** | TCC Retreat w/ Pam | Santa Barbara, CA | Pam Towne | 760-421-7589

### ~ MORE WORKSHOPS & RETREATS ~

*Postings here are open to all teachers offering events wholly devoted to TCC.*

**Feb 1-2** | TCC Retreat w/ Bill Moore | Fort Collins, CO | Lisa Stroyan | 970-481-9733  
**Feb 6-9** | TCC Workshop w/ Carmen Brocklehurst | Lake Charles, LA | Caroline Guillot | 337-302-5928  
**Mar 23-27** | TCC & Meditation Retreat w/ Amy Tyksinski | Aston, PA | Kathleen McAlister | 610-308-4846  
**Apr 2-5** | Learn Seijaku Retreat w/ Carmen Brocklehurst | Albuquerque, NM | Judy Hendricks | 505-573-0820  
**May 2-4** | TCC Workshop w/ Carmen Brocklehurst | Aston, PA | Kathleen McAlister | 610-308-4846  
**Aug 11-14** | TCC & Meditation Retreat w/ David Parrish & Bill Moore | Aston, PA | April Leffler | 610-809-7523  
**Aug 21-23** | TCC Retreat w/ Caroline Guillot | Black Mountain, NC | Steve Stevens | 828-776-9489

### CONFERENCE 2020

Update: There will be no teacher conference in 2020.

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### Contact Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone / Email \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher \_\_\_\_ Student \_\_\_\_

### Teacher Accreditation Information

Date you were accredited as a T'ai Chi Chih teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Date you were accredited as a Seijaku teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the teacher who taught you T'ai Chi Chih \_\_\_\_\_

Name of "second signature" \_\_\_\_\_

### Vital Force Subscription Information

Teachers are automatically included in the Teacher Directory; please check below if you do not want this.

( ) I DO NOT want to be listed in the Teacher Directory or on the Web site.

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