



Linda's T'ai Chi Weekly Handout June 2, 2024

Rooting and Grounding



Like roots of a tree that grow deeply into the ground, our feet sink or root into the earth. It is the action of our body sinking our weight downward. This happens when we sink our kua, the hip squat lowering our center of gravity, loosening and relaxing our joints as we sink our

Qi to the lower dantien- the source of our vitality. Being rooted is like the roots of a tree that allows us to be upright and stable. It also carries the meaning of connecting with the earth and the ground beneath our feet.

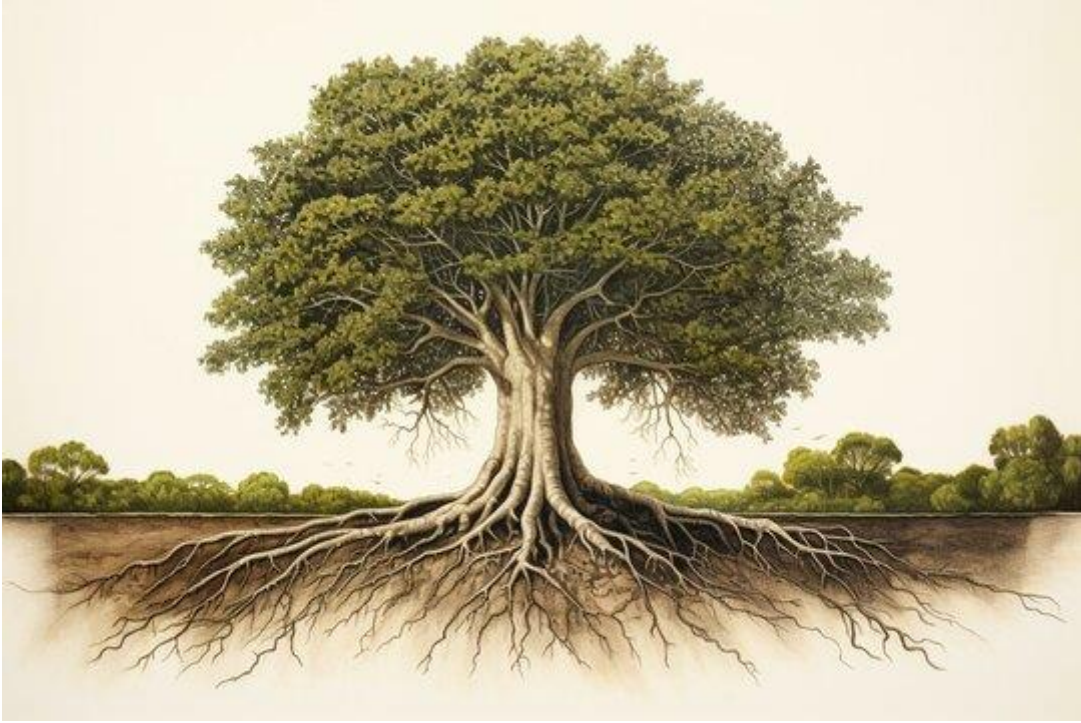
You would think this comes naturally but in truth many of us carry tension in our upper body – chest, shoulders, neck and head. We tend to “ride high” as I say. We are in a constant mode of lifting our weight upward instead of sinking with gravity as our bodies are intended to do. I think this comes from habit of managing tension, using the computer, phones, and all those things we do throughout the day. We are in a constant state of alertness. We have so much information coming our way in a constant barrage of words, images and concepts. We are constantly evaluating what we believe or not. We place our mind and body in a state of being on guard. We also breathe more shallowly as we tense. This habit becomes normalized and we do not even realize we are holding onto tension until our bodies react and say, “enough!” Our bodies react with pain, discomfort, aches, soreness and fatigue.

To reset our mind and body, we need to first recognize that we are holding tension and lifting our upper body upward in a constant state of stress. Then, once we recognize it, we can make adjustments to reset our mind and body. We begin with our feet.

Grounding, like rooting, is simply connecting our body with the earth's surface, the land, and water of our planet. It is of utmost importance to maintain balance naturally and relaxed while working with gravity instead of fighting it. We need to sink our strength all the way down the legs to the sole of the feet- the "bubbling well spring" while maintaining the integrity of our center line. The center line is the tip of crown, the neck, spine, hips, legs, knees, ankles and feet.

In T'ai Chi and Qigong we actively and consciously release tension in the upper body and legs while letting the legs and feet take care of the weight of the whole body. We ground our weight to the earth, and root our energy into the ball of the foot connecting to the energy within the earth.

This takes a bit of practice until it becomes a habit. Practicing deep slow breathing daily is a good place to start. Concentrating on dropping our shoulders and relaxing into our lower dantien downward to the bubbling well spring as we connect to the energy of the earth.



Be well, stay safe

Peace,

Linda