

Pursuing a balance in health for women

BY LOUISE CONTINELLI

NEWS STAFF REPORTER

LEWISTON — Women's Medicine of Niagara not long ago added to its staff Destin Radder, a board-certified acupuncturist and herbalist who specializes in women's health and pain management.

Radder, of Lewiston, studied at the four-year traditional Chinese medicine school Five Branches University in Santa Cruz, Calif., where he went on to teach its California board preparatory class.



Radder, 37, specializes in women's health and pain management, and recently talked with Niagara Weekend about his interest in Eastern medicine.

How'd your interest in this field start?

Destin Radder specializes in women's health and pain management.

When I was 17, I joined a kung fu school in Clarence. This was a school that taught a traditional style of martial arts, where rank wasn't measured by colored belts, where every class ended with 20 minutes of meditation, and the smell of herbal remedies permeated the air. It was in this school that I personally felt the effects of Chinese medical techniques.

During one football practice at Clarence Central High School, I aggravated an old gymnastics hip injury that resulted in a great amount of pain.

That night, my father, Joel Radder, helped me into the school, and my teacher took one look at me and instructed me to lie on his table. He kneaded and put extreme, sometimes painful pressure on my hip for almost an hour. He also rubbed an unfamiliar herb concoction onto my skin. I was given a bag of herbs and told to go home and put the herbs in a bath of very warm water and soak for 30 minutes, then go right to bed.

What happened next?

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Practice is offering time-tested therapies

RADDER • from NCI

The next morning my alarm went off, I jumped out of bed and went into the bathroom to get ready for school — and about halfway through brushing my teeth, I noticed that I had, indeed, jumped out of bed and walked to the bathroom, without any pain or discomfort. I went on to play in the game that Saturday without any problems. It's been almost 20 years since the treatment and I'm still without pain or discomfort.

We hear after you graduated in 1991 from Clarence High School, you saw the world.

I told myself, there's an incredible world out there to discover, and I'm going to live it, and learn from it. My wanderlust brought me all around the U.S., Europe, the South Pacific, India, Nepal and Thailand. I've walked ancient pilgrimages and learned from highly respected spiritual figures in Nepal, worked on Hollywood movie sets in California, rode trains across Europe and bathed in the South China Sea.

Throughout it all, one of the greatest gifts I've been given is the deep appreciation for home and family. Home becomes a special place when you live out of a backpack for months in a strange country. Home becomes even greater when you're in the depths of the New Delhi airport, trying to find that backpack, your only connection to anything familiar, and you finally realize it's gone forever.

You really lost your backpack in India?

Luckily I was with friends, and I had another bag that had some of my things. I did lose about \$4,000 worth of photo equipment — some of which was borrowed — and most of my clothes. If I were traveling alone, that would have been totally and completely devastating.

You have to tell yourself that you're safe, have food in your belly, you have friends around you.

Tell us more about traditional Chinese medicine.

For more than 3,000 years, traditional Chinese medicine was the dominant medical system in Asia. It was used to treat everything from bumps and bruises to major internal disorders and infectious diseases. When TCM practitioners are asked, "What can acupuncture or traditional Chinese medicine treat?," we often have a hard time answering, because it's been used to treat everything. The real question is, what con-

ditions respond to Western medical therapy better, what conditions respond to traditional Chinese medicine better, and what conditions respond to a combination of therapies?

Will you answer that question?

Fortunately, Western medicine's strengths are often Eastern medicine's weaknesses. The opposite also applies. For example, Western surgical techniques and life support systems are second to none. An example of traditional Chinese medicine's strengths is the treatment of pain, especially chronic pain. Low-back pain, arthritis and joint pain often respond well to TCM techniques, to name just a few.

What do you hope to achieve at Women's Medicine of Niagara?

I want to start to find that balance that I know exists between Western and Eastern medicine. I think a women's health practice is an ideal place to start, since women's medicine has been a specialty within TCM for millennia. Chinese medicine has thousands of years of experience "balancing" menstruation to alleviate pain and discomfort, enhancing fertility, supporting healthy pregnancies, regulating postpartum health and easing menopausal symptoms.

Sounds like your new job's a good fit.

I'm very lucky to be asked to join a practice like Women's Medicine of Niagara that has a holistic approach to treating women and their unique health issues.

Visionary medical professionals like Dr. Donna Feldman and Dr. Renee Baughman (MDs) see the value in bringing in time-tested therapies to complement proven Western medical techniques. It's a privilege to work with such forward-thinking practitioners, who understand that Chinese medicine and its holistic approach integrate fundamentally with how Women's Medicine of Niagara serves women's health.

I've come home with all the lessons learned, to try and assist committed health professionals, to help take care of our Western New York "family." Together we'll work to find a balance, that produces the best possible patient care.

Know a Niagara County resident who'd make an interesting question-and-answer column? Write to: Louise Continelli, Q&A, The Buffalo News, P.O. Box 100, Buffalo, NY 14240, or e-mail her at lcontinelli@buffnews.com