

NCCAOM Diplomate Spotlight: Shellie Goldstein



1. How did you initially come to be interested in the field of acupuncture and Oriental medicine?

I had a back injury and heard that acupuncture could be helpful. I found, in Chinatown, an acupuncturist who treated me with acupuncture and herbs. After several treatments my back pain was gone. I was so impressed with the results I decided to go to acupuncture school. I love the philosophy of Chinese medicine and acupuncture's holistic approach to health and healing. It makes sense to me. Western medicine has become very specialized and being a patient in the Western medicine system can be frustrating and complicated. I think Chinese medicine and acupuncture take the concept and the practice of medicine back to its original roots. I appreciate that.

2. How long after discovering acupuncture did it take for you to become interested in the field of cosmetic acupuncture?

I heard about cosmetic acupuncture in acupuncture school although at the time it wasn't popular like it is today and little was known about it. Although the topic was intriguing I was younger, much younger, and wasn't very interested in pursuing it. But then, one morning years later, I woke up, looked in the mirror and thought, "Oh my, I'm aging". [Laughs] Let's just say that was my light bulb moment and the beginning of my cosmetic acupuncture pursuit.

While in China I had observed acupuncture being performed in the facial paralysis unit of a Chinese hospital. I applied what I'd learned in China with my education in Chinese medicine, and my background in Western medicine (I have a Master's degree in Biology and Nutrition) and am also licensed in skincare as an esthetician. I put all of my knowledge together and developed my AcuFacial® Facelift.

3. Why did you choose to focus on cosmetic acupuncture?

It took a lot of soul searching to choose cosmetic acupuncture as a specialty. Twenty years ago there was a lot of controversy among acupuncturists about it. Many thought that it was 'shallow' and minimized the value of the profession. I didn't agree. I believed that helping



someone look better also makes them feel better. I also knew that although the patient was coming in for their appearance, the benefits of their acupuncture treatments would be far greater

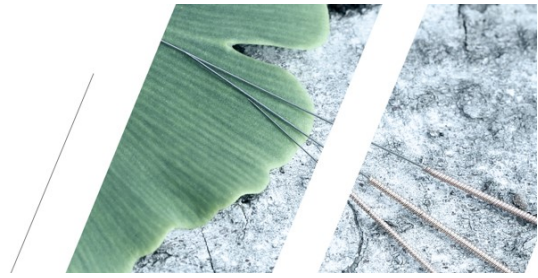
4. When did you realize that your AcuFacial® FaceLift has health benefits as well as cosmetic benefits?

Cosmetic acupuncture is Chinese medicine applied to the face. Patients cosmetic concerns- wrinkles, sagging jawline, acne, rosacea, sunspots are the symptoms of underlying conditions. As practitioners of Chinese medicine, we use the symptoms to assess and treat underlying conditions. When I first became interested in cosmetic acupuncture there was very little information about it so I had to go through my Chinese medicine text books to understand the relationship between cosmetic concerns and their relationship to the Organ systems, meridians and so on. In doing so I also realized that my patients other symptoms whether it be fatigue, menstrual disorders, digestive disorders, asthma, or whatever also directly corresponded to their facial and skin complaints. Once you determine and treat the underlying patterns of disharmony body and face symptoms resolve.

5. You have appeared on national television and now are a published author, how did you get started and what type of marketing has shown to be of greatest benefit to your practice throughout the years?

Word of mouth is always the best form of marketing. But getting your name out there can be a challenge, particularly in a city like NYC which is filled with many talented practitioners. For me, specializing in cosmetic acupuncture has been the key to my success. When you choose a specialty, focus on it, and excel in it, you eventually become recognized as an authority in your area of expertise. It takes years (actually decades) of diligence, perseverance, and commitment so it's important to choose something that you are passionate about and stick with it. You also need to be clear about who you want to work with whether it is the elderly, infants, men, women, athletes, handicapped etc. Your office atmosphere, personal presentation, and your prices all need to be congruent with your targeted clientele.

In terms of marketing, yes I've received a lot of press and it's been instrumental in helping to establish my reputation, but a strong website with great search engine optimization is the key. My website designer also manages my website and spends a lot of time keeping my



website visible. If someone in NYC Google's 'cosmetic acupuncture', my website pops up as one of the first three to five sites. If your websites sinks below fifth place you won't many hits. Today, social media is key- blogging on Facebook, Twitter, Pintrest, etc. I don't really understand how it works and quite frankly don't care, so I leave that up part up to my twenty and thirty year old staff. I think twitting and tweeting is part of their genetic makeup [Laughs].

6. You have recently appeared in a Good Morning America segment in which they stressed going to a certified practitioner. How has the NCCAOM Diplomate certification benefitted you?

A certified practitioner in New York actually refers to a physician or dentist with 200 hours of acupuncture experience so I think Good Morning America got their terminology confused, but my NCCAOM Diplomate certification has been extremely helpful. Continuing education requirements vary from state to state. In New York, there are no continuing education requirements necessary to renew your license. I find it a little frightening that a professional can continually renew their license without continued education.

I appreciate an organization whose core values serve both the practitioner and their patients. And I particularly respect the NCCAOM's commitment to continually improve the reputation of the profession. In the past 20 years, the field of Chinese medicine and acupuncture in the US has made tremendous progress in being a recognized and accepted alternative/complement to conventional Western care. I believe that much of its acceptance is due to the fact that it is a state licensed profession with quality control and recognized standards of competence and safety governed by leadership organizations such as the NCCAOM. I think that maintaining NCCAOM Diplomate certification not only sets an example for other acupuncturists and related healthcare professionals, but signifies my professional commitment to excellence. My motto in life has always been to be the best person I can be and I think that being connected to the NCCAOM helps me to be that person.