

## **Making a point, Kiiko-style**

They say that “the way to a person’s heart is through their stomach,” but for acupuncturist Dorothea Tebbenhoff the stomach is much more than simply the pathway to love.

“The stomach is the energetic, digestive and physical centre of the human body,” Tebbenhoff explains. “It’s like an extremely detailed road map, the window, if you like, to every aspect of a person’s physical and emotional health.”

Tebbenhoff, of Motueka, specialises in a Japanese-style of acupuncture known as Kiiko. Like Traditional Chinese acupuncture, Kiiko works by using fine needles to open and unblock the body’s energy channels. A key difference with Kiiko, however, is that diagnosis is largely done through a detailed examination and palpitation of the abdomen.

Through the examination, Tebbenhoff can begin to identify any areas of discomfort as well as any energy blocks. Pain or discomfort when pressure is applied can indicate an underlying condition in one of the organs or other part of the body.

“One the biggest benefits of Kiiko is that you get instant feedback. The client and I are both immediately aware of any areas of discomfort, as well as the release of pain and pressure when I hit the right spot.

“To obtain a complete picture of a person’s health, I also study their pulse and talk with them about their health history. Many people come to me with more than one symptom, and it often takes a bit of detective work to understand what’s going on and to determine the most appropriate course of treatment.”

Tebbenhoff says health issues can often be triggered by a particular event, which the client may not even remember. “Whatever happens to the body, good or bad, is stored in the cell memory. Emotional wellbeing and stress can have a huge impact on a person’s physical health.”

According to Tebbenhoff, one of the biggest misconceptions about acupuncture is the size and number of needles used. “Needle phobia is a huge barrier, and many first-time clients are apprehensive because they are expecting the experience to be horribly painful.”

"Kiiko is an extremely gentle form of acupuncture and the needles are extra-fine. They are inserted at such an angle that most people don't feel a thing – many are pleasantly surprised."

Originally from Germany, Tebbenhoff has lived in New Zealand for 17 years and feels extremely fortunate to have settled in Motueka. "It is a beautiful part of the country and a wonderful community.

"I see clients of all ages and with a huge range of ailments from coughs, colds and flu, right through to digestive disorders and musculoskeletal injuries."

With more than 800 acupuncturists practicing in New Zealand, finding the right one can be something of a minefield. Acupuncture New Zealand, New Zealand's largest acupuncture professional body, recommends prospective patients select an acupuncturist from their membership database to ensure the highest standards of care.

As a member of Acupuncture New Zealand, Tebbenhoff meets and maintains stringent voluntary standards in order to maintain her Annual Practising Certificate. "As well as having completed the equivalent of four years' full-time training either in New Zealand or overseas, Acupuncture New Zealand members also need to complete 20 hours of continuing professional development (CPD) education each year and hold a current first aid certificate."

Tebbenhoff says helping to educate her clients about their health and being part of their journey is extremely rewarding. "I get huge satisfaction from helping to improve the quality of people's lives.

"When people try acupuncture, they often become much more aware of the 'big picture' and how their lifestyle can affect their health. I liken it to driving your car for years before suddenly noticing the warning light flashing on the dashboard. It really opens their eyes."