

# SEASONS OF OUR LIVES

BY CLAYTON SPIVEY

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## Bursting Into Spring

The best day of the entire year is that sunny day in spring when I don't have any appointments or restrictions on my time. In short sleeves, without a jacket or sweater, I ride with all the windows open in my red Jeep Cherokee, radio blaring.

Picking up lunch at my favorite barbeque stand and have a picnic on the rocks near the river, surrounded by the newly leafing trees and spring flowers. I sense the remnants of winter in the rushing river and the soft moist ground. I feel the impending summer in the warm breezes and see the presence of spring in the light green of the leaves—a green present at no other time of year. Taking the long way home, I stop on the road by the split-rail farm-fences to look at the new foals and lambs. I feel unfettered, free, like the world has come alive again.

The Wood Element embodies that kind of freedom: the animals bursting out of the hibernation of winter, the plant bursting from the seed, the action bursting from the idea. We see growth, movement and realization of the grand plan. While summer will bring maturation, spring is about the tenderness of beginnings, with its exuberance, possibility and hope.

When someone comes to my office with concerns about stuckness or problems with smooth movement (physical, mental, emotional or spiritual), I look to the possibility of supporting the Wood element, associated with Spring in the five-element model. The organs

associated with wood, the liver and gall bladder, manifest the main Wood functions of planning and decision-making.

### PHYSICAL LEVEL

Wood is about the smooth functioning of the whole body. When out of balance, we may see sprains and strains of ligaments and tendons, headaches, spasms, weakness of the muscles, one-sided symptoms, and infertility or menstrual difficulties. The body may start to cluster and clog with blood clots, tumors, cysts, or cataracts.

### EMOTIONAL LEVEL

Healthy Wood allows us to make boundaries and to say “no” clearly and firmly. Wood also provides for flexibility in emotions. Out of balance, we may see inappropriate anger or lack of appropriate anger. Symptoms might be rigidity, irritability, and criticizing of self or others. Unexpressed anger or resentment can lead to depression.

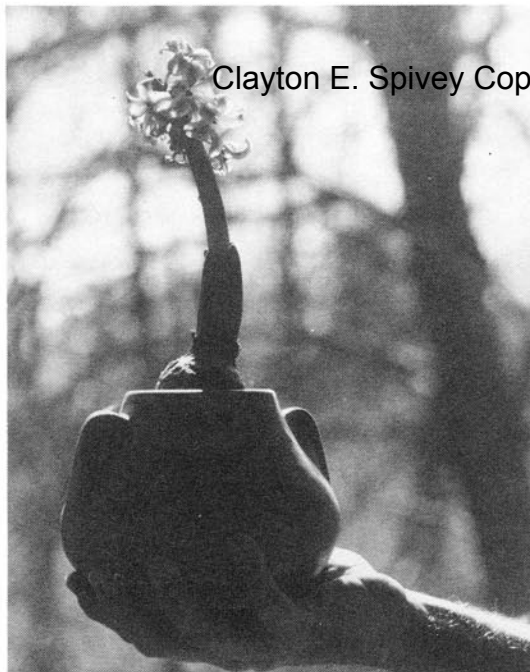
### MENTAL LEVEL

The Wood element shows up in the ability to plan and make decisions. When Wood is stuck, a person may not be able to decide or plan, because his vision of the future is hazy or nonexistent. Confusion and indecision may be evident. Or, if decisions are made, the decisions may reflect poor judgment, planning and

organization. Sometimes, the person with an imbalance in Wood may overplan, trying to organize everything and everyone, having a hard time relaxing.

### **SPIRITUAL LEVEL**

Wood is about having a vision for the future. It is linked with creativity, imagination, hope, growth and development. This element gives us the inspiration and desire for life. If it is weak, we may lack enthusiasm and



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have no interest in anything new.

Since spring is the time for planning and planting on every level, you might want to set your goals for the rest of the year. Below are some things you can choose to do to keep your Wood healthy, flexible, smooth and moving.

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## Practical Advice for Spring

- Don't take off your winter clothes too soon—even though it's warm outside, it's still easy to get sick.
- Exercise: Using your ligaments, tendons and muscles to keep them strong and flexible. Stretch, and do more active movements using "spring-like" action.
- Watch your diet: alcohol, chemicals, drugs, fried oils and meats can be toxic to the liver and gall bladder, the organs of Wood. Eat pure and natural food, not much that is processed or overcooked. You might plan how to grow some of your own food this season.
- Don't eat when you are tense, upset, or in a stressful environment. Take time to breathe, chew well, and digest food.
- You might think about a time spent in cleansing your body with fasting or drastically reducing the food you take in. This helps an overtaxed liver get "caught up." (Fasting should be done with care, with fruit or vegetable juices, or plain water, for somewhat short periods of time, such as one day per week, three days per month, or five to ten days if it is a one-time event.)
- Be willing to express your feelings and ideas. Listen to your inner self and know your boundaries. Know your goals, and don't assume that the goals of others are automatically yours.
- Take stock of your resources and think about your future. Are you doing what you need to be doing to reach your goals? Can you see yourself in five years? ten? What can you do now to start toward these goals? No step is too small.
- Go outside; take a walk. Look at nature bursting forth. Notice how seedlings grow around obstacles. Realize that what is going on out there is happening inside of you, too.