

Bodyreading the Three Principles

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Dr. Stone on Diagnosis

"The next problem is...: Where to draw off excess energy and where to tonify or stimulate? Plus and minus, or "Yang" and "Yin" are the two main factors; why, where, when and how, the repeated questions and these no one fully answers, or the doctor could cure almost anything. I can only call attention to your high and artistic calling, and its deeper meaning. In this way, looking for deeper causes, we will find them, and our work will be creative and interesting, not merely repetition."

Polarity Therapy Vol. I, Book 1, p. 71.

"Examination Preparatory to Treatment" (abbreviated)

1. Care for the convenience of the patient...
2. Check blood pressure and note mental tension...
3. Measure the leg length... (short leg = the side with deep overall tension)
4. Check vital functions, respirations/minute (= sympathetic nervous system function)
5. Check and count the pulse beats of the carotid artery on each side of the neck. Compare volume and beat on both sides. (= amount of prana going to the brain)
6. Count the pulse at various places on the body and compare the volume of flow. This tells the distribution of prana.

Immediately you have a clear picture of that patient's relation to nature's energy field.

Polarity Therapy Vol. II, Book 5, p. 60.

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How do you decide what to do when you are asked to give a Polarity Therapy session? For beginners especially, this question is foremost in the mind. Supplied with dozens of maneuvers and possibilities, how do you figure out which to use and in what order?

The purpose of this article is to describe how "reading" the Three Principles can be the first level of deciding what to do in a Polarity bodywork session, and to discuss various possibilities and implications for this approach. Reading and working with the Three Principles can set the stage for the better-known Polarity Therapy strategies based on the Five Elements. Sills describes the three nervous systems as the link between the chakras and the elements, between energy and physical body. The nervous systems can be seen as the stepped-down manifestations of the Three Principles.

An exploration of the Three Principles requires addressing a problem of terminology. Stone mixed his language to the point of considerable confusion, calling the Principles by their Vedic (*Rajas, Satva, Tamas*), colloquial (Fire, Air, Water) and Oriental (*Yang, Neutral, Yin*) words in various places. The problem is compounded by the fact that the colloquial

words are also used for the Five Elements, to the point where it is difficult to decipher his actual meaning in some passages. For this article we will use the Oriental version, to reduce confusion.

The status and quality of each principle may be assessed with any of several different approaches, including pulse, posture, body reading, voice, medical problems, life history, and others. But, in my experience, this is an imprecise art, not a hard science. The "high and artistic calling" mentioned by Dr. Stone implies that the practitioner relies on inner resources of intuition and creativity in session planning.

Once an opinion has been formed about the principles, appropriate strategies may be developed. The following table summarizes primary bodywork considerations for the Three Principles.

Key words and bodywork possibilities for each of the Three Principles:

| <u>Neutral Principle</u> | <u>Yang Principle</u> | <u>Yin Principle</u> |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| side-to-side | front-to-back | bottom-to-top |
| Still, light touch | active, stimulating | deep, penetrating |
| Parasympathetic | Sympathetic | Volitional |
| Joints & diaphragm | 6-pointed star | 5-pointed star |
| Chest/Colon/Calves | Umbilical | Pelvis, Feet |
| Ether line, Heart | Eyes, fire path | Digestion |
| Adaptability | Getting involved | Letting Go |
| Stillness | Authority, responsibility | Contentment, Receptivity |

Avoiding confusion between Principles/Elements or Principles/ Nervous Systems

Principles describe the general movement of energy from Spirit into Form and back to Spirit. The Three Principles are the basis of the whole Polarity cosmology. This cyclic movement is visible in microscopic and macroscopic perspectives. Microscopically, *Yang* can be seen in in-breath, arterial circulation and motor nerve function, while *Yin* is seen in out-breath, venous circulation and sensory nerve function.

Elements describe where and how energy moves to accomplish the specific functions necessary for life; elements are about the staged progression from subtle to dense. Air (transverse current) is a subtle transitional neutrality, bridging involutory (Fire, centrifugal, spiral current) and evolutionary (Water, centripetal, long-line current) energy movements. These movements occur throughout all energy systems, on every level of density.

The three nervous systems are physical, much less subtle than the ephemeral energy patterns of the principles. While they reflect qualities of the Principles and are linked to Principles (Air/Parasympathetic, Fire/Sympathetic, Water/Volitional), it is important to keep them separate. They are not the same. Sills describes the nervous systems as a bridge between chakras and physical body (Polarity

Process, p. 48). Balancing them (primarily by perineal technique) has a benefit for any subsequent, more physical, therapy. Polarity Therapy began when Dr. Stone sought an explanation for this benefit.

An interesting unresolved bodyreading question exists when contemplating the left and right sides. Traditionally, Polarity Therapy has held that the right side represents *Yang*, and the left side represents *Yin*. This is similar to the upper and back sides being associated with *Yang* and the lower and front of the body with *Yin*. However the spatial division of top (ecto-) -bottom(endo-) and back (motor)-front (sensory) make anatomical sense, while a strong case can be made for the lateral dimensionality being the reverse. In the body, the left brain governs the right side and is more *Yang* in terms of being more linear and sequential. The left digestive organs are more firm and structured (spleen/pancreas vs. liver). The left colon is more dry than the right. Important arteries are found more on the right.

General preliminary assessments

Generally, it is useful to characterize the client in terms of involution (*Yang*) and evolution (*Yin*): Do they seem to have stress about "getting involved" or "letting go," and is the condition "too much" (*Yang*) or "too little?" And, is the condition acute (*Yang*) or chronic? Most people will fall into one of these categories and for many more than one will be appropriate descriptions.

Another general question to ask initially is, how is this person in relation to sleep and rest? If the person is stressed and "jazzed up," then *Yang* Principle techniques are appropriate, especially the sympathetic balance. The sympathetic system governs "fight or flight," so ask yourself "is this person constantly fighting or fleeing?" On the other hand, they may seem sluggish, disassociative, depleted and unrested, and report sleeping a lot without feeling really rested. This would indicate a stressed Neutral Principle, with its parasympathetic "rest and repose" function. Here perineal technique is especially valuable. Almost everyone benefits greatly from both of these nervous system balances.

Also in the initial stages, make a few general observations about the person's physiology. Observe the client's eyes. If they wear glasses or the eyelids flutter, this may be a general indicator of need for *Yang* Principle balancing. In the Orient *Sanpaku* ("three whites") refers to eye placement. White showing above the iris suggests acute *Yang* imbalance, while white below indicates *Yin*. Also, observe the retention of water. If the client seems bloated, *Yin* Principle techniques ("letting go") may be appropriate.

Dr. Stone differentiates between sensory and motor distresses (VI, B1, p. 85). If the person is in actual pain (sensory), the *Yin* Principle techniques may be useful. If the presenting condition is primarily a motor condition, like inhibited movement or structural distortion, then *Yang* Principle techniques may be more appropriate. Obviously, these will often appear together, in which case both Principles may be used.

Similarly, note the placement of the nose. If it is off center to the left (*Yin*) or right (*Yang*), appropriate balancing may be valuable (however, note the earlier uncertainty about left and right). The side toward which it has been pulled by tension may mean that that nostril is inhibited, and the flow of prana to that side of the brain is limited. In a severe instance of this, the person may benefit from a regular program of yogic breathing which alternates use of nostrils during inhalation.

A final preliminary observation can be based on breath. Once the person is on the table, listen closely to breath and watch the chest movement. Many people will be prone to greater and freer inhale or exhale. The restricted breath dimension (inhale=*Yang*, exhale=*Yin*) is a clue to the Principle to apply in the bodywork. Ideally respiration has a 1:4 ratio to heart. Faster indicates *Yang*, slower indicates *Yin* imbalances respectively.

Pulses

"The pulse beat depends upon the... three essences in the blood for its vibratory rhythm and quality. In times of old, the entire value of taking the pulse was to find out which currents were in excess and which were lacking and thus balance these three forces by the Aryurvedic principles employed.

"The excess of the AIRY force in the blood makes a fast or zig-zag or crooked pattern of the pulse beat. It resembles the movement of a snake. When the heat... of FIRE is in excess in the pulse, it is restless or jerky or jumpy like a frog pattern. When the WATER... predominates, the pulse is slow, weak, restricted and soft."

Polarity Therapy (Book 3), p. 33.

The pulse is felt at positive (carotid and/or occiput), neutral (wrist) and/or negative (ankle) poles. It is my belief that the positive pole shows more current-time (acute) status, the neutral shows a blend of acute and chronic, and the negative shows chronic condition. Therefore it is useful to feel the pulse in two or more places. Both throat and ankle can be used. Phil Young, in The Art of Polarity (p. 21), describes using the wrist only.

To feel the pulse, touch very lightly on the chosen spot. Concentrate the attention in the fingertips and experiment with varying pressure. This can be done in many places. Attempt to discern the quality of the pulsation, in three categories: *Yang* (forceful and jumpy), Neutral (speedy and irregularly shifting), or *Yin* (slow, soft and mushy). Compare right to left, back to front, and top to bottom, to compare force present in *Yang* and *Yin* dimensions, respectively. Identifiable presence of any of these indicates a need for better energy balance in the appropriate principle. An even, steady pulse which is the same on both sides indicates relative balance. Phil Young says that when all three qualities may be felt, in sequence, a good prognosis is indicated. He also describes the Aryurvedic technique of touching with three fingers-- index (Neutral), middle (*Yang*), and ring (*Yin*)-- and discerning which finger feels the pulse, as an indicator of which dosha (Principle) is out of balance

(Young, *Art of Polarity*, p. 22 ff).

If a pulse condition can be detected, include appropriate bodywork in the session. If a *Yang* condition, perhaps a sympathetic balance, umbilical work, front/back, six-pointed star, back/buttocks/shoulders, or fire line path would be appropriate, depending on the presenting condition and goals for the session. The Rajasic (stimulating, moving) touch might be used for some or more of these.

If a Neutral condition is detected, contacts involving perineal work, some or all of the joints, diaphragm and diaphragm reflexes, neck and neck reflexes, and/or ether line bodywork, might be appropriate. The Satvic (still, light) touch would probably be helpful.

If a *Yin* condition is detected, contacts connecting left and right sides (toes, cranium, or opposite side hand/foot), perineal, foot, pelvic, lymphatic massage, and north/south contacts may be appropriate. The Tamasic (deep, penetrating) touch might be used.

These suggestions for bodywork also apply to yang and yin conditions described later, but avoid an excessively "cookbook" approach to polarity sessions: intuition is a significant contributor to planning. Also, sessions will usually involve a blend of all these, rather than being just one Principle. Certainly the Neutral Principle is commonly a part of all sessions.

The elemental triads, zones and reflexes will also guide session planning and can be blended with the work described above. For example, if body reading or presenting conditions indicate earth element stress, and the pulses or other indicators suggest Air principle imbalance, then a light touch side-to-side balancing of earth areas (small toe, neck, knees, bowels) might be appropriate. An infinite variety of strategies emerges from the practitioner's fluency with the many techniques.

Emotional work can also be creatively planned to blend these considerations. Generally, Yang Principle imbalances may be expected to relate to getting involved in some way, and with father, male energy, responsibility, the application of force (given or received), etc. Water Principle imbalances may relate to letting go in some way, and to mother, female energy, contentment and receptivity. Air Principle imbalances may relate to transitions, communication (especially in intimate relationships), spirituality, flexibility, and the person's ease in adapting to circumstances and change.

It is useful to remember Dr. Stone's repeated emphasis on the south pole in therapy. It was his observation that the majority of conditions involved fixation of the energy flow at the negative pole, stemming from the mind's universal tendency to becoming attached to materialistic illusion. Perineal technique thus has a universal usefulness. "Relaxation and balancing of the cerebrospinal, the sympathetic and parasympathetic systems by means of deep perineal technique are always indicated to balance the body with nature, prana, and the pulse beat" (Stone, V I, B1, p. 72).

Another way to think of the predominance and signifi-

cance of negative pole energy blockage is the fact that the seed patterns of chronic ailments are commonly rooted in early childhood trauma. Everyone begins life in a receptive *Yin* role relative to caregiving adults, with little choice but to adapt to the environment presented. Infancy and childhood, the springtime (most yang) phase of life, is couched in an extreme yin relationship structure. (This is another confirmation of the meaning of the Tao emblem: in the fullness of one is the seed of the other). Shock and distress acquired during this time can naturally be expected to be preserved in *Yin* (south pole, evolutionary impulse) dimensions later in life.

Posture and body shape:

In posture and body shape we get a general sense of the client's stance in life. For example, a loud person who is puffed up and leans forward indicates excessive *Yang* involvement, whereas a soft-spoken person leaning back is acting out an excessive *Yin* avoidance. A great resource for applying the Three Principles to posture is Emotional Anatomy by Stanley Keleman. Keleman shows how body shape and posture is also a signal of degree of stress response, indicating how chronic the condition and how ancient and traumatic the causing stressor. This book has excellent illustrations and is highly recommended.

In The Polarity Process, Franklyn Sills gives a good introduction and example of planning sessions based on body shape (p. 93 ff.). The orthodox medical body type categories of ectomorph (lean), mesomorph (muscular) and endomorph (stocky) are linked to Neutral, *Yang* and *Yin* Principles, respectively. Because body type originates in embryonic development, it is likely that body shape indicates major life lesson, and that the client can benefit from repeated use of the appropriate balancing strategies as major or minor parts of each session received. Because this pattern is so deeply embedded, it may or may not be accessible cognitively.

When considering body shape, the three dimensions of front/back, left/right, and bottom/top can be helpful. Look at the body, dividing it in half mentally. See if the two halves are similar in shape and size, or significantly different. Do the two sides seem to "fit" each other, and which side seems to be more stressed or out of place? Further, does the stressed side seem to be of a "too much" (overstimulated) or "too little" (depleted) nature? Now divide it in half at the waist, separating top and bottom. Are these different, seeming to come from different bodies? Then look from the side view: if you held a plumb line from ear to floor, is the weight and mass evenly distributed? Is there a big difference between front and back? Which of the three dimensions has the most stress or difference evident, side/side (Neutral), front/back (*Yang*) or top/bottom (*Yin*)? This is an indicator of chronic principle imbalance. Using front, left and bottom as *Yin*, what suppositions can be created from this approach? Also note the location of change, where the stress pattern begins. This can be a useful indicator of energy block location.

The Five-pointed Star and Interlaced Triangles also con-

tribute substantially to body shape. In a Five-pointed star imbalance, the client will show a high hip and high shoulder on opposite sides. This suggests *Yin* Principle stress and therapeutic response. The Interlaced Triangle will have the high hip and high shoulder on the same side, and indicates the possible value of *Yang* Principle techniques. Note that the diaphragm and Neutral Principle techniques are generally relevant to both.

In material presented by Jim Said, the position (which side is anterior and superior?) of the sacrum has been taught as a very precise indicator of the Three Principles. I consider it an advanced technique but include mention of it here because it exists in the literature.

Medical History:

It has been my experience that the medical history is a very useful basis for session planning. First of all, it reveals the conditions for which the person is seeking help, and supplies necessary information for safety and contraindications. But all medical conditions can also be interpreted in terms of the Three Principles, and of course this is also true for the Five Elements.

Generally, energy field conditions will be serious (chronic) before they are acknowledged, categorized/labeled, and receive medical care. Therefore if it has a name, the *Yin* Principle is likely to be involved, and *Yin* Principle treatments are likely to be helpful. I believe that the same applies to major accidents.

With this in mind, we can again evaluate the person from the perspective of “getting involved” and “letting go,” and in terms of an outgoing and return current cycle. High blood pressure would be too involved (*Yang*), while low would be too little (*Yin*). I perceive cancer as being loss of the *Yin* return current, allowing uncontrolled (*Yang*) growth, possibly linked with experiences of unacceptable, indigestible levels of shock and emotional pain. Arterial heart problems seem to be linked to excessive emphasis on the *Yang* outgoing current. I have found Louise Hay’s [Heal Your Body and Heal Your Life](#) to be helpful for bluntly educating people about the possible “meanings” of medical conditions, and addressing the common problem of denial of effects of stress. This is a delicate therapeutic area, avoiding “blaming” the client for a disease state while also holding an open curiosity about the possibility of mental-emotional impact.

In cases of acute pain and spasm, remember that the centripetal techniques are advised by Dr. Stone. This means reversing the normal right-hand-below orientation. I have

experienced the validity of this several times, although I have also noticed the reverse in some cases. This I attribute to an underlying chronic (*Yin* Principle) condition.

In cases of far advanced diseases, I suggest including at least some Neutral Principle work in any session. This is due to the need for the person to relax with and adapt to transition, and the value of being of comfort in a time of trial.

Life History:

I am convinced that what is happening internally is also happening externally. This is a very large topic and the subject of a future lengthier treatment. The concept is generally that relationships are co-creative contributors to the human energy field. Therefore the condition of relationships is entirely consistent with the internal condition. “Addicts travel in pairs.” Most Polarity Therapists eventually deal with relationships issues, because they are inseparable from health issues.

Considering this, the relationships of the client can be briefly surveyed to gather information describing the client’s energy field, and the session can reliably be structured as a response to this survey. The involvement/letting go and too much/too little criteria can be used again, in the same way. Pia Mellody’s work is highly recommended in this area.

A further dimension of this application has to do with gender. The Japanese folklore proverb, “The sex of the child is the challenge of the parents” implies that each person is the gender that he or she is for a profound reason dealing with life lesson. *Yang* Principle techniques may be somewhat more appropriate for male clients, and *Yin* Principle techniques for female clients. This cannot be applied broadly, since both genders have all three principles and each individual has specific goals for each session, but it is worth consideration in session planning.

Finally, it is useful to acquire information relating to parents. There is possibly a link between *Yang* Principle and father, and *Yin* Principle and mother. This cannot be applied indiscriminately, since father and mother may have reversed roles in some way, or the child may have identified with one or the other in an inverse or oppositional modeling way. There does seem to be a strong basis for linking body stress location with parent following the *Yin* (left, front, bottom) =Mother generality, and vice versa. But a *Yang* Principle imbalance can be found on the front or left of the body, so the nature of the stress must be considered along with the location.