

Fire: The Element of the Heart

With Valentine's Day fast approaching, it seems appropriate to discuss matters of the heart as they relate to Shiatsu and Chinese medical theory.

The heart manifests the Fire Element. Love, excitement, sexuality and joy are all feelings associated with fire. Fire brings light, warmth and movement, inviting responsiveness. Candles make a dinner romantic and gazing into a cozy fire can tap into our unconscious, eliciting feelings of contentment, love and intimacy.

The heart—our emotional center—integrates our life experiences and generates appropriate internal responses. If our fire element is unstable, our responses may be too hot and can even hit four-alarm status.

Passion and romance can make us lovesick or consumed by desire. Whether a new spark, a long-tended fire or the smoldering embers of a waning love, our body's fire—fueled by emotion—can rage out of control, roaring upward to cause headaches, tension, insomnia, stammering, oversensitivity, jumpiness, problems with concentration, a general lack of joy and paranoia—affecting our physical, mental and spiritual health.

Now taken for granted, fire and its transformative power have been worshipped throughout time. Emotions' effect on our mental and physical health has long been known and studied by various lineages and luminaries of medicine, including Hippocrates, the father of Western medicine (460 B.C.–370 B.C.).

Shiatsu Therapy, built on the foundation of Chinese medical theory, works holistically, restoring balance to our elemental matrix (fire, earth, metal, water and wood) to foster greater physical, emotional and spiritual resilience.

Shiatsu therapists facilitate the body's natural healing capabilities, utilizing one of the most natural and intuitive forms of healing—touch. Shiatsu can be an important part of our regular self-care, benefiting the recipient as well as those we interact with closely. It can help us start the week centered and strong, or recharge us after a particularly stressful day, so we are better able to connect with loved ones.

When you have a fire imbalance, your Shiatsu therapist will work to help anchor your heart in reality, so you can respond appropriately and develop deeper emotional resources. Using the power of touch, Shiatsu can help you reconnect with your sense of humor, contentment and balance.

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