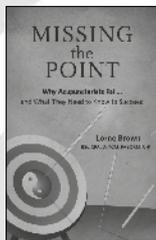


Reviews



Missing the Point: Why Acupuncturists Fail and What They Need to Know to Succeed
By Lorne Brown

Paperback, 97 pages,
£24.95

As Business Stream leader at the Northern College of Acupuncture (UK) I have been looking forward to reading Lorne Brown's *Missing the Point*, a very specific publication written for acupuncturists and of particular benefit to those starting out in business. I initially drew comparisons to *Acupuncture for New Practitioners* by John Hamwee and *Points for Profit* by Honora Wolfe, Eric Strand and Marilyn Allen. Whilst these books overlap in covering some of the same ground, in *Acupuncture for New Practitioners* the emphasis is on becoming a better practitioner through development of clinical practice and patient relationships, whilst *Points for Profit* is a compendium of all the information necessary to run a successful, profitable acupuncture and Oriental medicine business. *Missing the Point* is a short, snappy business self-help book. Read this book if you want practical advice with a formidable long term action plan.

Lorne Brown's credentials include a background in accountancy, a busy practice employing six associates and two successful continuing education websites for acupuncturists. He has amalgamated this experience in this book to highlight the common reasons acupuncture businesses struggle or fail, and has found easy-to-implement solutions to these problems.

In the introduction Lorne shows his understanding of the typical acupuncturist's psyche and uses this to demonstrate the negative impact this can have on success. 'Like It or Not, You're a Business Owner!', he asserts. This is something I can relate to as I see many new acupuncture businesses struggling. Lorne builds on this in part one, demonstrating how cultivating confidence, optimism,

perseverance and attitude are paramount to achieve one's dreams. In part 2, entitled 'Success is Surprisingly Counterintuitive', Lorne explains how pioneering entrepreneurs tend to explore new frontiers and are often thought to be mad through doing the opposite of what is normal. He demonstrates this with the personal example of successfully opening his acupuncture clinic on Sundays, which his colleagues initially thought was crazy. True entrepreneurialism involves 'thinking outside the box'. I particularly connected with the short chapter on delegation and the reference to entrepreneurs having control issues, something I have personally struggled with. Throughout Lorne makes extensive use of aptly chosen historical aphorisms with contemporary application, such as Thomas Jefferson on the importance of mindset and André Gide on the importance of the USP (unique selling point).

In part three Lorne gives advice on growing a business, creating an ideal client base and whether to raise prices or hire associates. He provides notable marketing techniques and insightful knowledge on goal setting. This all leads up to the finale, chapter 17, 'Achieving Success', and the invaluable action plan to achieve it.

There is much I enjoyed about this book. The layout can be commended; thought has gone into making it easy to read, memorable and useful as a resource. I particularly liked the sections at the end of each chapter called 'Putting it into Practice', which show the reader how to harness the impetus of an idea and process it into positive action. If I were to offer any constructive criticism it would be to include a section on supervision and add more practical advice on the importance of reception and patient management. Regarding supervision, it is easy when starting as an acupuncturist to underestimate the drain on one's energy that can occur. Working as a sole trader can be solitary, and dealing with emotional patients can be tiring, especially when trade gets busy. This can ultimately result in practitioners' qi becoming depleted and

can thus start to affect their health. I have seen acupuncturists forced to take time out from work or have to drastically scale down to prohibit burnout. Regular supervision can provide guidance and support and thereby protect acupuncturists. In terms of reception and patient management, the first contact with the potential patient is usually either over the phone, via email or directly via a 'walk in', and correct initial engagement is essential. I have seen new acupuncturists or badly informed receptionists fail to respond properly to these enquiries, and watched in dismay as potential patients and business are lost. Protocols to ensure this does not happen can easily be put in place. Patient management is of equal importance. Once the patient attends the clinic, correct guidance from the practitioner is essential to assist the patient with their treatment plan and ongoing bookings. New acupuncturists can easily bungle this with comments at reception such as 'See how it goes and give me a ring'. A patient must be managed or they are unlikely to know how often they should attend and for how long. They will appreciate this guidance.

In chapter 7 Lorne explains how entrepreneurs innovate to provide value. When value is seen in a product it is sought out and customers are happy to pay for it. If practitioners provide value in their clinics, patients will choose them for their care. Lorne has brought this sensibility to writing this book, combining his knowledge and experience to write a book of value for those wishing success in business.

In summary, this is an innovative book and a valuable resource for me as a business tutor, for students preparing to venture out into business and for those already in business. Lorne's writing is easy to read and honest, and his passion for acupuncture business is contagious. He points out how limiting beliefs and attitudes can prevent success in business and gives the reader the knowledge to develop the skills for success based on tested business strategies. Lorne's vision of assisting acupuncturists to become

prosperous, successful business people practising with integrity will be one step closer if they purchase this book. I will be putting it on the students reading list. Highly recommended.

Phil Montgomery

This book is available at a reduced price from the JCM bookshop www.jcm.co.uk/bookshop



Handbook of Formulas in Chinese Medicine
By Volker Scheid and Andrew Ellis
Softback, 406 pages,
£68.50

The *Handbook of Formulas in Chinese Medicine*, a new publication from Eastland Press authored by Volker Scheid and Andrew Ellis, is a neat and sharp reference tool for two types of practitioner: those with a busy clinic who are in need of a quick reference guide, and students or new practitioners wanting learning aids and checks on their recently acquired knowledge. Teaching Chinese medicine to beginners since 1995 has made me very familiar with the gargantuan task students have in learning a lot of new and very different information. This can be so overwhelming that even the most ardent of students often experience a phase of feeling defeated accompanied by strong feelings of inadequacy. Newly qualified practitioners can feel even more daunted when faced with the responsibility of treating complex real patients. Education in Chinese medicine has shifted during this 25-year period from an emphasis on memory and rote learning towards developing thinking skills and synthesising complex information. Now there is easy and immediate access to information about any herb or formula at our fingertips on our smart-phones. Even so, how to search, sort and assimilate that information in one easy click is still too big a ask for many. This book fills that gap.

There are several winning points about this publication from Eastland Press. Firstly, it has a good range of important formulas (183 in total) that we should already know about but may have forgotten some

details such as the constituent herbs, their actions or the balance of doses. Secondly, it provides groups of formulas that may have similar but different actions or emphasis, so can provide a good context for the treatment of the patient we have in mind. At just over 300 pages, weighing about one kilo and sized slightly larger than A5, this means it will fit comfortably in your work-bag.

Another significant strength of this book is that we can trust the authors. This small book is the light companion to Eastland's theory-heavy *Formulas and Strategies*. It is a strongly visual book, for those who find colours and pictures helpful for memory and quick indications. All the formulas are arranged alphabetically in pinyin (what joy!), although the herbs within the formula only have pinyin in brackets. There are three indices at the back: patterns and symptoms, English name formulas and pinyin name formulas (this pinyin listing appears at the front too, in addition to a top bar pinyin label on each page so you can flick through the book and see the pinyin formula names ordered alphabetically).

Each formula has a graphic – suggesting indications for gender, age, body type and constitution. This picture helps to identify the emphasis of the formula visually. As an example, *Ban Xia Bai Zhu Tian Ma Tang* is a formula whose primary focus is on dizziness due to upward disturbance by wind-phlegm. The graphic depicts a woman and by her head the words: 'headache, dizziness', and next to her chest: 'stifling sensation in chest or upper abdomen'. There are two pages of clearly laid out information, including colour codes for the taste and temperature of each herb and comparison with five other formulas that treat different patterns where dizziness is a symptom. Each entry can therefore serve several purposes, including checking detail, context and revision, in an easy and accessible way. There are also a couple of tables at the front describing different processing methods and herbs commonly processed. Substitutions are dealt with in a pragmatic fashion. For the small number of formulas that address skin complaints there is an appropriate accompanying photo, for instance for *Tuo Li Xiao Du Yin* there is an image of a

suppurating sore.

What are the shortcomings? Whenever we reduce data into categories for reasons of neatness, shorthand or brevity, there is risk of reductionism. That is, we lose some information or subtle interpretation. In addition, the gender-based portraits may cause unnecessary consternation for some (although with this in mind I carefully checked a sample of the formulas that involved constrained qi, and the gender portraits were evenly distributed). This book is an excellent aide-memoire for practitioners and students, and while being light on theory and explanation it displays lots of information in easily accessible ways.

Sarah Price

This book is available at a reduced price from the JCM bookshop www.jcm.co.uk/bookshop



Mastering the Art of Abdominal Acupuncture: A Concise Guide to Treating Numerous Painful Conditions
By Dave Shipsey
Softback, 228 pages,
£24.97

I have been an acupuncturist for 10 years and have studied several forms of acupuncture including Kiiko Matsumoto style, Tan, Tung, ear and hand acupuncture. I also studied Abdominal Acupuncture (AA) in 2008 with its originator, Professor Bo. Unfortunately due to translation problems at the workshop I did not quite get all the information I needed to keep using Abdominal Acupuncture. However, because I saw how effective the system was, I was hoping that someone would write a book about this topic in English. When I heard that Dave Shipsey had written a book about it I jumped at the chance of reviewing it.

The book begins with the history of Abdominal Acupuncture. Professor Bo 'discovered' Abdominal Acupuncture when treating a patient with sciatica. After trying various ways to reduce the patient's pain, nothing seemed to work. Then he decided to needle Guanyuan REN-4 and

Qihai REN-6. Within moments the patient's pain had disappeared. He subsequently treated several patients with these same points and each time got good results. From then on he started to research the abdominal area systematically, and after a few years he had created a microsystem using abdominal acupuncture that excels at treating physical and mental problems.

The author explains the theory and method of Abdominal Acupuncture step by step. In the Abdominal Acupuncture system the image of a turtle is superimposed on the abdomen, and the author explains precisely where to find the points based on this map. Most of the points are on the Ren Mai (Conception Vessel) and the Spleen, Kidney and Stomach channels. There are also a few points that do not belong to the traditional channel system.

Plenty of illustrations are used so that this information is visually easy to grasp. In the Abdominal Acupuncture system each abdominal point has functions that are distinct from its traditional functions. For example, Zhongwan REN-12 is used to treat the head, brain and sense organs when needled superficially, and the internal organs of the Spleen, Stomach, Heart and Small Intestine needled deeply. When treating pain the needles are not inserted deeply but rather very shallowly. Even adjusting the needles by a few millimeters in depth can make a great difference in releasing pain. And this method has the advantage of being almost painless when compared to traditional acupuncture.

The author explains clearly how to create an Abdominal Acupuncture treatment plan, and provides plenty of

case studies on how to use this method to treat pain conditions. I have now applied it on several of my patients with great results in a very short time. It is also a system that practitioners can use to treat themselves. This book is clear, well-written and very practical. It covers the basics of Abdominal Acupuncture, which is an effective system that works painlessly and precisely, especially for pain conditions. This book is an enormous contribution to our profession and the author has done an excellent job in putting together. I highly recommend it.

Naomi Welkens

This book is available at a reduced price from the JCM bookshop www.jcm.co.uk/bookshop

News News News

from The Journal of Chinese Medicine

Compiled and abstracted by Lisa Sherman

NEWS from *The Journal of Chinese Medicine* summarises recent research in acupuncture and Chinese medicine, as well as diet, lifestyle, exercise, relaxation and meditation and other miscellaneous subjects. Much of this information will help practitioners to accurately inform patients of the benefits or risks of lifestyle choices and give informed answers to patients' questions, aid in the practice of preventive medicine and help practitioners take care of their own health.

Top marks for acupuncturists in patient satisfaction survey

A new landmark survey of 89,000 acupuncture patients being treated for musculoskeletal pain has found that 93 per cent report their acupuncturist was successful in treating their primary complaint. Most of these patients had experienced chronic pain for many years and had been seeing an acupuncturist as a last resort, so they were not likely to get spontaneously better. In addition, 99 per cent of patients surveyed rated the

quality of care and service received from their acupuncturist as good to excellent. These levels of patient satisfaction exceed national benchmark averages for conventional care providers. The results were taken from a validated, government-developed survey tool. Only 0.014 per cent (13 out of 89,769) of patients reported a minor adverse event, with no serious ones reported. (Acupuncture: Does Acupuncture Provided Within a Managed Care Setting Meet Patient Expectations and Quality Outcomes? A 2-Year Retrospective Study

of 89,000 Managed Network Patients. American Specialty Health Incorporated Health Services Department.)

Acupuncture provides long-term relief of chronic pain

The beneficial effects of a course of acupuncture treatment for patients with chronic pain appear to persist for at least 12 months, according to a secondary analysis of data from the Acupuncture Trialists' Collaboration. Professor Hugh MacPherson and co-authors used meta-