



## Conscious Life presents

### Finding Balance in an Anxious World

Guest: Mimi Kuo-Deemer

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**[00:00:08] Jaï Bristow**

Hello, and welcome back to this event. My name is Jaï Bristow, and I'm one of your hosts. Today, I am delighted to be welcoming back the wonderful Mimi Kuo-Deemer. Welcome, Mimi.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

It's so nice to be back and talking with you, Jaï. Thank you for inviting me to return.

**Jaï Bristow**

Thank you for joining us again. Mimi, you are the author of *Qigong and the Tai Chi Axis, Nourishing Practices for Body, Mind, and Spirit*, as well as *Xiu Yang*. I hope I'm pronouncing that okay.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Close. *Xui Yang*.

**Jaï Bristow**

*Xui Yang*, the ancient Chinese art of self-cultivation. You're a meditation, Qigong and internal martial arts teacher.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Yes.

**Jaï Bristow**

Wonderful. Today we're going to talk about anxiety within the framework of Chinese medicine and Qigong. Let's dive right in. Do you want to start by telling us what are the causes and the triggers of anxiety within that framework?

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

I would say the main trigger within the Chinese medical, through the Chinese medical lens, and Qigong being one branch of Chinese medicine, is too much heat, too much fire. We can get to this later, but it's interesting in that the planet is warming up, and there's so much danger to not only the planet, but the inhabitants of the planet, including humans. Excess heat over-stimulates the heart in Chinese medicine. Qigong ascribes to these theories, and works with these theories.

**[00:01:57] Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

As a result, it dries out what should be cool and calm in our bodies, which is the organs related to the water element, the kidneys, and the kidneys sit right under our adrenal glands. Sometimes they're seen as the same complex, the adrenal kidney complex. As some of you may know, as you may know, too much production of the stress hormone, adrenaline, can escalate an already anxious heart and mind. That is what I would say is that the primary cause in Qigong, in Chinese medicine, of anxiety, too much heat.

**Jaï Bristow**

Super interesting. For those who are unfamiliar with this framework. What does that mean exactly in a more concrete way? What does too much heat mean?

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

An easy analogy some people may find helpful is a garden. If there's something you're trying to grow in your garden and you don't water it and there's too much heat, the plant withers and it struggles, or it can't grow. In our bodies, it's the same. The body is seen as a very dynamic, responsive organism in Qigong, not machine-like, but sensitive to the seasonal shifts, the changes in day to night, in fluctuations, of the positioning of the planet, et cetera.

We are quite biodynamic and too much heat in the body is often a result of an imbalance that is causing disruption to a healthy system, that should be enjoying a little bit of equilibrium, of flow.

The systems in Chinese medicine refer to meridians, which are like rivers or streams of energy. When there's too much or excess amounts of one aspect, so too much heat or not enough heat, too much cold, too much damp, that offsets the the whole balance within the ecosystem of the body. That results in disease, it results in a disruption to our wish, the body's wish, to seek equilibrium and equanimity.

**Jaï Bristow**

Fascinating. Just to clarify, when you talk about heat, do you mean literal heat? You talked about the planet warming up, do you mean being in hot environments? What do you mean by that then?

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

It can be physical heat, but it tends to be things that agitate the fire in the body and cause it to go out of balance. That can not just mean actual physical heat, but it could mean things that are over-stimulating to the mind and the heart. Too much activity, too much information to process, too many experiences that are not easily digested by the heart, which is trying to metabolize all of life's experiences.

In Qigong Chinese medicine, the heart works in conjunction with the gut, and the small intestine. It also has the protection, the shield, called the pericardium, the heart protector, and that works with a thermostat system of the lower, middle, and upper torso, generally thought of as a triple burner.

If you look at, for example, too much heat as too much information, it could be likened to food that we digest. Information is also something that we have to digest. If we are asking our heart to be bright, and open, and easeful, and calm, it is predicated in part on having these helpers separate out and defend it from the things that are burdening it, or riddling it with stress.

**[00:06:46] Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

The small intestine, for example, is thought of as the filtration system. It's the gut, and it filters out that which is unhelpful, toxic, and damaging to the heart. It's like a personal assistant to someone important or something like that. It filters out junk mail, it filters out unnecessary phone calls, and it separates the pure from impure.

But if we're inundating our small intestine with either foods, or experiences, or information, and it's working over time, that's too much heat. It's adding so much work, and the small intestine is struggling to do that job of separating out what is pure and impure, and it gets confused. That lends to a confusion of what is it that is good for the heart, and it's not able to pass on what is helpful and discard what is unhelpful. That heats up the system in a way that makes it struggle.

That's one example of too much heat. It's just over-stimulation. It's too much fire that if you think of a match when you strike it, the flame will burn, and then go out very quickly if it doesn't have something else to light. That's the problem with imbalances in heat in the body. It's very often we'll have a quick stimulation, but there's not a steady amount of wood to nourish and let that continue burning. It goes, and then it collapses.

That's what in many of our tendencies, we get very stimulated in life, we get traffinated, and then we collapse. That's also a sign of heat that shows up in the body, and then there's nothing for it to continue that steady, calm burn like a campfire. Instead, it just goes out, and that's what we do, we go out.

Something like excess heat is something that Qigong practices, along with many other lifestyle changes, would support in rebalancing or reintroducing strength to the small intestine. Flow of energy through the small intestine, and flow of energy through the other heart-related support meridians and organs that I mentioned. It creates an opportunity to re-find a balanced flow and therefore optimize the function of these organs and meridians in the body.

It's important to recognize that just like in a garden, nothing operates separately from other things. We can't just look at fire and the heat levels in the body. We also have to look at, are we watering? What other contributions and affecting conditions can we work with and tend to?

**Jaï Bristow**

Yeah.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Very holistic, and it's important not to just separate out one of these organ meridian systems or phases, elements, and say, Okay, now I'm just going to work on that. It's many contributing factors at work.

**Jaï Bristow**

That makes a lot of sense. I'm hearing from what you're describing that this heat and the different elements that we use, or that you use in Chinese medicine. That the heat is one of the different elements that's used in Chinese medicine but is impacted by external everyday things. It's the over-stimulation of information, of too much agitation, of caffeine impacting us. All of that causes this internal heat and internal imbalance because of what's happening externally.

**[00:11:12] Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Precisely.

**Jaï Bristow**

Wonderful. How does Qigong help us manage and balance all the external stimuli in order to find more internal balance?

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Very often I'll hear people describe Qigong as a moving meditation, like a lot of contemplative meditative practices there's an opportunity to attune to, and give care to, what's happening in the internal experience. So often we're just pulled out into the external when we don't set aside that time, and we get very caught up in doing things, or watching other things, or finding satisfaction through stimulation.

But meditation is this invitation to reduce that by paying attention to the sensitivity in the body, beginning to attune to what's felt, beginning to attune to the tendencies of our actions and behaviors, how they play out. What I love about Qigong is that it is absolutely essential to include the body in that meditative practice.

As you know, I have a long sitting practice, a long love of quiet sitting, standing, lying, and walking. But I recognize, and I see this for a lot of my students as well, that that can be a challenging ask to just sit. On top of that, the way in which meditation has presented itself, and been interpreted often in a lot of European and US, Western, I say, but West, East, West, West. Anyway, Western ideas are that it's very top-down, it's very cerebral.

Even in the translations of some of the Buddhist texts, you have things like creating awareness of the breath as it moves through the whole body. When we hear that, we think, Okay, I'm mentally aware of what's happening as I breathe in my body. But it's still this very top-down directive.

In the actual translations of Patisamvedi, I've heard Ajahn Sucitto, who's a beautiful, Qigong-loving, Theravaden monk, and he says, the more helpful translation of this should be sensitivity. So as I train, one trains in sensitivity to the whole body breathing in. It trains in sensitivity to the whole body breathing out. That's a very different language and very different processing, I feel like for the brain to shift out of awareness into sensitivity.

Qigong is a beautiful practice of energy and intention. When we move the body, we start to anchor the body in repetitive, simple, gentle, often sometimes still held postures, but where we stand, for example, and stay still, standing like a tree. But there's this opportunity to know and sensitize oneself to the body. That internal awareness is so rich and so powerful as an antidote to this constant barrage of external stimulus.

To sense into what's happening in my internal space right now. This is interesting, I feel like, and how can I not manage it but be playful with it? So often we feel like in meditation, it's very serious, and we're attending to the thoughts and the feelings, but in Qigong, we're asked to move the hands like they're clouds, or separate clouds, or fly like a crane, seize like a tiger, submerge under the water like a tortoise or turtle.

**[00:16:00] Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

We get to connect to the external world in a way that is quite soothing and playful. It doesn't disconnect us from the external world, which sometimes in some meditative practices, there is that tendency of like, oh, you shut out... You close your eyes, you attune to sounds, but you're really shutting out a lot of the stimulus and the connections to the outside world.

Whereas with Qigong, there's an invitation to attune to what's happening within you, at the same time be playful in that attunement, and not disconnect from the natural world, actually reconnect to it in a way that is potentially quite healing and nourishing.

There's a lot out there now, forest bathing, ecopsychology, an invitation to let nature heal and reduce tendencies towards stress and inflammation. There are a lot of studies out there now that are pretty positive about the effects of spending a little time in nature. But not everyone can, not everyone has a forest to go bathe in, not everyone has an ocean to go walk next to, or green space. But that's the other thing that I love about Qigong is that you can bring the external world of nature into an internal intention-based, visualization-based practice. It's very powerful.

You have pianists for example, who practice piano without the actual instrument, and they say that the effect of that on the brain is almost as helpful in then forming the piece later. Just like that with Qigong, if we can imagine we're flying or moving like dragons, or dancing with rainbows, or pushing waves, we may live hundreds of kilometers and miles away from the ocean and a wave. But in that moment that we start moving like that, we've recreated a relationship with the external world that is not just news, information, and the myriad problems, wars, and famines.

It's actually, no... That is happening, but there's also the wave that I'm connecting to. It's an internal quietening with a beautiful invitation to maintain an external connection to what is healing.

**Jaï Bristow**

Beautiful. I love that because the definition you gave at the beginning of anxiety within the framework, as being a lot of agitation, stimulus, and information, and that creates a lot of energy in the body and too much heat. Meditation, which absolutely has its place, and I think we can both agree on that, often asks us to sit with all that energy. And that can be very overwhelming, difficult, challenging, and over-stimulating when there's already so much stimuli.

Whereas what you're saying, and what I'm hearing you say, is that with the Qigong, it's more about working with that energy. It's not so much just sitting and observing it, but embracing it. Again, that relationship between the external and the internal, and bringing in the elements and connecting to the elements, whether you're able to do that in a very physical way, going into a forest, ocean, or not, or whether you're in your living room, in your flat, in a busy, polluted city, that they're still having that connection between the internal and the external.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

It's important that when the mind is focused here and it's not embodied, we can then think about forests, and suddenly we're doing the Qigong, but we're like, Oh, but they're burning, oh, no. We can go into catastrophizing and worry. But the movements of Qigong, meditatively, they are letting us learn from and embody these qualities.

**[00:20:39] Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

For example, we're not like, Oh, I'm a caretaker of the forest, and what am I doing? I'm not doing enough, and I'm being like a tree, but what about all the trees? This can be a really dangerous direction if we allow ourselves to go there. But rather than that, when we stand like a tree, for example, we're learning from the tree. We're asking, If I were a tree, how could I feel rooted? How could I feel my branches and leaves are growing from nourished deep root systems that communicate with other trees through the mycelium network?

Or how can I feel at home within the cycles and seasons of leaves falling off and returning to the Earth, and nourishment rising up and branching into new growth? How can I stand like a yew tree, which may have been there for thousands of years watching all this turbulence go by? What can I learn from these? When we push waves, we start to, in a poetic way, become like a wave, the water. What is its soft strength? How can I embody and feel this?

This is a beautiful thing, too. It is this invitation to let us learn from the non-human realm. I think about this a lot recently. People, humans, in all of our human problems, are constantly looking to other humans to try to solve them. It's not getting us so far. There's not a lot of benefits that I can see long term. But I think in a lot of traditions, there's a lot of respect for our non-human relations.

Qigong is one of these traditions that arose from Daoism and then later influenced by Buddhism. But we have so much to learn when we listen, open ourselves, and humble ourselves to birds, to dragons, to turtles, to the oceans, to the mountains, to the forests. That's also how we can navigate this internal and external dynamic.

I think it's also important to add to what you're beautifully summarizing, the benefit of that meditative awareness, of attuning to what's here, but also holding the space for everything that's there, can feel so overwhelming. But Qigong is saying, We don't have to pay attention to that stuff necessarily right now. And there's a lot of benefits even in quiet sitting practice to put aside that which is too overwhelming at points, and not think like, I'm going to make room for everything. No, I'm going to make room for what I can skillfully attend to.

In Qigong, there is that invitation of skillfully attending, but it's through the lens and movement of, How can I also skillfully attend to the potentials of the limitations of my body as I'm moving. And very often, our mind overrides our body, and this is also, I think, a mirror for what's happening in the larger world and climate catastrophe. We're overriding nature, we're head-focused on dominating and disconnecting from the blight and the problems. But we do the same in our own bodies.

We're very harmful in some ways towards injury, push through it, we're very determined to achieve goals that we see physically, or match that which we see our teachers doing at the cost of overriding what our own experience is. But I think Qigong is this practice, beautifully that is gentle enough, and powerful, subtle enough that we can start to notice, Oh, is that happening?

They have the rule of thirds, if you're injured, you work to one-third of your effort level. If you're not injured, work to two-thirds. Never work to 100%. Always leave reserve. Just that invitation can be radical for some people to scale back the drive, the wanting, and the desiring to do more.

**[00:25:24] Jaï Bristow**

Absolutely. I think that piece you said about always leaving reserve, that is not the world we live in. That is not the messaging we get from society, we're meant to operate 110% all the time. The idea of operating at two-thirds, just hearing you say that, I can feel my body relaxing.

I think it's so interesting what you were saying about how if you're working with the elements and you're working with the ocean, it's not, I am the ocean, Oh, my God, the oceans are full of rubbish and plastic, now I'm full of rubbish and plastic.

It's more like, what can I learn about the essential qualities of the ocean, about flow and fluidity, or the strength of a tree, or the adaptability, and all these things you were saying. That's a helpful distinction between the literal elements and what's happening in the world, and the core qualities, or essential qualities of the elements, and what we can learn from them as opposed to being them, and drawing a direct parallel between them.

I also really appreciate what you were saying about what can I skillfully attune to, as opposed to I have to hold everything and all the intensity, which is going to fuel the anxiety even more.

If we go into, as you were saying, in our bodies, if there's an area which is particularly painful and intense, if we focus on that it over-simulates our nervous system again. Whereas if we hold space for everything, then we can choose where we bring our attention, what becomes primary. I think that's really, really important, and I appreciate you bringing all that in.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Great.

**Jaï Bristow**

You've already touched upon this quite a bit, but I'm really curious if you have more to add around... You've talked about the world heating up, you've talked about the forest burning, and I mentioned the plastics in the ocean. I've interviewed Roxy Manning about the political anxiety, and political landscape across the whole world at the moment. It can feel like the world itself is very anxious right now. How do these practices support us in finding balance and creating balance in this very uncertain, intense, stimulated, anxious world?

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Wow, if I had the answers to any of those questions through the lens of Qigong, I think the world would be a different place, and I would not have to sit here and proliferate. I don't know, Qigong is a beautiful practice that has many health benefits, and many spiritual salves built into it, but it's not a panacea, nothing is. I think we have to recognize that we do what we can within the scope and scale, again, of what is skillful for us.

If Qigong is a practice that is of interest to people, it can have this potential of working with disturbances to the energy flow, and helping to regulate and balance that flow. Balance is not some perfect state, but balance is rather the capacity to feel less like adjustments to different forces happening.

**[00:28:57] Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

We can accommodate the different forces at work in a way that's a little bit more gracious. We can get back up on our feet after getting knocked down a little bit more easefully, or a willingness to get back up if we've been knocked down. I feel like that's what balance is, it's not some perfect state.

But our bodies inevitably are going to be triggered and feel anxious by what's happening in the world. I don't know, even at the Jedi level, it's like no one's going to not have that. But I think practices like Qigong, what I've experienced is that it combines a sense of faith because it works so much with nature. That faith is like a confidence that spring will be green after winter.

A confidence in faith in the longer and the wider view and the longer trajectory of time. That in my little human incarnation, I might feel anxious about the world's disasters, and all of those that you mentioned are definitely concerns, big concerns. And yet Qigong, because it's so reverent towards the cycles of the natural world, it's like you know what? I think in a larger meta-scale, things will be okay. That nature, in its capacity to renew, will renew. And that what I can know and do is my immediate experience.

Qigong helps me attune to that through that sensitivity that I was mentioning. It helps me better attune to the way that I can respond to the calamities, because if sit there, it's helpful. But unless my sitting practice is very embodied and I'm very skillful at letting energy that is accumulated, it's gotten stuck and caused that distress and disturbance to my body, unless I'm skillful at releasing that with just breathing, it's going to stay there and just fester, and get more contracted, and knotted, and tight, and tense.

But the beautiful thing about Qigong is it's very good at helping discharge energy that's been distressed. Even things like clearing, just like coffee pressing, pressing down and letting the sediment settle so that the result of that is some clarity. If we have a lot of energy stuck in the body that is dissonant, it makes it much harder to feel that my heart and my mind is in a place that I can respond to the difficulties of the world.

But if my body feels more vitality and ease, and it feels settled, it makes it a lot easier for my heart and my brain to process what's happening in the wider world. But when my body is like agh, my mind and heart are inevitably affected by that. It makes it either look at the news, look at what's happening, and something that I want to retract from and I can't deal with it. That makes me even more anxious because I'm just closing myself off.

Or I charge forward into it and get caught up in a lot of over-stimulation and reactivity. There's, again, that heat. But if we can attend to some of that energy that gets lodged into the body that blocks some of the flows, that prevents the functioning of our basic organ, and meridian, and energy systems. If we can attend to that, let there be a little bit more care and balance, then the way in which decisions are made is much easier. The clarity with which we can meet the dangers, and the difficulties of the world is a lot easier, I think.

**Jaï Bristow**

Yeah, that makes a lot of sense. I appreciate how you say balance isn't a perfect state. It's not about getting the needle perfectly upright and balanced, and never falling, or the spinning top, or whatever it is. I think that that's so important because the same way we were talking earlier, about



operating at two-thirds when you're healthy, and one-third when you're not, that, again, this society expects us to always be perfect.

**[00:34:24] Jaï Bristow**

The idea of balance sometimes can be heard and perceived through that lens of perfectly balanced. Instead, what I'm hearing you describe is Qigong helps us have less rigidity and brings in more movement into our daily lives, and that balances more in a sense of movement than rigidity. I'm curious, you looked like you're going to say something.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Definitely movement is helpful, but I think what has been valuable for me is the discharging of stagnant or distressed energy. When I'm sitting still, it's harder to make that happen. That soft fluid movements, and they're not super demanding, but they are quite surprisingly powerful for people. And this has been something I've heard many times from people who are new to Qigong. That was deceptively powerful.

But that is much more accessible and also more immediately beneficial to stuck energy states, which affect our heart and mind tendencies. There was a really good quote that Ajahn Sucitto wrote, again, in one of his books, and I think it was, The vitality and ease that a settled body can bring, can lift the heart and mind out of psychological and emotional obstructions.

**Jaï Bristow**

Beautiful.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

I love that image, a settled body, a body that is full of vitality and ease, that can help lift the heart and mind out of, not permanent conditions, just temporary obstacles, that are psychological and emotional tendencies. These obstacles come up, but if our hearts and minds were asking them to deal with the problems of anxious, anxiety, and difficulty from the outside coming in, it's a lot to ask of them if the whole body itself is struggling.

But that's why I like Qigong, it's particularly focused on rebalancing the nervous system and the organ meridian system. Then when there is that balance, we find harmony. And harmony is, I feel like, again, it's not a perfect state, but it's a state in which we can better attune to the discord, and know how to respond to the dangers, and the stresses, and the difficulties that arise. We have enough space and clarity. We have that harmonious place that gives us the space to know that the difficult things are coming up.

**Jaï Bristow**

I appreciate that clarification, thank you for bringing all of that in. I also love what you're talking about earlier, about the cycles, and the natural cycles, and the elements, and cycles, and balance, and harmony, and all these things are not a perfect state, but supporting the spaciousness within us, to have more capacity to manage the external anxiety. That's what I'm hearing.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

I think like a lot of meditative practices, the Qigong work is working at a radical deconditioning of the heart's tendencies to tighten and constrict. It's then giving us that space to recognize the discord, and the distress, and then have a better response to it.

**[00:38:43] Jaï Bristow**

Amazing. I'm wondering if maybe we could go into some of those practices that can support that balance, harmony, and all those beautiful things.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

They're simple ones, I mentioned one, clearing. The centers of the hands are very magical places in Qigong and Chinese medicine. The hands themselves, are embryologically formed from the same epithelial cells as the heart. The same original cells of the heart fill out and give shape and life to the hands.

This is like a heart of the hand. It's also a working palace point for the heart protector. Something like gathering with hands and clearing, can be faster or slower, but clearing out. We can't clear out completely anxiety, or tension, or cacophony and clamor, but we can slow the momentum down behind all of that. It's okay, I'm letting it settle, giving it back to the Earth. It can be a really simple practice.

I'd also say that a lot of the practices that connect us to things like water, cool the heat of the stimulation, the anxiety. Anxiety often comes with all kinds of things like heart palpitations, the feeling of sweating and trembling, and things like that, and disturbed sleep, like insomnia, feeling over-stimulated, and having problems concentrating, these are all manifestations of, in Chinese medicine, too much heat.

Water-based practices can be a nice antidote to that heat. Things like we were talking about the pushing waves, the separating clouds, dancing with rainbows, rainbows appear after it rains when there's still some sun in the sky.

We can use some lessons and learn from the teachings and the wisdom of water. What does water do if you sit and watch a stream for a period of time? Again, you don't have to go to a stream, turn on YouTube, there's plenty of beautiful mountain brooks that you can watch. But ask it a question. How would you deal with the anxiety that I feel right now? And then embody that.

And then as you do something like pushing waves or separating clouds, or there are different practices, like flowing streams. What wisdom could you learn from that water? What could it teach you?

That's accessible wherever you are, which is the wonderful thing. We have that right here and unlike some of the other movement practices that tend to get grouped. If you go to a yoga studio these days, you'll have Yoga classes, Pilates classes, and Qigong classes. I would say there are definitely overlaps and similarities, and there are distinctions. One of the general distinctions of Qigong is their simpler shapes, they tend not to require as much range of movement. They can be easily adapted to sitting.

Then they work very strongly with intention. Intention is how we connect to something. We're not just moving the hands like this, Oh, no, no. I'm going to move my hands like it's a root, versus moving my hands like it's a branch, or move my hands versus compared to a flower moving through the wind. All of these will create different results and experiences in the body, but that is the result of the intention changing.

**[00:43:25] Jai Bristow**

Beautiful, I love it. Thank you so much for bringing all of that in. I'm curious if you could say a little bit about regular practice versus punctual practice. I don't know if punctual practice is the right word, but just occasional practice, or every now and then going to a class and dealing with the immediate anxiety versus regular practice.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Again, going back to it as a meditative practice, the more regular the practice, the more benefit someone will experience, and it's cumulative. While I've definitely felt the benefit of feeling very tight in my body, feeling very confused and distracted, and then doing a set of forms and feeling immediately better, I've experienced that process, and I value it very much as instant medicine.

The more valuable aspect of Qigong as a branch of Chinese medicine is its preventative aspect. If we can start, if one is interested and there's a commitment to some daily practice, it can have immediate impacts on certain conditions. But long term, what it does is it's preparing us as we age. It's preventing some of the more debilitating possibilities of aging, maybe we can stave some of those off.

My grandmother, for example, had dementia in her later years, but she continued to practice Tai Chi her whole life, and she had perfect posture, fully mobile all the way through to the day she died. But my mother never practiced any real physical exercise like that. Her mind was very sharp until she died, but she lost her ability to move and be independent in the last few months of her life, and the last few years of her life.

I'd also say that regular practice has been... Quite a lot of great studies coming out, which are helpful because these days, our minds like to have evidence of things, but lots of practice that say, Tai Chi is... They've done a controlled study group over 12 months of hundreds of people on this, aerobic exercise compared to Tai Chi. Tai Chi has been shown to reduce blood pressure more than aerobic exercise.

Then there's a lot of work being conducted by people in the mindfulness world who are looking at embodiment practices like embodied cognition. It's been a few years since I've looked at those studies, but some of the ones that I did look at and hear about suggested that in controlled studies, the practitioners of Tai Chi and Qigong had dramatically lower levels of inflammation, inflammatory cytokines in their blood, compared to people who are doing biking, or cycling, and running, and swimming.

Then, as we know, inflammation is too much heat. It's also the leading cause of so many diseases today. I think if one can commit to a more regular practice, these long-term benefits will come forward.

I would personally say I've experienced something, and I don't...Again, I don't want to... I'm hesitant to share this sometimes because I don't want this to be like, Oh, you should do this, and this will happen to you. I could have been very, very lucky, or I would like to think that it's the decades of my Qigong, and more recently, my internal martial arts practice that allowed me to go through what's in the West called menopause, and in Chinese medicine, second spring, without any symptoms.

**[00:47:55] Jaï Bristow**

Wow.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

This happened four years ago. I'm four years into my second spring now. But the only change... And I asked my husband, I was like, "Have you noticed any change in me now that I'm through?" He's like, "Maybe you're a little more opinionated." But I didn't have hot flashes. I think I had it one day while traveling, and it was stressful that day. But I didn't have any of the disturbances to sleep, night sweats, hot flashes, headaches, dryness, nothing.

That second spring is a heat. It's like after winter, it's growing again, and there's this heat in the body, and that's what causes the headaches if we haven't given ourselves a winter if we haven't been resting.

These days, at the time that a person may go through something like second spring, or whatever you want to call it, menopause, it's usually not a time of life that is quiet and still. It's typically now a time when many people have had children. Their children are now teenagers at the age of going through the second spring. That's anything but quiet and peaceful.

Or they're reaching their apex of a career, or whatever it is, taking care of their parents, as well as their children, if they have children. So that can be a real disturbance to the rest that the body needs before spring, and too much heat then escalates these problems of headaches, hot flashes, disturbed sleep, and night sweats.

**Jaï Bristow**

Yeah.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Anyway, for me, I didn't have those symptoms.

**Jaï Bristow**

Amazing. That's incredible. I love what you're saying about how it's more for preventative long-term benefits, but it can also support people with existing symptoms. It can do both, so that's amazing. You definitely have me convinced to start Qigong practices.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

That's a hard sell, Jaï.

**Jaï Bristow**

How can I and others listening, who have also been convinced, find out more about you and your work, and access some of these classes and exercises that I know you put out into the world, and that you've named?

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

There's a lot of different online platforms. I have stuff on my YouTube channel. My web page has a link to the Vimeo On Demand archive for self-paced courses. I want to make those accessible, you can even get a 50% discount, they're already very low price. They're like £2 to rent or £3 to buy, so that's there.

**[00:50:53] Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

There are platforms that I've created content for, including Commune, One Commune, Movement for Modern Life, Yoga Fitness and TV. Can't think of any others... But yeah, they're out there.

Then I have some books, DVDs, workshops, I'm still teaching and retreats. You name it, there's probably some sort of a fit if people are interested in doing some Qigong for them to start.

**Jaï Bristow**

Fantastic, and people can find all of those on your website at [mkdeemer.com](http://mkdeemer.com), I believe it is. Fantastic. I know you're also quite active on Instagram, so do you want to share your handle so people can also see? I've seen some of your minute videos and I love them.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Yeah, it's [Mimi Kou Deemer](#) is the handle name.

**Jaï Bristow**

Fantastic. Thank you so much for your time today, Mimi, and for sharing all these wonderful practices, and this beautiful framework through which to understand some of what's happening in the world, and in ourselves.

**Mimi Kuo-Deemer**

Thank you, Jaï, for the invitation again, it was a delight to chat.