

## Women's Empowerment: Discovering the personal power of feminine energy.

The feminist revolution allowed women to make great strides socio-economically, but an unintended consequence was a devaluing of traditional feminine energies in favor of masculine energies.

Today's modern women are very effectively utilizing their internal masculine energies in service of educational and professional achievements. A recent Pew Research Center study "New Economics of Marriage: The Rise of Wives" finds that women are now outpacing men in both education and earning growth, while economic gains associated with marriage are now greater for men than for women.

Masculine and feminine energies are a central concept in Chinese philosophy and religion, present in both Taoism and Confucianism. The masculine and feminine halves of the personality are also a key component of Jungian Psychology, where founder Carl Jung referred to them as the anima (the inner feminine of a man) and the animus (the inner masculine of a woman). These polarities, and the dance between them, are represented by the ancient yet familiar Yin-Yang symbol. In each of these, the masculine energy is described as action oriented, strong and expansive, and feminine energy as intuitive, receptive and nurturing.

Unfortunately, many women only access and express their internal feminine energies in the service of others. Naturally empathic and patient with loved ones, nurturing of those in need, giving without score-keeping and striving for consensus, women are notorious for failing to give themselves the same. This is because it is difficult for women to be assertive.

Assertiveness is the ability to tell the truth, maintain good boundaries, and tolerate conflict in service of personal goals. In my work as a psychologist, I see many women who are afraid to express any form of assertiveness, because they "don't want to be mean" or "hurt anyone's feelings." It is tempting to consider assertiveness a masculine trait, but in its truest sense, assertiveness is not an action, it is a philosophical approach.

It is here that feminine energies can be accessed, in 3 simple steps easily remembered with the acronym "RIP". This acronym is usually associated with the words "rest in peace," and this is indeed the desired outcome. In this case, however, the letters remind women to be: Receptive, Intuitive and Protective.

Being receptive allows women to be open to, and allowing of, life. When we are receptive to things, we take them as they come. We do not wish they were different, ignore the parts we don't like, or move into fear or anxiety because they are not as we would like them to be. Receptivity is an attitude of radical acceptance, and it is a very powerful position to take in any situation, for it does not require any defensiveness.

Being intuitive allows women to “trust their gut” about things. It is not accidental that intuition is often located in the stomach; that is where many people experience their feelings. The stomach is also far away from the head, with all of its thoughts and analyses. FEAR (false evidence appearing real) is conjured up via thoughts, while intuition allows for a quiet and simply knowing of what is best.

Being protective of oneself - perhaps the most important part - is also the hardest for women to do. The good news is that feminine energy naturally moves to protect whatever is vulnerable. With a few moments of quiet self-talk, a woman can identify how to protect herself in any situation - be it a confrontation with a boss or spouse, yet another request to volunteer for a social event, or a medical or financial exchange that does not feel safe or respectful. Self-protection gives women the voice they need to stand up for themselves.

When women learn to RIP, there are often fascinating side effects. Spirituality often increases, as they personalize their relationship to a Higher Power of their choosing (possibly even a feminine version of the Divine). Relationships become more meaningful because authentic interactions create deeper connections than superficial ones did. No longer “people-pleasing, they feel more comfortable in their own skin and walk more confidently in their own lives. By reclaiming the personal power of the feminine energy, women can experience an alchemical transformation transcending both male and female, resulting in personal integrity, authenticity and empowerment.