

RUGGED UNCLE'S LONGEVITY METHOD

*from the opening lines of the first chapter of the
Yellow Emperor's Internal Classic (Huang Di Nei Jing)*

Yellow Emperor (Huang Di) – Why do some people suffer as they age more than others? Why does the work of life seem to be so exhausting to some and yet others appear unaffected by it? Is there some sort of problem with humanity? Which is the best way to properly nurture human life?

Rugged Uncle (Qi Bo) – Yes, it's true. Some people suffer more than others, especially in the second half of life. The only exceptions are certain “Tenders of the Way (Fu Dao).” These “Tenders” are able to avoid undue suffering and premature death by “following the way of truth as revealed by the sky” and thereby claiming their full natural span of 100 years without decline. They accomplish this by freeing themselves from the damage that occurs through the energy loss of excessive activity and strain. Depending on exactly how well one manages their “working motions” one may be able to resist the effects of aging for even longer than 100 years. Put simply, the singular way through which all things are possible (the way of the sky) is followed by balancing yin and yang, conserving spirit, energy, and essence, and ceaselessly pursuing the heart of truth.

- turn all perception and focus all energy on the unity of duality
 - harmonize the arts and sciences
 - blend form and spirit together (action and thought, practice and theory, real and ideal)
 - regard equally both the lofty and the lowly (worthy and unworthy, greater and lesser, above and below)
- protect and preserve the essential spirit within (nurture the psychological foundation)
 - secure the will and ground the mind
 - rest the heart at ease, open, and free
 - keep the whole body quiet, light, empty, and without
- follow the energy of the truth with joyful duty
 - regard the teachings set down
 - go out and come back with principle and timing
 - remove negative influences before they arrive

Of course, following the way implies not-following the non-way as well. As much as there should be an attachment to virtue and truth there should also be an equal and opposite detachment from vice and falsehood. When people are suffering it is not necessarily because they are not doing enough good and truthful things. It may also be because they have not removed themselves fully from the things that are harmful and dishonest. Here is a short list of what most commonly causes people to lose their energy and thereby suffer a premature decline in livelihood.

- reckless and incoherent effort without principle or intention
 - acting contrary to spontaneous joy
 - wasting and dismissing the truth
 - devoting hastily the heart
 - not invoking spirit or calling forth insight
- fear and dread of worldly affairs and the work of the world
 - vulnerability to “empty evils and rebel winds”
 - fatigue in the vision and confusion in the heart
- habitual desire and unsatisfied longing
 - excessive drinking and eating (esp. liquor and starches)
 - negative forms of seduction and intoxication
 - exhaustion of the essences through over-stimulation