

East Meets West

at Garden State Spine & Pain Institute BY FARRAH PILEGGI



Garden State Spine & Pain Institute and the future Soul Focus encompass wellness with an approach that blends both traditional and alternative medicines. In addition to chiropractic and physical therapy, they also have two acupuncturists on staff. Both Steve Lassen and Scott Bendell are certified acupuncturists, and although each came to study the ancient medicine in different ways, they both realized that it was their destiny to practice a technique that has been around for over three thousand years.

Acupuncture—the procedure of inserting and manipulating needles into various points on the body to relieve pain or for therapeutic purposes—has been known to treat maladies from infertility, migraines, back pain to rheumatoid arthritis.

“I didn’t like Chinese food, why would I ever consider acupuncture.” Steve Lassen jokes when talking about how he ended up as an acupuncturist. A pre-med student in college, he had hopes of one day becoming a doctor. However, when his third car

accident left him with partial paralysis and in need of spinal surgery he started considering alternative medicine for his own health. A friend had suggested acupuncture and Steve gave it a try. After ten sessions his problem was alleviated and he didn’t have to get the surgery.

Still hoping to continue on to his dream of becoming a doctor, health problems plagued him again and at the age of twenty-five, detached retinas in both his eyes caused him seventy percent blindness. Again, he turned to acupuncture for treatment.

“Acupuncture is a natural anti-inflammatory. It allows blood to flow more freely, increasing circulation,” Lassen says.

After the treatments, he got his vision back and realized that something was telling him to pursue a career treating people with acupuncture. After attending the Tri State Acupuncture School, he has been practicing since 1986.

“The essential part of acupuncture is giving it enough time. One session isn’t promised to cure immediately,” Lassen says.

Lassen has been with Garden State Spine for a little over four years. He shares in their philosophy of an open modality approach because acupuncture does have some limitations. Although acupuncture can boast a three thousand year old history, there are many misconceptions about the science and technique.

“Acupuncture works hand in hand with chiropractic. Inflammation is such a root of so many common problems,” Lassen says.

Lassen explains that the body responds to clear concise messages. A well trained acupuncturist is going to be extremely selective when using needles. Sometimes less is better. Lassen explains, “The body does not like to be shouted at.”

Although Lassen still keeps a western mind when it comes to modern medicine, he has been forever changed on his perceptions of the eastern philosophy.

“Sometimes people are brought to their destiny kicking and screaming. I was humbled beyond belief after my experience with acupuncture” Lassen says.

Scott Bendell started his college career planning to be a civil engineer but soon found that he wanted to do something more meaningful with his life. A friend had suggested alternative medicine as an avenue, and Bendell took to the idea of helping others.

“I really got into this by fate,” Bendell says. Searching for schools, he settled on the New England School of Acupuncture and studied Chinese, Japanese and Korean methods. Graduating in 2002, he went on to apprentice with a Qigong master. Qigong, the basis behind acupuncture, focuses on feeling and moving energy within yourself and how to apply it in order to self-heal. Bendell has also studied Tui na or acupressure, a medical

massage to treat illness.

In his practice, Bendell incorporates all these methods in his treatments. “People have to get in touch with their own body. They need to learn how to breathe right. In order to be human, it starts with you. If you are not taking care of yourself, no one is going to do it for you.”

Both Bendell and Lassen agree that there is a great need for a wellness center like Soul Focus.

“Acupuncture needs the exposure that Soul Focus can give,” Lassen explains.

“The concept of a holistic wellness center is age old,” Bendell says.

With technology and medicine evolving at a rapid rate, it is comforting to know that all of the physicians and specialists at Garden State Spine Institute are on the leading edge, blending modern design and ancient science to find the best treatment plan for you. It is the appreciation they have for health and wellness that drives their desire to want to take care of you. ■

SOUL SPA
Treat, pamper, spoil

FOCUS FITNESS exercise salon
Catering to a select few

GARDEN STATE SPINE & PAIN INSTITUTE
The doctors you’ve been aching forSM



STEVEN LASSEN
Acupuncturist



SCOTT BENDELL
Acupuncturist



DR. RAJ GUPTA
Got questions? Just want to say Hi? ... email me!
DrRaj@GardenStateSpine.com



732.935.1000

www.GardenStateSpine.com

www.SoulFocus.com

7 Meridian Rd. | Eatontown, New Jersey 07724