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## Why this book?

In a nutshell, this book is about curious tricks to create ease. I've called it "Happiness is a Warm Balloon" because my most curious trick - "Balloon breathing" is ultimately THE method I want you to master. Master it and you'll have a warm belly. Warm belly equals a warm balloon. Playing with balloons makes you happy! Being happy is the reward for mastering this.

Even though this collection of ideas is the result of 25 years creating "Healthy Chinese takeaway" for my clients, these lifestyle suggestions are universally applicable. In addition to client advice I've added ideas I've stumbled upon as I've lived my life in the pursuit of creating ease. I've added these as I think they'll help everyday problems of just being, thinking, or doing. It is only because they are related to applying the take home advice, that I've included them here. At times I have chosen to use the language of western science to explain some concepts that I've found for strategies that work. So you do not have to understand Chinese medicine to use this book. You just have to be in need of assistance and wanting to help yourself.

This guide is full of tricks, comprised in five sections. The first section deals with the most basic simplified strategies to assist well-being: breathing, thinking, being. The second section is full of ideas to keep you out of the doctor's waiting room. There are strategies to moderate pain, food suggestions to deal with a cold, deal with hot flushes/flushes, strategies to moderate high blood pressure, insomnia, anxiety and feeling blue. The third section explores having fun with health and fitness. After that, we play in the garden then get back into the kitchen to rattle pots and pans. The final section details any recipe mentioned in the preceding sections of the text.

The recipe section is quite large, as individual food suggestions may be easy to name, but how to use the suggested foods is not so easy. There are no bird's nests or shark fins of old Chinese style food recipes, just good honest "clean eating" ideas. Nearly all the recipes are vegetarian. There are also vegan or gluten free recipes or both. Recipes range from snacks, to soup, to mains, and even desserts. It's an eclectic collection that has largely stood the test of time. I was a vegetarian cook before I became a Chinese medicine practitioner, so was very interested in the interplay of food, and how it influenced energy on a daily basis.

So why stepping stones? You may stumble, but armed with these strategies, in no time, you'll be turning those stumbling blocks of ill-health into stepping-stones of vitality. I hope you have fun with my approach to creating ease.

Once you experience ease, before you know it, you'll be playfully dancing, stepping lightly over those stones you've mastered. Keep your belly expanded with warmth and good food, let the balloon rise, allow your mood to follow.

