

the gift of healing

Australia's leading healers share their fascinating stories and reveal how they walk their own talk to keep themselves well.

By Angela Donaldson

While you can learn to be a healer, for many people the calling to help others get well comes from within – their ability to heal is innate and their life experiences have drawn them to that inevitable destination.

We talked to four of Australia's top healers to discover how they came to be at the top of their field.



MIM BEIM

Mim is one of Australia's leading naturopaths and author of several books including *Grow Your Own Medicine: A Guide to Growing Health-Giving Plants in Your Own Backyard* (ABC Books, \$27.99).

WHAT I DO

I listen to my patients, then use naturopathic 'tools' like nutrition, herbal medicine and counselling to help them.

HOW I GOT INTO IT

While I was at university doing economics, I heard about naturopathy for the first time. As soon as I did, I wanted to do it. I had an eating disorder when I was about 17, so I was fascinated by food, albeit in a negative way. Being a naturopath became part of my healing – I learned that there are so many aspects to good health, apart from food.

WHY I DO IT

I really love it. I feel humbled by the trust my patients have in me. It's a great feeling to be part of someone feeling better.

WHO SHOULD SEE ME?

I like dealing with people whose stress affects their health. I'm also the bowel queen! I love treating bowel and stomach issues.

HOW I WALK MY OWN TALK

→ I don't consume anything with added sugar. Sugar affects our mood, weight and hormones. → I 'read' my body and emotions every day and don't push myself too much. → I'm not obsessive about health – it's not about having the best diet in the world. It's about being reasonably healthy so that you can enjoy your life.

PHOTOGRAPHY GEORGE FETTING / GETTY IMAGES / JASMINE POOLE / PAUL SUESSE • STYLING OLIVIA WAUGH • HAIR & MAKE-UP DI DUSTING • MIM WEARS SEED SINGLET, SUSSAN JACKET, COUNTRY ROAD SKIRT



Naturopathy has given me acceptance of how I am on any particular day – I 'read' my body and emotions and don't push myself too much.

I wish more people knew...

→ YOUR HEALTH IS UP TO YOU.

Be honest and look at the role you play in your health and what you can do.

→ **LIFE ISN'T FAIR.** Whether you are blessed with great genetics for good health or not, you can only do the best you can.

→ **BY KNOWING AND RESPECTING YOUR EARLY WARNING SIGNS,** you can prevent more serious conditions. For example, a couple of cold sores may indicate you are under stress. By not taking

action like rest or herbs, you are much more likely to get a bad cold, flu or pneumonia.

→ **YOU CAN WARD OFF A VIRUS BEFORE IT TAKES HOLD.** At the tiniest, first sign of a virus, such as sudden energy loss, a tickle in the throat or headache, have large doses of echinacea (500mg tablet), vitamin C (500mg tablet) and zinc (5mg) – take one tablet every couple of hours and rest! If you're too late for prevention, at least you will minimise the severity of symptoms and prevent a secondary infection. ►



KEVIN FARROW

Kevin is the founder and practitioner of AcuEnergetics, one of the world's most exciting new healing modalities – and one home-grown in Australia.



WHAT I DO

Much of our pain and illness is caused by energy that contracts when we are habitually angry, worried or sad. The contracting energy affects specific organs and parts of our body, their functioning becomes compromised, then pain and symptoms appear. In order to treat any symptom, I begin by treating the person and the real cause. I use energetic hand techniques to clear energy blockages so the body can heal itself.

HOW I GOT INTO IT

My mother was a yoga teacher and I learnt yoga from her from when I was 18 months old. At 23, I moved to India to learn more about the mind and body. Originally I wanted to write the definitive book about the anatomy of the energetic system of the body that doctors and other health professionals

could use to get better results in treating illness. During my research, I discovered that treating the energetic system was actually the most efficient way of treating illness, and gave the best results.

WHY I DO IT

I love treating people as I've never been a believer in the fact that we are randomly struck down with any form of illness or physical problem. So long as people can change, people can heal.

WHO SHOULD SEE ME?

I treat people with sports injuries, back, neck and knee problems, high blood pressure, prostate problems, urinary tract problems, infertility, and arthritic problems. I also treat autistic children and help people manage their health through cancer treatments, grief and depression.

HOW I WALK MY OWN TALK

→ I meditate every day. → I keep my heart open and when I notice it's not, I do something about it. → I don't take life, or myself, seriously (my wife won't let me!).

I meditate every day and have done so for many years. As a result, I get happier and happier.

I wish more people knew...

- **LOVE IS THE KEY TO ALL DOORS.** Learn to open your heart every day, to everyone. You'll be happier and healthier because an open heart provides balance and energy to all the organs in the body.
- **FORGIVE FASTER THAN YOU THINK YOU SHOULD.** Non-forgiveness is a real killer. Anger is another poison – it damages your body and mind. Kindness is the antidote.
- **OPINIONS ARE JUST IDEAS WE HOLD ON TO** – it doesn't make them true. Don't take them seriously.
- **THE MIND BECOMES WHAT IT PERCEIVES.** If you look at things that make you sad, you'll become sad. Look at happy things and you'll be happy.

KEVIN WEARS TARGET TEE, KMART CHINOS • PETREA WEARS FRENCH CONNECTION TOP, WITCHERY PANTS, STYLIST'S BELT, HER OWN SHOES



Good food is essential to nourish the spirit and body. I start every day with fresh juice, including ginger and a whole lime.

I wish more people knew...

- **WE ARE CREATIVE BEINGS, CAPABLE OF HEALING AT PROFOUND LEVELS.** We always have a choice in how we care for ourselves – and our choices make a difference.
- **IF OUR MINDS ARE DISTRACTED BY THE PAST** or forever focusing on the future we miss out on all the glory and potential that lie in the present moment.
- **THERE IS NO FINITE TIME FOR GRIEF AS THERE IS NO FINITE TIME FOR LOVE.** We need to enlarge our hearts so that we can feel our anguish without losing our capacity to love.
- **A LIFE-THREATENING ILLNESS** offers an opportunity to look at our relationships, roles, attitudes, stresses, anger, guilt and blame to heal past wounds and to see if our priorities might need changing.



PETREA KING

Petrea is the founder of the Quest for Life Foundation. As a teacher, naturopath, and meditation and yoga instructor she offers a practical and spiritual perspective during illness, grief, loss and crisis.

WHAT I DO

I educate and empower people to make new choices in their life that will enhance healing, integration and connection with others.

HOW I GOT INTO IT

As a teenager I spent three years in hospital having a dozen orthopaedic surgeries to my legs and was told I would never walk again. In my 20s, I was crippled with arthritis. In my 30s I was diagnosed with leukaemia and was not expected to live. These experiences sharpened my interest in the mind/body connection and led to my study.

WHY I DO IT

When you nearly die, as I did when I was 33, and then you don't, you're confronted with the reality that happiness doesn't lie in the 'things' of life and that it won't be found at a future time. My question was, 'What's a good way to spend a life? What life will allow me to be on my deathbed in five weeks or 50 years with a smile on my face and peace in my heart?'. It is such a privilege to do this work.

WHO SHOULD SEE ME?

People facing challenges like cancer and other chronic illnesses, grief, loss, trauma, anxiety, depression and those recovering from natural disasters. Our work is based at our retreat in Bundanoon, NSW, and workshops are conducted anywhere in the country where there is a need.

HOW I WALK MY OWN TALK

- Meditation and reflection are integral to my day. The natural consequence is that I live with awareness, respect and compassion.
- I use an exercise of 'coming to my senses' throughout the day. This releases the mind from preoccupation with the past or the future. → I start each day with fresh juice, including ginger and a whole lime. ▶



I aim for balance in my life, although I find it hard because I work too much!

I wish more people knew...

→ **IF YOU GET 30 TO 45 MINUTES OF EXERCISE EVERY DAY**, you will regulate your chi and blood flow. This prevents the stagnation and blockage in the circulatory system that leads to illness.

→ **NATURE IS FREE MEDICINE FOR STRESS.** The sun, moon, wind, earth and water all give you energy, which transforms your body's energy and clears your stress.

→ **ADOPTING A POSITIVE OUTLOOK CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE.** Make a decision that from today you will see the beauty in life and look for the positive in every situation.

→ **EATING MORE FRESH PRODUCE WILL GIVE YOU A HEALTHIER MIND, BODY AND SPIRIT.** But don't stress too much about preparing food from scratch – use that time to meditate and relax.



LILY LIU

Lily is a traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) practitioner in Sydney, renowned for her success in treating fertility and gynaecological disorders.

WHAT I DO

I treat health issues with herbs, acupuncture and diet. The most important thing is that I listen carefully to my patients.

HOW I GOT INTO IT

I was born into a medical family in Beijing. My mother was a pathologist in a gynaecological and obstetrics hospital and my father was a medical research doctor. They are also acupuncturists. When I was 10, my mother was struck down with severe autoimmune diseases. I decided to study traditional Chinese medicine and western medicine so I could help her. With my treatments, she made a complete recovery and that cemented my wish to spread TCM to a wider society.

WHY I DO IT

It's challenging and emotionally rewarding. I strive to help people become healthy or conceive healthy babies. I'm grateful that I've been given a special healing ability and feel rewarded when I see the healthy babies I've helped couples conceive.

WHO SHOULD SEE ME?

People with infertility that's caused by endometriosis, polycystic ovarian syndrome, hormonal imbalance, male sperm issues and recurrent miscarriage. I work in conjunction with IVF treatment programs to increase the success rate. I treat many other conditions including autoimmune diseases, skin disorders and low immunity.

HOW I WALK MY OWN TALK → My family and I stay as close to nature as possible, in what we eat and what we do. → I try to give equal attention to the three principles of good health: *jing*, the body's deep essence; *chi*, the body's vital energy; and *shen*, the body's emotional energy.

→ I aim for balance in my life, although I find it hard because I work too much. ❏