



The Natural Healing Podcast
with Dr. Setareh Moafi & Salvador Cefalu
Episode 66: Qi Gong for Everyone with Lee Holden

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:00:03] AD// The Daoists believe that anything is possible, including miracles, and that when you open your heart, you open your world to endless possibilities. My audio guide, "How to Attract Endless Possibilities" will teach you the exact steps to help you create your ideal life. And it's yours free when you sign up now at setarehmoafi.com/miracles. You'll learn the four pillars that will allow you to shift your internal experience so you can begin manifesting exactly what you want. The life of your dreams is closer than you think. Visit setarehmoafi.com/miracles to start creating it now. That's setarehmoafi.com/miracles. //AD

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:00:56] So we have a very special guest on the show today, Lee Holden, who is the CEO and founder of Holden Qigong. You may have seen him on PBS and he is a great colleague and also a friend of ours. Lee, I haven't talked to you for probably about ten years now, but I know that we always stay connected through the healing arts, so I appreciate having this connection with you today.

Lee Holden: [00:01:19] Absolutely. So good to be here, you guys. And so good to reconnect after some years of not seeing you. I'm so happy with what you're doing.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:01:28] Yeah, Lee and I want to commend you for all that you've done through PBS. You know, bringing Qigong to the public eye like that and something that's not so well known, especially with the rage in the yoga circles. But you've really helped raise the bar for qigong, and that's really a great thing. So thank you.

Lee Holden: [00:01:47] Thank you. You know, I'm trying to bring qigong to the mainstream. So qigong is a word that is comparable to yoga, you know, because it's such an amazing practice for our own wellness and self healing and it's so accessible. I mean, we don't have to change our clothes. We don't have to put on our spandex, we don't have to get a mat. We don't necessarily have to stand on our heads. It's just really simple, effective ways of moving our body mindfully, energetically, that activates a form of self healing. So I love it. I love sharing this wisdom with as many people as possible.



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Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:02:44] Welcome to the Natural Healing Podcast, the show designed to guide, inspire, and empower you to elevate your health so you can achieve your goals and dreams. We are your hosts. Dr. Setareh Moafi

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:02:55] And Salvador Cefalu.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:02:59] A husband and wife team of acupuncturists and owners of A Center for Natural Healing, an integrative wellness clinic based in the heart of Silicon Valley.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:03:09] We're here to make the ancient wisdom of healing practical and accessible for your modern lifestyle.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:03:22] So those of you who are not familiar with Lee. Lee Holden is the CEO and founder of Holden Qigong. He's a world renowned for bringing this ancient Chinese practice to the modern world. Holden has led eight successful shows on PBS, reaching millions of people through his warm, interactive approach to movement and healing. This November, Holden will appear on your Fountain of Youth with Lee Holden, a 13 episode show broadcast on PBS, where he teaches qigong at a variety of scenic locations, including Yosemite, Redwood National Park and Croatia. Holden has worked closely with celebrity clients Olympic and professional NHL and NFL athletes and high profile government officials, including the Bush family, the Minister of Happiness of Dubai and the royal family of Jordan. Through online and in-person courses, Holden teaches the transformative power of qigong, a science that improves the energy life force of individuals by activating dormant energy through a series of breathing and meditative exercises. Practitioners can see results in as little as seven minutes a day. Holden's teachings have helped more than 10,000 students meet their goals of healing from injury and disease, slowing the aging process, maximizing energy and feeling better in their bodies. Holden received his official qigong teaching certification from Master Montauk Chia. He went on to ghostwrite 12 books for Chia, including a bestseller about transforming stress into vitality, thus making this ancient practice accessible and comprehensible for all. Lee has also spent time learning from



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other qigong masters in Japan, China and Indonesia. Along the way. Wow. Fascinating story, Lee. And we can't wait to hear how you got to where you are. Like your journey will definitely be something we need to talk about.

Lee Holden: [00:05:22] It's been quite a journey.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:05:23] The last sentence that she didn't state here is that Qigong is currently the most popular exercise in the world, with over 50 million people worldwide practicing every single day. And that's something the Western world is not aware of. Qigong is, is like yoga, you know, in the Asian community.

Lee Holden: [00:05:43] Oh, yeah. I mean, it's amazing. I mean, 50 million people have been are doing it each and every day, but it's also the oldest form of exercise and it's, you know, some 4000 years ago was an exercise that was described as a practice for healing. You know, it was called the Art of Preventing Disease and Prolonging Life. And it was one of the first exercises that was written in the medical records as a way to help heal the body. And we all know that exercise and movement is so vitally important to health and longevity in a modern world. But these were the specific exercises to prevent disease and prolong life as it was discussed by the Yellow Emperor's Classic and Chinese Medicine some 4000 years ago.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:06:28] So we all know this is a very ancient form of healing and movement. But I'm curious, Lee, how did you discover Qigong? How did this become such a big part of your life?

Lee Holden: [00:06:38] Well, you know, I feel like she discovered me. You know, I was early days. My parents were into meditation, visualization and hypnosis. You know, they would take some workshops and weekend courses. And then they, of course, were like, let's go practice on the kids. So every night before bed they would come in and do a like a guided relaxation, kind of a hypnotic trance so that we would, you know, perform better in our sports or clear stress from school, be able to focus. And as I was doing some of these deep breathing and relaxation techniques, I started to feel something in



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my body. I started to feel this tingling, this buzzing, this elation. I would start to feel so good. And as a 15 year old, I was like, What is that? And really wasn't for some years until I really got a handle on what that was the sensation in my body. I was reading books on Chinese medicine and qigong by Mantak Chia, as you mentioned. I was like, finally somebody explaining what this was in my own body. And I bought his books at this beautiful little bookstore in downtown Berkeley. And as I was walking out of the bookstore with these three Mantak Chia books in my hand, I noticed on a telephone pole Mantak Chia in town tomorrow. And so I went to his workshop and, you know, kind of the rest was history because I started studying with Mantak chia and I was like, This is so powerful. And at the time I was a freshman in college, I was studying psychology and I was like, Wow, these are techniques and tools on how to make people feel better. And I just looked through the book and I was like, These are extremely helpful right away and studying psychology from a Western perspective you don't get tools and techniques to actually feel better, you get lots of diagnosing, lots of labeling, lots of what's wrong, but not much to do about it. And I love that about Chinese medicine and qigong practices. It was immediate in terms of how to feel better mentally, emotionally, as well as physically.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:08:42] And then I know that you and I graduated from the same graduate school from Five Branches. What made you actually make the decision to study Chinese medicine? Was it at that point when you were in college that you're like, okay, I want to pursue this and know more about this art? Or was it just kind of a side thing that you were doing for yourself?

Lee Holden: [00:08:59] Right at the time, it was a side thing I was doing for myself because when I graduated from college, people were like, You got to get a job in Silicon Valley. You can never make money teaching Qigong or doing healing arts work. And I was torn because Mantak Chia invited me to come to Thailand and work with him, write his books, teach hold workshops, and be one of the instructors in his workshops. And I decided to follow my heart and go to Thailand. And I did 12 trips to Thailand. Each trip we were working on different books and I became his kind of head ghostwriter for about 4 or 5 years. And all my friends in Silicon Valley were getting wealthy with their stock



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options and whatnot. But I was getting abundance of chai and you know, who did they ask for help when they were all stressed out? When the stock market crashed? It was me. "Oh, my God, what do I do? Oh, I had all this money and now I don't. And I'm stressed out. I got a headache, I got digestive issues", and I was teaching all my friends, you know, my community, how to use these practices for self healing. And that's where I became really passionate about is like, how do I translate these ancient esoteric practices, these energy arts that make it really makes sense for our Western minds, our busy lives, so that we could really use the practices for less stress and more energy and really activate our own healing power from within.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:10:24] You know, Montauk Chia was really a great teacher, you know, to bring this wisdom to the Western world. And sounds like you were a bridge there. So that's that's pretty awesome.

Lee Holden: [00:10:35] Yeah, indeed. And that's kind of how I saw myself. I wanted to bridge these teachings and to have them make sense and have people be able to understand them, to say, Yes, okay, I want to do that and I need that for my life because we see people in the parks, maybe in San Francisco or we've seen it in the movies, people doing these slow, graceful, flowing movements. But most Westerners say, Oh, that's not for me. And I just wanted to tell people, yes, this is for you. If you want powerful tools for self healing. And as I was able to translate these ideas and concepts into things that made sense for people, I started to see how effective they actually were in people's own health and wellness. When I started to teach in the Bay Area, I was going, you know, maybe 25 classes a week. I was going all over the place from corporations in Silicon Valley to health clubs to retreat centers to retirement centers, to kids camps. I was just doing a whole wide variety of teaching and seeing great results. And so all of a sudden I said, "you know what? How do I leverage this so I can reach more people?" And that's when I started making DVDs and educational material that very luckily got put in front of, you know, a PBS producer in San Diego. And they decided to try one show. And that one show did really well. It was a really funny story because I was on right after Wayne Dyer, who is like Mr. PBS. He was like very famous at the time. I know. Don't we love Wayne Dyer? Right.



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Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:12:09] In fact, I just picked up his book. It's funny you mentioned him. I repicked up "Manifest Your Destiny" after probably 20 years and I'm like, I should read this again.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:12:17] Lee I think I saw you after a Wayne Dyer.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:12:21] Yeah, we probably all did.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:12:22] I'm not even joking.

Lee Holden: [00:12:24] Oh my god, that's so cool. Anyhow, so I was on right after I was. I think I was sandwiched between Wayne Dyer and Yanni, you know, like Yanni live at the Acropolis and Wayne Dyer. And then they're like, Oh, we'll stick Qigong somewhere right in the middle. At the end of my show, we were talking about the benefits of Qigong, and the interviewer was really engaging and she had done some tai chi and qigong. So the phones, I could hear them ringing off the hook because it was a pledge drive. And at the end of the show the producer had a piece of paper in her hand. She's like, "This can't be right. You out pledged everybody tonight. Whoa. Wow." Yeah. So I was like, "Oh, that's a good thing, right?" And she was like, "Yeah, this is amazing." So what I didn't realize is if it pledges, well, immediately other PBS stations get notified and they start airing that same show.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:13:10] Okay.

Lee Holden: [00:13:11] At the time in 2006, when we were getting started, if you Googled my name, like you saw the show, you Googled my name, you only got my home phone number. There was no website. There was nothing. So I was getting like 50, 60 phone calls a day to my house, talking to me about qigong, talking to me about the impact, what it does. So I got to I got real hands on because people were just calling me for about a month or six weeks and it was just so cool to talk to everybody.



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Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:13:38] That's awesome.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:13:39] Yeah. That was probably a rotary phone.

Lee Holden: [00:13:43] It was probably a rotary phone. Yeah. I had to ride my horse out to the stable to answer the phone. That's how long ago it was.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:13:51] That's amazing. And right, like kind of prime time before, like the digital age kind of boomed. So then what developed from that?

Lee Holden: [00:13:59] Well, what developed from that was more we immediately went to production of new DVDs and new programming for PBS. So we did, you know, a bunch of other PBS pledge drives from 2006 to 2012 and then on and off into 2012 to 2018. And right now, currently the show *Your Fountain of Youth* is just starting to air all across the country. And it's not a pledge drive. It's actually a syndicated show. So you can see it in your local markets and it's usually on like in the mornings kind of before work. And people are doing it, as, you know, as rise and shine, get your chai flowing before you start your day.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:14:40] That's awesome.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:14:41] Oh, who is the yoga gal? Lillian? I can't recall.

Lee Holden: [00:14:45] Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I know, I know Lillian.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:14:48] Lillian Yoga or something? Yeah.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:14:50] Yeah. I used to do that all the time as a kid.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:14:54] Well, it's perfect because when you do things like this, you normalize it. And that's the beauty of making it public like that, is that you make it not so foreign. Like you said, you know, we're used to seeing people doing qigong in the



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park or you're used to seeing books about it or whatever. You feel very removed. You almost feel weird if you're interested in it. Yeah, but when it's normalized and like it's on public television, then people just do it from their homes and it's just a part of every day. I love that.

Lee Holden: [00:15:19] Oh, yeah, yeah, exactly.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:15:21] As we mentioned here in your bio, how seven minutes a day can make an impact. And I could attest to that.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:15:27] Yes. I can too.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:15:28] I mean, there's times I just do a little bit and then I'm off off to start the day. And I still feel something. But what I've been trying to do and as I've mentioned before we started recording here, is I've done some like Qigong breathing on the podcast through some auditory teaching. And what I've been trying to express to people is how to integrate qigong into your daily life. And so like, you know, we have dogs. I'm always walking the dogs, so I'm constantly just focusing on qigong breathing. And that just becomes a part of movement, you know? So you could be doing qigong a lot more. You don't have to just make that specific time, you know, when you're vacuuming the house or washing dishes, you know, all these activities are very good activities. Like I'm standing all the time doing acupuncture, so I'm always, you know, trying to work with the breath and the Qi as I'm standing. And that way I could prevent the exhaustion that happens because, yeah, otherwise you just feel like you're getting drained.

Lee Holden: [00:16:26] Oh, my gosh. Yeah. And it's, you know, you make such a good point because you don't have to do formal practice. You don't have to carve out your hour of time and tell everybody to be quiet. You can live qigong principles in almost anything you're doing, whether it's sitting in traffic, like you said, doing the dishes right before going to sleep. You can do little bits of qigong practices, intentional breathing, intentional movement, slowing down for just two minutes as you're doing something.



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That slowness brings in mindfulness, which helps to create a calmness and a clarity that you wouldn't otherwise have because so much of life is unconscious and just habituated. And if we slow down and use these principles, all of a sudden we get altitude above the mundane and we're able to guide and direct our life a little bit more consciously and creatively, rather than just getting stressed out, tense and tight. It just gives you so much more resources. And there's something I like to instruct people is what I call Chia breaks, where you just you're at your desk, you're sitting down, you're working well, maybe every hour or every two hours you stand up and do three minutes of qigong, get your spine loosened up, get your energy circulating, and then come right back to work. And if you do that each and every day, multiple times, you're living in a different body than you would otherwise. If you didn't do that over two months, three months, six months, a year, it makes a huge difference and it makes you more productive. So not only are you getting energized, you're getting more productivity because, you know, the science is out saying, you know, if you just sit there for hours on end, your focus, your energy levels go way down, your productivity goes way down. If you get up and take a break, whether it's a Qi break or just a nature break, you will be more productive.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:18:18] Yeah. And you're and you're increasing your awareness, your self-awareness. Just through the the process of increasing our self awareness that breeds transformation. Yeah. So, you know, because, you know, we always, we all want to change this. Life is about change, you know? And I mean, granted, we don't all want to change, you know, a lot of people who are very content with how they are and who they are, but anybody really who wants to evolve it requires change. And that requires awareness of ourselves. And just through that, the transformation comes and you have to stop. You have to pay attention. You have to check-in for that to happen.

Lee Holden: [00:18:58] And I love what you said about change because life is always changing. So if you don't want to change and life is always changing, you're going to be in resistance and you're going to just find that you're stressed out and you're holding too much tension in your body. It's kind of like you'll get depleted because you're swimming



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upstream. The current of life is moving and you're trying to stay the same. You're just going to get worn down. And so to be able to go with the change that life has to offer and guide the energy consciously, then you're in flow. And when you're in flow, you're having fun, you're inspired, you're creative, you're vibrant. It's a whole different way of living than stress. And so, you know, if we can transform stress into energy and energy into flow, all of a sudden life feels and looks really different.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:19:50] This is really important discussion here. I mean, you hit on that really important term resistance. You know, when we resist the change, you know, in Chinese medicine, we talk about resistance to change breeds wind. And wind is the pathology that is the precursor to all disease, you know, so it's that resistance to go with the flow, you know, that that is so critical in life. So many people, they drive with the brakes on, you know.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:20:21] And it reminds me of this new car we just got because it has one pedal driving and you feel like you're driving, you feel like you're driving with the brakes on. But it's regenerative. But it's regenerative.

Lee Holden: [00:20:33] Yeah. Yeah. Go green, guys. I mean, that's the thing. We do have our foot on the gas and the brakes at the same time, and we're wondering why we're, you know, low energy and all tight and stressed out because we're, we're in resistance and we're not being efficient with our energy systems. And one thing to remember to the listeners is that you have tremendous amounts of energy and you have tremendous potential and that you have tremendous power if you can tap into it. And these ancient practices have a lot to offer for modern life. We don't have this term for life force energy, at least not a very good one. In our modern, modern life. We're so focused on the material that we forget what's behind the scenes, that we forget about our internal energy and energy can be emotion, it can be thought, it can be consciousness. These are all invisible things. But these invisible energy rules life, invisible energy rules life. I'll say it again because it's so important to remember whether it's a force of gravity, whether it's your emotions, whether it's your thoughts. These are invisible energies. And as we know in Chinese medicine, they say the mind leads the



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chi. And so if our mind is in the right place and we have our thoughts in order and are positive and we're transforming negative thoughts into positive, all of a sudden, the way in which life responds to you is extremely different.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:22:01] And, you know Lee, this energy that we're talking about, you know, the spark of energy, the spark is oxygen. So that's why we know this just simple breathing is seven minutes of focused breathing. It's a huge spark to your energy system. Just got to take the time to pay attention.

Lee Holden: [00:22:20] Yeah. And remember, breath is is life, you know, And the reason all these ancient cultures talked about breathing, whether it's yoga, whether it's Tibetans, whether it's chanting or qigong practice, because breath turns into energy and breath turns into your energy that's particular to you. If you want everybody just take a nice deep breath through your nose right now. Where did that breath become you? Because that oxygen that you were talking about becomes your next thought. It becomes that spark to digest your food. And then when you exhale, you become nature. There's this dance, there's this oneness to life. And that's where we could see we were just talking about change. When we can inhale fully, we embrace the future, the positive qualities. We call it inspiration. And when you can exhale fully, you can let go of the past so that we can be more fully in the present moment. And we recognize by witnessing the breath. That nothing is static and everything is changing and always moving. And that is such a good lesson for us to not to hold on or resist because like the breath, if we hold on too much, that next inhale or exhale will be short or stuck and we won't have that full power or potential that it has to offer us.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:23:42] Yeah. Letting go. You got to let go of the breath. You know, a lot of people are exercising like crazy, and it actually can contribute to some burnout. I see that all the time. Or just a lot of stagnation, actually. And it's because it's generating too much heat, you know? So one thing I wanted to let our audience know is that, you know, when you're breathing with qigong and also like with yoga, for the most part, you know, you're breathing and you're cooling your body down. And that's the difference. You're not like generating a ton of free radicals in this process.



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Lee Holden: [00:24:16] That's great. If we bring it into, you know, Chinese medicine terms, this idea of yin and yang, these are two different kinds of energy. So everybody thinks of energy. Yang Energy. We got a cup of coffee, we want an energy drink. We want to get up and go. But yin energy is so important if we want. Yang Energy. Think of yin energy as being able to unwind, to be able to relax. Yin energy is a good night's sleep. If you get a good night's sleep, you have way more energy the next day. So don't forget your relaxation techniques, those cooling, those that yin energy where we actually replenish, then we can fully move through life with a full charged battery. So I find that qigong being at its so mindful that it's done often slowly with mindfulness. Qigong to me is the sunset of exercise. It's not like going to the gym or going for a run, which would be like 12 noon and it's not like going to sleep, which would be like midnight. It's like a sunset and it's that beautiful time of harmony where you're moving your body. Yes, you're exercising, but you're doing it with relaxation. And the feeling that you get from doing your qigong practice is like or is akin to sitting there watching a beautiful sunset. You just go, Oh my God, this is exactly how I want to feel. And that's what I love about this practice. And that's what's been so, I mean, for lack of a better word, it's so addicting for me to always be able to tap into that on a daily basis. And I've been doing it for over 30 years, and it's still one of the most passionate things that I do in my life.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:26:00] AD\\ Imagine waking up each day feeling inspired and on purpose with your life. Imagine freedom from anxiety and overwhelm regardless of what's going on in the world or what life throws your way. Now stop imagining and let's make this your reality. Visit joinfstt.com to become a From Surviving to Thriving VIP. Not only will you be the first to know when enrollment reopens for this one of a kind program, but I'll also send you exclusive insights and support so you can begin your journey from surviving to thriving now. Don't wait. Go to joinfstt.com to learn more and sign up now. That's joinfstt.com. //AD

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:26:54] And you made a really good point earlier that I want to go back to about how you can do these little Qi breaks, as you called them, and how that's



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so important for people to understand, because I have so many people come and say, "I don't have time for qigong, I don't have time for yoga, I don't have time for self cultivation. You don't know how busy my life is." And really, the reality is you don't have time not to do this because the little breaks that you take is going to expand the quality of your consciousness. It's going to expand the quality of just how you move through your life. It's so profound the difference that it makes. And the other type of person that I see a lot is person who goes and does these like hour and a half yoga qigong classes and then is like tight and stiff sitting at their desk the rest of the day. You're much better off doing short spurts of practice throughout the day. I think if you have time for those hour and a half ones, great. But don't neglect your body for the rest of the day. Don't forget to breathe. Integrate that awareness into every part of your life and you're going to get a lot more out of it than, you know, taking this bulk focus time that most of us really don't have or it's hard to create in your life. You can do it throughout the day. And that's the beauty of these practices.

Lee Holden: [00:28:05] Yeah, such a good point. And I see that a lot with just like you were saying, regular regular exercise, which, you know, people go for their morning run and then they sit at their desk for 10 hours or 8 hours and then they sit in their car to drive home and then they come home and have dinner and they sit down and then they sit down and watch TV on the couch. And that's a lot of sitting. And I don't know if people have heard the new research, but they saying sitting is the new smoking. And there's a reason for that, because if you sit too long, as we know in Chinese medicine, we call it stagnant chi. And just like water, if water doesn't move, the life force energy gets stagnant. So, yes, do your exercise, do your, you know, hour, hour and a half of movement in the morning or exercise. But don't just sit the rest of the day. Have those little breaks, breathing breaks, stretch breaks. Those are vitally important to optimal health. And that's what we're talking about, I think. How do we optimize our health or how do we activate healing from the inside out? And there's some real simple things that we can do to really bring a lot more energy and vitality into this precious vessel that we call our bodies.



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Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:29:16] And it doesn't take a whole lot of effort ultimately is what we're saying is that everybody can integrate this into their life.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:29:23] Yeah, but qigong, you could do, you know, just sitting in a chair. You could be lying in bed. Yeah. You know, I've made the mistake at times where I just feel inspired and I do a little qigong. In the evening and then I can't sleep. You know, I'm just like, darn, what did I do that you know? So, you know, now I do like meditation, you know, breathing and relaxation, and I'm usually just out pretty fast like that. But yeah, just so people know, you get an immediate charge when you do qigong, whether you may not notice it during the day, but if you do it in the evening, you might notice that you're you're pretty awake and alert and you really shouldn't be.

Lee Holden: [00:30:02] Yeah, not unless you want to go to the disco or you have to pull an all nighter.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:30:06] And unless you want to go raving, I guess.

Lee Holden: [00:30:09] Yeah. Yeah, exactly. It's perfect for that. My teenagers had some finals and they were. I got to study so late, I know I can't get up. And I was like, Come on, guys, do a little qigong with me just five minutes. And man, it put him in such a good place to be able to focus and study. And you make a good point, though. I mean, there's certain practices in Qigong that really energize you. These are what I call the morning or the daytime practices. And then there's other qigong practices that are your evening practices. These are going to unwind and they're going to design to clear stress, but they're also to promote a really good night's sleep. So there's targeted intentional practice for just about anything that you want in your life, whether you got tight neck and shoulders, whether you got headaches, whether you got insomnia, whether you got emotional stress. We can target a qigong practice for exactly what you're going through to make it balance with the rest of your life and overcome it and create a healing effect in your body. And that's some of the most fun kind of work for me is to design programs targeted for people's needs.



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Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:31:11] It's really a good thing to bring up because just so the audience could get an idea when you're going to sleep, you want the Yang Qi to settle down, You know that Yang Qi runs up the back, it goes into the neck and that stimulates your brain. So anything that you do that's going to help relax your spine and relax your neck is going to be inducive or conducive, I guess is the right word, to to having a better night's sleep. So, you know, whether you could just be doing yoga and some nice, you know, soft breathing, as long as you're just kind of loosening your spine, you're going to have a much better start to your to your night sleep.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:31:48] Yeah. Like relaxing the spine instead of stimulating the spine. Those are the two basic things, like, you know, triggering the bladder channel and relaxing it.

Lee Holden: [00:31:57] Oh, yeah. I love how you guys are geeking out on Chinese medicine.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:32:00] Yeah, that's our expertise. We geek out on Chinese medicine. Yeah.

Lee Holden: [00:32:04] I love it.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:32:04] We treat people all the time, and a lot of people are grinding their teeth at night. They get TMJ, they wake up with stiff necks. If you if you work with this and also it's really critical to release the shoulder joints. Yeah, you got to open those shoulder joints to let that energy move out of your head and out of your jaw and all that.

Lee Holden: [00:32:23] As you said that I was doing some shoulder circles.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:32:27] I know. Don't you always find yourself just moving throughout the day?



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Lee Holden: [00:32:30] Qi break?

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:32:31] There you go.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:32:33] It inspired a Qi break.

Lee Holden: [00:32:35] Yeah. Yeah, it did. Ready to go? And it's so true.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:32:38] Yeah. And in Chinese medicine, we talk about, you know, the bladder channel is the longest channel of the body. It runs along the outer part of the spine all the way down into the heel. And it's the channel that is designed to help you kind of be awake and propel you forward in life. The problem is that because we live in such a young society, especially here in Silicon Valley, right in the Bay Area and in many parts of the world now, we are in this chronic state of movement forward. So the bladder channel gets so tight on people that they can't relax and then at night they can't sleep.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:33:13] I'm sure you've seen patients. I have patients. I work and work to get that system to let go. You get it, you know, some of it to start to let go. But so deep, you know, that really deep pressure around the spine, it's just locked up. And they it takes so much work for them to get that to to unwind. And then once it's so habituated.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:33:34] They complain that they're really sleepy now. And now they need to drink a cup of coffee. That's right. They're too sleepy after treatment.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:33:40] Some people are like, didn't get energy. I just needed to sleep. I'm like, Well, you need to do that first.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:33:45] Yeah. Because like you said, Lee, you need that that yin chi to then be able to cultivate Yang Qi. You can't just burn on, you know, run on fumes all day long. That's how you get adrenal.



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Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:33:55] If you want energy, you go have a espresso. Right?

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:33:58] Quick energy, quick energy that will fade quickly.

Lee Holden: [00:34:00] Yeah. And we want that deep, nourishing, abundant well of energy that can sustain us. We don't, you know, those just those quick bursts. They're fine. But if you're neglecting the deep well, somewhere later in your life, you know, you could do it while you're in your 20s and maybe your 30s, but all of a sudden, 40, 50, 60 hit and you're like, where's that wellspring of energy? Now you're in burnout. Like you said, we're a culture that's wired and tired. And the mind, the energy is imbalanced because there's too much energy in the head, creating too many thoughts, and there's not enough energy in the body creating fatigue. So now people can't sleep well. And when you're wired and tired, you don't function well in life. You're edgy, you're overwhelmed. Little stresses make you emotional. And we continue these imbalances and it creates, you know, the majority of health problems, the majority of health problems can be avoided with lowering stress and improving energy quality. And this is ancient wisdom. But now modern science is talking the same thing. You know, the studies are out. You know, emotional stress is related to 90% or so of primary doctor visits. So the reason people go to their doctor is 90% stress related. That's emotional stress, which is astronomical. So I think it's just phenomenal that we're at a time where the research is proving and in alignment with what these ancient teachings have been saying for thousands of years. And we're getting this convergence.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:35:38] Well, and that in Chinese medicine, you know, that stress is exhausting the kidneys Qi And what do we see rampant now? You see people have low libido. They have erectile dysfunction. Viagra is very popular. You've got infertility is just like a huge industry now. So these are all reproductive problems relating to the kidney system. And it's because they're burned out at a very young age. Or or hereditarily. You know, it's like, you know, they're passing on the genes are just getting weaker.



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Lee Holden: [00:36:15] Uh, yeah. Hey, And we got solutions. So that's the good news. The good news is we got solutions. I mean, these ancient practices are so, so effective at working with where we've gotten ourselves in modern life. Where we're really out of touch with ourselves is what we're talking about. We don't listen to our own wisdom that's coming from within. We don't listen to the message within the body, and we're not listening to nature around us. We're out of tune with natural rhythms and harmonies. And so when we start to be able to be aware and conscious, you can hear the wisdom of your body when it says, I'm hungry, when it says I'm full, when it says I'm tired, when it says I'm too stressed out, we can hear that language because that's energetic language. It's sensation. And we can now have tools and resources to do something about it.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:37:07] Yeah. And it's not complicated. It really is relatively simple. It's. It's profound how simple it is.

Lee Holden: [00:37:15] As the qigong masters say, it's simple, but not easy.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:37:18] True.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:37:19] Well, it takes time and patience for sure, you know, to build things up that are really depleted.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:37:24] So on that note, Lee Well, how would we get started? Because I can just hear people asking the question of, okay, okay, I get it. This isn't so hard to do. I can do my Chia breaks, I can do, you know, the breathing. But what would you recommend to somebody who is like, this is so foreign to me or I've tried qigong and it didn't work for me. What would you recommend?

Lee Holden: [00:37:45] My style of qigong is really modern in its approach and its integrated meaning that I've taken modern life and tensions and created programming around that. Whether it's too much stress or sleep, there's introductory courses that I have. I have an introduction to Qigong, both a workshop and a program. I have a 30 day



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challenge which is seven minutes a day for 30 days, and we film this right on the coast of California. So it's beautifully filmed and you put it on and you do your seven minutes and you try it for 30 days and you you develop the habit of doing your practice. And we also have a subscription, meaning you just turn on your zoom and you do class with me a couple times a week. Those classes are always on demand and I edit them always so that you're you can either have a full hour or a 20 minute routine and we give away two weeks free so you can try it and see how that goes. So at HoldenQigong, you have all those different programming and condition specific things as well as some a lot of freebies and a two week free trial if you want to give it a try.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:38:51] Awesome. All right. So Lee, what can we do right now to activate Archie or to get a sense of Qigong?

Lee Holden: [00:39:00] Let's give listeners a qigong practice right here, right now. So what we're going to do is have the fingernails touch, so you bring the back of the hands towards each other. Fingernails are touching. And then what we're going to do is go back and forth vigorously rubbing the fingernails back and forth and do some deep breathing at the same time. This is going to activate your internal energy, activate your chi. So the ends of the meridians are right there at the fingernails. And so you're going back and forth vigorously. Take a nice deep breath in through your nose and a long exhale. Do it again.

Lee Holden: [00:39:43] Oh, one more time. Do it a little faster, vigorously and quickly to activate your energy. Exhale and then just relax and bring your hands down into your lap. And in less than 30 seconds, we have activated our life force energy A Chi, notice how your hands feel. See if you can feel a little buzzing and tingling in your hands. That sensation is what the ancients called Chi. It's life force, and we've been activating it. Now, when you do a qigong, a full qigong practice, we get that buzzing, tingling, that activation through the whole body.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:40:22] So true.



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Speaker3: [00:40:23] I feel like my fingers are swelling up with energy.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:40:25] Yeah, mine are tingling and buzzing at the same time.

Lee Holden: [00:40:28] Perfect. Hey, you guys are masters. And you know what? It's for everybody. This is the thing. It's not just everybody has life force, energy. And when we start to work with it, you know the word qigong qi means life force energy. But gong means a skill at working with this energy. And what is qi? It's life. It's emotions, it's thoughts. It's health. It's wellness. When we become skillful at working with Chi, we become more skillful at working with all the different kinds of energy that life has to offer.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:41:01] You know? Lee, I wanted to mention to the audience, doing that exercise with your fingertips, it stimulates the yanqi, it stimulates the meridians. And one of the things that's going to happen, it's going to wake up your brain. So if you just feel like you need a quick brain, wake up, that exercise will do it. I literally just felt I felt it. My brain just got a little bit more clear as we did it. So that was really cool.

Speaker2: [00:41:25] Yeah, absolutely. So that could be one of your good qi breaks like I'm still at work, but I'm feeling a little sleepy. I need to wake up. It's really good for focus and clarity. And it took less than 30 seconds. And if you do that with a little breathing, maybe a little movement, all of a sudden, less than three, four minutes, you're back to work recharging.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:41:45] And I love your enthusiasm. I always remember when we when I was at five branches and I took qigong with you. There's one there's one class that always stayed in my mind, which was it was a nice, sunny, beautiful day in Santa Cruz. And we. And you just decided you're like, let's go by the beach and practice today. Forget about being in the classroom. So we all walked down to the beach. We're standing in front of the beach and this huge school of dolphins, as we're doing qigong starts just swimming by. And I always just remember that moment. But also what a



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testament that is to when we cultivate A qi and we start to really activate Qi around us, how that just transforms the energy in our environment in nature to.

Lee Holden: [00:42:26] You know, that is so beautiful and I'm so glad you remember that because now that you mention it, I remember it too. But it's, it's so amazing. And it just blows my mind that when I go outside and do qigong, how nature responds, whether it's, you know, dolphins swimming by or what the birds do, or just my perception of what I'm aware of. And we just connect to the world around us in this beautiful way where we're just like, Hey, you know what? Life can be magical. Life can be amazing if we do this kind of cultivation practice where we're out of our just our habituated ways of moving and just do something a little bit different that wakes up our energy system into the magic.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:43:09] It reminds us of how just being present and out of our heads, how beautiful life really is. I mean, I often see in our backyard when we practice, we have a lot of hummingbirds that always seem to come very close when you're doing qigong or yoga practice, it's really amazing. They feel your energy change and nature becomes attracted to you.

Lee Holden: [00:43:28] Yeah, the birds here in my house, as soon as I'm doing qigong, they absolutely do something different. And the hummingbirds especially. We have these beautiful hummingbirds and they do this weird dance where they go straight up in the air and then they dive bomb down. And I was I was so amazed that they were doing this. I was like, what are they doing? They're not like they're not feeding because hummingbirds don't catch bugs. So I looked it up and that's when they when they're playful, when they're just deciding to be playful. And so as I was doing my practice out on the deck, these hummingbirds were doing this dance, and I was like,

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:43:59] They're doing their own qigong.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:44:01] So one time I was, I was-



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Lee Holden: [00:44:03] Everybody do your qigong and tune into nature.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:44:06] I was doing this Dear Qigong exercise is part of the five animal frolics. I was in a parking lot of a of a park in the area and I'm not exaggerating as I'm doing this exercise, a herd of deer come running into the parking lot area. It was just it was a trip. I never saw anything like it. So you can't explain these things.

Lee Holden: [00:44:30] Amazing. You know what? It's happened to me enough times, these kinds of things where I'm like, It's more than just random. It's absolutely more than random. I think you're so right in the when you said nature can really feel, especially animals, they really feel your energy. And when we're calm and clear and in a state of inner peace, you know, they are way more receptive to being around us than when we're agitated.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:44:59] Wouldn't it be. So nice if, like, we could get all of the world leaders and everyone you know, who's really so angry in the world right now to do more qigong? I mean, that's really the solution, I think, to world peace is when you have enough people cultivating themselves to get still and let go.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:45:16] I don't know, honey. They've been doing it a lot over in China. Not a whole lot changing over there.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:45:21] Maybe not the leadership, though.

Lee Holden: [00:45:24] Not the right people. Yeah, you know what? It's true. Yeah. And I think if we you know, it's so true what you said and I mean, this is this is definitely a dream of mine because when you're doing your practice, there's so much more balance and internal perspective that we're not grasping at life to fulfill our needs. Because as soon as we turn the focus outside of ourselves, we're out of our center, we're out of our power. And when we come from the inside, go in first and balance our energies, then then life is so much more joyous. It's so much more fun. And we connect to each other in the ways that we really enjoy. Like, you know, we're much more loving people. We're



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kind. We're in a state of abundance from within, so we don't feel this constant lack and survival externally. And so I do I really think that doing these kinds of practices is, you know, is a cornerstone for cultivating peace first within ourselves, and then that peace will just be reflected in the world around us. So let's let's do let's get all the world leaders together. You guys call them, I'll teach the class and we'll create world peace. All it would take.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:46:33] It's pretty simple, honestly. The reminder for everybody listening, I think, is you have to move peacefully in your body to create that peace in your mind. That's so key because so many people just do these. Like, you know, you can read literature, you can do meditation, you can sit and think about all the things that you want to make better in your life, but it doesn't integrate unless it's embodied. And I think that's why it's so beautiful what you're sharing. And, you know, having now taught yoga for all the years that I have, it's so important that we get help people access these practices in an accessible way so that they realize that it's not that hard. You don't have to stay so disconnected because we're so heady. We're such a cerebral society. We have to get into what really matters, which is into the physical body which makes us present.

Lee Holden: [00:47:24] Yeah, the body is always in the present moment and the head often is not. And so to be more present is a connection to our body. We just have to feel our bodies, you know, feel my body on the chair, feel my breath. And now I'm present. My mind is clear. And, you know, to solve mental emotional problems, it's often going to the body that's going to do that, to either discharge the emotional stress or to get us out of those repetitive negative thoughts. We come into the body with much more clarity and perspective. And then we are now tuned into the choice maker within our heads, within our thought process, and we can choose better thoughts. We can choose life affirming stories and images as opposed to life draining. So working with the energy of the mind, so, so important,

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:48:14] Like purifying. Purifying the chi. Get rid of the bad chi.



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Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:48:19] Yeah. By cultivating the good chi. Are there any last thoughts you want to leave our listeners with Lee?

Lee Holden: [00:48:26] No, I think. Thanks so much, guys. This was such a unique opportunity to talk with you guys. Fellow Chinese medicine practitioners, and I think this is something that has so much relevance in the world today. It is ancient medicine for modern life and use it complementary. You know, we have amazing technology, we have amazing medicine. But these practices really help us to empower ourselves to take charge of our own health and healing. Because let's face it, it's very frustrating to be in doctor's offices and talking to this person and that person and and not being able to find solutions to these simple things that can that can be awakened within us. So take charge of your own health, find your flow, and cultivate that inner peace for yourselves.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:49:13] Yeah, it's a nice way to end it. Yeah. You know, Western medicine really is too much about disease management. Yeah, this is health. Health management. Health regeneration.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:49:26] Yeah, exactly.

Lee Holden: [00:49:27] You know, saying that this medicine, these practices are true Health care. You know, where the medicine came from was prevention and prevention, meaning that people would pay their health care practitioners, their acupuncturist herbalists, their qigong teachers like a monthly fee. But as soon as you got sick, your payments went down, your payments went away. So you're like, Oh, I'm not feeling good. I'm not going to pay you, you're not doing your job. So unfortunately, we have Western medicine is sick care. It's not health care. So you need to take charge of your own health. Nobody's going to do that for you. In this particular design of society, you take charge of your health.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:50:06] That's so key Lee I'm glad you mentioned that because I think more people need to feel empowered that they have once they have the tools in their hands, there's nothing that you can't do.



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Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:50:15] And you won't feel like such a victim because it's easy. In fact, a lot of a lot of the phrases the doctors will even tell their patients, it's it promotes them to feel like a victim and powerless, you know?

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:50:27] Yeah, there's no other solution or. Yeah, that's true.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:50:30] Well, Lee, it's been great to meet you.

Lee Holden: [00:50:32] People remember how to spell qigong. It's qigong. So if you want any of those programs that qigong the spelling of qigong is is the hardest part.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:50:43] Japanese, they say Ki. Ki.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:50:46] Well, let's not confuse people about that.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:50:47] That, you know, So that could be confusing, especially for the macrobiotic people. But Lee, we're going to have your, your website on.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:50:55] Yeah, we'll definitely link it in the show notes and on the website for sure. So everybody will have that.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:51:00] You can say it one more time.

Lee Holden: [00:51:01] Yeah. HoldenQigong. Qigong.

Dr. Salvador Cefalu: [00:51:04] Okay. Take care.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:51:06] Thank you so much.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:51:07] Now we want to hear from you. It was so much fun talking to Lee Holden about his experience, his journey and his passion to make Qigong



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available for everyone. To learn more about what he has to offer and get the transcript for this episode and leave your comments because we really want to know what you thought about this episode and the insights that you gleaned from our conversation with Lee. You can share that with us by visiting acenterfornaturalhealing.com/qigong. That's acenterfornaturalhealing.com/qigong. Thank you so much for joining us for another episode of the Natural Healing Podcast. We so look forward to connecting with you again next time. Bye.

Dr. Setareh Moafi: [00:52:00] Hey, if you haven't already done so, be sure to rate and review us on Apple Podcasts. This ensures that we can share this invaluable information with more listeners just like you.