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ACUPUNCTURIST ROBERT OGILVIE

DIMENSIONS OF HOLISTIC HEALTH AT **LE GRAY**

BY FIDA CHAABAN

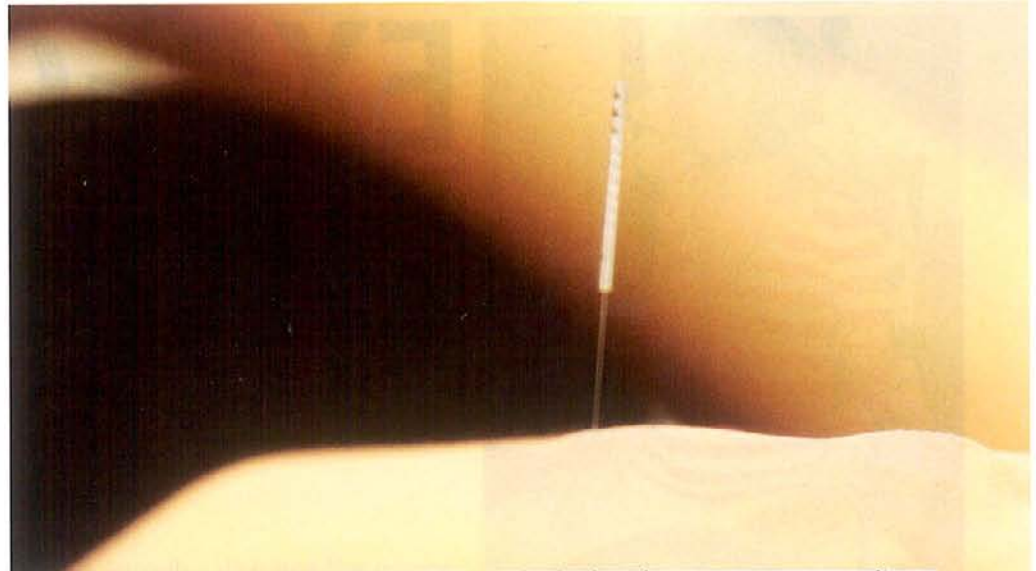
I get a laugh from Robert Ogilvie when I tell him he interviews like a movie star. “Just saying,” I say quickly lapsing into informalities. I’m sitting in the Cigar Lounge at Le Gray hotel in downtown Beirut and Robert Ogilvie, famous acupuncturist and holistic healer (my term not his) is speaking to me about the “damp” or “phlegm” part of my system. He started it, I promise! I had complained of a headache and fatigue and that prompted him to quiz me on my health. That’s the first dimension: Robert Ogilvie doesn’t just look at your symptoms, but rather why you are having those symptoms. “Why is somebody ill? We need to look at the root causes.” We talked about my menstrual cycle (I’ll spare

you the details) and my weakened immunity. He asks questions that my doctor usually asks but responds with concepts that are decidedly more holistic. I’m surprised to hear him discuss “Cold Invasion”, basically the Chinese medicine term for the Lebanese condition colloquially called, “Saf2it Hawa”. We discuss the merit of this theory for a while and he hands me an herbal remedy for the flu. “Take this, really I insist!” he says and well, not one to look a gift horse in the mouth, I do. (Thank you, Robert!) “It’s holistic in that we take into account everything: Your lineage, how you relate to your parents, how you eat, and your exercise [regime]. It is a bespoke system of medicine comprised of who you are and what you are,” explains Robert.

The second dimension: Treatments and courses. Yes, Robert Ogilvie does acupuncture but he also suggests herbal courses to boost and maintain results. “I studied herbal medicine in ’96. Herbal medicine is a substance and blood is a substance. You use a substance to make a substance stronger. Maybe thirty to fifty percent of people I give herbal powders in addition to acupuncture. If I go forward with Le Gray and visit Beirut say monthly, I would probably prescribe herbal medicine. It is a cheap and effective way to continuously treat something,” explains Robert. We begin to discuss some of the conditions acupuncture is said to alleviate and rumoured to cure all together. I beg his indulgence and refer to the Sex and the City episode of Charlotte visiting

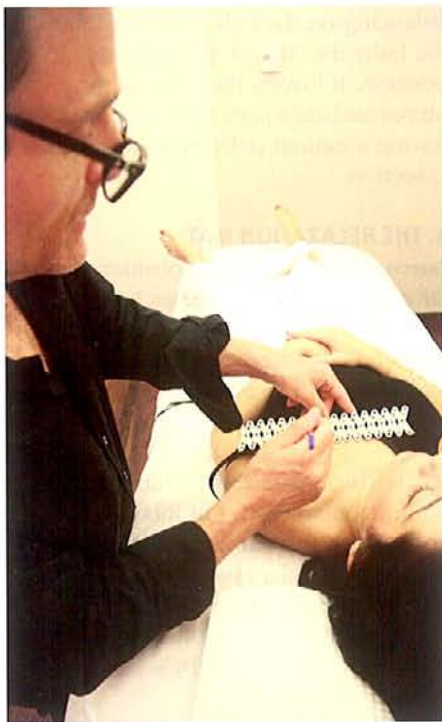


a famous New York acupuncturist to treat her infertility and that I've read that it's based on a real practitioner. Robert quickly agrees, "Women having difficulty conceiving- that's my passion. There is a physical and biological need in some women to conceive. I have huge compassion for women struggling with that. Often women after treatment conceive within 3 months and others within one cycle." This I tell him, will be a huge draw for the Lebanese community since infertility and difficulty conceiving are rife with stigma here. For women who have tried everything, "and had all manner of medical examinations done", acupuncture is the best and last available option says Robert and many in the holistic health community agree.



The third dimension of Robert Ogilvie is bedside manner. I'm squeamish in these situations and even more so when the person touching me is a male I've never seen before. Now imagine stripping down for a treatment in which you have your hand held (checking for pulse rhythmic), your body explored (searching for nerve endings), and finally, invaded (pin pricks that you cannot feel but will feel once the needle connects). Robert speaks soothingly as I fret asking if I can feel this or that and giving me a heads up before he administers each needle. He is intuitive, gentle and professional. Not in the habit of discussing my personal life during magazine assignments, I am a little wary of his questions but realize they are relevant to the treatment: I'm single and I'm not trying to conceive, I don't sleep very well and yes, I'm quite stressed. If I were trying to conceive and having difficulty, Robert just might be the very person I see since it is quite an emotional

trial. The last thing a woman struggling with the emotional stress of fertility problems needs is a cold fish in the treatment room. Empathy and sympathy go a long way, and people routinely complain of doctors and even holistic practitioners who "don't care". I realize that Robert's bedside manner is bespoke too, he knows I am a high-strung woman and purposely let's me babble away- waiting for the few moments of silence that I give him to reassure, address, and reiterate concerns. My headache is gone after my acupuncture treatment and I am surprised at this, but I am way more surprised at the quiet in my mind. "The last one I administered was to promote calm. People often see me for melancholia, depression or stress," he says simply. Well Robert, thank you, but I was so calm I couldn't write this article for 2 days! I kind of floated along, feeling like pending deadline wasn't so bad after all. Here it is and P.S. I'm still calm. ▶



MY HEADACHE IS GONE AFTER MY ACUPUNCTURE TREATMENT AND I AM SURPRISED AT THIS, BUT I AM WAY MORE SURPRISED AT THE QUIET IN MY MIND

Robert Ogilvie is currently considering doing sessions at Le Gray. He is based in London, England and the invitation to visit Beirut came from Gordon Campbell Gray, who receives treatment from Robert. No stranger to the press, Robert is widely mentioned in reputable European publications such as the Daily Mail and the Telegraph. To find out more contact PureGray Health Club and Spa at Le Gray www.legray.com | +961 1 962 885

