



The Yin and Yang of teacher and student

A long time ago my instructor told me that it took 10 years to really understand tai chi. I have reached that stage now and am amazed at how true a statement it is, and how a deeper understanding of this wonderful form of exercise seems to escalate with each passing year. What a joy that is!

Countless hours of practice help to learn tai chi, but there is no doubt that instructors, masters, students, and well written literature enhance and enrich the experience along the way. Developing a great sense of feeling tai chi is much greater than just being proficient in learning off by heart, a sequence of forms. When people around me share their experiences with me, it heightens my awareness of what I am doing. So, for me to learn from teachers willing to patiently, willingly, impart their knowledge to me in workshops is fantastic. In the circle of tai chi, the teacher is forever a student.

Perhaps the most influential teachers are the students we teach. It is wonderful to share tai chi with students. Watching their progression from that which we have all experienced, lacking finesse as their minds work around highly coordinated moves, to smooth flowing moving meditation, is a delight. Watching their rhythm as they move in unison in a room full of positive energy is inspiring. Students sharpen mental alertness of their teachers, particularly when a movement doesn't come easily to them. Working on ways to simplify a complex move is wonderful instructor training.

Students' comments keep the energy flowing in that lovely circle of chi. When they share their experiences such as looking forward to their lessons, greatly enjoying them and having improved flexibility, balance, sleeping, or normalizing of blood pressure, they nourish teachers to continue to impart knowledge of this unique activity that relaxes the mind while strengthening the body. And so the circle of energy flows between teachers and students, yin and yang in harmony.

By Meg Hutton
