



Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout January 29, 2023

Out with the Old in with the New



There are many traditions celebrated at the Lunar New Year. One of them is “cleaning away the dust.” Families clean their houses and the areas surrounding before the start of the new year. The word 'dust' in Chinese is a homophone for 'old', thus cleaning the house is symbolic of driving away the bad luck of the previous year to allow for a new start. Cleaning must end at midnight of the New Year in fear of sweeping away the good luck that occurs at the start of the New Year.

When we come to T'ai Chi we must clear away the clutter in our mind so that we are open to learning and being calm and relaxed in the process. The “monkey brain” gets in the way of being open to new ways of thinking, moving and feeling. When we start learning T'ai Chi or anything new, we begin in a state of incompetence. Adult learners do not like that description. No one wants to be incompetent. But, if we look at the word,

incompetence, it simply means unskilled. It is not a judgement or criticism. It is not a bad thing. No one begins a journey of learning without first being incompetent. We need to be comfortable with this first step of learning by opening our mind to learning. As we gain more skill, we move toward increased awareness, competence and finally mastery.

We declutter our mind so that we can learn. We remove thoughts and feelings that keep our monkey brain churning and replace these with more positive thoughts and feelings that allow us to stay present and focused.

The T'ai Chi literature tells us that learning T'ai Chi will help us to be **“Strong as an Oak, flexible as a willow and Clear as Still Water”**

