

The five Phases of Energy

Mark Johnson

Each person, like all that is manifested in the universe, can be described and understood in terms of five archetypal energies: earth, metal, wood, water, and fire. Though each of these forces is present in everyone, there is usually one elemental phase that predominates a person's make-up. Compass School Feng Shui traditionally uses the Chinese Energy Calendar and various methods of calculation to determine which energy phase is dominant.

Each of these five phases, or the five elements of energy has a corresponding geometric shape that represents and contains its primal energy.

Fire has a pyramidal shape.

Earth has a square or rectangular shape.

Metal (air) has a half of a sphere or is domed shape.

Wood has a cylindrical or any tall, columnar shape.

Water has the lower half of a sphere or any irregular shape.

These five fundamental shapes concentrate and store the five phases of transformational energy.

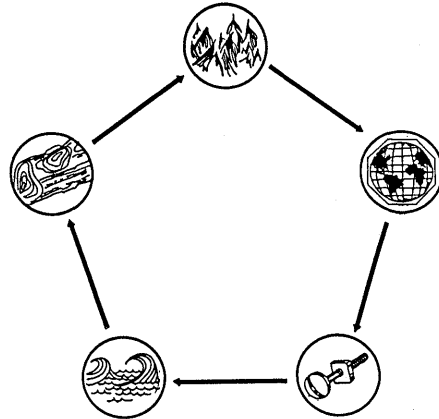
Since these shapes contain elemental energy, they can be used to balance one or more of the energy phases that may be out of sync in your space or your body. Using the knowledge of your dominant energy phase in conjunction with the five fundamental shapes, you can create harmony in your environment.

The Cycles of Energy

The five primal forces or phases of energy are in constant transformation. They operate and interact in creative, destructive, and moderating cycles.

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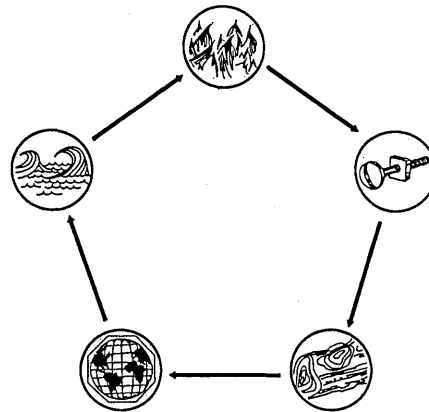
These three cycles can become useful tools for building energy or for mitigating negative energetic influences.



In the **creative cycle**,¹ the wood phase creates or nourishes the fire phase, fire creates the earth phase, earth creates metal, metal creates water, and water creates wood.

So, if you are a wood person, meaning your predominant energy is the archetypal wood force, you can nourish yourself by introducing the water phase into your environment, perhaps in the form of an aquarium, a pool, or a pond

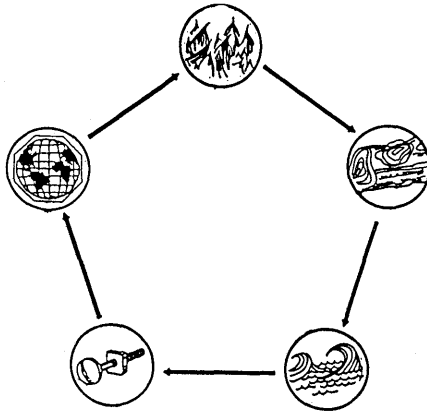
In the **destructive cycle**, the wood phase destroys the earth phase, earth destroys water, water destroys fire, fire destroys metal, and metal destroys wood.



This cycle can be used to neutralize an energy type that may be harming you. If you are predominantly a metal person, a view from your apartment window of a pointed church roof could be a negative energetic influence for you because pointed and pyramidal objects represent fire energy which *destroys* metal. Since water destroys fire, you could place an indoor water fountain in the path of the church view to neutralize its negative effect.

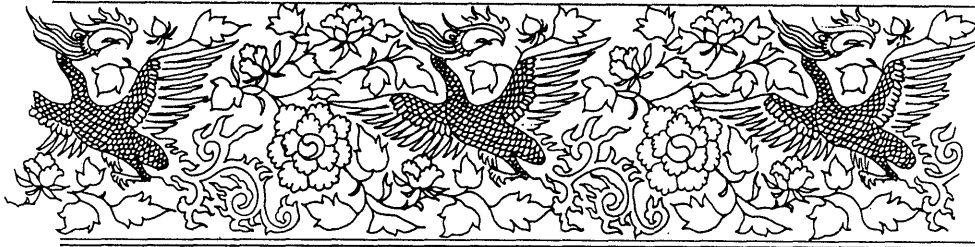
¹ Graphics: *Earth Design: The Added Dimension*

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In the **moderating cycle**, earth moderates fire, fire moderates wood, wood moderates water, water moderates metal, and metal moderates earth.

As one energy creates or nourishes another, its energy is weakened in the creative process. Fire creates earth, but loses energy in the process; to replenish itself, it draws more energy from wood. In the moderating cycle, the energy can be drawn from the primal force without destroying it.



The pointed, fire-shaped Transamerica building in San Francisco was designed according to the principles of Feng Shui. The fire shape draws energy away from the tall, columnar (wood shaped) buildings around it. The architect did not want to destroy the inherent wood energy of the area completely. Instead, he wanted to draw energy from the wood environment over a long period of time, which would have been impossible if he had destroyed it. A building with a metal-shaped, domed structure would have destroyed the energy of the columnar, wood shaped, structures around it.

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Finding Your Energy Type

Compass School practitioners have traditionally calculated your energy type based on your date of birth, insisting that your basic energy composition at birth is as fixed and unchanging as your DNA. However, it is my observation that many people have changed their energy composition through substance abuse, near death experiences, mystical experiences, and spiritual cultivation. By using the following in-depth questionnaire and factoring in these changes, you can more accurately determine the predominate energy type *you are now*. If you have had no such life altering experiences, then this method will simply confirm what your birth chart calculations would have been.

The results will give you a clear picture of which element predominates in your makeup and which may be lacking. With this information, you can make the necessary changes in your environment with Feng Shui cures.



The Questionnaire²

To get an accurate reading, mark the answers to the questionnaire according to *who you are* not *who you want to be*. Use the following scale:

- +2 if the question is **a lot like you**.
- +1 if the question it is **somewhat like you**.
- 0 if the question is **neutral**.
- 1 if the question is **not much like you**.
- 2 if the question is **nothing like you**.

Do not look to see what phase you are relating to until after you finish.

² Apply your phase or element for health-enhancements: Please refer to "Using Feng Shui to Create Health," p. 285, "Five Elements for Better Health," p. 303, and "The Energetic Basis of Good Health," p. 293.

Phase I

- Are you a natural born initiator?
- Do you have problems with authority figures?
- Do you suffer from migratory pains?
- Do you act assertively and confidently?
- Does other people's slowness and clumsiness irritate you?
- Do you like struggling against great odds, proving yourself to others?
- Are you always doing something or going somewhere?
- Do you have high blood pressure?
- Have you often been told you don't compromise much?
- Do you always have to be the first and best?
- Does confinement and sitting quietly drive you crazy?
- Do you get frequent muscle cramps?
- Do you like to make all the rules and then break them?
- Are you really passionate about everything you do?
- Do you pioneer new trails wherever you go?
- Do your nails alternate between hard and thick, and dry and brittle?
- Are you intolerant of uncommitted people with no direction?
- Does your own personal freedom reign supreme in your life?
- Are you afraid to show vulnerability?
- Do you love speed and adventure?
- Have you ever had tendinitis?
- Do you manipulate people and situations to get what you want?
- Is controlling your anger one of your biggest problems?
- Do you find any kind of restraint insufferable?
- Do you do your best work under pressure?

Phase II

- Would you describe yourself as an introspective loner?
- Do you have an exaggerated sex drive?
- Is the search for *truth* a prime motivator in your life?
- Do you hate superficiality more than anything?
- Are you highly creative, imaginative and original?
- Are you modest and do you fear being in the limelight?
- Do you pride yourself on being self contained and self sufficient?

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- Is rapid deterioration of teeth and gums a problem?
- Do you seek the deep mystery in everything?
- Are you out of touch with your emotions?
- Do you suffer with backaches frequently?
- Are you tactless and even rude occasionally?
- Do you have a very penetrating and critical mind?
- Do you hate waste and conserve everything?
- Is the desire to stick-to-it one of your strongest virtues?
- Do you have hardening of the arteries?
- Is it hard for you to share with others?
- Do you suffer with isolation and loneliness?
- Are you afraid of losing yourself in others?
- Are you considered enigmatic and eccentric by your friends?
- Do you have remarkable powers of concentration?
- Are you really awkward in social circumstances?
- Do you have trouble conforming?
- Have you recently had kidney or bladder problems?
- Are you watchful and objective with other people?

Phase III

- Are you highly motivated to seek the divine?
- Do you have an enlarged or weak heart?
- Are you charismatic?
- Do you have an extreme aversion to pain?
- Do you love drama, performing, and being in the limelight?
- Are you often spontaneous?
- Do you get sores on your tongue and around your mouth?
- Can't say no to anyone?
- Do you tend to be more sensual than your friends?
- Have you ever had a speech impediment?
- Do you love to give your opinion?
- Do you fear separation above all else?
- Are you clever on your feet?
- Do you desire fulfillment more than almost anything?
- Do you bore easily with the dull and ordinary?
- Do your cheeks turn red easily?
- Could you be described as extravagant?
- Are you bright and scintillating at social gatherings?

- Do you have eczema?
- Do you have trouble with boundaries?
- Is the need for intimacy and merging a strong motivation with you?
- Does sharing come easily?
- Are you mostly optimistic and enthusiastic about life?
- Are you strongly empathetic?
- Do you suffer from anxiety and insomnia?

Phase IV

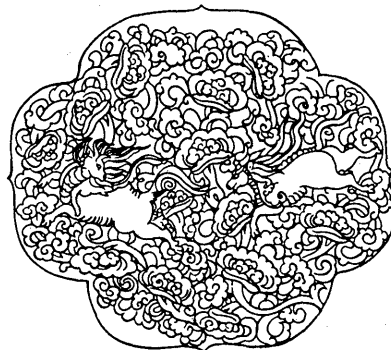
- Are you a law and order person?
- Do you hold righteousness and virtue in high regard?
- Are rituals important to you?
- Do you have stiff joints and muscles?
- Is chaos your enemy?
- Do you have no time for nonsense?
- Do you hold very precise standards?
- Are you really sensitive to temperature changes?
- Are you intolerant of disorder and dissonance?
- Is your skin and hair really dry?
- Do you fear intimacy?
- Do you have a strong aesthetic sense?
- Does carelessness in others drive you up a wall?
- Are you considered cool, dispassionate, and distant?
- Do you have a tight chest with dry coughing?
- Are reason and high principles your guiding light?
- Are you a little too strict and nit-picky?
- Do you have very refined tastes?
- Have you been called self-righteous?
- Do you have a lot of moles and warts?
- Is social involvement on the bottom of your list of things do?
- Do you have sinus problems?
- Does your constant self-control drive your spontaneous friends crazy?
- Are you into changing other people?
- Do you suffer from constipation?

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Phase V

- Do you see yourself as a service oriented person?
- Are you working on being more self-reliant?
- Do your friends often use you as a negotiator?
- Is bloating and water retention a problem?
- Do you struggle with inertia and feel “stuck” sometimes?
- Does nurturing come easy to you?
- Are you haunted with self-doubt?
- Do you like to be in charge but not in the limelight?
- Are you not the most efficient person in the world?
- Does your need to be accommodating result in conformity?
- Are you constantly going through an identity crisis?
- Is a need to belong strong in you?
- Do you suffer with muscle tenderness?
- Are you referred to as a “peacemaker” by your friends?
- Do you regard loyalty as one of the most important traits in a person?
- Are you quite conservative in your thinking?
- Do you have a strong need to be needed?
- Are you always involved in everybody’s business?
- Do you suffer with swollen glands and other lymphatic disorders?
- Would you like things to be more predictable?
- Do you tend to be overly protective?
- Do unrealistic expectations leave you disappointed much of the time?
- Do you try to be all things to all people?
- Is there a deep “emptiness” in the pit of your stomach?
- Do you have a squarish, solid physique?

Add up the total score for each of the phases. The phase that has the highest score is your predominant energy type. The phase with the lowest score is the weakest energy.



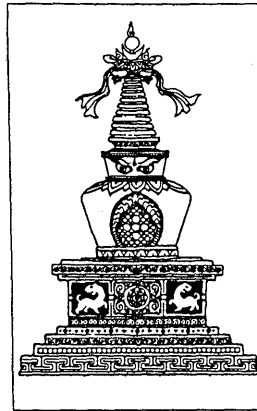
Phase I is the *Wood*³ type.
Phase II is the *Water* type.
Phase III is the *Fire* type.
Phase IV is the *Metal* type.
Phase V is the *Earth* type.

Interestingly, a majority of water people take this test and almost no earth people. It seems that earth types do not study Feng Shui in the first place! They are too involved in the practical, tangible aspects of life.

Using the five fundamental shapes

These five fundamental shapes act not only on an archetypal level, they also gather and concentrate their respective energies enabling you to draw from them. A beautiful example of the inherent power of the geometric shapes is seen in the large structures in Tibet (and the Far East in general) called *stupas*. They meditate in the base of these structures to get a balance of the five energy phases.

Stupas are built by stacking these five geometric shapes one on top of another in certain proportions in order to gather and store a balance of the five phases. People in Tibet believe the shape itself actually accumulates and focuses those forces.



By using the five basic geometric shapes and the cycles of creation, destruction, and moderation in relation to your specific energy type, you can create balance and harmony in your life.

³ If you hate questionnaires and refuse to use this one, you are more than likely a wood person!

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To complement the information in this article, interior designer Jami Lin⁴ has added the elemental energetics along with practical decorating applications.



Fire

The energetic symbolism of fire is action, motivation and intellect.

If you have an overabundance of fire:

Use the destructive⁵ cycle: Water: Use glass, a mirror, something with an irregular shape, a photo or painting of the ocean, a fish tank, water fountain, or blue-toned, cool colors.

Use the moderating cycle: Earth: Use ceramic or stone floor covering, furniture, and accessories, natural-tone colors, or flat-shaped and heavy items.

If you lack fire: add some Fire: Use pointed-shaped items, flame stitch or geometric patterns, red or warm-toned colors, and materials that come from animals, such as leather and wool.

Use the creative cycle: Wood: Use wood, rattan, hemp, cotton, or sisal furniture, accessories, floor coverings, floral or organic patterns, column shapes, and the color green.

⁴ Please refer to *Earth Design: The Added Dimension*, and "Outdoor Feng Shui," p.155 for more information.

⁵ A more appropriate term for this cycle might be "regenerative" as nothing in nature is ever really destroyed; the Chinese knew this as well as any earth people.

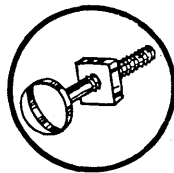


Earth

The energetic symbolism of earth is stable, solid, reliable, and confident.

If you have an overabundance of earth:

- Use the destructive cycle: Wood: Please see previous description.
Use the moderating cycle: Metal: Use metal accessories such as planters, picture frames, and sculptures, round or dome-shaped objects, along with metal, grey, and jewel-tone colors.
If you lack earth: add some Earth: Please see previous description.
Use the creative cycle: Fire: Please see previous description.



Metal

The energetic symbolism of abundance, wealth, and financial success.

If you have an overabundance of metal:

- Use the destructive cycle: Fire: Please see previous description.
Use the moderating cycle: Water: Please see previous description.
If you lack metal: add some Metal: Please see previous description.
Use the creative cycle: Earth: Please see previous description.

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Water

The energetic symbolism of water is emotional sensitivity and the ability to go with the flow.

If you have an overabundance of water:

Use the destructive cycle: Earth: Please see previous description.
Use the moderating cycle: Wood: Please see previous description.
If you lack water: add some Water: Please see previous description.

Use the creative cycle: Metal: Please see previous description.



Wood

The energetic symbolism of Wood is growth, creation, and nourishment.

If you have an over abundance of wood:

Use the destructive cycle: Metal: Please see previous description.
Use the moderating cycle: Fire: Please see previous description.

If you lack wood: add some Wood: Please see previous description.

Use the creative cycle: Water: Please see previous description.

When you design with all of the elements, you not only have well-balanced energy in your environment, you also have good design quality through the representational balance of shape, material, color, and texture.

Excerpted from
The Feng Shui Anthology

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In *The Feng Shui Anthology*, when the **Bagua** is discussed, **only the Life-Aspiration Energies are mentioned** (except in Derek Walter's article.). **To work with the Bagua and to maximize your Feng Shui with the information of all the masters, you must include your 8) Best Directions and 9) Flying Star Energies.**

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