

# CHINESE MEDICINE BUSINESS SUCCESS

*How to apply five elements  
for a thriving clinic*



Brigitte Linder

featuring Megan Hills with *Marketing Made Easy*

## Chinese Medicine Business Success



# WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

About Brigitte Linder and  
*Chinese Medicine Business Success*

*I wish I'd had this book when I first started out! Everything I've learned in 30 years of running a practice – and even things I never learned – can be found in this book. Highly recommended as a guide if you are beginning, a reference while you are setting up and a touchstone when you are established to check if you are being the best that you can be, business-wise.*

**Steven Clavey**

**Chinese medicine practitioner, Apricot Grove, Melbourne**

*As Chinese medicine practitioners, we need compassion, empathy and a pleasant bedside manner. We also need grit and determination and a good sense of humour. But above all, if we want to succeed in the highly competitive arena of private health care in Australia, we need highly refined business skills. Just a few years back there was very little out there to help people in the Australian Chinese medicine profession succeed in business. The arrival of *Chinese Medicine Business Success* changes all of that! This is a great book written for an Australian audience by someone who has been through the struggle and emerged victorious. It teaches the ABC's of setting up and running a Chinese medicine practice in Australia. In the short term, this book can help you pay your bills. However, if you are in this game for the long run, then this book will help you lay the foundations of your own Chinese medicine business*

*empire. I think everyone in our profession should read it! I sure wish something like this had been around when I first graduated.*

**Paul McLeod**

**Chinese medicine practitioner, Australian Acupuncture Centre, Geelong**

*This book is both practical and inspiring. It is a must-read for any clinician starting out and for seasoned practitioners needing fresh ideas to enhance their clinical work and develop their business. It is a step-by-step approach to developing the values-based, ethical business foundation needed to practise your medical knowledge and to flourish in clinic. It is especially useful for those having trouble organising their internal resources to make an ethical, busy and effective clinic happen. Written by someone who has done it, this book will help you learn how to become an increasingly effective business person while continuing to love what you do.*

**Greg Bantick**

**Health & Healing Wellness Centre, Brisbane**

*This book is essential reading for all Chinese medicine students and graduates wanting to set up and succeed in practice. It also provides valuable ideas for existing practitioners on how to improve their Chinese medicine business. The insights reflected in Brigitte's book are a distillation of many years of experience building her business into the successful company it is while continuing to develop her excellent clinical practice skills. The foundation of her work is a love for humanity and a commitment to be a conduit of knowledge and to continue the lineage of Chinese medicine in our modern world. This is coupled with very practical strategies of how to create and build a business so that this can be actualised. I highly recommend this book to Chinese medicine students, new graduates and existing practitioners.*

**Dr Kylie O'Brien PhD**

**Adjunct Associate Professor, Torrens University, Adelaide**

*As a recent graduate in Chinese medicine I, like many others, face the pressure of running a business, getting desired client numbers, providing*

*good service and meeting my clients' needs, while at the same time maintaining my authenticity within a structured framework. Brigitte's book outlines in a clear and comprehensive way the most important aspects of running a clinic and how to ensure a balance between professionalism and creative self-expression. The use of the five element framework resonated with me and has helped to motivate and inspire me for my journey ahead. The activities at the end of each chapter have allowed me to gain clarity and confidence and to refine my focus onto the most appropriate tasks. This book is practical, fun and heartfelt. Brigitte has shared her experience and provided a structure all graduates can follow to create their own unique business faster and with better results.*

**Vicki Iliopoulos**

**Chinese medicine practitioner, Venus Bay**

*Having been in practice since 1995, it is so pleasing to see a book dedicated to the success of the individual Chinese medicine practitioner and the industry as a whole. The learning and practice of Chinese medicine is complex enough. Add to this the trials of figuring out the intricacies of building and running a viable and successful practice and you certainly have your hands full. The beauty of this book is that it gives the perspective of highly successful and highly regarded members of the Chinese medicine industry as well as that of the author. By providing a practical framework, it also takes much of the guesswork out of being able to practice what you love and make a living doing so. By being the best we can be we have the potential to change the status quo of how health care is delivered nationally and internationally. I'm proud to recommend this resource to new graduates and veterans as an aid in making business dreams a reality and helping more people achieve the health they deserve.*

**Jeff Shearer**

**Chinese medicine practitioner, Evolve Natural Medicine, Newcastle**

*This is a great book. It starts with the end in mind; that is to have work wrap around life not life around work. Whether you are starting out or*

*well established in your practice but have lost your way, this book shall restore the focus in a step-by-step manner and return you to balance through thoughtful exercises and prompts to shine the light on your own journey. Written by a practitioner with fellow acupuncturists and Chinese medicine practitioners in mind, this book is direct and pertinent to all practitioners. Be inspired.*

**De-Arne Campbell**

**Chinese medicine practitioner, To The Point  
Acupuncture & Chinese Medicine, South Yarra**

*This book is a must-read for all Chinese medicine and other health care practitioners! Chinese Medicine Business Success is a powerful book that will enable practitioners to have a business that not only makes a difference to the community but also brings fulfilment to the practitioner. It is the first book to effectively guide practitioners to have success in both their clinical and business careers. The articulately explained methodology gives practitioners a simple and easy way for them to wake up every day filled with joy because their business has become a vehicle that works for them. They can make a big impact for their patients and also obtain freedom of time and money by having a successful business. The lessons in the book are easy to learn and apply because of the elegant framework that uses the familiar Chinese five elements as its guide. This point might well be the true genius of this book and why it will deliver such great results for those who implement it.*

**Dr David Dugan BDS, Adv Dip Bus, Grad Dip  
Clin Dent, Dip Fin Planning, Dip CH  
Dentist/CEO Abundance Global, Brisbane**

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Chinese Medicine Business Success: How to apply five elements for a thriving clinic

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Published by Brigitte Linder

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Editing, design and publishing support by [www.AuthorSupportServices.com](http://www.AuthorSupportServices.com)

ISBN: 978-0-6480494-4-9



A catalogue record for this book is available from the National Library of Australia

*I dedicate this book to my grandmother Anna Linder.*

*She still inspires me every day.*



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing this book has taught me to be happy with where I am today. It has also made me realise that no one is perfect and that this doesn't matter as long as we are prepared to keep learning, implementing and optimising all over again.

I had a head start with a teacher who taught me everything he knew. My sincere thanks to Dr Samuel Zheng who took me under his wing and helped me transition into my practice in 2002. He was patient and gentle yet tough at times when needed. I am grateful to have met him and he remains my teacher and mentor today.

I would like to thank my colleagues in both Switzerland and Australia who have helped me out in the past 16 years and were prepared to give their time, energy and opinion to assist me with problem-solving: Jeff Shearer, Shelley Beer, Kylie O'Brien, Steven Clavey, Greg Bantick, Helen Gordon, Arnaud Versluys, Hamish Brown, Jean-Paul Staats, Peter Gigante, Lin Dong, Graham Jellett, Debra Gillick, Nadine Zaech, Simon Becker, Philipp Ehrsam and Karl Zippelius.

Sincere thanks also to Paul McLeod and Robin Marchment who provided me with invaluable feedback on the content and structure of my book.

I also express my thanks to Alex Fullerton, Wendy Millgate-Stuart and Natasha Higgins from Author Support Services. Their love for my project has been truly inspiring and their assistance and support outstanding.

I am eternally grateful to be part of the strong Tian—Zeng (Dr Tian Heming 田鶴鳴 (1883-1980)) (Zeng Rongxiu, MD 曾榮修 (1931-2012)) herbal lineage now instructed by Dr Arnaud Versluys. His in-depth knowledge, compassion, strong personality and brilliant

teaching skills transformed my herbal practice and perception of herbs entirely.

Special thanks to my friend Hans Seiwald who has supported me in all my endeavours over the past 14 years. He moved to Australia with me to establish a new life. Together, we set up a herbal dispensary and clinic in regional Victoria, and he never stopped believing what I did was right, even when it was wrong. My heart, my thanks and my love go out to you. Thank you for being the caring and supportive person that you are.

To Dad, I am sorry you are missing this moment on earth, but I am sure you are watching from the heavens. Thank you for your love, your kindness and your dedication to my sister, Gabi, and me.

# FOREWORD

Decades ago, to be a successful practitioner it was enough to develop and apply our knowledge and our craft and to develop trust and rapport with our patients. We studied well as undergraduates and continued our clinical and academic learning as graduates. We served our patients well on a number of levels. That was enough.

Today, we must learn how to communicate even more effectively with our patients and also with trading partners. We must devote time and energy to fulfilling many professional expectations. We need to provide appropriate information and answer a myriad of questions in an efficient but helpful way. In addition, we must fulfil our obligations for labelling, record keeping, receipting and accounting practices. So, who has time to dedicate to a marketing strategy or to care for themselves?

In *Chinese Medicine Business Success*, Brigitte constructs the scaffolding for practitioners to build a strong practice according to their individual goals and aspirations – one that is not only successful as a business model but also satisfies their personal integrity. Brigitte uses a unique and heartfelt systematic approach that covers every detail from foundation to completion and answers the many questions that all practitioners have in regard to professional obligations, the regulatory system and time management. This is all contained in a flexible framework that is evocative of our philosophical training and so rings a bell that matches our aspirations in being the clinicians we believe we should be and in supporting the kind of clinic we want to run. This is not a manual only for the newly graduated, but for those of us who need new approaches and a fresh take on how we run our business effectively whilst still being faithful to ourselves.

As just one example, the word ‘marketing’ brings qualms of doubt to many of us in this modern world of websites and social media. Not all of us are eager to embark on a marketing education. Yet the section ‘Marketing Made Easy’ is a welcome boon to those such as I who tend to recoil from such things . All resistance is demolished as the process is made clear and simple. Even a person such as myself (notoriously resistant to social media) will find it simple and clear, readable and doable. Kudos to Megan Hills for her wonderful contribution – and congratulations to Brigitte for recognising her talent.

*Chinese Medicine Business Success* is an impressive piece of work in its conception; it is systematic in its approach, it gives us the tools to work effectively and it is in harmony with the integrity of our practice. It is a marriage of the intellect and the heart, resonating with our clinician’s heart as well as our business manager’s mind.

Innovative in its concept and practical in its application, this book is congruent with the ethics and philosophy of Chinese medicine which, in itself, is structured and logical, while simultaneously offering flexibility. I just wish I had had this remarkable resource at my fingertips two decades ago.

Robin Marchment

*BA (Hons), BHSc (Acup), Adv Dip HSc (Acup)*

*Cert Gyn (China), Dip Lang (Chin), Adv Dip HSc (TCM)*

*Registered Herbalist and Acupuncturist*

# PREFACE

I wake early in the morning because my brain works the best at that time. It hasn't always been like this but since running a business many of my habits have changed. Each morning, I take my dog, Pippa, for a walk on the beach. To me, that's the best way to start the day. It's when the Yin transitions to Yang. The world in and around me awakes, the energy is unspoiled and thoughts are the clearest. The two of us often witness the sun coming up across the water in the East. If it's a calm day, flocks of birds are busy setting themselves up for the new day.

I love this time of day with its fresh air and new qi as it allows me to arrange my thoughts and cherish my plans. Often, especially if I have challenges in my clinic or I have to sort something out, these morning outings give me the time and space to come to a good solution that feels right.

Building a business can cause anxiety and stress at various levels. Thankfully, I can share those fears with a team in my business, Safflower Chinese Medicine Dispensary & Clinic, as we tend to work things out better together. I also tell myself that Rome wasn't built in a day and that everything good truly takes time. Within this perpetually evolving process, I take great care that my values and goals are reflected in all my actions.

I have never been very artistic. I don't paint or make sculptures or other handy items, but I express my creativity in my business. My business reflects who I am. The profession that I intuitively chose, being a Chinese medicine practitioner, ultimately allows me to express myself as me. I truly feel that I have embraced my inner power or essence, which I call my 'inner emperor'.



Now, don't think I knew all this from the beginning. In fact, I remember when starting out that I was incredibly nervous with patients and unsure of my treatments, not knowing when and how to follow up. Managing patients was difficult for me as I am originally from Switzerland and things are different in Australia. It takes so much time to look after the administration required to run a clinic, let alone the need for marketing and finding new patients to fill up empty spaces in an appointment book. Witnessing how some new graduates struggle when first starting out, just as I did, encouraged me to write this book.

When I first migrated to regional Victoria, I felt totally isolated. Now, after a decade in Australia, I feel strongly connected to the Chinese medicine industry and to my purpose. I hope that this book will assist many other practitioners to achieve the same.

As new graduates, it is essential to have access to experienced practitioners. Expertise comes with years of practice and separation from the main body of the profession can be tough. We forget that only a few steps separate us, much like the concept of 'six degrees of separation' whereby everyone in the world is only six or fewer steps away from each other. I find this an amazing notion and feel in reality that it often pans out exactly like this. In fact, often there are less than six steps involved. All we have to do is take one step towards each other and I encourage new graduates to do that more often. Never feel disheartened if your attempts to connect with a more experienced practitioner fail as you will eventually find someone who is prepared to step towards you too.

This book is an accumulation of my knowledge, expertise and practical skills in running a Chinese medicine practice. During my 17 years in the Chinese medicine industry, I have undertaken various courses and ongoing training in many areas from acupuncture and herbs to Canonical herbal training. I have studied channels and convergences and five element acupuncture. I have attended various seminars and workshops on how to run a successful business and taken advice from people who already run a successful practice.

With this book, I hope I can honour everyone who has been part of my learning journey and assisted me to be where I am today.

This book describes a simple and easy-to-apply generic system that anyone can use. I believe it also allows for a great range of self-expression and individuality in conducting business in the Chinese medicine industry. It is my hope that it will help both new and established practitioners to implement a framework that works well for them so their years of study and training can bear fruit in a successful practice with happy patients and a happy practitioner.

This book is also about YOU. It is a gentle reminder to apply the five elements in your life and embrace the fact that our universe truly is an exchange of Yin and Yang. My reflective walks on the beach take me back to myself and the nourishing of self: to reflect, to think and to be mindful. Self-care is incredibly important in my life and helps me to remain focused and available for my patients. The rhythms of life and our perception changes daily, just as the tide comes in and leaves the shore once more. And just as the waves and wind change the landscape, self-care has the ability to transform the body and mind.

Our profession with its incredibly rich traditions offers so much in the way of treatment and therapy. Let us embrace it fully and apply it to our lives, our practice and to ourselves. I have great hopes that Chinese medicine practitioners in Australia will indeed succeed in establishing a strong profession with a framework of maintaining and regaining health that surpasses all expectations.

I welcome feedback and stories so that we can learn from each other and contribute to our industry. Please connect with me via email at [welcom@brigittelinder.com](mailto:welcom@brigittelinder.com).



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# INTRODUCTION

Chinese medicine practitioners represent less than 1% of the workforce in Australia. Even though there is a growing demand for Chinese medicine modalities such as acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine, practitioners in Australia are struggling to operate profitable clinics. On average, an acupuncturist earns an average salary of \$53,257 per year, compared with the average salary for a chiropractor or an osteopath of \$70,423 per year.<sup>1</sup> I have written this book with the aim of raising the figure reflected in this dismaying statistic.

*Chinese Medicine Business Success: How to apply five elements for a thriving clinic* encompasses all facets of establishing a successful practice and a thriving business. This book demonstrates an incredible amount of dedication to the Chinese medicine industry. It is the first book of its kind in Australia and has been written primarily for Chinese medicine practitioner graduates looking for guidance in transitioning into their own business. This book will hopefully also inspire more experienced practitioners to look at the way they practise in a different light and provide them with some new ideas.

As practitioners of Chinese medicine, we are familiar with the five elements or five phases of existence. It is a comprehensive system based on natural phenomena that determine five master groups or patterns. In the clinical setting we use it to explain how conditions are interconnected and how they impact on various systems of the body. Inspired by this, I have created a practical, easy-to-follow framework called the '5 Element Chinese Medicine Practice Success Model' to help you achieve success in your clinical practice. This model contains five simple elements which are presented in five chapters in this book. Each Element is important for long-term

business success. All have been tested in my practice and are entirely transferable.

Over the past decade, this framework has assisted me in establishing meaningful connections, not only within the Australian Chinese medicine profession but also with my patients. It has kept me and my business, Safflower Chinese Medicine Dispensary & Clinic, running at optimal levels. It has allowed me to grow and develop both as a practitioner and as an individual. I still use this framework today both professionally and personally.

One key aspect within my 5 Elements Model is marketing, especially marketing that is smart and doesn't cost an arm and a leg. Marketing has been crucial to my own business. I graduated from my undergraduate course in Melbourne in 2001, moved back to Switzerland in 2002 and practised in my homeland for six years. At the same time, I started working for a Swiss dispensary service and after a few years moved on to become a consultant. In this role, I combined my experience as a practitioner and my expertise in herbal dispensing with leadership and team integration.

Upon returning to Australia and setting up practice in 2008, I received valuable assistance in implementing marketing activities from Megan Hills, Health Practice Business Coach at Ethical Practice. I am thrilled that Megan has agreed to present her gems of marketing wisdom in this book. Megan's key areas of expertise are marketing and business training, creative and cultural enterprise mentorship, design and illustration, and arts administration. She not only has the 'eye' and the 'words' but brings in that creative ingredient that is often required for effective and low-cost marketing. She presents detailed information and exact instructions on how you might improve the identity and visibility of your clinic and business as a whole.

You will also hear firsthand from well-known and valued colleagues who are doing well in the industry in Australia. I am honoured that they are prepared to share their secrets, their successes and the challenges they have faced throughout their business journey. Towards the end of the book, you will find useful information on

suppliers, professional associations, training course providers, business mentors as well as recommended further reading.

This book is formatted so you can quickly look something up or dive into chapters more deeply. Each Element chapter concludes with a few thoughts on ‘Elemental Self-Care’ to help guide you towards some self-care followed by a range of activities. These activities are designed to help you plan and run your business confidently by integrating the knowledge shared in a step-by-step manner. It’s important to action the activities and take notes or record your answers on your favourite device. For the information to come alive, it’s best to go through the activities as you finish reading each Element, however they can be done after reading the entire book. Downloadable templates are available on my website to help you keep track of the process.

Setting up and running a practice is a step-by-step process. I encourage you to embrace the process fully. This book is not an academic piece; rather, it reflects my personal approach to building, running and managing a practice, and making a good living from it. I do not suggest that

Setting up  
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process.

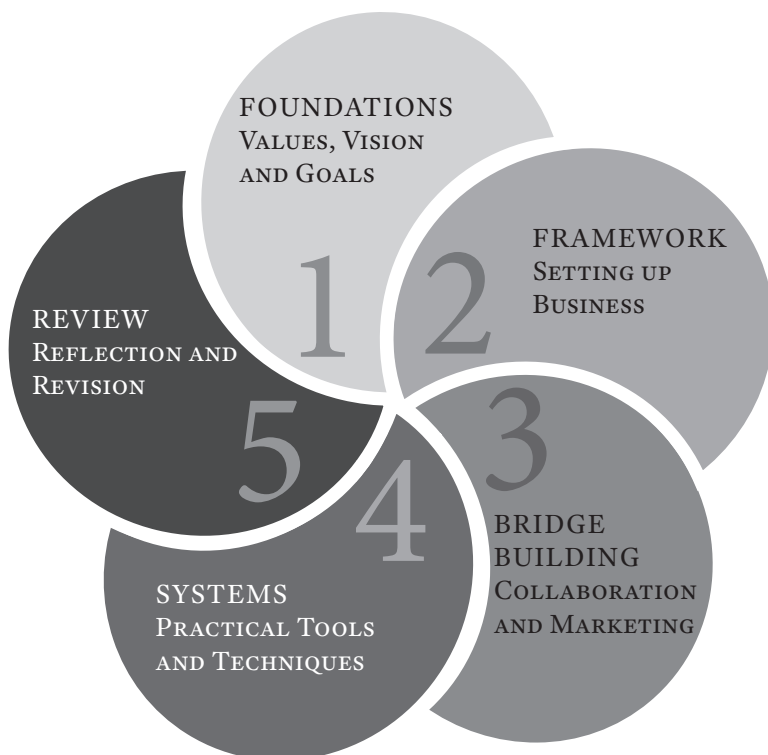
this book provides all the answers but it will provide new graduates with guidance on how to transition into a successful practice. The more easily and effectively new practitioners can integrate into our remarkable profession, the stronger the foundation will be to enable their business and the industry as a whole to flourish.

As part of a new generation of practitioners, you have incredible potential to change the face of our industry, to bring about new energy, to work differently and to embrace the idea that we can achieve much more as a team and help our profession to mature. If you truly crave recognition and wide-ranging acceptance for Chinese medicine practice – and believe me, if you don’t yet, you soon will – your confidence and professionalism will strengthen solidarity within the industry and bring maturity to the ranks.



As a strong profession, we can help more people. As a strong practitioner, you can help more people and create a successful income and business at the same time. It's really that simple.

# SNAPSHOT OF THE 5 ELEMENT CHINESE MEDICINE PRACTICE SUCCESS MODEL



## ***ELEMENT 1: FOUNDATIONS – Values, Vision and Goals***

Behind the power and force of everything is the initial spark. Within that spark is the entire solution – the pathway and the ultimate achievement. Visions are powerful because they are intrinsic to our own existence. This first Element and first part of the framework will assist you in tapping into your own vision.

Your vision combined with your values will help you to set your goals. Values can change over time, but they are always guiding forces that direct our actions and decisions on a daily basis. To align your goal setting with your vision and values is not difficult, but it requires some reflection and planning.

## ***ELEMENT 2: FRAMEWORK – Setting up Business***

Once your vision is crystallised, the focus is on you. This Element covers the basics of how you can set yourself up in business immediately after graduating. In order to make good decisions for the future you need to explore the options available to you.

The message that you put out there about yourself, your business and how you operate reflects who you are. If you spend a little time refining it, it will endure into the future and serve you well. This section explores who you are and what you are about, as well as discussing self-care to help keep you balanced.

## ***ELEMENT 3: BRIDGE BUILDING – Collaboration and Marketing***

In this section, we look at ourselves in relation to others and the communication pathways that we follow in our personal exchanges. ‘Others’ may include the community, patients, suppliers, alliances, business partners, alumni, colleagues, friends and other industry partners.

This Element examines the message that you wish to communicate in order to build that essential bridge. There are many ways to

promote your message and it is essential that you have great clarity on exactly how to do so. Megan Hills, Ethical Practice Business Coach, addresses this issue in the marketing section in a practical, easy-to-follow manner.

### ***ELEMENT 4: SYSTEMS – Practical Tools and Techniques***

Structure and organisation are essential for continued success. This Element encourages you to put systems in place to make your life easier – not only as a practitioner but also as a business owner.

This Element outlines systems to support you on a daily, quarterly and annual basis. It is also an essential prerequisite for Element 5 because reflection is more easily applied to all areas once a system is in place as it will then become apparent what works and what needs restructuring or modifying.

### ***ELEMENT 5: REVIEW – Reflection and Revision***

Reflection allows us to develop, deepen and strengthen. Reflection also provides room for change. In this Element, several established practitioners share their experience, challenges and successes.

By combining reflection and revision with real-life experience as a practitioner, you will grow and develop, and become more confident and knowledgeable about your clinical practice as well as about yourself as a person. Regular review throughout your career will nurture positive change in your clinical setting, in yourself and potentially also in the message that you impart as you journey towards business success.



## ELEMENT 1: FOUNDATIONS

# VALUES, VISION AND GOALS

“Your vision will become clear only when you look into your heart. Who looks outside, dreams. Who looks inside, awakens.”

—Carl Jung

To create a successful Chinese medicine practice, you have to set goals and plan your success. Success is a word that means different things to different people: it can include financial reward, helping as many people as possible, becoming a confident and well-respected practitioner, building a beautiful clinic or finding the answers to complex questions. Success is very individual. Your anticipated vision of success must be aligned with your goals and you need a clear plan.

Before you dive into planning your vision and goals, however, it is essential to know your core values. These are your drivers in life, part of your personality even, and will be at the core of your bigger vision or ‘why’. Without knowing your values, you may set goals that set you on a path to somewhere that is not in alignment with *who* you are and therefore your ‘success’ won’t sit right.

## KNOW YOUR VALUES

As a Chinese medicine practitioner, you have the potential to flavour your business with your own style and to bring your own personality into the treatment room and into your interaction with patients. Intrinsic to this are your values.

Personal values are the general expression of what is most important to you. They influence your thoughts, words and actions on a daily basis. They also assist you in growing and developing towards a specific purpose, hence their importance in defining your vision and goals. It's essential to think about your vision and tap into the bigger picture to find your 'why' of what you do and the values that come with it.

Some practitioners may say they simply wish to help people to have better health or regain health. Some may say it's more about assisting clients in the clinic space in a particular way that is flavoured with their own personal style. You might feel comfortable talking to patients about their emotional state and tackle their path to healing from a psychological point of view. Conversely, focusing on bodywork might be easier for you and so you concentrate more on integrating aspects that fit in with that approach such as massage, acupuncture and acupuncture.

Your values might not be crystal clear to you when you start thinking about them. The fact that there are so many possible values to narrow down to which is the best fit for you at this stage of your life doesn't make it any easier.

The values I have chosen originate in my past as well as being qualities that I look for in others nowadays. The reason for choosing them is based on the way I was brought up, the negative experiences in my life (which taught me a lot about myself) and the expectations others had of me. They also originate from my religious orientation and what I felt other people in my life were lacking. My values might have changed slightly over the years and could still change in the future, but for now, I have narrowed them down to four: accountability, honesty, expressiveness and justice.

Identifying your own values will help you make better decisions for yourself and your business. For instance, you will choose suppliers who share similar values to you and this will make your collaborations a lot easier.

Some examples of values are found in the following list.<sup>2</sup> You will refer to these when you investigate your values in the activities at the end of this chapter.

Accountability	Determination	Hard work
Accuracy	Devoutness	Health
Achievement	Diligence	Helping society
Adventurousness	Discipline	Holiness
Altruism	Discretion	Honesty
Ambition	Diversity	Honour
Assertiveness	Dynamism	Humility
Balance	Economy	Independence
Being the best	Effectiveness	Ingenuity
Belonging	Efficiency	Inner harmony
Boldness	Elegance	Inquisitiveness
Calmness	Empathy	Insightfulness
Carefulness	Enjoyment	Intelligence
Challenge	Enthusiasm	Intellectual status
Cheerfulness	Equality	Intuition
Clear-mindedness	Excellence	Joy
Commitment	Excitement	Justice
Community	Expertise	Leadership
Compassion	Exploration	Legacy
Competitiveness	Expressiveness	Love
Consistency	Fairness	Loyalty
Contentment	Faith	Making a difference
Continuous	Family-oriented	Mastery
improvement	Fidelity	Merit
Contribution	Fitness	Obedience
Control	Fluency	Openness
Cooperation	Focus	Order
Correctness	Freedom	Originality
Courtesy	Fun	Patriotism
Creativity	Generosity	Perfection
Curiosity	Goodness	Piety
Decisiveness	Grace	Positivity
Democracy	Growth	Practicality
Dependability	Happiness	Preparedness



Professionalism	Service	Thoroughness
Prudence	Shrewdness	Thoughtfulness
Quality-oriented	Simplicity	Timeliness
Reliability	Soundness	Tolerance
Resourcefulness	Speed	Traditionalism
Restraint	Spontaneity	Trustworthiness
Results-oriented	Stability	Truthfulness
Rigour	Strategic thinking	Understanding
Security	Strength	Uniqueness
Self-actualisation	Structure	Unity
Self-control	Success	Usefulness
Selflessness	Support	Vision
Self-reliance	Teamwork	Vitality
Sensitivity	Temperance	
Serenity	Thankfulness	

## CREATE YOUR VISION

Once you have spent a bit of time assessing these values and the reasons for choosing those most important to you, you then need to create a vision. In fact, a vision is intrinsic to your very own existence. Your vision, based on your values, will naturally generate your goals and your plan to achieve that vision. It's time well invested for a bright future, as hard as it may seem right now to engage with the process.

In my experience, your vision and plans should be set for the next 10 years, broken into 12month and 3year steps. A plan is not only critical to help you achieve your vision but is also essential for an enjoyable experience. You may find it a difficult task to determine exactly where you want to be in 12 months, 3 years or 10 years simply because you don't know or are unsure about your journey. Well, now is a good time to spend some energy on it.

Any decision you make now should be in line with what you want to achieve in the long term.

Although it is difficult to start planning when you have little practical knowledge to base decisions on, your clinical practice and business journey must be mapped out; this is non-negotiable. If you visit another country, you

don't just walk or drive there. There are oceans to cross, mountains to climb and rivers to pass. There are seasonal influences, foreign currencies, political circumstances and cultural differences to take into consideration. From a business perspective, it is important that you have some idea about what direction you would like to take as most decisions you take now will greatly affect your future. Therefore, any decision you make now should be in line with what you want to achieve in the long term.

A decade passes very quickly. In that time, I would love to see humanity taking big steps towards acknowledging that we are all made of the same material, that we have a similar goal of happiness and that we can support each other best by helping one another. My values of accountability, honesty, expressiveness and justice will guide me towards achieving this. How so? They will assist me in making decisions to establish programs, involve other individuals, choose locations that are conducive to the cause, raise money with and from certain organisations, and much more.

My 'grand' vision, which extends beyond current circumstances, is to create a global mentorship program. I associate the ten year mark with achieving my grand vision.

I associate the ten year mark with achieving my grand vision.

I highly recommend that you take the time now to think about the future and where you would like to see yourself. Now is the crucial time to give space and thought to your short- and long-term future to ensure you make something out of the time and resources you invested in your studies.

Your degree in Chinese medicine offers a great opportunity for your own vision. You might want to be involved in the first Chinese medicine hospital in the Southern Hemisphere or the first cancer centre treating patients with Eastern modalities only. If your values are strong, your vision will be too.

Values create visions by simply extending the qualities of those values into what you have been dreaming about – something that you would love to do or have always wanted to be involved in.

## SETTING GOALS

Once you have explored your vision and plan for the future, the next step is to think about some goals – milestones and markers – to help you to stay on track towards the achievement of your vision. These goals are not just the numbers in your plan, but they also include an attribute or a quality. A qualitative milestone could be being confident in treating a certain condition or working with a particular (difficult) patient or an age group such as children or seniors. It could simply mean that you feel ready to talk to banks or investors about your hospital project.

Knowing your goals will assist you in setting priorities. The more succinctly your goals are expressed, the clearer and more attainable they become. Below are some questions to reflect on or discuss with a trusted friend, partner or colleague to help you achieve clarity on your goals. The activities at the end of the chapter also provide an opportunity to finetune your goals and write them down.

In his book *Goals! How to Get Everything You Want – Faster Than You Ever Thought Possible*, Brian Tracy says that writing your goals down is essential.<sup>3</sup> Tracy discusses a Harvard University study that took place between 1979 and 1989 in which graduates of an MBA were asked if they had clearly written goals for their future and plans to accomplish them. Only 3% of students had written goals and plans. 13% had goals but not in writing and 84% had no specific goals at all. After ten years, the same graduates were interviewed with the following results: The 13% who had goals but not in writing were earning on average twice as much as the 84% who had no goals at all. The 3% who had written goals were earning on average ten times as much as the other 97% of graduates combined.

Proven results such as these confirm that having clarity of your goals and writing them down magnifies your chance of success significantly.

Consider the following:

- What things in life do I cherish the most?
- What areas of my life do I love? Why is that so?
- How do I want to feel around others?
- What got me here?
- Why did I do what I did in the past?
- How do others treat me?
- What do my friends see in me and what do they love about me?
- What do my patients say about me?
- How do I view my clinic/business?
- Do I want to practise in a particular field, a particular location or a particular style?
- What income do I hope to make?
- Is it important for me to work with others or would I prefer to be a sole operator?
- What am I going to focus on in my business?

By giving this process space and a reasonable amount of time and focus, yet without being too pedantic, you will get closer to your essence, the power, the engine that drives, that inner flame – your emperor. You will be able to create single sentences about yourself that resonate with you strongly and truly reflect who you are. Striving to determine a life purpose is a key moment in anyone's life. I can assure you that devoting time and effort in this area is well invested and will make your life much easier.

Below are examples of some of my goals that help me move towards my vision. As you will notice, I have set qualitative and quantitative goals. Additionally, I have listed both my personal and professional goals as they go hand in hand. I started with my long-term goal... my grand vision. After that, I narrowed it down to the next 3 years and

then the 12 months immediately ahead. When setting your goals, and especially the 3year goals, it is important to ensure they truly reflect what you want to do and achieve.

	<b>Personal goals</b>	<b>Professional goals</b>
<b>10 years Vision</b>	<p>Spend two months per year exploring places I have never been</p> <p>Link my travels with community work</p> <p>Be financially independent</p>	<p>Reduce my workload to two days per week in clinic</p> <p>Mentor 30 graduates per year</p> <p>Design a global mentorship program</p>
<b>3 years Milestone</b>	<p>Work in Nepal for one month</p> <p>Go on a three-week retreat in Nepal</p> <p>Increase financial buffer to \$20,000</p> <p>Pay off all debts</p> <p>Offer eight hours of community work per month</p>	<p>Be proficient in using Shang Han Lun and Jin Gui Yao Lue formulas</p> <p>Use Dr Tan's methods</p> <p>Obtain good results in 90% of my patients</p> <p>Present a paper on the impact of mentorship programs in our industry</p>
<b>12 months Goals to get the ball rolling</b>	<p>Have four weeks of holidays per year</p> <p>Spend two hours per week with my friends</p> <p>Go camping four weekends of the year</p> <p>Offer two hours of community work per month</p> <p>Read 12 books per year</p> <p>Build a financial buffer of \$5,000</p> <p>Have at least 12 acupuncture treatments myself over the year</p>	<p>Treat 30 patients per week and generate \$2,400 per week</p> <p>Learn Dr Tan's balancing method</p> <p>Memorise top 50 Shang Han Lun formulas</p> <p>Offer three educational events on various topics to the community</p> <p>Connect with at least ten other health practitioners and learn what they do</p> <p>Promote services to local government</p>

### *Techniques to map your path*

As you start brainstorming your values, vision and goals, particularly in the activities at the end of this chapter, you might find mind mapping techniques quite useful to map your path. There are great advantages to using mind mapping rather than conservative note taking. Mind mapping is a graphical and very visual way to represent ideas and concepts. It's a tool that assists in structuring information to create a map of what's in your mind. You don't need a computer and mind mapping software to have a go; simply use a piece of paper and some pens and start scribbling away.

### *Consolidating your goals*

Once you have set your goals, constantly remind yourself of them – you can read them, listen to them or look at a picture of them every day. As your mental plane absorbs your goals, your brain receives the message and helps you with every small step towards achieving them. Your goals now drive every single action in you and create alignment between you and your purpose.

Should you choose to play it by ear or let things happen organically, the chances are that achieving your goals won't just happen unless you are fortunate to be in the right place at the right time with the right idea and the right people. Our brains are made for procrastination and the sidetracking that occurs might not get you very far.

Test this theory on a goal to free write 1,000 words every day (something I did when writing this book). Without planning how to achieve this goal, you will find that you get up from your desk for another glass of water and on the way to the kitchen you will come across your unopened mail, so you will attend to that. Then you remember you had done a load of washing and now need to hang that out. Then once in the garden, you will notice the weeds are crying out to you. You will see the neighbour you haven't seen for a couple of weeks and start chatting. Then the phone rings. Then you need to check emails. In the end, you will find you have only written

For planning to be effective, it is essential to follow your vision.

50 words and the day is over. This is not how you achieve anything... well, not very quickly anyway.

For planning to be effective, it is essential to follow your vision. It

sounds such simple advice, but we are so busy running our day-to-day lives that our plan is relegated to second place unless we consciously keep it at the front of our mind. Otherwise, five years will pass in a flash and you will find yourself asking where you are going.

As your profession is a part of your life, be sure to include your personal vision and goals. It is part of you. Everything starts with you and it is you who must drive it to go where you want it to go. It is in your control. The time is now as you are about to embark on your new endeavour as a Chinese medicine practitioner. With more life experience you now know yourself a little better. Know where you want to go so you can start walking that path confidently with clarity and purpose. You can now plan your actions and your list of things to do. Element 4 discusses tools that can help you along the way.

In this chapter, I have encouraged you to think about your vision and goals for both your professional and private life. It's easy to skip through this section and think that you don't want or need to do this. But believe me, everything is in the planning. So please, if you are at the beginning of your business venture and you are serious about it, do it now! You can start with the activities that follow. Do the best you possibly can with the activities. Know how important it is for you to set yourself up for the future and to become a successful practitioner aligned with your purpose. Our profession also needs you to be assertively set on the future in order to assist future generations in this process of transition. The only way to know where you are going is to set goals.

## ELEMENTAL SELF-CARE

As Chinese medicine practitioners we know that with flow comes ups and downs. We are also aware that each of the five elements has a quality. In this first Element on values, vision and goals, we embrace the wood energy – the planning. Sitting down and planning doesn't come easily to a lot of practitioners as we just want to help people feel better. Therefore, there is a tendency to burn out quickly. A little planning supported by the wood energy – the season of spring and growth – helps avoid that.

Please take your time to plan ahead as much as possible. You could set a date in, say, November for a strategic planning day (either on your own or with other practitioners) to plan the whole year ahead. I always plan my clinic breaks and all of my activities ahead of time. Planning helps me to feel more relaxed. Although planning requires time and effort, I assure you it is time well spent.





## ELEMENT 1 ACTIVITIES

These foundational activities are exceptionally important for the bright future of a practitioner. Please make sure you spend ample time and put all your sincerity and heart into them as these activities will assist you greatly in setting the foundations for a solid and sustainable future. You will find mind mapping and rich picture techniques useful to apply here.

### *1.1: Identify your top three values*

This first activity will have you reflecting on your values and your ‘why’ as a foundation for creating your grand vision.

1. Take a look at the values table on page 11 and choose ten values that resonate with you.
2. Go through your list of ten values and cross five out.
3. Now choose your top three values from the remaining five on the list. Why are those top three values so important for you? Use the values that you have chosen for yourself as guidance in setting your vision and goals in the next activities.

### *1.2: Explore your ‘grand’ vision*

This exercise will provide you with clarity about your vision. It will help to focus on your future and set the right goals and plans to get there. For example, if the outcome that you want to become proficient in (ie. your vision) is working with mental health conditions, you are most likely not going to choose to work in a clinic that focuses on autoimmune conditions.

Most people don’t dare to dream big enough. This is your moment to encounter your big vision. Dare to be different, no matter how scary this might feel. It’s a moment to bring your essence into your life as a practitioner. While doing this

exercise, it is important that you do not think about *how* you will achieve your vision, but simply come up with the vision itself.

4. Sit down with a trusted friend, partner or mentor and start exploring your vision for your practice by talking about it and naming goals and aspirations. Is your dream to own and run a multidisciplinary clinic or is your dream to work with a certain age group? What difference do you want to make in people's lives? Do you have a calling to work with minorities? Is your biggest goal to work overseas? Is your aim to practise a certain modality proficiently? What is your personal dream? Dare to express it!
5. As you consider ideas, notice your feelings and any revelations, images or thoughts that accompany them. Feelings might be accompanied by sensations in your body: a tingling sensation, butterflies in your stomach, a warm feeling in your chest, a buzzing feeling at the back of your head, a general emotion of feeling happy and content, or a moment of truth – the feeling that everything aligns in time and space.
6. Write your findings down or record them on your favourite device.

### *1.3: Define your 10-year goals*

You have now spent some time thinking about your vision. The next step is to set your goals. Importantly, you need to start with your long-term goal – your grand vision.

7. Sit down and think about your long-term goals. What are you setting out to achieve in the next ten years? Be as clear as possible. Make them big and prosperous; do not hold back.
8. Write these goals down or record them on your favourite device.

Once you are happy with these goals and they fully resonate with you at this point in your life, take the next step and

narrow them down to the next 3 years, then the 12 months immediately ahead of you.

#### ***1.4: Determine your 3-year goals***

9. Sit down and think about what you want to achieve in 3 years' time? Be as clear as possible. Make these goals a milestone between now and your 10year plan. Make sure that some of the goals are challenging but still truly reflect what you want to do. You might plan to buy a clinic, double your income, educate yourself further in a particular area of interest or go overseas to work for a not-for-profit organisation for 12 months.
10. Write these goals down or record them on your favourite device.

#### ***1.5: Set your 12-month goals***

11. Sit down and think about what you want to achieve in the next 12 months. Remember the bigger picture – your 10year grand vision. Be as clear and concise as possible and make these goals a milestone between now and your 3year goals.
12. Write these goals down or record them on your favourite device.

Congratulations, you have completed the most important part of your journey. For further worksheets and templates, go to [www.brigitteinder.com](http://www.brigitteinder.com).

Learn the secrets to achieving a continuous flow of patients and a thriving practice. Chinese Medicine Business Success meets the demand for simple, practical and step-by-step advice for new graduates of Chinese medicine, encompassing all areas of running a successful clinic.

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- Develop your unique style in business, from vision to reflection
- Acquire increased confidence as a practitioner

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“Innovative in its concept and practical in its application, this book is congruent with the ethics and philosophy of Chinese medicine... structured and logical, while simultaneously offering flexibility. I wish I had had this remarkable resource at my fingertips two decades ago.”

*Robin Marchment, Chinese medicine practitioner*

“I wish I’d had this book when I first started out! Everything I’ve learned in 30 years of running a practice – and even things I never learned – can be found in this book. Highly recommended as a guide if you are beginning, a reference while you are setting up and a touchstone when you are established to check if you are being the best that you can be, business-wise.”

*Steven Clavey, Chinese medicine practitioner*



Swiss-born Brigitte Linder migrated to Australia in 2008 and now operates a professional Chinese medicine practice and herbal dispensary in regional Victoria. Her business journey in Australia has provided Brigitte with a steep learning curve and she now enjoys the fruits of her labour. Brigitte is a self-confessed advocate for quality, change and progress in the Chinese medicine profession and she enjoys assisting practitioners at all levels find their own rhythm and style so they can run a successful clinic that provides them with a good income and personal satisfaction.

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ISBN 978-0-6480494-4-9

