

DIAGNOSING THE FIVE TYPES: THE CONCEPTUAL AND THE CLINICAL

Five phase typing helps to explain the dynamic context within which symptoms arise. It's an approach that grafts Western notions of the psyche onto the trunk of traditional Chinese medical thought. By sharing case studies, this methodology gains clinical utility that can advance herbal prescribing.

Chinese cosmology posits five fundamental organizing agents in nature and in the microcosm of the human person. In our typology, we postulate that there are five individual styles of being in the world that correspond to these five phases. Each of us is governed by a dominant phase--Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal, or Water--which we know as our *type*. One phase most characterizes each of us and acts as the primal ontological matrix out of which our unique existence forms itself. Our core phase functions like the hub of our wheel, while the others serve as the spokes. As the source of our deepest impulses, this phase organizes the ineffable force—our qi—through which all of our experience is received, incorporated and expressed. In short, our type organizes us, body and mind.

Within the Five Phase paradigm, Water (Yin) and Fire (Yang) constitute the primary polarity that organizes Nature, embodied in the relationship between the Kidney and Heart. A secondary dynamic polarity is represented by Wood and Metal, embodied in the relationship between the Liver and Lung. Earth, manifest in the body as the Spleen, is the mediating, harmonizing power at the center of the body. While Water and Fire (Kidney and Heart), organize the substance (Jing) and context (Shen) of our life and its expression, Wood and Metal (Liver and Lung) orchestrate its pulse and rhythm—the movement, distribution and transformation of Qi and Blood. Another way to think of this dynamic relationship is that the Liver Network (Wood) is dedicated to getting stuff going—activating and mobilizing—and the Lung Network is committed to keeping stuff in order—sequencing and supervising. Earth is the fulcrum between contending forces—Earth is what binds stuff together and provides shape.



The Fire Type

Fire types seek excitement, pleasure, intimacy. They are emotionally expressive, magnetic and easy to know, enjoy sensuality and drama, and are prone to maladies such as anxiety, nervousness, alternations of heat and cold, fluctuations in energy and mood, and burnout. They tend to be warm on the surface (get hot and sweat easily) and it's easy for them to become cold internally. They are sensitive to their environment, physically and psychically, and rely on how things strike them. Whether slim or heavy, their bodies tend to be well proportioned, willowy or graceful in posture and in movement, with long and tapered fingers and toes.

The Fire type is probably the easiest of the types to read. As long as they feel safe, they will gladly tell you everything, making contact easily and quickly. They relish being seen, heard and understood. They are emotionally expressive (laugh, weep, joke, and bristle easily). It's easy to tune in to what they're experiencing just by watching the variation of color and sheen on their faces, the changing luminosity in their eyes and the variability of the temperature and moisture of their skin. They become hot or cold easily and perspire freely. In the interest of maintaining their natural good humor, they prefer to make light of their difficulties and vulnerabilities—they detest being brought down—and on the other, they are fearful of sickness and death, sometimes exaggerating the gravity of their symptoms.



Recognizing the FireType

KEYS TO FIRE

- relishes excitement and delights in intimacy
- keenly intuitive and passionately empathetic
- believes in the power of charisma and desire
- loves sensation, drama, and sentiment

TYPICAL PROBLEMS

- anxiety, agitation, and frenzy
- bizarre perceptions and sensations
- nervous exhaustion and insomnia
- palpitations, sweating, hypoglycemia, rashes, palsy



Annie: Case Study of a Fire Type

Annie is a 32 year-old woman with a long list of physical and psychological concerns. Easily distracted and disappointed, she has difficulty disciplining herself in regard to diet and exercise; is vexed with worries, anxieties, dark thoughts and feeling misunderstood; has trouble getting up in the morning and feeling able to get through the day; often thinks “there’s something wrong with me” and that “I might die early in life”, or that something terrible will happen to a loved one; gets nauseous if she lets herself get too hungry; and is discouraged by heaviness and flabbiness in her legs and hips. She also gets lumbar pain, uterine cramps and constipation during her period. She works as a massage therapist and this helps her to feel competent, plus she gets satisfaction from helping others feel good.

Annie is light skinned with a reddish hue to her cheeks, and lips that are dry and slightly reddened as well. She is neither slim nor chubby, but well muscled and shapely, although from the waist down her hips and thighs are fleshier and her lower legs and ankles appear slightly edematous. There is no pitting but there is a soft, mushy sensation when palpating her calves. She is warm to the touch but says that she chills easily. The skin around her cheeks, chin and jaw is a little red and rough, showing signs of blemishes that come and go. There is also a little reddening of her palms and fingers, which are long a tapered. Her tongue is pale, with some reddened papillae at the front and middle zones with a sticky, yellowish coating. Her pulse rate is slow (less than 65 beats per minute at rest) with pounding over the entire pulse, plus her pulses are especially deep.

Nervous and giddy, with moist palms, Annie is amiable and accessible, wanting to put me at ease, even when she is not. She smiles a lot when discussing her problems. There is a palpable sense that her body quivers slightly with every pulsation, and she often sighs after finishing a sentence. She laughs easily and her eyes well up with tears when voicing upsetting or disappointing events. She confesses to sadness and insecurity yet is committed to transcendence and making the best of it. She genuinely desires happiness and is willing to work hard to attain it.



Summary of Complaints:

Easily distracted and disappointed
Difficulty dieting and exercising
Worries, dark thoughts, feels misunderstood
Fear of disease and premature death
Nauseous with hunger
Heaviness and flabbiness of legs and hips
Menstrual constipation, lumbar pain, cramps
Easily overheated and chilled
Dream disturbed sleep

Summary of Observations:

Reddened cheeks, palms, fingers
Dry, red lips
Moist palms
Hips and thighs fleshy, ankles swollen
Mushy tone in lower leg muscles
Pale tongue with red tip and center
Yellow, sticky tongue fur
Slow, pounding, deep pulse
Nervous, giddy, emotionally labile

Commentary:

Annie's pulse picture indicates chronically and perhaps congenitally insufficient Original (*yuan*) Qi and Yang; her whole pulse is deep and slow and she chills easily. In particular, her Kidney Qi is deficient as evidenced by water retention in the lower body, lumbar pain during her menses, trouble getting herself up in the morning, and worrying about premature death. The pounding quality on the pulse, the redness of the tongue tip, and the skin on her face and palms, along with incessant worry and nervousness, all indicate Heat as a result of hyperactivity of the Heart Qi. But her tongue is also pale and her lips, though reddened, are dry. Thus her Heart is not supported by adequate Qi and Blood.

Annie's fundamental imbalance between the Heart and Kidney is typical of Fire types. Fire types tend to have imbalances along the *Ke* Sequence between the Kidney and Heart and/or the Heart and the Lung. The Fire phase is what organizes her inside and out, driving her forward; yet she feels unsure and unstable. She desires to transcend these insecurities that affect her emotional life, but feels inadequate to take on the task. The strong desire to rise and see the glass half full, to be happy and enjoy the excitement and pleasures in life, are her strengths and come from her Heart. The constant apprehension, vulnerability and insecurity come from her Kidney. If only she had enough juice, she believes she could build the life that she envisions.

Instability of the Heart Qi also affects the Stomach/Spleen (Fire nourishes Earth), causing much fluctuation in her energy (hypoglycemia) throughout the day. And when the Stomach/Spleen functions are weak, there is insufficiency of Blood and Qi on a daily basis. With a dramatic disharmony between Organ Networks, especially the Kidney and Heart, all other Organ Networks are impacted. Annie needs major nourishing of the Qi and Essence of her Kidney, supplementation of her Heart Qi and Blood, and re-establishment of the union between the Kidney and Heart, Jing and Shen.

There are signs of Heat, however it is of the deficiency type and, in this case, primarily due to the chronic or congenital insufficiency of Essence and Yang. When the Kidney Essence and Yang are depleted, the genuine Fire of the Life Gate (*ming men hua*) tends to float upward. This upward rising of Fire vexes the Heart and unsettles the Mind. To rectify this disharmony, we employ rich Essence replenishing (**Replenish Essence**) and Yang warming ingredients (**Purge Cold**), along with Mind soothing and Yang settling agents (**Comfort Shen**). **Harmonize Kidney-Heart** coordinates the action of all the other formulas to re-establish the fundamental relationship between Yin and Yang, Jing and Shen.



Diagnosis:

Deficiency of Kidney Qi and Essence
Internal Heat due to hyperactive Heart Qi
Deficiency of Heart Qi, Yang, and Blood
Deficiency of Original Qi and Yang
Disharmony of Heart and Kidney



Prescription:

Harmonize Kidney-Heart	20 ml
Replenish Essence	60 ml
Purge Cold	20 ml
Comfort Shen	20 ml

Dose: 4 squirts 3 times daily in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



Follow-up:

Two weeks following her first visit, the redness of her face, tongue and hands has markedly diminished; her ankle swelling is gone; and she had a menses without constipation or back pain but moderate to severe cramps for two days. She is less hungry and is able to go for longer periods between meals. Her anxiety is much less and she notices that her sleep is better. Annie's pulse is still slow and deep but she reports less sensitivity to heat and cold. She continues with the same herbal prescription for another month, and in addition, she is given the formula **Got Rhythm**, 4 squirts every 2 – 4 hours as needed for pre-menstrual discomfort and cramping during her periods.

Annie's progress is dramatic. After only six weeks, she feels more calm, her appetite and diet are under control, she is exercising (yoga and walking) regularly, awakens happy in the morning, and the redness in her face and hands has faded. She is still sensitive emotionally and her palms perspire easily—she is still a Fire Type. She no longer experiences her back as weak and she is feeling more optimistic and confident. Annie also reports that using **Got Rhythm** before and during her periods has really made a difference. Her prescriptions remain the same, she receives acupuncture twice a month, and she continues to improve.



The Water Type

The Water type can be the most challenging to assess and know because Water, the most Yin of the five phases, is understated, placid, and more hidden than that which is Yang. The Water type's mind, body and Qi share the Yin qualities of quiet, dark, cool, deep, buried, solid, imperturbable, concentrated, covert, compact, constant, steady, and full of potential. But deep within Yin is Yang, so even though the Water type appears outwardly cool, even to the touch, there is still a robust Fire of Life—the *ming men hua*—burning within.

Water types can be reserved, even reticent, tend to keep to themselves, don't easily share personal information, are outwardly calm and self-contained, astute and scrutinizing, and probably know a lot more about what they're doing than they let on—at least during the first few meetings with a new doctor. More often than not,



they have thought long and hard before coming for help, preferring to take care of themselves. They don't especially like people messing with, probing, or even advising them. Trust is cautiously given by Water types. They need to believe that the provider is not treating them in a generic or formulaic fashion, and that whatever is learned about them will not only be held in confidence, but will not be used to coerce them into doing something their instincts or analyses tell them is incorrect or conflicts with their own thinking. On the other hand, they are inquisitive and open to thoughtfully considering new ideas and unfamiliar approaches.

Although outwardly calm, cool and collected, on the inside a Water type may have passionate feelings and harbor strong opinions—the Yang within Yin. Sometimes this can be an immobilizing contradiction if one is unable to adequately express what is so deeply held within. This feeling of being stifled can manifest as Internal Heat.

Recognizing the Water Type

KEYS TO WATER

- articulate, clever, self-sufficient, and introspective
- penetrating, critical, and scrutinizing
- seeks knowledge and understanding
- likes to remain hidden, enigmatic and anonymous

TYPICAL PROBLEMS

- emotionally inaccessible and undemonstrative
- isolation and loneliness
- tactless, unforgiving, and suspicious
- hardening of the arteries, deterioration of teeth and gums, back ache, chilliness, loss of libido



Lily: Case Study of a Water Type

Lily is a 58-year-old woman who seeks better health in order to prevent frequent bronchial colds and a recurrence of cancer. As a child she was hospitalized for Bronchitis. Lily's menopause was hastened ten years ago when her diagnosis of breast cancer was followed by a lumpectomy, excision of lymph nodes, and seven months of chemotherapy and radiation. Ever since then she has had hot flashes and night sweats as well as dryness in her eyes and vagina. Most immediately distressing to her is that she began having palpitations three years ago. The palpitations and hot flashes sometimes disturb her sleep. These symptoms are aggravated by fatigue, anxiety, indigestion, and stress. Due to greater work demands lately, she is experiencing more fatigue than usual. She also complains of chronic indigestion: a bad taste in her mouth, bad breath, flatulence, burping, and occasional acid reflux.

During her cancer treatment she received acupuncture and Chinese herbal medicine which she believes enabled her to tolerate chemotherapy and radiation better than most. She doesn't like to complain and prefers to think that she is generally in good health though understandably worried about a cancer recurrence. Being a self-sufficient person, she has tried to maintain her health through the practice of QiGong and a healthy diet.



She is hesitant to reveal much about herself unless asked. Conversely, she understands that Chinese medicine takes everything about a person into consideration. She works hard as an auditor for a utility company and finds respite and satisfaction in her marriage, QiGong practice, and the QiGong community. While she is committed to using non-conventional medical approaches, she's reluctant to add anything to her regular regimen of a few vitamins.

She is puffy under both eyes (Kidney zone) and, though light skinned, her facial color is a lusterless pearl gray with a slight red flush on both cheeks. Her Kidney pulses are deep, firm and tense, her Heart, Lung and Liver pulses are pounding and her Stomach pulse is thin, soft and mushy. Lily's tongue is scalloped, pale orange in color (like apricots); both sides near the front and the tip form a red triangle and the fur is yellow, dry and sticky. The texture and tone of her skin feels smooth and soft while the musculature underneath is firm. It appears as if there is a spongy padding between the skin and the muscles. Her fingers and toes are long, neither thick nor thin, with a flat, square shape to the nails and tips.

Interacting with Lily is direct and straightforward: specific questions are met by factual answers. She is not without affect—she appears pleased to be discussing her situation and initiating acupuncture treatment after contemplating this step for over a year. Lily is anxious about her future—she sums up her concerns with one essential thought, “I'm interested in strategies for supporting my immune system long term”, a statement which I interpret to mean she seeks to know how to keep cancer in check and stay alive for a long time. Water types are most interested in the fundamental questions.

When an herbal prescription is suggested, she balks—she isn't opposed to the idea, but she needs to think about it. She is willing to add two nutritional supplements, a probiotic and digestive enzyme, partly because she has some indigestion, and partly because I explain that improving the health of her gut will enhance her resistance to colds. But by the end of her first acupuncture treatment, she has decided to try an herbal formula.

Summary of Complaints:

Frequent colds leading to Bronchitis
Hot flashes
Dryness of eyes and vagina
Palpitations
Poor sleep
Fatigue
Acid reflux, belching, flatulence, bad breath

Summary of Observations:

Puffy under eyes
Lusterless grey complexion
Red flush on cheeks
Deep, tense Kidney pulse
Pounding Heart, Lung, and Liver pulse
Thin, soft, mushy Stomach pulse
Scalloped, pale, orange tongue
Tongue red at front and tip
Dry, sticky, yellow fur on tongue
Spongy padding between skin and muscles
Long fingers, toes with square tips and nails

Commentary:

Chemotherapy damages the Qi and Yin of the Spleen and Stomach, the body's source of Qi and Blood. Radiation damages the Blood and Marrow and weakens the Kidney and Liver. Overwork weakens the Qi of the Lung and Kidney. The fundamental pattern of Organ Network interactions in a Water type is typified by a dynamic tension between the Kidney (Water), Heart (Fire) and Spleen (Earth)—so her problems are most likely to appear within the triad of Kidney-Heart-Spleen. Knowing her type, the context within which her symptoms occur assists us in designing an herbal formula that fits both her symptoms and constitution.



Poor sleep, red-tipped tongue, and a pounding pulse are understood as agitation of Heart Qi and Yang causing Internal Heat and restless Shen. A pounding quality at the Heart, Lung and Liver pulse positions indicates Heat trapped in the Heart that often diffuses into the Upper, Middle, and Lower Burner, affecting the Lung, Stomach, and Liver. And while the pounding quality may appear at any pulse position, it is a distinguishing feature of excess Heart Fire. Worry and anxiety about her health contribute to Shen agitation and accumulation of Heat in the interior which leads to a contradictory condition of Dryness and Dampness, a common pattern of Stomach-Spleen disharmony. Hot flashes are also indicative of an imbalance between Yin (Moisture and Blood) and Yang (Qi and Genuine or True Fire).

Lily's digestive dysfunction is evidenced by the bad taste in her mouth, the dry, sticky fur on her scalloped tongue, and a thin, soft, mushy Stomach pulse. These signs are interpreted as deficient Stomach Qi, Stomach Heat (probably due to lack of Moisture) co-existing with stagnation of Moisture (Dampness).

Lily's Kidney problem manifests as depletion, a likely consequence of the chemotherapy and radiation, along with the initial fear and shock that accompanies a cancer diagnosis and the persistent worry about a recurrence. Lily was pushed into menopause and shows signs of dryness and has hot flashes, both indications of Kidney Yin deficiency. But, more than that, Lily has the Water character: reserved, reticent, thoughtful (wanting to know and to understand), deliberate (needing to carefully consider before making a decision), suspicious or wary (uncertain about the wisdom of any big changes in her plan), soft and pliable on the surface (her skin and padding), but firm and unyielding underneath (Kidney pulses were firm and tense and her muscles were also quite firm with good tone). Also, she keeps her emotions to herself, especially with someone she doesn't yet know, feelings that are clearly quite intense and manifesting inwardly as excess Heat in the Heart, Liver, and Lung.

Diagnosis:

Deficiency of Qi and Moisture of the Spleen and Stomach
Heart Blood deficiency
Instability of Heart Qi
Internal Heat affecting Heart, Liver, Lung, Stomach
Kidney Yin deficiency
Disharmony of Kidney-Heart
Disharmony of Spleen-Kidney



Prescription:

Harmonize Kidney-Heart	30 ml
Harmonize Spleen-Kidney	30 ml
Purge Heat	20 ml
Tonify Moisture	20 ml
Tonify Blood	20 ml

Dose: 3 squirts 3 times daily 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



Why will the prescription be efficacious? First of all, it modulates the fundamental interactions between the three major Organ Networks that organize Lily: Kidney, Heart and Spleen. A base formula for any Water Type might include the Chinese Modular Solutions formulas **Harmonize Kidney-Heart** and **Harmonize Spleen-Kidney**. Prescribing only the two Harmonizing formulas might accomplish a lot. But we are adding formulas that will correct the three major imbalances that underlie her symptoms: eliminate Heat, replenish Moisture, and nourish Blood. Replenishing Moisture will relax the Kidneys by nourishing the Yin, plus it will help to quell the surfeit of Yang Fire. Clearing Heat (revealed by the tongue, pulse and a bad taste) will complement the action of replenishing Moisture and will be good for the Stomach as well as the Heart. And, finally, supplementing the Blood will further nourish Yin, relaxing the Heart, helping to ground the Qi and the Yang, creating greater harmony between the Kidney and the Heart.

Follow-up:

Lily decides to come once a month for acupuncture and herbal therapy. At the second visit she reports that she no longer has a bad taste in her mouth and has less frequent bouts of belching, flatulence, and acid reflux. Palpitations are also less frequent and less disturbing—they no longer awaken her at night. Her eyes and vagina are still dry but she feels less tired. So far she has avoided getting a cold or cough. Now that winter is approaching she has growing concern about getting Bronchitis. Her tongue remains pale and scalloped but the tongue fur is no longer yellow and sticky. There is still some redness at the tip of her tongue and some pounding on her pulse. Her new prescription is:

Harmonize Kidney-Heart	20 ml
Harmonize Spleen-Kidney	20 ml
Purge Heat	20 ml
Tonify Blood	30 ml
Tonify Qi	30 ml
Dose: 3 squirts 3 times daily in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water	



Tonify Qi replaces **Tonify Moisture** in this formula in order to give more support to the body as a whole and increase resistance to external stress.

In addition, Lily gets a second prescription as prophylaxis and therapy for colds and coughs, to be taken at the first sign of any viral illness. This prescription includes:

Purge External Wind	15 ml
Strengthen Lung	15 ml
Windbreaker	15 ml
Chest Relief	15 ml
Dose: 4 squirts every 4 hours in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water as needed	



One month later, at her third visit, Lily is glad to say that she was coming down with a cold two weeks ago and she was able to nip it in the bud with her cold formula. Her hot flashes have become so minor that she doesn't regard them as a problem, and her palpitations have abated completely. As a result, her sleep has improved as



she is much less tired. The pounding quality is gone from her pulse. Her tongue shows that the fur is no longer yellow or sticky, the redness is gone from the tip, and the color is pinker. The scallops remain, indicating that her Spleen still needs support. All in all, Lily feels more centered, more at ease, more energetic and, most importantly, more herself.

In addition to her cold remedy to be used as needed, Lily is advised to continue with the following formula: **Strengthen Kidney** and **Strengthen Spleen** replace **Harmonize Kidney-Heart**—she is sleeping better, no longer has palpitations, and the pulse is no longer pounding. The strengthening formulas provide ongoing support to two pillars: the Root (Kidney) and the Stomach (Spleen).

Harmonize Spleen-Kidney	20 ml
Strengthen Spleen	20 ml
Strengthen Kidney	20 ml
Tonify Blood	30 ml
Tonify Qi	30 ml

Dose: 3 squirts 3 times daily in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



Wood and Metal

Each of the five phases or agents represents a particular aspect of the process of change. The role of Earth is to modulate all transitions between one state and another, enabling us to adjust smoothly and gracefully without losing our bearings. What is the nature of the Wood-Metal relationship? They alter the direction of Qi. Wood shifts movement outward from utmost contraction and stillness (Water). Metal shifts movement inward from greatest expansion and activity (Fire). In contradistinction to Water, Wood represents a radical, abrupt shifting from internalization to the vigorous emergence of externalized action. And in contradistinction to Fire, Metal represents a gradual, conservative retreat from intensity and outward expression toward containment and restraint.

Based on these qualities and predispositions, we can predict that Wood types will be disturbed by excessive inhibition or restraint, and Metal types by the absence of regularity or stability. For example, constraint of Liver Qi is often given as the etiology of Liver Network disharmonies, and reversal of Qi is used to describe disharmonies of the Lung Network. Constraint equals excessive inhibition (inflexible limits). Reversal equals disorderly movement (breaking the rules). Constrained Liver Qi is manifested by symptoms such as headaches, muscle tension and spasm, hypertension, constipation, emotional volatility, depression and dysmenorrhea. Reversal of Lung Qi may manifest as cough, wheezing, chest pain or distension, stomach reflux (yes, stomach!), sinus headache, facial flushing, paroxysms of weeping, and tightness (not tension) of the chest, neck and shoulders.

Five Phase theory predicts that Wood types may likely be afflicted with rage and intolerance born of frustration and an inflated sense of power (Wood types seek to be the best, first and only). Metal types are more likely afflicted with melancholy and embarrassment born of an unmet need for intimacy and disillusionment with an ideal (Metal types seek genial friendships and find refuge in beauty, honor and authority). On the positive side, it is good to remember that indignation and outrage (Wood) are forces that can be harnessed to foster constructive change, and that an impartial and realistic view (Metal) of circumstances can lead to fresh thinking



and novel solutions. In fact, the powers of Wood and Metal within us work well together to move us forward in life with clarity and purpose.



The Wood Type

Wood types seek the space in which to move freely, whether physically or mentally. They abhor limits and regulations, unless it is they who establish them and, even then, they are apt to ignore the limits and rules they sanction for others. “Don’t fence me in” is one of their mantras. Goals, targets, missions, causes, obstacles, novelty, struggle and discovery are their métier, their sphere of action. And action, without restriction and in whatever context, is what appeals to them.

Because of their relentless drive and single-mindedness, Wood types may provoke discord and resentment. They prefer doing things their own way--which can be challenging for others who want to equally participate in formulating plans and making decisions. Being held accountable to other’s expectations and ideals can feel like a ball-and-chain to a Wood type who wants to follow her own bent and pursue her own agenda, one which she determines is the best one anyway. But, more than that, Wood types can become worn out by a compulsion to do more, do it faster, and do it better. Eventually, they run into a wall of frustration or run out of steam and can feel thwarted, disheartened, defeated and deflated. When they push themselves past their own limits, they can become vexed with headaches, muscle aches, dyspepsia, IBS, sinusitis, sleep disturbances, hypochondria and depression.

Recognizing the Wood Type

KEYS TO WOOD

- seeks challenge and pushes to the limit
- enjoys and does well under pressure
- loves action, movement, and adventure
- likes to be first, best, and only

TYPICAL PROBLEMS

- intolerance and impatience
- volatile emotions
- vascular headaches, muscle spasms, high blood pressure, nerve inflammations, migratory pain
- abuse of stimulants and sedatives



Anita: Case Study of a Wood Type

Anita is a 28 year-old woman who voices her primary concerns as being uterine fibroids, ovarian cysts that burst twice in the preceding 5 months, and the desire to lose 30 pounds. Although her menstrual cycle is regular at 28 days, she experiences premenstrual headaches and painful periods. Additional complaints include diarrhea during menstruation and sensitivity to cold, including hands and feet that can become swollen and purple when exposed to cold.

Further inquiry into Anita's history reveals that she began menstruating at age 9 with fully developed breasts, and reached her full height (5' 2") and was the tallest child in her class at age 11. At age 12 she weighed 140 pounds and, until age 17, was very active in swimming, cross country running and other sports, except for one year at age 13, when she was less athletic and gained 15 pounds. She lost the weight again a year later. When she began college at 18, she developed severe acne and was given Accutane. At 21 she graduated from college and weighed 175 pounds. A doctor then prescribed Xenical and Meridia that enabled her to lose 25 pounds while eating a very low fat, low carbohydrate diet. After this, she developed acute, necrotic appendicitis that was surgically remediated.

From age 24 on, Anita gained and lost weight several times, experienced recurring episodes of "stress-induced physical and emotional shut-down and exhaustion", during which she lost much of the hair on her head while growing more body hair—treated with laser therapy—and was finally diagnosed as suffering from polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS), and was treated with Spironolactone (an anti- androgen) and birth control pills.

At age 27 Anita became a vegetarian and, in the last year, developed constipation, abdominal bloating, erratic appetite, episodes of nausea and heart burn. She has been unable to break the 158 pound barrier, even though she practices yoga, exercises regularly and eats "only healthy food"—she doesn't feel "right" unless she's exercising a lot. In spite of her strength and flexibility, she gets back pain if she sits for a long time. She works very hard as a teacher and writer and is currently under contract to finish a book.

Although Anita is somewhat overweight, her body is well-shaped, muscular and flexible. Her complexion is swarthy (dark and a little oily) with a slightly green and yellow tinge around the eyes, nose and mouth. Her skin is smooth and soft with good tone and moisture. Palpation of her lower abdomen elicits tenderness and areas over her small and large intestines feel tight and swollen. Her hands are cool, her feet are cold and her forehead is warm. Her tongue is pale and large, a little red at the tip and pale orange (peach colored) at the edges, with dry, red cracks in the Stomach region; the fur is dry, thickened and slightly yellow. Anita's pulse rate is slow at 60/minute, her Kidney pulses are deep, her Heart pulse thin and tight, her Lung pulse thin and slightly pounding, her Stomach pulse thin, tight and slightly pounding, and her Liver pulse tense and pounding.

What characteristics identify Anita as a Wood Type? She grew fast and matured much earlier than her peers. She's competitive and pushes herself extremely hard, sometimes to the point of mental and physical exhaustion. She sets challenging goals for herself and tries to achieve them in record time. Even though she is overweight, her body is strong, flexible and muscular. And, she manifests the fluctuating, sometimes erratic habits and proclivities of a Wood Type: she pushes hard for time and then stops; she diets to lose weight, then slacks off and gains it back; she has pursued aggressive medical therapies and suffered some severe consequences as a result of some of them. These erratic, fluctuating behaviors and symptoms are emblematic of poorly regulated Liver Qi that varies between hyperactivity and hypoactivity, stagnation and depletion.



Summary of Complaints:

Early onset of menses, precocious sexual maturity
Intense athletic activity during adolescence
Large fluctuations in weight during adolescence and adulthood
History of acne, loss of head hair, hirsutism
Appendicitis following a rapid weight loss
Changing eating habits from low fat/low carbohydrate to vegetarian diet
Doesn't feel right unless exercising strenuously and frequently
Difficulty losing weight even when on restricted caloric intake
Regular menstrual cycle but painful periods and premenstrual headaches
Fibroids and ovarian cysts
Sensitivity to cold; cold hands and feet
Occasional diarrhea, constipation more common
Nausea, heartburn, abdominal bloating
Lower back pain after sitting

Summary of Observations:

Strong, muscular despite being overweight
Warm forehead
Tender lower abdomen
Pale tongue with red tip and peach colored edges; red cracks in Stomach region; dry, thickened yellow fur
Slow pulse overall; deep Kidney pulses; thin, tight Heart pulse; thin, tight, pounding Stomach pulse; tense, pounding Liver pulse

Commentary:

Even though Anita's Liver appears hyperactive with a tense and pounding pulse—there is underlying deficiency as evidenced by the deep, tight and thin qualities at the pulse positions of the Kidney, Heart, Lung and Stomach. Heat of the deficiency type is demonstrated by a red tongue tip with a pale body, the pounding quality of the Liver, Stomach and Lung pulses, and redness in the Stomach region of her tongue. The tense quality indicates stagnation of Liver Qi which interferes with the proper movement of Qi in the Stomach and Intestines. Heat and Qi stagnation along with a deficiency of Blood lead to dryness.

In order to clear Heat, eliminate Qi stagnation and nurture Blood, her prescription includes **Purge Heat**, **Disperse Qi** and **Tonify Blood**. These formulas will alleviate the congestion and dryness while supporting the Yin (Blood) of the Kidney, Liver, Heart and Lung. Anita's warm head and cold extremities are a manifestation of the uprising of Yang (upper Heat) and settling of Yin (lower cold). And since there is also deficiency of Qi, **Harmonize Spleen-Kidney** will augment the Qi by improving the function of the Spleen and Stomach as well as strengthening the Kidney which, in turn, will help to anchor the Yang and warm the Lower Burner (abdomen and feet). The stagnation of Liver Qi both disrupts the circulation and distribution of Blood to the hands and feet and interferes with the Spleen and Stomach's ability to digest, assimilate, and generate, that also contributes to the deficiency of Qi and Blood. **Harmonize Liver-Spleen** will enhance the complementary functions of the Spleen, Stomach and Liver in generating and circulating Qi and Blood. But Anita's condition is also characterized by the accumulation of Yin in the Lower Burner, leading to stagnation of Blood in the uterus and ovaries that in turn contributes to the development of fibroids and cysts. Adding **Disperse Qi** to the combination will further diminish the Qi stagnation in both the Middle and Lower Burners (Spleen, Liver and Kidneys) and improve the movement of Blood as well.

Because Anita has well documented PCOS, additional supplementation with chromium, DIM and Calcium d-glucarate is considered an essential adjunct. Dietary chromium helps to regulate insulin which is a significant factor in PCOS since high levels of circulating insulin can suppress ovarian function in combination with



high levels of androgens. Reducing dietary starch will also help to reduce insulin secretion to more optimal levels. It is interesting to note that Wood types—both men and women—tend to have higher levels of androgens (testosterone and DHEA) than do other types. High levels of androgens confer greater muscle size and strength, stronger bones and greater endurance, all of which are characteristics of Anita's development and body type.

DIM and Calcium d-glucarate facilitate the metabolism and elimination of excess estrogen which is what often drives the growth of uterine fibroids and ovarian cysts. And finally, Evening Primrose Oil is a good fat, rich in Omega 3s, that nourishes the Blood and down-regulates pro-inflammatory prostaglandins that contribute to dysmenorrhea and other premenstrual complaints.

Diagnosis:

Stagnation of Liver Qi and Blood
Deficiency Heat in Liver and Stomach
Stagnation of Qi of Stomach and Intestines
Deficiency of Kidney Qi and Yin
Deficiency of Spleen Qi
Deficiency of Blood
Reversal of Yin and Yang: Cold below (feet) and Heat above (forehead)



Prescription:

Tonify Blood	40 ml
Harmonize Liver-Spleen	20 ml
Harmonize Spleen-Kidney	20 ml
Disperse Qi	20 ml
Purge Heat	20 ml

Dose: 4 squirts 3 times daily in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water, before or between meals



She was also prescribed:

- Evening Primrose Oil, 2 capsules twice daily
- Chromium polynicotinate, 1 capsule with every meal
- Di-indolylmethane (DIM), 1 capsule twice daily
- Calcium d-glucarate, 1 capsule twice daily
- Reduce intake of starchy vegetables, legumes and sugar
- Increase intake of healthy fats and proteins (other than soy)
- Increase intake of fluids (water, diluted fruit and vegetable juices, herbal and/or non-caffeinated tea)

Follow-up:

Two weeks after her initial visit, Anita is feeling markedly better. Her digestion is improved—she has no heartburn or bloating, is less constipated, and has more sustained energy. She is advised to continue with the same formula and supplements. Anita comments, “I just feel better when I take the herbs and supplements”. She is also doing much better at restricting starch and sugar and has been able to increase good fats and proteins. As



a result, her energy is even better than before, and she has been able to resume a moderately rigorous and regular exercise regimen without wearing herself out.

However, she complains that she's had sinus congestion accompanied by a headache and a recurrence of acne with a period that was uncomfortable, but not as painful as before. Her tongue changed: the fur was not as thick and dry, and the redness at the tip and in the cracks has diminished, but remains visible—Heat is still a factor. Although she is advised to continue with the same three supplements, because of the appearance of sinus headache and congestion, coupled with increased stress and anxiety, her herbal prescription is modified by removing **Harmonize Spleen-Kidney** and replacing it with **Harmonize Lung-Liver**. **Harmonize Lung-Liver** contains herbs that will clear Heat and Wind from the Liver while moisturizing and clearing Heat, Wind and Phlegm from the Lung.

Tonify Blood	40 ml
Harmonize Liver-Spleen	20 ml
Harmonize Lung-Liver	20 ml
Disperse Qi	20 ml
Purge Heat	20 ml

Dose: 4 squirts 3 times daily in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



Follow-up:

Eight weeks after her initial visit, Anita was quite pleased. She had a period with no pain, no headache, and no acne, and she had lost nine pounds. In addition, an ultrasound requested by her gynecologist revealed that the cysts on both her ovaries had completely disappeared. Anita was gearing up to do some serious work on her book and having some anxiety because she was under pressure to produce. She was not averse to the pressure because she experiences that as a motivating factor, but she doesn't want to be bothered by anxiety. Anita's pulse was no longer pounding or tense at the Liver position and the redness on her tongue had all but disappeared, indicating that Heat was no longer prevalent. Instead of Heat, however, the increased pressure in her life was causing anxiety. Accordingly, her prescription was modified by removing **Purge Heat** and replacing it with **Comfort Shen**. **Comfort Shen** calms the Heart-Mind and quells uprising Yang of the Liver, the kind of Heat that is caused by agitation of the *Hun* and *Shen*.

Tonify Blood	40 ml
Harmonize Liver-Spleen	20 ml
Harmonize Lung-Liver	20 ml
Disperse Qi	20 ml
Comfort Shen	20 ml

Dose: 4 squirts 3 times daily in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



Anita continues to receive acupuncture about every two weeks as well as sticking with more-or-less the same herbal prescription and supplements, with the addition of a probiotic formula to further aid digestion and elimination. She reports feeling healthier than she ever has before.





The Metal Type

The Metal types among us are people who, in ways not always apparent, help to organize our lives. They are the experts who faithfully and meticulously manage many of the procedures and protocols that enable us to function effectively in our everyday worlds. They are also some of the geniuses who invent new models and operating systems that improve the security and quality of our lives. The Metal type is not only happy to take care of the details, he devotes himself to making certain that there is a proper place for everything and that everything is in its rightful place.

Metal types are quite comfortable living within the margins and prefer to have a sense of order and continuity. They appreciate protocol and parameters—they like to know where they stand, where they begin and end. Respect for boundaries and difference is something that they seek to cultivate in themselves and admire in others. Unlike Wood types, they detest open conflict, boisterousness, flying-by-the-seat-of-their-pants, disorder or lack of structure, crudity or rudeness, and they are cautious around people who are too spontaneous. Metal types can become preoccupied with personal and emotional limits, distinctions, rules, and possess an unrealistic faith in authority. As a result they can become undone by disillusionment—experienced as a betrayal of agreements, principles and shared values. Insecurity and anxiety about the reliability of relationships, agreements and established practices can result in a kind of stiffness and resistance that make it difficult to adjust and adapt, manifesting as restricted breathing, constipation, tightness in the neck and shoulders, tension in the stomach, palpitations, hypersensitivity to physical or social insults, resentment about unmet expectations, and an intolerance of the unpredictable.

Recognizing the Metal Type

KEYS TO METAL

- likes definition, structure, and discipline
- respects virtue, discretion, and authority
- seeks to live according to reason and principle
- reveres beauty, ceremony, and refinement

TYPICAL PROBLEMS

- indifferent, formal, distant, and inhibited
- autocratic, strict, and persnickety
- stiff joints and muscles, dry skin and hair, shallow breathing, sensitive to climate, poor circulation
- self-righteousness and disillusionment



Jerry: Case Study of a Metal Type

Jerry is a 61 year-old man whose primary complaints are gastric reflux, worry, anxiety, and occasional mild asthma, as well as recurring allergic sinusitis and upper respiratory illnesses. Chronic low back pain has also been a problem, although it is better when he receives regular body work. He has gallstones and gallbladder polyps, and it is presumed that his acid reflux is contributory to gallbladder dysfunction, although he has no discomfort



or pain that originates in the gallbladder itself. Jerry takes Prilosec and DGL (de-glycyrrhizinated licorice) daily to control stomach acidity and reflux.

As a young child, Jerry began having hayfever and was vulnerable to catching colds that developed into bronchitis. In his teenage years he had acne that persisted into adulthood. Just before age 20 he suffered from two episodes of pneumonia.

During our first consultation, Jerry elaborated on his current concerns: he feels unduly susceptible to colds and flu; often has belching and abdominal gas (flatulence); tends to have thick, sticky nasal mucus; has diminished libido in the last few years; and experiences a lot of anxiety with occasional phobic reactions and frequent insomnia.

Jerry is well put together, meaning that he is quite neat and nicely groomed. His reporting of his history and current complaints is articulate, specific, detailed: he notes the varied colors of his phlegm, carefully describing the quality and timing of acid reflux, and keeps an exacting chronology of his health. As he prepares to receive acupuncture, he carefully and neatly stows his shoes, socks, watch and sweater so that they will be safe and out of the way. And, as he is lying down on the treatment table, he asks for an extra pillow and for me to position them just so in order to protect his neck, which, apparently, easily becomes stiff and sore. Not only does he position himself and his effects in an almost ritualistic manner, he inquires about the specifics of my diagnosis, what am I going to treat this morning, how many treatments will he need, how often, and, if I were to prescribe any herbs or supplements, what will be their compatibility with the medications he is already using. Jerry appears to be thorough and meticulous by nature.

Examination of his tongue reveals a pale body, a red tip and cracks in the Stomach (middle portion) and Lung zones (portion between the middle and the tip). There is also a small hollow in the Lung zone, indicating chronic weakening of the Lung Qi due to a previous severe illness or injury—probably his two bouts of pneumonia. The tongue fur is thickened, yellow and dry. The overall quality of his pulse is rapid and thin, changing to tense and pounding (Yin and Blood deficiency concurrent with Heat and hyperactive Yang). The Lung and Liver positions are taut (indicating Qi stagnation); the left Kidney position is deep, thin and separating (indicating marked depletion of Blood, Qi and Essence); the Heart position is thin and tight (indicating depletion of Yin and Blood); and the qualities at the Stomach position are constantly changing from tight to tense to taut (indicating Heat, Yin deficiency and Qi stagnation).

Jerry's constitutional type is identified by his history, current complaints and personal presentation. While respiratory illness and dysfunction does not automatically qualify a person as a Metal type, the pattern of Jerry's symptoms, combined with how he expresses himself, is almost archetypal. He displays the triad of the Metal Type: a central disharmony between Metal (Lung--chronic respiratory problems), Wood (Liver--gallbladder dysfunction) and Fire (Heart-- anxiety, phobias, insomnia). Moreover, he demonstrates a strong need for order, a measured, logical manner of thinking, particular concern with timing and aesthetics, great attention to specifics, and wants to know as much as possible about what to expect.



Summary of Complaints:

Childhood allergies and URIs
Two bouts of pneumonia just before age 20
Adult vulnerability to recurring URIs with occasional asthma
Stomach reflux, belching, flatulence
Gallstones, gallbladder polyps
Insomnia, anxiety, phobias
Low back pain, stiffness of neck
Diminished libido

Summary of Observations:

Neat, orderly, logical, particular
Pale tongue with red tip, lung *hollow*,
Stomach and Lung *cracks* and thick,
yellow, dry fur
Overall pulse: rapid and thin changing to
tense and pounding
Other pulse qualities: taut Lung and Liver;
thin, tight Heart; deep, thin Kidney; tense-
tight-taut Stomach

Commentary:

Jerry is a Metal type who has developed chronic deficiencies of Yin and Qi. His tongue and pulse demonstrate deficiency of Blood and Yin fluids (pale tongue with red tip with a rapid, thin, tight, pounding pulse) that has led to Heat and instability of the Qi of the Heart (insomnia, phobias) and Liver (tension and stiffness) and weakness of the Stomach (reflux), Lung (allergies), and Kidney (low libido, back pain). Phobias and anxiety coupled with lack of libido and chronic low back pain show the kind of instability that occurs when the Essence of the Kidney becomes so depleted that the integrity of the Kidney (Jing) - Heart (Shen) connection becomes strained. The gallstones further interfere with his Stomach function (chronic reflux).

This is a rather complicated picture, but a careful selection of formulas can meet the underlying dysfunctions. Of utmost importance is supporting the Kidney Qi which will then be able to anchor the instability and heal the deficiency. For this, **Replenish Essence** is the clear choice. Complementary to **Replenish Essence** is **Comfort Shen**. Together they will begin to restore the relationship of Kidney and Heart, *Jing* and *Shen*, securing the Source Qi (Yin Essence) and calming an agitated Mind (Yang *Xin*) while subduing hyperactive Liver Yang. **Comfort Shen** also contributes to the Heat clearing properties of the prescription.

To address the constitutional imbalances between Lung and Heart, Lung and Liver, **Harmonize Heart-Lung** and **Harmonize Lung-Liver** will form the nexus of the prescription. **Harmonize Heart-Lung** will treat some of the Yin deficiencies of Blood and Moisture, while **Harmonize Lung-Liver** will relieve the congestion of Qi (taut Liver and Lung pulse) and enhance resistance to adverse external influences of Wind, Heat and Dryness (supporting Defense Qi or *Wei*). Completing the prescription with **Tonify Moisture** will help to nourish Yin and eliminate the deficiency Heat. Although five formulas may seem like a lot, together they faithfully mirror Jerry's major patterns of imbalance. The core of this prescription is composed of **Harmonize Heart-Lung**, **Comfort Shen** and **Replenish Essence**. These three will mitigate a lot of Jerry's anxiety and, when taken at bedtime, will help him to relax and sleep soundly.

Diagnosis:

Deficiency of Yin (Moisture), deficiency Heat of the Stomach,
Lung, Heart, Liver
Stagnation of Liver and Lung Qi
Deficiency of Kidney Essence and Qi
General weakness and instability of Jing, Qi and Shen, indicated by
changing pulse qualities, vulnerability to external influences,
apprehension and uncertainty



Prescription:

Harmonize Heart-Lung	20 ml
Harmonize Lung-Liver	20 ml
Replenish Essence	30 ml
Comfort Shen	20 ml
Tonify Moisture	20 ml

Dose: 4 squirts in the morning, 8 squirts at bedtime, taken in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



Follow-up:

Three weeks after his first visit, Jerry has had more nights of good sleep, but still has anxiety during the day. He continues to be bothered by reflux, but not as much; although, for insurance, he is still using the Prilosec and DGL daily. His allergy symptoms continue to come and go, but he is thrilled that he has not gotten sick even though his partner has succumbed. His tongue is less dry, less red at the tip, and the fur is a lighter yellow and not as thick. His pulse is still changeable, but a little less thin and rapid. There is still a taut quality at the Liver, Lung and, now, the Stomach positions.

Jerry is advised to continue with the original prescription, morning and at bedtime, and is given a second prescription to help with his problems with indigestion and nasal-sinus allergies.

Harmonize Liver-Spleen plus **Disperse Qi**, **Purge External Wind** and **Purge Heat** will alleviate reflux by normalizing the movement of Stomach Qi, reducing the symptoms of upper respiratory allergies by dispelling Wind and Heat from the interior and exterior. **Tonify Moisture** counters the potentially drying effects of **Disperse Qi**, **Purge Heat** and **Purge External Wind**. A secondary property of **Purge External Wind** is that it also helps to expel air accumulating in the intestines, another form of Wind. In this manner, **Purge External Wind** supports the action of **Harmonize Liver-Spleen** and **Disperse Qi**. Jerry can use this formula during the day before meals, after meals, and at any time that he's experiencing symptoms.

Harmonize Liver-Spleen	20 ml
Purge External Wind	40 ml
Disperse Qi	20 ml
Purge Heat	20 ml
Tonify Moisture	20 ml

Dose: 2-4 squirts as needed, in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



Follow-up:

After twelve weeks of diligently taking his herbal formulas—and Jerry is all about diligence—he is feeling more confident about his health. He rarely has indigestion, continues to be free of colds and flus (even though many of those around him have been sick), his allergy symptoms are infrequent and mild despite the rapidly changing weather, and he is generally sleeping better and worrying less. He is still prone to anxiety and apprehension about the future, but feels generally more optimistic in spite of the fact that his life continues to be stressful in these difficult times.



Jerry's pulse and tongue picture are also changing for the better. His pulse is less rapid, less pounding; the thin and tight qualities are disappearing, indicating that his Yin Moisture is being restored; the changing qualities—tight and thin changing to taut and pounding—are no longer present; and, most importantly, his Kidney pulse is not separating in the middle, demonstrating that Kidney Yin, Yang and Qi are again conjoined. There is still a problem of Heat and Dryness in the Stomach and Lung as revealed on his tongue: the fur is still yellow and dry and the tip is still a little red. However, the cracks are not as prominent, indicating that the Yin and Qi of the Stomach and Lung are rebounding. Jerry is pleased with the improvement in his symptoms and wonders if he needs to continue treatment. Though his prognosis looks good, he is encouraged to continue with treatment at least once a month because of the chronicity of his condition and the very gradual improvement in his pulse and tongue.

Earth



The Earth Type

Earth is at the center: it is the power that orients us in time and space as well as in all the relationships that compose our life and upon which it depends, internally and externally. Metaphorically and functionally, Earth confers the capacity to harmonize ourselves, to seek, establish and sustain a dynamic equipoise with fluctuating conditions, within and without. It is the agency of Earth that enables us to shift and adapt while maintaining our posture and position, physically and mentally, in relation to everything around us. In a sense, our ability to gracefully adjust the rhythm of our inner life with the changing currents of the life around us is like having an internal gyroscope that keeps us on the right heading and allows us to change course without losing our direction.

The power of Earth is embodied in the Spleen Network, whose governance of digestion, assimilation, along with the, generation and distribution of Qi, Moisture and Blood, constitutes the central hub of the Organ Networks. The Spleen orients and organizes the movement of Qi, Moisture and Blood that must transit through the center of the body, the Middle Burner, which is itself the domain of the Spleen and Stomach.

The Earth Type, then, is a person for whom the harmony of relationships is the greatest virtue. Given the opportunity and support to develop this aptitude, Earth Types will work tirelessly to initiate and sustain a social and physical environment in which needs are fairly met and aspirations are equitably encouraged. Toward this end, Earth Types are at risk of self-neglect in their avid, sometimes zealous, pursuit of a world, whether large or small, without want and without conflict. In an effort to be all things to all people, for the sake of meeting whatever needs and desires are at hand, Earth Types may disregard what is crucial for their own personal growth and fulfillment. When over-extending and over-stretching becomes a habitual mode, this causes both deficiencies and accumulations of Qi and Moisture.

This burden upon the Spleen and Stomach distorts and destabilizes other processes within the organism that manifest primarily as undesirable alterations of body mass, muscle strength, fluid distribution, joint integrity, digestion and elimination, as well as inconsistency of energy, weakening of mental focus and concentration, emotional inertia, and loss of confidence or ambition. Earth is vulnerable to Stagnation of Qi and Moisture, producing Dampness, manifesting as abdominal distension, swelling of joints, lethargy, heaviness, and difficulty moving. The Dampness caused by the stagnation of Spleen Qi often expresses itself in feelings of amorphousness, loss of identity, and paralyzing dilemmas and quandaries. Earth types are easily subject to inertia and a loss of direction and perspective. On the other hand, Earth's virtue of being able to hold firm and remain in one place contributes to the sustainability and integrity of relationships.



Recognizing the Earth Type

KEYS TO EARTH

- wants to be involved and needed
- wants to be all things to all people
- seeks harmony and togetherness
- insists upon loyalty, security, and predictability

TYPICAL PROBLEMS

- worry, obsession, and self-doubt
- meddling and overprotective
- over-extended and inert
- lethargy, indigestion, unruly appetites, water retention, muscle tenderness



Jill: Case Study of an Earth Type

Jill is a 49 year-old woman seeking help for her peri-menopausal complaints that include occasional hot flashes, exhaustion, dry mouth and lips, pre-menstrual depression, acne, weight gain, diminished libido and a generalized feeling of overwhelm. She also has recurrent sinusitis and earaches due to fluid congestion, cold hands and feet, and sensitivity to cold. Her health history reveals persistent childhood ear infections, three miscarriages between 1998 and 2000, and a stubborn case of dysentery that she contracted while traveling in Africa in 2004 that resolved with anti-parasite and anti-biotic medications.

During the initial examination, other problems surfaced, including low back soreness, increased weight primarily in the abdomen and pelvis; dry skin, cool hands, feet and belly. Jill mentioned that she craves sleep, tends to be constipated if she eats a lot of cheese, milk and bread, hates windy weather (this causes ear aches), and she states that she, “can’t feel the joy in my life”. She also describes being frustrated with herself and angry that she as allowed herself to become derailed.

Observation of her tongue shows it to be a little pale and dry, cracks in the middle zone (Stomach-Spleen area), and white, sticky fur covering the root, middle and sides. Her overall pulse quality is slow (rate = less than 60 beats per minute) and soft (easily compressible as if ensconced in cotton), a little slippery in the right bar position (Stomach-Spleen), and deep and small in the right and left cubit positions (Kidney Yang and Yin). Her lower abdomen is cool to the touch and her low back soreness is better with the pressure of a warm hand.

Jill is a talented, accomplished, successful artist who, although she has received many kudos from students, colleagues and patrons, feels undervalued and underappreciated. What seems uppermost for Jill, more than her hot flashes, weight gain and fatigue, is her lack of joy, ebbing interest and pleasure in sex, feelings of being overwhelmed and a loss of her sense of direction in life. Not only was she in a quandary about where to go and what to do, she is disappointed with her marriage, a relationship in which she has invested much emotional, intellectual and physical energy over many years without experiencing her expected reward of recognition and appreciation for her loyalty and commitment. Part of her dissatisfaction is that she realizes that she has put many of her own ambitions on hold while doing what she thought was necessary not just to keep her marriage alive, but to support her husband in his work.



Earth Types manifest patterns of imbalance that involve primarily the Spleen, Kidney and Liver Networks. We can recognize Jill as an Earth Type because her history and presentation closely match the Spleen-Kidney-Liver triad. One of her greatest concerns is feeling overwhelmed, which undermines her desire to be purposeful and positive, a kind of inertia indicative of Spleen Qi depletion and stagnation. Secondly, she is disturbed by her inability to feel joyful and sexual, both of which are indicative of a depletion of Kidney Qi and Yang. Her low back soreness is also consistent with Kidney deficiency. And, thirdly, a lack or loss of a sense of direction and thwarted ambition are emblematic of Liver Qi deficiency and stasis. Her chronic cold hands and feet are also consistent with a blockage or weakness of Liver Qi that governs the circulation of Blood and Qi to the extremities: when Liver Qi is blocked or constrained internally, there can be internal Heat and external Cold. And although Jill is generally cold, she is dry due to the poor circulation of Blood and Fluids. Add to this picture her discomfiture with wind—"I hate wind!"—along with her anger and frustration, and we have the clincher for identifying a disharmony of the Liver Network.

Furthermore, a loss of a sense of direction is the consequence of a conflict between the Liver and the Spleen: the Liver helps us to set goals (look ahead) and move forward (rouse to action), while the Spleen helps us to focus (give shape to an idea or intention) and orient ourselves (give us the correct perspective). Underlying all of her troubles, though, is the weakening of her Kidney Qi. Kidney Qi naturally declines as we age, and this often becomes especially prevalent around the menopause for women. But, in addition to the natural attrition of her Kidney Qi, Jill is exhausted and mourning the loss of sexual desire and her capacity to feel pleasure and joy. Pleasure and joy are both tangible and intangible sensations of the body and mind that cannot be felt or expressed when Yang is blocked or depleted—they are fundamental expressions of the radiance of the Fire of the Life Gate that is secured and protected by the Kidney Qi. Without adequate Yang, the Liver cannot nurture and mobilize the Qi and Blood, and the Spleen cannot generate and distribute them. Note also that Jill craves sleep, a sign of Yang deficit, rather than being unable to sleep, a sign of Yin deficit. A preponderance of Jill's Fire has been invested in her marriage.

Summary of Complaints:

- Childhood ear infections
- Three miscarriages in two years
- Dysentery
- Lumbar soreness, abdominal weight gain
- Generally cold, cold hands and feet
- Recurring sinusitis and earaches due to fluid
- Dry skin, lips and mouth
- Craves sleep
- Lack of joy and libido
- Overwhelmed and without direction
- Frustrated and angry
- Aversion to wind

Summary of Observations:

- Pale, dry tongue with sticky white fur and cracks in Stomach area
- Slow, soft pulse: Stomach-Spleen = slippery; Kidneys = deep, small
- Cool lower abdomen
- Lumbar soreness lessened with warmth and pressure

Commentary:

Even though Jill's complaints include localized sinusitis and ear aches, her major concerns were more general: exhaustion, chilliness, melancholy and stuckness. It is therefore appropriate to focus treatment on the underlying pattern of disharmony typical of her type while supplementing the deficiencies which are also global in their impact. At age 49 a woman has completed seven seven-year cycles, each of which represent one phase in the succession of the five phases, beginning with Water. For a woman, the eighth seven-year cycle begins at age 49. This phase corresponds to Fire which represents expansion in an individual's social and intellectual world, not a time for retreat. Jill is not an especially unhealthy woman. Rather, she has come to a crucial turning point in



her life, a time when she needs the renewed strength of her will and determination to make difficult choices about her true desires and goals and the fortitude to follow them through to actualization. Our expectation should be that, once her Qi and Blood are restored and her Yang is invigorated, Jill's anger and frustration will gradually dissipate and her Essence-Mind—her *Jing-Shen*—will rouse itself and revive her lust for life.

Jill's prescription comes very close to the definition of a constitutional rather than a problem-based formula. The two core formulas, **Harmonize Spleen-Kidney** and **Harmonize Liver-Spleen**, address the Earth triad of Spleen-Kidney-Liver. **Harmonize Liver-Spleen** will decongest the Spleen and the Liver, freeing the Qi, removing the source of physical and mental inertia (overwhelm and loss of direction). **Harmonize Spleen-Kidney** will dispel the Dampness that develops when the Spleen and Kidney cannot coordinate their work of efficiently generating, distributing, storing and eliminating fluids (fluid in ears, dryness, and abdominal weight gain). Jill's prescription should also include **Tonify Qi**, **Tonify Blood** and **Purge Cold** to supplement the deficiencies of Qi and Blood, and invigorate Yang. Together these three potentiate the harmonizing formulas, supporting respectively the function of the Spleen, Liver and Kidney Networks.

Diagnosis:

Deficiency of Qi of the Spleen, Kidney and Liver
 Deficiency of Kidney Yang
 Stagnation of Blood, Qi and Moisture
 Congestion of Liver and Spleen Qi
 Excess Yin-Dampness of Spleen and Kidney



Prescription:

Harmonize Spleen-Kidney	30 ml
Harmonize Liver-Spleen	30 ml
Tonify Qi	20 ml
Tonify Blood	20 ml
Purge Cold	20 ml

Dose: 4 squirts 3 times daily in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



Follow-up:

One month later, Jill notices her energy returning and that she needs less sleep, but hot flashes are still a bother. She's made some decisions about how to proceed with her professional work that makes her feel stronger and happier. She's still cold all the time, frustrated and angry, but she feels like she's turning her anger to good use (taking action steps) instead of stewing in it and remaining inert. On the other hand, her hot flashes are worse. Her lips and mouth are still dry, and so is her tongue, but the tongue fur is thinner and not as sticky. Her pulse and tongue are about the same.

The peri-menopause is clearly becoming a significant part of Jill's pattern. Her Kidney pulses remain deep and small and she continues to feel cold. On the other hand, her hot flashes are worse and she still has a lot of dryness. Since hot flashes are often the result of a decline of Kidney Essence, her new prescription will replace



Purge Cold with Replenish Essence. **Replenish Essence**, and also contains ingredients that restore Kidney Yang as well as Yin, but it is not as hot and drying a formula as **Purge Cold**. Continuing to support the Yang helps the Kidney to root the Qi and firm up the foundation of Jill's bodily and social life.

Harmonize Spleen-Kidney	20 ml
Harmonize Liver-Spleen	20 ml
Replenish Essence	20 ml
Tonify Moisture	30 ml
Tonify Blood	30 ml

Dose: 4 squirts 3 times daily in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



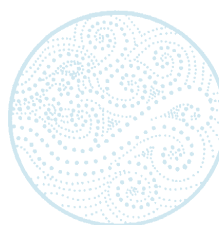
Follow-up:

Four weeks later—six weeks after her first visit—Jill's hot flashes have significantly subsided and she is generally warmer, but still sensitive to cold weather. She is somewhat dry, but her lips feel better (softer and smoother) and she's much less thirsty. At this time, her tongue shows a little redness at the edges, indicating developing Heat in the Liver. On the other hand, her digestion is better and she's not as constipated. Her pulse also shows some improvement: there are sharper outlines to the pulse (less of the cotton quality) and her Kidney pulses are not as deep or as small. It's time to eliminate the Yang invigorating herbs in **Replenish Essence** and concentrate on building the Qi and Yin (Moisture and Blood).

Eliminating **Purge Cold** from the first prescription and **Replenish Essence** from the second one reduces the influence of Yang tonics that can generate surplus Fire and Heat, demonstrated by redness that appeared at the edges of Jill's tongue. This is a good sign, however, reflecting a restoration of the Life Fire that gives renewed liveliness to the Kidney and Liver Qi. The re-invigoration of Yang is enabling Jill to rouse herself and act on her desire to change the course of her life, personally and professionally. The three tonifying formulas will shift the emphasis of the formula from invigorating Yang to replenishing Yin.

Harmonize Spleen-Kidney	20 ml
Harmonize Liver-Spleen	20 ml
Tonify Qi	20 ml
Tonify Blood	30 ml
Tonify Moisture	30 ml

Dose: 4 squirts 3 times daily in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water



Follow-up:

During the six weeks after her second visit, Jill experienced more changes. Gradually, her hot flashes disappeared completely; she continued to have pre-menstrual bouts of anger and melancholy, but they were transient and did not particularly upset her; she has felt happy for almost two months; she's no longer worried about her libido, having realized that the presence or absence of sexual interest in her life is not a physical problem but determined by the closeness with and affection she feels from and toward her husband; the feelings of inertia and lack of purposeful direction have been replaced with clear ambitions and plans for her future.



Unfortunately, during this interval she developed acute hay fever symptoms (sneezing and slight cough; red, itchy eyes; sinus headache; feeling of heat in the face, throat and nose; irritability) on the heels of a head cold. She came into the clinic for a remedy that contained **Purge External Wind** to alleviate sneezing, itching and headache; **Purge Heat** to reduce swelling and inflammation in the nose, sinuses, throat and eyes; **Harmonize Lung-Liver** to invigorate the Protective Qi (*Wei*); and **Consolidate Moisture** to check the loss of Moisture from excess mucus secretions.

Prescription for allergy:

Purge External Wind	60 ml
Purge Heat	20 ml
Harmonize Lung-Liver	20 ml
Consolidate Moisture	20 ml

Dose: 6 squirts in 1/4 to 1/2 cup hot water (allowed to cool to room temperature) every 4 hours for the first 24-48 hours. When improvement is evident, reduce dose to 6 squirts 3 times per day until symptoms are completely relieved.



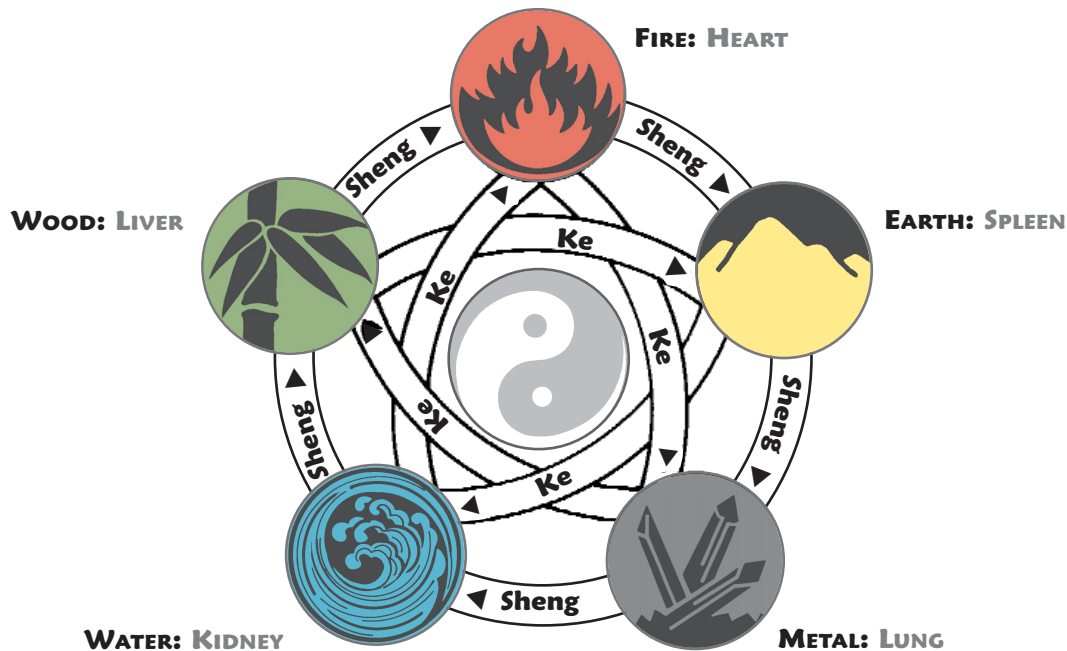
Jill recovered from the allergy episode in three days and hasn't had a cold or allergy episode since. Currently her pulse and tongue are showing significant signs of recovery. The tongue fur is acceptably thin and white and there is no abnormal redness or dryness, although there are still cracks in the Stomach area—not unexpected for a chronic pattern. Her pulse has also changed: her right and left Kidney pulses are larger and shallower (they used to be deep and small) and her Stomach-Spleen pulse is smooth (not slippery), albeit slightly thin—but this is an improvement. The overall pulse is still slow, but the soft quality is gone (this reflects Jill's renewed sense of clarity, direction and happiness).

Jill's condition has dramatically improved in three months. Her Kidney and Liver Qi are re-invigorated as manifested by her renewed sense of energy, purpose and happiness. But, as is often happens when Qi increases, imbalances that were latent during a period of depletion emerge. In Jill's case, along with improved energy and well being, PMS symptoms have become more apparent; and this is due to the invigoration of the Liver Network. Employing **Harmonize Liver-Spleen** plus **Harmonize Lung-Liver** will modulate the Liver Qi which has become a bit overheated. Combining these with **Tonify Blood** and **Tonify Qi** continues the support for fundamental deficiencies. And instead of using a formula like **Purge Heat** to reduce the upsurge of Liver Yang, adding **Purge Internal Wind** to the mix will temper Liver Yang by dispelling Wind and clearing Heat by nurturing Kidney and Liver Yin. This new prescription meets the needs of Jill's changing condition while still addressing the constitutional pattern of an Earth Type.



Harmonize Liver-Spleen	30 ml
Harmonize Lung-Liver	30 ml
Tonify Blood	20 ml
Tonify Qi	20 ml
Purge Internal Wind	20 ml

Dose: 4 squirts 3 times daily in hot water



The key to discerning a person's type lies in identifying patterns of *Ke* sequence imbalances. Each of the types is typified by a triad of relationships in which the core Phase is at the center and the two opposing phases on the *Ke* sequence are complementary to it. For example, in the case of Jill, we recognize that her pattern of imbalance reflected the triad of Spleen (Stomach) + Kidney + Liver = Earth + Water + Wood. These *Ke* relationships characterize each of the five types. Theoretically, Jill could have been a Water Type or a Wood Type. However, if she were a Wood Type she would have had more of a history of problems related to the Lung Network as well as the Spleen, and very few related to the Kidney Network. If she were a Water Type, she would have more difficulties correlated with the Heart Network as well as with that of the Spleen. Once the type or the pattern of *Ke* sequence imbalances is determined, it is easier to select the appropriate Chinese Modular Solutions formulas.



TYPES:



<p>Mental Faculties:</p>	<p>Impression Communication Intuition Comprehension</p>	<p>Imagination Perception Retention Reflection</p>	<p>Clarity Judgment Foresight Decision</p>	<p>Analysis Definition Discrimination Synthesis</p>	<p>Remembering Intention Ideation Attention</p>
<p>Biological Functions:</p>	<p>Dilation Sensation Perfusion Extension</p>	<p>Consolidation Retention Germination Regeneration</p>	<p>Filling Arousal Expansion Acceleration</p>	<p>Emptying Inhibiting Contracting Descending</p>	<p>Balancing Transforming Absorbing Distributing</p>
<p>Exaggerated patterns arise from:</p>	<p>Congestion of <i>Blood</i> Accumulation of <i>Heat</i> Depletion of <i>Moisture</i> Disharmony of <i>Heart-Lung, Heart-Kidney</i></p>	<p>Congestion of <i>Moisture</i> and <i>Blood</i> Accumulation of <i>Heat</i> and <i>Cold</i> Disharmony of <i>Kidney-Heart, Kidney-Spleen</i></p>	<p>Congestion of <i>Qi</i> and <i>Blood</i> Accumulation of <i>Heat, Dampness</i> Generation of <i>Internal Wind</i> Disharmony of <i>Liver-Spleen, Liver-Lung</i></p>	<p>Congestion of <i>Qi</i> and <i>Moisture</i> Depletion of <i>Moisture</i> Accumulation of <i>Heat</i> Disharmony of <i>Lung-Liver, Lung-Heart</i></p>	<p>Congestion of <i>Qi</i> and <i>Moisture</i> Accumulation of <i>Heat</i> and <i>Dampness</i> Generation of <i>Internal Wind</i> Disharmony of <i>Spleen-Liver, Spleen-Kidney</i></p>
<p>Collapsed patterns arise from:</p>	<p>Depletion of <i>Blood</i> Loss of <i>Heat</i> Weakness of <i>Liver, Heart</i> and <i>Spleen</i></p>	<p>Depletion of <i>Moisture, Blood, Essence</i> Congestion of <i>Moisture, Blood</i> Accumulation of <i>Cold</i> Weakness of <i>Spleen, Lung, Kidney</i></p>	<p>Imagination Perception Retention Reflection</p>	<p>Depletion of <i>Qi</i> and <i>Moisture</i> Accumulation of <i>Damp</i> and <i>Cold</i> Invasion of <i>Wind</i> Weakness of <i>Spleen, Lung, Kidney</i></p>	<p>Depletion of <i>Qi</i> and <i>Blood</i> Accumulation of <i>Damp</i> and <i>Cold</i> Weakness of <i>Liver, Spleen, Kidney</i></p>



DOSAGE INFORMATION

Adult Dosage and Administration Guidelines

2 to 3 squirts, 2 - 4x per day

1 squirt = 1/2 dropperful = 30 drops = approximately 1 milliliter (ml)

When the rubber bulb of the glass dropper is firmly squeezed, approximately 1 ml is drawn into the dropper (1 squirt), equal to about 1/2 dropperful in a one-ounce bottle. Simply put, *one squeeze equals one squirt*. Take herbs in 1/4 to 1/2 cup water.

Pediatric Dosage and Administration Guidelines

0-4 years: 1/2 to 1 squirt = 15-30 drops

4-8 years: 1 to 1-1/2 squirts = 30-45 drops

8-12 years: 1 to 1-1/2 squirts = 45-60 drops

12 years - adult: 2-3 squirts = 60-90 drops

Take above dosages 2-4 times per day

When the rubber bulb of the glass dropper is firmly squeezed, approximately 1 ml is drawn into the dropper (1 squirt), equal to about 1/2 dropperful in a one-ounce bottle. Simply put, *one squeeze equals one squirt*. Dilute in 1 tsp. of breast milk or hot water for infants, or mix with 1 tbsp. of juice at room temperature or 1/4 tsp. of maple syrup for toddlers and children. Mix in 1/4 cup hot water or juice for children 10 years or older.

