

## ***Releasing Yin Energy***

**Notes from January 21, 2009**

- In what ways do I continually bring “voice to what I do?”
- What stories do I tell others that convey who I am and what I do?
- How do these stories build my authority?
- Am I speaking about what I do with clarity that attracts to me those I want to be with and work with?

**And, finally, ask yourself these questions and see what comes up for you:**

- What am I not seeing?
- What am I not paying attention to?

Prompted by these questions, and the energy of those in the room - - we engaged in a lively and insightful conversation, very grounded in our own experience, and circling around ways we do, and don't, manifest our own deep Yin energy.

- I feel ‘*authorized*’ in my professional role and am quite comfortable confronting disrespectful behavior. It is harder for me to have that same sense of authority outside of that role.
- My strong relationship skills are not valued in a hierarchical system. I don't have the information or language to describe my own skills, inclinations, perspectives, experience and desires. The organization speaks “Yang.”
- When I introduce myself, I often don't use my title as that seems to really put people off.

Questions came up about what prompts us to feel apologetic or diminished and how we can ‘*authorize*’ ourselves and others. These questions moved the awareness of the group into two directions.

- 1.) On the one hand, we gained a deepened awareness that the validity of women's rights is actually a recent phenomenon.
- 2.) And, on the other we explored some effective strategies for manifesting Yin energy.

We recognized some significant historical realities. It was in 1921 when women became able to vote in the U,S, elections – fewer than 100 years ago. As recently as 1970s jobs became open to women in fields where they had been excluded. Some took advantage of it – picture Glenda building railroad tracks!

Susan described being the only woman in her graduate pharmacy program in the 70s.

Women continue to be pioneers and pathfinders in terms of manifesting and authorizing Yin energy, equal and complementary to Yang energy. On the social, institutional and personal level, attitudes and patterns of behavior are embedded in a “power over,” command and control paradigm in which women are valued less than men.

We are breaking subconscious patterns that serve to constrain us and developing new habits. New neural pathways are being created which requires clear intention, continual practice and persistence... while embracing awkwardness. “We’re creating new skills and strategies.” “We can’t collaborate without authorizing ourselves.

Claiming our own strengths and our own power can manifest in countless ways, and yet the simple act of introducing ourselves can pose a challenge: “How do we claim our achievements, i.e. education, skills and title, without sounding arrogant?” The alternative often seems apologetic. As we “unbundled” this resistance we were aware that the resistance was prompted by the reality that often introductions – obviously or subtly – reinforce the hierarchical, competitive paradigm. NOT something we want to do. Reframing helps here. Claim our power, who we are and what we do, not as “power over,” but as “power with,” others, power as energy to make things happen, as skills that are needed, as confidence that can inspire others.

Other specific practices emerged! Barb M. described what she called “*Book Ends*.” Attributing this practice to Alanon, she explained it as a valuable and collaborative way to break old patterns and develop new habits.

Let’s say you need to confront your boss about something, or you are dreading a tough conversation with a colleague, or perhaps you need to be more assertive in your team. “*Book End*” the experience by...

- contracting with a respected friend or colleague to hear you out as you describe your goal and strategy,
- take the action,
- debrief with your friend/colleague.

The role of the friend/colleague is not to give advice, but to be witness, to hear you.

Another specific practice that came out of the conversation is another application for reframing – consider yourself as your own company rather than as an employee. Such reframing stimulates different ways of thinking of your professional colleagues. The relationship between an owner and her clients and vendors, is different from the way we often think of bosses or subordinates.

The conversation closed with a consideration of looking at our work - the old patterns we are shedding, the new practices we're developing – from the perspective of wisdom. This keeps us mindful of the larger purpose of our lives and reminds us to tap into our own wisdom, to access universal wisdom.

In light of our conversation, the question that surfaced as the focus for the February conversation is:

***“What is the story I am telling myself?”***

- What messages am I reinforcing?
- What new neural pathways am I nurturing?
- How am I evoking my own inner wisdom?