



**ALASKA CENTER
FOR ACUPUNCTURE**

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“You are the Expert”

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Every day information changes about what we are supposed to do or not supposed to do to support our health and well being. Often, today’s information conflicts with what we’ve been told the day before, and it’s almost guaranteed that tomorrow’s information will further confuse the issue.

Contradictions abound in recent bestselling books on diet and exercise, and there’s always the hot new supplement that just might change your life. Problem is, you may have tried the last several “hot new supplements” only to find that your particular health problems don’t change at all.

If preventing illness is your goal, where do you turn for information? What if you are already suffering from an illness? What health screenings should you be considering at your age? What if you want to explore the limits of your physical potential by taking up an extreme sport? Or maybe you want to learn to alleviate some emotional stress? Who do you talk to then?

While friends, family and co-workers probably have plenty of unsolicited opinions on the aforementioned subjects; most of us have been conditioned to think that it’s important to consult an “expert” in order to learn the truth about what we should do to take care of ourselves.

So, it’s simple then, just find an expert and all of your problems will be solved, right? Unfortunately, taking your body in to a “body expert” is not the same as taking your car into the mechanic.

While all 1999 Subaru Outbacks are roughly the same, you, however, are a unique individual, and it’s impossible to expect that someone who hasn’t seen your particular

constellation of issues, concerns, challenges, hopes, dreams and fears can really know you better than you know yourself.

Of course experts know more about certain aspects of the human body than someone who hasn't studied their subject in depth, but that doesn't mean that they know more about a given individual than anyone else.

Additionally, experts are people too. So like most people they have their particular biases, blind spots and outdated dogma, along with their own personal issues and challenges to work through.

Also, it's important to know your source when consulting an expert. Some questions to ponder might be:

1. Is this person only interested in selling something?
2. Does the person offer a one sized fits all solution for every problem?
3. Are they personally following their own health recommendations?
4. What are the limits of this person's training?
5. What filters, biases or blinders does this person have?
6. Can they work with me in partnership if I want to try something outside the scope of their field of knowledge?
7. Are they willing to admit when they don't know something and make the appropriate referrals?
8. And most importantly, does the expert radiate the health and vitality that you hope to achieve?

Furthermore, it's useful to recognize whether you are in an emergency situation that requires immediate action, vs. a chronic situation which allows you more time to explore different options.

A wonderful book on the subject of knowing when you are facing an emergency is: "When to Call the Doctor to Save a Life" by Dr. Robert Tano. (www.whentocallthedoctor.com)

Of course this book is only useful if you've reviewed it BEFORE a life threatening emergency crops up. In the midst of a crisis, it's not appropriate to consult a book – call 911 or go to the ER.

Ultimately, it's important to recognize that when it comes to your continuing health and well-being, plenty of valuable information will come from experts, but it's up to you to look inward to make the appropriate decision.

How do you know what's good for you? You learn to listen to your body! Your body won't lie. It is always giving you direct feedback about what you consume and what you do. Stomach upset, chronic exhaustion, irritability, low back pain, tight shoulders, and

headaches are all wonderful examples of your body telling you the truth about something it wants you to do differently.

What is most essential is the commitment to live up to what you discover from your own body and then put it into action.

Samantha Berg and Kevin Meddleton are Licensed Acupuncturists who own the Alaska Center for Acupuncture in Palmer. Call 745-8688 for more information or visit on the Web at www.AlaskaAcupuncture.com