

Winter - a time for stillness

In nature, the underlying energy current of Winter can be seen as a time of stillness, gathering in, and letting go of the earlier activity of the year in preparation for the next.

This time of year serves as a reminder of the natural internal stillness within the movements of Taijiquan. Taijiquan is often described as 'Stillness in Movement' because that is one of the aspects of what we, as Taiji players, are practising when we move through our Forms: releasing *Doing* and resting in *Being*. This is relatively easy to do in our own quiet space and it can act as a refuge from the whirl of daily life.

However, it would be much more useful to be able to bring that stillness into the midst of chaotic situations and not have to run away to somewhere else in order to feel calm and safe.

So... when life appears to be rushing along at 90 miles per hour, how can you find enough stillness to stay centered and calm?

One way is to join with it (apply the principles of Sticking) and move at 90 miles per hour yourself, then in the relationship between yourself and life there *is* a calm stillness. This is easy to describe in words but may be not so easy to achieve in practice. How to do this?

Firstly, there has to be engagement - if you are not engaged with what is happening, it is difficult, if not impossible, to keep up with the seemingly hectic pace around you.

Aliveness is the key

To be engaged with anything you need to be *alive*: this includes awareness, intention, willingness, presence, and joy. I'm sure you've seen and recognised these qualities within yourself and others - when someone is fully alive they are joyful; light yet grounded. Stillness, on the other hand, is often perceived as static, dull or dead. The kind of Stillness to which I'm referring I would call the 'Way of Taiji' - it is the essence of relaxation. From this deeply still, relaxed and totally alive place of Being we can move lightly, instantly and at great speed, should the demands of life require it.

So in these following few months of winter, invite yourself to rest in the quality of stillness, move with an inner stillness, be in tune with nature.