

Oriental medicine recognises that the elements that make up nature – Earth, Water, Metal, Wood and Fire - also make up the human being.

Elementally we can be out of balance indicated by a proneness to certain dis-ease and geared to behaving in limited ways.

However, with enquiry and self compassion we can work with the resources that we have, to encourage more and different helpful solutions into our lives

From a five element point of view, we usually have an Achilles Heel. Maybe we had Asthma as a child and suffer from skin ailments in times of stress, indicating that the proneness would be Metal in elemental flavour. Perhaps we were plagued with digestive issues as a child and can have 'flare-ups' when overwhelmed, ailments of the Earth element are our 'red lights'. Though simplistic, it is generally the case that an imbalance of one element or another follows us through life.

The elemental proneness or Achilles Heel is known as the Causative Factor (CF) and it is something that we need to manage lifelong. When designing personal Qigong for someone, the form would usually include a daily series of movements to support the elemental causative factor.

Another tendency is to have a 'go to' resource element. An action or behaviour which works to make us feel better. I feel better when I walk to the park which suggests an Earthy resource! Some feel better with rest which would be a resource of the Water element.

There is nothing inherently wrong in having a resource element and often we are 'patted on the back' for using it. However, the pattern that is set up between the CF and the resource is worth a second glance. If we constantly use the resource as a means to feeling better, it will eventually tire leading to the symptoms of that element, for example overuse of the Wood element as a resource may lead to eye, vision, tendon problems etc. Further we may miss out on the solutions offered by the other elemental options, the resting and renewing nature of the Water element, the creativity of the Fire element may also offer assistance.

Helper elements may be observed in patterns of behaviour that are not our 'go to' element, but are still effective and comfortable. An example would be someone with a Earth helper element who feels better after going to the gym and working muscles.

When looking at our elemental make-up, we usually find that we have a missing element and this is where working with the elements on an individual basis can be really life-changing. If we introduce the missing element as a resource, we expand into new ways of being or behaving. We can really start to live more smoothly and with congruence. In my own experience, the missing element is often signalled by a shying away from or even slight disgust at taking a particular action to problem solve. An example from my clinic room is provided by a young man who described sleep and rest as something he did because he "had to" – if he didn't physically have to sleep, he would just keep going. Again, the element of Water as a solution is not just undervalued but almost resented.

A personal Qigong form would include movements to encourage the missing element.

In my clinic room, I use a questionnaire to agree with clients about their particular elemental make up. This consultation can also be Skyped.

Clients have said of these 'Individual Qigong forms' that

*'it feels as if I should be doing this' and 'it feels personal'.*

You will receive a video with your personal Qigong form. Price for consultation and video £80.00.