

"Naked Beneath Your Clothing"

by John Veltheim

Forward

The birth of this article was an easy one. The gestation period, however, spanned many years. In John's years of clinical practice he became acutely aware of the abyss that, in the majority of people, seemed to separate mind from body. The abyss resulting from centuries of societal dictates concerning moral and ethical codes of behavior. Dictates that have given rise to man's present day rejection of that which is most natural and most beautiful - the human body. His motivation came from seeing the limitations people placed upon themselves and, as a result, their health.

His inspiration for the writing of this booklet came from watching the transformation of those patients and students who chose to bridge the abyss of indoctrinations. People who chose to investigate their need for clothing, their fear of nakedness and the disempowerment such unquestioning acceptance of moral codes had been subjecting them to.

This is not a booklet about civil disobedience, rather one about looking at what we do with regard our own bodies, what we disallow ourselves to do and why. There have been numerous exponents of the importance of nudism, and a healthy relationship to nakedness. From ancient Indian mystics and Greek philosophers to great contemporary thinkers such as Wilhelm Reich and Carl Jung, nakedness has been addressed at length, but their words have fallen largely on deaf ears and often been met by fearful, offended minds.

Lalla, the legendary 13th century woman mystic from Kashmir, India, perhaps best described the potential joy and sacredness we are denying ourselves, when she wrote:

"Dance, Lalla, with nothing on
but air. Sing, Lalla,
Wearing the sky.
Look at this glowing day! What clothes
could be so beautiful or
more sacred?"

This article may challenge your attitudes and beliefs, but asks only of you that you entertain the ideas and suggestions with an attitude of inquiry. John's background in Chinese Medicine, metaphysics and Martial arts has afforded him the benefit of a unique canvas upon which to present his observations. He paints a very impelling picture of the benefits of nudism. More importantly, we emerge from the following pages aware that a subject is being addressed that is long-overdue public consideration and action.

Personal joy and inner peace are two good reasons for staying with John through the following pages, for his purpose is clearly to explore one of the realms that offers us both.

Esther Veltheim (December 1994)

Psychology of the body

Progressively, over the centuries, society has developed the use of clothing as a mask. Clothing was originally used and designed to protect people from the elements of heat and cold, to stop themselves from getting burned or frozen. It was also used as a method of adornment to enhance attractiveness and for ritual and ceremonial reasons. In the latter centuries, people developed a cultural dependency on clothing. Clothes became a mask and a prop for perceived personality and character deficiencies.

We frequently see people who would not be seen "dead" without their clothing on. Clothing is often used to portray an image that is different from the person's perceived inner deficiencies. It is a form of artificiality or masking that they outwardly project to cover up any personality or emotional defects they think they have. People tend to feel that by hiding behind clothing they can metaphorically cover themselves and deny others exposure to the inner-self they perceive to be crippled. The need to do this most commonly occurs in people with low self-esteem.

Fashion

This process is being encouraged by the cultural excesses of fashion magazines in an industry with a very strong monetary interest in the promotion of clothing. These special interest industries create the belief that clothing is an essential to life itself, rather than a practical and fun auxiliary. The tragedy is that many have blindly accepted this. The average person thinks of clothing as one of the necessities of life that transcends mere protection and expands into the realm of personality, character and self-worth.

Guilt

Concurrent with this trend is a parallel trend to automatically associate nudity to sexual activity. Many religions choose to perceive sexual activity as a sin, and by association, choose to see nudity as a sin also. Some religions use this argument as a way of manipulating people into feeling guilty about nudity. Guilty people then think they need the church to forgive them. Also, guilty people can be controlled easily by authorities of any description. Vibrant, healthy, guilt free people of high self esteem are traditionally very hard to 'manage' or control for churches or governments. Through the combination of the above influences, many societies created laws to make it illegal to go as nature intended.

When is it wrong to be naked? A naked new born baby is not considered wrong or bad. At what age does this child become bad? Is it 18 months or when they are three. A naked two year old on the beach is generally considered normal and inoffensive. So when is a child not a child? Is it four years old or is it ten years old? People with issues around nudity will often say it is when they reach school age, and that would be five years old. That concept infers that when a naked child on the beach is 4 years 364 days 23 hours and 59 minutes old it is a healthy child with a good attitude to life. One minute later, when the child turns five it is suddenly a naughty, sinful child because he/she is still naked! That concept is obviously a farce.

Self-esteem

The creation of this absurd attitude often emerges from low self-esteem issues developed at a very young age. Children are influenced by an environment producing many negative attitudes about themselves. They are told, or it is inferred by certain actions, that they are not perfect, not lovable, not good enough, naughty, etc. As adults, they feel a need to camouflage these perceived inadequacies in our personality and character. We often create a series of attitudes and belief systems to compensate for these inadequacies. They also develop a series of masks to 'cover up' the weaknesses. For example, the person who feels weak deep down will often put on a 'tough' personality mask and adopt an aggressive posture.

Clothes are used continuously in this process; the weak person uses powerful or aggressive clothing. The 'naughty' person wears clothing designed to give them acceptance and make them appear 'good.' The unloved person tries to show he/she doesn't care wears rebellious and 'unacceptable' clothing. The 'guilty' person portrays themselves in pious and 'pure' attire with the 'holier than thou' attitude.

People who don't approve of themselves deep down also cover up by becoming judgmental of others. They feel that by pulling someone else down, they are bringing that individual down to their lower level. They ensure they always wear the 'right' clothing for each occasion so they won't be judged badly. People who hate being judged are the very people who tend to be judgmental themselves.

This whole process is unfortunate because the inner low self image people think they are hiding is not the true self. It is simply another mask at a deep level. The true self lies below that set of belief systems they are taught as a child. In situations where people are able to 'peel off' the outer masks and expose the true self, they always find someone they love and feel good about.

We are born pure, loving and innocent. The sooner we can get back in touch with that, the sooner we get in touch with experiencing the joy of life. The only reason we are not experiencing total abundance of joy, peace, love and financial security is because we are actively resisting those things which are our birth right. We resist them by creating the masks which act to separate us from our true inner selves and block us off from that abundance.

Shutting down

When people use clothing as a means of shutting out the world and covering up to stop the world from seeing their distorted inner self image, they create a tragedy of immense proportions. When hiding behind clothes, people are closing down their body energetically and psychologically. A healthy body has its energy, nervous system, and life forces flowing freely throughout it. When shut down psychologically and physically, the body energy shuts down, distorts and flows abnormally. This manifests major kinks in spiritual, emotional, mental and physical growth.

A suppressed energy system becomes inflexible and rigid. This is easily seen in the inflexible attitudes we encounter so often in our society, as well as the tendency for the human race to develop rigid, inflexible, arthritic bodies.

Interacting with life

Closing down and isolating one's energy also has a dramatic affect on their ability to relate to other people and the world. There have been many books recently that demonstrate we are energy systems constantly interacting with all the energy systems in our environment. We draw energy from the world around us. Up to 40% of our oxygen intake is through our skins, (unless we stifle that through excess synthetic clothing and makeup!) Healthy individuals draw a large percentage of their energy through their skin from the atmosphere, the trees, plants and all of nature. (Unhealthy, needy people will also draw energy from other human beings like parasites.) This also involves a healthy exchange of energy. We draw in and give out energy. Our ability to do this depends upon the openness and flexibility of our energy systems.

When people psychologically and physically shut down, especially through the metaphor of needing clothing to hide from the world, we are not just hiding from other people, they hide from the world. They block the exchange of energy and reduce the total vitality available to them. They also impair their ability to relate to, and interact with, the world. That interaction is an essential criteria for any healthy organism. All cells, animals, plants and humans survive according to their interrelationships with the world around them. Once people insulate themselves, they cripple their ability to grow and process the world as they should.

The need for clothing

There are many ways of insulating and shutting down the processing of life. One prominent method is to shut down through the need for clothing. It isn't the actual wearing of clothing that is the problem, it is the need for the clothing - when they cannot do without clothing because they need it as a mask.

People say, "it doesn't worry me if I have my clothes on or off." That is great if it is really true. How would you really feel going naked to work or naked in public? (Assuming that it was legal for you to do it.) What impact would that have on you? How worried would you be about the way people would judge you? We need to look very closely as to whether or not our clothing is a way of masking and emotionally protecting ourselves.

Disempowerment

This masking, this covering up, this utilizing clothing to shut us down, disempowers us. Society is too full of disempowered people who hand over financial responsibility to accountants and bankers. They also hand over health responsibilities to doctors, emotional responsibilities to their spouses and are constantly disempowering themselves by giving away responsibility for many different aspects of their life. Even more serious is the way people shut down their own ability to interact in life, draw energy and vitality from their environment, and disempower themselves though their neediness for the masking aspect of clothing.

Mind and health

The mind is a very powerful influence on your health. It is generally accepted in psychology that many diseases are created through your mental attitudes towards your body and ourselves. Unfortunately, our society cultivates a negative attitude to the very bodies they are trying to maintain healthily. Many children are raised to believe their body is naughty and

should be covered up - something to be ashamed of. This has a lasting impression on the inner self and the psychology of the persona. Distorted thinking like this can stay with you to your grave unless you actively seek to correct it. In fact, it can put you in your grave much earlier!

Stress

The negative effect of being ashamed of our body will affect our image of self and be a constant source of stress. Negative body image can be considered a major cause of stress in our society. This will have a profound influence on the body's functioning and its ability to remain healthy and vital because high stress levels are a significant predisposing factor to disease. This can be seen particularly in children who are brought up with distorted body attitudes. Many young children are being prescribed tranquillizers these days.

Delinquency in minors

Once children start thinking negatively about their body and regard their sexual organs as bad, they become preoccupied with those negative aspects. People have a natural tendency to focus on what is denied. When a child has a negative attitude toward his/her body there will be a tendency to abuse it. The negative body attitude combines with a distorted self image and low self esteem, resulting in a tendency to self-sabotage with substance abuse, destructive sexual exploration, and to have rebellious tendencies towards delinquency. Many studies have shown that people who have been brought up in nudist families with healthy attitudes, tend to have a far greater respect for their bodies, and are far less likely to be caught up in abusive systems such as alcohol or drugs. (See - 'Growing up without shame' by Dennis Smith and Dr. William Sparks.)

The sexual aspect is very important. Adolescent children with hormones raging who have been brought up with negative body/mind attitudes, will quickly distort their sexuality. The sexual urge is the strongest force and drive people have. Nature was ensuring the survival of the species by providing people with a strong, healthy sexuality. When such a strong urge is distorted, suppressed, and confused they see abnormal behavior manifesting. The child obsesses with the opposite sex and with their own sexuality. They start relationships with the opposite sex with the attitude of competition - winners and losers. The opposite sex is threatening and sex is a way to conquer.

The intelligent child has a natural, healthy curiosity around their body and the bodies of others. When this natural curiosity is suppressed and distorted, problems occur. Further, when that curiosity is colored with feelings of being naughty, they associate guilt with their curiosity and desire to learn about life. This will reflect in all other aspects of their life including the general pursuit of knowledge and understanding.

Children brought up in a nudist environment tend to relate far more easily to peers, and pass through adolescence with less potential trauma. They have a healthier attitude towards themselves and others. Statistically, they adapt to study and learning more effectively, and have significantly less incidence of substance abuse, brushes with the law, and juvenile delinquency.

Naked beneath the clothing

A case history

Janice and her husband Gary stumbled along the seemingly endless pathway towards that beach. Her heart was pounding, she felt nauseous, on the verge of blacking out. Fear, guilt, and panic overwhelmed her and yet there was somehow a deeper intuitive feeling that this 'remedy' prescribed by her doctor was the one that would work.

The prescription was for her and husband, Gary to walk to this nudist beach, undress and spend at least one hour naked mingling with the other nudists. Janice could then come home when she wanted. Why was something so simple engulfing her with such strong emotional reactions?

At 33 years of age, Janice and Gary were both moderately successful professionals with a good home, no children and an unhappy marriage. Janice was always very ill to the point that it was threatening her ability to work. She had daily tension headaches, asthma, back pain, stomach cramps and nausea after eating and her reproductive cycle was in chaos. Alcohol relieved the pain but not the depressions. She was truly living the 'dark side' of her life and had few friends to talk to.

After many specialists and tests, she decided to visit a highly recommended doctor who practiced alternative medicine. After the consultation, Dr. Bill decided to physically examine her and left her with instructions to change down to panties and bra. He returned to find that Janice had removed her dress but still had four petty coats, tights, and the reversible gown supplied in the changing room on. When Dr. Bill suggested that he will need to see more of her body to conduct a physical examination the reactive, almost hostile, answer was that nobody got to see her body.

Further questioning revealed that even Gary was denied that privilege. On the very few occasions they made love (her words - "had a naughty") she kept her nightie and bedclothes on, the light off, and the nightie was lifted just far enough for the act to be done.

Janice was easy to talk to and intelligent. It became obvious through discussion with Janice and Gary that the negative aspects of nudity, clothing, and body image were a major block in her life. She was desperate to get better and had Gary's total support. Her therapeutic choice was between many long drawn out therapy sessions that often become bogged down in cerebral dialectics or her other choice - cold turkey.

Janice and Gary struggled on until they reached the beach. At this point they could see about two hundred naked people. The worst part was that many of them were actually playing beach games. At least half were happy, laughing children. Janice was unable to undo the buttons on her dress. Gary had to undress her. Four petty coats, tights and all! Janice later said that she honestly thought she was going to have a heart attack. Gary stripped, with some difficulty, and they started to walk (because they could not have stood still without passing out).

Forty-five minutes later Janice and Gary were playing beach volleyball with a group of naked people. They stayed the whole day, went back the next day, and are now regular visitors.

Since that day Janice has not had a severe headache or backache. All aspects of her health have improved dramatically. Her marriage is strong, sex life prolific (making up for lost time) and her career is flourishing. Her description later was that she suddenly felt released within her body, and was finally in touch with her true life force. For the first time in her life she was a sensual being without feeling guilty!

Janice's case was an extreme example of what so many people are going through with the distorted conditioning our society gave them as children. We are taught that the human body is shameful. We are then conditioned to use our clothing as a mask to hide behind. Continued use of this mask, eventually leads to identification with it. We really believe we are the mask. Instead of clothing being something we use for protection, for fun, to tease and adorn our bodies, we often use it to try and fool others into believing that we are something that we are not and then believe in the sham ourselves! This artificiality is recognized intuitively and we feel stifled by the falseness of life. Legally, we can't remove the clothing mask so we look for other outlets through illness, neurosis, and sensate indulgences.

Sensuality

The tragic aspect of this scenario is that people are also denying their sensuality. Sensuality is the primary energetic force that 'moves and shakes' the body. The chi (ki, prana) that people hear about in acupuncture and martial arts is simply another manifestation of sensuality. A healthy flow of sensuality determines the general health, vitality, sexuality, and feelings of well-being. Although it ultimately goes deeper than that, the naked body is a metaphor for our sensuality. Nudity symbolizes freedom, openness and sensuality better than any other cognitive process.

People don't have to be naked to reap the benefits of being naked. There are constant situations where it is impossible to be naked because of weather, social, and legal restrictions. We can, however, be 'naked beneath our clothing.'

Being naked beneath our clothing goes way beyond the scope of sensuality. It is an attitude to life. A constant reminder that life flows far better when we open up to it mentally, emotionally, and energetically.

There is a constant energy exchange going on between people. In 'healthy' individuals there is a give and take mechanism where our own unique energy flows out to the people around us, and then we, in turn, absorb the energy of others. This is very necessary for balancing the body's energy systems because of the variety of energy we can absorb. In much the same way, it is unhealthy to live on a mono food diet.

People who are shut down, and closed off to the world, short circuit the system and energetically isolate themselves from the world. Their energy system stagnates and starts to manifest 'dis-ease' within the system. Admittedly, there are many other reasons for 'dis-ease' but this one should not be ignored. Even if people don't take it that far and just concentrate on the obvious energetic/interactive starvation in our relationships, they will find dramatic decreases in our quality of life, personal growth and sense of well-being.

It is well known that there is a very strong flow of energy through the body, that the body is made up of energy of many forms and frequencies. The slower frequencies are the physical energy of the muscles, bones, tissues, etc. As those frequencies get higher they pass through the spectrum of blood, lymph, nerve impulses, energy channels, chakras, auras, etc.

Acupuncture

Chi (Qi) is the name given to the specific energy frequencies that run along 'meridians' (pathways) in the body. This energy is utilized by acupuncturists and other health therapies to influence their patients. The chi flow is a very important component of body function. A healthy flow of chi promotes a healthy nervous system, blood vessels, lymph drainage, etc.

The effect of clothing on energy flow

Many interesting experiments have been done on the affect that clothing has on chi flow within the body. During the authors' years as Principal of the Brisbane College of Traditional Acupuncture and Natural Therapies in Australia, many experiments were conducted using highly sensitive equipment that could monitor and measure the flow of chi along the meridians. An acupuncture needle could be inserted into an acupuncture point to demonstrate the affect it has on the energy levels in other parts of the body along where that meridian flowed. For example, a needle inserted just below the knee at a point called stomach 36, would demonstrate an increased flow of energy along the whole stomach meridian running up the leg, through the stomach, up into the chest, and up to the eyes. Stimulating the needle can effectively help to balance, and heal, a stomach disorder (such as a stomach ulcer), or perhaps increase the energy flow to the eyes and improve vision. Some interesting experiments demonstrated the following:

When a patient was naked and had the needle stimulated, there was a measurable flow of energy - we'll call it 100 units. If that person then wore nylon underpants while this experiment was being done, and the needle was being stimulated, the effective end result of the flow was a reduction of energy flow of up to 60%. Repetitive experiments demonstrated that if a patient wore nylon underwear while receiving acupuncture treatments, that patient would need twice as many treatments to get the same results. [Cotton underwear reduced the flow by 20%.]

The body as an electrical field

The surface of the skin is an electrical field that is constantly interacting with our environment and our inner body systems. The nervous system is another set of electrical circuits. The two combine to create varying electrical potentials that can easily be measured. This electrical potential is altered by the influence of different types of clothing. Synthetic clothing builds up a static charge on the body so that when a piece of metal is touched, the person gets a shock. Practitioners who work with bioenergetic therapy have found the static has detrimental effects on the body's electrical network which, in turn, affects health.

Daily nude break

Wearing clothing, particularly synthetic clothing, has a detrimental effect on the electrical potential of the body and the ability of the chi in the body to flow freely. From a bioenergetic

point of view, clothing builds up stress in the body with an accumulative effect. It is important to allow the body time to normalize - give it some breathing space as it were - for it to balance out the electrical flow throughout the skin. That is why it is so essential for us to have a period of time each day without clothes.

Many of us have noticed that the stresses of the day can be diminished quite dramatically by standing under a shower or sitting in water. There is a twofold effect here. One is the removal of the clothing to allow energy to flow more freely. The other, is that running water has a wonderful effect of neutralizing energy blockages, and deactivating electrical charge. The body can also neutralize itself by simply being naked without the electrical and physical interference of clothing.

That is why a period of being totally naked each day is so important. The longer the period the better. Our bodies need a chance to recharge, revitalize and sort themselves out. The accumulative effect of wearing synthetic, restrictive and tight clothing over the years is a dramatic increase in stress levels, accelerated aging and reduced health.

The affect of bathing suits

When people go out into the sun wearing synthetic swim suits, there is an accumulative negative effect. Firstly, a static electrical charge builds up from the material, interfering with the energy circuits and irritating the skin. Then the sun beating down on the body creates a temperature differential between where the clothing is, to where it is hitting bare skin. The combination of temperature differential, electrostatic charge built up by the synthetic fiber, and the disturbed flow of the chi through the area, creates electrical variations that can be very detrimental to the skin. Objectively, we see that the area around the bathing costume is where we burn more easily. There is an inch band where the bathing costume meets the skin that is the first area to get red, burn, and blister. This appears to be a result of the interference created by these electrical charges.

This also has a generalized effect on all the skin. When the electrical potential of the skin and its function is upset at any part of the body, it will have ramifications on the rest of the body. It is the author's belief that this is one of the reasons why nudists tend to have a lower incidence of skin cancer than the general public. (This has been reported extensively.) You only have to look at people on a nude beach to see that there is a lower incidence of burning than would normally be expected on textile beaches. Statistically, it has been shown that naturalists manifest a lower incidence of skin cancer despite the fact that they are in the sun longer, the whole of their body is exposed, and they generally use less sun creams. If this evidence affects the incidence of skin cancer, it will obviously affect many skin diseases.

The skin is the largest organ of the body with a very complex relationship to the body. If something goes wrong in the skin it will have ramifications on total general health. It has also been shown that these affects occur even with very small strips of clothing. A g-string or small bikini creates just as big a problem because that band of synthetic fiber across the skin creates the same situation. So it doesn't matter if you are wearing bikini or a one-piece, you will still have a detrimental effect on health and an increase in stress load on the body.

The authors own observations involve a long personal history of skin disorders and genetic tendency to skin cancers. My numerous moles developed white circles around them and

started going black whenever I went out in the sun, unless I used copious amounts of sunblock. I found that whenever I was on nudist beaches with the same amount of sun, and much less suntan cream, the opposite effect occurred. I tanned rather than burned, and my moles progressively disappeared as a result of sunbathing naturally, compared to sunbathing with clothes on. Recently, I have lived in parts of America where clothing is compulsory on the beaches and my skin problems started to return! Because of the personal health risk involved, I am reluctant to swim on a beach where I cannot be nude.

Breast disorders

This tragedy continues when women have to wear tops on their bikinis. They create an electrical imbalance around the very sensitive tissue of the breast that helps to promote skin cancer. Once cancer is in the system, it can promote any form of cancer. This has not yet been scientifically proven because nobody has really bothered to look seriously into this problem. Probably because they would be going up against a lot of 'sacred cows' when it comes to the promotion of nudity in relation to health.

The bra

As an aside, it is worth looking at the whole concept of bras. Most bras these days are still synthetic although there is a positive trend to cotton. The synthetic material builds up an electrical charge that interferes with the energy meridians running through the breasts. These hindered meridians form small eddy currents of energy rather than flowing smoothly in a linear direction. These eddy currents cause a build up of stagnant energy that attracts fluid (lymph) to the breasts. (In some body-types it does the opposite and reduces fluid flow to the breast.) The combination of the eddy currents, and fluid build up, promotes the formation of breast lumps, painful breasts, feeding disorders in nursing mothers, etc.

This is further compounded in bras that have metal wiring (such as the 'Wonderbra'). The wire sets up a magnetic field exacerbating everything even further. The author has successfully treated many women with long histories of breast lumps. I have told them to wear their bras only when necessary, spend time in the sun tanning their breasts, and organized a few sessions of lymphatic drainage therapy around the breasts with excellent, consistent results.

In the author's opinion, any government that enforces women by law to cover their breasts when they go out in the sun, is promoting disease. Not only the disease of physical illness, but the disease of mental illness by creating negative attitudes towards the human body, and negative attitudes towards one's own sensuality and sexuality, which then flows on to major problems within society.

[Note: Since writing this article, an excellent book has been published which documents the affect of the bra on the lymphatic system and the high cancer risk it can create. This book states:

"By wearing a bra more than 12 hours daily, a woman seems to increase her chances of developing breast cancer by 11 percent compared with the general population."

It would appear that wearing a bra for fewer than 12 hours affords a 19 fold protection against breast cancer, as compared with the general population. (Few women, however, wear their bras for only part of the day.) Also women who wear bras for over 12 hours daily, but not to sleep, had a 21 fold greater chance of developing breast cancer than women who remove their bras before 12 hours.

And women to wear their bras 24 hours a day (some actually wear them to bed), have a 113 fold increase in breast cancer incidence compared to women to wear their bras only 12 hours a day.

Conclusion: "It follows that going braless is associated with a 21 fold reduction in breast cancer incidence compared with the general population."

The book is called - 'Dressed to Kill, The Link between Breast Cancer and Bras.' Avery press.]

Metaphysics and nudism

Wei Chi (protective energy)

Extending on our concept of energy in the body, we can now look at one of the high frequency energies. The wei chi is a superficial energy that runs over the surface of the body just inside, and above, the skin. Some people can see it in certain light as a etheric whitish glow that can extend perhaps half an inch out from the body. (This should not be confused with the human aura that is an even higher frequency and extends much further.) It is classically referred to as our protective energy although, as we will see later, it has more far reaching effects. It is really a mixture of frequencies, each controlling different aspects of protection - physical, climatic, emotional, psychic, etc. One can have strong physical wei chi but weak emotional wei chi.

When we are injured, the wei chi is the first energy to arrive in force and plan our defense and repair. It encourages the flow of meridian energy, nerve impulses and, eventually, the biochemical agents necessary for repair.

A person who has low or weak physical wei chi bruises or cuts easily. Whereas a person with strong wei chi, such as a top athlete, tends not to bruise and cut as easily. Martial artists develop the art of strengthening wei chi so they can take powerful blows or deflect sharp objects and not damage their skin.

Wei chi protects us from our environment. A person with strong wei chi can withstand sudden changes in climate and temperature. A person with weak wei chi suffers from sudden climatic change even to the point of serious health problems.

Part of our environment includes the bombardment from energy fields around us. This includes negative energies from electrical appliances, power lines, radiation and numerous other man-made hazards. We can also be attacked by the negative output of people who are very emotional. Emotions are energy frequencies that, when experienced reactively and uncontrolled, can affect all the people around the emotionally charged person.

Wei chi depends on its ability to flow smoothly through the skin and over the body in order to function optimally. As mentioned earlier, wei chi is not like the aura. It appears as a thin film or envelope of glowing energy around the body of a healthy person. In some people it is only just above the skin. In others, it can radiate from half an inch to an inch. (In extreme cases - three inches.)

Clothing impedes wei chi

People who can see wei chi notice that it doesn't flow through the clothing as well as it flows along bare skin. It tends to dip into the body rather than tackle the fibers, colors, synthetics and electrical charges of clothing. For example, if I look at a naked person clothed only in a pair of pants, I will see the wei chi above the surface of the skin disappear where the pants are, and then reappear where the pants end. This means that the area of the body where the pants are is not being protected by the wei chi anywhere near as powerfully. That makes that area of the body more vulnerable to negativity. This is important because, if the wei chi flow is being impeded in any way, it reduces our ability to respond to life, and to respond to the damaging things that happen in our life.

The liver and the Soul

Wei chi has very strong metaphysical connections and implications. In natural (Chinese, Indian, Shamanic etc.) medicine, if the wei chi needs to be strengthened, the organ that we have to treat is the liver and its associated energy systems.

In metaphysics the liver is the organ associated with the soul. There are many interpretations of the soul. Simply put, the soul is the part of our body, or energy presence that helps us to process life and records the processes of our life. (Whether it be just this life, and/or past lives.) Medically, the liver is the central processor and chemical warehouse of the body. Most cultures relate to the old concepts of cutting out a man's liver to take his soul and various other similar stories.

The soul processes life, sorts out our karma, and is constantly synthesizing all the events that are happening. It is also involved with the process of planning and making decisions. In Chinese medicine, each organ has a yin and a yang component. This is seen in other systems as well. (They just use different terms to denote the duality principle of yang - yin; male - female; positive - negative; expanding - contracting, hot - cold, etc..)

The yang aspect of the soul is the wei chi that is found on the surface of the body. Our wei chi is not only there to protect us from life but it is also our first contact with the world around us. All the inputs coming from our environment, people and events make contact with the wei chi first. Although some of it penetrates directly into the body through the five senses, most of the input is processed by the wei chi. Healthy wei chi determines how well we can process and digest our life on a psychological, physical and energetic level.

This processing in the wei chi builds up during the day. When we go to bed at night a procedure occurs between 1am and 3am whereby the wei chi withdraws from the surface and travels internally to the liver and other major organs to synthesize and 'pass on' this processed information. (This time relates to the Chinese clock that demonstrates the internal concentrations of body energy according to the time of day.) That is why when we lie in bed

at night (even on a warm night), our wei chi withdraws, and we feel more vulnerable, and often feel colder and need to cover up for protection. This also explains why shift workers who work through the night can often have many problems processing their lives and making plans and decisions. It also accounts for many of the negative effects of jet lag where the Chinese clock is disturbed, and the wei chi travels inside at the wrong times.

Healthy wei chi means healthy processing of life. Earlier it was stated that wei chi is best treated through the liver. In a practical, clinical situation it is very difficult to obtain significant results in this way. What works in theory doesn't always work in practice.

Denying our soul

Wei chi is most profoundly affected by the attitudes of each individual. This is what we talked about at the beginning of this article. When people are in denial of their body, when they are closing down their emotional and psychological body and need to hide behind a mask of clothing, they are also suppressing their wei chi. Their wei chi hardly extends above their skin. It is thin and very weak. As a result of that denial and shutting down of the body, they are also closing down the processing of life.

Our ability to process and synthesize the events that are occurring in our life is heavily dependent on our healthy attitude to our body and our openness to allowing our body energies to be 'out there' to do that processing. When people expose themselves to the world, they are opening up their wei chi and opening up to the processing of life. When people who can see wei chi observe people undressing, they can see the wei chi expanding as they undress.

'Baring the soul'

Throughout history in many different cultures, there has been a term relating to somebody going naked publicly. We talk about them 'baring their soul' to the world. This is linked directly to the wei chi being on the surface of the skin and it being the yang of the soul. When a person 'bares their soul' by going naked publicly, they are opening themselves up to the process of life, they are allowing themselves to synthesize life in a more powerful way, metaphorically, psychologically, spiritually, and physically.

When people are experiencing major traumas or events in life and find that drugs or alcohol only result in their shutting down the processing of the event, they often pass through a period where they feel compelled to take their clothes off. It's as if the shedding of clothes represents the shedding of the problems of the world. Many naturists talk about the feeling of leaving the world behind them once they have removed their clothes and mingled with other people similarly naked.

Many non naturists in society have that inner urge to 'bare their soul' and take off their clothes, because at some level their subconscious is saying that they need their wei chi out there so that they can process what is going on in their life, and clear it all out. In general, people in a crippled 'mask' orientated society do not handle life well. They deny themselves the ability to process life, and proceed through the highs and lows of living in this world in an unhealthy way.

In 'new age' terms, many people want to realize their karma and purpose in life. They go to seminars, read books, have realizations and paradigm shifts that they simply can't synthesize into reality. This is because their wei chi is so withdrawn it cannot perform its function of metabolizing and digesting those experiences. This is particularly important when therapy is involved.

Nudity in therapy

More and more people are attending processing type therapy sessions in psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, rebirthing, holotropic breathing, life management, Reiki and many other wonderful techniques. These techniques involve bringing out many issues in people, and getting them in touch with important realizations about their lives. One problem is that those people participating in that therapy are usually still clinging to their clothing mask, shutting down their wei chi and are, therefore, unable to process what they are learning.

People often attend great seminars or therapy sessions, learn a great deal and go through major 'ah hah' experiences. One month later they have made little progress because, although they have intellectually realized a few things, they haven't internally digested the experience. The tendency is to drift back to the old ways.

One can undergo years of therapy only to make minor shifts because the fundamental problem of opening up to the processing has not been addressed. In her excellent book, 'Therapy, Nudity and Joy,' Dr. Aileen Goodman gives many examples of the increased benefits of therapies that utilize group and individual sessions where the participants are naked. The openness and honesty that the nudity encourages greatly helps the process. The consequent exposure of the wei chi facilitates the synthesis of the process and consolidates the results.

Massage

We often see people going for a massage and having their whole body covered except for the part being massaged. These people are denying themselves much of the effectiveness of the massage. They are not allowing themselves to be open to the process. Massage helps to distribute the wei chi and encourages it to flow more freely. If the therapist is good and relaxed, the wei chi will also be encouraged to synthesize the accumulated stress. The presence of coverings, both physically and psychologically, will discourage this process.

'Naked' versus 'Nude'

On a day to day basis, you are constantly receiving input from your environment, family, friends, work, television, traffic jams, etc.. It is essential that every day you give your body a chance to breathe, clear, and process by removing the obstructions to that process. You need to not only to take off your clothes, but to be totally open and vulnerable about it. Being totally naked - deliberately undressing with the concept of allowing your body to be physically and mentally open. Simply undressing doesn't always achieve this. When you undress for a shower, you are not necessarily naked in the sense of being totally open.

In the bathroom with the door locked, you can be clothed by the bathroom, by the environment of the bathroom. That, in itself, can effectively reduce the impact on your wei

chi. It does something, of course. Simply being naked is always going to be more healthy, but it won't be as healthy as if you were psychologically totally open and naked as well. Being naked in public, or out in nature, is more beneficial because there is an exposure, a vulnerability, an openness, that will dramatically open you up to the exchange of energy.

You should take every possible opportunity to go naked and expose your body to life. Weekends or holidays in the nude are very powerful therapies. They give your body, mind, and soul a chance to recuperate, synthesize, and regenerate.

'Naked' - a state of mind

It follows that 'nakedness' is a state of mind as well. Although it is extremely beneficial to physically expose ourselves, to be naked physically, and go through periods of time when we are naked, we should also realize that the state of mind of being 'naked beneath our clothing' is extremely important. (It is possible to be a nudist and not go 'naked.' There are nudists who use their nudity as a mask. They are nude in a confrontational or sexual way rather than being open.)

There are people who are unable to physically go naked because of climatic, religious, or cultural reasons. Some of these people are still able to process life well and have healthily functioning wei chi. These rare people have found a way to remain open to life in a positive way. They have a healthy unrepressed attitude towards their bodies, and aren't in denial of it. They are 'naked beneath their clothes.'

This state of mind is very important even for the practicing naturist. It means that no matter what our situation, we can continue to live in the naturist philosophy even though our environmental situation requires clothing. It isn't necessary to be able to walk down the main city street naked. That is silly because it needlessly confronts the sociological and cultural conditions of the area. Although those attitudes may be wrong, we will not advance our cause by being deliberately confrontational. However, there is no reason why we can't walk down the main street with clothing on and still be 'naked beneath your clothing' with all the advantages attached to that state of mind.

This healthy state of being means that you will have many of the benefits of naturism, and you will be more open and honest in your relationships with other people, and the world. You will be drawing on the energy around you much better, and empowering yourself from that energy. You will also be processing events as they occur rather than having them store up in your body to cripple it later with mental and physical disease. It is a compromise from the ideal situation of living naked. It is also an essential compromise for many people living under various conditions. People in Alaska might have trouble spending the winter naked. By being 'naked beneath their clothing', they can still enjoy the benefits of naturist philosophy.

Eliminating the mask

People who live naked or are 'naked beneath their clothing' are not using their clothing as a mask. They are not using it as an emotional or psychological character prop. They are saying, "I am good enough the way I am. I love and respect my body. I do not need my clothing to hide me. I do not need this mask to relate to other people. I do not need the prop of makeup and fancy clothes to try and get prestige or recognition from the people around me." This

enables people to relate to themselves, and others, from a position of empowerment and strength. They become part of the family of man, rather than a competitor in it.

Conclusion

It is a tragedy that the human race has allowed itself to create such a complexity of negative rules and belief systems around the body they have to live in from birth to death. One would think that when we have to spend so much time with something given to us by God, we would learn to love and respect it. We would want to look after it, and nurture it. We would want to train our children to grow up with healthy and positive feelings about it. To be able to enjoy its magnificence of structure and feelings. To respect, enjoy, and love the bodies of fellow life travelers without the denial, guilt, abuse, and hostility we see so commonly in this world.

The philosophy and practice of naturism will not solve all these problems because they are so ingrained into a system that has too much dependency on the negative fruits of disempowering rules. However, those individuals who choose to embrace the openness, honesty, and vitality of nudism, can at least profoundly enhance the experience of joy, health, and peace in their own lives and have a positive effect on those around them.

By encouraging a healthy positive attitude to our bodies, we are encouraging a healthy relationship with our mind, soul, spirit, and our environment. That will make a difference within our own lives and, if enough of us do it peacefully and responsibly, the world.