

**Awakening the Essential  
Feminine: Claiming Your  
Influential Power**

Maureen Simon

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Graphic Design & Layout: Zoey Setiawan, *www.ZoeyChloe.com*

Digital Art: Victor Lee

Final Design & Layout: Kip Williams/Print-Ink Press

*mrkipw@gmail.com*

Cover Design: Leslie Waltzer, *www.crowfootdesign.com*

Editor: Nanette McGuinness

## *Dedication*

To Brigid, the suffragettes,  
my mother Mary, my father Tom,  
my dear husband Karim,  
the many sisters who have enlivened my life,  
and God's nature and many gifts.

*In every being there exists a masculine and  
a feminine nature. The masculine side reveals  
itself as the powers of discrimination, self-control,  
and exacting judgment qualities that express  
or respond to reason.*

*The feminine nature consists of feeling—love,  
sympathy, kindness, mercy, joy.  
In the ideal being, these two aspects are perfectly  
balanced. But if reason lacks feeling, it becomes  
calculating, harsh, judgmental; and if feeling lacks  
reason it becomes blind emotion.*

Paramahansa Yogananda



## *Author's Note*

In order for our world to be fair and harmonious, we need to equalize those areas where equalization has not existed in the past. We must strengthen women's voices and deepen our understanding of our gifts and talents for this equalization to occur. This book offers an opportunity for women to understand and claim some of the innate talents, gifts, and abilities that the feminine holds. I believe that women are predisposed to these feminine gifts by the very nature of our birth, biology, and socialization. We are now poised in a perfect position to bring the pendulum back to center, where the masculine and feminine can live side by side, empowering each other and fully utilizing the gifts of both.

*Women hold up half the sky.*

Chinese proverb

*When sleeping women wake,  
mountains move.*

Chinese proverb

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## *Introduction*

I was first inspired to write this book when it became clear to me that women around the world were unaware of their natural feminine talents and power and of the influence that these assets hold when fully expressed. I realized that our lives can be far more satisfying, successful and meaningful when our feminine nature is fully contributing to all areas of our lives. I noticed that women were climbing the ladder in business and knocking off the women who were coming up behind them in order to win in a highly competitive narcissistic world. Through my individual consulting with business women worldwide, I noticed that women were experiencing a decreasing level of satisfaction in business and life. I began to wonder what was contributing to the feelings of dissatisfaction and disharmony.

About fifteen years ago, I began to study feminine attributes. I looked closely at women's natural gifts and tendencies. I saw that a majority of women are comfortable in building relationships, collaborating, and caring for others in the world. I noticed that we



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communicate with great agility and have the ability to engage others collaboratively in both dialogues and projects. I observed that when women speak, we express emotions comfortably and are often able to communicate with ease. I saw many, many more abilities in addition to these and began to make a study by watching friends, observing clients, and reading books. Three years ago, I began to do anecdotal and subjective research on this topic with my friend and colleague Bonnie Gallup. We did extensive research on feminine attributes in business and in life. I have used this research to inform my comments and observations in this book.

Through my research, I realized that the feminine qualities of care, compassion, the ability to create and sustain deep relationships, the values of peace and harmony along with the many other feminine talents and attributes were not valued and prioritized in the world where powerful decisions are being made. Their absence is reflected in the facts that women hold less than 8% of the board seats in major international corporations and earn \$.80 on each U.S. dollar in comparison to their male counterparts.

We can also see the absence of feminine attributes reflected in the number of violent wars currently on this planet. As a mediator in the disruptive wars in Northern Ireland and Eastern Europe, I had firsthand experience that war destroys the lives of children, families and communities for generations beyond the end of the conflict. As the one who births life it is a woman's





natural feminine instinct to provide the care, safety and security her family needs. She needs to be at the table where these decisions are made.

Masculine and feminine attributes live side by side in men and women. Women are predisposed to our feminine gifts due to our basic biology (brain and hormonal, etc) and because of the way we are socialized. The Essential Feminine qualities place us at a distinct advantage in today's world. When we become aware of our unique attributes and gifts, and of the critical value and potential influence that they hold in today's world, our world will become a much more positive place to live. Women contributing the feminine perspective will bring more diversity and harmony to the decision making tables.

In recent years, women have fought dedicatedly to achieve a status that places us as equals (in our minds, at least) to men. We have proudly climbed the ladder, particularly in business, and have pulled up our trousers, learning the ways of thinking, working and succeeding in a masculine world. I strongly believe that the masculine aspects of our nature are very much needed in life, but if they are over-weighted, the world will continue to be off balance with excessive wars, misuse of power and abuse of the environment. I have written this book to support women to learn, claim, live and lead with their Essential Feminine. I believe the feminine is now needed in order for us to reach equilibrium across all areas of life. The time for the feminine to meet and compliment the masculine



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has come. The outcome of this union will be to save this amazing world we all inhabit.

*Awakening the Essential Feminine: Claiming Your Influential Power* focuses on the nine areas of life in which our feminine attributes, gifts, and talents are predominantly and uniquely expressed. These areas include: relationships; harmony and peacemaking; thinking; imagination and vision; creativity and innovation; language; power; intuition; and beauty and aesthetics. Within these 9 areas of life the book identifies twenty-six attributes, gifts, and natural styles that women hold and that serve as magical keys to creating a shift from an isolating, masculine, power-based, autocratic world to a web-like, compassionate universe.

I hope that you will enjoy this book and that it will provide you with an opportunity to dream big, step outside of your comfort zone, and contribute in the best way you can. Enjoy the journey you are about to embark upon. Today's world needs you to step forward more than ever before.

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## Philosophy

I have a strong respect and reverence for men and their masculine gifts. Some of my greatest teachers and guides have been men—including my father. While the attributes that I describe in this book are shared between both men and women, I am drawing attention to the ways in which their brains, biology, values, and socialization make women unique. Men may cultivate the feminine qualities of an attribute, just as women may cultivate the masculine qualities of an attribute. That is the beauty of the masculine and feminine living side by side. However, this book is intended to support women as they identify, claim, and live with their feminine qualities as strengths that will allow them to increase their contributions to the world as leaders, decision makers, and creators of new and innovative ways to live.

When women understand their importance in the world today and really understand that it is time for them to claim a greater capacity for growth and change, they will begin to lead with greater confidence than ever before.

I believe that we must:

- First, fully understand the attributes, gifts, and talents that are unique to the feminine. Once they are fully understood, we must make them our own and become comfortable with these gifts and talents.



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- Next, we need to look around the world and see how our natural gifts can make a difference.
- And finally, we must lead from a place that brings us out of ourselves and allows us to make a contribution to the whole, whether as a mother in her home or a powerful leader in the external world.

In this book, I am not claiming that all comments and observations are based on pure, empirical, scientific research. Rather, my interpretation is based on subjective and anecdotal information and experiences. The bibliography serves as a road map for you to gain access to additional, more empirical background information.

The book has also been heavily informed by my individual and group work internationally with thousands of women over the past 25 years. These women and their life experiences have enriched my knowledge of the feminine and have provided a deep understanding of the attributes I discuss in this book. The clarity and knowledge that I have received about the Essential Feminine has been the focal point of most of my professional life; I have created an entire “body of work” around the Essential Feminine in order to empower women to create success and influence in business and in life through my webinars, classes, CDs, and consulting.



The philosophy behind *Awakening the Essential Feminine: Claiming Your Influential Power* has also been informed by the work of Rutgers University anthropologist Helen Fisher, author of *The First Sex: The Natural Talents of Women and How They Are Changing the World*. Other key sources for our research include Louann Brizendine's *The Female Brain* and Carol Gilligan's *In a Different Voice*, as well as Helen Palmer's *Inner Knowing*.



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## **How to Use This Book**

*Awakening the Essential Feminine: Claiming Your Influential Power* has been designed to take you on a journey through the natural talents, gifts, and attributes of the feminine. While you may choose to read the book from cover to cover, it is not mandatory. You may decide to focus on any individual area as you read the book, or, if you want, you can put it down, pick it back up, open it with intention and intuition, and read the section you open to, as it may relate to a question or concern in your life.

This book stands alone as a guide to support you in learning about your Essential Feminine gifts and talents. It can be used as a part of your meditation and self-reflection process, or it can be used in a gathering or a circle. As you read through the book, you will see that each chapter covers a specific area of the feminine and begins with an opening invocation, opening ideas for contemplation, an introduction to that area, inspiring questions, and the invitation to be witnessed if you want to create movement or change in that area.

Additional material to help you on your journey can be found online at *www.TheEssentialFeminine.com*, where you will find further information to support you on the way. Future companion tools in the works include a journal and a deck of Awakening Your Essential Feminine cards.



Read the opening invocation as you begin to sit quietly, either together in a group or circle or on your own. This is a time for you to invite the guidance of the Essential Feminine.

### ***Opening Ideas for Contemplation***

This poem or quote has been provided as a source of inspiration as it relates to the attribute you will be examining or discussing. It—or they, as there may be more than one—is also intended to provide a moment of reflection and an opportunity for inner connection.

### ***Inspiring Questions***

I have designed three questions for each attribute. These questions can serve as an impetus for deepening your personal connection to the topics covered as part of that attribute. When answering these questions, notice your first response and then continue to listen deeply for ideas and thoughts that follow. Look for further information that may come through after your reflection on the question. It is in the deepening of your inquiry that you will receive meaningful guidance. As you reenter the world and continue to live your life, look for divinations, coincidences, and synchronicities that may support the information that you have received or that further your learning.



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## ***Witnessing***

After you have answered the three inspiring questions referred to above, decide if there is an action, commitment, or intention that you would like to make as you move forward in your life. Be sure to speak your intention, as there is great power in stating an intention and being witnessed.





## **Women's Groups and Women's Circles**

Each chapter of this book examines one of the nine areas in which the feminine is uniquely expressed. These areas can be explored individually as you read the book on your own, and they can also be brought into a women's group or circle where the exploration of the Essential Feminine and its attributes occurs in a rich community dialogue.

If you are gathering in a women's circle, you can bring a specific area to the group for dialogue and discussion, or you can use each of the nine chapter areas as content for facilitation. Simply read through the material in each section, allowing time for conversation and reflection. Sessions can be set up to discuss each of the nine chapters or chapters can be consolidated. As the group comes to an end, consider witnessing an intention set by each woman in order to take advantage of a new revelation or learning brought forth from working with *Awakening the Essential Feminine: Claiming Your Influential Power*.





**Part I:  
Enlivening the World  
through Feminine Expression**





*Chapter 1*  
*Relationships*



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## **Relationships**

### ***Opening Invocation***

The feminine holds great richness in her ability to build and nurture relationships. Her deep understanding and valuing of relationships form the web of life. In her life she prioritizes sharing, including, connecting, and communicating. Her care, compassion, and empathy keep the flame of life alive.

### ***Opening Idea for Contemplation***

*...One does not choose between 'the rational, goal-oriented, and just' of the masculine energy and 'the irrational, cyclic, relating' of the feminine energy; instead the idea is to hold the tension between the two.*

*—Helen Fisher*

### ***Introduction to Relationships***

Being overly autonomous, independent, competitive, and action-oriented creates an environment of isolation, power mongering, and self-centeredness. The competitive, overly-individualized culture in the United States developed from a militaristic model that encourages hierarchy, competitiveness, and aggression. While this model has served the growth of America well in past years, it has become outmoded and obsolete in today's world. There are many



examples worldwide of societies that encourage support and care for the needs of all. We now must move to a model that includes compassion and concern for others in a non-competitive, inclusive, relational way.

Our current, self-centered, less relational orientation can be harmful, as it does not always serve the good of all. Today's model focuses on benefiting the few who hold power and make decisions. For years it has been felt that if you share information, you dilute your power, and if you place a high priority on communication, you lose control over situations and people.

Since the feminine values the whole over the parts, is interested in direct communication and collaboration, and often enjoys sharing power as a means to building relationships and sharing knowledge, her gifts and talents are needed in the world now in an unprecedented way. Because the female is the more relational of the two sexes, we move away from disharmony towards peace and choose to build relationships that provide nurturing and care.

In this book, the chapter on relationships launches the first of nine areas where the feminine most predominantly lives, and includes the importance of collaboration, inclusiveness, interconnectedness, communication, care, compassion, and empathy. Time and time again in our research, we have found that these various areas can be traced back to



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the feminine and her role in the family, community, and society.

By first identifying your personal relationship with each of these areas and then evaluating which of these areas would enrich your life if enlivened, you can develop connections to the world that open many new doors and horizons. Through relationships, we learn most of all about ourselves and the world that we live in. As you develop a deeper understanding of how connections with others influence your life, you will have a greater ability than you now have to use your feminine gifts and talents to explore, develop, and grow rich, meaningful, and wise relationships.

### ***Inspiring Questions***

1. Where in your life could you collaborate with or include another that would benefit both of you?
2. How can you connect more to others, outside of yourself? What would be the benefit to you and to others?
3. Where can your communication more deeply reflect how you feel?

### ***Witnessing***

Make a commitment to enrich the relationships in your life. State the commitment aloud after completing the reading on relationships and their attributes.





*Awakening the Essential Feminine: Claiming Your Influential Power*

If possible, be witnessed by a friend or someone who supports you.



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## **Collaboration**

### ***About collaboration***

Women understand that no one woman can hold all knowledge. Women have a distinct understanding that when we listen to others, include their thoughts, and get them to be a part of an agreed-upon direction before we take action, we will have better results. This approach leads to inclusivity. The greatest benefit that collaboration offers is the understanding that everyone is a leader, as opposed to one person. Collaboration also encourages direct communication. When communication is direct and flows freely, we open the door for understanding. This builds flexible and diverse dialogues, work environments, and political exchanges.

### ***Why collaboration is special to the feminine***

From the days that women washed clothes together on the shore of a river, they came to know the importance of working together. This included watching each other's children and taking care of community tasks. Women have an innate sense that when we are aware of the needs of others, we benefit the whole. At times, collaboration has been seen as a by-product of indecision, but in reality its consultative nature brings about the best decisions, thinking, and actions.



## ***How women can use our gift of collaboration***

People need to be a part of something and to be valued for what they can offer. When we collaborate, everyone feels a sense of ownership, and this sense of ownership leads to greater success and a deeper level of involvement from everyone than would otherwise be possible. It has been shown repeatedly that women maintain networks based on relationships that allow them to connect diverse environments. This ability allows women to contribute our full resourcefulness, together with our natural gift of collaboration. Our ability to relate to many diverse people and styles allows women to build connections across many groups throughout life. Many believe that this desire and urge to connect has a strong link to estrogen and begins in women at puberty.

## ***Why collaboration is needed in the world now***

The world has become a very individualistic place. Many people only look out for their own interests and disconnect themselves from what would benefit the whole, the world, or the whole of others' needs. It is time to keep the benefits and creativity that individualism allows us while we focus on what will better serve all. We gain people's buy-in and support when they feel their input is included. There has never been a greater time in the history of the world than now, when people need to feel part of the larger whole and



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in collaboration with others. We have created much separateness through social class and inequality. We must now build bridges that allow our world to become far more egalitarian than it currently is.

***Remember collaboration when...***

...you feel insecure and become competitive or feel like focusing on winning at all costs to achieve a goal. Remember collaboration when you feel the need to make a decision and are unclear or unsure of which direction to go. Think collaboratively when you seek deeper levels of creativity and support than you might achieve on your own.

***Enlivening collaboration in your life***

Surround yourself with people who are aligned with your way of thinking, but do not exclude from your circle those who will stretch or expand you. Look around your world and notice the people that you want to bring onto your team. Create a salon or a gathering that supports you and others on topics that encourage your growth and creativity. Play or make music, dance, and move with others.



## **Inclusiveness**

### ***About inclusiveness***

By nature, women innately include others in sharing decisions, information, and power. We value others' opinions and involvement, as we understand that this collective involvement leads to strong decisions and outcomes. When we include others authentically, with pure intention, we build deeper relationships. We enhance a web that we know to be the essence of our connection with others. When this web is strong and expansive, it moves us away from hierarchy and allows a more equal, holistic relationship to unfold.

### ***Why inclusiveness is special to the feminine***

Because of our understanding that all are important and all voices are needed, women are drawn to the voices of other women, for those voices have been excluded in the past. It is also natural for women to be inclusive and to involve the voices of many. In addition, women are also less prone than men to holding to a single authority. Since women have a natural desire to connect, share power, and include others, they are well positioned to integrate silent parties and to support others in the full expression and contribution of their voices.



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Women see themselves in “the middle of things” (web). We do not see ourselves at the top (hierarchy). We build flexible, diverse, and cooperative work environments. We are trusting and have an impulse to share information that holds a concern for relationships and connection. We are naturally interested in sharing power.

### ***How women can use our gift of inclusiveness***

The feminine has been minimized in our world. It is now time for women—who are strongly predisposed to the feminine—to step forth and show the power and contribution that the attributes and gifts of the feminine hold. Inclusiveness is one of the main strengths of the feminine. We must not be afraid to lead and to show our gifts and talents in the world.

Leadership takes many forms. Becoming a leader and part of the collective with a voice that is valued brings personal responsibility. It is easy to look towards the top, to the one who leads us, but it is far more rewarding to look within and to the circle around us, to the powerful team that we are a part of. When we share power, we naturally include others. This builds more flexible, diverse, and cooperative environments than hierarchical power structures. We are the leaders that we have been waiting for. All voices must now be heard.

