

## Case Study #2– Post Covid with Earth Element

by *Elin Hilgemann*

Meridian Key:

SI Small Intestine	GB Gallbladder	BL Bladder	LI Large Intestine	ST Stomach	TW Triple Warmer
H Heart	LV Liver	KI Kidney	LU Lung	SP Spleen	P Pericardium

Heidi is a 74-year-old retired businesswoman. Heidi has run countless businesses in her life solo, and with her husband. At the age of 23 she had already created her own agency and had 14 employees, which she ran successfully for over 20 years. When she first came to me for acupressure treatments she had a lot of presenting symptoms. Heidi told me she has had bronchitis and back pain since she was a teenager, and that she has always struggled with her immunity. She also has chronic constipation, poor sleep, and continuous menopausal symptoms due to have a hysterectomy at 35. She believes her constipation, hot flashes, and insomnia are still present due to that procedure.

When Heidi was talking, I noticed that she had a very happy lightness in her voice. It sounded almost like a birdsong or the way that some singers speak in old-fashioned musicals when they aren't singing. She seemed very happy but also a tad nervous and shy about receiving bodywork. I noted that she was uncomfortable sitting down and talking about her own concerns, but rather would rather talk about the concerns she had of others. After we finished our interview, she was surprised at how many symptoms she realized that she had, as well as how many she forgot she had over her life. When we first starting to talk, she told me that she had no pains or concerns with her body, but then after answering my questions in the interview, she seemed surprised at herself with how much pain she *did* have. Heidi's biggest concern at this time was lack of sleep, constipation and stress.

1<sup>st</sup> Session – 12:45am – Heart Time

SI -	GB -	BL -	LI +	ST $\emptyset$	TW -
H +	LV $\emptyset$	KI -	LU $\emptyset$	SP $\emptyset$	P $\emptyset$

I noticed that the majority of Heidi's pulses were quiet and deficient. She asked me what I was checking for and I told her that I was checking all the 12 meridian's pulses on her wrists, and that the majority of them were "faint." Heidi then told me she had low blood pressure and was always cold. I made note of what she said to me and checked the pulses again. Heidi had told me that she wasn't able to have a treatment for the regular amount of time on this day. Since she had mentioned that sleep and stress were the biggest concerns for her now, I chose to do the Stress Reduction Pattern for Heidi. It was a shorter pattern than the Linking Vessel and I thought it would be a good introduction to Acupressure for her. She seemed to like the feeling of receiving the acu-points when I worked through this pattern. Heidi wasn't one to get quiet or sleepy in treatment. She was alert the whole time, eager to

learn more about what specific points I was doing and how the meridians relate to all of her symptoms. I understood that this was her first session, and that it may take a few more treatments for her to feel comfortable with me and “settle.” I felt that she was distracted a tad in the treatment because she was hosting a family reunion at her property that week and I knew that she was more focused on that than anything. It was another aspect about Heidi that I silently made a note of.

So far Heidi was portraying very clear *Earth* signs to me. She had a sing-song voice, a yellow hue around her temples and lips, and she didn't seem to have much *sympathy* for her own symptoms and pain. She was more focused on other's and how they were doing, and it was hard for her to give herself that hour of body work. I wasn't going to determine Heidi as an Earth CF on the first treatment with her, but it was exciting for me to feel almost intuitively that she very well could be an Earth.

SI	⊖	GB	⊖	BL	-	LI	+	ST	⊖	TW	-
H	⊖	LV	⊖	KI	⊖	LU	⊖	SP	⊖	P	⊖

After her treatment, Heidi's pulses had changed for the better. Her SI and H pulses were balanced, as well as her GB and LV. I was happy to see that her GB pulse had balanced more because she told me that from 11-1AM (Gallbladder Time) she is very much awake and has trouble falling asleep after this time. Heidi seemed happy after her first treatment and was eager to receive more treatments in the late summer when she knew she would be less busy. I felt that Heidi's body responded well to Acupressure and that her faint pulses did shift a lot in her first treatment.

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Session – 3:30pm – Bladder Time

SI	-	GB	-	BL	-	LI	⊖	ST	+	TW	⊖
H	⊖	LV	⊖	KI	⊖	LU	+	SP	⊖	P	⊖

In our second treatment together, I noticed that Heidi's pulses had shifted quite a bit since before. It had been over a month since we had last worked together, and I was eager to start treating Heidi more regularly. Her BL was still extremely quiet and hard to find, and her pulses at this time indicated a Husband/Wife imbalance. Heidi was still concerned about her constipation and sleep more than anything, so I chose to do the Penetrating/Girdling pattern in the Extraordinary Vessels. I felt that this pattern would address a lot of her symptoms: cold extremities, menstrual problems, sleep, and digestion and also stimulate a lot of Earth points. While I worked on Heidi, she was very alert and aware of what I was doing. She didn't seem comfortable closing her eyes or relaxing more into the table. Heidi wanted to talk throughout a lot of this treatment. I knew that we were still building rapport together, since this was only her second treatment and that is she was more comfortable to stay alert and talk than that was completely fine. After her treatment, Heidi told me she felt more peaceful and better within her body.

SI	⊖	GB	⊖	BL	-	LI	⊖	ST	⊖	TW	-
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H	Θ	LV	Θ	KI	Θ	LU	Θ	SP	Θ	P	Θ
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Her pulses had shifted quite a lot. Her BL pulse was still the weakest on both sides, and I hadn't felt change, or it get any stronger. I took note of her Water aspect as well as her Wood since the GB and BL were shifting the most in the past the two sessions. Heidi didn't seem to display any aspect of *anger* though she did seem shy, timid, and almost *fearful* about certain things. I told her what the Wood and Water elements emotionally display, and she replied that she never gets angry, and she doesn't feel afraid or fearful at all. I made note that she did seem *worried* about her property, her grandchildren and her husband's back pain, as well as her trip that was coming up. It was another indicator of the Spleen in Earth, but I didn't want to confuse this with *fear* in Water. It was just something I took note of and continued to keep an open mind about what CF Heidi may be.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Session – 8:30pm – Pericardium Time

Heidi had been away for three weeks and had had a very busy time. While away, she contracted Covid-19. It left her with a terrible cough which she believed further activated her bronchitis. She told me that she always gets bronchitis on flights, and she never could fly without getting it, but Covid had made it worse. Heidi was having really bad coughing fits and it hurt her entire body. She stayed inside for a week on her own until she was negative for Covid, but her bad cough had lingered. I saw Heidi during a big dinner that we were both attending. She kept having horrible coughing fits at dinner and had to leave the room because her cough was so bad. I offered to give her a quick treatment in a separate room in the house and she agreed.

SI	-	GB	-	BL	-	LI	+	ST	+	TW	-
H	-	LV	Θ	KI	-	LU	-	SP	Θ	P	-

I was surprised at how weak Heidi's pulses were since she had gotten Covid. Her entire system had undergone a very serious attack and her cough was a result of her immune system weakening. It seemed like every pulse was off. I held LU-7 and LU-1 bilaterally as she focused on speaking less and drinking only warm water. About 10 minutes later her coughing fits weren't as long and deep sounding. I then moved to ST-40 to help clear up the congest mucous she told me she felt in her lungs. I then did LU-11, LI-4, ST-36, P-6, P-8 and GV-14. After about 20 minutes Heidi only had a slight cough every 5 minutes or so. She was relieved that the acupuncture points had helped. She asked if I would come and give her treatment sooner in the week and I agreed. Her pulses were still unbalanced after this treatment, but her cough had settled down and she was grateful for that. I showed her how to locate LU-1 and LU-7 on herself and she told me she was happy to learn these points and try them.

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Session – 2:30pm – Small Intestine Time

Heidi arrived for her 4<sup>th</sup> session feeling better than before. She still had some coughing fits, but they weren't as painful or for as long. She said she still felt stuck in her lungs, as if there was mucous in them but it was starting to lift.

SI	∅	GB	∅	BL	-	LI	-	ST	+	TW	-
H	-	LV	∅	KI	-	LU	∅	SP	∅	P	∅

I chose to start Heidi's treatment by holding LU-7 and LU-1 bilaterally on her. She really liked these points and mentioned that she had been using them a bit through the week on her own. I then decided to use the Yin & Yang Linking Vessel on Heidi. I hadn't done this pattern yet for her, but I knew that it would be potent in helping her immunity and cough, as well as calm her body. Heidi seemed to really like the treatment and relaxed easier than ever before. Her pulses shifted quite significantly, and she said her chest felt lighter after the treatment. It was the first treatment where Heidi seemed comfortable enough to settle into her body and close her eyes throughout the session.

SI	∅	GB	∅	BL	-	LI	+	ST	∅	TW	∅
H	∅	LV	∅	KI	∅	LU	∅	SP	∅	P	∅

I was glad that her pulses shifted at this pattern. It felt as if they back to the same way they had been before she had gotten Covid. Her BL pulse was still very low. She asked how her pulses seemed and I told her that they had all balanced except for her BL still being faint. Heidi had previously told me that she has had back pain since she was 17 and I mentioned the BL is connected to the back and that this pulse may take some time to balance because of how long she has carried the pain. I thought it would be a good idea to do the Bladder release for the next session because her entire body had undergone a lot of stress in the previous two weeks with getting sick and her back still felt fragile to her.

#### 5<sup>th</sup> Session – 4:00pm – Bladder Time

Heidi arrived at the treatment and seemed very happy to begin. She told me that her cough had settled, and she barely had it anymore. She didn't feel weak or tired from post Covid and she was eager to lay down on the massage table and get started. She was also keen about Qigong and wanted to see my own favourite movement before our treatment. I showed her how to tap on her Kidney's and back to bring blood flow into that area of her body and mentioned that if she ever had annoyance in her back that this simple Qigong movement could help. We then started the session at the table.

SI	∅	GB	∅	BL	-	LI	∅	ST	∅	TW	-
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H	∅	LV	∅	KI	-	LU	∅	SP	∅	P	∅
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Heidi's pulses had overall stabilized other than her BL and KI which was the usual deficient pulse. I started with the Four Gates to bring Heidi more into her body. Then I started with the Bladder pattern. A lot of the points were tender for Heidi and slow to release. GB-31 was particularly sore for Heidi. When I pressed onto the point, she was surprised at how tender it was for her. Heidi began to ask more questions about the 5 Elements as she worked together on the Bladder points. I briefly explained to her how each Element encompasses different traits, emotionally, physically, and with specific meridians.

I told her about Earth, Wood and Water in particular, and Heidi seemed to really resonate with Earth. I mentioned that the Earth is about Worry, Nourishment, Digestion, feeling at home with the Earth, sometimes having troubled relationships with our mother's, and Sympathy and understanding. Heidi explained that she wasn't close to her mother growing up and she didn't really feel like she knew her. She said that out of all the emotions, she desires to be *understood*. She also wears a lot of *yellow* and she has *digestion* issues for most of her life. It was interesting to talk to Heidi about the Elements and have her relate to the aspects of Earth in the same way that I did for her. We both felt that she was Earth. As we talked more about the Elements, I finished the pattern and Heidi said she felt wonderful. She hadn't coughed once during the treatment, and she seemed more relaxed than before.

SI	∅	GB	∅	BL	∅	LI	∅	ST	+	TW	∅
H	∅	LV	∅	KI	∅	LU	∅	SP	+	P	∅

Her pulses had all balanced out! Her BL pulse was a little bit stronger than before. I was excited about this before with the previous 5 sessions, I hadn't felt a BL pulse at all! So, to even feel a slight pulse for her Bladder was exciting. Her ST and SP pulses felt a bit stronger than every other pulse, and I thought maybe this is because she is Earth, but it is something that I will keep in mind as I continue to work with Heidi. After this session, Heidi seemed really relaxed and at peace. She didn't feel any heaviness in her chest, and she said that her cough was virtually gone. Heidi had a inner smile and a sparkly eyes when we finished this treatment together. I think she was really happy that she gave acupressure a try.

## In Conclusion

It has been a rewarding experience working with Heidi. Heidi had arrived with many presenting symptoms, and we were able to make that list shorter for her. Since Heidi contracted Covid-19, our direction changed in the treatments to address her bronchitis cough more than anything else. Both Heidi and I were relieved to see throughout the treatments that her pulses were balancing as well as her cough. I was so grateful to see that I could help someone with post-Covid symptoms and Heidi felt much better after each treatment and that acupressure really was helping her. It was also very gratifying seeing that her BL pulse started to come back the more that we worked in the Water Element.

I still feel that Heidi is an *Earth* CF. She has a hue of yellow around her temples and lips and a sing-song lightness to her voice. She is very caring and sympathetic towards others and loves to take care of people. Heidi portrays a lot of *worry*, but she doesn't see it within herself so much. She told me that she

never worries, but I find that to be an inappropriate portrayal of the emotion because when I treat her, she does seem to express worry about a lot of people in her circle, her husband, and her life. She just doesn't seem to have sympathy towards herself. She smells like fragrant flowers and perfume, of course I am not sure if that is her perfume, but I have only ever smelled that scent on her. I noticed while working with Heidi that she loves to feel understood and speaks in a clear way that is easy to understand. She has also had previous issues with not feeling support in her life and this could have led her to having back pain. She didn't have the support from her mother, and she told me that her mother never said that "*she loved her.*" She also was the boss to dozens of employees in her 20's and spent the majority of her time at night writing up schedules and making sure each employee was doing okay. She focuses so much on the well-being of others.

Heidi portrays a lot of Earth tendencies. I look forward to in the future addressing the Stomach and Spleen for her to see how this may contribute to helping her overall health and well-being. I am happy that I get to work with such an inspiring Earth woman, and I am grateful that acupressure helped Heidi's cough, as well as other symptoms. I checked in with Heidi last week and she told me she never has constipation issues anymore. She almost *forgot* that that was a symptom she told me she wanted to focus on in the beginning of treatment. Heidi also mentioned to me that the idea of falling asleep at night doesn't make her worry as much as before. I am glad that Heidi is improving, and I look forward to helping her move more into a balanced state with Earth and Water.