



Tapping Into the Four Elements—What’s the Big Deal? *by Rosalinda Huck, LMT, NCTMB*

We all remember from elementary school learning about the four major elements of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, and what their physical, scientific properties are. But these four intriguing elements transcend just the scientific aspect. Every day, you are utilizing the mental and spiritual properties of these elements in various activities, or in the way you approach particular issues and challenges. But you probably don't realize that you do!

Take the element of water, for example. In terms of physiology, the human body is comprised of anywhere between 50-70% water. We continually need it to keep ourselves hydrated, and we cannot go without water for more than 3-4 days or we die. On a more metaphysical level, water is associated with emotions and feelings, and emotions fall under the second chakra, (one of the seven major energy centers in the body located around your lower abdomen and lower back). If you are overly emotional, you may need to pull away from this element a bit by balancing it with one of the other three. Or perhaps you have difficulty being creative. Water energy is also associated with creative energy--think of the "flow" of creativity. If you are having a creative block, you may want to physically be near a fountain, a waterfall, a lake, or ocean, and let the sound and feel of the water inspire you. Water also corresponds to purification, washing away dirt and other toxins. Have you ever had such a bad day, or experienced so much negativity, that you just stood in the shower and let the water pour down on you? You probably did so to gain that refreshed, clean feeling--both physically and energetically--in a way, symbolically washing away the "gunk" that was making you feel horrible.

Each element gives us both spiritual and practical “tools” to work with, depending on what is going on in our lives. The four elements and the significance of each can be traced back centuries to pagan societies and various cultural tribes, including Native Americans, who relied heavily on the elements for healing purposes and daily rituals and routines. A major healing system, Chinese Medicine, has its basis on the foundation of the five element theory, of which the basic four elements are represented. Over time, we have sub-consciously incorporated the elements into our own daily lives. We can all associate with our zodiac signs in western astrology (when we say things like, “I’m a water sign”), when we are wholeheartedly passionate about a hobby or our profession (fire energy), when we take up a yoga practice (primarily earth energy, but also air), or when we give a sigh of relief or breathe deeply before we do something challenging (air energy).

All these energies are inherently a part of us and we use them all the time. We have the ability to develop them further and become more in tuned to the many ways we can take these elements and integrate them on a deeper level for healing our thoughts, our physical bodies, and even our relationships with others. When you look around, these elements are physically present everywhere, and knowing how to include their more metaphysical properties in everything we do can be a key to enriching our lives with more clarity and self-fulfillment.

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