



July - August, 2011
Volume 3, Issue 4

Ear Say



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Upcoming Seminars:

Laser Therapy in Auricular Medicine

(Online Video Course)
with Dr. Beate Strittmatter

September 1

(Registration Opens
July 25th)

Seminar I – Online

September 16

(Registration Opens
July 25th)

A Warm Welcome
to:

Dave Maybee

Our newest
Lead Instructor!

Lisa Weleschuk

Assistant Teacher

Susan Reid

Communications

*And of course to
our newest class
of Auricular
Practitioners!*

A Coast-to-Coast Summer with VPI



Advanced Clinical Retreat,
Salt Spring Island, BC



Seminar II, Mahone Bay, NS



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Next Issue:
Sept 10, 2011

**Deadline for
Submissions:**
August 20

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of "Ear Say"**

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Advanced Clinical Retreat

Edward Sanderson, L.Ac.

The ideal way to master a style of acupuncture is to apprentice yourself to a master practitioner. When you can observe them in their practice, day in and day out, and have them observe you, you really learn in depth. Unfortunately, in our current society, that is difficult to do. Even if Muriel would have me, I'm not ready to drop my life for 6 months to 5 years and move to Nova Scotia to be her apprentice. I've tried convincing her to move to Powell River, but so far she's not biting.

So if you can't do an apprenticeship, what is the next best thing? The best substitute that I have found, so far, is the *Advanced Clinical Retreat*, with Muriel and David. During the retreat we were able to observe Muriel treating several real patients. Each session brought valuable insights and teachings. We also had many opportunities to practice on each other, under personal supervision by Muriel or David. And between observing and being observed, Muriel taught us new techniques and deepened our understanding of techniques we had already learned.

One advantage of the retreat format that almost makes up for the lack of a true apprenticeship is the wisdom of the group. I had the good fortune to spend a few days with a dozen of my colleagues who have been practicing auricular medicine for several years, some of them specializing in particular areas. For example, we learned great tips from a practitioner who specializes in neurological disorders. His successes have made him well known in his province, which has given him even more opportunities to research and treat within his specialty.

Another advantage of the retreat environment is what I call group energy. If you have ever been to a meditation retreat, or a qigong or hatha yoga retreat, you know what I

am talking about. The group energy heightens your own energy and, in auricular medicine, which requires fairly subtle skills, the value of heightened energy is the same as for meditation, qigong or yoga. As your energy is heightened in a retreat environment, your awareness expands and becomes more subtle. Even if, like me, you have a little performance anxiety when the teacher is watching you, and you feel unsure of your pulse reading, you still experience a shift, a quantum leap in your skill. In this environment, tremendous breakthroughs are possible.

Be aware though that the benefits can be short lived, unless you practice immediately after the retreat. "Use it or lose it" is even more meaningful in this situation, because without the heightened energy of the retreat, you will find it more difficult, especially as time goes by. It's like the way the memory of a dream can fade minutes or hours after waking up. So keep practicing, and don't be disappointed when it doesn't feel the same as it did, or if results are not as profound.

Another way to make breakthroughs permanent is to form practice/study groups with other practitioners. Even 2 or 3 people getting together regularly, whether it's monthly or quarterly can have many of the benefits of a retreat.

I feel very fortunate for the opportunity to observe and absorb the teachings, skill, wisdom, and as one participant put it, the grace of a master practitioner like Muriel. I look forward to many more such opportunities in the future.

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