

# TINDERBOX

SPIRITUAL BEINGS BEING HUMAN

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## Liver Loving with Hepatic Herbs

### Our primary organ of detoxification

Without question, the liver is one of our most vital organs, perhaps second only to the lungs and the heart. The liver plays a leading role in keeping us alive and is critical to detoxify the body. We can live with just one kidney or a single lung, and we can do without the spleen entirely. We cannot, however, survive without the functioning liver that endlessly filters and detoxifies the blood. The liver also plays a significant role in digestion and metabolism, protein synthesis, essential enzyme and hormone production and the breaking down and recycling of tired blood cells. It provides our primary source of available biological energy because it regulates glycogen storage; converting sugar into glycogen and stores it for use by the muscles in the form of glucose energy.

Basically the liver has to process everything that we take in, including the air we breathe, the water we drink, environmental toxins, pharmaceutical drugs and the metabolic wastes coming from our body's cells. The liver filters two litres of blood each minute! All our organs are fed a clean, oxygen-rich blood supply from the liver. The liver has the essential job of protecting the deeper tissues from impurities in the blood that might otherwise cause harm. However, long-term overexposure to toxins (such as alcohol, prescription or recreational drugs or environmental pollutants) will adversely impact the liver itself.

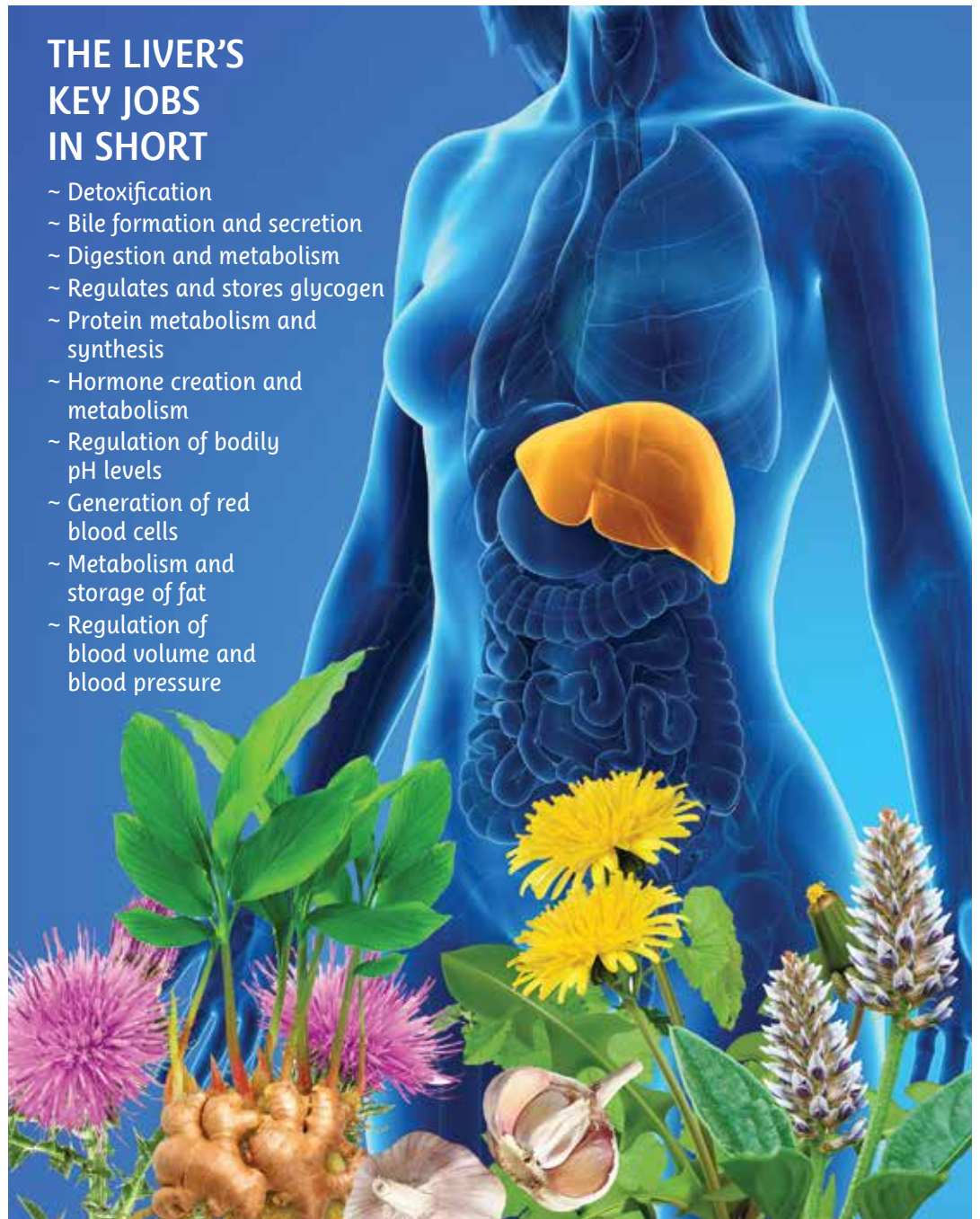
### Livers repair like lizard's tails

The good news is, barring complications, the liver can repair itself completely being the only internal organ that can regenerate from damage and sometimes within a month. A liver can regrow to a normal size even after up to 90% of it has been removed; but the liver isn't invincible. Many diseases and exposures can harm it beyond the point of repair. Loving our liver today has the potential to profoundly impact our overall health, well being and longevity for years to come.

If we want the liver to repair itself efficiently, we must offer it periodic rest and both in our daily lives and in more focused periods of cleansing and detoxification with specific liver herbs. Our liver is incredibly capable

### THE LIVER'S KEY JOBS IN SHORT

- ~ Detoxification
- ~ Bile formation and secretion
- ~ Digestion and metabolism
- ~ Regulates and stores glycogen
- ~ Protein metabolism and synthesis
- ~ Hormone creation and metabolism
- ~ Regulation of bodily pH levels
- ~ Generation of red blood cells
- ~ Metabolism and storage of fat
- ~ Regulation of blood volume and blood pressure



and we can trust that it can cope with whatever we've exposed it to so far and then do our best to make its job less arduous.

### The master multi tasker

The liver is one of the hardest working organs in our body and it is also considered a gland because it makes chemicals that the body needs. It is estimated that the separate functions performed by

the liver are in the range of 500, most of which occur quite elegantly in concert with other organs and systems outside of the liver. A product of the liver, bile is an alkaline fluid that helps emulsify fats for proper digestion.

It is temporarily stored in the gallbladder, which hangs at the base of the liver. When food is digested, the gallbladder empties stored bile into the small intestine and as a

result, the health of the liver and gallbladder are closely intertwined. The liver produces blood-clotting factors and at the same time creates protective elements that keep blood clots from blocking the circulatory system. Additionally, the liver synthesises proteins and cholesterol and it's the place where our body stores valuable trace elements such as iron, copper and Vitamins A, D and B12.

## So what is a hepatic herb?

So many essential bodily functions rest on the liver, it is paramount to look after it well with efficacious liver herbs that refresh and cleanse it. Hepatic herbs work in multiple ways by strengthening and tonifying the integrity of the liver for optimum flow of bile and other significant functions. Most importantly, they reduce oxidative stress by scavenging the free radicals that promote liver cell

regeneration and decrease the workload of the organ. Along with many herbal digestives, bitter herbs are a significant part of the hepatic herb category. The taste of bitter catalyses a whole host of different actions within the body, mostly the digestive system. Bitter herbs work to stimulate the liver's metabolic function by increasing and diluting the bile flow and reducing the chance of gall bladder problems by enhancing the self-cleansing reparative capacity of the liver. Hepatic herbs that specifically stimulate the production and release of bile from the gallbladder

are called cholagogues such as dandelion or yellow dock.

Herbal wisdom tells us that in order to efficiently clean up a toxic liver, our bowels need to move, otherwise toxins removed from the liver get reabsorbed rather than excreted. According to Ayurveda, pitta accumulates in the small intestines and purgatives (laxatives) help to release it. One of the gentlest purgatives is the soluble fibre psyllium, which can safely be used on a daily basis for months.

Cholesterol is a fatty substance in the body which is essential to many metabolic processes. A full

80% of the cholesterol in our body doesn't come from the food we eat; it is produced in our liver. That's why supporting liver health with herbs and a healthy plant based diet are important ways to protect ourselves from bad cholesterol - the low-density lipoprotein (LDL) that carries cholesterol into our bloodstream and in excess can lead to clogged arteries. How much 'good' and how much 'bad' cholesterol our body produces depends on one thing: how well our body metabolises fats and this is where herbs can help.

### Milk Thistle *Silybum marianum*

The supreme herb for liver support is milk thistle. Herbalists have used milk thistle for hundreds of years to treat a wide range of liver pathology, including fatty liver disease, hepatitis and cirrhosis. Milk thistle's primary active compound is silymarin with antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and antifibrotic properties that keep toxins (including pain killing drugs) from getting attached to the liver cells and free radicals in check.

### Turmeric *Curcuma longa*

Central to turmeric's health-promoting properties is curcumin, a bioactive compound known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidant capacities which makes it an excellent choice for dealing with liver-related diseases. It reduces oxidative stress and helps to avoid fat accumulation in the liver, thanks to its free radical scavenging action that helps prevent the liver damage that incurs due to harmful toxins. It's a good remedy for people who take harsh medicinal drugs (such as antidiabetic agents) for a prolonged period that impair liver functions.

### Liquorice root

*Glycyrrhiza glabra*

Liquorice a powerful antioxidative herb, giving it liver-protective and anti-inflammatory properties. It contains glycyrrhizin a set of compounds that can alleviate liver toxicity or prevent liver injury from a variety of assaults including chemotherapeutic agents, prescription drugs, obesity and ischemia. Notably, liquorice can reduce the risk of liver cancer in people with hepatitis C.

### Ginger *Zingiber officinale*

Warming ginger is another great herb for our liver with all the elements needed to prevent and treat liver problems. Research shows how ginger is effective for NAFLD (Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease) by improving the body's antioxidant activity, reducing inflammation and insulin resistance.

## Liver Loving Herbs

### Dandelion Root

*Taraxacum officinale*

Dandelion root is a magnificent herb with profound hepatic properties that enhances the working of the liver and excels in the elimination of toxins from the liver and kidneys. It also reduces the severity and incidence of liver injury and treats various types of liver disease.

### Burdock Root *Arctium lappa*

Burdock improves liver function and elimination, and is helpful for a 'sluggish' liver with feelings of fullness, chronic constipation and poor fat digestion. Burdock goes well with dandelion root for reducing swelling in and around the liver. Its antioxidants help to protect the liver against poisonous substances that damage liver cells like alcohol, acetaminophen and other liver-damaging toxins. Burdock's bitter taste helps stimulate bile production to cleanse it with more speed and ease.

### Yellow Dock Root

*Rumex crispus*

Yellow dock root is a strong liver protector with phytochemicals that stimulate the liver, which in turn helps heal poor absorption of nutrients and increases bile production. This herb can stimulate a bowel movement to help remove lingering waste from our intestinal tract; it also increases the frequency of urination to assist in toxin elimination. Maintaining an efficient rate of waste elimination helps prevent toxins from accumulating in the liver, gallbladder and bloodstream and circumvents the associated concerns.

### Garlic *Allium sativum*

Garlic is a powerful liver-protective agent that reduces the accumulation of fat in the liver and contributes to liver cleansing by triggering liver enzymes and naturally flushing out the toxins from our body.

### Other liver loving herbs

Aloe Vera, Sarsaparilla, Schisandra berries.



## Ayurvedic liver wisdom

Ayurveda attributes liver congestion to heat that is trapped in the liver and both seek to clear and cool the organ through lifestyle changes and herbal treatments. The ancients of Ayurveda held that by keeping our liver healthy, we will enjoy greater mental and physical energy, clearer skin and increased immunity.

Eating according to our body constitution or "dosha" is foundational in Ayurveda and incorporating liver-friendly herbs and foods to flush out toxins. The liver is known as the home of Pitta

dosha (one of the three dosha along with Vata and Kapha) that regulates the physiological functions of the body. Pitta is the fiery mind-body element associated with metabolism that helps our body to digest, metabolise and manufacture essential compounds - the essence of the liver's job. For instance, the liver is responsible for converting clear plasma (Rasa Dhatu) to blood (Rakta Dhatu). It is the liver's job to scan and identify toxins in the Rasa Dhatu and store them so they don't enter the blood. This maintains the purity of the blood by keeping ama, or impurities, from mixing with it.

## Chinese liver wisdom

In Chinese medicine (TCM), the liver organ-meridian system is considered responsible for nourishing and storing the blood and ensuring the smooth flow qi (life force energy) around the body. As a result, healthy liver function is considered key; the body is in harmony when the cyclical flow of blood and qi is calm, smooth and able to adapt to the body's changing requirements as needed. The liver is responsible for regulating this flow, so any disruption to its function can interfere with its ability to distribute qi around the body,

leading to a stagnant or sluggish liver. A stagnant liver is believed to generate an excess of heat, sometimes accompanied by dampness, an energetic pattern that can interfere with the body's natural detoxification processes. The excess heat produced by a stagnant liver can also influence the cooling and moistening yin energy of the liver and kidneys. In TCM, sluggish or stagnant liver qi can cause a variety of symptoms in the body for which herbs can help remedy.



## How can we love our liver?

- ~ The best way to reverse liver damage is to remove whatever is causing it. For example, if someone has fatty liver caused by drinking alcohol, it's important to stop drinking. If it's caused by a poor diet or being overweight, then it's important to eat healthily and lose weight.
- ~ We can support our liver with B vitamins, antioxidant foods and liver herbs like milk thistle, burdock and dandelion root.
- ~ Drink more water, it is one of the best ways to detox the liver. It is also important for our body to sweat to detox.
- ~ Many citrus fruits, including lemon, can be added to water to help stimulate and flush out the liver. Drink warm lemon water first thing in the morning.
- ~ For a high-functioning liver, we will need to avoid toxins in our

environment, staying away from cigarette smoke, air pollution and exposure to commercial household cleaners and other toxic chemical substances. This includes non-botanical cosmetics. These are all taxing to the liver.

- ~ Lack of sleep disrupts the metabolism of glucose, which can result in weight gain. Inadequate sleep is also linked to an increase in anger. If we don't sleep we can prevent the liver from performing its necessary cleansing and resting functions during the night.
- ~ Avoid situations that cause conflict or anger. It is of enormous help, with liver issues to regularly reduce mental toxins and to prevent stress and strain of daily life from taking its toll on our liver. After all, negative emotions create powerful hormones that flood our liver with toxins. Meditation is the very best remedy for this.
- ~ It is imperative to exercise daily, but avoid being really competitive and stop before exhausting our self.

## Avoid toxic food

To improve liver function naturally, we can seriously upgrade our diet according to our individual needs and avoid overindulging in heating foods, sugar and alcohol. Highly processed foods, such as bread, rice and pasta made from white flour are poison for a fatty liver. Avoid food high in salt, red meat and fried food that contains a lot of fat which generates free radicals and can damage the liver.

If we eat foods that are laced with preservatives and chemicals, or that are processed or left over, we are just making our liver work overtime to filter out the toxins. Eventually that's going to tax its health. Processed oil and alcohol are both enemies of the liver making it work harder. There is always a scope to improve liver health by modifying our diet sometimes radically if necessary.

## The liver loving diet

- ~ A fundamental way we can help give our liver a rest is by eating a liver-friendly diet. This includes: getting sufficient fiber from sources like whole grains as well as fresh fruits and vegetables, choosing lean protein sources, such as seafood, or legumes, as opposed to fattier meats. Eat sulphur-rich and potassium-rich foods.
- ~ Vegetables such as broccoli, cauliflower, brussels sprouts, cabbage and kale contain glutathione, which kickstarts the liver's toxin cleansing enzymes. Eating them will increase production of glucosinolate in our system, which helps flush out carcinogens and other toxins.
- ~ It's important to use healthier mono-unsaturated fats with mega-3 fatty acids, antioxidants and other compounds that offer liver health benefits. Choose from plant sources like organic cold-pressed nut and seed oils, nuts themselves (especially walnuts), hempseed oil and flaxseed oil. These compounds are also found in wild sourced fish and fish oil. Choose only quality cooking oils that can withstand higher temperatures like olive, avocado, sesame and safflower.
- ~ Extra virgin olive oil has several liver-protecting properties that decrease inflammation. Apple cider vinegar has amazing detoxification properties and works by helping the liver flush out the toxins that can interfere with its normal functioning. Pair the vinegar with olive oil for salad dressings.
- ~ Choose foods high in flavonoids that fight liver damage due to their antioxidant activity. Eat plenty of leafy vegetables, onions, apples, cherries and citrus fruits, celery, parsley, red peppers, chamomile, mint and ginkgo biloba that all are major sources of flavones. Eat cranberries, grapes, grapefruit, and berries, especially blueberries. A regular use of raw honey rich, in flavonoids, was studied in patients with a build-up of fat in the liver and showed beneficial effects.
- ~ Bananas are recommended for fatty liver disease patients. They are a storehouse of vitamin B6, C and A and also high in resistant starch, which is good for liver health.

## Press the liver places

Traditional Chinese Medicine identifies "four gates" for relieving liver stagnation - two acupuncture points each at Liver 3 (Taichong) and Large Intestine 4 (Hegu). These are located in the hollow between our big toe and second toe on our feet and on the fleshy area between our thumb and index finger on both hands. We can increase the flow of chi (vital life force, the equivalent of prana) and blood throughout our body and relieve stress and anxiety by massaging them as follows. Taichong: Place the right heel in the space between the big and second toes on the left foot and knead for 30 seconds. Reverse feet and repeat. Hegu: Press the right thumb between the bones that attach to our thumb and index finger on our left hand and massage for 30 seconds. Reverse hands and repeat.

## Yoga and Breath Work for the liver

Certain Yoga postures can help remove toxins

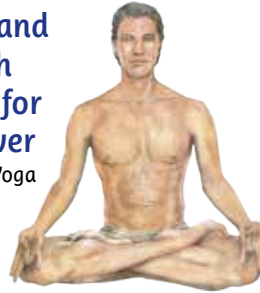
from the body, improve liver function, which promotes overall health and strength. These asanas stimulate and stretch the liver, aiding in the healing of conditions like fibrosis, hepatomegaly (enlarged liver), liver inflammation, fatty liver disease and stress.

Additionally, these postures utilise the fat deposits in the liver as an energy source for the body.

Choose the following Asana: Vajrasana (Thunderbolt Pose), Padmasana (Lotus Pose), Baddha Konasana (Butterfly Pose), Urdhva Mukha Svanasana (Upward-Facing Dog Pose), Chaturanga Dandasana (Four-Limbed Staff Pose) Dhanurasana (Bow Pose), Ardha Matsyendrasana (Half Fish Pose), Gomukhasana or Cow Face Pose, Navasana or Boat Pose.

Breathwork will indeed help detoxify the liver. Do pranayama at least 10-15 minutes daily.

**Kapalbhati** This is a breathing exercise that improves liver function; sugar levels and reduces risks of liver cirrhosis. Start by sitting cross-legged on the ground. All breaths are through the nose and focus is on the exhalation. Inhale deeply and rhythmically exhale forcefully through the nostrils. The essence of kapalbhati is a steady repetition of forceful exhalations followed by slightly slower, passive inhalations. Kapalbhati pranayama increases our pitta levels hence improving our metabolic rate, which in turn supports weight loss.



## When things go awry

There starts to manifest multiple body signs indicating to us that we need to pay attention and focus on liver repair. We do not want any emerging liver condition to worsen because the consequences are a serious deterioration to our health. Disorders elsewhere in the digestive tract (like peptic ulcers or hyperacidity) are typically rooted in impaired liver and gallbladder function, imbalances that are classically hot and inflammatory in nature. So keeping an eye out for these types of imbalances and addressing them early on, naturally helps protect the health of the liver and gallbladder.

## Early symptoms of a struggling liver

- ~ Generally feeling unwell and tired all the time
  - ~ Strong body odour and excessive sweating
  - ~ Nausea after eating, loss of appetite
  - ~ Dark-coloured urine
  - ~ Acne, skin breakouts discoloured skin and allergies
  - ~ Sudden weight gain
  - ~ Tenderness/pain in the liver area
  - ~ Spider-like small blood capillaries on the skin above waist level (spider angiomas)
  - ~ Breath may have a musty or sweet odour
  - ~ Disturbed sleep patterns
- Sometimes the liver gets overwhelmed and can't repair itself completely, especially if it's still under attack from a virus, drug, or alcohol. Roughly a quarter of people with liver cirrhosis develop palmar erythema which is a reddening of the skin on the palms. Urine that is dark orange, amber, or brown can be a sign of liver disease. The colour is due to too much bilirubin building up because the liver isn't breaking it down normally.

Acute liver failure is loss of liver function that occurs quite quickly, in days or weeks and usually in a person who has no pre-existing liver disease. It is most commonly caused by a hepatitis virus or drugs, such as acetaminophen. Acute liver failure is less common than chronic liver failure, which develops more slowly. Acute liver failure, also known as fulminant hepatic failure, can cause serious complications, including bleeding and increased pressure in the brain. It's a medical emergency that requires hospitalisation. Depending on the cause, acute liver failure can sometimes be reversed with treatment. In many situations, though, a liver transplant may be the only cure.



# Liver support with Essential Oils

Blend liver loving essential oils (hepatoprotective) in a carrier oil and rub it over the liver area a few times daily for a month to benefit from its healing liver qualities.

**Cypress** A diuretic that flushes out toxins from the liver. Its antioxidant compounds can also help lower cholesterol levels.

**Geranium** Expands bile ducts and accelerates the elimination of toxins in the liver.

**German chamomile** Stimulates the liver and gall bladder which helps to improve digestion, cleanse the blood and discharge toxins via the liver.

**Ginger** Helps reverse a fatty liver and stimulates liver secretions. Ameliorates hepatic injury and lipid accumulation in high fat diet-induced nonalcoholic fatty liver disease.

**Peppermint** Overcomes food stagnation as a symptom of overeating that can lead to disturbed sleep. Since the liver is also involved in this digestive process, peppermint helps the liver with its digestive and detoxification functions. Its antioxidant properties play a vital role in liver injury. It's an excellent one for preventing lipid peroxidation.

**Frankincense** Has anti-inflammatory properties that can help protect the liver from damage caused by inflammation.

**Lavender** Increases bile flow output and flow into the intestine, It has been used extensively for diabetes in parts of Spain and is included in some commercial herbal antidiabetic preparations.

**Grapefruit** Supports a healthy liver and gallbladder function with detoxifying properties.

**Rosemary** A powerful antioxidant, it helps to stimulate digestion, relieve bloating and digestive cramps and tone and detoxify the liver.

**Carrot Seed** Can detoxify blood, tissues, muscles and internal organs, such as liver and kidneys. It helps neutralise excess bile from the liver and also heal infections caused by jaundice. It takes out toxins such as uric acid from the blood, tissues, muscles, joints.

**Lemon** Purifying, cleansing and protective effect on the body, it helps defend against harmful pathogens and promotes detoxification through the blood and liver. Lemon oil also stimulates lymphatic drainage that helps the body cleanse itself of wastes and toxins.

## The liver holds our rage

All emotions will eventually find a home in our bodies so the body is our best teacher; what occurs physically parallels what is occurring spiritually. The liver's work is to process, store, filter and eliminate unwholesome emotions, just as it processes toxins from the body. As it filters our experiences, it requires us to filter our emotions around the experiences to find the truth, hold and store wisdom and eliminate or let go of what causes us suffering. Stress and anxiety can cause elevated levels of liver-produced enzymes. Unprocessed anger can lead to developing negative habits and addictions and manifests physically as disruption to the liver and its myriad functions. Long seated anger shows heat in the body, systemic inflammation and immune dysfunction. Anger also presents shows its presence as a backup of toxins in the digestive system, triggering chronic digestive issues.

There are always things happening around us that arouse anger inside us, and certainly anger is a necessary emotion, it is a warning flag that alerts us to those times when others are attempting to, or have violated our boundaries.

It is a misconception that spiritual people cannot or should

not get mad; we are not talking about aggression here. Many of us struggle to recognise and deal with anger accepting its message on our spiritual path. Anger is a family legacy, travelling down our lineage and how our family processes and dealt with anger influences us greatly, which we will replicate until we learn how to transform anger into fuel for our progression in life and spiritual growth.

Anger can be explosive or a silent rage, however it arises within us, it is our work to try to understand what our higher intelligence is trying to communicate to us. We can respect anger for what it is: the much-needed release of emotions that have been repressed for far too long; the eruption of words unspoken, needs unmet, hurts unhealed and feelings unprocessed, perhaps years and years worth, many of which we had never even taken the time to acknowledge, much less manage or begin to heal.

## The liver's warrior spirit

The liver has a warrior spirit and its function is its innate ability to defend and protect. When the liver is stuck or stagnant, this warrior spirit can react or attack. In contrast, when there is ease, anger can serve its protective purpose to respond intelligently to the call for action, without causing harm to others.



We can thank our anger for protecting us and find our own personal way to send that unwanted energy back to the universe. When we free up this congestion we will feel better able to express the creative energy that flows into the space.

The Solar plexus chakra (Manipura) is associated with feelings of anger, joy, and personal power. It is the area that contains our ambition, sensitivity and general ability. A blocked solar plexus chakra may lead to a lack of direction, frustration, anger or a sense of victimisation. Sometimes when we use hepatic herbs that support our liver, residual anger is released and surfaces and we may notice we speak of things we have been carrying for a long time

and have forgotten to remember. It is time to stay with the intense feelings, watching the story we attach to them, then we just allow, with objectivity without any force or resistance all of this fiery, angry energy to leave our body and flow back to source. The more we truly feel the anger, the more it will begin to dissipate and the more we will heal. Anger can actually be an expression of compassion, a willingness to uphold boundaries that are sacred or stand up for someone who is being oppressed. Compassion and anger can absolutely coexist. Gratitude is a quick way to heal anger and resentment; when we are grateful and content for our life and what is good in our world the more healing comes our way.

## TINDERBOX LIVER LOVING PRODUCTS



### Power Detox

With the 3 best liver loving herbs.



### Dandelion Coffee

Ultimate liver tonic.



### Tumeric Latte

Protective, heals liver damage.



### Gut Lover

A digestive and liver overhaul.



### Herbal Bitters

Superlative digestives for liver health.



### Super Plant Vitality Powder

Revitalises the entire system.



### Power Greens

Alkalisating cleansing.