

# **An Invitation to Sacred Feminine Leadership**

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For the first time in history, a significant population of professional and/or baby-boomer women all over the world are independent, financially secure, and essentially free of family responsibilities. Increasing numbers of these women are turning their attention to healing the planet. And they are frequently doing it with this un-named, unrecognized leadership. To efficiently access this power, it must be named—called what it actually is: Sacred Feminine Leadership. We must define it in its own terms rather than as a subset of masculinity. And the formulation of a proper definition will thereby illuminate the keys to accessing it.

Leadership using of the sacred feminine *in dynamic balance* with the sacred masculine expands our human capacity to be whole in our intentions and actions to thrive on Earth. This generative collaboration is our only viable future.

## **Sacred feminine leadership defined**

When I was about ten, I explained to my family that I was a “natural-born leader, only I don’t have any followers.” This confession was met with hoots of derision, which certainly discouraged my further philosophical exploration in that direction, while I was taught that there was only one model for leadership—and that was hierarchical. The idea of collaborative leadership—inclusive, joint leadership *without followers*—was simply undefined at that time by anyone that I knew. As I have gradually discovered through fifty years of observation and participation, such leadership without followers—without hierarchy—is the leadership of community, of networking, of *women!* When women get together, it’s how we self-organize. But it’s not generally called leadership. In fact, it’s not generally called *anything*, because the nature of feminine leadership at its most feminine is not so much to name, structure, rank, and delegate (which are generally accepted as masculine traits), as to *be*, to hold the space, to facilitate, and to allow.

First, the word *sacred*, as compared with *temporal*. Interesting words. *Sacred* is derived from the same source as *secret*—that which is hidden at the core, and alludes to our immortal life force, which *had* to be hidden to survive the dominating drive of the temporal world. *Temporal* is derived from the word *time*, and alludes to our mortality. Only sacredness is the doorway to our life force that goes beyond bread on the table and a roof over our head, to true health and wholeness.

Sacred femininity arises out of that deepest and most precious spiritual value: unconditional love. Why “feminine”? Because it is based in quintessential feminine qualities of intuition and community, as opposed to sacred masculine qualities of analysis and accomplishment.

And why “leadership”? Not because it looks anything like what we would normally call leadership, but because, for human survival, we must re-define leadership to include qualitative nurturing as well as quantitative performance. We must be whole.

The words *health* and *wholeness* have the same derivation as *holy*, which brings us back again to the sacred. Awakened, conscious femininity will intrinsically awaken the conscious, sacred masculine and, as we work together—in *wholeness*—real, balanced, sustainable solutions will be obvious.

There is scientific research that our brains are different and that we function differently. This is inclusive balance

Sacred feminine leadership is *not* about women taking over control from men. It is *not* about replacing patriarchal hierarchy with matriarchal hierarchy. It’s not about passivity. Rather, it is about contributing sacred feminine attributes to the greater human psyche, so that the doing and being, the outer and the inner, are balanced. And, while it may be generally easier for women to contribute sacred femininity and men to contribute sacred masculinity, a dynamic balance within each person is what is actually required.

## **The four aspects of sacred feminine leadership**

We are all familiar with positive leadership that consists of doing and creating, which is our sacred masculine aspect. How can we lead using our feminine aspects of *being*, *holding space*, *servicing*, and *allowing*?

The first aspect is to create a solid foundation. One of my great teachers was a woman who truly expressed unconditional love her whole life. It scared her parents, so she suffered terribly as a child, and she had built up strong walls around her tender heart. One day, she realized that the thick emotional/experiential walls were getting in her way. What to do? While I acted as her witness, she journeyed into her soul and tipped over the heavy walls (of which each building block was a life experience), so they formed a platform on the ground—a very solid, firm foundation. She demonstrated the re-invention of her trauma as strength, simply through conscious choice. Likewise, we must use our life experience—who we are, our *being*—as a solid foundation for sacred feminine leadership.

The second aspect is to hold space, to own what's ours, to be present and conscious now that we know that we can not only survive trauma, but we can use it to make us strong. We can embrace life, we can be joy. How is this leadership? When we are whole and clear, in and of ourselves, those around us *feel* the opportunity to be whole and clear themselves. The deepest change happens without us having to do or say anything. Conscious presence and emptiness of need make room for great human creativity.

Servicing is the place where the sacred feminine most closely approaches the sacred masculine, because it is about action—but collaborative *group* action, creating and nurturing inclusively so that all may flourish. Out of this emerge powerful, whole, and concrete results.

And the fourth aspect? Allowing. Most people will feel the opportunity implicit in wholeness and clarity, and align their own energy. But some people will feel frightened or threatened by such strength, and will attempt to dominate or attack. Of course, we *could* react by feeling frightened or threatened ourselves. Or we can calmly stay in our center, on our foundation, grateful that our life experiences have made us so strong. Domination in such a case is impossible.

## **How did I come to the way of sacred feminine leadership?**

First, my foundation. Although I am athletic and physically strong, my system is extremely sensitive to subtle imbalances, which show up as health anomalies. These can be a great motivator, and for 40 years I searched in all directions for relief, including into my psyche. Finally, at age 50, I finally discovered the causes, and am able to avoid them. But in the meantime, I had deeply explored myself. These explorations are my foundation.

Second, in the process of self-exploration, I became aware that I am also exquisitely sensitive to the people around me. And that those people were also exquisitely sensitive to me, whether or not they were consciously aware of it. So I began to understand self-responsibility as a *personal* intention in a *collective* energy field. In other words, if I was calm while being congruent with the inherent values of sacred feminine leadership, people around me were more likely to be calm. Since I do better in calm situations, I began to practice what's called "holding the space"—*being* the calmness that I wanted around me while holding a clear intention. This is the space in which great creative ideas are spawned.

Third, as part of my understanding of self-responsibility in a collective energy field, I recognize that every action affects the whole, and therefore that facilitating wholeness actually serves me. Service changes as one proceeds through life—from the joy that a child manifests, to the idealism and creative energy of youth, to the focused nurturing and stability of a householder, and on to the broader vision of an elder.

And *allowing* is the mechanism that finally enables peace of mind, and the deep joy that grows out of that. All great religions and philosophical streams have some version of the idea that from our limited human viewpoint, we cannot judge what is good or bad. *Allowing* spares us of any need to judge.

### **How am I now applying sacred feminine leadership in Altai?**

All of these aspects of sacred feminine leadership are useful to me at this time, as I, in the role of an elder, focus on the healing of the planet through alignment with the powerful, coherent energy field of Altai. Altai is a region to the south of Novosibirsk that is rightfully known as a place for miraculous healing. It is the place where people go looking for Shambhala. I am one of those people, and I found it. Now my service is to bring that awareness onto the whole planet.

All of my years of self-exploration form my foundation, which has culminated in my sacred feminine *beingness*. The truly awesome awareness of the Oneness of everything is *beingness*. I have learned how to listen (a particular challenge, since until recently, every word had to be transmitted through a translator). I learned to witness, to encourage, and to support. I use these skills to find access to a shared vision with the people of Altai, and then *hold the space* with my intention for accomplishment of our shared vision.

I went to Altai many times, and finally, last fall, breakthrough opportunities became apparent. In collaboration with others who hold the same intention—especially Marina Tyasto, Lyudmila Komkova, and Nina Goncharova in Novosibirsk, and a whole group of enthusiasts in Seattle led by Jackie Stratton—I was able to see how my professional skills (as an entrepreneur, and as a writer and editor of English) could be productively applied to further this group intention.

Under the auspices of Altai Mir University, which was founded to support this work in Altai, our *service* involves very concrete initiatives in several different arenas, with the intention of supporting the indigenous Altai people (in ways that *they* find useful) to be materially prosperous enough that they can afford to give the world the gifts of healing and hope for which they are the stewards. These initiatives include:

- 1) strategic planning facilitation, using Open Space Technology (including facilitation training) in all sectors of society;
- 2) grant-writing support for economic development efforts, cultural heritage, and civil-society building, especially for English-language proposals, but also networking and internet research to find appropriate opportunities, and coaching on how to find and write their own grant proposals;
- 3) international networking to find resources to bridge the digital divide in this rural region;
- 4) international leadership exchanges in both directions—inviting emerging Altai leaders to participate in the American Open World exchange program, facilitating participation by youths from other countries in international youth leadership camps in Altai, and leading international expeditions to Altai.

And finally, working across cultures and languages, a big part of our Altai Mir University effort is to allow—to *know* that whatever comes of our efforts is the only result that could happen for that set of circumstances, and to be at peace with that.

### **And that's sacred feminine leadership?**

The highest use of leadership is to enable people to be all they can. By being, holding the space, serving, and allowing, sacred feminine leadership accomplishes this simply and powerfully, with optimal use of all available resources. It may go by other names, like “quality-based leadership,” or “competent leadership,” or maybe even “enlightened leadership,” but by whatever name, it opens the door to deep community involvement by both men and women in the community’s future and the world’s future.

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